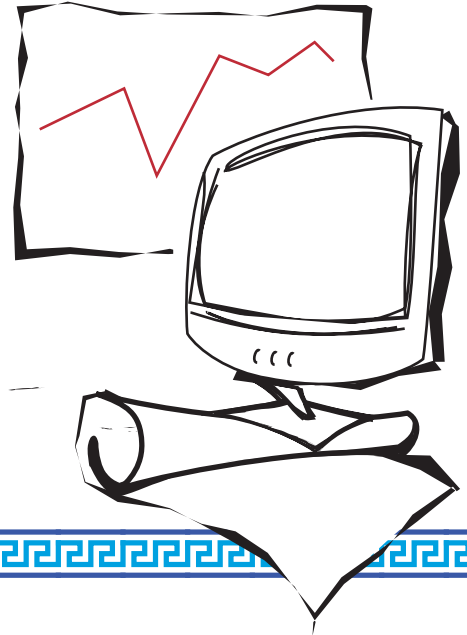


Sophist



Information Bulletin

News

On May 26 – 31, 2003, an annual congress of the International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST) was held in Ottawa, Canada. The Russian Sociological Data Archive was introduced at the session called "The Leading Role of Archives in Social Sciences". The abstract of presentation is available at: http://www.socpol.ru/archives/doc/archive_report.doc.

This spring, the Archive's collection of research data was significantly replenished. Seventeen more databases, including VCIOM surveys for 2002 and early 2003, IKSI surveys for 2000, 2001 and 2002, as well as a number of case studies are now available at: <http://sofist.socpol.ru/oprosy.asp>.

In August 2003, special software was developed that allows to calculating frequencies at our website online. You can now get a frequencies table for any question of the surveys stored in the Archive at: <http://sofist.socpol.ru/lin.asp>.

In November 2003, the Russian Sociological Data Archive is planning to hold a seminar on the use of Archive's data for research and education purposes. You can find more information at <http://www.socpol.ru/archives/conference.shtml>.

In November 2003, an annual congress of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) will take place in Toronto, Canada. The Russian Sociological Data Archive will be presented at a special session "The Russian Sociological Data Archive as a New Tool for Research and Education". For more detail please visit: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aaass>.

Foreign Social Science Data Archives

We start a new section that would be devoted to the most well-know, foreign social science data archives and archival institutions. We would like to begin with the most recent network that encompassed new archives of Eastern Europe, including the

Russian Sociological Data Archive. The following report was presented by Brigitte Hausstein, a research officer of GESIS (Berlin) / Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung an der Universität zu Köln August 2003 (hausstein@berlin.iz-soz.de)

Through the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA, <http://www.cessda.org>) and the International Federation of Data Organizations for the Social Sciences (IFDO, <http://www.ifdo.org/>) there has been intensive cooperation between the West European data archives for many years. At the same time, there has also been a considerable growth in empirically-oriented academic social research in the states of Eastern Europe, and a very large number of market and opinion research institutes have come into being. A remarkable expansion in social, economic and political data gathering has been witnessed. In order to make these data systematically available for secondary analysis and to secure the free flow of data social science data archives have been created in Eastern European countries in last years. There are data archives in Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Romania, Russia and Czech Republic and in Slovakia, Bulgaria, Poland and Ukraine archiving activities are underway.

In 2001 the GESIS (German Social Science Infrastructure Services) Service Agency initiated the project "Social Science Data Archives in Eastern Europe – Results, Potentials and Prospects of the Archival Development" which was funded by the UNESCO's MOST Programme. It was aimed at providing a forum both to exchange experience of how establish a data archive and to evaluate the potential for the establishment of data archives in Eastern European countries with-out a developed data infrastructure. Main result of the project was the creation of the East European Data Archive Network (EDAN).

EDAN is not intended to replace or substitute the already existing networks IFDO and CESSDA. It acts as an informal network designed to unite data archives which are at an early stage of their existence and share common problems as well as to make sure that the ... See p.2

Where there is a national Data Archive, this process is so much more straightforward than trying to order data directly from government, academic or commercial data providers. I have recently received data from the Russian Sociological Data Archive for researchers in Oxford – and I have found the service to be very quick, friendly and efficient. Data that monitors the changes in Russian society in recent years is clearly of enormous interest and we are very pleased that this data has become so easily available, thanks to the Russian Sociological Data Archive.

Jane Roberts
Oxford University

The Russian Sociological Data Archive provides new opportunities for teaching social disciplines. Being a storage of studies and surveys conducted by leading sociological agencies and providing free access to data, the archive is a unique source for resolving methodological issues. It gives a remarkable chance to both students and teachers to get in touch with the results of real field investigations, evaluate and compare the tools and test various methods of data processing. I believe that this chance would be greatly appreciated by all institutions of higher education where social disciplines are taught.

A. Kryshchanovskiy
Dean of the Sociology Department at the Higher School of Economics

Eastern European data archives will catch up with the advanced western data archives. For those archives, which were not formal members of CESSDA the EDAN serves as a good organizational framework to coordinate efforts for setting up the archive. The GESIS Service Agency/Central Archive (GESIS/ZA) as the German member of EDAN serves as the coordinator of all activities concerning the network. 18 data archives/archive initiatives have already joined EDAN.

In September 2002 the first EDAN Training Seminar was held in Bucharest, Romania. Organized by the Romanian Data Archive (RODA) and GESIS/ZA it was aimed at the introduction of the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI). To support this seminar and to make sure that the experts are available for both events CESSDA decided to hold its annual expert seminar in Bucharest as well. The participants from Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovenia, Romania and Czech Republic were informed about the ongoing developments in the area of metadata production. Besides background information the seminar offered also hands-on-computer sessions. This seminar was a great success

and it encouraged most of the participants to introduce elements of the DDI in the meta data production of their archives. EDAN members agreed to continue these training seminars to explore special questions concerning DDI. Furthermore it is planned to intensify the cooperation within EDAN to promote the use of common meta data standards for the management of data and to set up "Good Practice" in the field of data archiving.

To foster the dissemination of news concerning data archives in Eastern Europe GESIS/ZA has been maintaining a mailing list since 2001. It is a moderated mailing list intended for a highly interested audience. The contributors to the news list reciprocally inform on their activities, new projects and initiatives in the field of data archiving. Information on promotional opportunities, grants, guest scientists, foreign exchanges (plans and reports), networks, project planning, employment opportunities etc. are also disseminated.

For more information see: http://www.gesis.org/en/cooperation/data_service/eastern_europe/index.htm-Membership

Public opinion on the reforms

The use of the term "economic reforms" in questionnaires for public opinion polls is sometimes criticized by researchers. There is no doubt that respondents being no experts on the matter are unlikely to adequately analyze and understand the meaning, the object or the aftermath of economic reforms. Nevertheless, the concept of the "attitude towards economic reforms" can be used as an integral indicator of general adaptation to the situation and as such produce good results. There is a significant correlation between the distribution of answers for the question on adaptation of citizens to the current conditions and their level of support to reforms.

The level of support to reforms is unstable. It sags when everyday conditions of respondents worsen, and rebounds when the conditions stabilize. Fig.1 presents results of a survey conducted by VCIOM. Over the past five years the level of support to reforms has been hovering between 25 percent and 40 percent. The lowest level of support was registered after the crisis of August 1998. The stabilization took over a year, and it was not until the year 2000 that the corresponding indicators bounced back to the pre-crisis level.

Not all respondents have retained their attitude towards reforms. According to the results of a survey conducted by the IKSI, nearly a quarter of those who have now distinctly negative feelings towards the reforms, favored them in 1991. Those who opposed reforms in 1991 have not changed their attitude so much: only 5 percent of those who are now staunch defenders of reforms, opposed them in the past; and about 10 percent of those who believe that reforms have more advantages than disadvantages, repudiated reforms 12 years ago (Fig.2).

What is the reason for these changes in the attitude? Figures 3 and 4 display the results of the IKSI survey. The respondents were asked to name their most significant losses and gains during the years of reforms, both at the personal level and with regard to the Russian society as a whole. Among the most significant personal losses were a sag in the living standards, a loss of security and confidence in the future. On the other hand, an opportunity to earn money without restrictions and no more deficits of goods proved to be the most significant personal gains.

In your opinion, should the market reforms be continued or stopped?

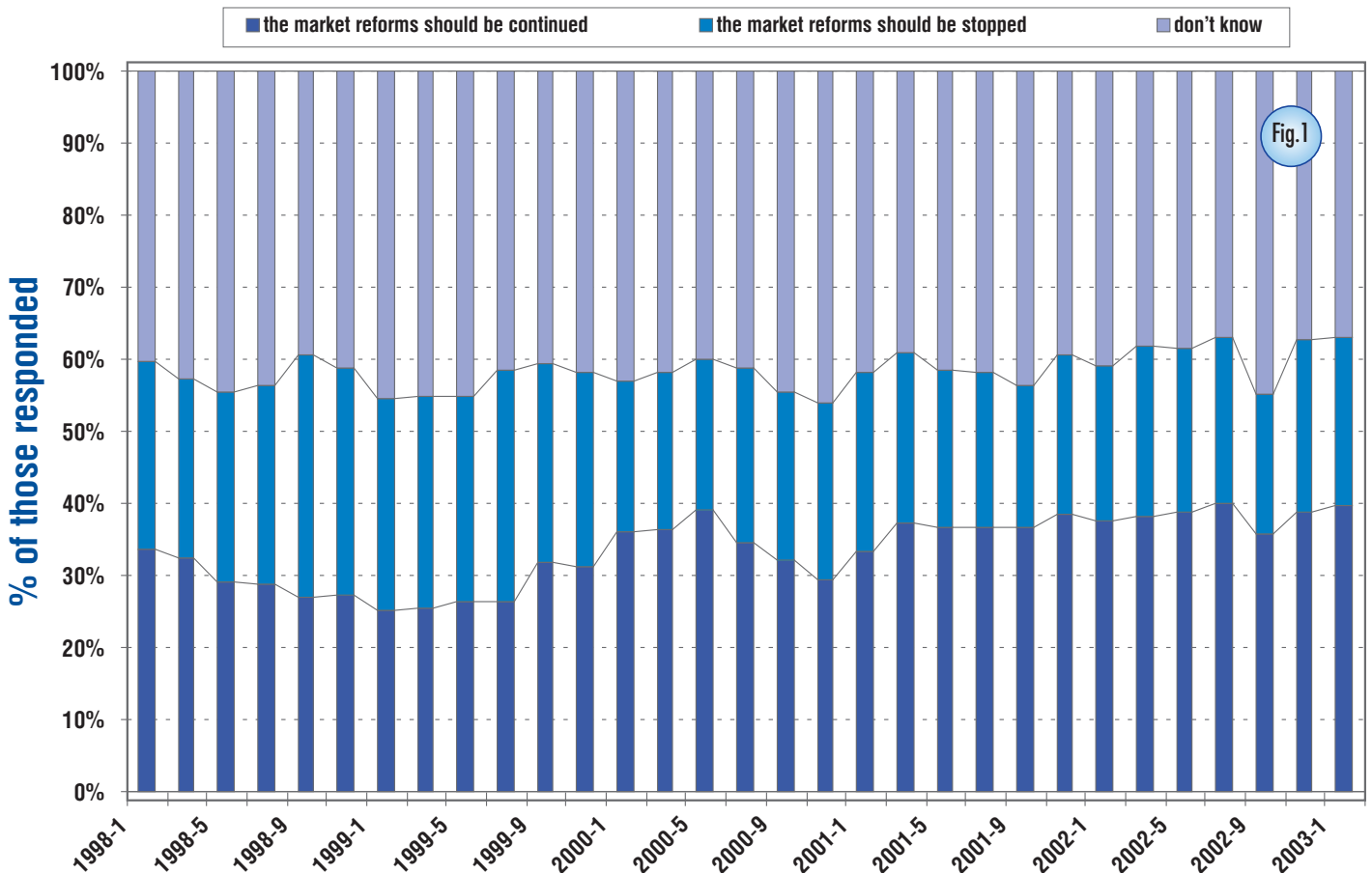
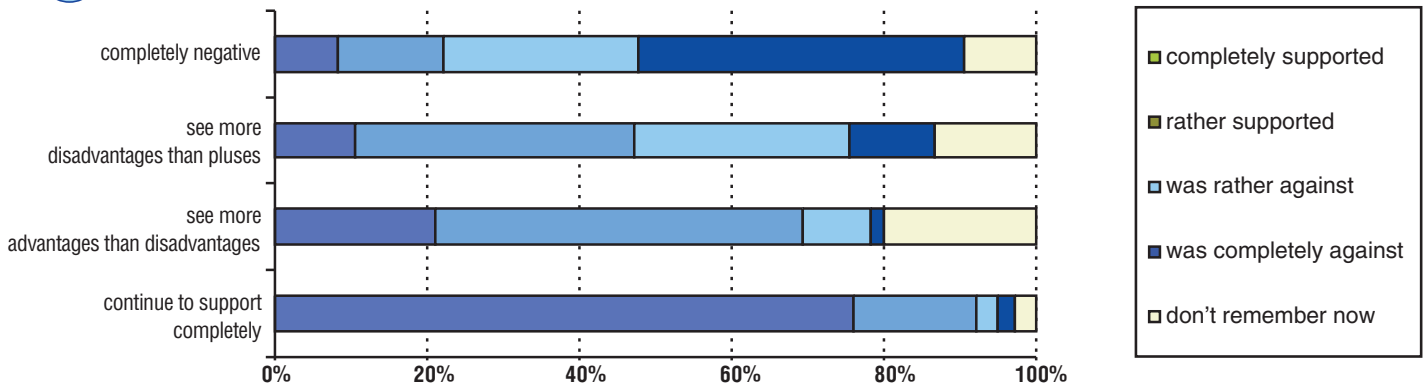


Fig.2

How do you feel about the reforms now?



The most significant losses

with regard to the Russian society as a whole (dark blue) | at the personal level (light blue)

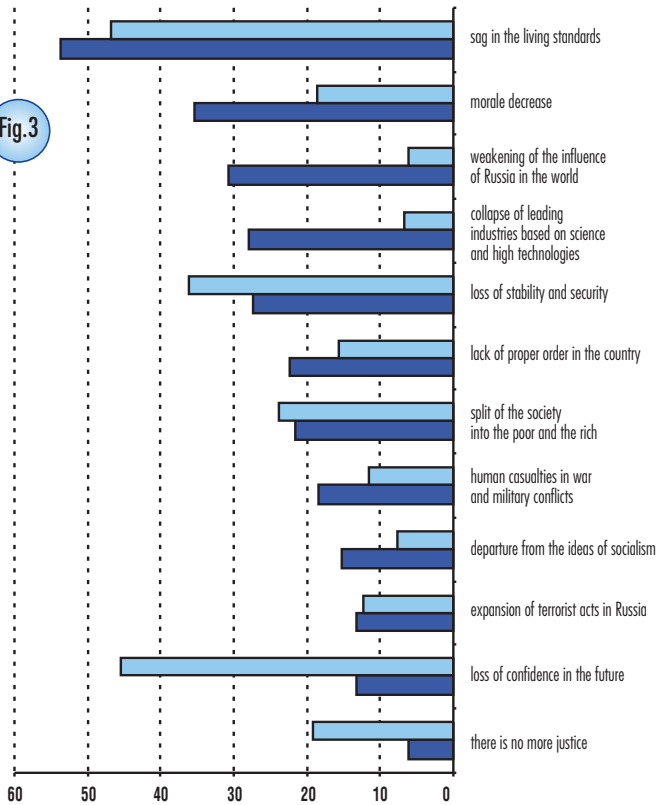


Fig.3

The most significant gains

with regard to the Russian society as a whole (dark blue) | at the personal level (light blue)

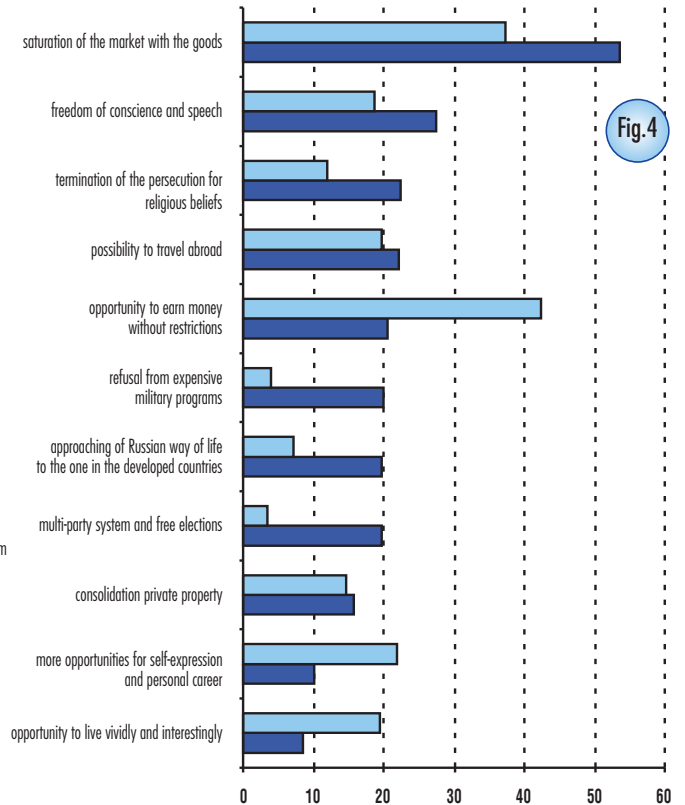


Fig.4

How would you assess the Russia's economic situation?

good (light blue) | neither good nor bad (pink) | bad (medium blue) | very bad (dark blue)

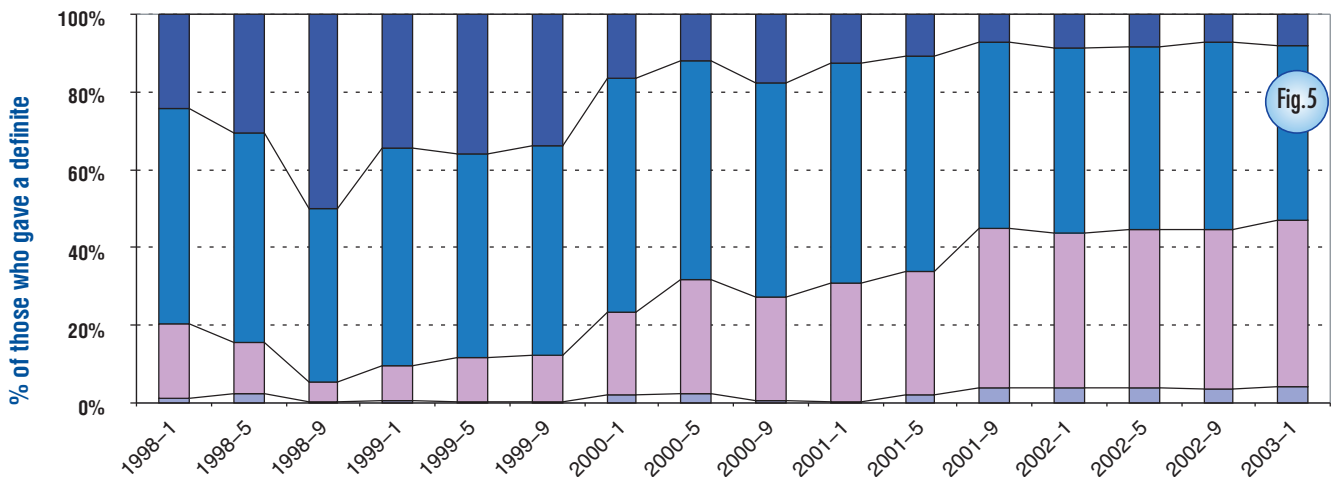


Fig.5

In your opinion, how would the number of the unemployed change in the next 12 months?*

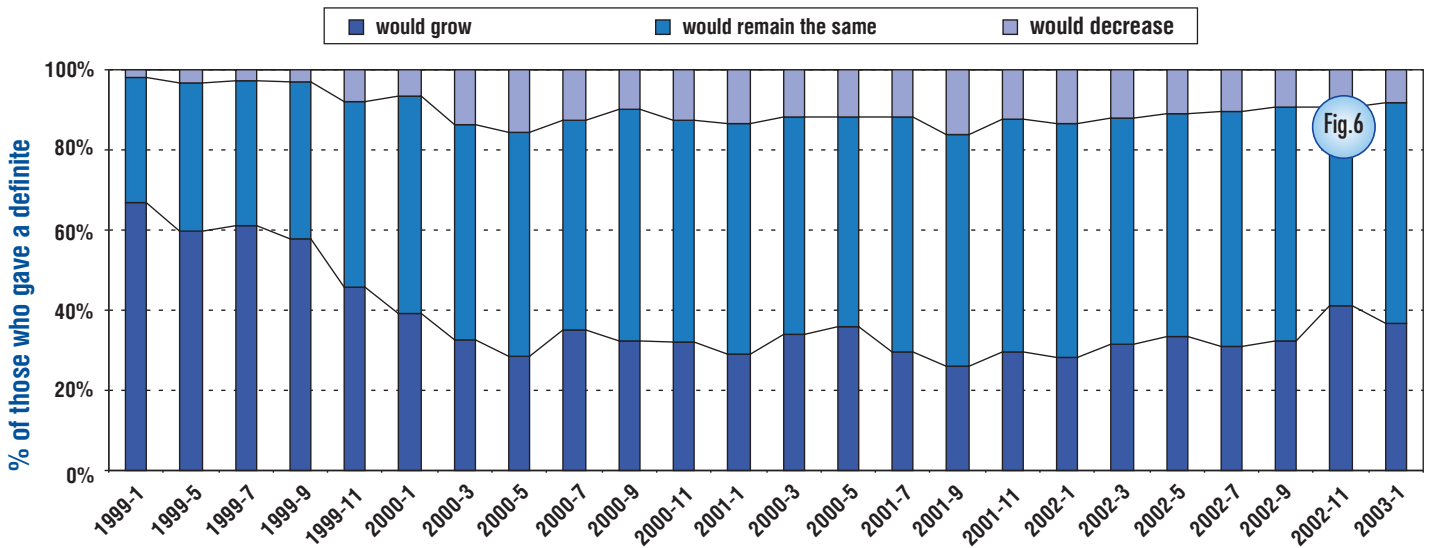


Fig.6

Regular investigations of the public's attitude towards socioeconomic developments in Russia pointed out a considerable decrease in tension after August 1998. A VCIOM survey testifies to the fact that the mass consciousness is calming down: in late 1998 more than 90 percent of respondents who gave a definite reply to the question considered Russia's economic conditions bad and very bad, whereas in September 2001 the share of negative attitudes shed over a half. Although there is no doubt that appraisals of professional economists may significantly differ from "impressions" of the general public, it should be reiterated that this data has more to do with the normalization of sentiments and feelings, with adaptation mechanisms being put into effect, rather than with the real economic conditions. Views on the current macroeconomic situation are now even more optimistic than before the crisis of August 1998 (Fig. 5).

Views on unemployment rate trends also confirm this positive tendency. In early 1999, almost 70 percent of respondents, who gave a definite response to the question, believed unemployment would rise. By the year 2003, the number of people sharing these fears almost halved, and the number of those who believe unemployment would go down increased (Fig. 6).

People's views on welfare standards (or the financial position of their family) underwent a similar transformation: the share of negative views dropped from nearly 70 percent in late 1998 to 25 percent by the middle of 2001, whereas the number of positive views virtually trebled (Fig. 7).

In your opinion, how would the material situation of your family change in the next year?*

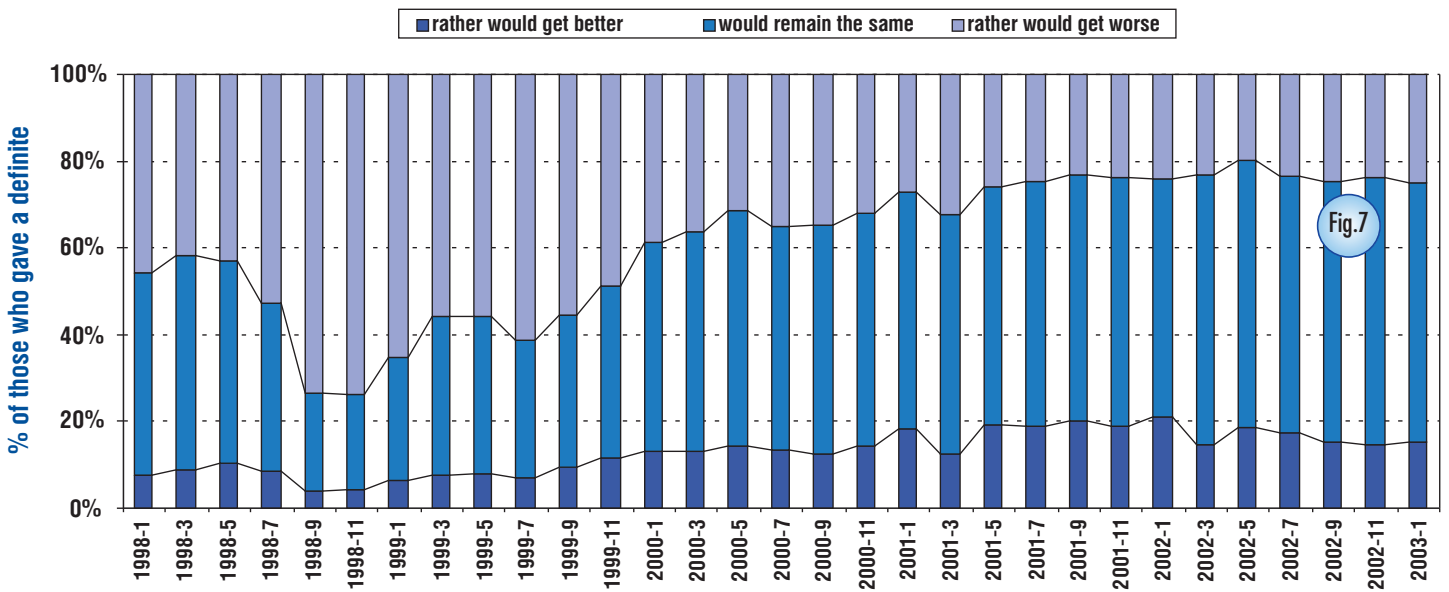


Fig.7

* VCIOM Monitoring data

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