

EDITORIAL

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On the Way toward Crossing the Inner Rubicon



**Vladimir A
ILYIN**

Vologda Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences
Vologda, Russian Federation

E-mail: ilin@vscc.ac.ru

ORCID: 0000-0003-4536-6287; ResearcherID: N-4615-2017



**Mikhail V.
MOREV**

Vologda Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences
Vologda, Russian Federation

E-mail: 379post@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0003-1396-8195; ResearcherID: I-9815-2016

Abstract. February 24, 2022, the President of the Russian Federation announced the beginning of a special military operation on the territory of Ukraine; this, in fact, became a Rubicon in the 30-year history of Russia's existence within the framework of the liberal-democratic development paradigm imposed by the Collective West. Six months have passed since the launch of the operation. During this period, Russian society has faced unprecedented sanctions pressure from the United States and NATO and the withdrawal of a significant number of large foreign companies from the Russian market; the situation in Ukraine continues to arouse significant concerns. Sociological surveys indicate that the majority of Russian citizens support the President and the goals of the special operation. However, representatives of different social strata react differently to the events taking place in internal and external political and economic life. The article analyzes trends in social sentiment and the level of approval of the President's work on the basis of long-term monitoring of public opinion conducted by VolRC RAS in the territory of the Vologda Oblast. We conclude that the broad strata of Russian society feel the effect of the

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measures taken by the RF President and the RF Government to mitigate the effects of sanctions pressure on the economy and the quality of life and improve the spiritual, moral and cultural atmosphere that corresponds to the goals of national development in the current geopolitical situation; the attitude toward the measures is reflected in the assessments of public opinion. Besides, relying on expert assessments and statistical data, we dwell upon the problem of whether the views of individual representatives of Russia's ruling circles and financial and cultural elites correspond to the RF President's goals to "build and strengthen Russia as a strong sovereign power", whose sovereignty "cannot be segmented or fragmented in the 21st century" as Vladimir Putin noted at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 17, 2022. That is, sovereignty must be complete, not only political, economic or military, but, first of all, spiritual, cultural and moral. To achieve the set goals of national development, it is necessary to change the elites in the system of public administration, economy and culture. It is necessary to move from the elite, which was formed during the period of the country's life in the framework of the liberal-capitalist paradigm before the special operation, to the elites that ensure the sovereign development of Russia based on traditional spiritual and moral values and social justice.

Key words: special operation, civilizational conflict, spiritual sovereignty, RF President, social sentiment, ruling circles.

February 24, 2022, after announcing the start of a special military operation on the territory of Ukraine, Russia crossed the Rubicon in its relations with the Collective West by launching an open and irreversible process of moving away from the "semi-colonial" existence that has taken place over the past 30 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, toward achieving full national sovereignty.

"We are acting to defend ourselves from the threats created for us... The purpose of this operation is to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime. To this end, we will seek to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation"¹.

"...The 1990s, Yeltsinism, were times of Russia as a semi-colony without any "crypto", and we must, albeit with difficulty and blood, even by military means, get out of this historical trap"².

"What is Full State Sovereignty? It consists of five sovereignties:

1. Recognition of the country's territory, flag, coat of arms and anthem by the international community.
2. Diplomatic sovereignty – the ability to pursue an independent international policy...
3. Military sovereignty.
4. Economic sovereignty.
5. Cultural sovereignty. **As our history has shown, it is the most important component of sovereignty. With his absence, the path to nowhere begins"**³.

¹ Address of the President of the Russian Federation to the citizens of Russia on February 24, 2022. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

² Fursov A. What Hitler failed to achieve, the Anglo-Saxons are trying to achieve today. The Izborsk Club. April 29, 2022. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/22708>

³ Starikov N.V. The shortage of state sovereignty. Official website of N. Starikov. July 28, 2010. Available at: <https://nstarikov.ru/defitsit-gosudarstvennogo-suverenite-6047>

According to experts, today Russia is undergoing a “test for steady development”⁴, during which not only its military and economic, but also its patriotic, cultural, spiritual and moral potential is being tested. This, first of all, concerns the ruling strata, whose representatives, as history shows, become the main reason for the collapse of the state: if the state does not pass this “test”, then “one common reason underlies the collapse – the inability of political elites to ensure stable development ...” when “the accumulation of wealth begins to displace virtue and service to the state as the main indicator of success”⁵.

The six months that have passed since the beginning of the special military operation on the territory of Ukraine have shown that the economic blitzkrieg organized by NATO countries led by the United States failed, which the President of the Russian Federation stated on June 17 at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum.

“The idea was clear as day – they expected to suddenly and violently crush the Russian economy, to hit Russia’s industry, finance, and people’s living standards by destroying business chains, forcibly recalling Western companies from the Russian market, and freezing Russian assets. This did not work. Obviously, it did not work out; it did not happen.... As for the blitzkrieg they have tried against our economy, it is clear that it did not work out... The same is true of the blitzkrieg against Russia”⁶.

After the meeting of the leaders of Russia, Iran and Turkey in Tehran on July 19, 2022, periodicals of the Western media came out with the headlines “The West **helplessly** watches Russia create a new world order” (Handelsblatt, Germany), “Tehran and Putin create an **anti-NATO** axis” (Corriere della Sera, Italy), “Vladimir Putin creates a new alliance of rogue states that will pose **a more serious threat to the West than the old Soviet bloc**” (Daily Mail, UK).

Russia continued to strengthen international relations with those states that refused to support NATO countries in their anti-Russian policy; thus the RF is creating new economic and political foundations for its own development. “The West has failed to put together a global anti-Russian front. Most countries of the world did not support the Russophobic policy. The sanctions are not supported by China, India, Brazil, the leading countries of Africa, the Arab world, and Latin America”⁷.

The goals of the special military operation are being systematically implemented, and initially the main principle that guided the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was “people and their lives”⁸. This principle applies not only directly to military personnel, **but also to the preservation of the habitual way of life of the civilian population**. According to experts, “normal life” is an “absolute goal”; therefore, the President and the government promptly take the necessary measures to reduce the negative impact of economic sanctions and to

⁴ Arbatova N. Twenty centuries of the rise and decline of empires. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. July 13, 2022. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2022-07-13/7_8485_empires.html

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the plenary session of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 17, 2022. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68669>

⁷ Pushkov: The West failed to put together a global anti-Russian front. Federal News Agency. July 27, 2022. Available at: https://riafan.ru/23559481-pushkov_zapadu_ne_udalos_skolotit_global_nii_antirossiiskii_front

⁸ Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting with the heads of the constituent entities of the Federation on April 28, 2020. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63288>

ensure that “people living in Russia continue to live as they do”.

“A person living in Russia is told the following: **You can and should continue to live the way you live, and it is our duty to provide you with such an opportunity...** We will try to minimize the losses of our professional army. And even more so, we will try to take out of harm’s way that part of the population that does not sign a professional contract and does not voluntarily assume all the costs arising from this contract. This part of the population should not be disturbed in any way at all... **normal life is an absolute goal. And our political system is implementing this goal**”⁹.

One of the main points in Vladimir Putin’s public speeches that he voiced throughout virtually all his presidential terms was the thesis that “The opinion of people, our citizens as the bearers of sovereignty and the main source of power must be decisive”¹⁰. In this sense, the dynamics of public sentiment indicate that the task of maintaining a way of life familiar to citizens is being fulfilled.

Table 1. The attitude of Russians toward the work of the RF President in February – August 2022 (VCIOM data), % of respondents

People’s assessments	20 Feb. 2022	21 Aug. 2022	Dynamics (+/-)
Share of positive assessments	64.3	78.4	+14
Share of negative assessments	24.4	12.6	-12

Source: Rating assessing the activities of state institutions. VCIOM. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/ratings/dejatelnost-gosudarstvennykh-institutov/>

Thus, according to VCIOM, since the beginning of the special military operation, the level of approval of the President’s work has increased by 14 percentage points (from 64 to 78%; *Tab. 1*), the share of negative assessments has decreased by 12 percentage points (from 24 to 12%).

The overwhelming majority of Russians (65–70%) have shown and are showing support for the special operation. At the same time, the proportion of those who support the special operation increased by 7 percentage points from February to June 2022 (from 65 to 72%; *Tab. 2*), and the share of those who hold the opposite opinion decreased by 8 percentage points (from 25 to 17%).

In order to understand the trends observed in public sentiment after the start of the special military operation, we analyzed the data of the monitoring of public opinion conducted by Vologda Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (VoIRC RAS)¹¹ for the period from February to August 2022 in comparison with the same period of 2021.

Table 2. The attitude of Russians toward the special operation on the territory of Ukraine (VCIOM data), % of respondents

People’s assessments	25 Feb. 2022	25 June 2022	Dynamics (+/-)
Share of those who support the operation	65	72	+7
Share of those who don’t support the operation	25	17	-8

Source: VCIOM analytical review “Special Military Operation: Monitoring”. VCIOM official website. June 30, 2022. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/specialnaja-voennaja-operacija-monitoring-20223006>

⁹ Kurginyan S. In order not to fall into the abyss. *Zavtra*. June 29, 2022. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/chtobi_ne_ruhnut_v_bezdnu

¹⁰ Address of the President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on January 15, 2020. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62582>

¹¹ The public opinion monitoring has been conducted since 1996 on the territory of the Vologda Oblast. Surveys are conducted every two months (with the exception of missing monitoring “waves” in April and June 2020 due to quarantine restrictions imposed on the territory of the region in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19); 1,500 respondents over the age of 18 are interviewed in the cities of Vologda and Cherepovets, in Babaevsky, Velikoustyugsky, Vozhegodsky, Gryazovetsky, Kirillovsky, Nikolsky, Tarnogsky, and Sheksninsky districts. Representativeness of the sample is ensured by observing the following conditions: proportions between urban and rural population; proportions between residents of settlements of various types (rural settlements, small and medium-sized cities); gender and age structure of the adult population in the region. Survey method is questionnaire at the place of residence of respondents.

For each of these periods, four “waves” of surveys were conducted (in February, April, June and August), which made it possible to carry out a comparative analysis of key indicators of public sentiment, based on the estimates of six thousand respondents representing 14 socio-demographic strata¹².

According to the results of the survey (February – August 2022 in comparison with February – August 2021), we can say that the majority of citizens support the activities of the RF President, and their share after the start of the special operation has increased in all major socio-demographic groups (in the Vologda Oblast as a whole, the proportion of positive assessments of the activities of the head

of state for February – August 2022 compared to February – August 2021 increased by 4 percentage points, from 52 to 56%; *Tab. 3, Insert 1*).

The share of those who assess their daily emotional state as positive has also increased (in the whole region by 5 percentage points, from 64 to 69%; *Tab. 3*), negative changes are not observed in any of the socio-demographic groups (*Insert 2*).

From February to August 2022:

- ✓ the level of approval of the RF President’s work in the region as a whole increased by 13 percentage points (from 48 to 61%; *Tab. 4*);
- ✓ the share of positive assessments of social mood has not changed and amounted to 70% (while from April to August 2022, the share of people describing their mood as “normal, good” has *increased: by 3 percentage points, from 67 to 70%; Tab. 4*);
- ✓ the Consumer Sentiment Index¹³, reflecting people’s forecasts about the future of the Russian economy and their own financial situation, amounted to 84–86 points (at the same time, from April to August 2022, it increased by 4 points, from 80 to 84 points; *Tab. 4*);
- ✓ protest potential¹⁴ decreased by 2 percentage points (from 23 to 21%; *Tab. 4*).

Table 3. Trends in key indicators of public sentiment in February – August 2022 compared to February – August 2021, % of respondents

	February – August 2021	February – August 2022	Dynamics (+/-)
Share of those who positively assess the work of the RF President	51.5	55.8	+4
Share of those who positively assess their social mood	64.3	68.7	+5
Source: VoIRC RAS public opinion monitoring.			

¹² The total number of respondents in each socio-demographic group is presented in the table:

Population group (number of respondents, persons)		February – August 2021	February – August 2022
Sex	Men	2684	2684
	Women	3316	3316
Age	Under 30	880	867
	30–55	2824	2832
	Over 55	2296	2301
Education	Incomplete secondary and secondary	1956	2215
	Secondary vocational	2282	2174
	Incomplete higher and higher	1753	1606
Income groups	Bottom 20%	1064	1077
	Middle 60%	3186	3232
	Top 20%	1064	1077
Territories	Vologda	1595	1588
	Cherepovets	1617	1620
	Districts	2788	2792
	Oblast	6000	6000

¹³ The Consumer Sentiment Index is calculated based on the answers to the questions:

1. How do you assess the financial situation of your family: is it better or worse than it was a year ago? (answer options: “better”, “worse”).
2. If we talk about large purchases for the home, then, generally speaking, in your opinion, is now a good or bad time to buy most of such products? (answer options: “good”, “bad”).

3. Do you think that in a year your financial situation will be better, worse or about the same as it is now? (answer options: “it will be better”, “it will be worse”, “it will be the same”).

4. Do you think the next 12 months will be a good time for the country’s economy, a bad time for it, or will they be something else? (answer options: “good”, “bad”).

5. If we talk about the next five years, will they be a good or bad time for the country’s economy? (answer options: “good”, “bad”).

Private indexes are calculated for each question. To do this, the proportion of negative responses is subtracted from the proportion of positive responses, then 100 is added to the resulting value so as not to have negative values. Thus, completely negative answers would give a general index of 0, positive – 200, the equilibrium of the first and second expresses the index value of 100 (neutral index value).

The arithmetic mean of the private indices gives the aggregate value – the Consumer Sentiment Index.

¹⁴ The protest potential is the proportion of respondents who answered the question “What are you ready to do to protect your interests?” as follows: “I will participate in a rally, demonstration”; “I will participate in strikes, protest actions”; “If necessary, I will take up arms, I will take to the streets”.

Table 4. Trends in key indicators of public sentiment in February – August 2022, % of respondents

	Feb. 2022	Apr. 2022	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Dynamics (+/-), Aug. 2022 to	
					Feb. 2022	June 2022
Share of positive assessments of the activities of the RF President	48.0	56.3	58.0	60.9	+13	+3
Share of positive assessments of social mood	69.3	66.5	68.7	70.1	+1	+1
Consumer Sentiment Index (CSI), points	85.7	80.2	81.9	83.9	-2	+2
Protest potential	22.7	19.3	17.5	20.5	-2	+3

Source: VolRC RAS public opinion monitoring.

Thus, the all-Russian VCIOM research and VolRC RAS regional sociological surveys indicate, first, that against the background of the actualization of external threats, Russian society is consolidating around the head of state; second, that the measures taken by the state to mitigate the negative impact of sanctions on the standard of living and quality of life and preserve the usual lifestyle of citizens is supported by public opinion assessments.

There remain more conceptual and strategic tasks that are of fundamental importance and relate to achieving **“spiritual sovereignty”**, dominating (as experts note) over all others; gaining **“sovereign thinking... as an impossibility to continue copying the**

**“The sovereignty of any state means the isolation of its sphere of spiritual production...
Spiritual (conceptual) sovereignty is primary**

in relation to technological, military, economic and political sovereignty, and it is impossible to build it on the basic principles of the imported worldview”¹⁵.

West and its norms, standards and rules”¹⁶, and also **“civilizational indifference... as an awareness of the fact that we are strangers to Europe”¹⁷.**

The solution of these tasks is impossible without understanding a clear image of the future of Russia and without the presence of a certain Russian idea or ideology. **For Russia, this is, in fact, also a Rubicon, but no longer an external one (defining its attitude toward the Collective West), but an internal one, connected with the achievement of its own “spiritual sovereignty”.**

“We are now turning to the fundamental questions of our being. And the special military operation is a catalyst for this process of understanding our place in the world, and of course, we need an image of the future...”¹⁸

“The question about the Russian civilization is not due to the presence of certain cultural traits that connect us with the past, but to the presence in Russia of an “image of the future” to which our society would aspire, an image that would be an alternative to the Western one”¹⁹.

¹⁵ Khaldey A. Transfer and the strategy of sovereignty: Customers and performers. *Zavtra*. July 29, 2022. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/transfer_i_strategiya_suvereniteta_zakazchiki_i_ispolniteli

¹⁶ Dugin A. Rejection of the Bologna system and ideological convulsions of the elites. *Zavtra*. June 8, 2022. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/otkaz_ot_bolonskoj_sistemi_i_ideologicheskie_sudorogi_elit

¹⁷ Mezhujev B. (2022). Is Russia’s “civilizational indifference” toward the Collective West possible? *Ekspert*, 26, p. 70.

¹⁸ Glazyev S.Yu. Russia is fighting for the preservation of humanity. Official website of S. Glazyev. June 17, 2022. Available at: <https://glazev.ru/articles/153-geopolitika/103254-rossija-vojuet-za-sokhranenie-chelovechestva>

¹⁹ Mezhujev B. (2022). Is Russia’s “civilizational indifference” toward the Collective West possible? *Ekspert*, 26, p. 69.

*Insert 1***The share of positive assessments of the RF President's work, in various socio-demographic groups**

(question: "How do you currently assess the work of the RF President"; answer option is "I fully and mostly approve"), % of respondents

	Population group	Average for February – August 2021	Average for February – August 2022	Dynamics (+/-)
Sex	Men	48.1	52.4	+4
	Women	54.2	58.6	+4
Age	Under 30	45.4	51.9	+7
	30–55	49.8	53.4	+4
	Over 55	56.1	60.3	+4
Education	Incomplete secondary and secondary	46.6	50.3	+4
	Secondary vocational	51.6	56.8	+5
	Incomplete higher and higher	56.8	62.0	+5
Income groups	Bottom 20%	37.1	40.1	+3
	Middle 60%	54.8	58.3	+4
	Top 20%	62.6	62.7	0
	Vologda	46.6	47.2	+1
Territories	Cherepovets	57.2	61.7	+5
	Districts	51.0	57.3	+6
	Oblast	51.5	55.8	+4
<i>Total interviewed for February – August (people)</i>		<i>6000</i>	<i>6000</i>	
Source: VoIRC RAS public opinion monitoring.				

In general, in the Vologda Oblast for the period from February to August 2022, compared to the same period last year, the share of positive assessments of the RF President's work increased by 4 percentage points (from 52 to 56%). Positive changes are observed in all major socio-demographic groups, except for residents of Vologda and 20% of the most affluent citizens of the region (in these groups, population estimates have not changed).

It is worth noting an increase in the level of approval of the work of the head of state among the following groups:

- ✓ persons under the age of 30 (by 7 percentage points, from 45 to 52%);
- ✓ residents of districts (by 6 percentage points, from 51 to 57%)

The lowest level of approval of the RF President's work is noted among people who, according to self-estimates of income, belong to the category of bottom 20% residents of the region (40%). However, in this group, the support for the head of state increased by 3 percentage points (from 37 to 40%), while among the 20% of the most affluent segments of the population, the share of positive assessments in February – August 2022, as in February – August 2021, was 63%.

Insert 2

The share of positive assessments of social mood in various socio-demographic groups

(question: “What could you say about your mood in recent days?”, answer option is “excellent mood; normal, good condition”),
% of respondents

Population group	Average for February – August 2021	Average for February – August 2022	Dynamics (+/-)
Sex			
Men	63.2	67.8	+5
Women	65.2	69.3	+4
Age			
Under 30	70.9	78.1	+7
30–55	67.8	70.7	+3
Over 55	57.4	62.6	+5
Education			
Incomplete secondary and secondary	59.7	66.5	+7
Secondary vocational	65.0	69.9	+5
Incomplete higher and higher	68.5	69.7	+1
Income groups			
Bottom 20%	50.8	59.0	+8
Middle 60%	65.5	69.1	+4
Top 20%	77.5	79.0	+2
Territories			
Vologda	58.0	61.5	+4
Cherepovets	68.9	72.5	+4
Districts	65.2	70.5	+5
Oblast	64.3	68.7	+5
<i>Total interviewed for February – August (people)</i>	<i>6000</i>	<i>6000</i>	

Source: VoIRC RAS public opinion monitoring.

In February – August 2022, compared with February – August 2021, the share of Vologda Oblast residents who describe their daily mood as “normal, beautiful, good” increased by 5 percentage points (from 64 to 69%). Positive changes were recorded in all socio-demographic groups, except for people with incomplete higher and higher education, as well as representatives of the category of 20% of the most affluent residents of the region (in these groups, the share of positive assessments of social mood remains stable).

The most significant changes in the dynamics of positive assessments of social mood occurred in the following groups:

- ✓ persons under the age of 30 (proportion of positive characteristics increased by 8 percentage points, from 70 to 78%);
- ✓ persons with incomplete secondary and secondary education (the share of positive ratings increased by 7 percentage points, from 60 to 67%);
- ✓ people who, according to self-estimates of income, belong to the category of top 20% (by 8 percentage points, from 51 to 59%).

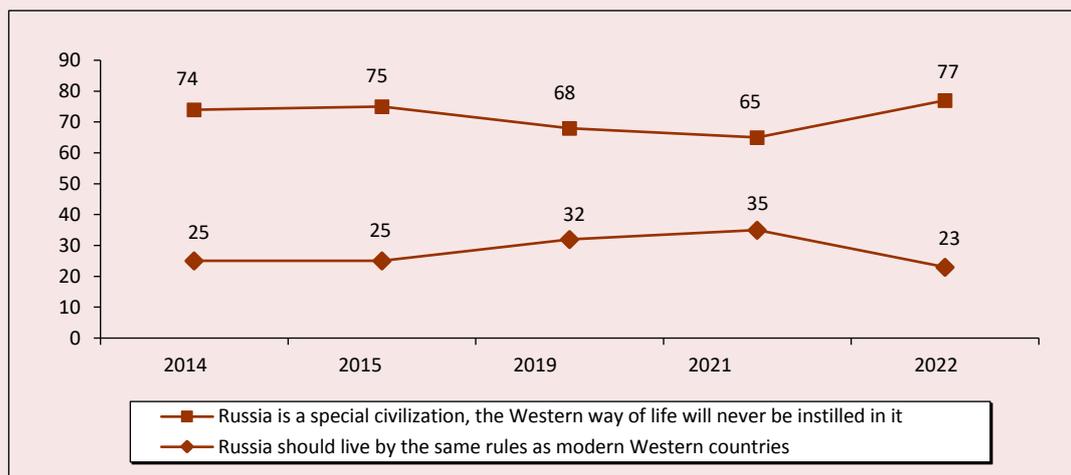
The complexity of the task of achieving “spiritual sovereignty” lies not only in the amorphous nature of its criteria and deadlines for implementation.

The results of all-Russian sociological surveys indicate that for at least eight years (since 2014), the proportion of Russians who believe that “Russia is a special civilization, a Western way of life will never be instilled in it” is almost three times higher than the proportion of those who believe that “Russia should live according to the same rules as modern Western countries”. Moreover, for the period from

2021 to 2022²⁰ it increased by 12 percentage points (from 65 to 77%; *Fig. 1*).

According to experts, in Russian society there is a “request for a common destiny”²¹ and along with it, there is an understanding of its components: “social justice” (47%), “a strong government that ensures order and development” (40%), “preservation of national traditions, moral and religious values” (39%), “ensuring human rights, democracy, freedom of expression of the individual” (39%), the idea of Russia as a “great world power that unites different peoples” (35%)²².

Figure 1. Dynamics of attitudes of Russians toward the Western civilizational model or special Russian civilizational model, % of respondents



Source: *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo v usloviyakh novykh vyzovov i ugroz (kontekst sotsiologicheskoi diagnostiki)* [Russian Society in the Context of New Challenges and Threats (Context of Sociological Diagnostics). FNISTs RAN. Moscow, 2022. P. 115.

²⁰ The latest survey was conducted in March 2022 (source: *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo v usloviyakh novykh vyzovov i ugroz (kontekst sotsiologicheskoi diagnostiki)* [Russian Society in the Context of New Challenges and Threats (Context of Sociological Diagnostics). FNISTs RAN. Moscow, 2022. P. 115).

²¹ EISI experts discussed the phenomenon of consolidation of Russian society (V. Poturemsky’s opinion, Institute of Social Marketing). *Rossiyskaya gazeta*. May 4, 2022. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2022/05/04/eksperty-eisi-obsudili-fenomen-konsolidacii-rossijskogo-obshchestva.html>

²² *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo v usloviyakh novykh vyzovov i ugroz (kontekst sotsiologicheskoi diagnostiki)* [Russian Society in the Context of New Challenges and Threats (Context of Sociological Diagnostics). FNISTs RAN. Moscow, 2022. P. 187.

“The comprehension of historical experience in the light of modern problems and requests demonstrates a certain (albeit weakly expressed) increase in the proportion of our fellow citizens who believe that **socialism is more fit for Russia than capitalism**.

Nowadays, there is a new reading, rethinking by society of the very idea of change and the way of development of the country... **today, in the minds of our fellow citizens, the path chosen by the country and the “changes” no longer contradict each other. The current “path” to a great extent represents the expected “changes” in Russia... currently, the path of Russia is understood through the concept of an original Russian model of the world order, its civilizational sovereignty**”²³.

In other words, expert assessments, public opinion surveys, and the results of the 2020 vote on constitutional amendments (which were supported by 79%, or almost 58 million Russian voters) show that **broad strata of Russian society would like to see Russia as a welfare state based on the rule of law, social justice, and the priority of traditional spiritual and moral values**.

The achievement of this socio-political consensus (especially strengthened after the Crimean Spring of 2014) is one of the results of the presidential activity of Vladimir Putin, who initially saw three pillars in the new post-Soviet

“There is no need to talk about sovereignty in Russia. As a matter of fact, this sovereignty has already been acquired; **the task is to fill this sovereignty with some real civilizational content**”.

statehood he was building: “The Russian idea”, “A strong state” and “An efficient economy” (and precisely in this sequence²⁴).

However, the positions on which consensus has now been reached in Russian society **are just contours that require filling with “real civilizational content”**. What this content will be is a question that remains open for now.

The data of the all-Russian and regional surveys of the expert community show that “the desired future of Russia and the really predicted situation in the country in the medium term do not just differ, but are in many ways opposite”²⁶ (*Insert 3*). And this skepticism is perhaps one of the main reasons explaining exactly how experts assess the state of Russian society after the start of the special operation: “The country is in a very unusual state. It is like hovering between the past that has already ended and the future that has not yet begun, or rather, it has begun, but has not yet been realized and accepted... We have irrevocably and radically broken with the West. But we have not comprehended it yet”²⁷.

What are the “roots” of this skepticism? The special military operation has shown that people’s doubt (or rather even disbelief) that the desired image of the future can become really achievable comes from the deep penetration of the values and ideals of the culture of the consumer society (liberal capitalist ideology) into the very fabric of the Russian elite, by which we understand not only (although above all) representatives of the ruling circles, but also many politicians, businessmen, cultural and art figures, show business celebrities, etc.

²³ *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo v usloviyakh novykh vyzovov i ugroz (kontekst sotsiologicheskoi diagnostiki)* [Russian Society in the Context of New Challenges and Threats (Context of Sociological Diagnostics)]. FNISTs RAN. Moscow, 2022. Pp. 188, 234.

²⁴ Putin V.V. Russia at the turn of the Millennium. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. January 30, 1999. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millennium.html

²⁵ Mezhujev B. (2022). Is Russia’s “civilizational indifference” toward the Collective West possible? *Ekspert*, 26, p. 71.

²⁶ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2018). Revisiting the issue concerning the future of Russian statehood. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 11(5), p. 11.

²⁷ Dugin A.G. Integral sovereignty. Official website of the Izborsk Club. July 4, 2022. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/23057>

Insert 3

Distribution of assessments of the need for various factors (conditions) to achieve the **desired situation** in Russian society by 2020 (average score on a scale from 1 – no need to 10 – absolutely necessary), points*

Data of the all-Russian survey (IS RAS, 2015)		Data of the survey conducted in the Vologda Oblast (VoIRC RAS, 2018)	
1. Rotation of the political elite in the center and in regions	8.5	1. Changing the attitude of the state toward the sphere of culture, education and science, refusal to commercialize this sphere	9.8
2. Conducting transparent (with public control) and legitimate elections at all levels of government	8.1	2. Stability of legislation, “rules of the game”	9.5
3. Stability of legislation, “rules of the game”	8.0	3. Conducting transparent (with public control) and legitimate elections at all levels of government	9.3
4. Changing the attitude of the state toward the sphere of culture, education and science, refusal to commercialize this sphere	7.7	4. Maintaining the foreign policy course to restore Russia’s strong role in world politics and independence, active protection of national interests	9.2
5. Strengthening the role of representative authorities, development of multiparty system	7.2	5. Rotation of the political elite in the center and in regions	8.5
6. Lifting of sanctions by Western countries, restoration of dialogue and relations with the West	6.7	6. Strengthening the role of representative authorities, development of multiparty system	7.8
7. Maintaining the foreign policy course to restore Russia’s strong role in world politics and independence, active protection of national interests	6.4	7. Lifting of sanctions by Western countries, restoration of dialogue and relations with the West	7.7
8. Strengthening the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, expanding the network of its parishes	3.6	8. Strengthening the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, expanding the network of its parishes	4.8
9. Continuation of priority development of the raw materials sector of the economy, taking into account Russia’s competitive advantages in the global division of labor; maintaining relatively low prices for labor and raw materials	3.0	9. Continuation of priority development of the raw materials sector of the economy, taking into account competitive advantages in Russia in the global division of labor; maintaining relatively low prices for labor and raw materials	4.3
* The wording of the question: “In your opinion, to what extent are the following conditions necessary to achieve the desired situation in Russian society by 2030?” Factors that scored more than 5 points on a scale from 1 to 10, i.e. those that, according to experts, are the most necessary, are highlighted in green.			

Expert surveys conducted by IS RAS in 2015²⁸ and VoIRC RAS in 2018²⁹ showed that in the five-year perspective, the necessary factors for the **desired** development of the situation in Russia are “rotation of the political elite in the center and in regions, “stability of legislation and rules of the game”, “holding transparent (with public control) and legitimate elections at all levels of government”, “changing the attitude of the state toward the sphere of culture, education and science, refusal to commercialize this sphere”, “strengthening the role of representative authorities, development of multiparty system”.

²⁸ The expert survey was conducted by RAS Institute of Sociology with participation of the ZIRCON Research Group in July – October 2015; 154 experts took part in the survey: 94 from Moscow, 64 from various regions of the country. Five types of specialists were involved in the survey: state and municipal employees, officials, high-level managers, heads of state universities; representatives (heads) of business structures and business associations, commercial consulting centers; representatives (heads) of public associations, NGOs, independent intellectual organizations, clubs, etc.; journalists, publicists, actively speaking in the media with materials on the subject of research; researchers, scientists, specialists of analytical centers professionally engaged in studying the problems and prospects of the country’s development (Source: Gorshkov M.K. et al. (2016). *Rossiiskoe obshchestvo i vyzovy vremeni. Kniga chetvertaya.* [Russian Society and the Challenges of the Time. Book Four]. Moscow: Ves’ mir).

²⁹ The survey was conducted by VoIRC RAS in the Vologda Oblast in February – March 2018. The sample included reputable specialists in their fields (managers, their deputies, people with significant work experience, candidates and doctors of sciences, etc.) representing those areas that, in our opinion, most fully reflect the situation in Russian society: government; business; “third sector” (non-profit organizations); mass media; science; 5–7 people were interviewed in each of the 5 key areas. The total sample size was 30 people.

Insert 3 (continued)

Distribution of **probability** estimates of **factors (conditions)** in the context of which the development of Russian society will take place in the next five years (average score of the degree of probability on a scale from 1 – unlikely to 10 – most likely), points*

Data of the all-Russian survey (IS RAS, 2015)		Data of the survey conducted in the Vologda Oblast (VolIRC RAS, 2018)	
1. Reduction of household incomes, rising prices and falling living standards, unemployment	7.7	1. Prolongation of Western sanctions against Russia; loss of the possibility of importing critical goods, resources, technologies, ideas	6.2
2. Prolongation of Western sanctions against Russia; loss of the possibility of importing critical goods, resources, technologies, ideas	7.6	2. A sharp increase in the demand for engineering and technical professions and specialties, demand for IT, reorientation of the labor market from the service sector to the production sector	5.4
3. A sharp drop in oil and gas prices, the crisis of the Russian oil and gas industry, a reduction in budget revenues	6.7	3. Reduction of household incomes, rising prices and falling living standards, unemployment	5.3
4. Destruction of the infrastructure of the social sphere (healthcare, education, culture), departure of professionals, reduction of staff and institutions, collapse of intra-industry communications	6.5	4. Destruction of the infrastructure of the social sphere (healthcare, education, culture), departure of professionals, reduction of staff and institutions, collapse of intra-industry communications	5.1
5. Tightening of domestic policy, reduction of citizens' rights and freedoms, introduction of formal and/or informal censorship in the media, etc.	6.4	5. Tightening of domestic policy, reduction of citizens' rights and freedoms, introduction of formal and/or informal censorship in the media, etc.	5.1
6. Mass dissemination of technologies for tracking citizens' behavior, total loss of privacy	6.3	6. Successful import substitution, development of non-resource sectors of the economy, improvement of the investment climate	5.0
7. Man-made and other disasters, major accidents, including those caused by the human factor	5.9	7. Mass dissemination of technologies for tracking citizens' behavior, total loss of privacy	4.7
8. Increased terrorist pressure on Russia (terrorist attacks, sabotage, intimidation)	5.1	8. Increased terrorist pressure on Russia (terrorist attacks, sabotage, intimidation)	4.7
9. A sharp increase in the demand for engineering and technical professions and specialties, demand for IT, reorientation of the labor market from the service sector to the production sector	4.6	9. A sharp drop in oil and gas prices, the crisis of the Russian oil and gas industry, a reduction in budget revenues	4.6
10. Large-scale war in Ukraine with direct or indirect participation of Russia and NATO countries	4.5	10. Man-made and other disasters, major accidents, including those caused by the human factor	4.2
11. Decrease in the influx of migrants from Asian countries into the country, increase in migration (workers, specialists) from European countries	3.7	11. Large-scale war in Ukraine with direct or indirect participation of Russia and NATO countries	3.8
12. Successful import substitution, development of non-resource sectors of the economy, improvement of the investment climate	3.7	12. Decrease in the influx of migrants from Asian countries into the country, increase in migration (workers, specialists) from European countries	3.5
*The wording of the question: "Please assess the probability of the following factors and conditions in the context of which the development of Russian society will take place in the next five years". Factors that scored more than 5 points on a scale from 1 to 10, i.e. those that, according to experts, are the most probable, are highlighted in green.			

The most probable negative factors under the influence of which the future of our country will be shaped, according to experts, are "a reduction in household incomes, rising prices and falling living standards, unemployment", "prolongation of sanctions by Western countries against Russia; loss of the ability to import critical goods, resources, technologies, ideas"; "a sharp drop in oil and gas prices, crisis of the Russian oil and gas industry, reduction of budget revenue"; "destruction of the infrastructure of the social sphere (health, education, culture), departure of professionals, reduction of staff and institutions, collapse of intra-industry communications"; "tightening of domestic policy, reduction of citizens' rights and freedoms, introduction of formal and/or informal censorship in the media, etc."

It is necessary to agree with experts that this is not an elite in the classical sense of this term (from the French: *elite*, which means “the best”, “selected”), which implies, among other things, the presence of “high moral and civic qualities”³⁰. “These are figures who occupy such socio-political positions that give them the opportunity to rise above the environment of ordinary people and make decisions with major consequences... those who occupy key positions in the economy, politics and other spheres of public life”³¹. **That is, these are persons who, by virtue of their publicity, possession of financial resources, authority, social status, popularity among the people, should bear the responsibility of practical implementation of the contours of the image of the future expected by broad segments of Russian society. They should, but in many cases they do not do this because of the priority of their own, personal goals and interests – power, money, fame, etc.**

The special military operation, launching, according to Vladimir Putin, the process of “natural and necessary self-purification of society ... which will strengthen our country, our solidarity, cohesion and readiness to respond to any challenges”³², actually disclosed the names³³ of some people who are mentally and materially connected with the West and the Western way of life and who put personal interests, personal lifestyle and financial situation above the interests of the country and its citizens. At the same time, as experts note, there are “... open and latent globalists. The open ones left, the latent

“It is no secret to anyone that the ruling class, which came after the “privatization” wave of the 1990s, and the bureaucracy and intelligentsia serving it, pursuing a line to surrender state interests and defending Russia’s integration into the Western community, **have mostly retained their positions in government structures and are trying to realize their clan interests...** Although the purges have recently begun in this environment..., but **many have remained in their places and continue their destructive activities**”³⁴.

ones remained and still occupy their posts, too”³⁵. The presence of such people shows that **the interests of society that coincide in general with the initiatives of the President are still divided by a serious “gap” which does not allow the already formed, but so far only the contours of the image of the future to be filled with real content.**

Therefore, for example, the need of Russian society for social justice (as one of the main such contours) continues to be extremely acute and the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation adopted in 2020 did not affect its relevance in any way: from 2021 (when the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation came into force) to 2022, the estimates of the population have not changed significantly: 60% of people consider modern Russian society unfair, 17–18% (that is, almost 3 times less) hold the opposite opinion (*Fig. 2*).

³⁰ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2012). The not very clean elite? *Poisk*, 21. Available at: <https://poisknews.ru/magazine/3473/>

³¹ *Ibidem*.

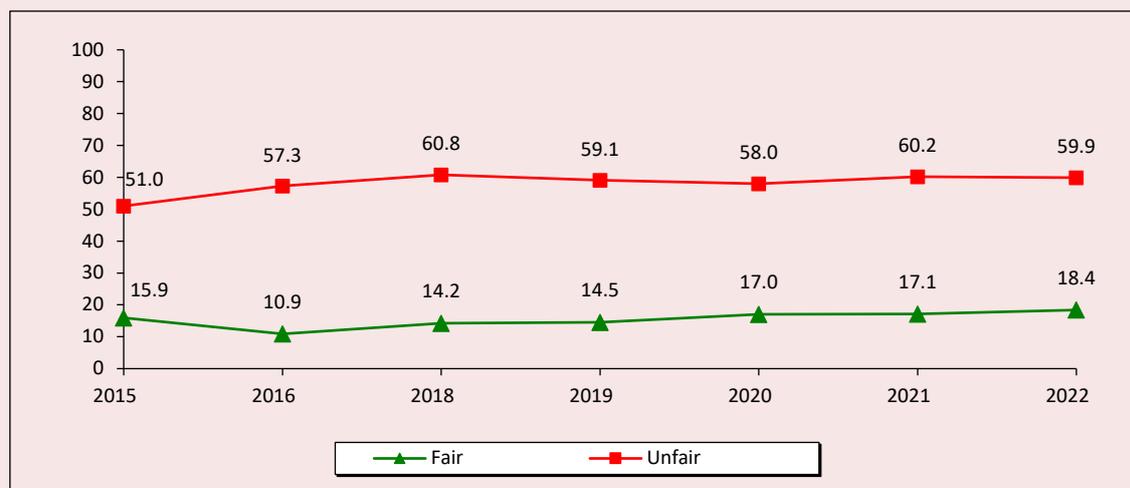
³² Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting on measures of socio-economic support for the regions on March 16, 2022. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67996>

³³ Among them: former deputy prime ministers (A. Kohh, A. Chubais, A. Khloponin, A. Dvorkovich, I. Klebanov); businesspersons (M. Fridman, A. Panov, M. Prokhorov); cultural figures, journalists and show business celebrities (A. Pugacheva, M. Galkin, D. Dibrov, I. Urgant, R. Litvinova, A. Makarevich, K. Sobchak, A. Vasiliev), etc. (Sources: Khakassia Information Portal. *Artel of prospectors*. June 7, 2022. Available at: <https://19rusinfo.ru/politika/12587-priyutili-na-svoyu-golovu-evropa-vzvyala-ot-khamstva-ukraintsev-i-tsen#menu>; news portal Emigrating.ru. 18.08.2022. Available at: <https://emigrating.ru/ktopokinul-rossiyu-v-2022-godu-iz-za-ukrainy/#i-2>).

³⁴ Apukhtin Yu. Why the Russian elite is opposed to conducting the special operation. *Voennoye obozrenie*. August 3, 2022. Available at: <https://topwar.ru/199775-pochemu-rossijskaja-jelita-protivitsja-provedeniju-specoperacii.html>

³⁵ Khaldey A. Why peace in Ukraine is impossible: About the “fatigue” of the cunning Russian elite. *Regnum*. July 26, 2022. Available at: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/3652253.html>

Figure 2. Do you think Russian society as a whole is fair or unfair?*, % of respondents



* In 2022, the question was asked during each “wave” of the monitoring: in February, April, June, August.

Source: VoIRC RAS public opinion monitoring.

Thus, the “welfare state” as an initiative of the head of state, coming from above together with the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, and “social justice” as a long-standing need of the general population, coming from below, ultimately have not yet “met”. They exist in isolation, each at its own level: “welfare state” – at the upper level in the form of legislative and strategic documents, as well as in the public rhetoric of the authorities; “social justice” – at the lower level in the form of one of the basic needs of the population.

They did not come together “in the middle”, because “in the middle” (as the special operation has shown) there is a cult of idleness and momentary entertainment, cheap scandalous popularity and individual enrichment. The society and the President see each other’s needs and initiatives, feel their coincidence at the mental level, consolidate

in the face of external threats, **but their common image of the future remains only a task that needs to be solved. The task requires, perhaps, a new social contract in which the ruling strata and elite circles are aware of their role and bear actual responsibility for the realization of national interests.**

The creation of such a social contract first of all requires actions on the part of the head of state – the same clear and rapid organization of the real implementation of the proposed idea, which he demonstrated in 2020 during the work to amend the Constitution of the Russian Federation (we recall that from the moment Vladimir Putin publicly announced the initiative to amend the text of the Constitution before the official adoption of the law “On the official publication of the Constitution of the Russian Federation with amendments”, only six months have passed, from January to July 2020³⁶).

³⁶ The proposal to amend the Constitution of the Russian Federation was announced by the head of state during his Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on January 15, 2020.

From June 25 to July 1, 2020, an all-Russian referendum was held, during which 79% of voters (58 million people) supported amendments to the Basic Law.

July 3, 2020 the RF President signed a decree “On the official publication of the Constitution of the Russian Federation as amended” (the text of the decree is posted on the official website of the President of the Russian Federation. Available at: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/63598>).

Of course, it is difficult to argue with experts who note that “the fate of Russia and the future world order... will largely be determined by the results of the special military operation”³⁷, but it should also be recognized that the special operation will definitely end, and after the geopolitical situation in the world reaches a more or less stable state, the internal question of “what kind of state we are building” will arise, as they say, “point-blank”.

The special operation achieved a similar effect in the form of “natural self-purification” of society in a slightly different aspect, but also directly related to the achievement of spiritual sovereignty. Strengthening the anti-fake legislation and the fight against foreign agents (*Insert 4 (pp. 27–28), Tab. 5*), which was required by the hybrid specifics of the course of modern global conflicts (namely, the war on the information front), leads to the detection (and, accordingly, to the suppression of the possibilities of negative influence) of an increasing number of NGOs, media, individuals (including those directly related to the education of young people) who openly or semi-openly propagandize the values of consumer society and liberal capitalist ideology

(including gender tolerance, which contradicts traditional moral values enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

A number of experts note that the use of such entities or “sleeping agents” as a strategy of “canceling” Russia will be actualized by the West as the ineffectiveness of attempts at economic and military pressure becomes more and more obvious. It was this strategy that brought success to the Collective West in the Cold War of 1946–1991, which ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

“The upcoming expected anti-Russian scenarios include **attempts to exacerbate tension in society. Both among the intelligentsia and within the governing class...**

For almost 30 years... we were getting enough people oriented toward the West inside the country. And not so much young people, **but quite serious people holding relevant positions in large corporations, in other notable places.** These are what are called “sleeping agents”. So far, no one has used them. **But today, the West is likely to use them to achieve its goals...**”³⁶

Table 5. Foreign mass media, individuals, NPOs performing the functions of a foreign agent

	2020	2021–2022	Dynamics (+/-)
Mass media*	2	37	+35
Physical persons*	5	117	+112
NPOs**	5	12	+7

* Source: Register of Foreign Mass Media Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent. Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. Available at: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7755/> (latest data are as of July 29, 2022).
 ** Source: Register of NPOs Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent. Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. Available at: <http://unro.minjust.ru/NKOForeignAgent.aspx> (latest data are as of August 12, 2022).

³⁷ Apukhtin Yu. Why the Russian elite is opposed to conducting the special operation. *Voennoye obozrenie*. August 3, 2022. Available at: <https://topwar.ru/199775-pochemu-rossijskaja-jelita-protivitsja-provedeniju-specoperacii.html>

³⁸ Pereslegin S. Strategies of the West and the sleeping ones. *Zavtra*. June 25, 2022. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/pereslegin_svo

Thus, the special military operation exposed an acute problem of post-Soviet society associated with a stable, long-term stay in power, in business, in the culture of specific people who share and cultivate (through their activities, their example, their biography, “success story”) a system of values that contradicts the image of the future of Russia and its goals to achieve full national sovereignty. In fact, their efforts were the process of moral

“decomposition”³⁹ of Russian society, which, in particular, is clearly demonstrated by the data of sociological research⁴⁰ (Tab. 6).

According to experts, the President and several people in his entourage, in fact, turned out to be the only “customers” of Russia’s movement toward gaining full national sovereignty; without the support of the “class of the large national bourgeoisie”. Part of today’s Russian ruling circles, formed during

Table 6. Dynamics of people’s attitudes toward various moral qualities, phenomena, actions for the period from 1996 to 2020*, % of respondents

Negative moral phenomena and actions	1996	2020	Dynamics (+/-) 2020 to 1996
Proportion of people to whom the following phenomena are not important			
Mutual assistance	13.6	21.9	+8
Tolerance, respect for the views and opinions of other people	11.9	19.4	+8
Decency	13.3	21.1	+8
Honesty, truthfulness	6.3	13.0	+7
Mutual assistance	7.1	13.8	+7
Proportion of people who consider the following phenomena acceptable and quite normal			
Laziness	22.3	42.6	+20
Desire to work less and earn more	36.1	49.1	+13
Arrogance, conceit	10.9	20.0	+9
Subservience, servility	9.0	15.7	+7
Disrespectful attitude toward a woman	5.6	11.4	+6
Proportion of people who do not feel remorse when committing such acts as...			
Unwittingly (or consciously) offending a person, rudeness	16.2	34.7	+19
Insufficient attention to parents (mother, father)	34.4	53.0	+19
Injustice you have committed under the pressure of circumstances or of your own free will	24.5	41.1	+17
An unfulfilled promise made to someone	25.3	39.9	+15
Bad attitude toward children (your own or those of others)	54.5	67.4	+13
* The table presents the answer options that show the most negative changes for the period from 1996 to 2020. For more detail, see: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. <i>Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast</i> , 15(3), 9–41.			
Wordings of the questions: “People evaluate different life phenomena in different ways. For some, one thing is important, for others – another... Which of the following is important to you and which is not?”; “Please, express your attitude toward the following phenomena ...”; “Have you ever experienced guilt, remorse in the cases listed below or not?”			
Source: data of the monitoring of the labor potential of the population of the Vologda Oblast, which has been carried out since 1996 once a year. The representativeness of the sociological data obtained is ensured by using a model of multi-stage zoned sampling with quota selection of observation units. The zoning structure includes two cities (Vologda and Cherepovets) and eight municipal districts with different levels of socio-economic development. The surveyed population is of working age – from 16 years old to retirement age (men – up to 59 years, women – up to 54 years inclusive; due to the increase in the retirement age from 2020 – 61 and 56 years respectively).			

³⁹ S. Shoigu’s speech at the panel discussion of the All-Russian Youth Educational Forum “Territory of Meanings” (August 2021). Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/shoigu_nazval_strashnejshuyu_ugrozu_dlya_rossii

⁴⁰ In this article we present the quintessence of the results obtained – the number of positive and negative changes in the dynamics of public opinion assessments for the period from 1996 to 2020. More detailed information is provided in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(3), 9–41.

the 30th anniversary preceding the special military operation, **does not want and is even unable** to carry out those complex transformations of public consciousness that today dictate the conditions of the civilizational conflict. Many representatives of elite circles continue to live “the old-fashioned way” in a hope that everything will return to normal.

“...who in Russia is capable of being a customer of the sovereignty strategy?.. **The main customer of the sovereignty strategy is Putin and several people in his entourage.** That is, it is a subjective factor. And there is no objective factor – the class of the large national bourgeoisie, which is determined to separate from the West...”⁴¹

The elite “not only has no worldview for the last decisive battle with the West. Its **whole system of long-term interests is protesting against something like this...** The system has been providing philistine well-being for decades, **and it cannot and does not want to do anything else**”⁴².

This, in particular, is indicated by such episodes as the story of the Russian athlete I. Kulyak, whom Russian officials banned from participating in national competitions after he publicly demonstrated his support for the Russian armed forces at the awarding of the World Cup in gymnastics⁴³; it is also proved by attempts to let various representatives of show business, who left the country after the start of the special operation, return to the mainstream media⁴⁴.

At a time when “entire ministries, entire industries, entire segments of the government are zombified with the idea that the West is the goal and that Russia is its periphery”⁴⁵, **it is necessary to organize a planned transition from the old elites to the new ones** that are capable and internally motivated to implement complex changes that correspond to the national interests of Russia and the majority of its citizens, as well as those with relevant life experience and practical skills acquired not in offices, but in the course of real management in production, culture, science...

“...this has been such a hypnosis for decades, that Russia is a hiccup, that it is necessary to focus on liberal values advocated by the West. This is a mass hypnosis that the West is the goal, Russia is its periphery... our entire education is based on this”⁴⁶.

At the same time, “planned transition” means the impossibility of a quick, revolutionary solution to the problem. According to experts, “the filth of the Time of Troubles cannot be eliminated by decree, with the stroke of a pen. This filth must be scraped off with steel scrapers. And it will not be possible to scrape it off everyone – for many it has become their essence. **So do not pretend that the current elites will easily readjust themselves. It does not work that way**”⁴⁷.

This should be a systematic work aimed at laying off those persons who do not fulfill the instructions of the President as the main “customer” of Russia’s achieving full national sovereignty, as well as to

⁴¹ Khaldey A. Transfer and the strategy of sovereignty: Customers and performers. *Zavtra*. July 29, 2022. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/transfer_i_strategiya_suvereniteta_zakazchiki_i_ispolniteli

⁴² Kurginyan S. In order not to fall into the abyss. *Sut’ vremeni*. June 30, 2022. Available at: <https://eot.su/node/23743>

⁴³ Soshenko A. Sports officials: Like goats chasing carrots. *Zavtra*. July 12, 2022. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/sportivnie_chinovniki_kak_kozli_za_morkovkoj

⁴⁴ For example, occasional appearances of Ivan Urgant at corporate events of Russian foundations and individuals; appearance of Aleksandr Vasiliev on the air of TV Channel One, etc.

⁴⁵ Dugin A. Elites have not yet realized that this situation will remain. *Radio Komsomolskaya pravda*. June 24, 2022. Available at: <https://radiokp.ru/podcast/dialogi/635161>

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Averyanov V.V. The battle for the renewal of the state is coming. Official website of the Izborsk Club. July 16, 2022. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/23090>

replace these people with those who have proven their dedication to the national interests of the country and their professionalism with real deeds.

Some of the measures taken by the head of state to implement such systematic work, to improve the spiritual and moral atmosphere in the ruling strata and society as a whole, are presented in *Insert 4* (we started monitoring them in the previous article⁴⁸).

Thus, the “test for stable development” that Russia is undergoing today in the context of a global civilizational conflict with the Collective West requires society to move toward overcoming the “internal Rubicon”, toward overcoming the long-term hypnotic influence of the liberal-capitalist development paradigm; comprehension, formulation and acceptance of one’s own system of spiritual and moral values corresponding to the traditional and already established contours of the image of the future of Russia, which are based on such concepts as “sovereignty”, “welfare state”, “social justice”, “traditional values”.

This primarily concerns the ruling, cultural, financial elites of the country, because, as experts note, “the most terrible challenge comes not from the West, or transnational networks, or the international finance, or megacorporations... **our main enemy is the low degree of awareness of the challenges facing civilization, as well as the inadequacy of a significant part of the still ruling elites to these challenges**”⁴⁹.

The national elite (not only the ruling class, but also figures of culture, art, science, business) should ultimately serve the national interests of the country, that is, the interests of the majority of its citizens, and not the interests of individuals, Western “curators” or even their own ones.

If we take into account that, according to scientists, from 50 to 75% of the economically active population of Russia belongs to the “precariat” – a “new phenomenon”, “a new class that has taken the place of the proletariat, formed from almost all strata of modern society” and consisting of people who “do not have a clear vision of their future, are not confident in the security of their lives and the guarantee of a quiet old age at the time of their retirement”⁵⁰, then it becomes quite obvious that **in order to overcome the “inner Rubicon” it is necessary to fill the contours of the image of the future (the ideas already formed in society about the desired vector of Russia’s development) with real content.** People should understand how they, their families, and children personally “fit” into this image of the future: what social guarantees they can really count on; what trajectories of professional and personal growth they can have, what opportunities they have so as to maintain and develop living standards, participate in the socio-political life of the country, etc.; they should feel that this future is not just desirable for them, but **understandable, predictable and really achievable** (at least in the perspective of future generations)...

“...for most Russians, it is still unclear what kind of society Russia is building. Common words – the welfare state, modernization – are not enough, because they are too abstract, similar to the all-encompassing promises inherent in almost every modern country... In other words, without programs that would serve as a powerful impetus for the elevation of a person, it is impossible to imagine the further development of the country. And the more of them there are, the fewer people will feel like the precariat, at least spiritually and morally”⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(3), 29–32.

⁴⁹ Averyanov V.V. The battle for the renewal of the state is coming. Official website of the Izborsk Club. July 16, 2022. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/23090>

⁵⁰ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2018). *Prekariat: ot protoklassa k novomu klassu: monografiya* [The Precariat: From the Proto-Class to a New Class: Monograph]. Moscow: Nauka. P. 270.

⁵¹ Ibidem. P. 269.

Monitoring the actions of federal state authorities to strengthen the internal foundations of national sovereignty⁵²

June 28, 2022 – The RF President signed Law 1101162-7 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation (in terms of determining the direction of the use of pension savings remaining after settlements with creditors of non-state pension funds)”. According to experts, “for those who are not aware of the situation, this event passed unnoticed, but professional economists saw in it a number of truly revolutionary and fateful changes ...” This innovation “financially blocks offshore companies and, at the same time, legal withdrawal of funds abroad, actually delegates to the government the determination of the current U.S. dollar exchange rate, grants the President extremely broad powers to ensuring the financial stability of Russia... The law took Nabiullina out of the game... In recent months, the President has developed a **managerial technique to leave team members on the ground and at the same time deprive them of their powers**... In fact, a “financial extraordinary commission” is being created, which will determine the rules of the financial game in the economy. Moreover, it is far from certain that it will include Nabiullina, Siluanov, Kudrin, but for sure – Mishustin, Belousov, Egorov⁵³.

June 29, 2022 – in Moscow, the heads of three metropolitan theaters were replaced: A. Yakovlev was appointed artistic director of the Gogol Theater (the former Gogol Center) instead of K. Serebrennikov; in the School of Modern Play, the place of J. Reichelhaus will be taken by D. Astrakhan; V. Ryzhakov was dismissed from Sovremennik, and the artistic policy of the theater will be determined by the artistic council. All three former leaders have repeatedly shown anti-Russian rhetoric (in their actions, statements, theatrical productions). According to experts, “**the cultural leadership of state institutions has finally decided to “take out the trash”**, which is quite a timely decision given the current circumstances... all the three theaters are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Culture of Moscow, and most of the theaters, while subordinate to this department, alas, enjoy notoriety among “traditional” viewers, because they are engaged in the most liberal and “free”, experimental art and resonant appointments to leadership positions, with rare exceptions. It turns out that an iron hand has reached out to this budget cluster as well⁵⁴.

June 30, 2022 – RANEPa rector V. Mau was arrested on charges of embezzlement of the Academy’s funds. As experts noted, this became “**a landmark event; a serious blow to the entire liberal-monetarist spectrum; another important step toward current Russia’s break up with the Yeltsin era**”. Currently V. Mau has been released on his own recognizance, but the investigation on his case continues.

July 8, 2022 – the RF President met with the leaders of the State Duma factions; at the meeting, “**the priorities in the socio-political field were sorted out**”⁵⁵. In an interview with deputies, Vladimir Putin “clearly outlined Russia’s priorities in a rapidly changing world in connection with the special operation in Ukraine”⁵⁶: “The policy of the parliament is based on the will of the people of Russia, our firm position and conviction that we are on the right side of history, on the unwavering resolve of the vast majority of the country’s citizens to uphold Russia’s sovereignty and to help our people in Donbass. This is what underlies the policy of our state in general”⁵⁷.

⁵² Insert 4 presents a continuation of the monitoring of management decisions of the authorities, which we started in the previous article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(3), 29–32.

⁵³ Economist Krichevsky: Putin has put Nabiullina on the sidelines. Available at: <https://sibkray.ru/news/2127/957162/>

⁵⁴ Borodina D. In three Moscow theaters, artistic directors with an anti-war and Russophobic position were dismissed. Available at: <https://readovka.news/news/103154>

⁵⁵ “There is nothing more important and higher than the fate of the Fatherland!”: The State Duma told about the meeting with the RF President. July 8, 2022. Available at: https://riafan.ru/23526656-_net_nichego_vazhnee_i_vishe_sud_bi_otechestva_v_gosdume_rasskazali_pro_vstrechu_s_prezidentom_rf

⁵⁶ And the unsinkable go down as well. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/i_nepotoplyaemie_tonut_arestovan_rektor_ranhigs_mau_podrobnosti

⁵⁷ Transcript of Vladimir Putin’s speech at a meeting with leaders of the Duma factions on July 8, 2022. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/68836>

July 11, 2022 – the Presidential Decree⁵⁸ introduced a simplified procedure for obtaining Russian citizenship for all residents of Ukraine. Experts assessed this measure as “**a serious political step...** toward the denazification of Ukraine by radically separating it from the previous political regime”⁵⁹; “having adopted this decision, he [the President] shows that he considers the whole of Ukraine as a Russian people who have the right to be part of Russia if they want. Apparently, it can also be regarded as a kind of **counter-response to the actions undertaken by the West**”⁶⁰.

July 14, 2022 – the RF President signed Federal Law 255 “On control over the activities of persons under foreign influence”, according to which “a foreign agent may not carry out educational activities in relation to minors and pedagogical activities in state and municipal educational organizations”⁶¹. The law “is not so much about political dissenters, as in general about disloyal citizens, officials and businesspersons”⁶². According to experts, this is “a kind of code on foreign agents... **Its essence is the placement of all categories of foreign agents in the unified register of the Ministry of Justice, the unification of various prohibitions and restrictions**”⁶³.

July 15, 2022 – following the results of an extraordinary meeting of the State Duma, personnel changes took place in the public administration system: Minister of Industry and Trade D. Manturov became Deputy Prime Minister. Deputy Prime Minister Yu. Borisov, who was responsible for the defense industry, resigned from his position and headed Roscosmos, replacing D. Rogozin in this post. Experts assessed these appointments as “the first serious reshuffle after February 24”⁶⁴.

July 18, 2022 – Draft Law 165975-8 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation regarding the prohibition of information promoting non-traditional sexual relations” was submitted to the State Duma. The draft law provides for a ban on the dissemination of information that denies family values and promotes non-traditional sexual relations; in particular, it is proposed not to issue film distribution certificate to films with the above content. As pointed out in the explanatory note to the draft law, “the denial of the family as a social value, the promotion of the so-called “childfree” lifestyle (without children) and the popularization of non-traditional sexual relations **are no less dangerous for the development of Russian society than... propaganda of suicide, drugs, extremism, criminal behavior**”⁶⁵.

July 31, 2022 – the Naval Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Naval Charter of the Russian Navy have been approved. According to experts, these documents “meet the dictates of the time”⁶⁶; “Russia is showing the whole world that it will defend itself by all available means”⁶⁷. **For the first time, the main threats to Russia’s national security include “the strategic course of the United States to dominate the oceans and their global influence on the development of international processes”**. Also, the main threats include the promotion of NATO infrastructure to the Russian borders, Russia’s dependence on maritime transportation and the functioning of offshore pipeline systems; international sanctions against shipbuilding enterprises of the industrial complex and oil and gas companies, etc.

⁵⁸ On amendments to Presidential Decree 183, dated April 24, 2019 “On the definition for humanitarian purposes of categories of persons entitled to apply for the citizenship of the Russian Federation under a simplified procedure: Presidential Decree 440, dated July 11, 2022; On certain categories of foreign citizens and stateless persons entitled to apply for the citizenship of the Russian Federation under a simplified procedure: Presidential Decree 187, dated April 29, 2019.

⁵⁹ Opinion of O. Agapov, advisor to the rector for strategic initiatives of Kazan Innovative University (source: <https://www.tatar-inform.ru/news/eksperty-ukaz-putina-ob-uproshhennom-grazdanstve-dast-zashhitu-ukraincam-ot-kietskoi-xunty-5873887>).

⁶⁰ Opinion of political scientist I. Grashchenkov (source: Why Putin invited all Ukrainians to become citizens of Russia. July 11, 2022. Available at: <https://sevastopol.su/news/pochemu-putin-priglasil-vseh-ukraincev-stat-grazhdanami-rossii>).

⁶¹ On the control of the activities of persons under foreign influence: Federal Law 255-FZ, dated July 14, 2022. *Rossiyskaya gazeta*. July 19, 2022. Available at: <https://rg.ru/documents/2022/07/19/document-inoagent.html>

⁶² Rodin I. Draconian laws will be applied not only to the opposition. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. June 28, 2022.

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ Cherkasov B. Personnel challenge: Why the Duma interrupted its holidays for the appointment of Denis Manturov. July 15, 2022. Available at: https://www.forbes.ru/mneniya/471739-kadrovjy-vyzov-pocemu-radi-naznachenia-denisa-manturova-duma-prerval-a-kanikuly?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop

⁶⁵ Explanatory note to the draft law. Legislative support system. Available at: <https://sozd.duma.gov.ru/download/2D204B07-B68D-4F90-BF3C-1D82B1FB47BA>

⁶⁶ V. Dandykin (military expert) (source: Russia’s Naval Doctrine is a response to U.S. ambitions in the Arctic. *Vzglyad*. July 31, 2022. Available at: <https://vz.ru/news/2022/7/31/1170278.html>)

⁶⁷ Hero of the Russian Federation Rear Admiral I. Kozlov (source: Ibidem).

The activity of the head of state in this direction testifies to his awareness of this task (or even mission). However, as Academician S.Yu. Glazyev notes, “the emergence of a new management system, and this is primarily the relationship between people, **cannot but be combined with a new system of ideas, views and principles**”⁶⁹. Therefore, the complex contradiction between the objective need to overcome the boundaries of the existing liberal-capitalist paradigm and the inability of the Russian elites to implement this step is a task that cannot be solved by personnel reshuffles and high-profile arrests alone.

This requires an ideology – based on public interests, a reflexive and formulated understanding of the “Russian idea”, which Vladimir Putin spoke about back in 1999⁷⁰; **understanding the image of the state, which by and large we have only begun to build after the events of February 2022.**

“Ideology is:

- ✓ the logical and psychological **behavioral basis of the political management system;**
- ✓ **a system** of views and ideas, political programs and slogans, philosophical concepts in which **people’s attitudes toward reality and toward each other are realized and evaluated, which express the interests of various social classes, groups, societies;**
- ✓ **a set of principles, norms and rules** that define, establish and regulate relations within the sphere of social production and consumption”⁷¹.

* * *

As we know, history is cyclical, and Russia has repeatedly been in a situation where, in the face of external threats, it was necessary to implement rapid and complex changes in the training of personnel of a new formation corresponding to the prevailing historical period, providing the necessary changes in the management system and economic life.

Here is an example. On May 4, 1935, while addressing the graduates of military academies in the Kremlin Palace, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Joseph Stalin delivered a speech, the quintessence of which, one might say, became historical, since the cadres trained by the Bolshevik Party ensured that the Soviet Union managed not only to survive, but also to defeat fascist Germany, which was a direct threat to the existence of the country.

“The question that confronted us was: EITHER we solve this problem in the shortest possible time and consolidate socialism in our country, OR we do not solve it, in which case our country – weak technically and unenlightened in the cultural sense – **will lose its independence and become a stake in the game of the imperialist powers...**

It is time to realize that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and most decisive is people, cadres. It must be realized that under our present conditions ‘cadres decide everything’”⁷².

⁶⁹ Glazyev S.Yu. Russia is fighting for the preservation of humanity. Official website of S. Glazyev. June 17, 2022. Available at: <https://glazev.ru/articles/153-geopolitika/104465-rossija-vojuet-za-sokhranenie-chelovechestva>

⁷⁰ Putin V.V. Russia at the turn of the Millennium. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. January 30, 1999. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millennium.html

⁷¹ Mochar K.Yu. (2019). Ideology as a creative force of society. In: *Istoriya i sovremennost'* [History and Modernity]. Issue 4(34). Available at: <https://www.socionauki.ru/journal/articles/2433435/>

⁷² Joseph Stalin’s speech before the graduates of military academies on May 4, 1935. Online Library Dslov.ru. Available at: <https://dslov.ru/txt/t10.htm>

In 2017, in the article “Significance of the thesis ‘Cadres decide everything’ as applied to modern Russia”⁷³ we drew attention to the importance of personnel policy for the implementation of Russia’s national development goals, which are stalled due to the fact that the personnel did not ensure timely and complete fulfillment of the RF President’s instructions. To this end, we published the full text of Stalin’s speech, focusing on the most important points.

In the five years that have passed since then, Russian President Vladimir Putin has made many key and system-forming steps toward strengthening Russian statehood: the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the National Security Strategy have changed, new people have appeared in

the government (including the chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers), the possibilities of negative influence of foreign agents receiving funding from abroad (including from countries that are unfriendly toward Russia) were virtually leveled out, and much more.

However, after February 24, 2022, when Russia, in fact, opened a new page in its history and when the question of the possibility of its sovereign future acquired a new level of urgency, the task of improving the effectiveness of personnel policy became even more important than five years ago.

Only cadres are capable and must ensure that our country achieves full and therefore spiritual, military, economic, political, territorial national sovereignty.

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⁷³ Ilyin V.A. (2017). Significance of the thesis “Cadres decide everything” as applied to modern Russia. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 10(3), 9–31.

Information about the Authors

Vladimir A. Ilyin – RAS Corresponding Member, Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor, Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, scientific director, Vologda Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences (56A, Gorky Street, Vologda, 160014, Russian Federation; e-mail: ilin@vscc.ac.ru)

Mikhail V. Morev – Candidate of Sciences (Economics), Leading Researcher, deputy head of department, Vologda Research Center, Russian Academy of Sciences (56A, Gorky Street, Vologda, 160014, Russian Federation; e-mail: 379post@mail.ru)