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# ZOIS REPORT

## **RUSSIANS IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE**

Félix Krawatzek, Isabelle DeSisto and George Soroka

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## Summary

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, numerous Russians decided to leave their country. Georgia and Armenia were among the most popular destinations for Russian migrants, either as a temporary stopover or for more permanent relocation. Young urbanites with higher education are disproportionately represented in this wave of migration, which has significant implications for the Russian labour market. The political consequences of the associated demographic changes remain uncertain—on the one hand, the Russian regime has exiled some of its most vocal critics; on the other, the comparatively liberal environments in their host countries might allow exiles to connect with one other and mount a challenge to the Putin regime.

Both Armenia and Georgia are readily accessible for migrants, who can remain there de facto indefinitely. Nonetheless, conditions for newly arrived Russians differ significantly between these countries. Armenia remains socially and politically closer to Russia, whereas public criticism of the Russian government and Russian society is more tangible in Georgia.

We conducted a face-to-face survey in both countries in late 2022 among a total of more than 1,600 respondents. Although our sample is not random and therefore does not represent the experiences and attitudes of all recent Russian migrants in Armenia and Georgia, our findings illuminate important patterns both within and across countries. The key findings are as follows:

- Young respondents from cities dominate the samples, with individuals from Moscow and St. Petersburg especially overrepresented.
- Half of our samples in both countries have not yet decided for how long they have left Russia. This points to the profound uncertainty this population faces. However, the share of those who see a long-term future for themselves outside of Russia is considerably higher in Armenia than in Georgia: 20% of Russians interviewed in Armenia say they have left Russia forever, while only 12% of those interviewed in Georgia say the same. In line with their sense of a more permanent departure from Russia, respondents in Armenia are more likely to state that they no longer feel responsible for Russia's political future (27%), while only 19% of those in Georgia feel the same way.
- Adjusting to the host country can be extremely challenging. Respondents frequently say they have experienced difficulties that are both psychological and material—such as trouble finding a place to live or a job.
- Russians interviewed in Armenia were more politically active prior to their emigration, both in terms of news consumption and participation in political or civic activities, such as volunteering, donating to NGOs or organising cultural events. Respondents in Armenia were also more likely to report that they had participated in protest events against the war in Ukraine while still living in Russia (26% in Armenia versus 11% in Georgia).
- Levels of political activism in the host country are significantly higher among our sample in Armenia. The Russians we interviewed in Armenia discuss politics with friends and family members more frequently and are also more likely to consume news online and engage in political discussions on social media than their counterparts in Georgia. They have also forged stronger connections with other migrants from Russia. However, respondents in both countries seldom engage in volunteer activities or participate in protests unrelated to the war in Ukraine.
- Migrants' views on Russian institutions are overwhelmingly negative, particularly among those interviewed in Armenia. By contrast, around 66% of respondents in Armenia gave a positive rating to Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyi but only 46% in Georgia. Attitudes to NATO, the EU, and Western media are also largely positive.
- Respondents clearly attribute responsibility for the war to Russian authorities. In Armenia, three-quarters of respondents blame Russian authorities; in Georgia, the figure is nearly two-thirds. Respondents in Georgia continue to monitor the progress of the war more closely: over half said they followed the war 'very closely', compared to just over 40% in Armenia.
- Russian migrants in Georgia and Armenia have substantially more liberal social attitudes compared to the general Russian population. This difference is particularly pronounced with regard to tolerance of same-sex relations.

## Introduction

Emigration from Russia in the aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 occurred on a scale unprecedented since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.<sup>1</sup> Even if precise numbers are hard to come by, at least two 'peaks' of migration are evident: one in the initial weeks after the invasion, which lasted through the summer, and another following President Vladimir Putin's declaration of a 'partial mobilisation' on 21 September 2022. The total number of migrants is well over 500,000, with some media reports claiming that it may be closer to one million.<sup>2</sup>

Earlier migrants were predominantly young urbanites—both men and women—who were on average better educated and more affluent than the Russian population as a whole. The post-mobilisation migrants, meanwhile, were disproportionately military-age men trying to escape conscription. Post-Soviet countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia became popular destinations for those fleeing Russia, alongside countries like Turkey, Brazil, and Thailand.

The motives underlying individual decisions to emigrate varied, and individuals often left for a combination of reasons. For some, political repression and the Kremlin's escalation of the war in Ukraine were the primary motivating factors; others wanted to avoid military service or worried about their economic prospects.

This report focuses on the situation of Russians in Armenia and Georgia. Both countries were particularly attractive to those living in the Western part of Russia, as they are geographically proximate and can be entered without a visa. Armenia does not even require an international passport for entry, and regular flights from Russia make the country accessible. Georgia shares a land border with Russia, allowing migrants to bring their vehicles and at least some of their belongings with them. For those intent on leaving Russia, these countries served as ready and relatively inexpensive destinations and, at least for a sub-set of migrants, convenient transit points from which to move to third countries. Moreover, Russians can stay in both countries *de facto* indefinitely—in Armenia after official registration of their place of residence, and in Georgia provided they exit and re-enter the country at least once a year.<sup>3</sup>

1 We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this project received from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI), the Davis Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard, and Harvard's Minda de Gunzburg Centre for European Studies. Many thanks go to Varvara Ilyina and Dmitry Rudenkin for research assistance. We would also like to acknowledge Travis Frederick's input in designing an earlier version of the survey.

2 The Bell arrives at half a million migrants by the end of 2022 'Skol'ko rossiyan v 2022 godu uyekhalo iz strany i ne vernulos', 30 December 2022, <https://thebell.io/skolko-rossiyan-v-2022-godu-uekhalo-iz-strany-i-ne-vernulos>, whereas the Washington Post claims that the number is likely to be one million at the upper end of the scale: 'Russians abandon wartime Russia in historic exodus', 13 February 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/02/13/russia-diaspora-war-ukraine/>. Forbes Russia has reported that some 700,000 fled Russia after Putin's announcement of 'partial mobilisation' alone, though the Kremlin has disputed this figure 'Rossiyu posle 21 sentyabrya pokinuli okolo 700 000 grazhdan', 4 October 2022, <https://www.forbes.ru/society/478827-rossiu-posle-21-sentyabra-pokinuli-okolo-700-000-grazhdan>.

3 For the entry requirements, see 'Visa requirements for foreigners', <https://www.mfa.am/en/visa> [last accessed 11 April 2023] as well as 'Georgian visa information', <https://www.geoconsul.gov.ge/HtmlPage/Html/View?id=956&lang=Eng> [last accessed 11 April 2023].

Socio-political contexts, however, differ markedly between Armenia and Georgia. Armenians use the Russian language far more often than Georgians and the atmosphere for Russians tends to be more welcoming. Yerevan maintains better relations with Moscow than Tbilisi, making it a less hospitable destination for the most politically active dissidents. At the same time, it has been widely reported that Georgians have been less welcoming of the Russian newcomers, whom some see as failing to assimilate into society and driving up real estate prices.

The mass emigration after February 2022 will have major demographic, economic, and political consequences for Russia. On the economic front, these consequences are already perceptible. In late December 2022, Russia's Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media reported that '10% of the country's IT workers had left in 2022 and not returned'.<sup>4</sup> However, given that a share of these workers can continue to do their jobs remotely, at least for the time being, their departure may have caused less economic disruption than would be the case for other types of workers. The political repercussions are less clear. On the one hand, the Putin regime has effectively exiled some of its most vocal critics; on the other hand, political activists operating from outside Russia now have more freedom to connect with each other and criticise the Russian government. Thus, while the consequences of this migration are already being felt in Russia, it is impossible to predict its full impact.

## Russians in Georgia and Armenia: Insights into the sample

### Comparing the profiles of respondents

We designed and fielded face-to-face surveys of Russian citizens living in Georgia (Tbilisi and Batumi) and Armenia (Yerevan). These three cities are known to be the most popular destinations in these countries for those who have recently left Russia. Interviews took place between late November 2022 and early January 2023. Eligibility was based on Russian citizenship, rather than language, to avoid sampling Russian-speaking respondents from Ukraine, Belarus, or elsewhere. At the end of the survey, interviewers were asked to assess the demeanour of each respondent; most indicated that subjects felt either absolutely at ease or mostly comfortable. The length of the interviews is indicative of a generally high level of comfort. The average interview in Armenia lasted 16 minutes, with the shortest being six minutes and the longest over 90 minutes. In Georgia, meanwhile, the average interview lasted 12 minutes, while the longest ran for nearly two hours.

We surveyed 853 respondents in Georgia (60% in Tbilisi and 40% in Batumi) and 801 in Armenia's capital Yerevan. The two samples differ substantially from the overall Russian population in their demographic composition. The

<sup>4</sup> 'Russians abandon wartime Russia in historic exodus', 13 February 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/02/13/russia-diaspora-war-ukraine/>.

TABLE 1

**Demographic composition**

Samples of the survey compared to the overall Russian population

		Armenia	Georgia	Russia (2010 Census data)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	34.80 %	39.70 %	53.80 %
	Male	65.20 %	60.30 %	46.20 %
<b>Age</b>	Average age	30.1	32.6	39
<b>Settle- ment size</b>	City with population > 1 million	86.30 %	81.40 %	19.75 %
	City of 500k to 1 million inhabitants	4.50 %	9.80 %	11.03 %
	City of 250k to 500k inhabitants	4.70 %	4.90 %	8.50 %
	City of 100k to 250k inhabitants	1.10 %	1.60 %	9.87 %
	Settlement with a population < 100k	2.50 %	1.40 %	50.84 %
<b>Place of residence</b>	Moscow	54.10 %	31.10 %	8.01 %
	St. Petersburg	19.40 %	16.90 %	3.42 %

Source: 'Vserossiyskoy perepisi naseleniya 2010 goda', No. 491 – 492, 19 – 31 December 2011, <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2011/0491/perep01.php> as well as 'Vserossiyskaya perepis' naseleniya 2010', [https://gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis\\_itogi1612.htm](https://gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm) [last accessed 11 April 2023].

average age of respondents in our sample is significantly lower and men are overrepresented compared to the Russian population at large (► TABLE 1). We also observe a noticeable difference in marital status between the samples: in Georgia, around 58% of respondents stated that they were either married or in a civil partnership, whereas in Armenia this figure was only 45%. This difference is reflected in family composition: while one-third of respondents in Georgia stated that they have children, less than 15% of those in Armenia have children.

The sociodemographic differences suggest that Georgia is a more attractive destination for older respondents with families, as many Russians perceive the quality of life there as higher. Armenia, by contrast, is more popular among younger Russians with more limited resources (► FIGURE 1).<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the actual costs of living in the two countries are fairly similar if we look at indicators such as rental prices or groceries, and the two countries' GDP per capita is comparable. Both have also experienced high economic growth in the last year, aided by the inflow of economically active young Russians.<sup>6</sup>

5 Maria Kuznetsova, a spokeswoman for the Russian human rights group OVD-Info, who is based in Tbilisi, Georgia. In reality, the pre-war cost of living does not appear to differ substantially across the two countries: 'Kuda poyekhat' — v Gruzuyu ili Armeniyu', 13 March 2020, <https://www.skyscanner.ru/news/kuda-luchshe-poekhat-gruzia-ili-armenia-sravnenie>.

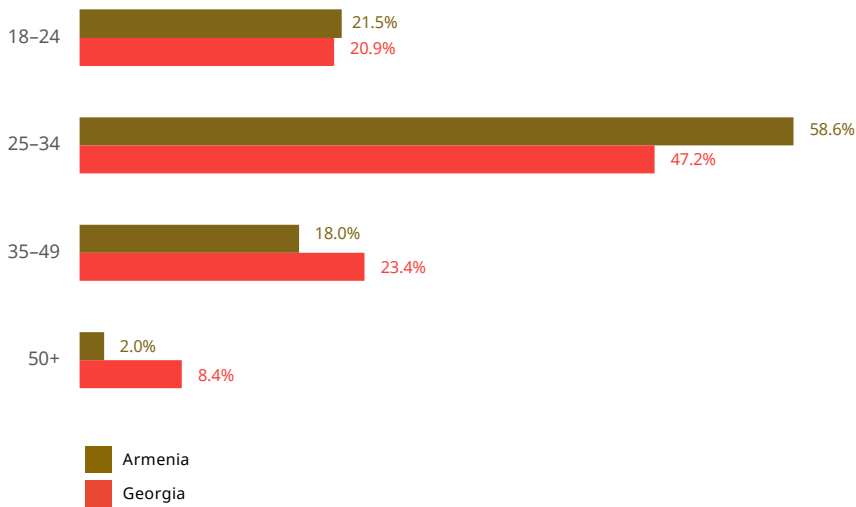
6 IMF, 'Press Release No. 22/374', 7 November 2022, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/11/06/pr22374-Georgia-IMF-Reaches-Staff-Level-Agreement-First-Review-Georgia-Stand-By-Arrangement> and IMF, 'Press Release No. 22/77', 17 March 2022, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/03/16/pr2277-armenia-imf-reaches-staff-level-agreement-sixth-review-stand-by-arrangement>.



FIGURE 1

**How old are you?**

Сколько Вам лет?



Source: Data from ZOiS / Harvard / FES survey of Russians in Georgia (853) and Armenia (801), 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

The level of education among respondents is higher than that of the Russian population overall. In both Georgia and Armenia, the share of respondents who have completed higher education (including specialist training or degrees at the bachelor's, master's, or doctoral level) is over 70%. According to OECD data from 2019, the share of Russians between 25 and 34 years old with tertiary education was 63%.<sup>7</sup> If we restrict our sample to that age range, we find that 79% of respondents have higher education credentials.

The share of respondents who have completed higher education is over 70%.

The vast majority of respondents in both countries (over two-thirds) worked full-time before leaving Russia. Smaller shares were working part-time, studying, or caring for a family member. Only around 3% of respondents in Armenia and 7% in Georgia were unemployed prior to their departure. Consistent with numerous media reports about the disproportionate outflow of workers in the information technology sector, a sizeable share of respondents in both countries were employed in IT: 27% in Georgia and 37% in Armenia.

While only individuals with Russian citizenship were eligible to participate in our survey, we do observe variation in respondents' ethnicities. Those who self-identify as ethnic Russians make up around 89% of the sample in Georgia, whereas this share is substantially lower in Armenia (69%). In the latter sample, around 8% of respondents are Russian citizens but have now returned to Armenia and see themselves first and foremost as Armenians. Respondents also identify with other national groups found in Russia, such as Tatars, Ingrians, Ossetians, and Komi.

<sup>7</sup> 'Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators', 2019, [https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019\\_CN\\_RUS.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019_CN_RUS.pdf).

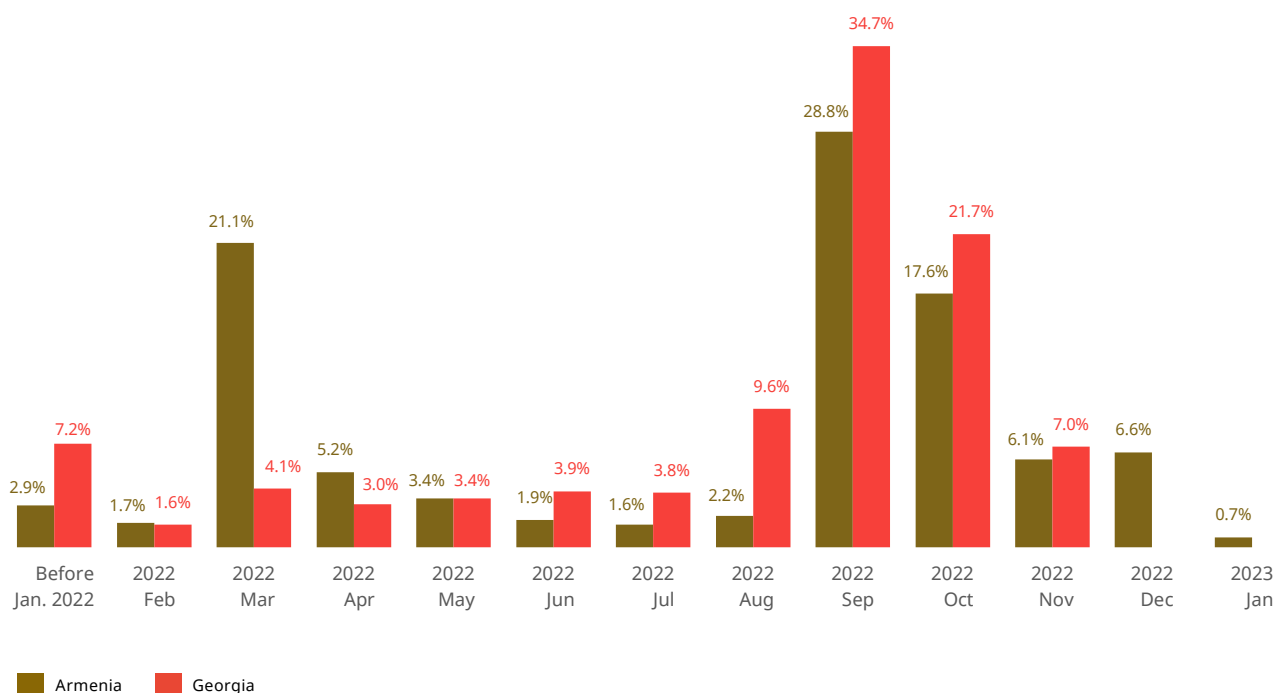
The majority of respondents come from highly metropolitan environments. Before migrating, over 80% lived in a city with more than one million inhabitants. This highlights another major difference from the overall Russian population, where only 20% live in a settlement of that size. Furthermore, while half of the Russian population live in settlements with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, only about 2% of our respondents did.

Former residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg are highly overrepresented in our sample, particularly in Armenia. Respondents in Georgia hail from a wider range of large cities across Russia, including Rostov-on-Don and Krasnodar (Southern Federal District); Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, and Saratov (Volga Federal District); and Novosibirsk (Siberia). Other parts of Russia, such as the Volga region, have seen substantially less outmigration towards the South Caucasus, despite being geographically proximate.

### Timing and reasons for migration

There are notable differences in the dates when respondents left Russia. In Armenia, a higher proportion left Russia in the immediate aftermath of the full-scale invasion (► FIGURE 2). In Georgia, by contrast, we have a larger concentration of respondents who left Russia around the time when the ‘partial mobilisation’ was declared in September 2022 or shortly thereafter. This might be related to the skyrocketing price of airline tickets to Yerevan and the fact that Georgia can be accessed via land.

**FIGURE 2**  
**When did you leave Russia?**  
 Когда Вы уехали из России?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of Russians in Georgia (853) and Armenia (801), 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

A typical respondent who left for Armenia or Georgia before September 2022 was female and already politically active back in Russia. Overall, one-third of the interviewed respondents left between January and September 2022, and a sizeable number of those who migrated to Georgia were from either Moscow or St. Petersburg.

Once the ‘partial mobilisation’ was announced, the profile of Russian migrants changes drastically. We observe primarily young men, aged 18 to 24, leaving the country. These individuals resided predominantly in large cities across Russia and were on the whole less likely to be politically active back home than those who left before.

The reasons given by respondents for emigrating are diverse. Across both samples, the overall political situation in Russia was cited most frequently, with two-thirds of respondents noting it. Female respondents, particularly in Armenia, were most likely to give this reason, in line with their higher levels of pre-migration political activism back in Russia. The war in Ukraine was cited as the second most important reason. In both countries, partial mobilisation was the third most common reason for leaving, mentioned by 37% overall (42% in Armenia and 33% in Georgia). Among respondents who left after September 2022, more than half said they did so because of the partial mobilisation (64% in Armenia compared to 46% in Georgia). In both samples, men and respondents aged 18 to 24 were significantly more likely to mention the partial mobilisation as a reason for emigration. One in six respondents also mentioned that they left for the sake of their children’s future.

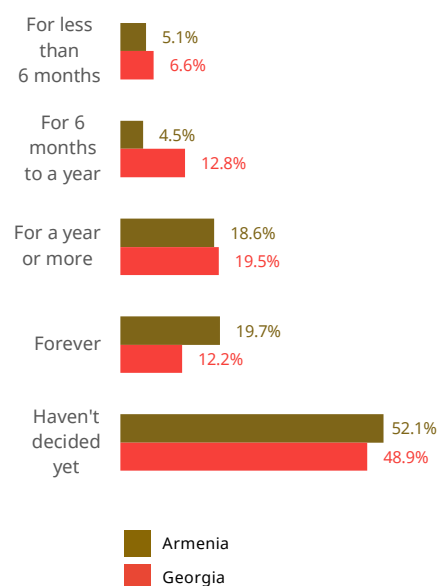
How long these Russians will stay in their current place of residence depends on a variety of factors, including political and economic developments in Russia, their family situation, and the economic and social conditions in their host country. Russian migrants’ plans for the future are therefore likely to change over time, as they either start to put down roots or struggle to integrate into new environments. Respondents in Armenia, overall younger and less likely to have children, were more likely to indicate that they had left Russia permanently (► FIGURE 3). However, this does not necessarily mean that the migrants will stay forever in their current host country; some of them will undoubtedly move on to other countries.

Respondents across both samples who left prior to the partial mobilisation were more likely to state that they had left Russia forever. This suggests that departures after September 2022 were oftentimes unplanned and undertaken in a moment of heightened uncertainty. A larger share of respondents in Georgia indicated that they had left Russia for less than a year (19%) compared to Armenia (10%). Those who left Russia after September 2022 were particularly likely to give this answer. In fact, over 80% of the people who said they had left Russia for a year or less were part of the post-mobilisation wave of emigration.

Nonetheless, in both the Armenian and Georgian samples uncertainty looms large, as roughly half of all respondents have not yet decided for how long they intend to be gone from Russia. Women were slightly more likely to report that they had not yet made this decision (52%, versus 49% for men), as were individuals with higher education (52%, versus 45% for those without), and without partners (52%, versus 48% for individuals who are married or in a civil union). Younger people, notably those in the age bracket 18–24, are the most likely to indicate uncertainty about when they will return.

Once the ‘partial mobilisation’ was announced, the profile of Russian migrants changes.

FIGURE 3  
For how long have you left Russia?  
На какой срок Вы уехали?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of Russians in Georgia (853) and Armenia (801), 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

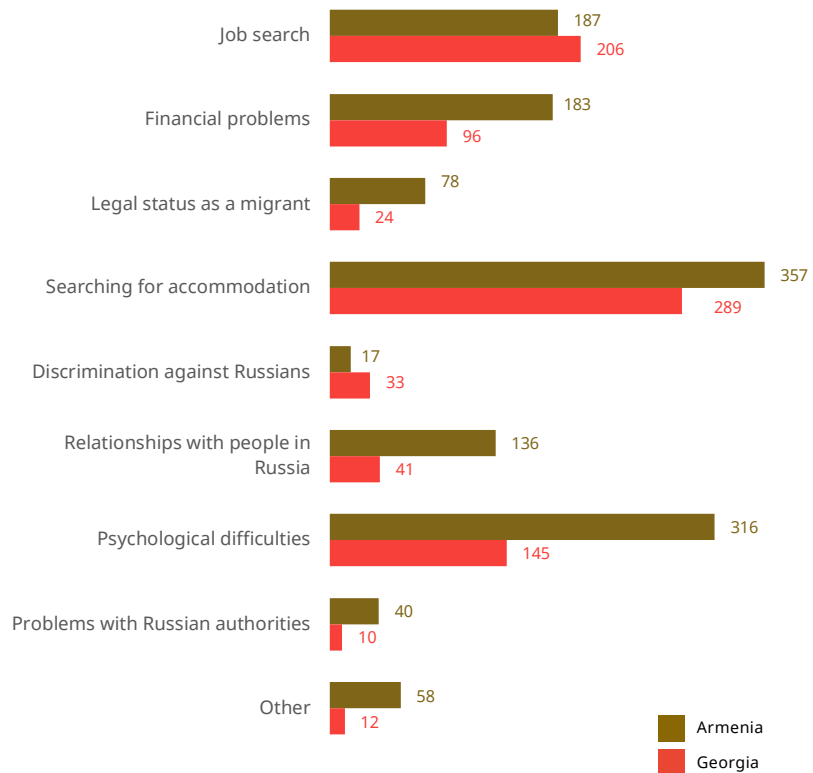
### Shared challenges while abroad

People who leave their homes with little advanced planning tend to encounter a host of difficulties when relocating abroad. These include practical challenges like finding an apartment or securing an income, as well as the psychological stressors associated with uprooting oneself from familiar surroundings. We asked respondents about the difficulties they encountered since moving abroad (► FIGURE 4). Searching for an apartment or job were challenges familiar to both samples. Respondents in Armenia, who tend to be younger, more politically active, and single, reported a higher incidence of psychological problems.

Relatedly, although virtually all respondents reported that they maintained close ties to friends and family members in Russia, those living in Armenia mentioned family troubles more frequently than those in Georgia. This probably contributes to the Armenian respondents' greater psychological distress and may be linked to how their political and social attitudes often diverge from the norm in Russian society.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Which of the following difficulties have you encountered while in Armenia / Georgia?**

С какими из следующих трудностей Вы сталкивались, находясь в Армении / Грузии?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of Russians in Georgia (853) and Armenia (801), 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

## Surveying Russians abroad: Methodological note

Conducting surveys under conditions of war and displacement is a challenging undertaking. We must be sensitive to a potential social desirability bias when interpreting our data. Russian migrants are situated in highly politicised environments and their responses to our survey questions may be influenced by surrounding social and political discourses, as well as emotions that may arise over the course of the interview. We attempted to mitigate this concern by designing the survey to begin with a ‘warm-up’ in which we collected sociodemographic information and asked factual questions about individual’s migration experience before gradually progressing to more sensitive political topics. Respondents were free to decline to answer any question in the survey and skip to the next.

A second challenge relates to respondent recruitment. Initially, we attempted to conduct this research via social media, but response rates were extremely low and there was a high proportion of incomplete surveys and missing answers. We therefore decided to undertake face-to-face surveys, even though randomised sampling was impossible for this population. While the face-to-face approach captures a more diverse sample than an online survey, the resulting data still cannot be regarded as fully representative of the underlying population of interest.

The samples reflect a combination of non-probability convenience and chain-referral sampling methods. For the convenience sample, potential respondents were contacted in public places (e.g. streets, parks and restaurants). Those who agreed to participate were then asked for referrals to other individuals. Prior to the launch, a pilot study was carried out to assess the viability of the questionnaire and fieldwork methods. Interviewers were trained by the respective Caucasus Research Resource Centres (CRRC) in Armenia and Georgia.

In the present analysis, we have excluded ‘don’t know’ and ‘prefer not to answer’ responses if they made up less than 5% of the total responses to a given question. If the share was over 5%, we retain this information, as we consider it to be an important indicator of either a high level of uncertainty or a desire to avoid

that question. We use appropriate regression models to identify the individual characteristics, particularly sociodemographic, that predict responses to certain questions.

We are aware of at least four other surveys of Russians abroad since 2022. Three—After 24, OK Russians, and Outrush—used online chats to collect survey responses. After24 distributed surveys to Russians living in Georgia and Armenia through ‘relocation’ chats on the popular messaging app Telegram.<sup>8</sup> OK Russians assembled a panel survey of 1,500 Russian emigrants across the globe using similar relocation chats and conducted two major sets of interviews with them.<sup>9</sup> Outrush put together a similarly sized panel survey through a combination of relocation chats, recruitment of respondents from the OK Russians sample, and snowball sampling through existing respondents.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the German Economic Team conducted face-to-face surveys among Russian migrants in Georgia and Armenia in July 2022 in conjunction with CRRC, focusing on the economic aspects of migration.<sup>11</sup>

Respondents in all the aforementioned surveys of Russians living abroad, including ours, cannot be characterised as representative of the broader Russian migrant population in either Armenia or Georgia. Still, they provide interesting qualitative and quantitative data on Russian migrants’ attitudes and concerns.

8 <https://after24.org/> [last accessed 11 April 2023] see also <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/105aPtNUvZKNFkqtGuyTC8ViGXxHBIOHF/edit#slide=id.p12> [last accessed 11 April 2023].

9 <https://okrussians.org/> [last accessed 11 April 2023].

10 <https://outrush.io/outrush> [last accessed 11 April 2023].

11 ‘Relocation of people from Russia to Armenia’, September 2022, <https://www.german-economic-team.com/en/publication/relocation-of-people-from-russia-to-armenia-results-of-survey-and-economic-implications/> as well as ‘Relocation of people from Russia and Belarus to Georgia’, July 2022, <https://www.german-economic-team.com/en/publication/relocation-of-people-from-russia-and-belarus-to-georgia-results-of-survey-and-economic-implications/>.

## Armenia: A destination for politically active young Russians

### Progressive young urbanites with liberal social values

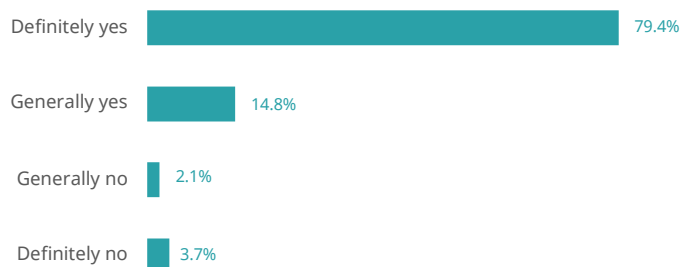
The Russian migrants in the Armenia sample differ significantly from Russians living in Russia when it comes to social attitudes like tolerance of homosexuality, a highly charged topic in Russia. Russian authorities have significantly curtailed LGBTQ rights in recent years; for example, in November 2022 the Russian parliament passed a bill that further expands a 2013 law which criminalised what the state refers to as ‘LGBT propaganda’.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, according to repeated Levada Center surveys, a growing percentage of Russians state that consenting adults should definitely not have the right to enter into a relationship with people of the same sex (53% in September 2021 compared to 35% in February 2013). Only 10% state that they should definitely have the right to do so.

Levada Center data from 2021 show that among Russians in Russia, attitudes towards same-sex relationships differ by age. Among 18- to 24-year-olds, 53% stated that adults should have the right to enter a relationship with another person of the same sex, compared to 13% of respondents aged 55 and older.<sup>13</sup> Yet even when compared to younger cohorts in Russia, respondents in Armenia express far more tolerance of homosexuality. A striking 91% stated that consenting adults have the right to engage in same-sex relations, while only 6% think they should not have this right (► FIGURE 5). Similar to the situation in Russia itself, respondents who are 50 or older are far less

FIGURE 5

#### Armenia: Do you think that consenting adults have the right to enter into a relationship with people of the same sex?

Как Вы считаете, имеют ли право взрослые люди по взаимному согласию вступить в отношения с людьми того же пола?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

12 ‘Russia’s upper house of parliament passes tougher ban on ‘LGBT propaganda’, 30 November 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/30/europe/russia-upper-parliament-lgbt-propaganda-law-intl/index.html>.

13 ‘Otnosheniye rossiyan k LGBT lyudyam’, 15 October 2021, <https://www.levada.ru/2021/10/15/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-lgbt-lyudyam/>.

tolerant of same-sex relations, as are respondents with children. Those who left in the wake of the partial mobilisation are also less likely to approve of same-sex relations relative to those who left earlier.

Russians in Armenia are considerably more tolerant of homosexuality than the Armenian population; according to a 2017 Pew survey, 97% of Armenians believe that homosexuality should not be accepted in society.<sup>14</sup>

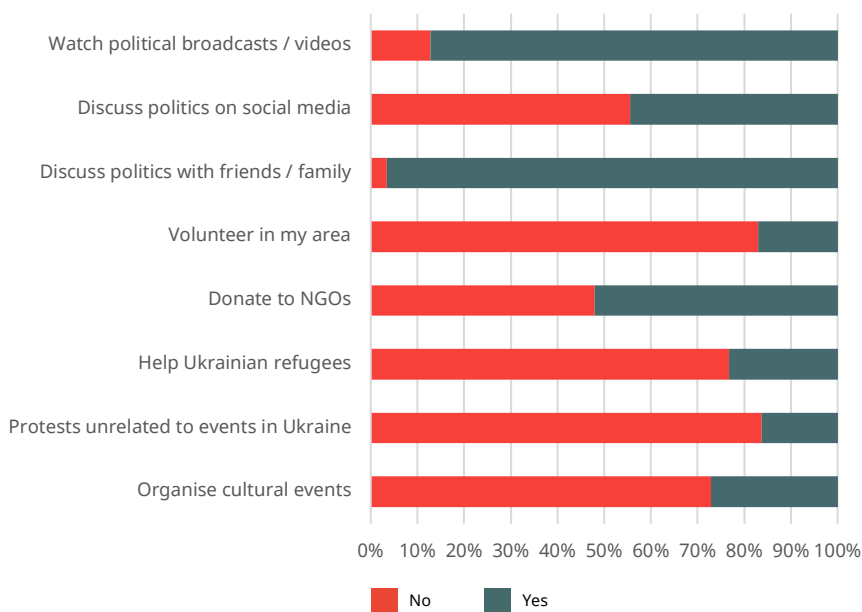
### Political engagement in Russia and Armenia

Participating in a variety of political and civic activities before leaving Russia was common among respondents in Armenia. Nearly two-thirds engaged in at least one of the following activities in the six months before leaving Russia: participating in a protest unrelated to Ukraine; volunteering; donating to an NGO or helping Ukrainian refugees (► FIGURE 6). Around 15% stated that they had participated in protests unrelated to the war in Ukraine back in Russia. Despite the increased visibility of protest activities in Russia before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine—related, for instance, to Aleksei Navalny’s arrest in January 2021 and political protests in Khabarovsk—the overall level of protest participation in Russia is probably lower than in our

FIGURE 6

#### Armenia: Were you involved in the following activities during the 6 months before you left Russia?

Принимали ли Вы участие в следующих действиях в течение 6 месяцев до Вашего отъезда из России?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

14 'Social views and morality', 10 May 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/05/10/social-views-and-morality/>.

sample. While reliable numbers concerning how many Russians have actually taken part in a protest event are unavailable, a 2021 Levada Center poll found that only 17% of respondents would entertain the idea of participating in a mass political protest; we can assume that a far lower percentage has actually done so. These data indicate that the population we surveyed is far more mobilised than most Russians.<sup>15</sup>

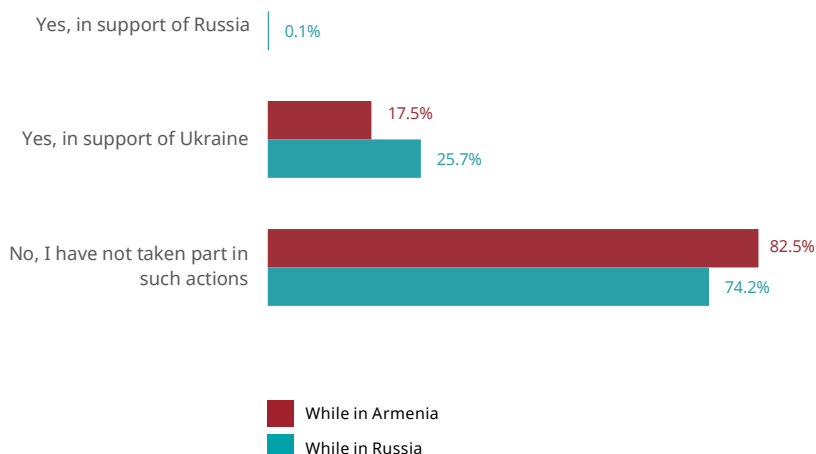
Among respondents in Armenia, higher education, being a woman, and having left Russia before the declaration of the partial mobilisation are all associated with more frequent participation in political and civic activities. Similarly, those without children participated in political and civic activities back in Russia more often than those who have children. More educated respondents were more likely to have engaged in political discussions with friends and family, and men tended to discuss politics more frequently than women.

When asked about their participation in demonstrations related to Russia’s war in Ukraine, 26% of respondents in Armenia said they had joined a pro-Ukraine demonstration while living in Russia (► FIGURE 7). As documented by the human rights organisation OVD-Info, Russian authorities have responded harshly to such protests, with nearly 15,000 people arrested across the country during the first weeks of the war alone.<sup>16</sup> The level of participation

26% of respondents in Armenia said they had joined a pro-Ukraine demonstration while living in Russia.

**FIGURE 7**  
**Armenia: Have you taken part in demonstrations in support of or against the war (Russia’s ‘special military operation’)?**

Принимали ли Вы участие в акциях в поддержку или против войны (специальной военной операции России)?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

15 ‘Protestnyye nastroyeniya’, 10 December 2021, <https://www.levada.ru/2021/12/10/protestnyye-nastroeniya-3/>

16 ‘Net voyne’, 14 March 2022, <https://reports.ovdinfo.org/no-to-war>.



in pro-Ukraine demonstrations in Armenia is lower—still, its very existence suggests that Russians in Armenia are well connected with one another, particularly those we interviewed in Yerevan.

Those most likely to say that they participated in a pro-Ukraine demonstration in Russia or Armenia were younger, female, well-educated and lived in Moscow or St. Petersburg. They were also more likely to have left before September 2022. Indeed, those who left between January and September 2022 were nearly three times as likely to have participated in war-related protests in Armenia as those who left afterwards, and women were twice as likely as men to have done so. While this points to the more political nature of the first wave of emigration, it also suggests that time in the host country enables migrants to network with one another, forming a basis for their political activism.

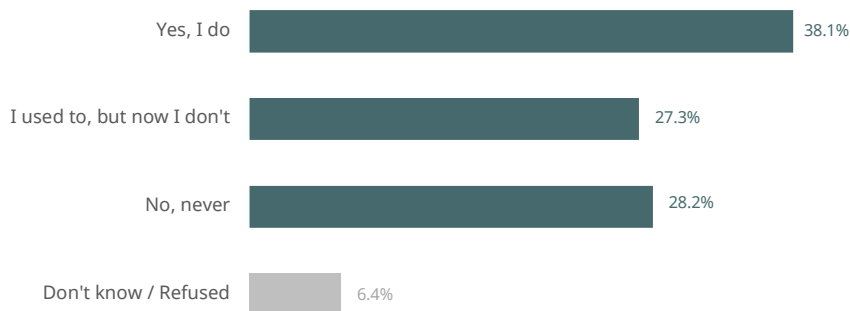
We also asked a set of questions about the future of politics in Russia. A plurality (38%) of respondents in Armenia said they do feel personal responsibility for Russia’s political future. A remarkably large share of the Armenian sample (27%) stated that they used to feel responsible but no longer do (► FIGURE 8). Given that the Armenian sample is composed of many young and politically active Russians, this figure indicates a strong sense of disillusionment with Russian politics. It also suggests that the longer migrants live abroad, the more estranged they feel from their country of origin. A further 28% said that they never felt responsible for Russia’s political future.

The responses in Armenia indicate a strong sense of disillusionment with Russian politics.

Underscoring the importance of time spent in migration, Russians who left between January and September 2022 (rather than after the partial mobilisation) were more likely to state that they no longer have a sense of responsibility for Russian politics—31% as opposed to 21% of those who left since September 2022. Respondents who left before mobilisation were

**FIGURE 8**  
**Armenia: Do you feel personally responsible for Russia’s political future?**

Чувствуете ли Вы личную ответственность за политическое будущее России?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

significantly more likely to express a sense of personal responsibility, while those who left afterwards were more likely to say that they have never felt responsible for Russian politics.

To get a better sense of the behaviours that might follow from beliefs about personal responsibility for Russia's political future, we asked whether the respondents think that Russians living abroad are obliged to take action to influence the political situation in Russia. Slightly more than 50% of respondents in Armenia believe that Russian migrants have such an obligation, despite the growing sense of estrangement from Russian politics in that group (► FIGURE 9).

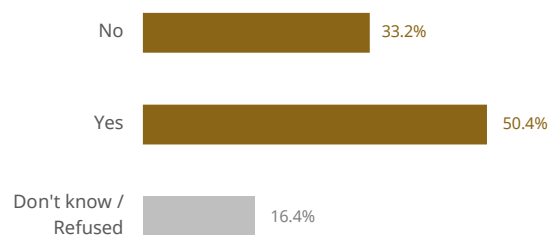
This high share relates to the strong level of politicisation within the Armenian sample, but even in this group, 16% stated they did not know how to respond to the question. The youngest respondents, aged 18 to 24, were the most convinced that Russians abroad should take political action. Based on their responses to this question, we then asked why they did or did not think that Russians abroad should take such action.

Respondents who said Russians are obliged to act were given a set of reasons to choose from: 'Their actions can change the political situation in Russia'; 'Their actions send a signal to other countries about what Russian citizens are thinking'; and 'Their actions send a symbolic message to Russians who remain in Russia'. Roughly equal numbers selected each of these options, with around 22% of respondents in Armenia claiming that exiled Russians can influence the political situation back home. Those who chose to provide their own answer frequently made emotional statements, reasoning, for instance, that 'one cannot just leave and forget' or that it was necessary 'to show that Russian society is not homogeneous'.

FIGURE 9

**Armenia: Do you think that Russians living abroad are obliged to take action to influence the political situation in Russia?**

Считаете ли Вы, что россияне, проживающие за рубежом, обязаны участвовать в деятельности, чтобы повлиять на политическую ситуацию в России?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

Respondents who said that Russians are not obliged to take action to influence the political situation in Russia were given a parallel set of reasons to choose from: ‘Their actions cannot change the political situation in Russia’; ‘Their actions cannot influence how other countries treat Russia’; and ‘Russians living in Russia do not want to hear the opinions of Russians who live abroad’. Around 28% of this group then chose the first reason. Those who expressed a view that was not in our set of reasons spoke of a feeling of being overwhelmed by the situation and said that they no longer identify with Russia and that ‘politics is for politicians’.

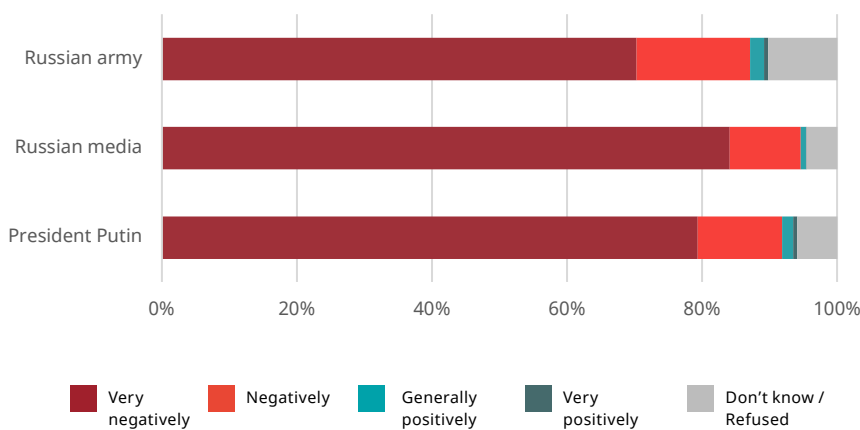
### Highly critical about Russian politics

We also asked respondents to give their evaluations of President Vladimir Putin, the Russian army, and the Russian media. Unsurprisingly, their ratings of Russian institutions were very low (► FIGURE 10). As in Russia itself, the Russian army still receives the least negative ratings, relatively speaking, with the worst ratings reserved for the Russian media. Eighty-four per cent express very negative views of the media, a similar share gives very poor ratings of the president, and 70% are equally critical of the army. The share of respondents who avoided giving any rating was also highest in the case of the army.

Looking at individual institutions, it is noteworthy that male respondents are less hostile to President Putin and give a much lower rating to the army. Those with lower levels of education also tended to express higher trust in all of these institutions, along with those aged 25 to 49. Still, very few respondents in any category expressed positive attitudes towards any Russian institutions.

**FIGURE 10**  
**Armenia: How do you rate the activities of the following individuals and / or institutions?**

Как Вы оцениваете деятельность следующих лиц и/или институтов?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

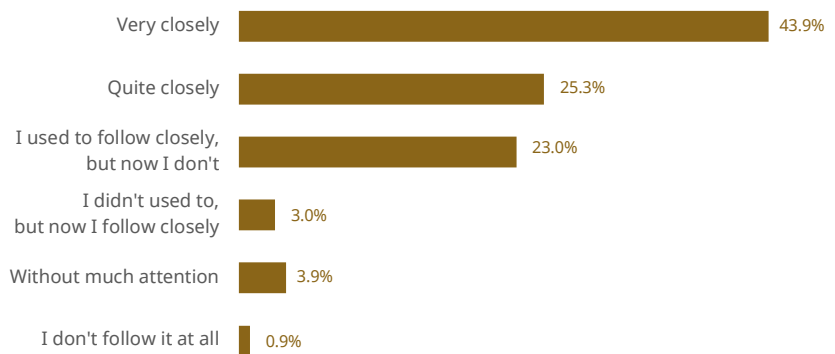
### Waning interest in Russia's war in Ukraine

Interest in the war is flagging among Russians in Armenia (► FIGURE 11). Even if a clear majority follows the situation ‘very closely’ or ‘quite closely’, nearly a quarter stated at the end of 2022 that they ‘used to follow [the war] closely, but don’t any longer’. This is consistent with our finding that many respondents in Armenia say they used to feel personally responsible for Russia’s political future but now do not, and reflects the fact that a high share of respondents in Armenia left Russia in early 2022. Forty-seven per cent of those who left before September 2022 continued to follow the war very or quite closely, as opposed to 41 % of those who left after September 2022.

FIGURE 11

#### Armenia: How closely have you been following the situation in Ukraine since the conflict started in February 2022?

Насколько внимательно Вы следили за ситуацией в Украине с момента начала конфликта в феврале 2022?

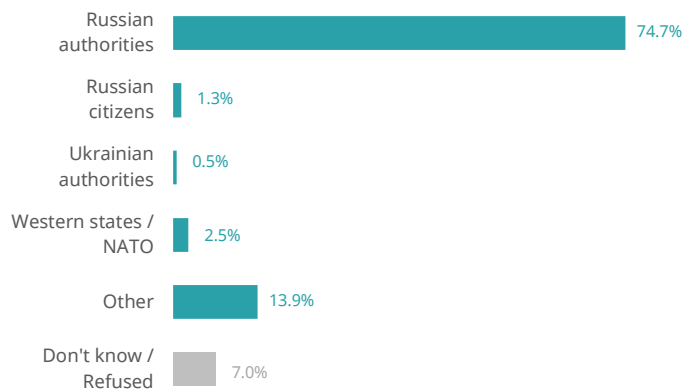


Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

FIGURE 12

#### Armenia: In your opinion, who is primarily responsible for the conflict in Ukraine?

На Ваш взгляд, кто несет главную ответственность за конфликт в Украине?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

Three-quarters of respondents in Armenia believe that the Russian authorities are primarily responsible for the war in Ukraine (► FIGURE 12). However, the share of those who selected ‘other’ as the responsible party or avoided the question altogether was fairly high. The open-ended responses convey a sense of shared responsibility; people frequently added comments like ‘everyone’ and ‘both parties, but Russia more’, or attributed guilt to the United States alongside Russia and Ukraine. Female respondents were most likely to state that the Russian authorities alone were to blame.

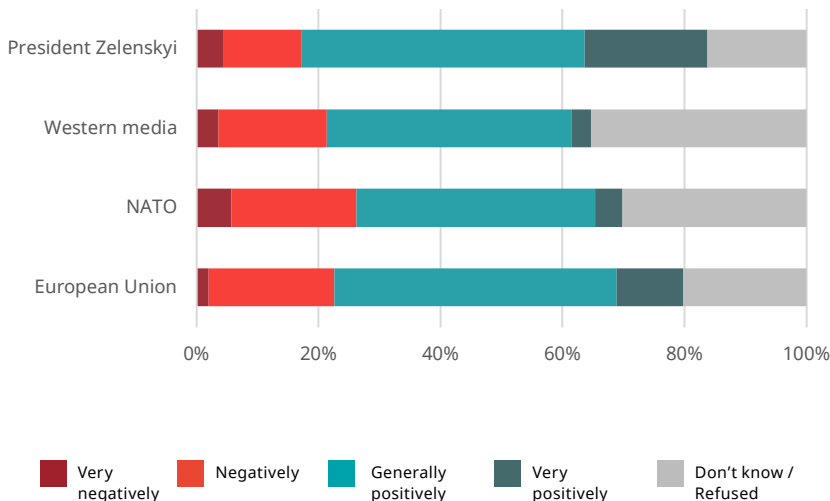
**International political actors: Uncertainty amidst positive ratings**

Ratings of both Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskyi and Western institutions like NATO were generally high. Respondents in Armenia were particularly well-disposed towards Zelenskyi: 20% rated him ‘very positively’ and 46% ‘generally positively’ (► FIGURE 13). However, nearly one in five respondents expressed uncertainty about Zelenskyi and gave ‘don’t know’ or ‘prefer not to answer’ responses to this question. Zelenskyi’s ratings were especially positive among respondents who left before the partial mobilisation and among those aged between 35 and 49.

A high proportion of respondents (around 30% in both cases) were unable or unwilling to provide an answer to the question of how they evaluated NATO or Western media. Overall, the EU received generally positive assessments, with 57% of respondents in Armenia being ‘very’ or ‘generally’ positive about the EU. Approval of Western media and NATO was significantly lower. This may reflect both a general mistrust in the media and a belief that NATO is at least partially responsible for escalating the war in Ukraine

**FIGURE 13**  
**Armenia: How do you rate the activities of the following individuals and / or institutions?**

Как Вы оцениваете деятельность следующих лиц и/или институтов?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 801 Russians in Armenia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

## Georgia: Families and more qualified opposition to the Russian regime

### Social values in line with the average young Russian

Attitudes towards same-sex relations among our Russian respondents in Georgia correspond broadly to those held by Russians of a similar age in Russia.<sup>17</sup> In Georgia, 58% of respondents stated that consenting adults should ‘definitely’ or ‘generally’ have the right to engage in same-sex relations, while 37% said they should not (► FIGURE 14). This is by and large in line with the attitudes of Russians aged 18 to 24 in Russia (53% approve, 39% disapprove), who are far more accepting of homosexuality than older Russians.

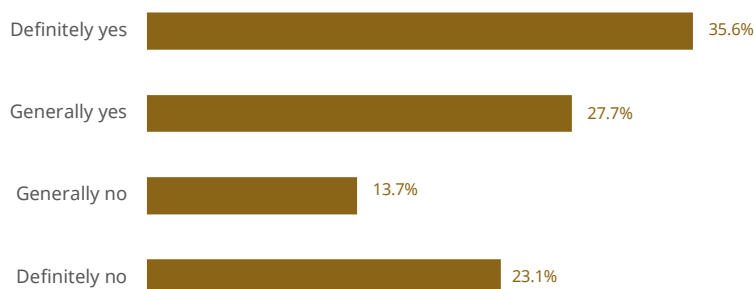
In the Georgian sample, approval of same-sex relations tends to be higher among single people and those with higher education. The aforementioned Levada survey also finds an important gender difference, with women being more likely to approve of same-sex relations (28% versus 20% for men). We did not, however, detect any significant gender differences in our results in Georgia.

Russians in Georgia are considerably more tolerant of homosexuality than the overall Georgian population. According to a 2017 Pew survey, 93% of Georgians believe that homosexuality should not be accepted by society, although young Georgians are more tolerant than those aged 35 and older.<sup>18</sup>

FIGURE 14

#### Georgia: Do you think that consenting adults have the right to enter into a relationship with people of the same sex?

Как Вы считаете, имеют ли право взрослые люди по взаимному согласию вступить в отношения с людьми того же пола?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

17 'Otnosheniye rossiyan k LGBT lyudyam', 15 October 2021, <https://www.levada.ru/2021/10/15/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-lgbt-lyudyam/>.

18 'Social views and morality', 10 May 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/05/10/social-views-and-morality/>.

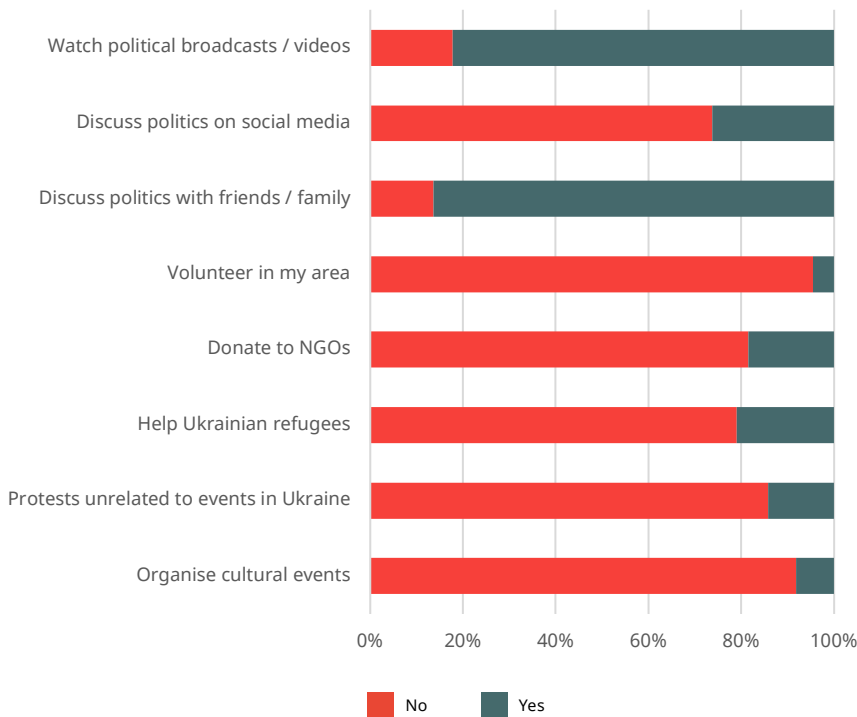
### Periodic political engagement in Russia and Georgia

We also asked Russian respondents in Georgia about their levels of political and civic engagement in the six months before leaving Russia. Only 36 % indicated that they had been involved in at least one of the following activities: participating in a protest unrelated to Ukraine; volunteering; donating to an NGO or helping Ukrainian refugees (► FIGURE 15). Nevertheless, at 14 %, the share of respondents who said they had participated in a protest unrelated to events in Ukraine reflects a far higher level of protest participation than is typical in Russia.

Individuals with higher education and those without children were more likely to report engaging in political or civic activities. This was also the case among those who left Russia before the partial mobilisation was declared. Respondents in a long-term partnership, as well as those between 18 and 24 years of age, were more likely to watch political news online, discuss politics with friends, or post political comments on social media. Overall, 92 % of the sample reported engaging in at least one of these activities.

**FIGURE 15**  
**Georgia: Were you involved in the following activities during the 6 months before you left Russia?**

Принимали ли Вы участие в следующих действиях в течение 6 месяцев до Вашего отъезда из России?



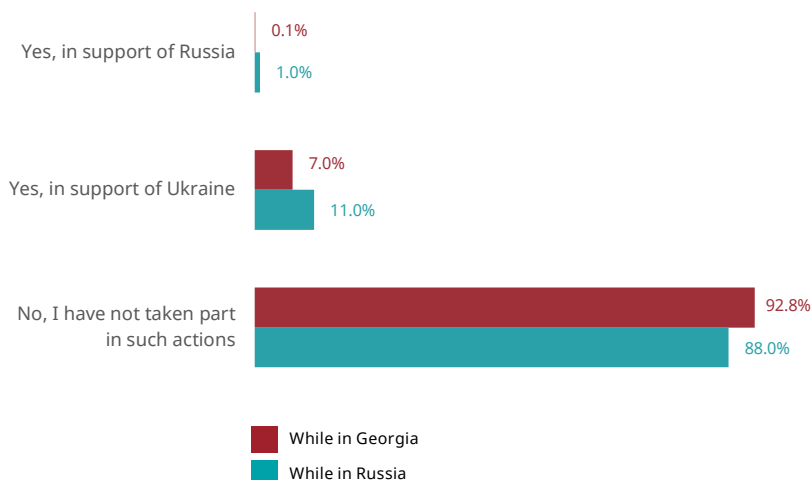
Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

11 % said they had participated in demonstrations against the war back in Russia.

When asked about their participation in demonstrations against Russia’s war in Ukraine, 11 % of respondents in Georgia said they had participated in such events back in Russia, while 7 % had taken part in anti-war protests since arriving in Georgia (► FIGURE 16). Several factors increased the likelihood of an individual participating in a pro-Ukraine demonstration while still living in Russia. Younger respondents, individuals from Moscow and St. Petersburg, and those who left before the declaration of the partial mobilisation were more likely to have protested in Russia. Among respondents aged 18 to 24, 14 % declared that they had participated in anti-war protests compared to 7 % of those aged 35 to 49. The level of protest participation was quite high among those who left between January and September 2022 (15 %) and much lower among those who left Russia after September 2022 (8 %).

**FIGURE 16**  
**Georgia: Have you taken part in demonstrations in support of or against the war (Russia’s ‘special military operation’)?**

Принимали ли Вы участие в акциях в поддержку или против войны (специальной военной операции России)?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

Regarding participation in pro-Ukraine demonstrations while in Georgia, we observe similar trends in age and time of departure. Individuals who left before the partial mobilisation were more likely to have protested abroad: 12 % compared to just 4 % of those who left afterwards. Similarly, those aged 18 to 24 were twice as likely to have participated in protests in Georgia than respondents in the 35–49 age group (10 % vs 5 %).

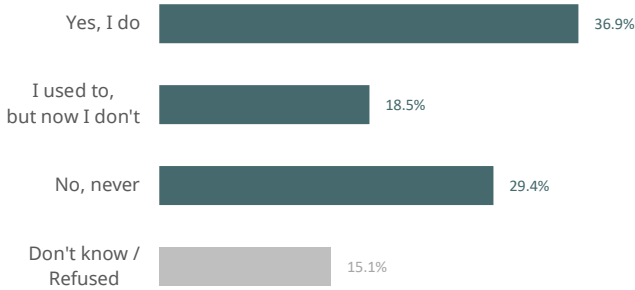
The share of respondents in Georgia who reported feeling responsible for Russia’s political future is well below 40 % (► FIGURE 17). The share of those who have never felt such a sense of responsibility is almost 30 %, while a considerable fraction did not know how to react to the question. Women and respondents interviewed in Tbilisi more frequently reported feeling a sense of personal responsibility than men and those who were interviewed in Batumi.



FIGURE 17

**Georgia: Do you feel personally responsible for Russia's political future?**

Чувствуете ли Вы личную ответственность за политическое будущее России?

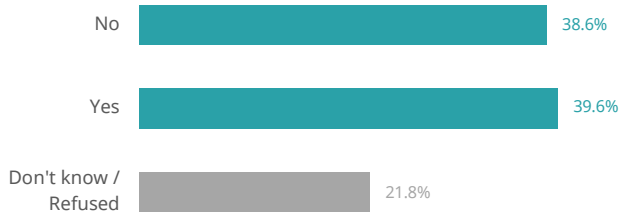


Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

FIGURE 18

**Georgia: Do you think that Russians living abroad are obliged to take action to influence the political situation in Russia?**

Считаете ли Вы, что россияне, проживающие за рубежом, обязаны участвовать в деятельности, чтобы повлиять на политическую ситуацию в России?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

In Georgia, respondents were evenly split on the question of whether Russians abroad are obliged to take action to influence the political situation in Russia: nearly 40% said they are, while another 40% said they are not. The remaining respondents were undecided (► FIGURE 18).

Forty per cent of respondents who said Russians are obliged to act believe that their actions would 'Send a signal to other countries about what Russian citizens are thinking'. Another 27% indicated that 'Their actions can change the political situation in Russia', and a further 20% said that they would 'Send a symbolic message to Russians who remain in Russia'.

Respondents who felt that Russians are not obliged to act most often expressed a sense of disillusionment, with 40% agreeing that 'Their actions

cannot change the political situation in Russia'. The two other options in our set of reasons, namely that 'Their actions cannot influence how other countries treat Russia' and that 'Russians living in Russia do not want to hear the opinions of Russians who live abroad', were chosen by roughly 15% of respondents respectively. Many of those respondents who gave their own answer to this question indicated that they did not feel personally responsible for Russia's political future.

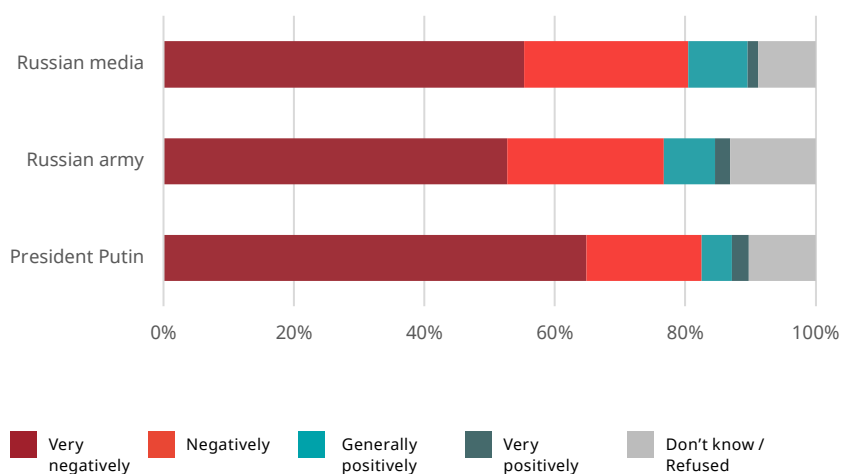
### Generally critical of Russian politics

Respondents' assessments of key Russian institutions, while generally negative, show some variation. The army is the institution that received the least negative rating, relatively speaking, with 52% very critical of it (► FIGURE 19). President Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, received a very negative rating from 64% of respondents. It should be noted that the share of respondents who chose not to answer questions about how they regard Russian institutions was high: 13% for the Russian army and 9% for the media. Age is a key factor in these differences, with respondents aged 35 and older generally expressing higher approval ratings for all three institutions. Furthermore, respondents without higher education and those interviewed in Tbilisi were generally less negative about Russian institutions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who left Russia after the declaration of the partial mobilisation were particularly negative towards the Russian army.

President Vladimir Putin received a very negative rating from 64% of respondents.

**FIGURE 19**  
**Georgia: How do you rate the activities of the following individuals and / or institutions?**

Как Вы оцениваете деятельность следующих лиц и / или институтов?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

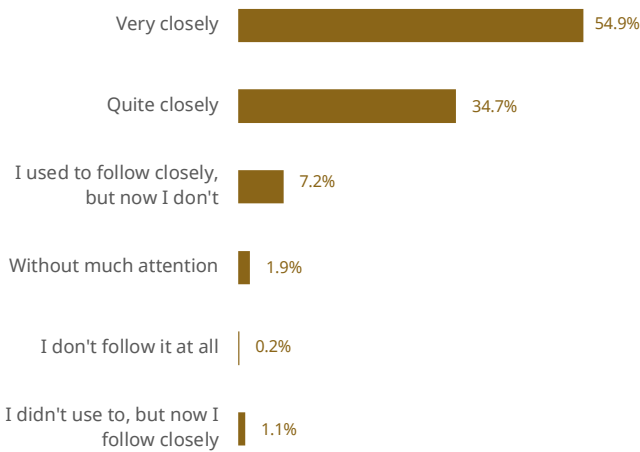
**Persistently high level of interest in Russia’s war in Ukraine**

Respondents in Georgia—on the whole slightly older and having arrived from Russia more recently than their counterparts in Armenia—tended to follow the war in Ukraine ‘very closely’ or ‘quite closely’ (► FIGURE 20). This was particularly true of older respondents and those who left after September 2022.<sup>19</sup> Only a small share stated that they are no longer interested in following the war.

Two-thirds of respondents in Georgia believe that the Russian authorities are primarily responsible for the war in Ukraine (► FIGURE 21). A much smaller share (11%) assigned blame to Western states/NATO and another 5% to Ukraine. Among those who gave their own response to this question, the most prevalent view was that both sides are at fault. Those who blame the Russian authorities are typically the youngest respondents, aged 18 to 24, and from Moscow and St. Petersburg. To illustrate that difference, 68% of the youngest respondents held the Russian authorities responsible, compared to just 52% of those aged 35 to 49.

**FIGURE 20**  
**Georgia: How closely have you been following the situation in Ukraine since the conflict started in February 2022?**

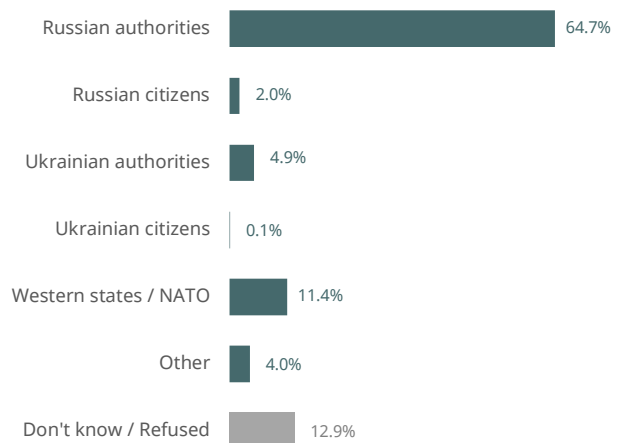
Насколько внимательно Вы следили за ситуацией в Украине с момента начала конфликта в феврале 2022?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

**FIGURE 21**  
**Georgia: In your opinion, who is primarily responsible for the conflict in Ukraine?**

На Ваш взгляд, кто несет главную ответственность за конфликт в Украине?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

<sup>19</sup> By comparison, in a nationally representative poll conducted in Russia by the Levada Center in November 2022, only 23% of Russians indicated that they follow the war ‘closely’, while 35% replied they follow it ‘rather closely’, cf. ‘Konflikt s Ukrainoy: noyabr’ 2022 goda’, 2 December 2022, <https://www.levada.ru/2022/12/02/konflikt-s-ukrainoj-noyabr-2022-goda/>.

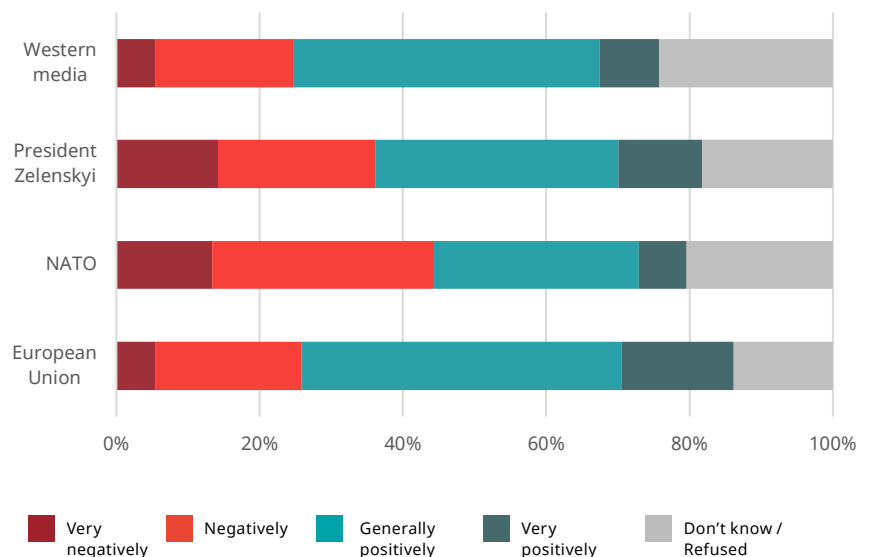
### Overall approval for international political actors

Turning to opinions about international political actors, respondents in Georgia tended to express positive views of both Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskyi and Western institutions like the EU (► FIGURE 22). The most positive ratings were given to Western media (51%) and the EU (60%). However, significant shares of respondents avoided giving an assessment of the EU (13%) and Western media (24%). In addition, 46% of respondents rated Ukrainian president Zelenskyi positively, while NATO received a positive rating from just one-third of respondents (with an additional 20% of respondents undecided).

Overall, ratings for Western institutions tended to be lowest among respondents aged 35 to 49, those with children, and those who migrated from cities with more than 1 million inhabitants that were not Moscow or St. Petersburg. This holds for all four of the institutions we inquired about and shows how researchers must take care before automatically assigning pro-Western attitudes to those who fled Russia in the wake of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**FIGURE 22**  
**Georgia: How do you rate the activities of the following individuals and / or institutions?**

Как Вы оцениваете деятельность следующих лиц и / или институтов?



Source: Data from ZOIS / Harvard / FES survey of 853 Russians in Georgia, 18+, conducted in December 2022 (CAPI)

## Conclusion

The exodus from Russia that began in early 2022 will have major consequences for Russian society for decades to come. The Russian migrants we interviewed in Armenia and Georgia are overwhelmingly opposed to Vladimir Putin and his war against Ukraine. A considerable share have also engaged in explicitly political actions in opposition to this war. Putin, meanwhile, has called those who oppose Russia's war against Ukraine a pro-Western 'fifth column' populated by 'scum' and 'traitors'.<sup>20</sup> Within Russia, there has been some debate as to whether those who have left Russia should even be allowed to return.<sup>21</sup>

Data from our survey and others like it suggest that the Russians who have left in this mass emigration are younger, more educated, more politically active, and hold significantly more liberal social values than the overall Russian population. We might imagine that internal resistance to the Kremlin could decrease with the exit of this segment of Russian society, while opposition to Putin's regime from Russians abroad could increase going forward. In economic terms, the comparison to the 'brain drain' of the 1990s seems apt, as much of the country's most educated, energetic, and creative segment has relocated abroad. It seems likely that the longer Russia's war in Ukraine continues, the fewer Russians will return to their country—at least in the near future.

In economic terms, the comparison to the 'brain drain' of the 1990s seems apt.

The implications of this mass movement of people are wide-ranging. For one thing, the exodus of Russians—along with Ukrainians fleeing the war and Belarusians fleeing a dictatorship—has had a profound impact on receiving societies. Those who left often prefer to settle in big cities, where housing markets have been under strain for decades. Education and healthcare systems, too, may face challenges in dealing with the influx of people. The war in Ukraine is certain to reshape the face of receiving societies, raising questions about how host countries should respond to and integrate the newcomers. This integration process has the potential to become a contentious political issue, particularly in Europe.

At present we can only speculate as to the impact this emigration will have on the Russian political system. On the one hand, mass emigration from Russia might have a stabilising effect on the increasingly repressive regime, as those who oppose the war in Ukraine but cannot leave the country will probably be more cautious in their behaviour. On the other hand, a depleted Russian labour force is likely to result in economic distortions and shortages. Whether the Russian state can mitigate these negative effects in the long run, especially in the context of far-reaching sanctions, remains to be seen.

Lastly, the political impact of migrants on home and host societies is a topic that deserves close attention. Thanks to online communication, Russians abroad stay in close contact with friends and family members back home. This facilitates the circulation of political remittances. However, it remains unclear whether those who have recently left Russia will be able to transmit political norms or ideas back to their country of origin.

20 'Putin warns Russia against pro-Western "traitors" and scum', 16 March 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-warns-russia-against-pro-western-traitors-scum-2022-03-16/>.

21 'Nazad dorogi net', 10 March 2022, <https://ria.ru/20220310/emigratsiya-1777363843.html>.

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