Documentation of Data Collection

Western Sanctions in the Perception of the Russian Population (Public Opinion Polls by the Levada Center)

Random-sample questionnaire-based nationally representative polls conducted as omnibus surveys 2014-22

The Levada Center has been conducting omnibus surveys of the Russian population on a regular basis. This data collection includes questions about the attitude towards Western sanctions against Russia (enacted after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the full-scale war against Ukraine in 2022) together with standard socio-demographic and political data about all respondents. It contains the raw data from a total of 30 opinion polls conducted from March 2014 to May 2022.

This documentation of data collection documents the questions included in the dataset and provides information about the random-sample questionnaire-based nationally representative polls conducted as omnibus surveys. The original data file is in Russian, but this documentation lists all questions and answer options with an English translation.

Included in this data collection are the relevant questions from the Levada omnibus surveys copied into one file. The SPSS file (.sav) is the original files provided by the Levada Center. It has been exported into an Excel file. The content of the respective xlsx-file should be identical with the original sav-file.

The data presented in this dataset have been compiled by the Levada Center. The dataset has been provided to the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen for open access publication (non-commercial use) on the DiscussData-platform.

Questions included

The design of the surveys is described below.

The dataset contains the following questions

- SA1 Do the political and economic sanctions by Western countries against Russia worry you? 1= very much, 2= considerably, 3= not much, 4= not at all, 9= hard to say

    In the Russian original: БЕСПОКОИТ ЛИ ВАС ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ И ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ САНКЦИИ СТРАН ЗАПАДА В ОТНОШЕНИИ РОССИИ? 1= Очень беспокоят, 2= Довольно беспокоят, 3= Не слишком беспокоят, 4= Совершенно не беспокоят, 9= Затрудняюсь ответить

- SA2 Are you worried by the personal sanctions against major Russian businesspeople/billionaires (blocking bank accounts, freezing property abroad)? 1= very much, 2= considerably, 3= not much, 4= not at all, 8= don't know anything about this, 9= hard to say

    In the Russian original: БЕСПОКОЯТ ЛИ ВАС ПЕРСОНАЛЬНЫЕ САНКЦИИ ПРОТИВ КРУПНЫХ РОССИЙСКИХ БИЗНЕСМЕНОВ/МИЛЛИАРДЕРОВ (БЛОКИРОВКА ИХ СЧЕТОВ, АРЕСТ ИХ ИМУЩЕСТВА ЗА РУБЕЖОМ)? 1= Очень беспокоят, 2= Довольно беспокоят, 3= Не слишком беспокоят, 4= Совершенно не беспокоят, 8= Ничего об этом не знаю, 9= Затрудняюсь ответить

- SA3 Did the sanctions create problems for you and your family? 1= yes, very serious ones, 2= yes, rather serious ones, 3= no serious problems, 4= no problems at all, 9= hard to say

In the Russian original: СОЗДАЛИ ЛИ ЭТИ САНКЦИИ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ДЛЯ ВАС И ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬИ? 1= Да, очень серьезные, 2= Да, довольно серьезные, 3= Нет, не создали серьезных проблем, 4= Нет, не создали никаких проблем, 9= Затрудняюсь ответить

- SA4 What do you think is the primary aim of Western countries when they tighten the sanctions against Russia? 1= to end the war, destruction and death of people in Eastern Ukraine, 2= to restore the geopolitical balance which has been disturbed by the incorporation of Crimea, 3= to weaken and humiliate Russia, 9= hard to say

  In the Russian original: КАК ВЫ ДУМАЕТЕ, К ЧЕМУ ПРЕЖДЕ ВСЕГО СТРЕМЯТСЯ СТРАНЫ ЗАПАДА, УЖЕСТОЧАЯ САНКЦИИ ПРОТИВ РОССИИ? 1= Остановить войну, разрушения и гибель людей на Востоке Украины, 2= Восстановить геополитическое равновесие, нарушенное присоединением Крыма к России, 3= Ослабить и унизить Россию, 9= Затрудняюсь ответить

- SA5 How should Russia – in your opinion – react to the sanctions by Western countries? 1= continue its policies, ignoring the sanctions, 2= search for a compromise, make concessions in order to leave the sanctions regime, 9= hard to say

  In the Russian original: КАК, ПО ВАШЕМУ МНЕНИЮ, ДОЛЖНА ДЕЙСТВОВАТЬ РОССИЯ В ОТВЕТ НА САНКЦИИ СТРАН ЗАПАДА? 1= продолжать свою политику, невзирая на санкции, 2= искать компромисс, идти на уступки, чтобы уйти из-под санкций, 9= Затрудняюсь ответить

- SA6 What do you think, who is really affected by the current Western sanctions? 1= only a small circle of people, who are responsible for Russia's policy towards Ukraine, 2= large parts of the Russian population, 9= hard to say

  In the Russian original: КАК ВЫ СЧИТАЕТЕ, КОГО РЕАЛЬНО ЗАТРАГИВАЮТ НЫНЕШНИЕ САНКЦИИ СТРАН ЗАПАДА? 1= Только узкий круг людей, отвечающих за российскую политику в отношении Украины, 2= Широкие слои населения России, 9= Затрудняюсь ответить

- SA7 In your opinion, how dangerous are the US economic sanctions for Russia? 0= no answer, 1= very dangerous, 2= dangerous, but not very much, 3= no big danger

  In the Russian original: НАСКОЛЬКО, НА ВАШ ВЗГЛЯД, ОПАСНЫ ДЛЯ РОССИИ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ САНКЦИИ США ПРОТИВ РОССИИ? 0= Нет ответа, 1= Это очень опасно, 2= Это опасно, но не очень, 3= Нет большой опасности

- SA8 What do you think, will the European Union prolong sanctions against Russia this summer? 1=definitely yes, 2=rather yes, 3=rather no, 4=definitely no, 9=hard to say

  In the Russian original: КАК ВЫ СЧИТАЕТЕ, ПРОДЛИТ ЛИ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЙ СОЮЗ ЛЕТОМ ЭТОГО ГОДА САНКЦИИ ПРОТИВ РОССИИ? 1=оопределенно да, 2=скорее да, 3=скорее нет, 4=определенно нет, 9=затрудняюсь ответить

- SA9 What do you think, how much of an impact have the current Western sanctions had on the Russian economy? 1= Western sanctions have led to a significant worsening of the economic situation in Russia, 2= Western sanctions have led to an insignificant worsening of the economic situation in Russia, 3= Western sanctions do not have an impact on the economic situation in Russia, 9=hard to say

In the Russian original: КАК ВЫ СЧИТАЕТЕ, В КАКОЙ МЕРЕ НЫНЕШНИЕ САНКЦИИ ЗАПАДА ПОВЛИЯЛИ НА РОССИЙСКУЮ ЭКОНОМИКУ? 1= Санкции Запада привели к значительному ухудшению экономической ситуации в России, 2= Санкции Запада привели к незначительному ухудшению экономической ситуации в России, 3= Санкции Запада не имеют влияния на ситуацию в российской экономике, 9=затрудняюсь ответить

- S10 In reaction to Western sanctions Russia has decided to introduce counter-sanctions against the West. In your opinion, for whom will these sanctions cause big losses? 1= Russian counter-sanctions cause losses first of all for the West, 2= Russian counter-sanctions cause losses first of all for Russia itself, 3= = Russian counter-sanctions cause losses for both sides to the same degree, 9=hard to say

  In the Russian original: В ОТВЕТ НА САНКЦИИ ЗАПАДА РОССИЯ РЕШИЛА ВВЕСТИ ОТВЕТНЫЕ САНКЦИИ ПО ОТНОШЕНИЮ К ЗАПАДУ. КОМУ, ПО ВАШЕМУ МНЕНИЮ, ЭТИ САНКЦИИ НАНОСЯТ БОЛЬШИЙ УЩЕРБ? 1= Ответные санкции России наносят ущерб по большей мере Западу, 2= Ответные санкции России наносят ущерб по большей мере самой России, 3= Ответные санкции России наносят ущерб в равной степени обеим сторонам, 9=затрудняюсь ответить

In addition, the dataset includes standard social-demographic and political data for all respondents:

- place of living – region/oblast (qOBL - the full list of answer options is available in the SPSS file),

- gender (SD1 with 1=male, 2=female),

- age (SD2 indicates age in years, S2_AGE gives age groups: 1=18-24, 2=25-39, 3=40-54, 4=55+),

- education (SD3 with 1= higher, 2= professional, 3= other),

- voting EITHER in the most recent national presidential elections (SD4: "Did you vote in the most recent presidential election?" with 1=yes, 2=no, 9=no answer / SD4a-c lists the specific voting options with Putin as option 5 (in 4b) or 4 (in 4c), 4a not used – the full list of answer options is available in the SPSS file)

  OR in the most recent national parliamentary elections (SD5: "Did you vote at the national parliamentary election?" with 1=yes, 2=no, 9=no answer / SD5a-d "Which party did you vote for in the last elections?" with the pro-Putin party United Russia as option 6 (in 5b), 4 (in 5c) or 5 (in 5d), 5a not used – the full list of answer options is available in the SPSS file),

- type of profession (SD6 with 1= independent entrepreneur, 2= team leader, 3= specialist without leadership functions (with special education), 4= employee without special education, 5= worker (including master, group leader), also in agriculture, 6= army, ministry of the interior, public prosecution, 7= pupil, student, 8= pensioner (non-working), 9= housewife, 10= unemployed, 99=answer rejected),

- marital status (SD8 with 1= married, 2= not registered, but living together, 3= widow(er), 4= divorced, 5= living separately, but not divorced, 6= single (never married), 7= not registered, living separately, 9=answer rejected),

- number of people living together with respondent (SD9: How many people live together with you, yourself and all children included? / SD10A: How many children up to 16 years old live together with you in your family?), SD10B: up to 18 years, SD10C: up to 17 years),

- material situation of the own family (SD11 with 1=We hardly manage. Money is not even enough for food products, 2=We have enough money for food products, but buying clothes causes financial problems, 3=We have enough money for food and clothes, but the purchase

of durable household goods (e.g. TV, fridge) causes problems, 4=We can buy durable household goods without problems, 5=We can afford expensive things like a flat and a datcha, 9=answer rejected),

- place of living - mega-region/federalny okrug (qFO with 1=Northwestern, 2=Central, 3=Southern+North Caucasus, 4=Volga, 5=Ural, 6=Siberia, 7=Far Eastern),

- place of living - number of inhabitants (qRNP with 1=Moscow, 2= over 500,000, 3=from 100,000 to 500,000, 4= city of up to 100,000, 5=village).

In total four variables describe the survey: The variables MONTH and year in the dataset refer to the time the respective survey has been conducted. The variable opros gives the name of the respective poll as explained below. The variable qID is the identification number of the respective respondent.

If any of the questions included in this data collection has not been asked in the respective survey, the data file shows missing values. That means a missing value always indicates that the respective question has not been asked.

This dataset includes all "Courier" omnibus surveys in which at least one of the sanctions-related questions SA1-10 has been included. In the data file the publication date for each survey is indicated in the form YYYYcurNO (e.g., 2014cur04 for survey No. 4 of 2014, which was conducted in March 2014).

This dataset includes the following surveys:

• 2014cur04 (with question SA1 only),	• 2015cur14 (SA4)
• 2014cur05 (SA1)	• 2015cur16 (SA5)
• 2014cur06 (SA1+6)	• 2016cur08 (SA5+8)
• 2014cur07 (SA6)	• 2016cur09 (SA6)
• 2014cur08 (SA1+6)	• 2016cur11 (SA5+9)
• 2014cur10 (SA1+6)	• 2017cur01 (SA5)
• 2014cur11 (SA4+5)	• 2017cur06 (SA3+9-10)
• 2014cur12 (SA3)	• 2017cur07 (SA5+8)
• 2014cur16 (SA1+3-6)	• 2017cur15 (SA1+7)
• 2015cur01 (SA3+5)	• 2018cur05 (SA1+3)
• 2015cur02 (SA3+5+9-10)	• 2018cur12 (SA1)
• 2015cur05 (SA5+8)	• 2020cur02 (SA1+3)
• 2015cur08 (SA3-5)	• 2021cur13 (SA1+6)
• 2015cur09 (SA1+9-10)	• 2022cur03 (SA1+3+6)
• 2015cur11 (SA3+5)	• 2022cur05 (SA1-5)

The Levada-Center

The Levada-Center (https://www.levada.ru/en/about-us/) began to take shape in 1987 as All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) of the Soviet Union. It conducted its first country-wide representative opinion poll in 1988.

In August 2003, the Ministry of Property Relations of the Russian Federation adopted a decision to change the status of the Center, resulting in a change of the Center's management. The research team rejected the changes and left the organisation to create a new independent pollster called "Analytical Service Polls" VTsIOM-A". However, usage of the new name was forbidden by court order, so the organization continued to operate under the name "Yuri Levada Analytical Center" (Levada-Center).

Opinion polls conducted by the Levada Center follow the principles of WAPOR (World Association for Public Opinion) and ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and Market Research). Senior staff of the Center have been trained in the USA and Western Europe.

The omnibus surveys of the Levada-Center

The Levada Center holds monthly omnibus surveys. The omnibus survey is based on the nationwide, multi-stage, stratified and probability sample that represents the adult population of Russia over 18 years of age. For the "Courier" Survey the number of respondents amounts to 1,600; for the "Monitoring" Surveys the respective number was 2,500. The statistical error of both surveys does not exceed 3.4%.

The omnibus survey covers the entire adult population of Russia excluding the following categories:

a) persons doing their military service by conscription (around 0.8% of the total adult population)

b) persons under imprisonment before trial or already convicted (around 0.6% of the total adult population);

c) persons living in remote or difficult to access regions of Far North (around 1.8% of the total adult population);

d) persons residing in rural settlements with not more than 50 inhabitants (around 0.8% of the total adult population);

e) persons with mental illnesses constantly living in psycho-neurological hospitals (about 1.2% of the total adult population).

Additionally, homeless people are also not included in the sample (about 1.5% of the total adult population). Consequently, around 6.7% of Russia's total adult population are excluded from this survey.

The omnibus survey is conducted in the form of face-to-face interviews at the home of respondents. Usually, the questionnaire comprises 80-100 questions, including the demographic section.

Sample Design

At the first stage, urban settlements and rural administrative districts are selected as primary sampling units (PSUs). The nationwide sample (N = 1,600) is divided among:

- 8 large geographical macro regions (Federal Okrugs) – North-West, Central, Volga, South, North Caucasus, Ural, Siberia, Far East — proportionate to the size of the local population aged 18+ of each macro region, in addition to Moscow as a macro region and self-representative stratum.

- 5 types of settlements in each of the macro regions in proportion to the size of the local population aged 18+ of each type:

  cities > 1,000,000 inhabitants;

  cities 500,000 – 1,000,000 inhabitants;

cities 100,000 – 500,000 inhabitants;

urban settlements < 100,000 inhabitants;

rural administrative districts.

In the North-West region there are no cities with 500,000 – 1,000,000 inhabitants, in the Far East region and in the North Caucasus there are no cities with more than 1,000,000 inhabitants, and Moscow is considered as a separate stratum. As a result, the total number of strata is 38 (Table 1).

Table1. Distribution of adult (18+) population and sample among macro regions and settlement types

	Geographical macro region (Federal Okrug)	rural administrative districts		urban settlements < 100K inhabitants		cities 100K-500K inhabitants		cities 500K-1'000K inhabitants		cities > 1'000K inhabitants		Totals	
		%	interviews	%	interviews	%	interviews	%	interviews	%	interviews	%	interviews
1	North-West	1,52	24	2,41	39	1,99	32			3,77	60	9,69	155
2	Central	4,93	79	5,71	91	6,29	101	1,17	19	0,75	12	18,85	302
3	Volga	5,66	91	4,46	71	2,59	41	3,44	55	4,04	65	20,19	323
4	South	4,16	67	2,08	33	2,53	40	0,97	16	1,52	24	11,26	180
9	North Caucasus	2,99	48	1,16	19	1,56	25	0,38	6			6,09	98
5	Ural	1,51	24	2,47	40	1,90	30	0,50	8	1,84	29	8,22	131
6	Siberia	2,91	47	2,74	44	1,21	20	2,02	32	2,70	43	11,58	186
7	Far East	1,40	22	1,54	25	1,58	26	0,87	14			5,39	87
8	Moscow									8,73	140	8,73	140
TOTAL		25,08	402	22,57	362	19,65	315	9,35	150	23,35	373	100,00	1 602

Selection of primary sampling units (PSUs):

All cities with over 1,000,000 inhabitants are included in the sample as self-representative units. The number of interviews in each of these cities is determined in proportion to its size in the adult population of the Russian Federation.

Other urban settlements and rural districts are considered as primary sample units (PSUs). In each stratum (except a stratum of cities over 1,000,000 inhabitants) the number of PSUs is calculated with an average of at least 10 interviews per PSU (but not more than 12), and the PSUs are selected with the probability proportional to the size (PPS) method as well. The total numbers of interviews calculated for a stratum are distributed approximately equally among selected PSUs.

In total, 137 PSUs are selected including 97 urban and 40 rural PSUs (Table 2).

The sample includes:

- 15 cities over 1,000,000 inhabitants;
- 15 cities with 500,000 – 1,000,000;
- 31 cities with 100,000 – 500,000;
- 36 urban settlements less than 100,000;
- 40 rural administrative districts.

Table2. Distribution of adult (18+) population and number of PSUs among macro regions and settlement types

Geographical macro region (Federal Okrug)		rural administrative districts		urban settlements < 100K inhabitants		cities 100K-500K inhabitants		cities 500K-1'000K inhabitants		cities > 1'000K inhabitants		Totals	
		%	PSUs	%	PSUs	%	PSUs	%	PSUs	%	PSUs	%	PSUs
1	North-West	1,52	2	2,41	4	1,99	3			3,77	1	9,69	10
2	Central	4,93	8	5,71	9	6,29	10	1,17	2	0,75	1	18,85	30
3	Volga	5,66	9	4,46	7	2,59	4	3,44	5	4,04	5	20,19	30
4	South	4,16	7	2,08	3	2,53	4	0,97	1	1,52	2	11,26	17
9	North Caucasus	2,99	4	1,16	2	1,56	2	0,38	1			6,09	9
5	Ural	1,51	2	2,47	4	1,90	3	0,50	1	1,84	2	8,22	12
6	Siberia	2,91	5	2,74	4	1,21	2	2,02	3	2,70	3	11,58	17
7	Far East	1,40	3	1,54	3	1,58	3	0,87	2			5,39	11
8	Moscow									8,73	1	8,73	1
TOTAL		25,08	40	22,57	36	19,65	31	9,35	15	23,35	15	100,00	137

At the second stage, the secondary sampling units (SSUs) are selected from the lists of electoral districts (blocks, streets) in urban settlements and villages in rural districts. The number of surveyed SSUs is defined by 5-12 interviews per SSU; 14 SSUs are selected in Moscow, 6 SSUs in St. Petersburg. Overall, about 163 SSUs are selected.

At the third stage, the households are selected by a random route method. From this route lists interviewers approach each 7th household in blocks with multi-storey apartment buildings and each 3th household in blocks with individual houses.

At the fourth stage, one household member is selected based on the question whose birthdays is closest to the interview date. Once a person has been selected as respondent in a particular household, this person may not be substituted with another person of the same household.

Soft quotas (sex and age) are used only at this last stage (i.e., the selection of a respondent in a household). They are applied after 75% of the sample is collected and when the deviations resulting from the "next birthday method" are +/- 15%. Quotas for the selection of respondents are used to increase accessibility of some problem groups (e.g., younger persons, males) and to decrease some groups that often are oversampled,for example, women over 55 years of age.

If nobody is at home or the selected member of a household is absent, an interviewer is required to visit this household again. In order to reach those who work late hours and those who leave for the weekends, interviewers are required to visit households at different times of the day and at different days of the week.

The stages of the selection process are based on the following data:

- Russian Federal State Statistics Service: Population Census 2010 (gender/age/education distribution);
- Federal State Statistic Service: Resident population of the Russian Federation by municipalities on January 1, 2018 (rural/urban population, gender/age distribution);
- Lists of electoral districts (blocks/streets in urban settlements or villages in rural districts) with located buildings in each of sampled settlements.