

FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR

Dynamics of the RF President's activities approval by the region's population



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August 14, 2012 marked the first one hundred days of the third Vladimir Putin's presidency in Russia. Hundred days report has become a tradition in the world as a landmark date when some results of top-ranking politician's activity are summed up.

Most experts are of a unanimous opinion that "the third advent" of Putin took place in the conditions when domestic and foreign-policy situation in Russia cardinally differed from its position during two previous terms of Putin's presidency¹. He faces a range of new challenges, the main of which is a need to change and select a new scenario of our country's development.

The first hundred days of the third Vladimir Putin's presidency are characterized, on the one hand, by the clear priorities of medium-term national development perspective, and, on the other hand, by the increased reliance on the national-oriented elite (D.O. Rogozin was appointed to the post of Vice-Premier in charge of military-industrial complex; S.Yu. Glazyev was appointed to the post of Presidential Adviser responsible for coordinating work on developing Eurasian integration; V.V. Medinskiy was nominated as the Minister of Culture and I.R. Kholmanskikh became the Presidential Envoy in the Urals Federal District).

There is a rule in the expert and the scientific community around the world to assess the efficiency of government activity, including the authorities of higher rank, through sociological measurements that allow experts to identify the share of people who approve (or do not approve) the authorities' work. In this case, as a rule, data collection is carried out simultaneously by some factors which are the main powers that influence the results of measurements.

¹ The differential characteristics of the current socio-economic situation in the country were described in detail, for example, in the following work: Glazyev S., Ivanter V. Makarov V., Nekipelov A., Tatarkin A., Greenberg, R., Fetisov G., Tsvetkov V., Batchikov S., Ershov M., Mityayev D., Petrov Yu. On the strategy of Russia's economic development. Economics of contemporary Russia. 2011. No. 3. It is necessary to note that the situation in the country during the third V.V. Putin's presidency and his previous presidential terms is characterized in the article by many Russian political scientists and such well-known writers as N. Starikov, A. Prokhanov.

ISEDT RAS has been using these basic approaches for assessing presidential activity in opinion polls since 1996². The Institute has accumulated the comprehensive materials covering the period from 1996 till 2012. The database accumulated over 16 years is actually unique: as far as we know, other academic institutions in the regions of the country do not have the similar system databases.

The figures attached present graphs that show the degree of the RF President's activity approval by the Vologda Oblast's population in 1996 – 2012.

Figure 1 shows that the degree of approval of the President B.N. Yeltsin's activity dropped multiply below the figures that were permissible for the Head of the state by the end of 1999. Therefore, his voluntary resignation and entrusting the duties of the President, according to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, to Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin were immediately approved by the majority of population. In March 2000, most people, who took part in the Presidential election, voted for Vladimir V. Putin as the President of the Russian Federation.

Social tension reduced in Russian society during **the first term of V.V. Putin's presidency** (from early 2000 to April, 2004). There was a negative mean power correlation

² The polls are held six times a year in Vologda, Cherepovets, and in eight districts of the region (Babayevsky District, Velikoustyugsky District, Vozhegodsky District, Gryazovetsky District, Kirillovsky District, Nikolsky District, Tarnogsky District, Sheksninsky District). The method of the survey is a questionnaire poll by place of residence of respondents. The volume of a sample population is 1500 people aged from 18 and older. The sample is purposeful and quoted. Representativeness of the sample is ensured by the observance of the proportions between the urban and rural populations, the proportions between the inhabitants of settlements of various types (rural communities, small and medium-sized city), age and sex structure of the adult population of the region. Sampling error does not exceed 3%.

dependence³ between the level of approval and the share of people with low "patience reserves". The share of positive characteristics of the RF President's activity increased significantly in the category of 20% the most prosperous people in the Oblast (by 13 percentage points, up to 82%, *fig. 3.*), as well as among young people (aged from 18 to 30) and middle-aged population (30 - 55 years) (by 11 percentage points, *fig. 4.*)

In general, the population made special mention of Putin's successful work in solving key problems of the country against the background of the previous Head of the state Boris Yeltsin's failed results.

The second presidential term of Vladimir V. Putin was marked by the increase in support for his work. The share of positive assessments increased from 67 to 82% in April 2008 as compared with June 2004.

The share of people, who identified themselves with the "poor" and "extremely poor", reduced from 53 down to 43%; the share of people with low "patience reserves" decreased (from 19 down to 14%). The average income was higher than the cost of living by more than a third.

Social tension continued to reduce in the society in that period (*fig. 2.1 – 2.3*). And besides, the decline in the share of people with low "patience reserves" and the share of the "poor" and "extremely poor" was directly related to the increase in the level of the RF President approval (there was a strong negative correlation dependence, $R = -0,7$).

³ Correlation dependence is a statistical relationship between two or more random variables. In this case, variation in the value of one variable is accompanied by the systematic changes in the values of other variables. It is measured by the correlation coefficient R (the Pearson correlation coefficient). The sign of the correlation coefficient R indicates the direction of relationship (direct - in the case when R is positive and inverse if it is negative), the value of R determines the strength of correlation (weak at $R < 0,3$; mean if R varies from 0.3 to 0.5; strong if R is more than 0.5).

The level of approval increased significantly in the category of 20% poorest people in the Oblast (by 23 percentage points, up to 80%), it became closer to the indicators for the groups of well-off people and people with middle-sized incomes (by 83%, see fig. 3). The positive assessments of the President’s activity continued to increase among middle-aged and elderly persons and people with low “patience reserves” (fig. 4, 5).

In general, the share of people, who assessed V. Putin’s work as positive, increased during two terms of his presidency (from 63 up to 82%, or 1.3-fold). Population assessments became more correlated with the real activity of the RF President and his domestic and foreign policies. His international activity was recognized as successful.

The degree of the President’s activity approval reduced in **the period of Dmitriy A. Medvedev’s presidency** (May 2008 – April 2012): the share of people who approved it decreased from 71 to 50%.

In the period from June 2008 to April 2012 there was a decline in the share of people who recognized D. Medvedev’s activity as successful in such important areas as: foreign policy (from 55 down to 43%); establishment of order in the country (from 50 down to 35%); defense of democracy and citizen rights protection (from 40 down to 27%); economic development and improvement of population’s financial condition (from 40 down to 29%, fig. 6 – 9).

Thus, a significant decrease in Dmitriy Medvedev’s popularity in his presidential term was caused by not only the consequences of the global economic crisis, but the growth of unresolved economic and political problems in the country.

Vladimir V. Putin’s authority, political experience and his practical actions during **the first hundred days in the third presidency** has already led to positive changes in population’s assessments.

According to the recent ISED T RAS sociological measuring (table 1 – 3) in June 2012,

Table 1. Estimation of power activity (How do you assess the current activity of..?)

Vertical power structure	Approval in % to the total number of respondents								Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to 8 months 2008	Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to June 2012
	8 mnth. 2008	Aug. 2011	Oct. 2011	Dec. 2011	Feb. 2012	Apr. 2012	June 2012	Aug. 2012		
The President of the RF	75.0	62.1	56.6	51.7	47.3	50.3	54.5*	53.7*	0.72	0.99
The Chairman of the Government of the RF	76.4	60.4	59.1	52.9	52.6	51.7	49.5**	48.5**	0.63	0.98
The Governor of the Vologda Oblast	57.8	49.5	47.7	41.9***	37.7***	37.7***	44.7***	45.3***	0.78	1.01

Vertical power structure	Disapproval in % to the total number of respondents								Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to 8 months 2008	Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to June 2012
	8 mnth. 2008	Aug. 2011	Oct. 2011	Dec. 2011	Feb. 2012	Apr. 2012	June 2012	Aug. 2012		
The President of the RF	9.3	19.7	29.0	35.7	35.7	33.3	28.9*	31.1*	3.34	1.08
The Chairman of the Government of the RF	10.4	21.4	24.7	32.7	32.0	33.1	31.5**	34.5**	3.32	1.10
The Governor of the Vologda Oblast	19.9	24.4	32.1	36.1***	33.8***	32.6***	31.8***	32.7***	1.64	1.03

* Data for June - August 2012 - the beginning of V.V. Putin’s presidency
 ** Data for June - August 2012 – D.A. Medvedev’s activity as the Prime Minister of Russia
 *** Data from December 2011 relate to the activities of the Vologda Oblast Governor O. A. Kuvshinnikov

Table 2. What party expresses your interests?

Party	In % to the total number of respondents								Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to 8 months 2008		Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to June 2012	
	8 mnth. 2008	Aug. 2011	Oct. 2011	Dec. 2011	Feb. 2012	Apr. 2012	June 2012	Aug. 2012				
United Russia	40.5	33.7	29.8	26.1	26.0	28.3	31.9	31.4	0.78		0.98	
KPRF	6.8	10.0	12.1	13.4	10.1	11.4	10.0	9.5		1.40	0.95	
LDPR	7.7	7.5	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.5	7.7	6.7	0.87		0.87	
A Just Russia	5.0	2.7	5.6	13.9	10.2	8.2	4.6	5.6		1.18		1.22
Other	1.4	2.4	3.1	4.6	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.3		1.36	0.82	
No party	20.1	28.9	28.1	23.9	25.7	28.6	31.5	33.2		1.65		1.05
It's difficult to answer	13.7	14.8	12.2	9.0	15.8	10.8	11.6	11.1	0.81		0.96	

Table 3. Estimation of social condition

In % to the total number of respondents								Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to 8 months 2008		Dynamics indices, Aug. 2012 to June 2012	
8 mnth. 2008	Aug. 2011	Oct. 2011	Dec. 2011	Feb. 2012	Apr. 2012	June 2012	Aug. 2012				
What would you say about your mood in the last days?											
Usual condition, good mood											
70.2	66.7	64.7	64.2	62.9	63.4	69.0	71.3		1.02		1.03
Feeling stress, anger, fear, depression											
22.1	24.1	29.4	30.2	33.5	30.2	23.4	23.3		1.05		1.00
What statement, in your opinion, suits the current occasion best of all?											
Everything is not so bad; it's difficult to live, but it's possible to stand it											
81.0	73.2	73.9	78.6	74.9	76.5	77.3	73.2	0.90		0.95	
It's impossible to bear such plight											
10.9	11.3	15.8	14.1	18.1	16.8	13.6	17.0		1.56		1.25
Consumer Sentiment Index											
107.5	92.9	88.5	85.6	89.8	90.1	93.4	92.3	0.86		0.99	
What category do you belong to?											
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor											
39.8	40.8	44.6	41.9	43.2	43.6	45.0	44.2		1.11	0.98	
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income											
50.7	46.2	41.8	42.2	44.9	46.5	45.3	43.4	0.86		0.96	

the share of respondents in the Vologda Oblast, who approve the President's activity, has increased by 4.2 percentage points, and the share of people, who do not approve the President, has reduced by 4.4 percentage points. There was also a positive dynamics in people's assessments of their social status. However, according to the August survey, the indicators (approval/disapproval of the President's activity, social status) declined slightly.

It appears that one of the significant factors decreasing the values of a number of indicators on the August survey is a fact that during his first hundred days of presidency Vladimir V. Putin did not clearly define the structure of promised real steps to change the current system of social injustice that had formed in the country over the past 20 years (side effect of the 1990s privatization, flat rate of taxes, inadequate luxury tax, declaring of state officials' incomes

and other acute problems). *The priorities of oligarchic clans, corrupt elites and bureaucracy still remain the basis of this system.*

People expect Vladimir Putin's real actions to bring the current economic and political systems to the requirements of the social state, whose policy is aimed at creating conditions for worthy life and free development of an individual, in accordance with Art. 7 of the RF Constitution.

The problems of forming the basic conditions for the transition of RF governmental system to the standards of social state that are settled in the leading European countries were considered in a number of works⁴.

There were informative publications on this subject in our Journal⁵. These articles deal with

⁴ See, for example: Gubanov S. System choice of Russia and living standards. *Economist*. 2011. No. 11; Ivanova L. On the strategy of neo-industrial modernization. *Economist*. 2012. No. 2; Mikulskiy K. Modernization of the Russian economy: the need and the opportunity. *Society and Economy*. 2011. No. 11 – 12; Senchagov V. Objectives, priorities and risks of financial system modernization in Russia. *Federalism*. 2012. No. 2, etc.

⁵ Makarov V.L. Historical examples of various methods for recovery from crisis. *Economic and social changes: facts, trends, forecast*. 2011. No. 1 (13); Greenberg R.S. The contours of the global world: denoting future. *Ibid.*; Ivanter V.V. On the problems of Russia's way out of the economic crisis. *Ibid.*; Petrakov N.Ya. Forward to the monograph "Problems of Market Economy Development". *Ibid.* 2011. No. 2 (14); Ilyin V.A. The influence of the metallurgical corporation owners' interests on the national and regional development. *Ibid.* 2011. No.3 (15). P. 14 – 38; Povarova A.I. The influence of the metallurgical corporation owners' interests on the financial performance of the head enterprise (the case of OJSC Severstal). *Ibid.* 2011. No.5 (17). P. 36 – 51; Tatarkin A.I., Lavrikova Yu.G. Programmed project modernization of the federative structure in Russia. *Ibid.* 2011. № 6 (19). The articles of the following authors were published in the latest issues of our journal: Glazyev S. Yu. Why is Putin. *Economic and social changes: facts, trends, forecast*. 2012. No. 2 (20); Yakunin V.I. Post-industrialism: the experience of critical analysis. *Ibid.*; Collapse of the global pyramid. Interview with RAS Academician S. Yu. Glazyev. *Ibid.* 2012. No. 3 (21); Tatarkin A.I. Development of the economic space of Russia's regions on the basis of cluster principals. *Ibid.*

the real actions that are recommended by national-oriented experts to the President of the RF to ensure the stable and sustainable development of our country.

This issue contains the text of academic report by Academician S.Yu. Glazyev and Professor V.V. Lokosov at the meeting of RAS Presidium that deals with the assessment of the critical threshold values of the indicators of the state of Russian society and their use in the socio-economic development management.

The authors, carrying out a more detailed analysis of the situation, based on the system of indicators reflecting the fundamental social and economic processes, proves that Russian society and economy are on the verge of breakdown.

In scientists' opinion, *“wide-scale export of capital, having reached for the 2 decades the astronomical value of \$ 1 trillion; brain drain that is also devastating for the economy and society; the loss of the most part of scientific, industrial and human potential are the consequences of unsatisfactory performance of market self-organization mechanisms and state regulation institutions. Actual self-estrangement of the ruling elite from the society and depriving the overwhelming majority of citizens of exercisable rights to participate in management processes impede the feedbacks between the society and the state. The latter conforms to the oligarchic interests and becomes a tool of receiving the administrative markup by a corrupt bureaucracy, protected from liability to the society thanks to the existing political system”*⁶.

⁶ Glazyev S.Yu., Lokosov V.V. Assessment of the critical threshold values of the indicators of the state of Russian society and their use in the socio-economic development management. *Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Sciences*. 2012. Vol. 82. No. 7. P. 600. (*Note: The text was set in bold by editors.*)

Dynamics of the RF President's activity approval by the region's population

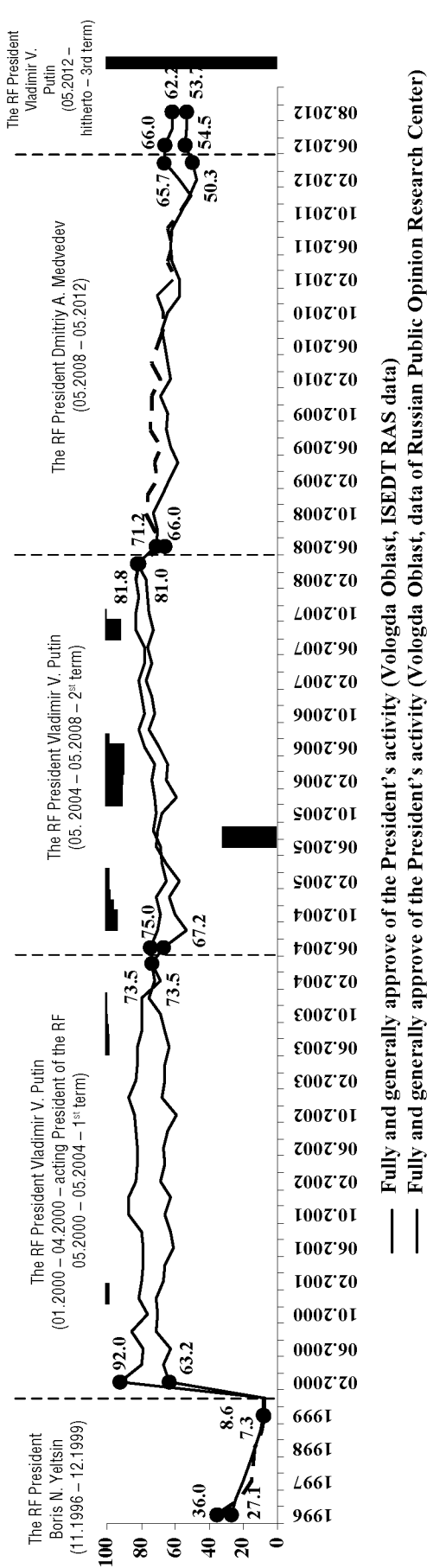


Fig. 1. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval (in % to the total number of respondents)

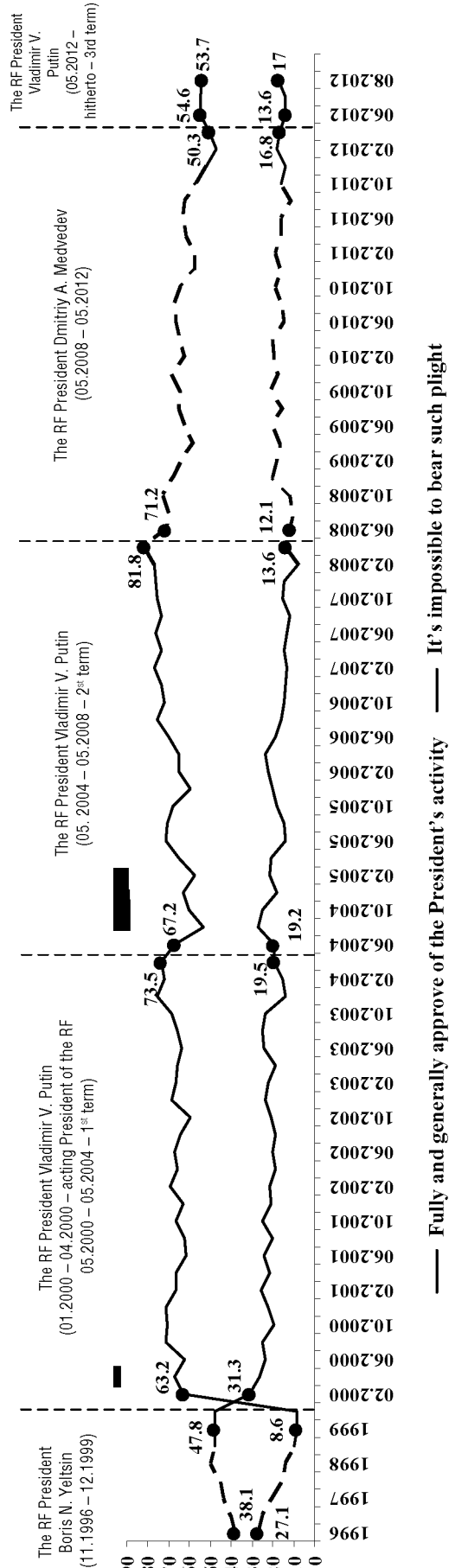


Fig. 2. 1. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval and the share of the Vologda Oblast's population with low patience reserves (in % to the total number of respondents)

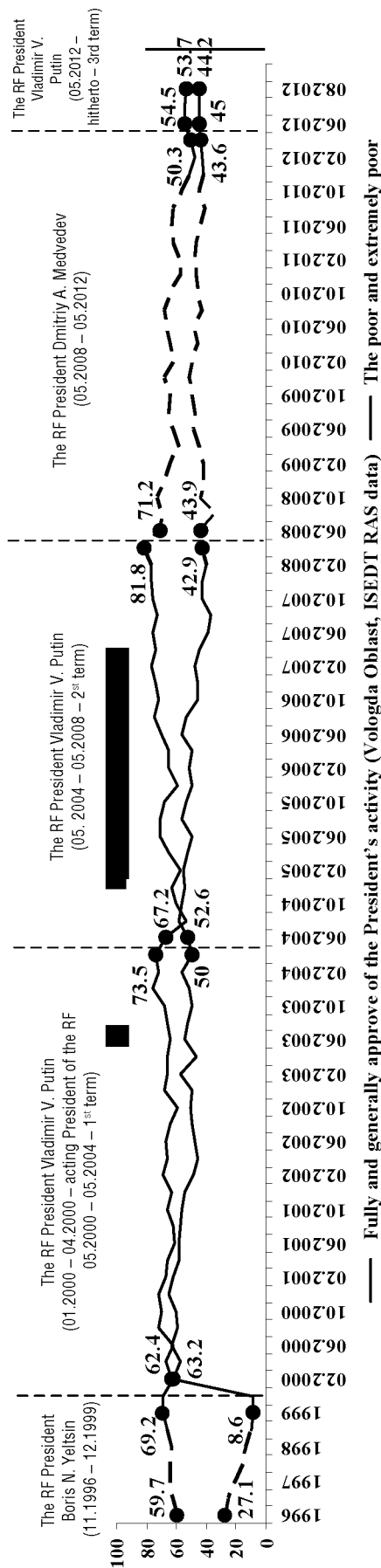


Fig. 2.2. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval and the share of "the poor and extremely poor" (according to people's self-assessment) in the Vologda Oblast (in % to the total number of respondents)

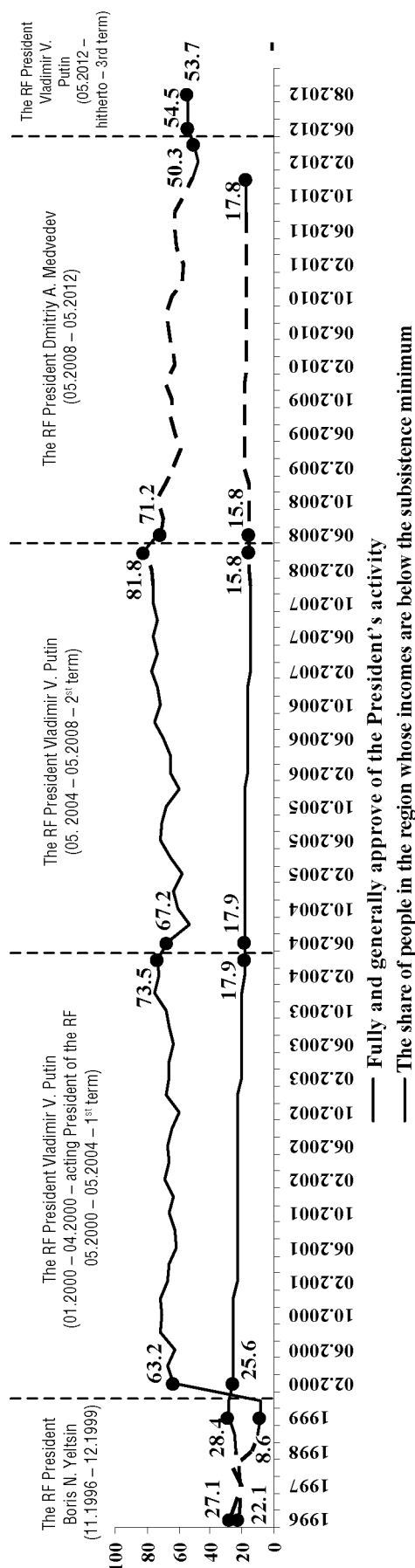


Fig. 2.3. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval (in % to the total number of respondents) and the share of people in the region whose incomes are below the subsistence minimum (according to the data of State Statistics; in % to the total population)

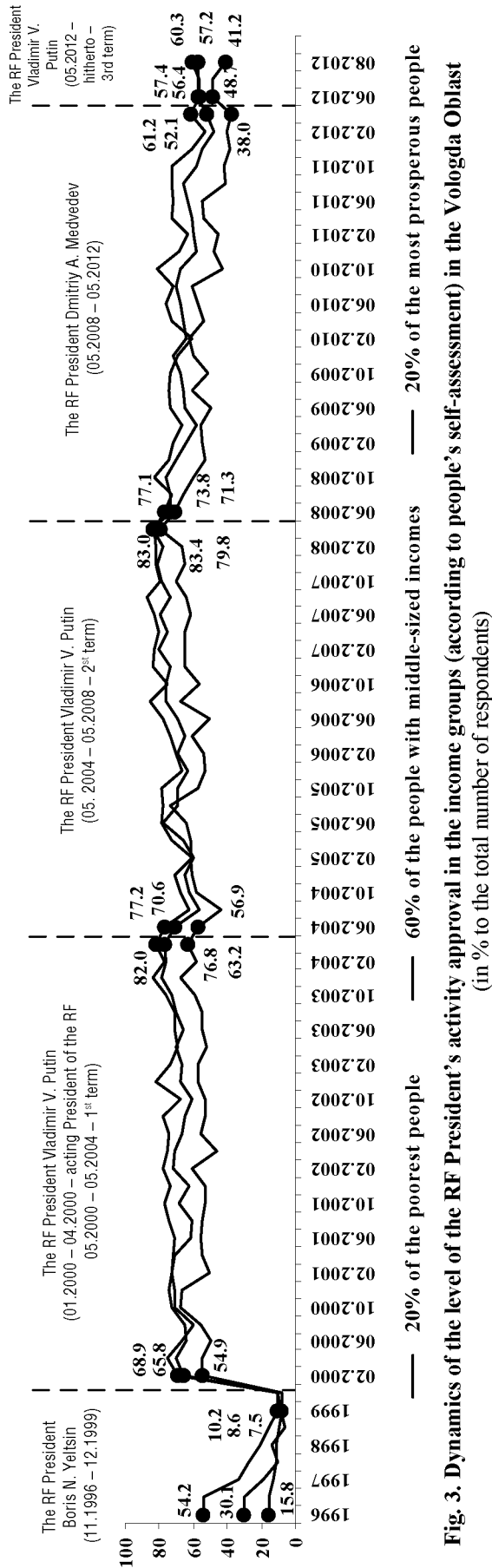


Fig. 3. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval in the income groups (according to people's self-assessment) in the Vologda Oblast (in % to the total number of respondents)

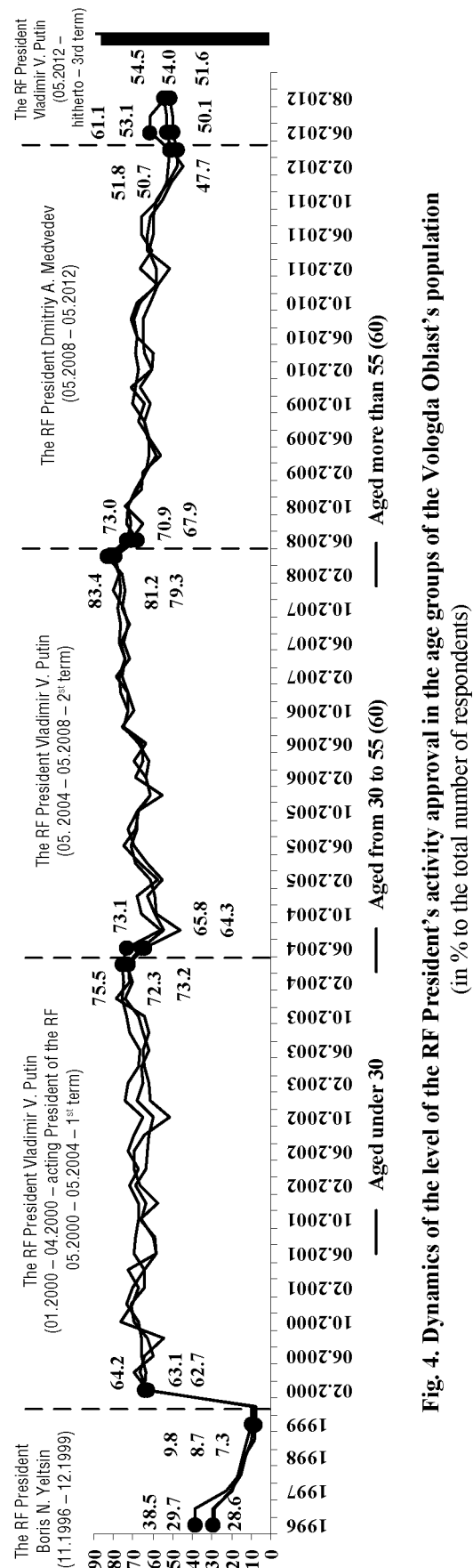


Fig. 4. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval in the age groups of the Vologda Oblast's population (in % to the total number of respondents)

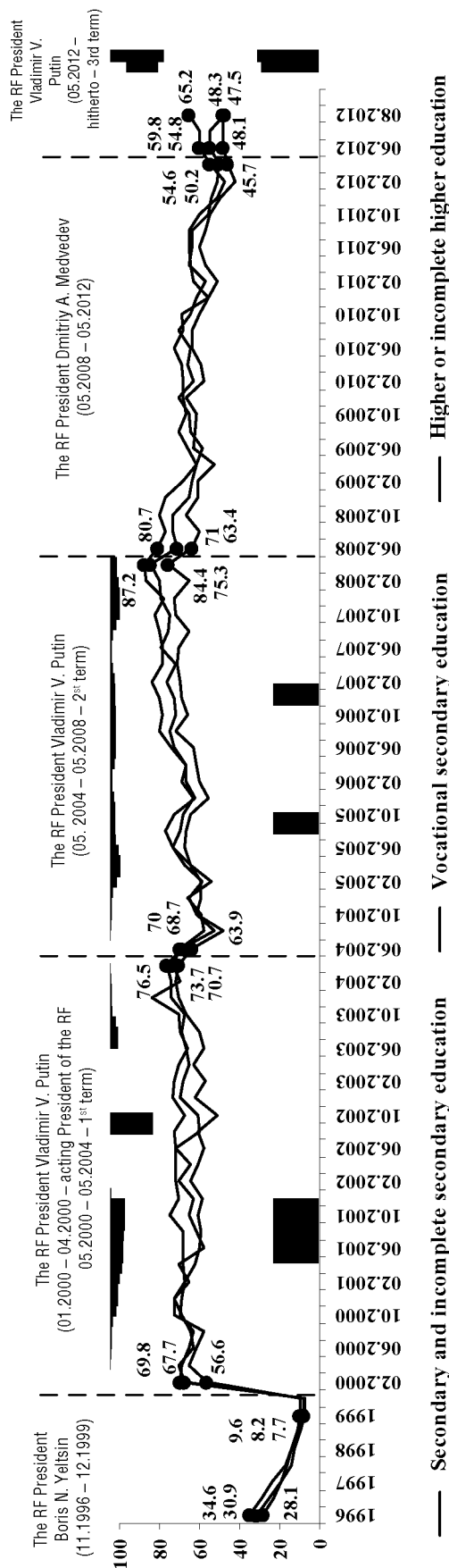


Fig. 5. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval in the educational groups of the Vologda Oblast's population (in % to the total number of respondents)

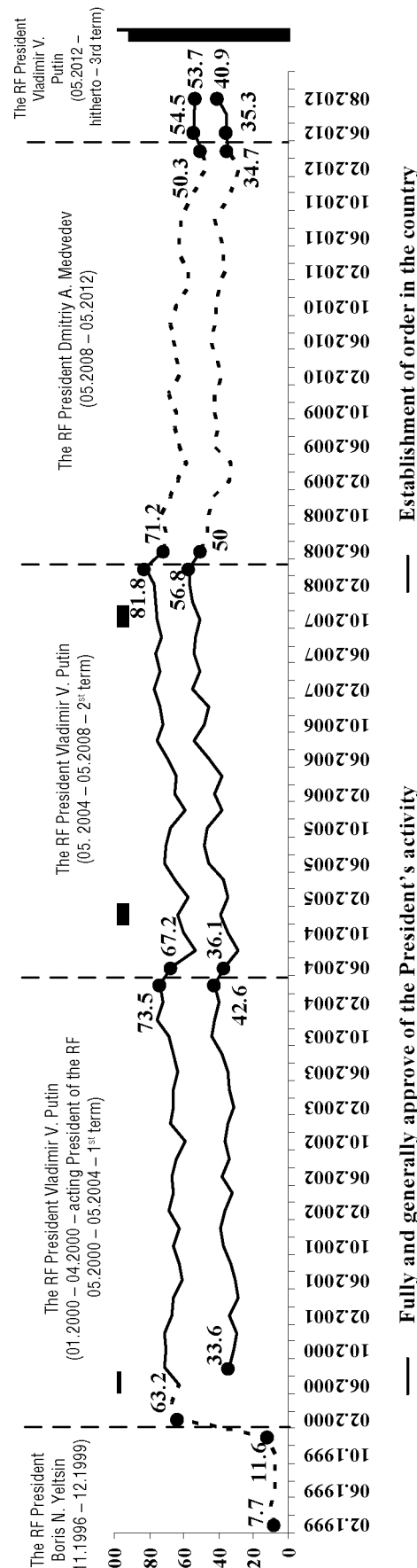


Fig. 6. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval and positive assessments of his work in establishing order in the country by the Vologda Oblast's population (in % to the total number of respondents)

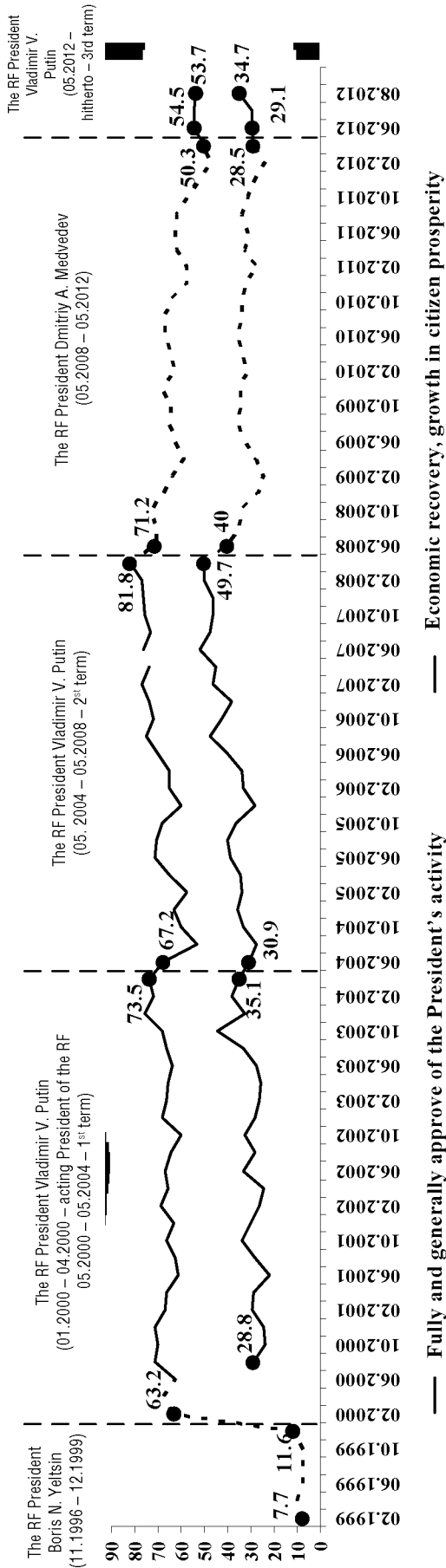


Fig. 7. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval and positive assessments of his work in solving the problems of economic recovery and growing citizen prosperity by the Vologda Oblast's population (in % to the total number of respondents; the question has been asked since 2000)

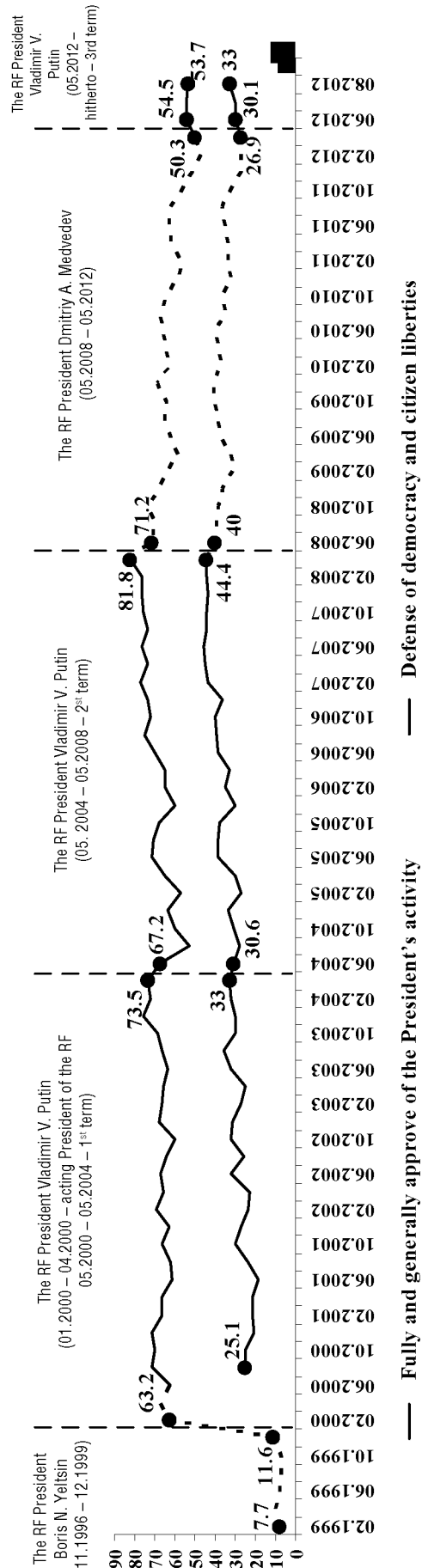


Fig. 8. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval and positive assessments of his work in defending democracy and citizen liberties by the Vologda Oblast's population (in % to the total number of respondents; the question has been asked since 2000)

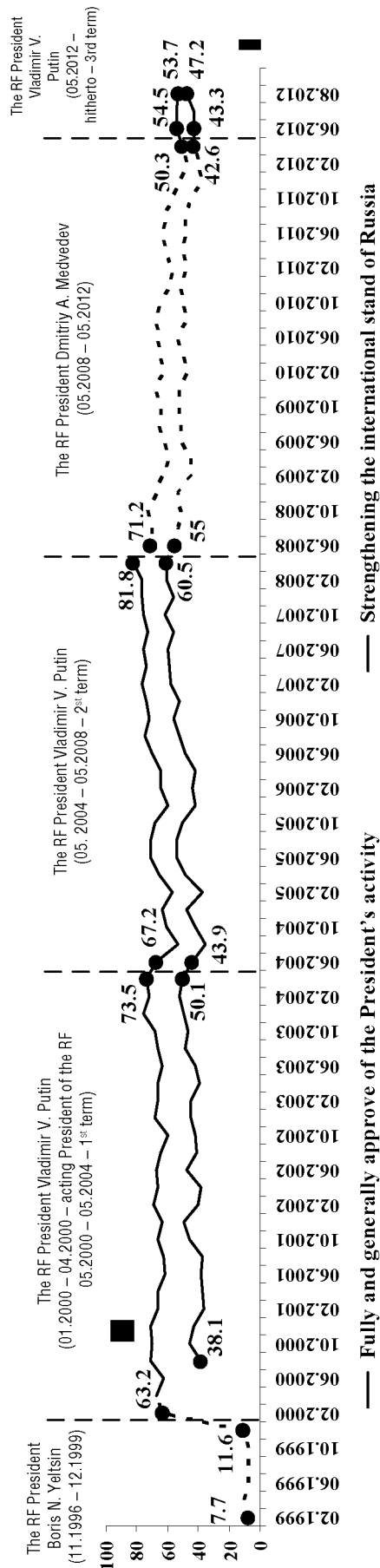


Fig. 9. Dynamics of the level of the RF President's activity approval and positive assessments of his work in strengthening the international stand of Russia by the Vologda Oblast's population (in % to the total number of respondents; the question has been asked since 2000)

The first ten articles according to the frequency of their viewing for the recent 12 months (September 2011 — August 2012)

Rating	Article	Total time of reading for the recent 12 months, minutes	Total time of reading, whole period, minutes	Number of views for the whole period	Number of views for the recent 12 months	Number of views for the recent 3 months	Average time of viewing for the whole accounting period, minutes	Issue	Release date	Authors
1	Modernization of the Russian economy as the imperative of the country's prospective innovative development	5060	5060	179	179	22	28	No.16	August 2011	Kondakov Igor Anatolyevich
2	Threats to the region's economic security and the ways to overcome them	1921	2474	133	96	7	19	No.14	April 2011	Uskova Tamara Vitaliyevna Kondakov Igor Anatolyevich
3	Fiscal federalism and inter-budget relations in the Russian Federation	1907	2534	184	134	14	14	No.13	March 2011	Avetisyan Ishkhan Artashovich
4	The post-crisis economic development and prospects of innovation activity in the Tomsk Oblast	1209	1209	42	42	3	29	No.15	June 2011	Myakota Ekaterina Aleksandrovna Vorobyov Aleksandr Grigoryevich Pufilov Aleksandr Valentinovich Zhiganov Aleksandr Nikolayevich
5	Methodology of the comparative estimation of the scientific and technical potential of the region	1101	2908	163	73	5	18	No.12	December 2010	Zadumkin Konstantin Alekseyevich Kondakov Igor Anatolyevich
6	Agriculture on the European North: All-Russian agricultural census results	1035	2032	131	80	1	16	No.11	September 2010	Ivanov Valentin Aleksandrovich Ivanova Elena Valentinovna
7	Demographic problems of the Republic of Belarus and their solutions	725	725	50	50	16	14	No.16	August 2011	Shakhotko Lyudmila Petrovna
8	Intellectual resources as the factor of the innovational development	677	3153	161	42	7	20	No.11	September 2010	Ilyin Vladimir Aleksandrovich Gulin Konstantin Anatolyevich Uskova Tamara Vitaliyevna
9	Investment process in the region: the new century – old problems	641	1207	78	36	3	15	No.11	September 2010	Gubanova Elena Sergeevna Vorontsova Tatyana Vladimirovna
10	Programmed project modernization of the federative structure in Russia	621	621	22	22	2	28	No.18	December 2011	Tatarkin Aleksandr Ivanovich Lavrikova Yuliya Georgievna

* Account of the site's viewing has been carried out since 2009, December, 12.