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RESOURCE CENTER

LIFE OF RUSSIAN ÉMIGRÉS IN GEORGIA

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ABOUT CRRC-GEORGIA

CRRC-Georgia is a non-profit research organization which provides good data for public good. The organization's mission is to promote evidence-based discussions on pressing societal issues by producing reliable, up-to-date, and accessible data and analysis.

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DISCLAIMER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Georgia and the South Caucasus region, in general, have been among the most popular destinations for Russian migrants. Figures suggest the number of Russians who entered Georgia in 2022 amounts to more than a third of Georgia's total population. Rough estimates suggest that 100,000 of them stayed in Georgia.

The primary goal of the study was to portray a more nuanced picture of Russian citizens residing in Georgia in terms of their motivations for moving, their perceptions, and their political attitudes.

CRRC-Georgia, with financial support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), conducted a survey of 1,008 adult Russian citizens who moved to Georgia after February 2022. The data collection took place in April–May 2023. The findings cannot be generalized to the entire population of Russian citizens living in Georgia because the sample of respondents was not random or probability-based.

The study leads to the following conclusions:

Socio-demographic profile:

Interviewed Russian citizens who have moved to Georgia since the war are mostly young, well-educated, and employed. They are disproportionately men, urbanites, and IT workers.

Leaving Russia:

The interviewed Russians most frequently named the political situation in Russia, the conflict in Ukraine, and the announcement of 'partial' mobilization as the main reasons for leaving the homeland. An overwhelming majority of surveyed Russians do not plan to return to Russia in the near future. However, three out of four maintain regular contact with their relatives and friends who stayed in Russia, and one in four reports they have been temporarily back in Russia since they arrived in Georgia.

Attitudes towards Russia and other Russians:

Respondents mostly tend to exhibit negative feelings towards Russia in general. However, they are divided over trust in Russians who stayed in Russia; Particularly, half of the respondents trust them (49%), while the other half (47%) do not trust them.

Russian politics:

Surveyed Russians mostly continue to follow Russian politics. An overwhelming majority of them believe Russia is not a democracy at all, and, at the same time, a bulk of them disagree that maintaining order and stability is more important than having a democratic government.

On the one hand, Russians in the sample exhibit explicit distrust of the Russian government and evaluate Putin's performance sharply negatively. On the other hand, eight out of ten Russians evaluate Navalny's performance positively.

Moving to Georgia:

The primary reasons cited by the interviewed Russian citizens for selecting Georgia as their destination are security, affordability of living, and ease of accessibility to the country. The Russians in the sample overwhelmingly feel physically safe in Georgia and are largely satisfied with their lives.

When it comes to the duration of their stay in Georgia, half of the respondents plan to stay for more than a year, while one in four have not decided yet.

When it comes to the duration of their stay in Georgia, half of the respondents plan to stay for more than a year, while one in four have not decided yet.

Attitudes towards Georgia and Georgians:

Almost every Russian citizen interviewed exhibits positive feelings towards Georgia in general. Nine out of ten people trust Georgians, and seven out of ten report having Georgian friends. Examining differences across subgroups suggests Russians who came before the announcement of 'partial' mobilization tend to be more trusting toward Georgians.

Georgian politics:

Respondents believe Georgia is a democracy, but the majority of them also believe the Georgian democracy has significant flaws.

The majority of polled Russian citizens distrust Georgia's government and rate Prime Minister Garibashvili's performance negatively. In contrast, three out of every four people approve of President Zurabishvili's performance.

Russians who came before the announcement of 'partial' mobilization are more likely to think that Georgian democracy has major problems and negatively assess the performance of the PM of Georgia.

International actors:

Respondents' attitudes toward Western international actors are highly favorable. Eight out of ten Russians polled thought Zelensky performed well. Furthermore, the majority of them have favorable attitudes toward Ukraine (93%), the EU (92%), the United States (84%), and NATO (77%).

Political engagement after moving to Georgia:

In terms of political activities, the vast majority of Russian citizens in the sample discuss politics with their peers and watch political TV shows. However, less than half of respondents publicly express their political views, such as by writing about politics on social media or attending rallies or street demonstrations.

INTRODUCTION

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, an unprecedented number of Russians have fled their homeland.¹ Although the exact figure is unknown, estimates place the exodus in the millions. According to data from the UK Ministry of Defence, approximately 1.3 million people left Russia in 2022 alone.²

The South Caucasus region, particularly Georgia, has emerged as a popular destination for Russian emigrants, owing largely to its geographic proximity and a welcoming visa policy.³ Georgia shares a 900-kilometer de jure land border with Russia, and the magnitude of Russian migration is underscored by the long queues of vehicles at Georgia's northern frontier.⁴ As per the Georgian Interior Ministry, an astonishing 1.4 million Russians entered the country from February to December 2022, accounting for slightly over a third of Georgia's total population.⁵

It is important to note, however, that the actual number of Russians who have settled in Georgia is most likely much lower. According to preliminary estimates, approximately 100,000 Russian citizens chose to settle in Georgia as of December 2022.⁶

The recent influx of Russians into Georgia is often scrutinized in terms of socio-economic impacts, while the socio-political implications have not been as extensively explored.⁷ While some argue that this migration wave can fuel short-term economic growth, others express concerns about potential inflationary effects.⁸

Earlier inquiries about Russian migrants in Georgia indicate that they are typically younger, more educated, and hold more liberal and anti-Russian views than their Russian counterparts.⁹

¹ Aronova, "As More Russians Flee Over Putin's War on Ukraine, Other Countries Are Reaping the Economic Benefits."

² Ministry of Defence (United Kingdom), "Latest Defence Intelligence Update on the Situation in Ukraine - 7 May 2023."

³ Krawatzek, DeSisto, and Soroka, "Russians in the South Caucasus: Political Attitudes and the War in Ukraine."

⁴ Lomsadze, "Russian Draft Dodgers Queue at Georgian Border."

⁵ Ministry of Internal Affairs (Georgia), "საქართველოს სახელმწიფო საზღვარზე გადაადგილებული პირებისა და ტრანსპორტის სტატისტიკური მონაცემები (2022 წელი)."

⁶ Staske and Giucci, "Relocation of People from Russia and Belarus to Georgia: Results of 2nd Survey and Update of Economic Implications."

⁷ Kakachia and Kandelaki, "The Russian Migration to Georgia Threats or Opportunities?"

⁸ [Link](#).

⁹ Krawatzek, DeSisto, and Soroka, "Russians in the South Caucasus: Political Attitudes and the War in Ukraine"; Staske and Giucci, "Relocation of People from Russia and Belarus to Georgia: Results of 2nd Survey and Update of Economic Implications"; Kostenko et al., "The Russian Rhizome."

The following research report serves two purposes:

1. To supplement previous research by examining time trends in the socioeconomic activities of Russian citizens living in Georgia
2. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of Russians in Georgia, including motivations, perceptions, and political views

To probe the attitudes, views, and concerns of Russians residing in Georgia, CRRC-Georgia conducted a survey, interviewing a total of 1,008 adult (18+) Russian citizens who relocated to Georgia post-February 2022. Conducted in Russian, data collection took place in April–May 2023. It should be noted that the survey employed non-random, non-probability-based sampling; hence, its findings may not be generalized to the entire population of Russian citizens living in Georgia. In other words, any mention of Russian citizens throughout the report implies a reference to interviewed Russian citizens (i.e., 1008) and should not be interpreted as a claim about the whole population of Russian citizens residing in Georgia.

The structure of the report is as follows: The subsequent section discusses the methodological design, including data collection and analysis methods. The second section, forming the crux of the report, presents the primary findings. The report concludes with a summary, followed by a bibliography and appendices.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

To examine the attitudes, views, and issues of Russians residing in Georgia, CRRC-Georgia conducted a survey. Overall, 1,008 interviews were conducted with adult (18+) Russian citizens who came to Georgia after February 2022¹⁰. Probability sampling was not an option due to a lack of official information about Russian citizens living in Georgia. CRRC-Georgia chose a non-probability sample of respondents recruited through: a) CRRC's previous surveys in which respondents agreed to participate; b) Facebook advertisements; c) advertisements in Telegram channels; and d) in-person recruitment (more information on sampling can be found in Appendix 1). The survey cannot be considered representative of Russian citizens living in Georgia due to the non-probability sampling method used.

The survey was conducted in the Russian language. The data collection periods are the following: The telephone survey lasted from April 5 to April 18, the face-to-face survey lasted from May 1 to May 7, and the online survey lasted from April 20 to May 8. In order to ensure comparability with previous surveys of Russian migrants in Georgia, the research instrument contained some of the questions from studies of German Economic Team¹¹ and Re-Russia¹².

Data analysis

The analysis below makes use of multivariate regression models. The multivariate models examine statistically significant relationships between the outcomes and the following variables:

- Age group (less than 33, more than 33)
- Sex (male or female)
- Formal education level (secondary or lower, vocational, Bachelor's degree, Specialist degree, Master's degree)
- Settlement in Georgia (Tbilisi, Batumi, other)
- Previous residence in Russia (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, or other)
- Timing of arrival (before or after September 2022)
- Employment status in Georgia (working, not working)
- Ethnicity (ethnic Russian, not ethnic Russian)
- Monthly income in Georgia in USD (less than 1000, between 1000 and 2500, more than 2500)

The analysis also controlled for interview type (face-to-face, telephone, or online).

¹⁰ The sample consists of respondents who answered 50% of the questionnaire

¹¹ Staske and Giucci, "Relocation of People from Russia and Belarus to Georgia: Results of 2nd Survey and Update of Economic Implications."

¹² Kostenko et al., "The Russian Rhizome."

FINDINGS

Leaving Russia

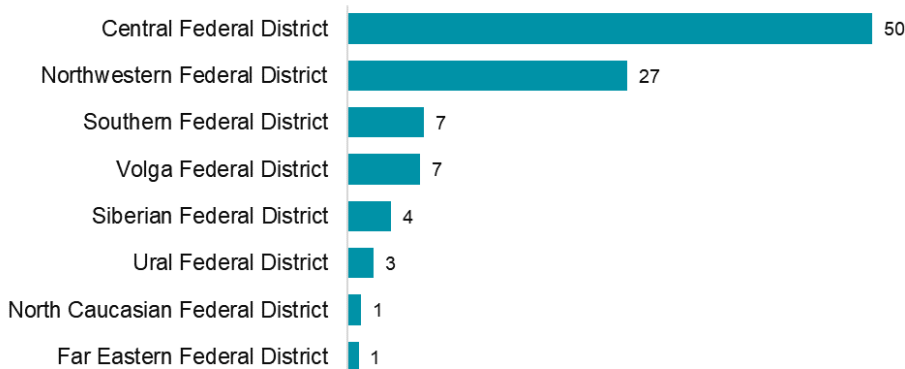
This subsection of findings discusses the main motivations for leaving Russia and what people think about returning to Russia. The most frequently cited reasons for leaving Russia are the country's political situation, the conflict in Ukraine, and the announcement of 'partial' mobilization. The Russian citizens polled are mostly from Moscow or Saint Petersburg, and they maintain regular contact with friends and relatives who remain in Russia. Furthermore, the majority of them will not be returning to Russia anytime soon. However, every fifth Russian says they have been temporarily back in Russia since they arrived in Georgia.

The interviewed Russians who left their homeland for Georgia mostly come from Central and Northwestern Federal Districts and more particularly, from the two largest cities of Russia: Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Half of the respondents (50%) come from Central Federal District and 27% come from Northwestern Federal District. More than a third of the respondents (36%) lived in Moscow before moving to Georgia. Slightly less than a quarter of the interviewed Russians (23%) lived in Saint Petersburg. 9% lived in Moscow Oblast, and 3-3% lived in Krasnodar and Rostov Oblasts. All the other federal subjects in Russia were named by less than 3% of the respondents.

Despite that, Russian citizens residing in Georgia come from various federal districts and subjects. In total, 8 different federal districts and 58 different federal subjects of Russia were named by at least one respondent in our sample, highlighting the diversity of geographical locations that Russians living in Georgia come from.

Figure 1. What was your last place of permanent residence in Russia?

(%, N=750)



The sample is diverse in terms of satisfaction with life in Russia, too. Roughly half of the respondents (47%) reported that they were very or quite satisfied with their life in Russia before coming to Georgia. 16% of the interviewed Russians said they were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied. Approximately a third of the respondents (36%) said they were very or rather unsatisfied with their life in Russia.

Figure 2. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your life in Russia before coming here?

(%, N=1005)



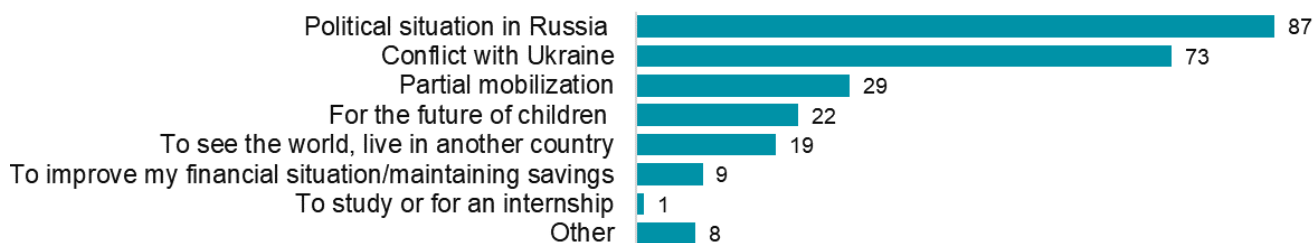
As for the main reasons for leaving Russia, similar to other surveys of the relocated Russians in Georgia,¹³ the political situation in Russia, the war in Ukraine, and the ‘partial’ mobilization in September 2022 are most frequently cited. An overwhelming majority (87% of the respondents) mentioned the political situation in Russia. 73% named conflict with Ukraine. Slightly less than a third of the interviewed Russians (29%) said the announcement of ‘partial’ mobilization was one of the main reasons they left Russia.

When it comes to other reasons, every fifth Russian said they left Russia for the future of their children (22%) or to see the world and live in another country (19%). 9% named financial situation, and 1% named studying or internship. Other reasons were named by fewer people.

Figure 3. What is the main reason for leaving Russia?

Multiple answers were allowed

(%, N=1006)



¹³ ZOIS

Another study of the current Russian migrants suggests that 16% of them returned to Russia temporarily to 'set their affairs in order'. This survey verifies this finding: Every fifth Russian (20%) said they traveled back to Russia since they had moved to Georgia.

Figure 4. After moving to Georgia, have you traveled back to Russia?

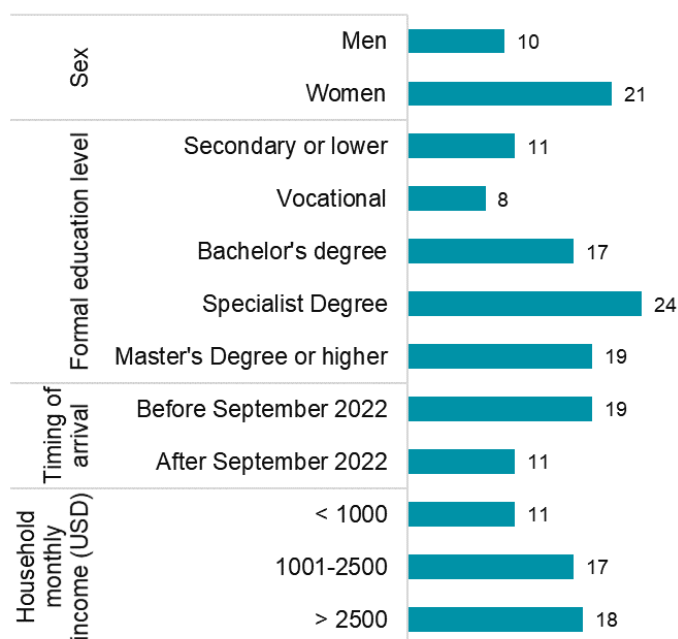
(%, N=857)



According to statistical analysis, women, people with higher education, Russians who moved to Georgia before the 'partial' mobilization, and Russians whose monthly income is more than 1000 USD are more likely to say that they have traveled back to Russia than men, people with lower levels of formal education, Russians who moved to Georgia after September 2022, and those whose monthly household income in Georgia is less than 1000 USD.

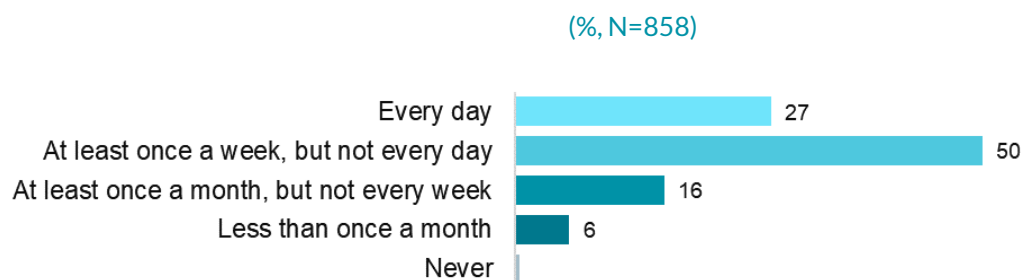
Figure 5. Been back to Russia - Regression model

(predicted probabilities)



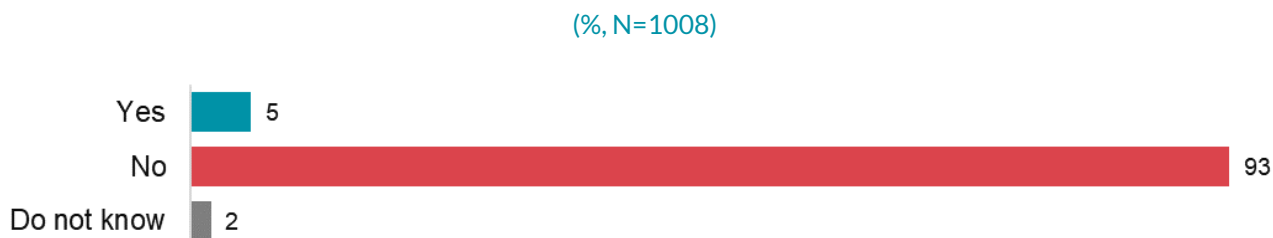
The interviewed Russians maintain regular contact with their friends and relatives who stayed in Russia. Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents (27%) said they spoke with their friends and relatives in Russia daily. Half of the respondents said they communicated with them at least once a week. 16% said that they talked with friends and relatives in Russia at least once a month, but not every week. Fewer people said they talked with their friends and relatives less frequently.

Figure 6. How often do you talk with friends and relatives who stayed in Russia?



Russians in Georgia do not plan to go back to Russia soon. An overwhelming majority of the interviewed Russians (93%) are not going to go back to Russia in the near future.

Figure 7. In the near future, are you going to return to Russia?



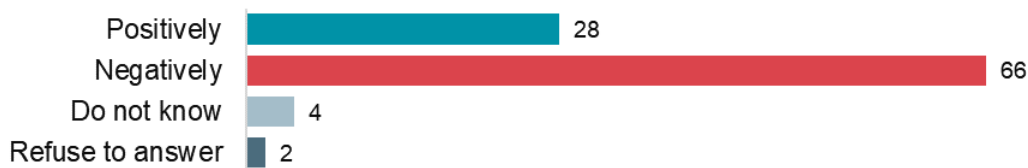
Attitudes towards Russia and Russians

The findings' second section focuses on Russians' attitudes toward Russia and the Russian people. According to the study, two-thirds of respondents have negative feelings toward Russia, and they are divided on trust in Russians who have stayed in Russia; half trust them, while the other half do not.

When asked about their general feelings towards Russia, the interviewed Russians tend to feel negative. Two-thirds (66%) of the Russians in the sample reported feeling negatively toward Russia. Slightly more than a quarter of them (28%) feel positive, while 6% do not know and refuse to answer the question.

Figure 8. How do you generally feel about Russia?

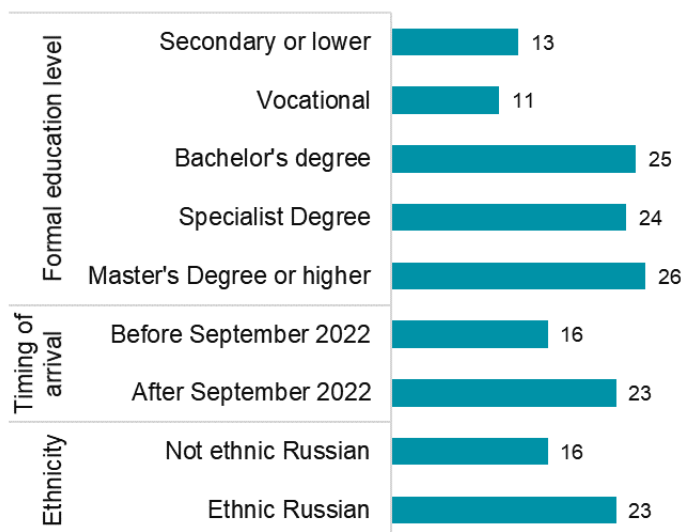
(%, N=856)



After controlling for other socio-demographic variables, statistical analysis suggests that Russian citizens with higher levels of formal education, those who arrived in Georgia after the 'partial' mobilization, and ethnic Russians have a more positive attitude toward Russia than Russian citizens with lower levels of formal education, Russians who arrived in Georgia before September 2022, and Russian citizens who are not ethnic Russians.

Figure 9. Positive feeling towards Russia - Regression model

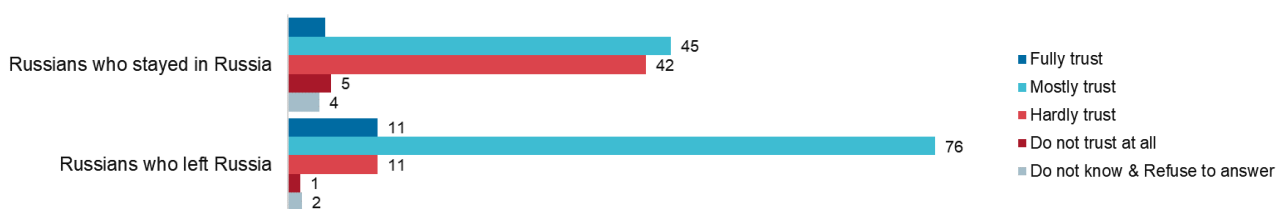
(predicted probabilities)



In line with previous rounds of surveys,¹⁴ Russians residing in Georgia who were sampled in the current survey are split over trusting Russians who stayed in Russia and tend to mostly trust Russians who fled their homeland. 49% of the respondents fully or mostly trust Russians who stayed in Russia, while the other half (47%) hardly trust them or do not trust them at all. As for Russians who left Russia, 76% of the interviewed Russians living in Georgia say they mostly trust.

Figure 10. To what extent do you trust or distrust ...

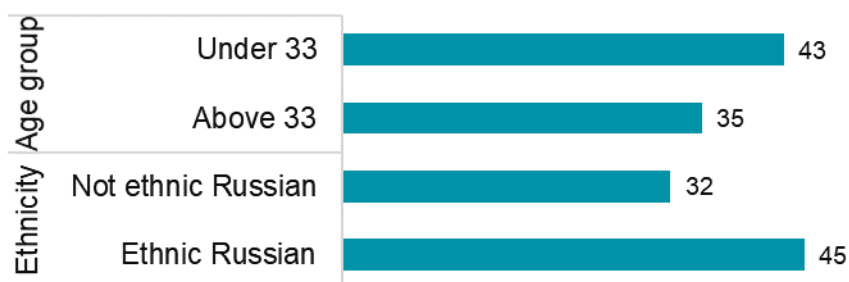
(%, N=1008)



According to regression analysis, younger people and ethnic Russians are more trusting of Russians who stayed in the country than more senior respondents and Russian nationals who are not ethnic Russians. Trust in Russians who have left the country is unaffected by age, gender, location in Georgia, formal education level, or timing of arrival.

Figure 11. Trust Russians who stayed - Regression model

(predicted probabilities)



¹⁴ Kostenko et al., "The Russian Rhizome."

Moving to Georgia

This subsection discusses the main motivations for moving to Georgia, as well as their sense of satisfaction and safety while there. According to the survey, the interviewed Russian citizens are primarily located in Georgia's urban districts of Tbilisi and Batumi. Most people chose Georgia as their destination because of its security, affordability of living, and ease of getting there. Furthermore, they feel physically safe and are generally content with their lives in Georgia. In terms of length of stay, half of the Russians polled plan to stay for more than a year, while a quarter are undecided.

The interviewed Russians have primarily resided in the capital of Georgia, and only a tiny minority of them have a residence permit. Nine out of ten Russians (94%) do not have a residence permit in Georgia, while only 6% do. Eight out of ten interviewed Russians (80%) live in Tbilisi,¹⁵ 15% live in Batumi, and the remaining 5% live in other areas of Georgia, such as Kutaisi, Kobuleti, Rustavi, etc. Of those Russians who live in Tbilisi (i.e., 80% of the respondents), more than a third live in the Saburtalo district (35%), 12% in Mtatsminda, and 11–11% in Vake and Isani. Other districts of Tbilisi were reported by less than 10% of the Russians residing in Tbilisi.

Figure 12. In which settlement do you permanently reside in Georgia?

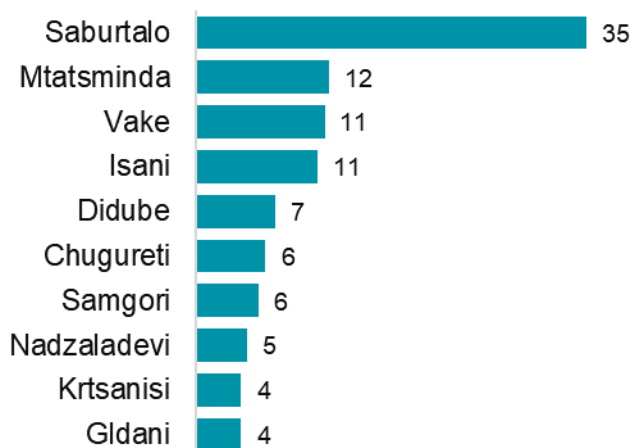
(%, N=1008)



Figure 13. In which district do you reside in Tbilisi?

Out of 80% who live in Tbilisi

(%, N=802)

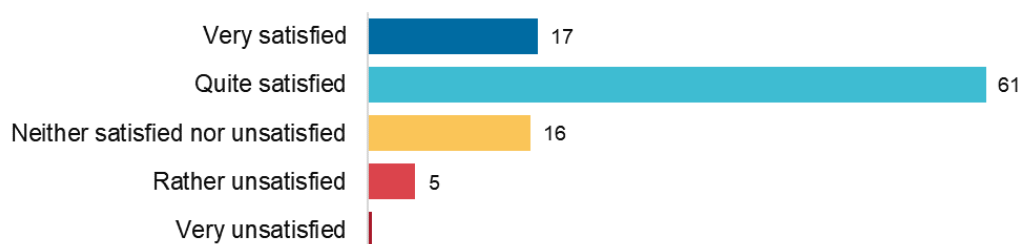


¹⁵ After excluding face-to-face interviews, which were held in Tbilisi only, we still got 77% of the respondents living in Tbilisi.

The majority of Russians (78%) say they are very or quite satisfied with their life in Georgia. 16% are neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, whereas up to 6% of the interviewed Russians report that they are very or rather unsatisfied with their life in Georgia.

Figure 14. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you now with your life in Georgia?

(%, N=1005)



All else being equal, Russians who arrived before the announcement of ‘partial’ mobilization in September 2022 and people with higher reported monthly income are more satisfied with their lives in Georgia than people who came after September 2022 and people with less than 1000 USD monthly income in Georgia.

Figure 15. Satisfaction with life in Georgia - Regression model

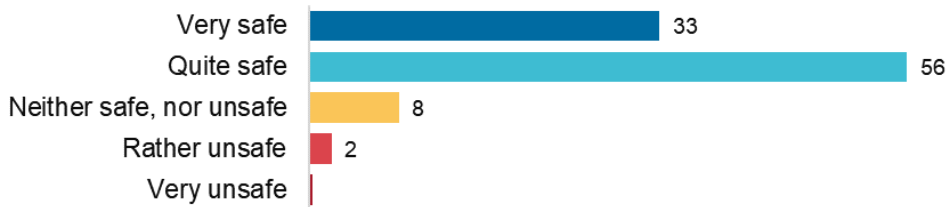
(predicted probabilities)



Moreover, Russians feel largely physically secure living in Georgia. A third of the respondents (33%) said they felt very safe, while 56% said they felt quite safe living in Georgia. 8% contended that they felt neither safe nor unsafe, and up to 3% of the sample said they felt very unsafe or rather unsafe physically in Georgia.

Figure 16. How physically safe or unsafe do you feel in Georgia?

(%, N=1008)



Statistical analysis suggests, all else equal, Russians living in Batumi tend to feel more physically safe than Russians living in Tbilisi as well as in other areas of Georgia.

Figure 17. Feeling physically safe in Georgia - Regression model

(predicted probabilities)

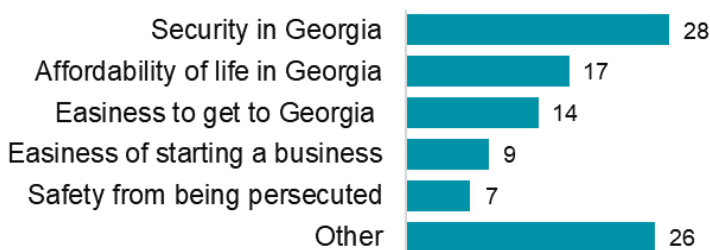


The poll also asked respondents to name the primary reasons for choosing Georgia as their destination. 28% of the respondents mentioned security in Georgia as one of the main motivations. 17% named affordability of life and 14% said easiness to get to Georgia. Less than 10% of respondents listed any of the other reasons.

Figure 18. What was the main reason for choosing Georgia as the final destination for your relocation?

Multiple answers were allowed

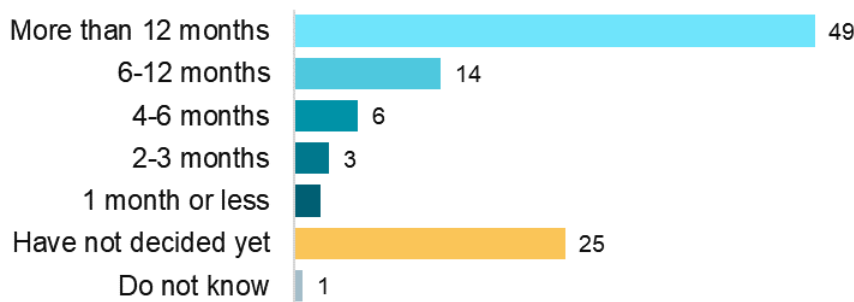
(%, N=1008)



Respondents are divided about the length of their stay in Georgia, with a sizable proportion still undecided. Half of those polled (49%) intend to stay in Georgia for at least a year. 14% of the Russians polled plan to stay in Georgia for more than six months but less than a year. 6% of those polled intend to stay for more than 4 months but no longer than 6 months. Other periods were noted by fewer than 5% of the population. A quarter of the Russians polled (25%) say they haven't decided how long they will stay in Georgia.

Figure 19. How long do you plan to stay in Georgia?

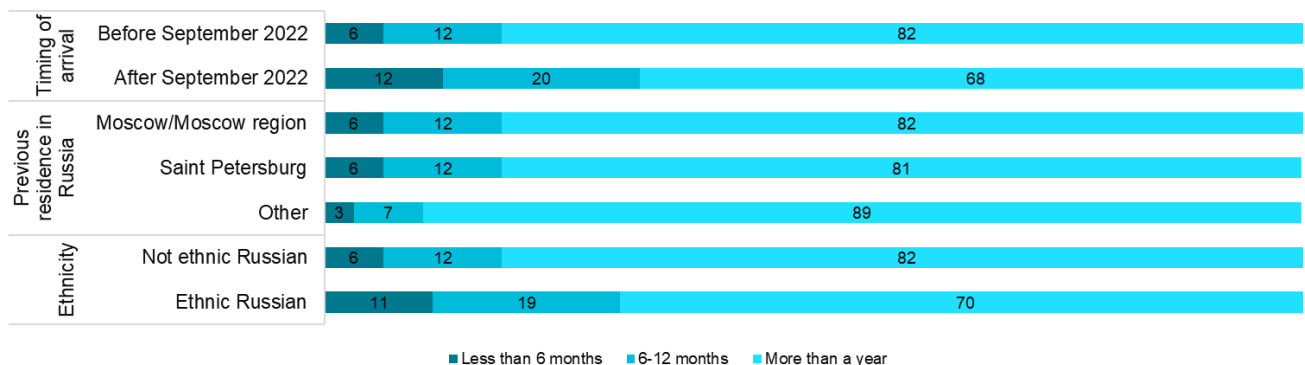
(%, N=1000)



Ordered logistic regression suggests that people who moved to Georgia before the announcement of 'partial' mobilization are 14 percentage points more likely than Russians who came to Georgia after September 2022 to say that they are going to stay in Georgia for more than a year. Moreover, Russians from Moscow and Saint Petersburg are statistically significantly less likely to say that they are going to stay in Georgia for more than a year. Additionally, Russian citizens who are not ethnic Russians are 12 percentage points more likely than ethnic Russians to say that they are going to stay in Georgia for more than a year.

Figure 20. Self-reported duration of stay in Georgia - Regression model

(predicted probabilities)



Attitudes towards Georgia and Georgians

The fourth part deals with the Russians' general attitude towards Georgia and Georgians. Russians predominantly exhibit positive feelings towards Georgia and nine out of them trust residents of Georgia. Three out of four Russians say that they have a Georgian friend.

As opposed to their mostly negative feelings towards Russia, an overwhelming majority of the interviewed Russians display positive feelings towards Georgia. An absolute majority (98%) of the surveyed Russians indicate positive feelings towards Georgia in general.

Figure 21. How do you generally feel about Georgia?

(%, N=853)



This study reconfirms the findings of previous studies of the current Russian migrants in the South Caucasus that they mostly trust residents of their host country.¹⁶ Nine out of ten interviewed Russians (91%) fully or mostly trust residents of Georgia, while only 8% say that they do not trust Georgians at all or hardly trust them.

Figure 22. To what extent do you trust or distrust residents of Georgia?

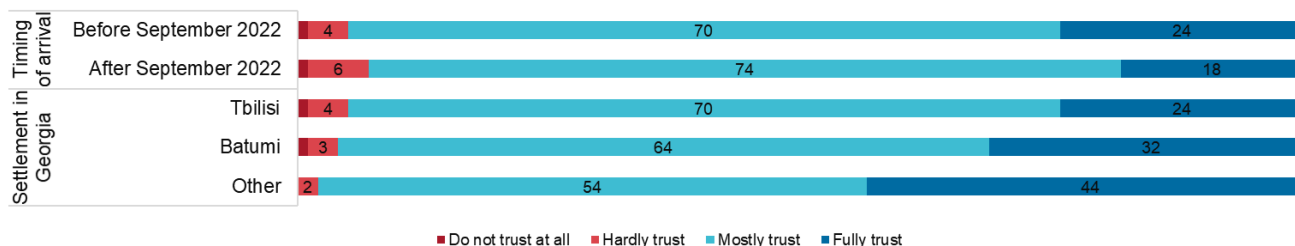
(%, N=1007)



¹⁶ Kostenko et al., "The Russian Rhizome."

According to an ordered logistic regression model, people who arrived before September 2022 and Russians who live outside of Tbilisi are more likely to report full trust towards Georgians, as opposed to people who arrived after September 2022 or Russians residing in Tbilisi.

Figure 23. Trust towards Georgians - Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



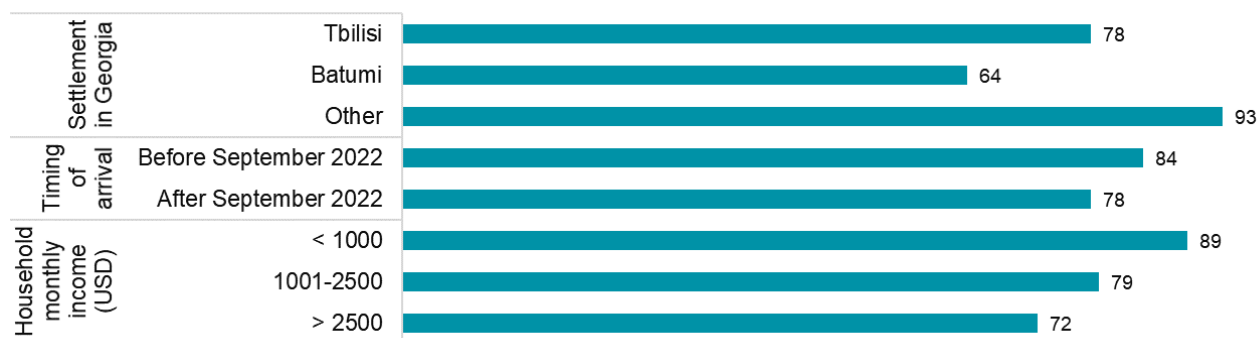
When it comes to having a friend in a host country, more than two-thirds of surveyed Russians (74%) argue that they have a Georgian friend. 44% of the interviewed Russians reported having a Georgian friend before their arrival to Georgia after February 2022. More than half of the respondents (57%) stated they made new Georgian acquaintances after moving to the country.

Figure 24. Having or acquiring Georgian friends
(%, N=999)



Regression analysis suggests, all else being equal, that people who do not live in Batumi, Russians who came earlier, and those with lower monthly income are more likely to have a Georgian friend than Russians living in Batumi, those who came to Georgia after September 2022, and people with higher monthly income.

Figure 25. Having Georgian friends - Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



Political attitudes and activities

The subsequent section is divided into four subsections. The first subsection covers the attitudes of the interviewed Russian citizens regarding Russian politics and political figures. An overwhelming majority of respondents think Russia is not a democracy at all, distrust the Russian government, and evaluate Putin's performance negatively. On the other hand, eight out of ten Russian citizens evaluate Navalny's performance positively.

The second is about Georgian politics. Nine out of ten Russian immigrants believe Georgia is a democracy, but half of them say it has major problems. The respondents tend to distrust the government of Georgia and assess the performance of the Georgian PM rather negatively. At the same time, three out of four evaluate the performance of the Georgian president positively.

The third subsection deals with the perspectives of respondents regarding international actors. They also harbor particularly positive attitudes towards Ukraine, its president, and other Western actors. Eight out of ten interviewed Russians assessed Zelensky's performance positively. The majority of them display positive feelings towards Ukraine, the EU, the US, and NATO.

The fourth is about the Russians' engagement in politics since moving to Georgia. According to its findings, Russian citizens have remained quite engaged in politics since they arrived in Georgia. Nine out of ten Russians discuss politics with peers, and eight out of ten watch TV programs about politics. However, when it comes to expressing political views publicly, four out of ten people write about politics on social media, and a slightly smaller proportion say they have attended a rally since moving to Georgia.

Russian politics

In line with an earlier study that suggested that this wave of Russian migrants was heavily politicized, this survey finds that Russians residing in Georgia closely follow socio-political developments in Russia. More specifically, 94% of the respondents said that they followed current political and social events in Russia.

Russians residing in Georgia do not think that ensuring stability and order is more important for a government than being democratic. The survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that maintaining order in a country is more important than having a democratic government. Three out of four Russians (75%) completely disagree with the proposition, 14% partially disagree, 8% partially agree, and only 1% fully agree with the statement.

Further analysis reveals there are no statistically significant differences across socio-demographic groups in terms of views regarding maintaining order and having a democratic government.

Figure 26. To what extent do you agree or disagree that if a government maintains order and stability, it does not matter whether it is democratic or not?

(%, N=855)



As for the political regime in their home country, the surveyed Russians firmly believe Russia does not qualify as a democracy. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (94%) think that Russia is not a democracy at all. 2% say Russia is a democracy but with major problems, while only 1% claim it is a democracy with minor problems. 3% of the respondents either do not know or do not answer the question.

Figure 27. How democratic is Russia today?

(%, N=856)



Russian citizens residing in Georgia who ended up in our sample report overwhelming distrust towards the Russian government. Nine out of ten interviewed Russians (90%) report no trust at all towards the government of Russia. Trust towards the Russian government does not differ in terms of age group, sex, settlement in Georgia, formal education level, or timing of arrival in Georgia.

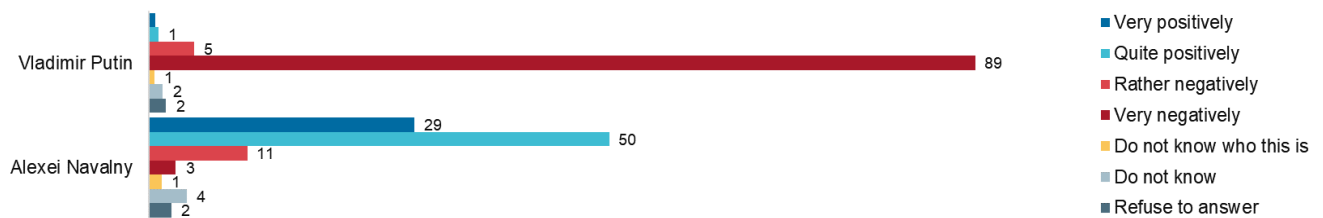
Figure 28. To what extent do you trust or distrust the government of Russia?

(%, N=1008)



The survey also asked respondents to assess the performance of two political leaders in Russia: Vladimir Putin and Alexey Navalny. Interviewed Russians tend to evaluate Putin’s activities very negatively and Navalny’s activities quite positively. Nine out of ten respondents (89%) assessed the activities of the current president of Russia very negatively, and 5% rather negatively. As for Alexey Navalny, half of the respondents (50%) assessed his activities quite positively, and slightly less than a third of the respondents assessed them very positively.

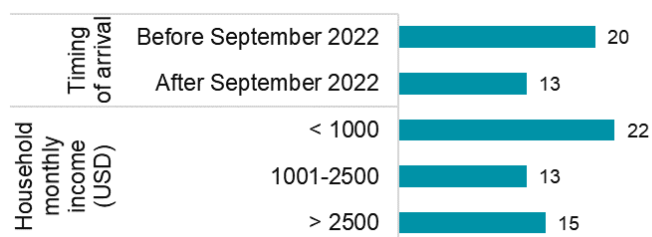
Figure 29. How would you assess the performance of Vladimir Putin and Alexei Navalny?
(%, N=861)



Further analysis suggests there are no statistically significant differences across socio-demographic groups in terms of assessment of Putin’s activities, i.e., regardless of their sex, age, education, ethnicity, income, and previous or current settlement, Russians in Georgia evaluate Putin's performance very negatively.

However, when it comes to Navalny’s performance, people who moved to Georgia before the announcement of ‘partial’ mobilization and Russians whose monthly income is less than 1000 USD are statistically significantly more likely to assess Navalny’s activities negatively than people who came to Georgia after September 2022 and Russians with a higher monthly income.

Figure 30. Negative assessment of Navalny's performance - Regression model
(predicted probabilities)

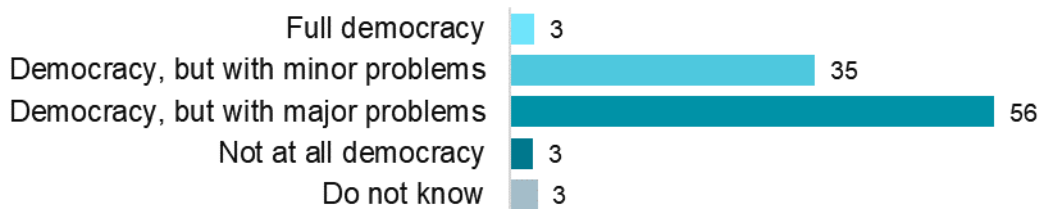


Georgian politics

Regarding the political regime in their host country, the interviewed Russians mostly agree that Georgia qualifies as a democracy, but they are divided over the scale of problems it has. More than a third of the respondents think Georgia is either a full democracy (3%) or a democracy with minor problems (35%). More than half of the interviewed Russians believe Georgia is a democracy with major problems (56%). 3% consider Georgia not at all democratic, and the remaining 3% do not know.

Figure 31. How democratic is Georgia today?

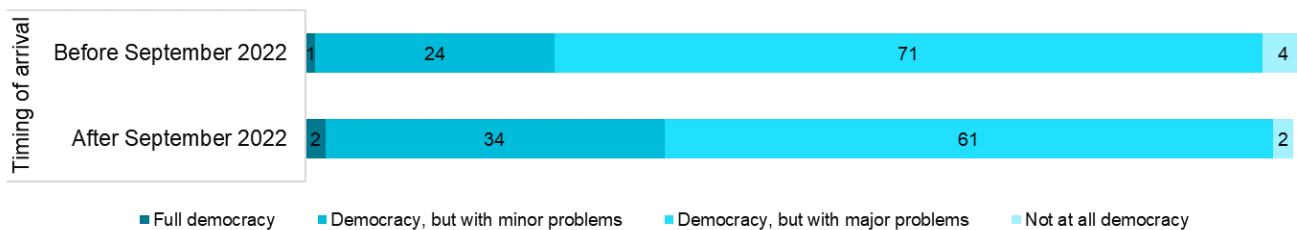
(%, N=853)



Statistical analysis suggests Russians who moved to Georgia before the announcement of ‘partial’ mobilization in September 2022 are more critical of the quality of Georgia’s democracy than Russians who came to Georgia after September 2022. More specifically, people who arrived before September 2022, in comparison to people who arrived after September 2022, are 10 percentage points more likely to think Georgian democracy has major problems and, at the same time, 10 percentage points less likely to believe that Georgia is a democracy with minor problems.

Figure 32. Views about Georgian democracy - Regression model

(predicted probabilities)



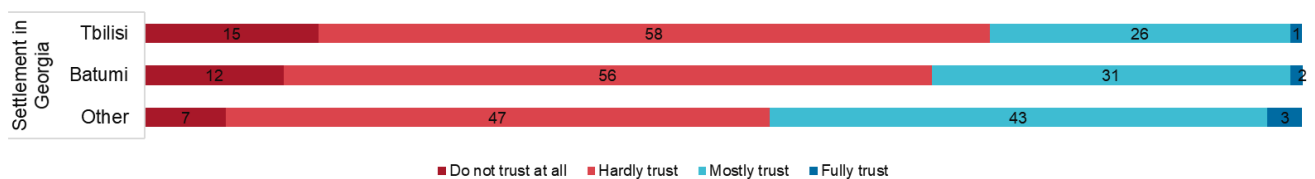
Like previous waves of surveys of the current Russian migrants,¹⁷ this study reaffirms that Russians tend to be split regarding the level of trust in the government of their host country. 39% of the interviewed Russians fully or mostly trust the government of Georgia, while 55% hardly trust the government or do not trust it at all.

Figure 33. To what extent do you trust or distrust the government of Georgia?
(%, N=1008)



Further detailed analysis of subgroups of Russian migrants suggests that Russians living outside of Tbilisi are statistically significantly more likely to trust the government of Georgia than Russians who live in the capital of Georgia.

Figure 34. Trust towards the government of Georgia - Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



The survey also asked Russians to assess the performance of the head of the government of Georgia (the prime minister) and the head of the state of Georgia (the president). It must be noted that the prime minister of Georgia has been widely criticized recently for being accommodating to Russian interests. While the President of Georgia has been a vocal critic of the government's positions that some consider pro-Russia.¹⁸

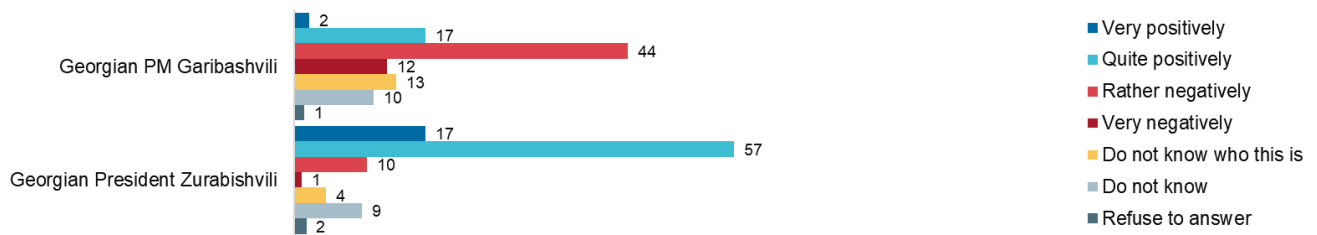
¹⁷ Kostenko et al.

¹⁸ Civil.ge, "Analysis | Rapprochement with Russia."

Interviewed Russian citizens tend to assess the performance of Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili negatively, while they mostly assess the performance of President Salome Zourabichvili positively. Only 19% of the respondents assessed the performance of the PM very or quite positively, while 74% of the respondents assessed the performance of the President in the same way.

Figure 35. How would you assess the performance of the Georgian PM and President?

(%, N=861)



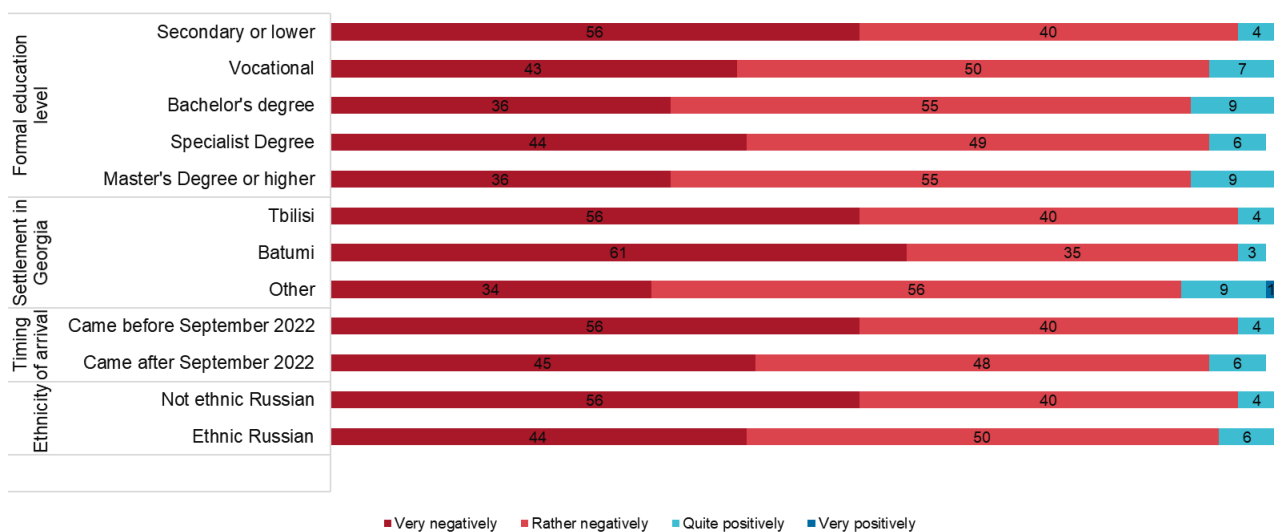
Regression analysis suggests that socio-demographic subgroups of Russians differ in terms of their assessments of the performance of Georgia’s PM. However, these differences are largely about the intensity of negative assessments, rather than between positive and negative assessments. More specifically, Russians with secondary or lower levels of education tend to assess the PM’s performance very negatively, while Russians with higher levels of education are more likely to opt for ‘rather negatively’.

Moreover, people living in Tbilisi and Batumi tend to be more radical in their negative assessments than Russians living in other areas, such as Kutaisi, Rustavi, etc. Russian immigrants who are not ethnic Russians and people who moved to Georgia before the announcement of ‘partial’ mobilization in September 2022 also tend to assess the performance of Georgia’s PM very negatively.

Figure 36. Assessment of the performance of Georgian PM – Regression model

Only 75% of the respondents who were aware of the Georgian PM and assessed his performance

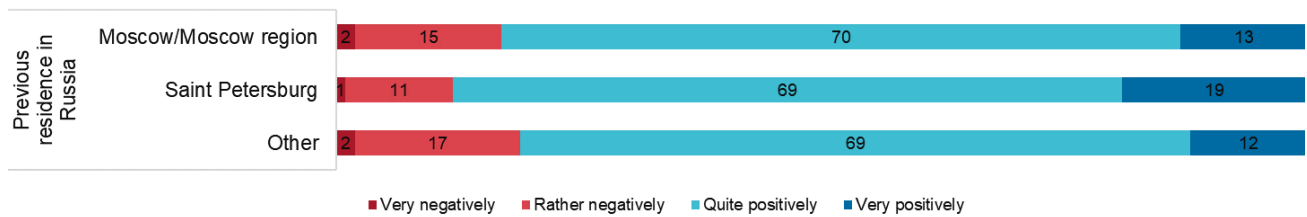
(predicted probabilities)



As for the assessments of the Georgian President, there are no differences across socio-demographic sub-groups of Russians, except for settlement in Russia. Russian citizens who came to Georgia from Saint Petersburg are statistically significantly more likely to assess the president’s performance positively than Russians coming from other parts of Russia.

Figure 37. Assessment of the performance of Georgian President – Regression model

Only 85% of the respondents who were aware of the Georgian President and assessed her performance (predicted probabilities)



International actors

Earlier studies have suggested that Russian migrants in Georgia gave the president of Ukraine a moderately positive rating, with 46% of Russians evaluating Volodymyr Zelenskyy positively.¹⁹ Throughout this study, the positive rating of the Ukrainian president is significantly higher. In total, eight out of ten respondents assessed the performance of Volodymyr Zelenskyy very positively (43%) or quite positively (38%). Only one in ten interviewed Russians assessed the performance of Ukraine’s president rather negatively (7%) or very negatively (3%). One in twenty (5%) did not know, and one in fifty (2%) refused to answer.

Further analysis suggests there are no statistically significant differences across socio-demographic groups of Russians in terms of assessing the performance of Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Figure 38. How would you assess the performance of Volodymyr Zelenskyy?

(%, N=861)



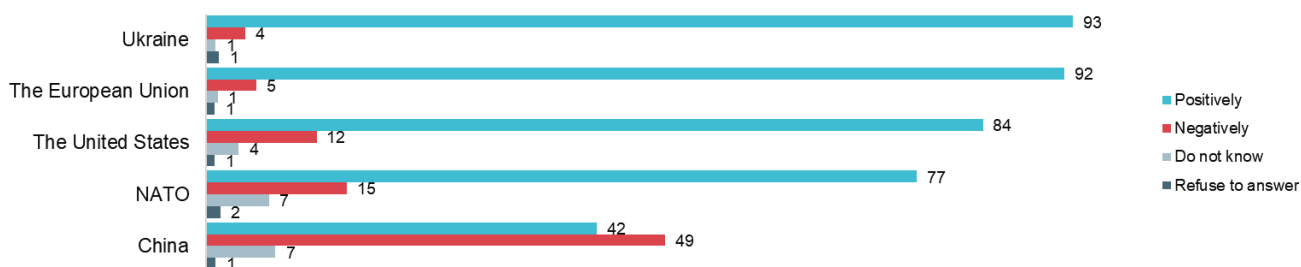
¹⁹ Krawatzek, DeSisto, and Soroka, “Russians in the South Caucasus: Political Attitudes and the War in Ukraine.”

Russian citizens exhibit overwhelmingly positive feelings with regard to international actors from the West as well as with respect to Ukraine. Nine out of ten people expressed a positive attitude towards the European Union as well as Ukraine. Eight out of ten (84%) Russians feel positively when it comes to the United States, and 77% feel positively towards NATO.

However, the respondents are split over emotional associations regarding China. Four out of ten interviewees (42%) feel positively, and almost half of the respondents (49%) feel negatively towards China.

Figure 39. How do you generally feel about ...?

(%, N=856)



There are no statistically significant differences across socio-demographic groups in terms of general feelings toward Ukraine and the European Union. However, subgroups of Russians differ when it comes to general attitudes with regard to the US, NATO, and China.

More specifically, further analysis suggests that Russian citizens with a higher monthly income in Georgia exhibit more positive feelings towards the US than people with a lower monthly income.

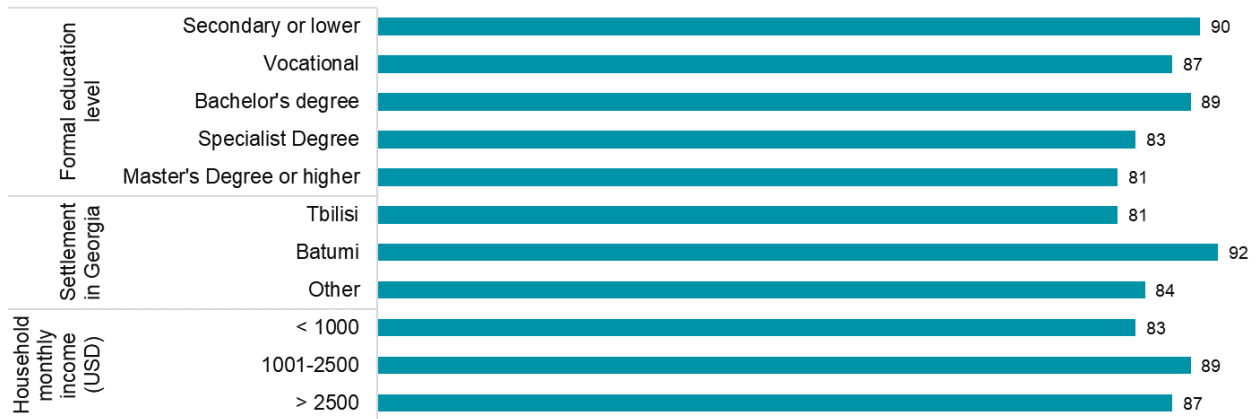
Figure 40. Positive feelings towards the United States – Regression model

(predicted probabilities)



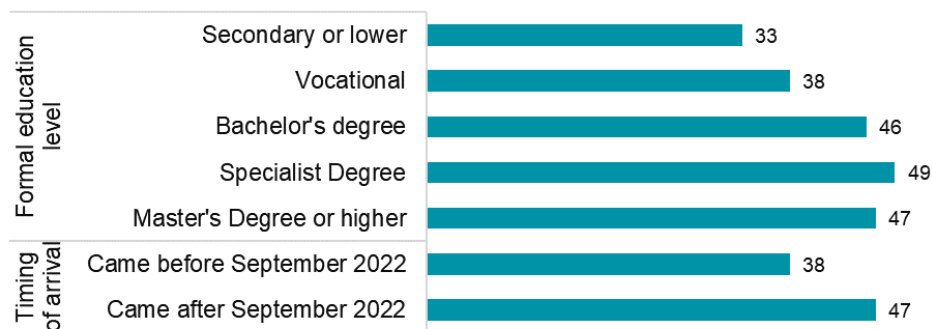
There are differences when it comes to NATO, too. Russians with lower levels of education, living in Batumi, and higher monthly income are more likely to display positive attitudes towards NATO than Russians with higher levels of education, people living outside of Batumi, and people with lower monthly income.

Figure 41. Positive feelings towards NATO – Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



Moreover, statistical analysis suggests people with higher levels of education and Russians who arrived in Georgia after September 2022 are more likely to exhibit positive feelings towards China than Russians with lower levels of formal education and people who came to Georgia before the announcement of 'partial' mobilization.

Figure 42. Positive feelings towards China – Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



Political engagement while living in Georgia

Interviewed Russian citizens remain attached to politics, as demonstrated by their reported behavior, such as discussing politics with peers and watching TV programs about politics. Since moving to Georgia, nine out of ten interviewed Russians have discussed politics with friends and relatives (90%), and eight out of ten have watched political programs (80%).

However, when it comes to expressing their political stance publicly, less than half of the respondents do that. More specifically, four out of ten Russians have written about politics on social media (39%), and a slightly smaller proportion attended rallies in Georgia (37%).

Figure 43. Have you participated in the following activities since you moved to Georgia?

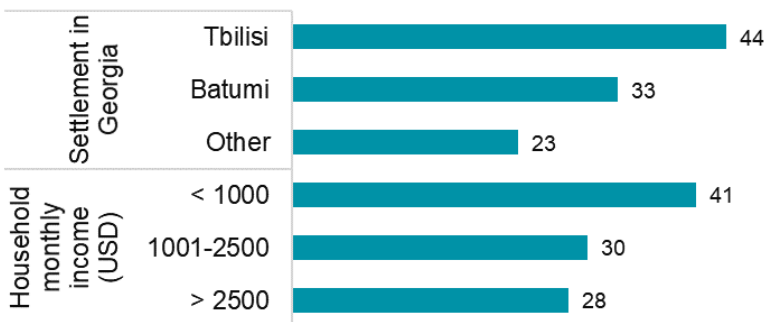
(%, N=859)



All else being equal, Russians who live in Tbilisi and people with less than 1000 USD monthly income are more likely to have attended a protest or rally since moving to Georgia than people who live in Batumi and people with higher monthly income.

Figure 44. Attending a rally in Georgia – Regression model

(predicted probabilities)



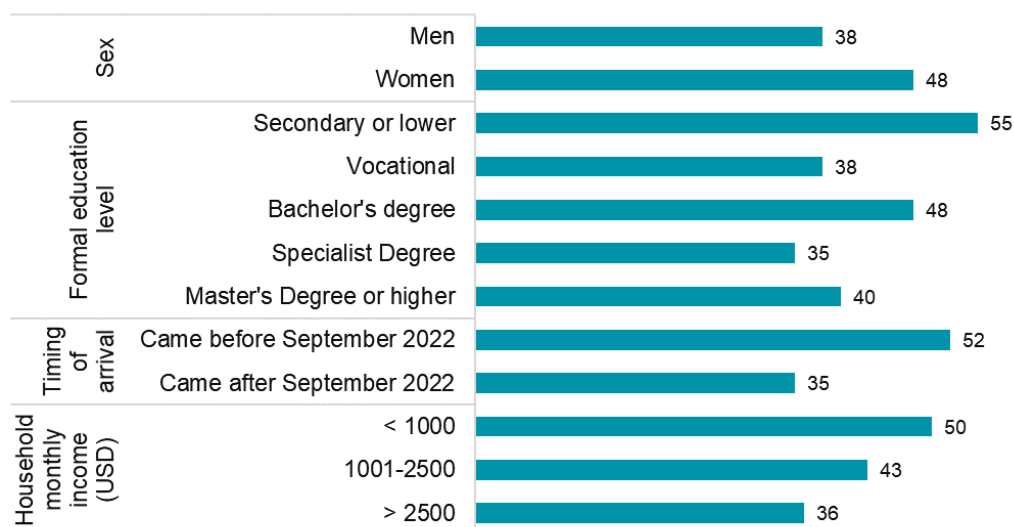
As for watching political TV programs or videos, more senior Russians, i.e., people who are older than 33 years and Russians that came to Georgia from Moscow, are statistically significantly more likely to say that they have watched political programs after moving to Georgia than younger people and people who do not come from Moscow or Saint Petersburg.

Figure 45. Watching political programs – Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



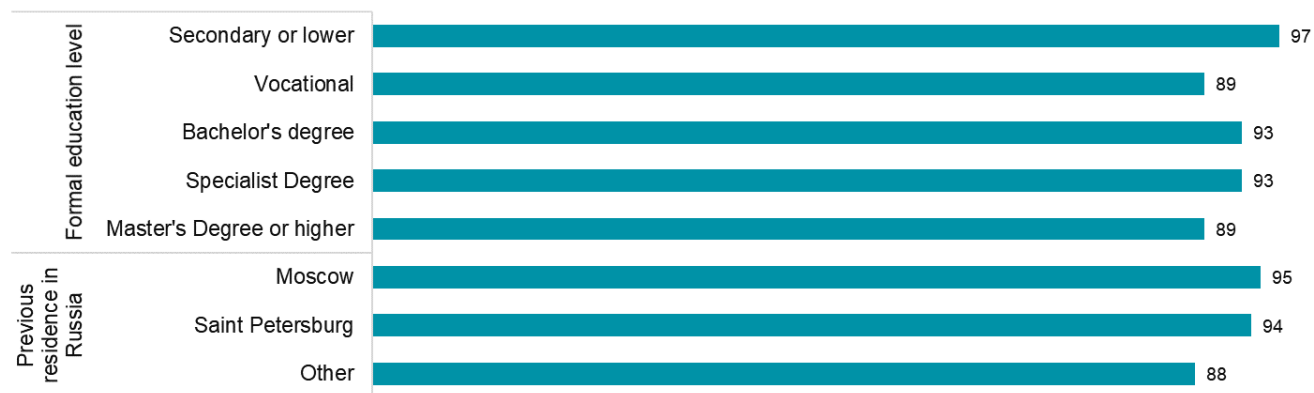
Regression analysis suggests, after controlling for other factors, that women, Russian citizens with secondary or lower levels of education, Russians who arrived before the announcement of ‘partial’ mobilization, and people with lower monthly income are more likely to say that they have written about politics in social media since moving to Georgia, in comparison to men, Russian citizens with a specialist or Master’s degree, people who came to Georgia after September 2022, and Russians with higher monthly income.

Figure 46. Writing about politics in social media – Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



Respondents with a lower level of formal education and people who came to Georgia from Moscow are more likely to say that they have discussed politics with friends and relatives since moving to Georgia than people with a Master’s degree or higher level of education and Russian citizens who came to Georgia from other settlements in Russia.

Figure 47. Talking with friends/relatives about politics – Regression model
(predicted probabilities)



SUMMARY

The study mainly reaffirms the findings of other earlier surveys of Russians in Georgia. Interviewed Russian citizens who have moved to Georgia since the war started are mostly young, have higher formal education, are mostly employed, and are disproportionately men, urbanites, and IT workers. They mainly name the political situation in Russia (87%), the conflict in Ukraine (73%), and the announcement of 'partial' mobilization (29%) as the main motivations for leaving their homeland. Moreover, the study reaffirms that Russian migrants trust other Russians who left and the local population.

Respondents exhibit negative attitudes towards Russia and Russian leadership. Two-thirds of the interviewees report generally negative feelings towards Russia. An overwhelming majority of respondents think Russia is not a democracy at all (94%), distrust the Russian government (97%), and evaluate Putin's performance negatively (94%). On the other hand, eight out of ten Russians (79%) evaluate Alexey Navalny's performance positively.

On the contrary, Russians predominantly display positive attitudes towards Georgia and Georgians. They overwhelmingly report generally positive feelings towards Georgia (98%) and nine out of ten of them trust residents of Georgia. Three out of four Russians say that they have a Georgian friend. They most frequently cite the following reasons for moving to Georgia: security in Georgia (28%), affordability of life (17%), and ease of getting there (14%).

Moreover, interviewed Russians predominantly feel physically safe (89%) and are largely satisfied with their lives in Georgia (78%). Regarding the duration of their stay, half of the interviewed Russians are staying for more than a year, while a quarter of them have not decided yet.

Nine out of ten Russians believe Georgia is a democracy, but half of them say it has major problems. The respondents tend to distrust the government of Georgia and assess the performance of the Georgian PM rather negatively. At the same time, three out of four evaluate the performance of the Georgian president positively.

They also hold particularly positive attitudes towards Ukraine, its president, and other Western actors. Eight out of ten interviewed Russians assessed Zelensky's performance positively. The majority of them display positive feelings towards Ukraine (93%), the EU (92%), the US (84%), and NATO (77%).

Interviewed Russians remain quite engaged in politics since they arrived in Georgia. Nine out of ten Russians discuss politics with peers, and eight out of ten watch TV programs about politics. However, when it comes to expressing political views publicly, only four out of ten people write about politics on social media, and a slightly smaller proportion say they have attended a rally since moving to Georgia.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Number of interviews per survey mode

Number of interviews	Survey mode
48	<i>Telephone survey</i>
137	<i>Face-to-face</i>
823	<i>Self-administered</i>

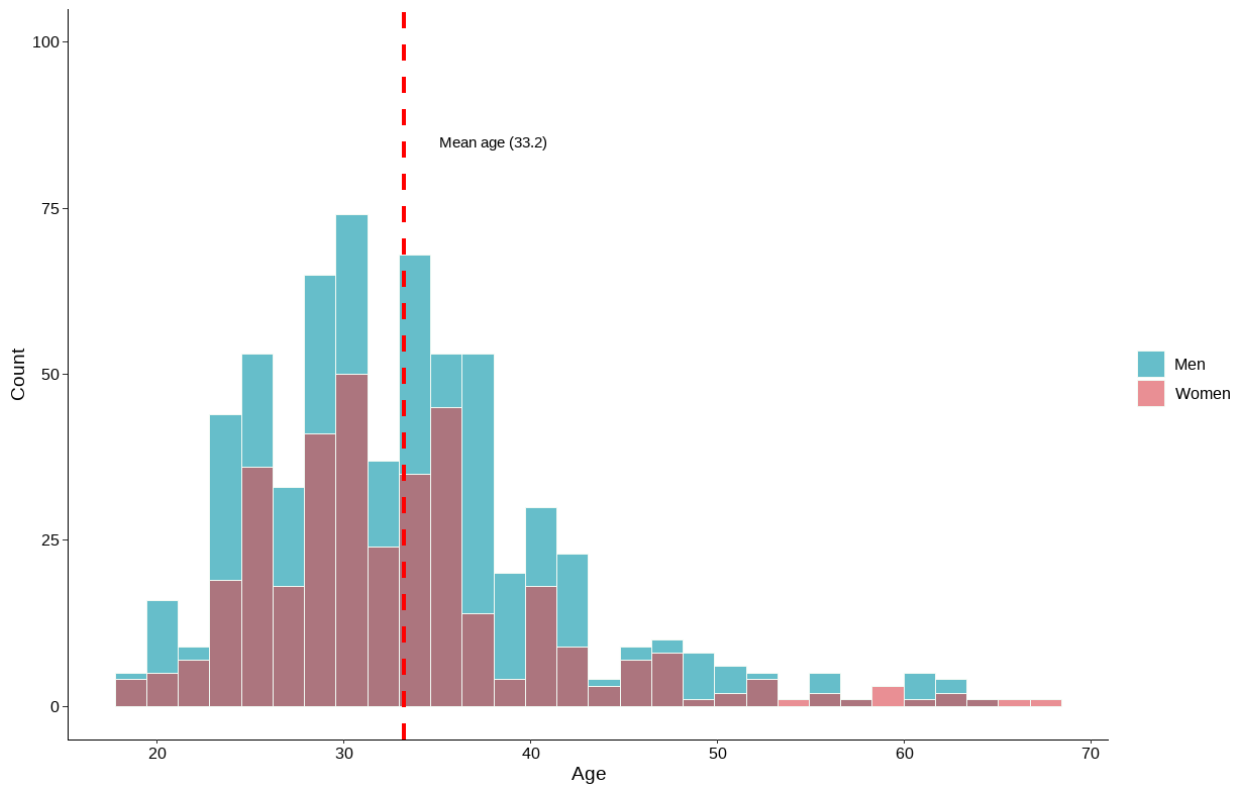
Appendix 2 - Socio-demographic Profile of Interviewed Russians

In line with previous surveys of Russians residing in Georgia, Russians living in Georgia who were surveyed are mostly young (84% of the sample is under 40), very well educated (82% have higher education), employed (up to 80% are employed and only 11% say they are looking for a job), and disproportionately men (64% are men) and IT workers (40%).

The age range in the sample is from 18 to 67. The average age of the respondents was 33.2, which is very close to the average age of Russian people residing in Georgia that were surveyed at the end of 2022, similarly with the non-probability sampling method. This confirms the finding that Russians who moved to Georgia after the invasion of Ukraine started are significantly younger than the general population of Russia (average age 39).

Figure 48. Age distribution by sex

(Count, N=1008)

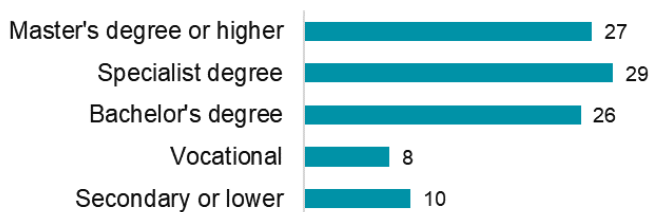


The distribution of different genders in the current sample reaffirms that men are more prevalent among Russian immigrants than women. 64% of respondents in our sample are men, while women comprise only 34%. This too is in line with previous surveys of Russians residing in Georgia. In contrast, in the Russian population, there are 46% men and 54% women.

As for educational attainment, the share of interviewed Russians that have completed higher education (e.g., a bachelor's degree, a specialist degree, a master's degree, or a Ph.D. degree) is more than 80%. Similar to previous studies, the CRRC-Georgia survey suggests that Russians who moved to Georgia after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 have a higher formal education than the Russian population in general.

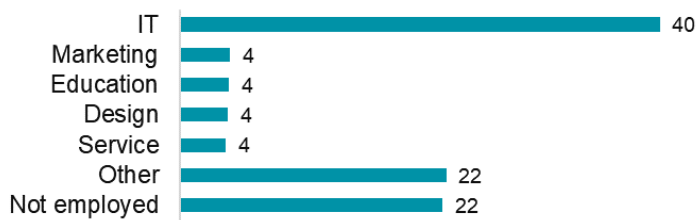
Figure 49. Formal education level of respondents

(%, N=1008)



Eight out of ten respondents (78%) are employed either part-time or full-time. Affirming the statement of Russia's Communications Ministry that IT workers in Russia disproportionately left the country in 2022,²⁰ Russians working in the IT sphere dominate our sample by far. 40% of the interviewed Russians are employed in the IT sphere. Moreover, the Marketing, Education, Design, and Service industries were each named by 4% of the respondents. All the other occupations were named by less than 3% of the sample.

Figure 50. Occupation of respondents
(%, N=1008)



²⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/02/13/russia-diaspora-war-ukraine/>