



April 2022

# Taking Georgians' pulse

Findings from February and March 2022 Surveys, and March 2022 Focus Groups

Carried out for NDI by CRRC Georgia

Research is funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the foreign, commonwealth and development office's good governance fund.

# RESEARCH GOALS

- To foster the development of more responsive policies and governance;
- To help stakeholders diagnose and address top national concerns and priorities;
- To help stakeholders identify impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Georgia.

## FEBRUARY POLL

- ❖ Fieldwork dates: February 3 – 15
- ❖ 2,036 completed interviews (18% response rate, according to AAPOR standards)
- ❖ The average margin of error is +/- 1.8%

## MARCH FOCUS GROUPS

- ❖ Fieldwork dates: March 15 – 22
- ❖ Tbilisi, Batumi, Telavi, Zugdidi, Akhalkalaki and Marneuli
- ❖ Two groups in each city: 18–28 y/o; 45+ y/o
- ❖ Conducted on Zoom.

## MARCH POLL

- ❖ Fieldwork dates: 9–20 March 2022
- ❖ 2,024 completed interviews (18% response rate, according to AAPOR standards)
- ❖ The average margin of error is +/- 1.6%
- ❖ Note: the margin of error is different for every response
- ❖ Shift from face-to-face to telephone method might affect a change on historical slides.

## SAMPLE

- ❖ Interviews were conducted on mobile phones
- ❖ Simple random sampling method was used. Respondents were selected using the random-digit-dial method
- ❖ Interviews were conducted in Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian
- ❖ The poll is representative of entire Georgian population (excluding the occupied territories). In addition, the poll is representative of the capital, urban and rural settlements

### Quality control

- ❖ All interviewers receive special training
- ❖ CRRC central office coordinators conduct quality control interviews.

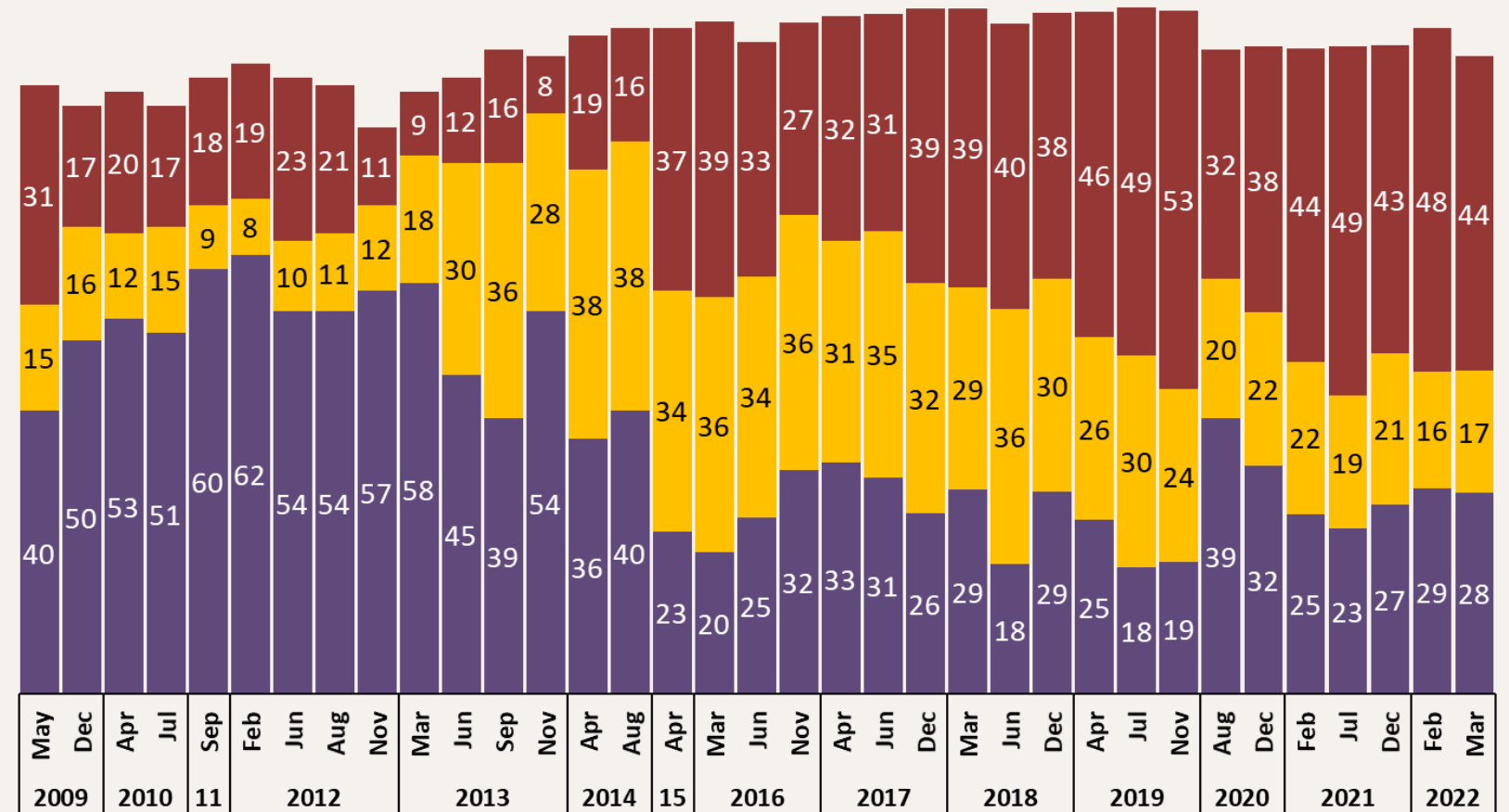
# General mood

Country direction, leaders and institutions

# Plurality say Georgia going in the wrong direction

## There are different opinions regarding the direction in which Georgia is going. Which one do you agree with? (q3)

■ Georgia is going in the right direction ■ Georgia is not changing at all ■ Georgia is going in the wrong direction



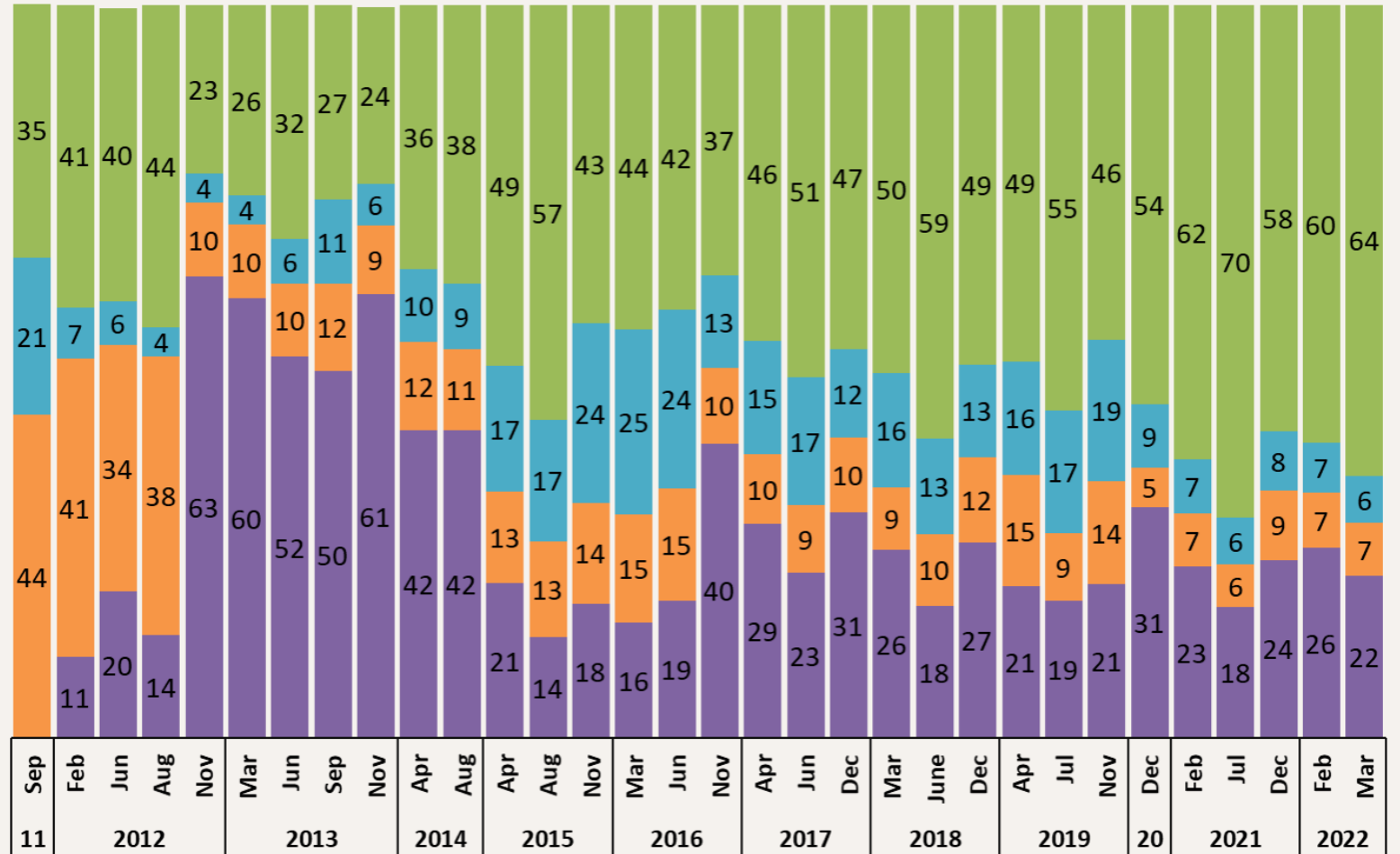
# Majority remain politically undecided

Majority do not know or do not say which party is closest to them. Only 35% of citizens named a political party closest to them.

Declared support for individual parties is so low that they cannot be taken as a guide to the outcome of future elections.

## Which party is closest to you? (q7)

■ Georgian Dream 
 ■ UNM 
 ■ Other 
 ■ No Party+DK+RA

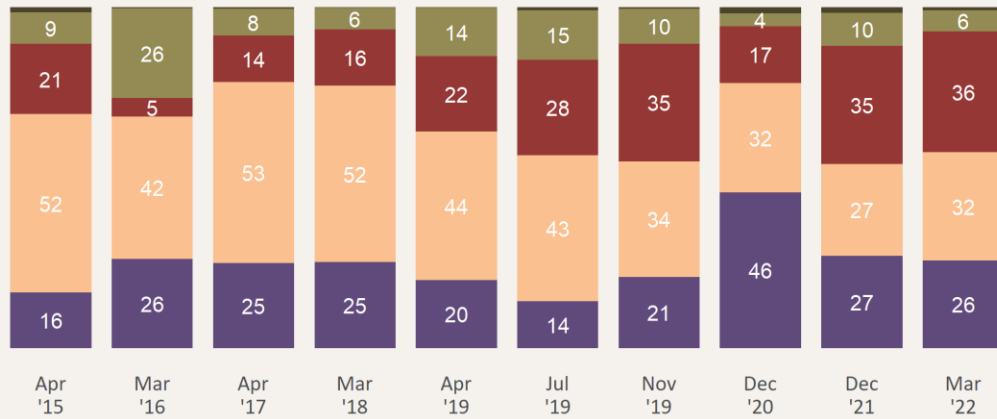


# Assessment of institutions remain the same, except for the president - her positive job assessment has almost doubled

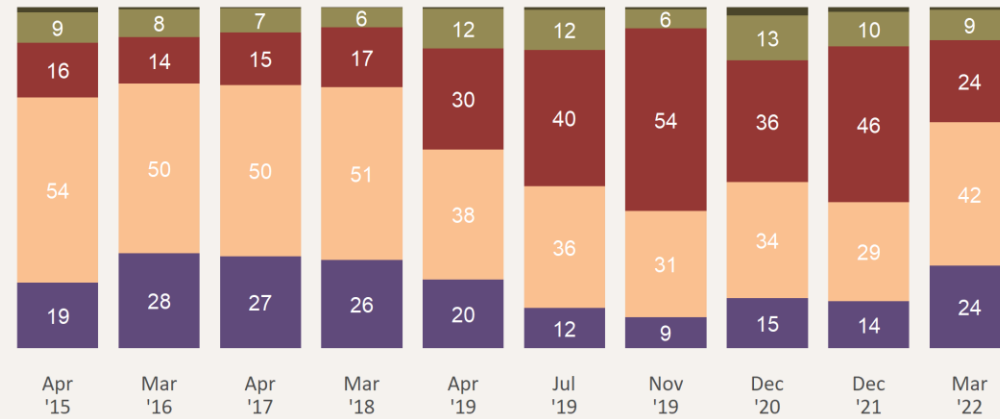
Please tell me, how would you rate the performance of ... (q6)

■ Good ■ Average ■ Bad ■ DK ■ RA

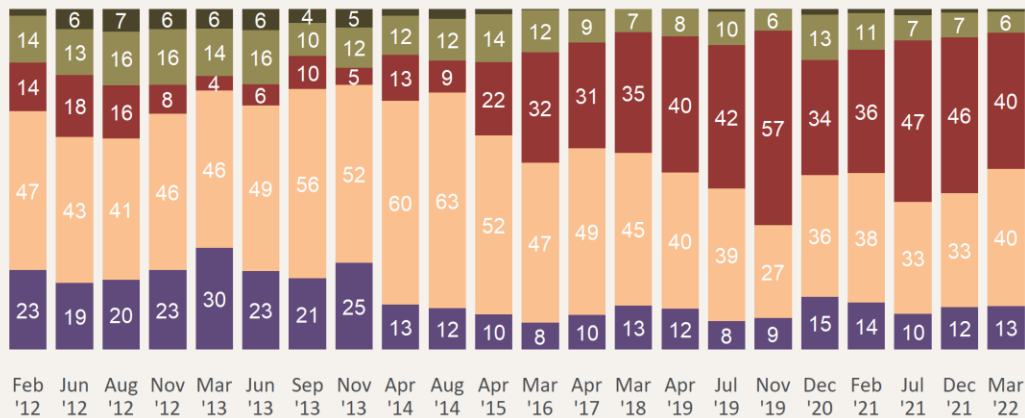
**Prime Minister**



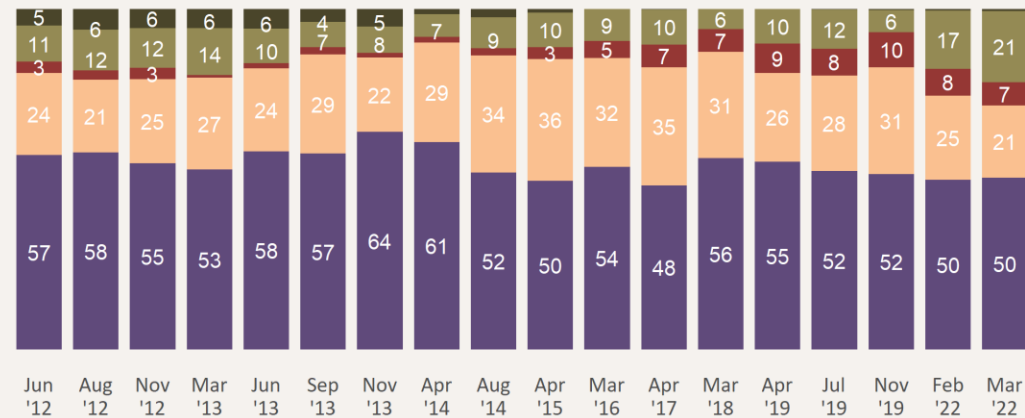
**President**



**Parliament**

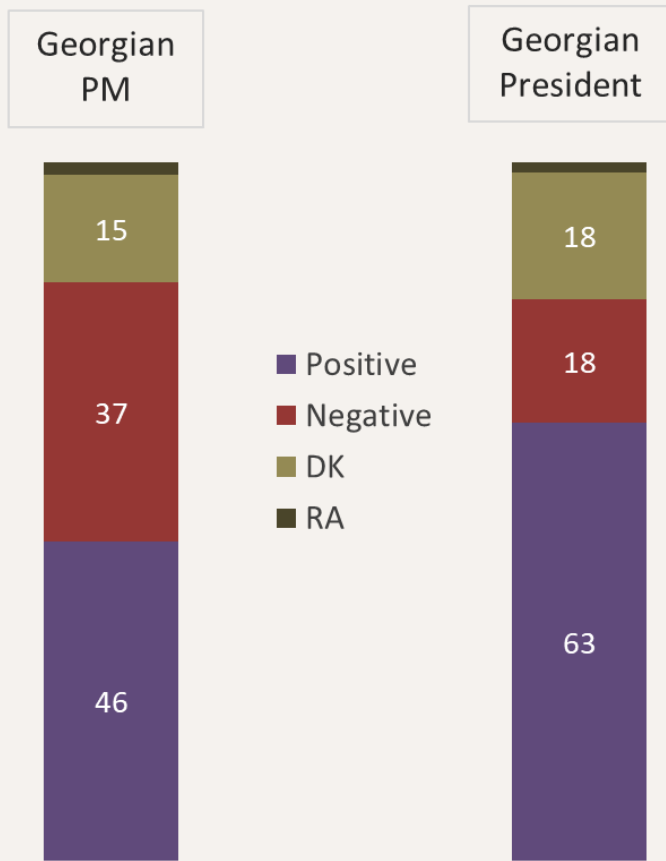


**Army**



## Plurality content with Georgian leaders' response to the war

For each of the following, tell me how would you assess their response to the Russian invasion in Ukraine? (q26)



Data analyses show that President enjoys slightly higher support among **female** demographics, while Prime Minister's likability is relatively lower among **younger** population and **Tbilisi** residents.

"PM's statements were too rigid, rude and straightforward (about Ukraine). The President delivered the same messages, said what needed to be said but in a more gentle, diplomatic way." – **Tbilisi focus group participant, female, 27 y/o**



# Major (post-invasion) shifts in public perceptions in Georgia

#SlavaUkraini

# Major (post-invasion) shifts in public perceptions

- Belief that Russia is a threat to neighbors increased;
- Belief in EU's economic and security benefits increased;
- Belief that Georgia will benefit more from abandoning west in favor of closer relationship with Russia decreased;
- Belief that Georgia should have closer economic and political relations with EU increased;
- Russia dropped on a list of Georgia's major economic and political partners;
- Belief that Georgia should cut economic ties with Russia Increased.

Favorite foreign partners

# Russian invasion strengthened belief that Georgia should have closer relations with EU, but limit with Russia

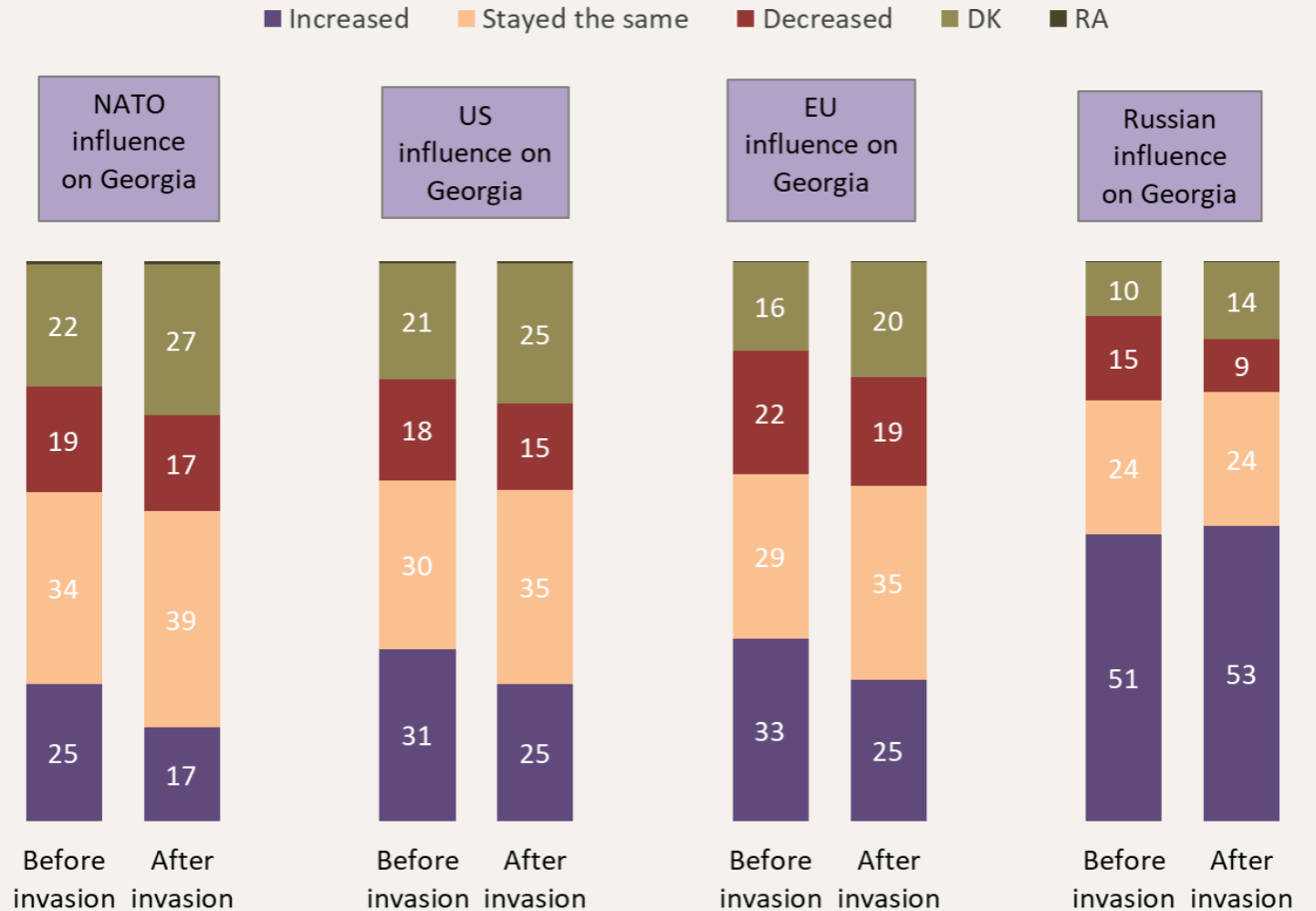
After the Russian invasion, EU, USA and Turkey are top most desired political and economic partners for most Georgians.

Which countries and unions should Georgia have the closest political/economic cooperation with? Up to three answers



Every second Georgian says Russian influence on Georgia has increased

In the last 5 years, has the influence of the following on Georgia increased, decreased, or stayed the same? (q19)

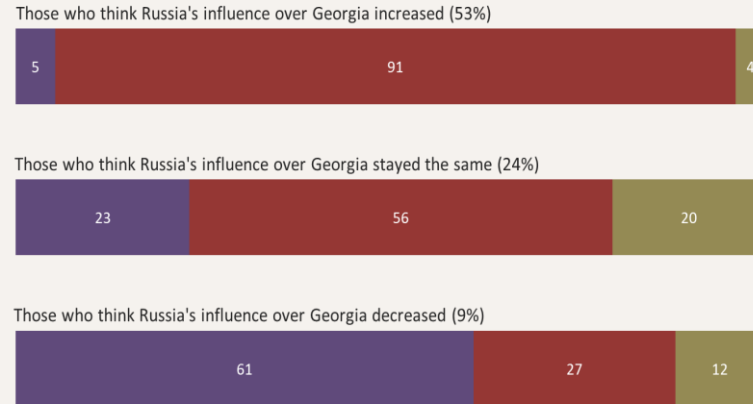


Russian influence is regarded as negative, while EU, NATO and US influence is perceived as positive.

### Russia's influence on Georgia

Is this a good thing or a bad thing for Georgia? (q20\_1 X In the last 5 years has the influence of Russia on Georgia increased, decreased, or stayed the same?)

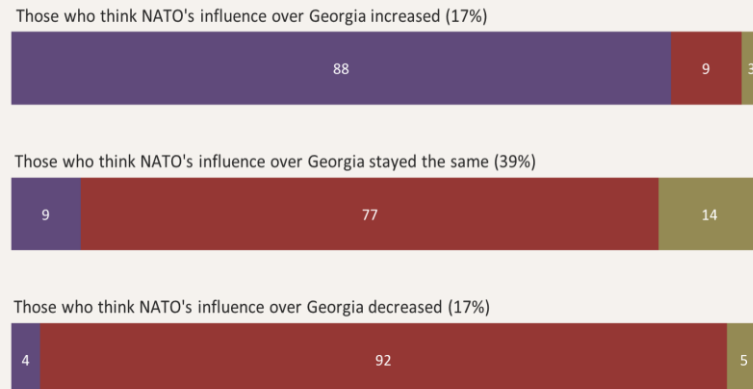
■ Good thing ■ Bad thing ■ DK ■ RA



### NATO's influence on Georgia

Is this a good thing or a bad thing for Georgia? (q20\_3 X In the last 5 years has the influence of NATO on Georgia increased, decreased, or stayed the same?)

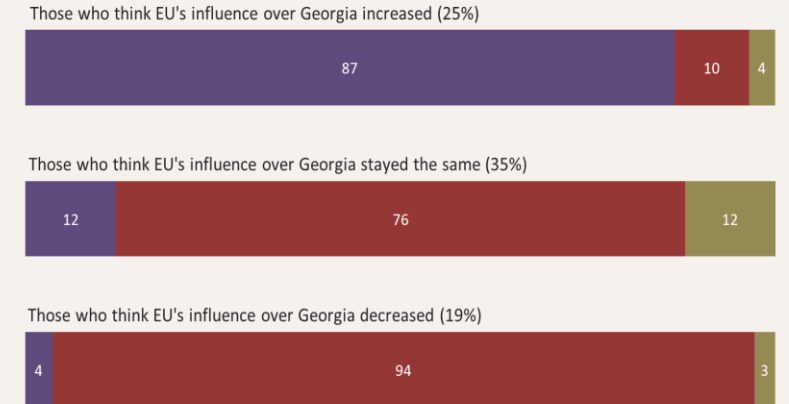
■ Good thing ■ Bad thing ■ DK ■ RA



### EU's influence on Georgia

Is this a good thing or a bad thing for Georgia? (q20\_2 X In the last 5 years has the influence of EU on Georgia increased, decreased, or stayed the same?)

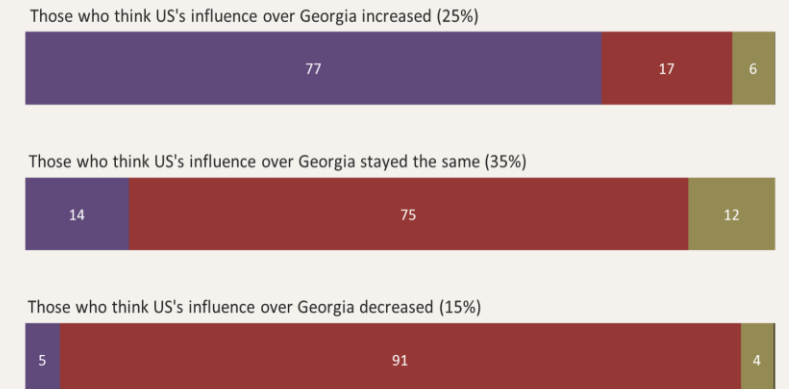
■ Good thing ■ Bad thing ■ DK ■ RA



### US's influence on Georgia

Is this a good thing or a bad thing for Georgia? (q20\_4 X In the last 5 years has the influence of US on Georgia increased, decreased, or stayed the same?)

■ Good thing ■ Bad thing ■ DK ■ RA



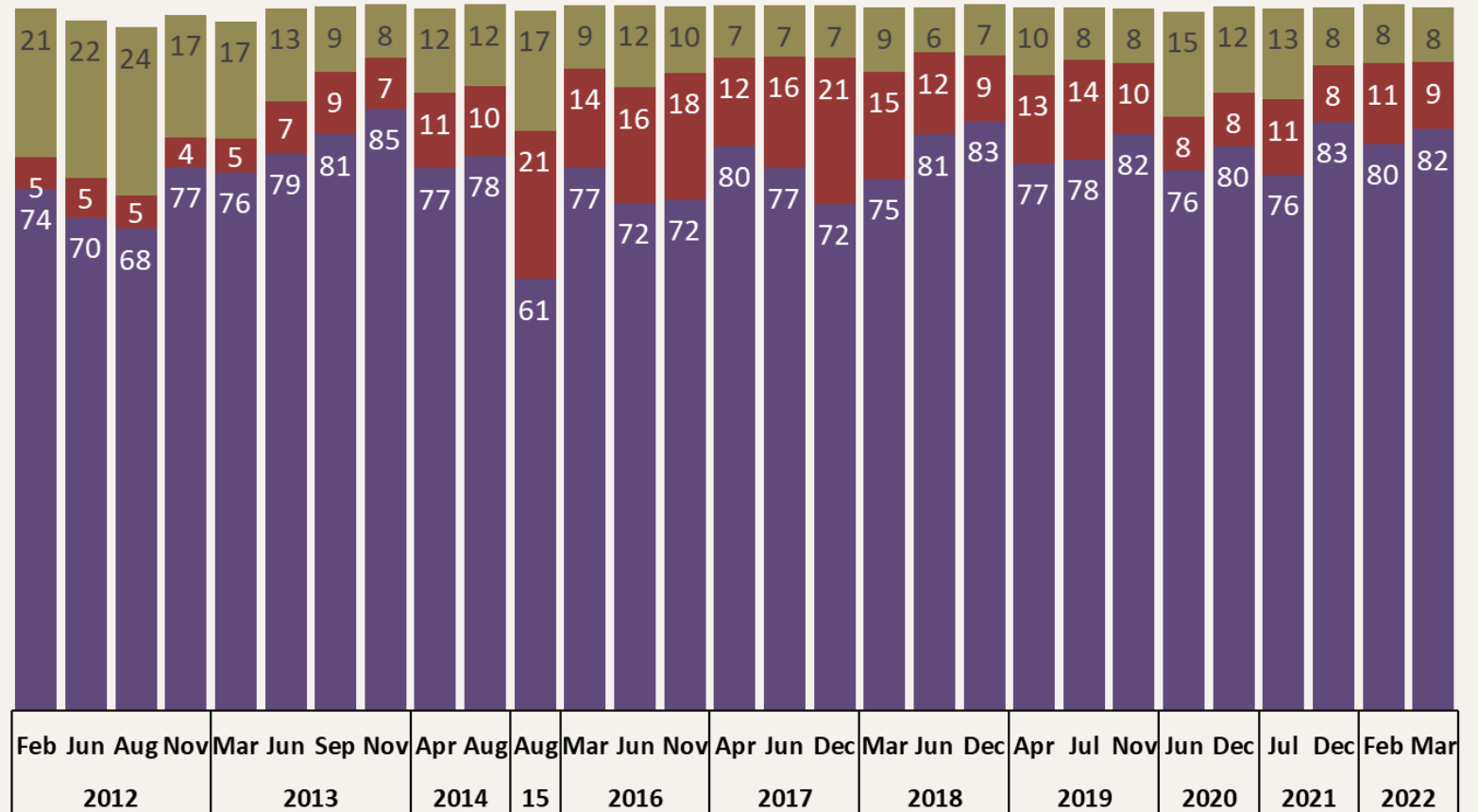
European and Euro-Atlantic integration

# Support for EU membership remains solid

Regression analyses: Tbilisi residents, people with higher than secondary education, and Georgian Dream and opposition supporters are more likely to approve EU membership.

## Do you approve or disapprove of Georgian government's stated goal to join the EU? (q8)

■ Approve ■ Disapprove ■ DK

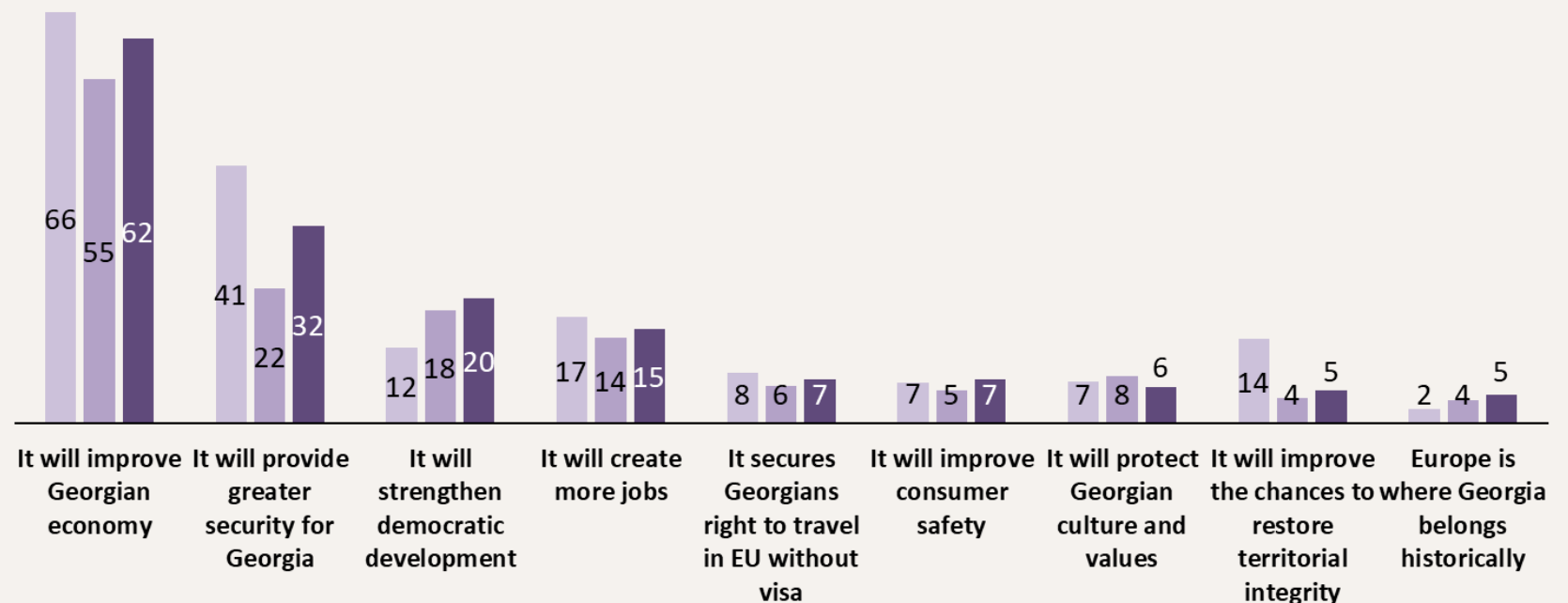




After invasion, more people believe that EU will improve Georgian economy and security

### If approve, why do you approve it? Up to three answers (q9) - Of those who approve joining the EU.

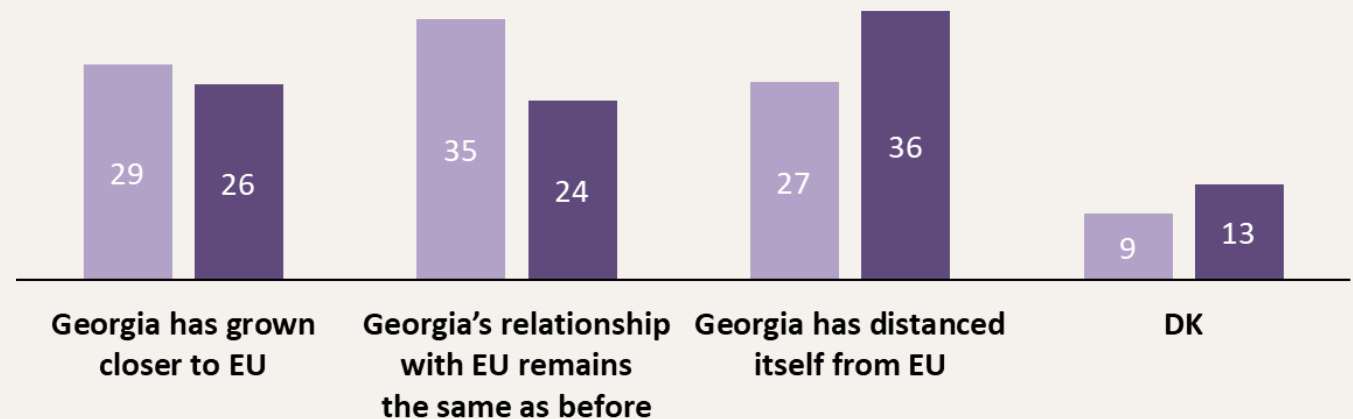
■ April 2019 ■ Before invasion ■ After invasion



After invasion,  
more people think  
that Georgia has  
distanced itself  
from EU

### Which of the following statements do you agree with? In the last 5 years ... (q10)

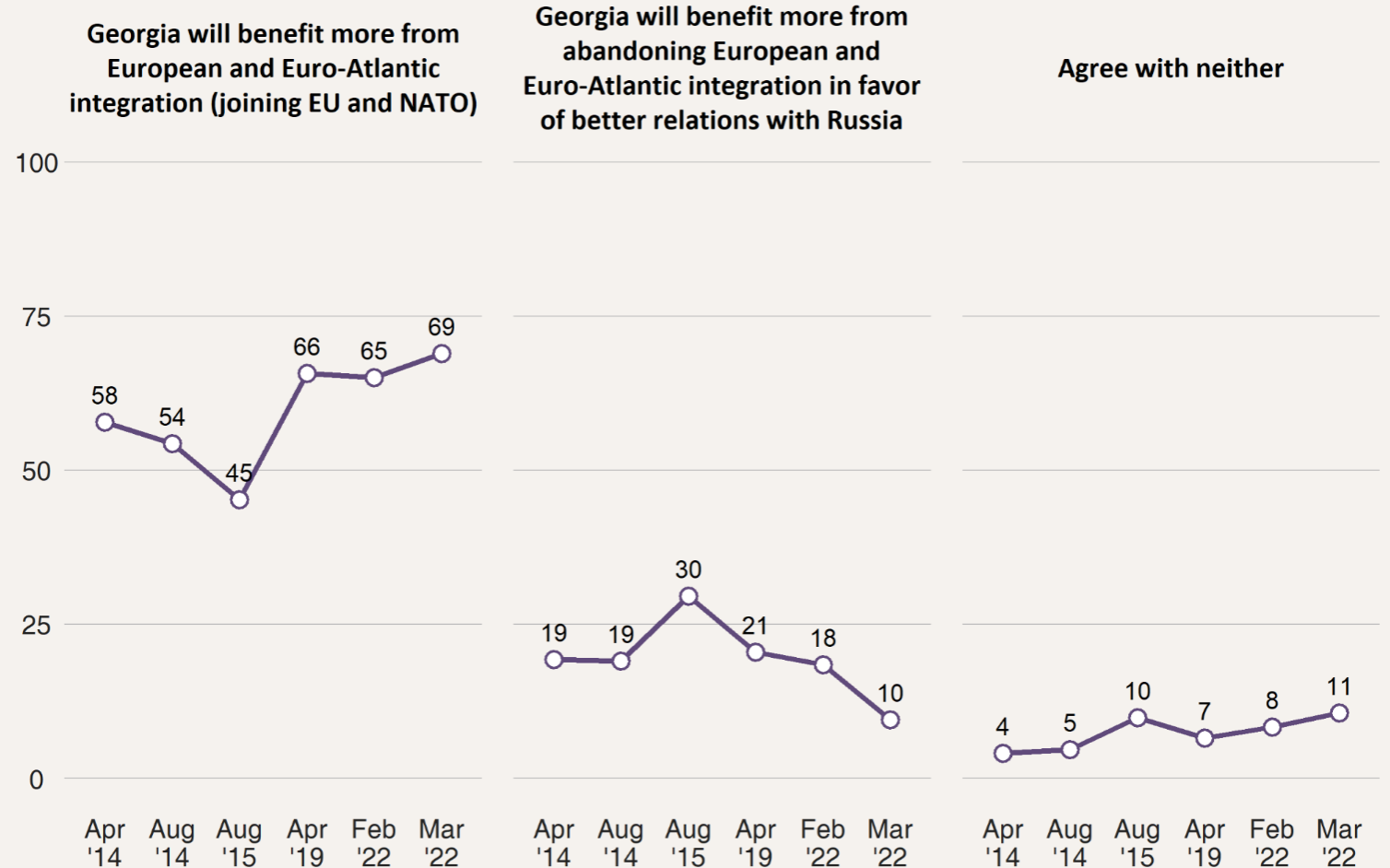
■ Before invasion ■ After invasion



# Belief that Georgia will benefit more from closer ties with Russia decreased

Younger citizens believe more strongly that Georgia will benefit more from European and Euro Atlantic integration.

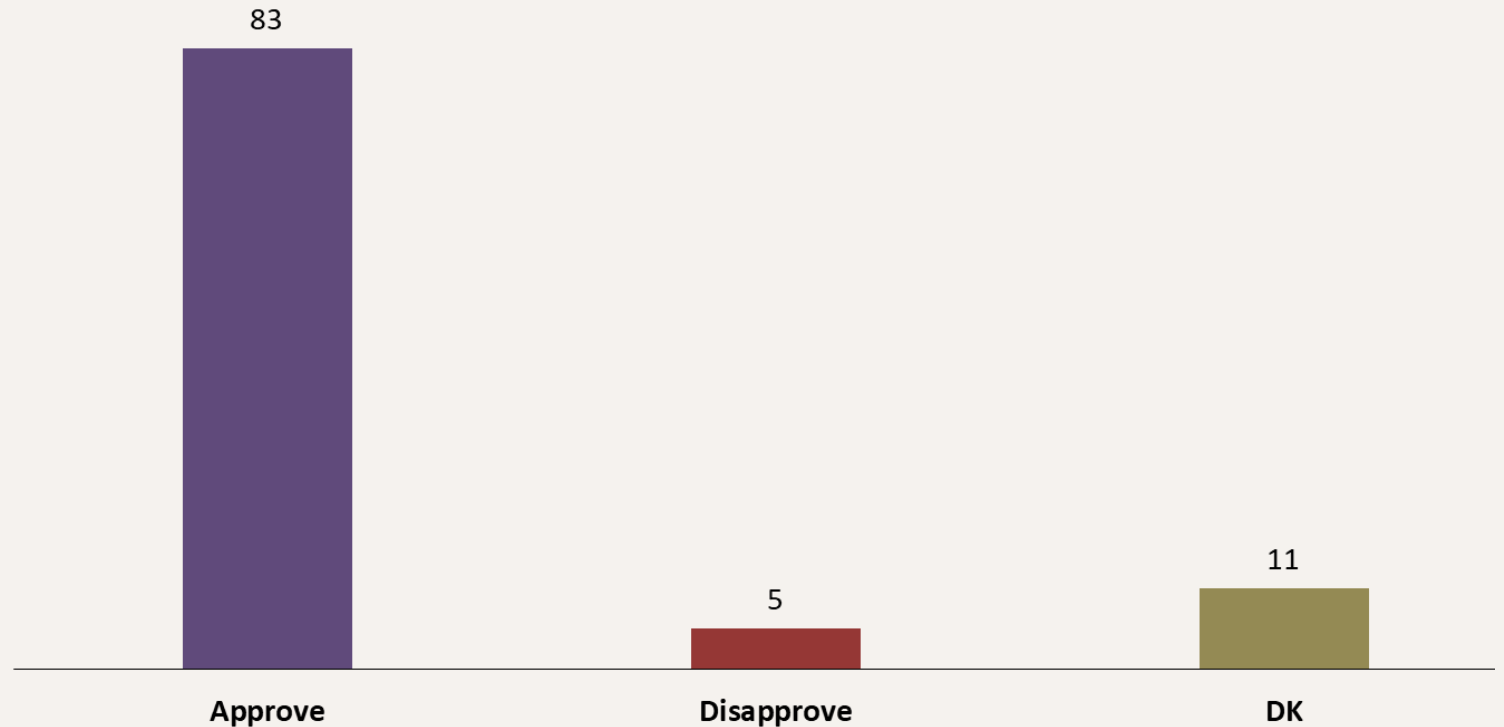
## Which of the following statements do you agree with? (q11)



Citizens across various settlements, age groups and political affiliations equally support Georgia signing EU membership application

## Georgia's EU membership application

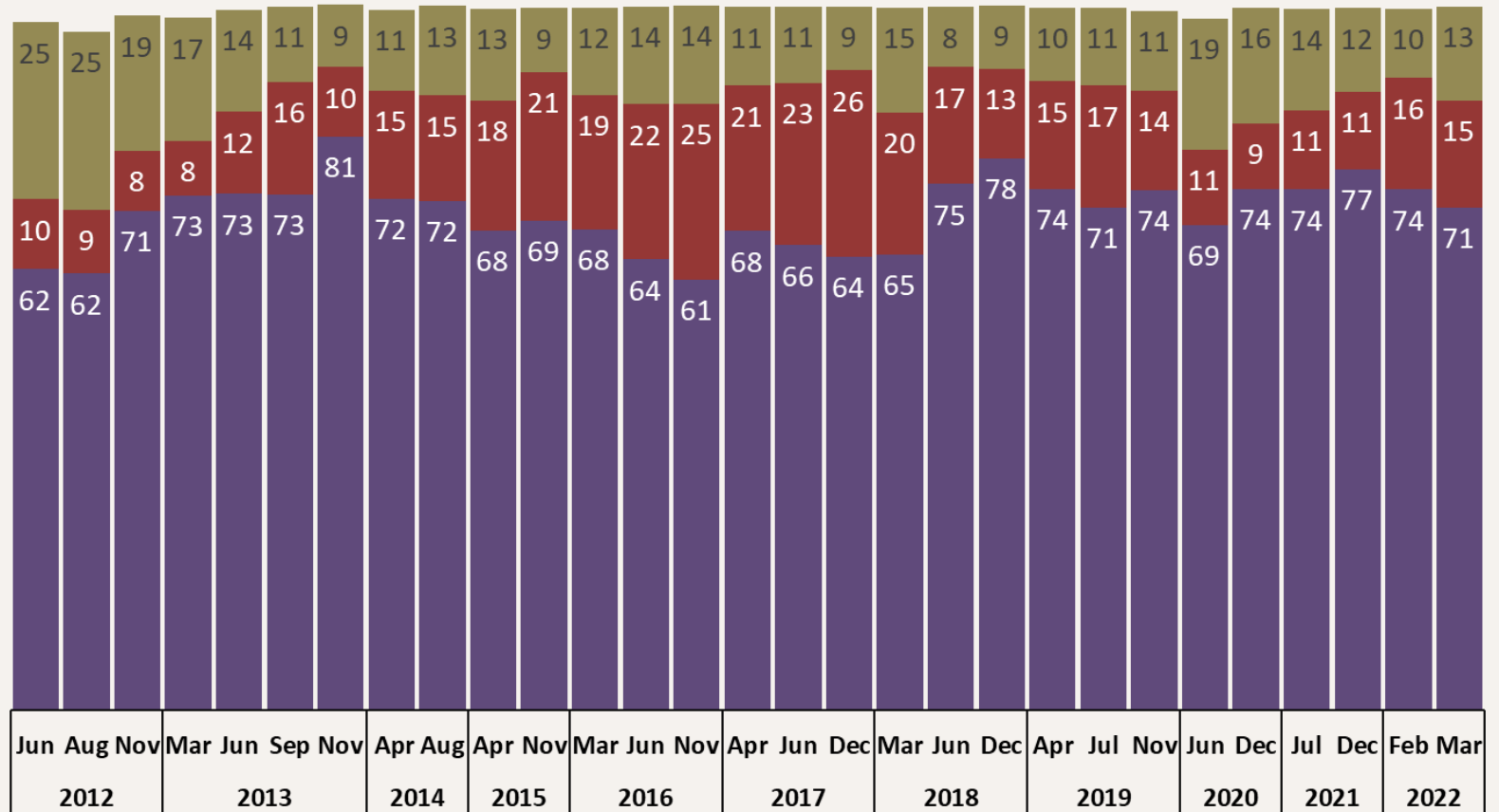
On March 3 the Georgian government signed an application to join the European Union.  
Do you approve or disapprove of this decision? (q33)



# Support for NATO remains solid

## Do you approve or disapprove of Georgian government's stated goal to join the NATO? (q13)

■ Approve ■ Disapprove ■ DK



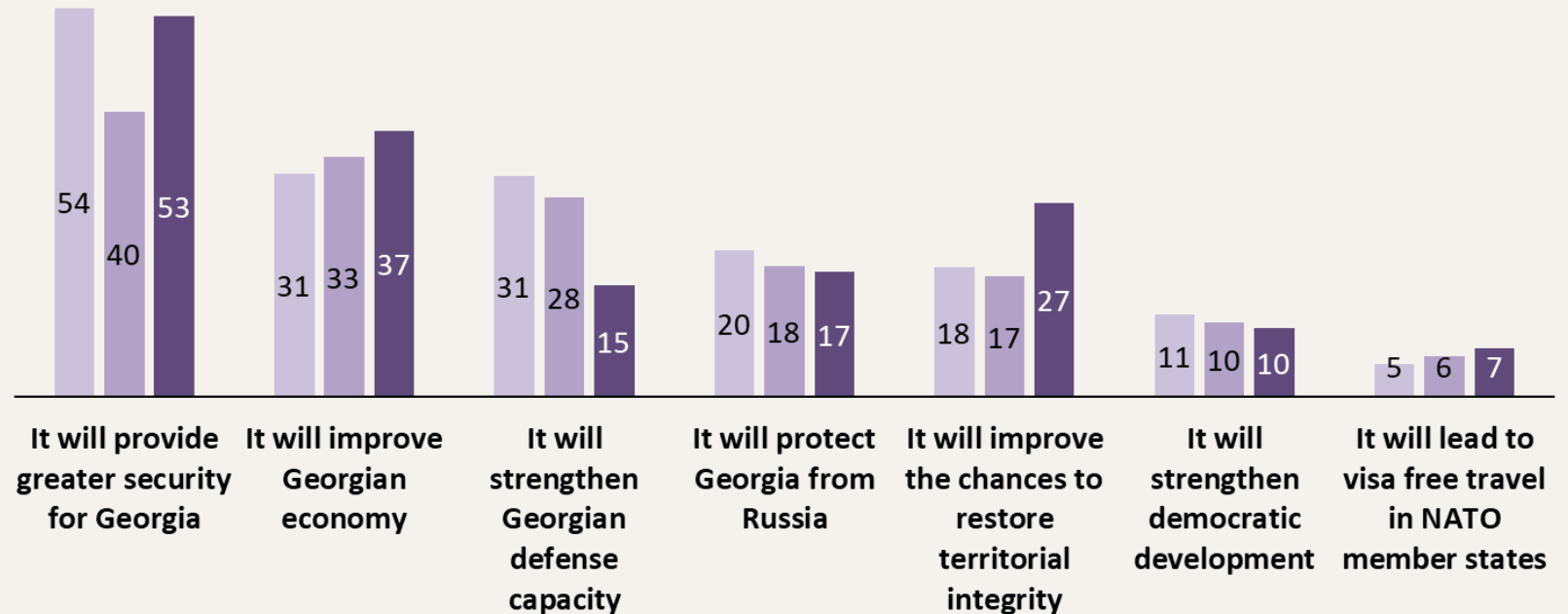
“We must continue pursuing NATO membership. While the dictator Putin is in power, we will always be under threat” – **Zugdidi focus groups, male, 27 y/o**

After invasion, more people believe NATO will provide greater security to Georgia

“Pursuit of NATO membership is the reason for all this mess. But I am hopeful that Russia will be forced to back off; and if it does, then everything will be as we wish”. – Zugdidi, male, 59 y/o

### If approve, why do you approve it? Up to three answers (q14) - Of those who approve joining the NATO

■ April 2019 ■ Before invasion ■ After invasion



“We must fast track our integration in NATO. We must become NATO members as soon as possible”, - **Telavi, male, 66 y/o**

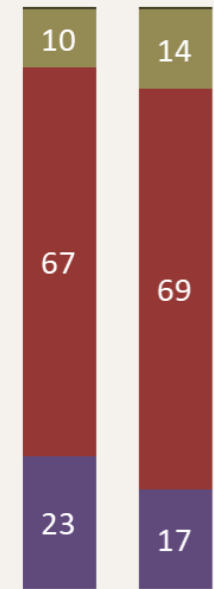
“We must not stop pursuing NATO membership, but we must be careful. We must tread lightly. We must not be overly vocal and obvious about it, it’s dangerous”. - **Batumi, female, 50 y/o**

## Majority believe NATO membership will help Georgia restore territorial integrity

There are different opinions regarding Georgia’s integration in NATO and EU. Do you agree or disagree with the following? (q12)

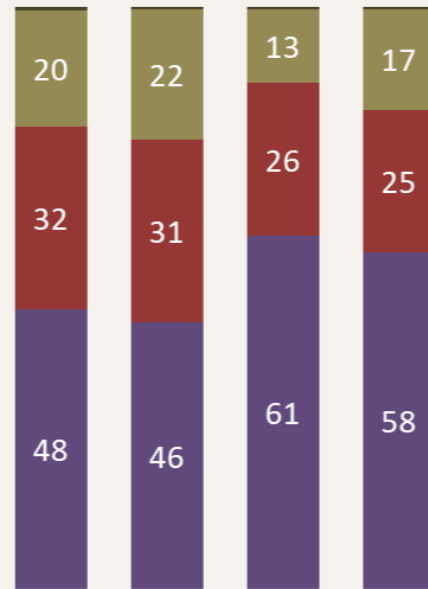
■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ DK ■ RA

As a result of EU integration Georgia will lose its national identity



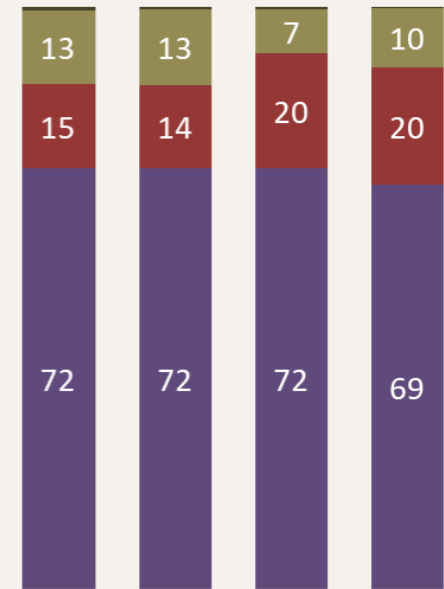
Before invasion After invasion

If Georgia becomes NATO member, it will help restore territorial integrity of Georgia



April 2017 March 2018 Before invasion After invasion

If Georgia joins NATO, there will be higher risks of Russia's aggression towards Georgia



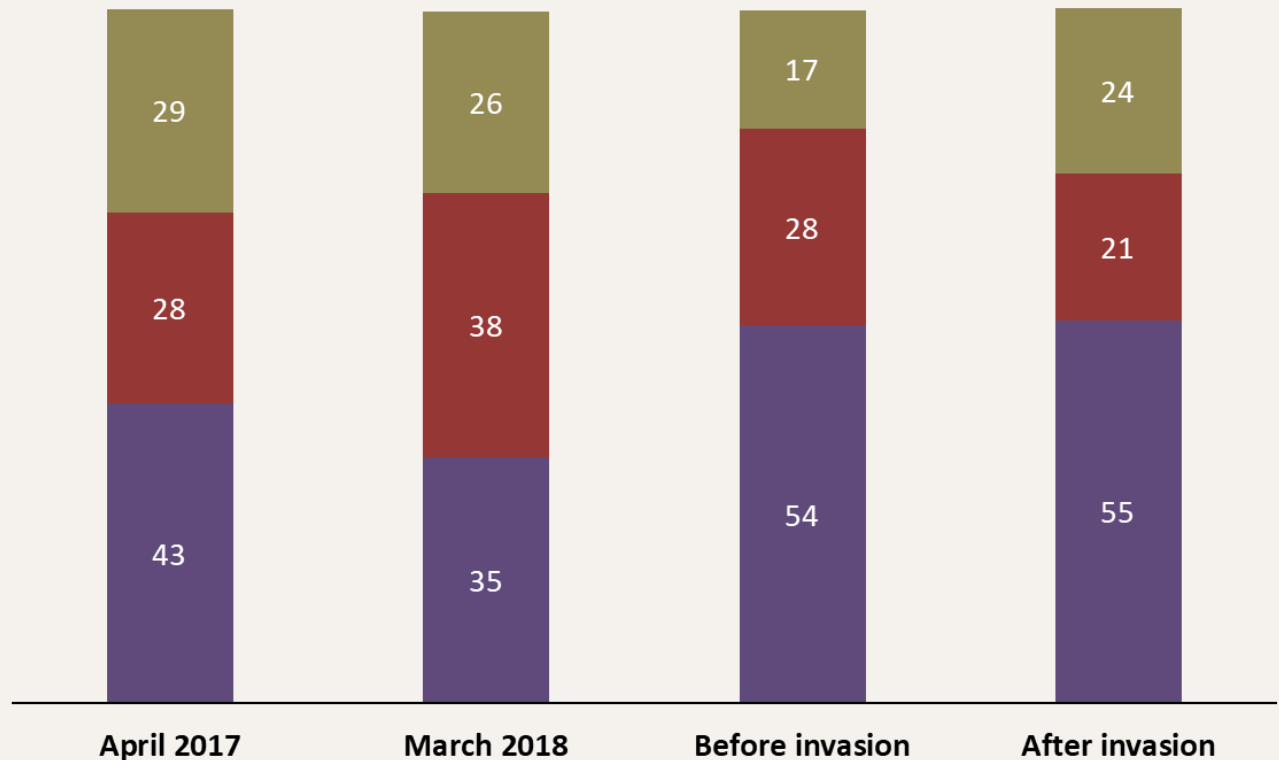
April 2017 March 2018 Before invasion After invasion

# Every second citizen believes Georgia will regain territorial integrity

Younger demographic, Tbilisi dwellers and undecided voters are most skeptical about the prospects of regaining territorial integrity.

Thinking about 15 years from now, do you agree or disagree that Georgia will regain territorial integrity? (q17)

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ DK



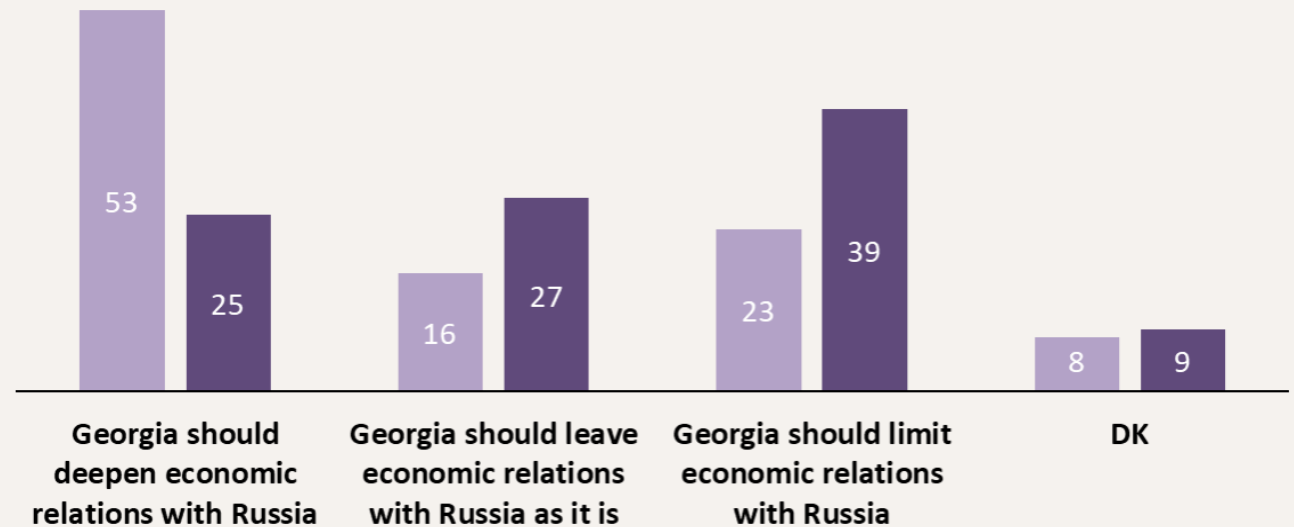


“It’s the economy, stupid!”

After invasion, more people think that Georgia should limit economic relations with Russia

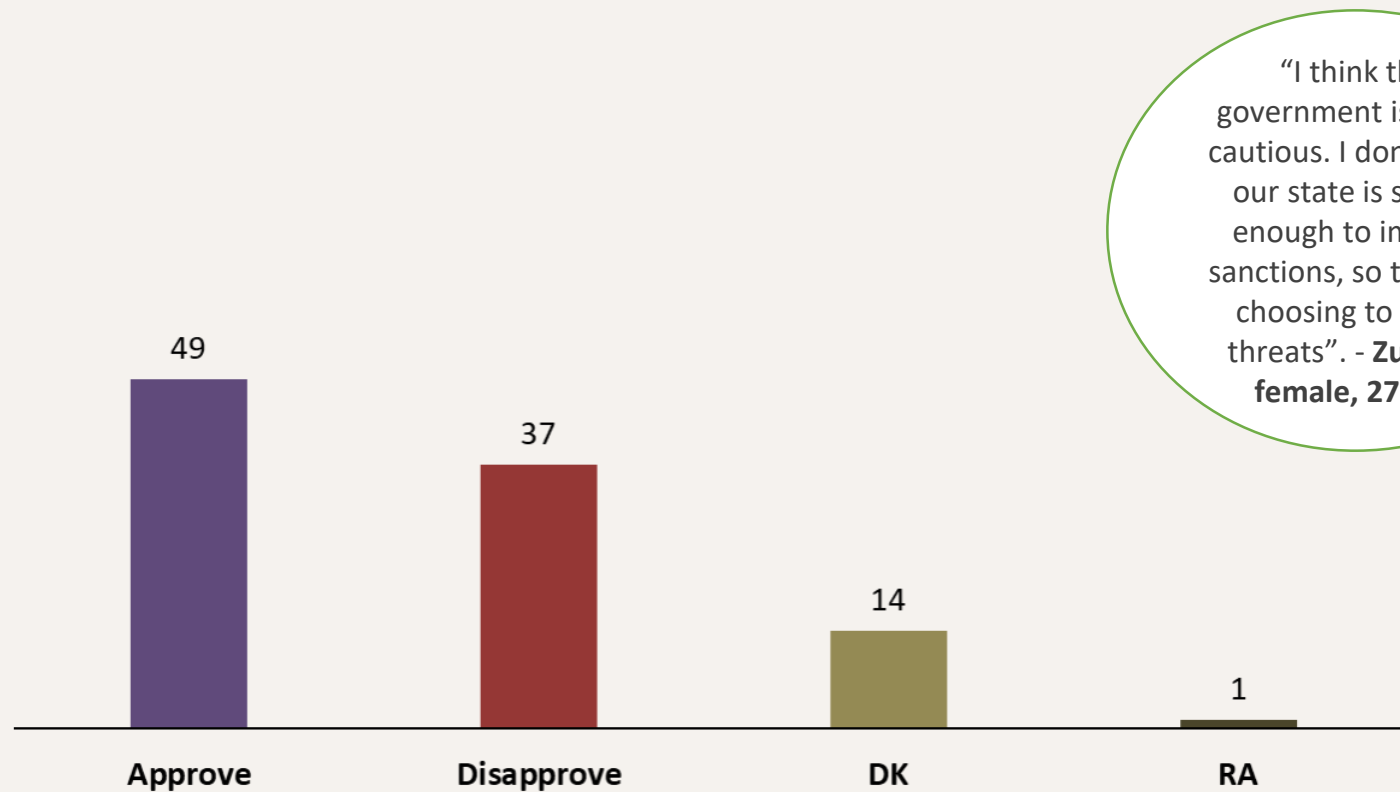
### Thinking about Georgia's economic relations with Russia, in your opinion: (q21)

■ Before invasion ■ After invasion



## Half of Georgians approve of the government decision not to join sanctions against Russia

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, countries across the world imposed a series of economic sanctions on Russia. The Georgian Government decided not to join the global sanctions against Russia. Do you approve or disapprove of Georgian government's this decision? (q27)



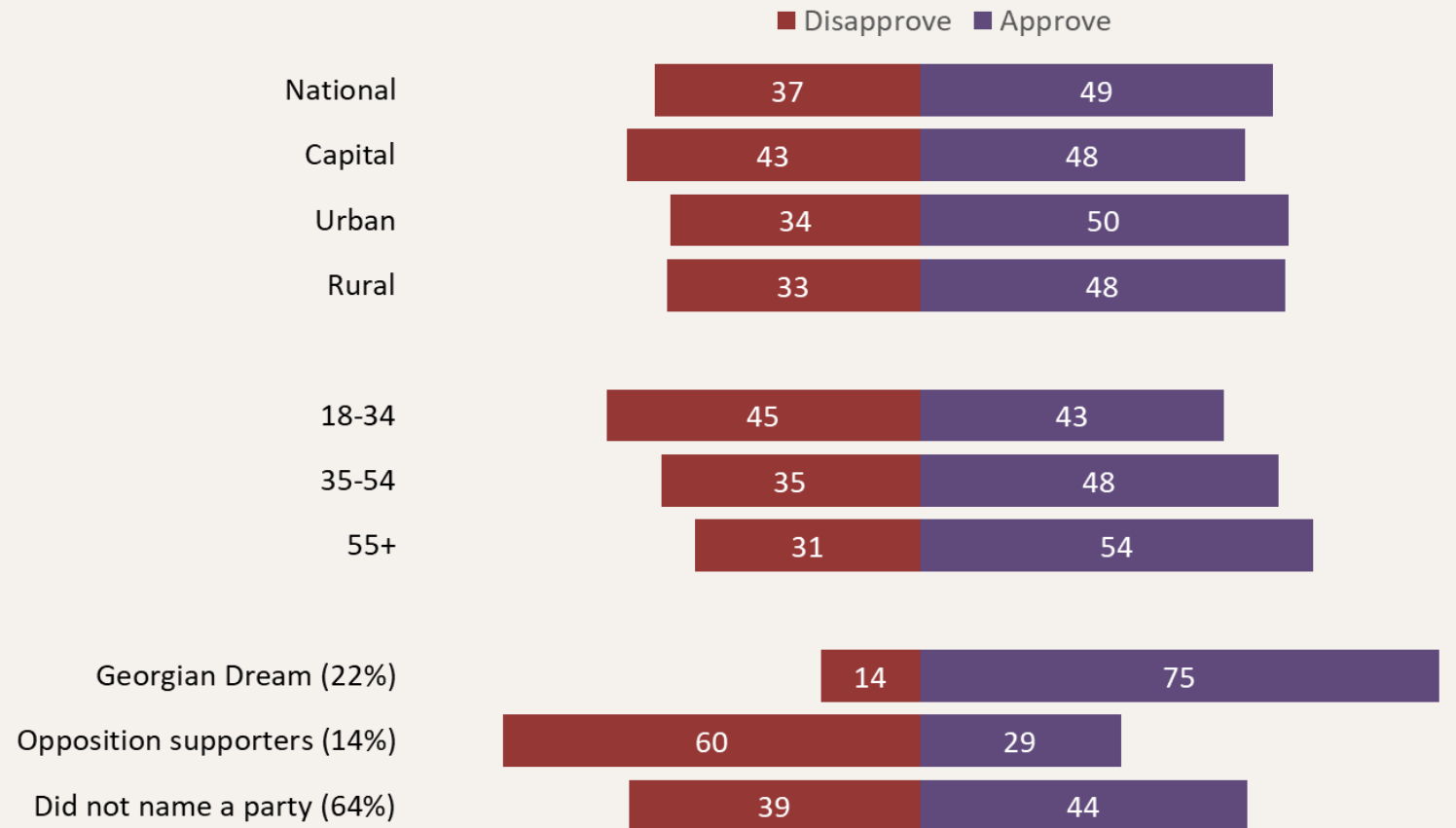
"I think the government is being cautious. I don't think our state is strong enough to impose sanctions, so they are choosing to avoid threats". - **Zugdidi, female, 27 y/o**

"I don't think we can or will terminate our economic relationship with Russia just like that. We must try and find new export and import partners first. It's ridiculous that we are so much dependent on one country, we should at least have some alternatives". - **Tbilisi, female, 28 y/o**

"If we join Western sanctions against Russia, this will cause economic collapse for us, because we are very dependent on the Russian market. This is our government's fault, because they failed to estimate risks and find alternative markets". - **Batumi, male, 28 y/o**

GD supporters and older citizens more likely to approve not joining economic sanctions against Russia

**Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, countries across the world imposed a series of economic sanctions on Russia. The Georgian Government decided not to join the global sanctions against Russia. Do you approve or disapprove of Georgian government's this decision?** (q27 X Settlement, Age, Gender, Party closest to you)

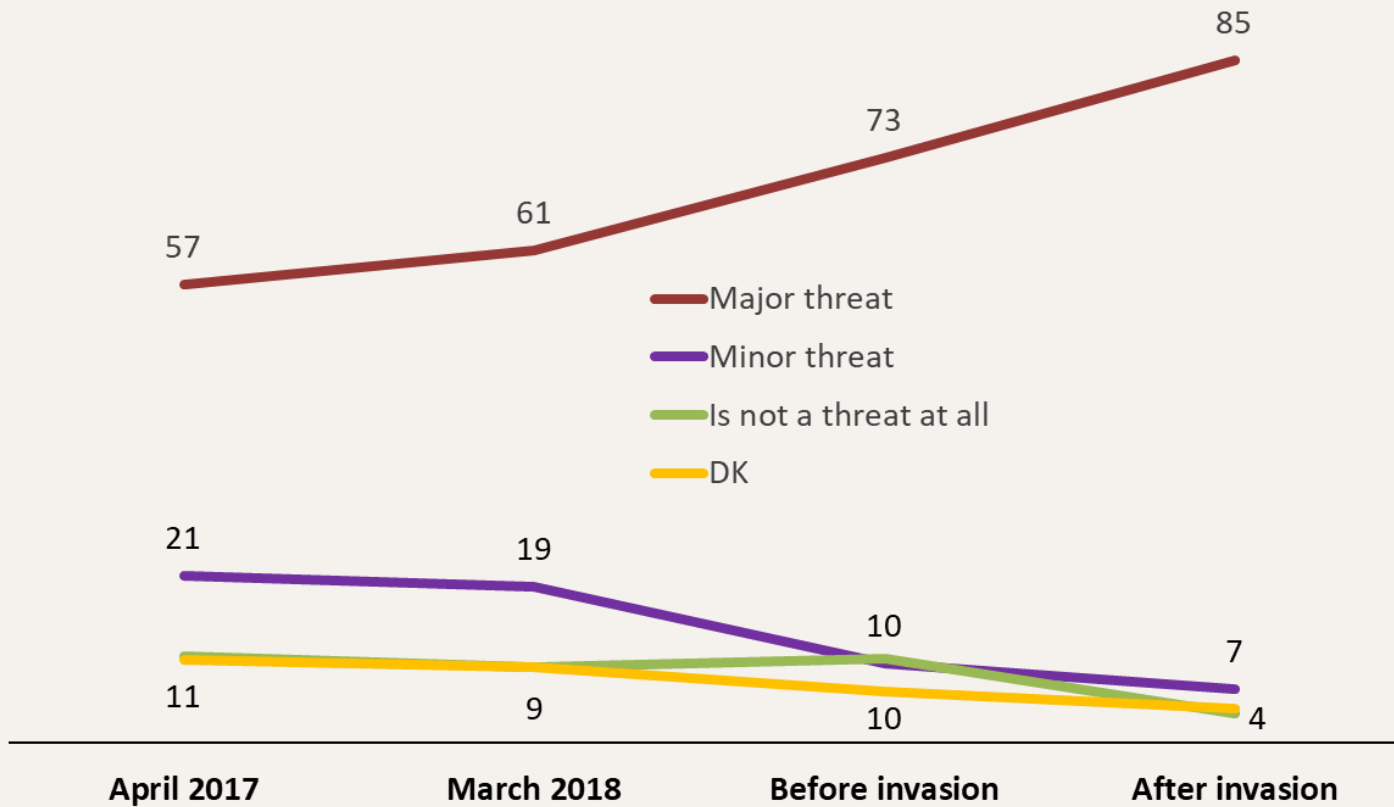


# Russian invasion in Ukraine

#SlavaUkraini

## Majority believe Russia is a major threat to neighbours

In your opinion, how much of a military threat, if at all, is Russia to its neighboring countries?  
A major threat, a minor threat or not a threat at all? (q18)



“ I think Russia is trying to demonstrate that it still has a powerful leader, who can rule Russia and influence the political climate in Europe and in the West.” – **Telavi, male, 21 y/o**

“I think Putin wants to restore the old glory of the Russian empire - Soviet Union,” – **Tbilisi, female, 20 y/o**

## Georgians are confident that war is Russia's fault

To the best of your knowledge, whose fault is the War in Ukraine?  
Up to three answers (q29)

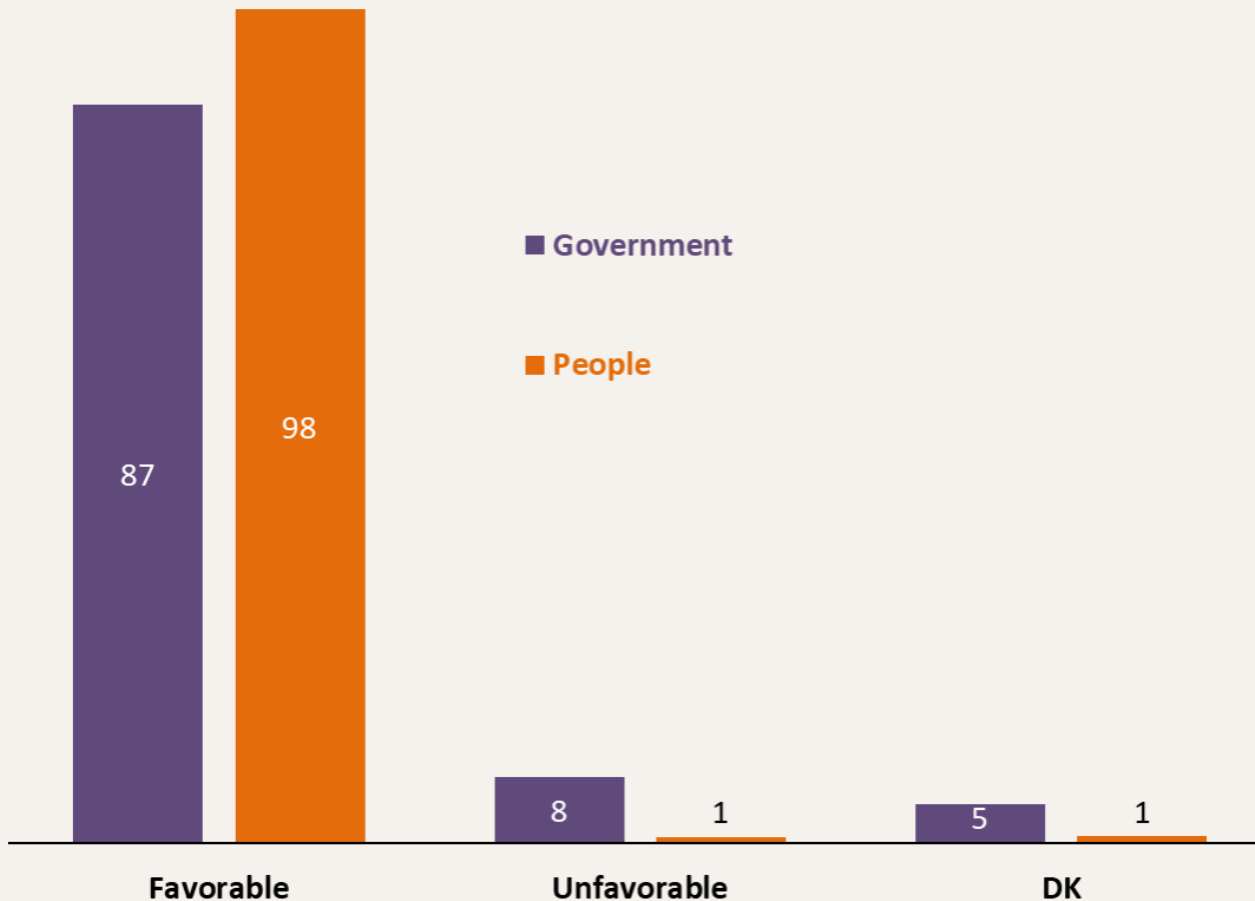


“Russia is responsible for this war, Putin himself and his entourage. Also, all those countries who just voice their concerns but do nothing to help, those also share the blame” –  
**Tbilisi, female, 27 y/o**

“Russia and people in power are the only ones to be blamed. But I also see the responsibility of the USA and Europe. Just like in 2008, they push these small countries to provoke this tyrant [Russia] and then they leave them alone, and do nothing but impose sanctions and want to score points with this” –  
**Tbilisi, male, 24 y/o**

## Georgians demonstrate strong support for Ukrainian people and their government

What is your overall opinion of the government/people of Ukraine? (q22, q23)



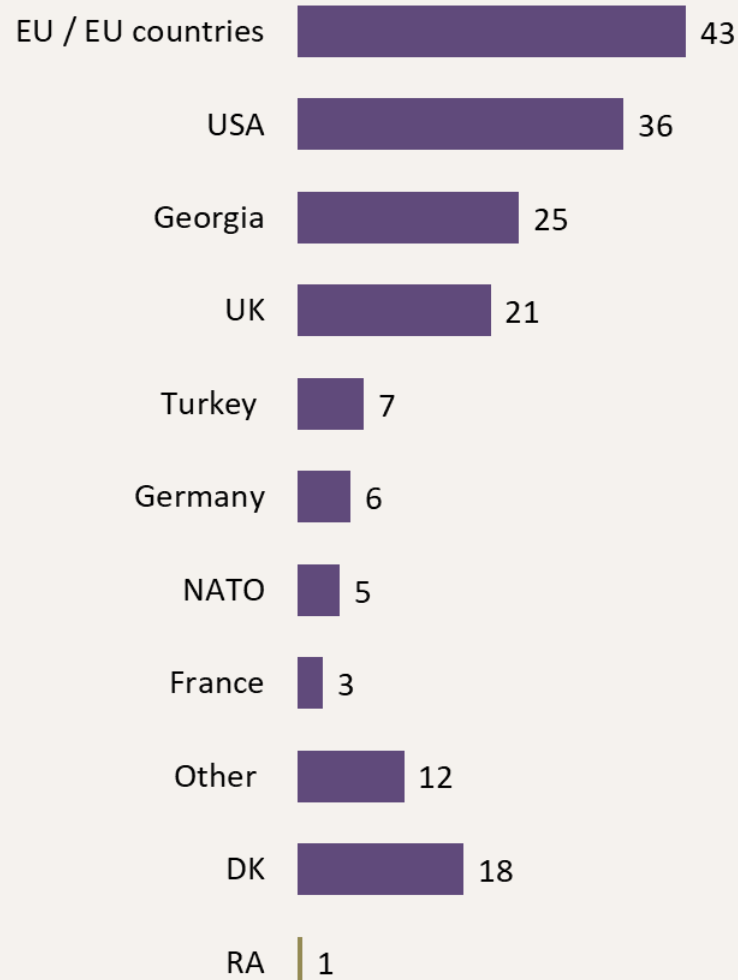
“I respect their unity, they came together as one, that’s what Ukrainian people are - exemplary. They know how to support each other, exemplary indeed!” - **Batumi, female, 53 y/o**

“They faced attacks with dignity, both the Ukrainian people and the government. People follow the government's instructions and it’s very important as well.” - **Tbilisi, female, 20 y/o**



## Georgians say EU helped the most

In your opinion, who helped Ukraine the most? Up to three answers (q28)



“From what I can tell, they (countries) are doing their best. I really didn’t expect so many countries rallying around for Ukraine and assisting Ukraine. I don't think there is anything else they can do, realistically speaking.” - **Telavi, female, 23 y/o**

“Small countries did whatever they could [to help Ukraine]. Bigger countries can do more. I think military help would be best to prevent Russia from causing so much damage.” - **Tbilisi, female, 20 y/o**

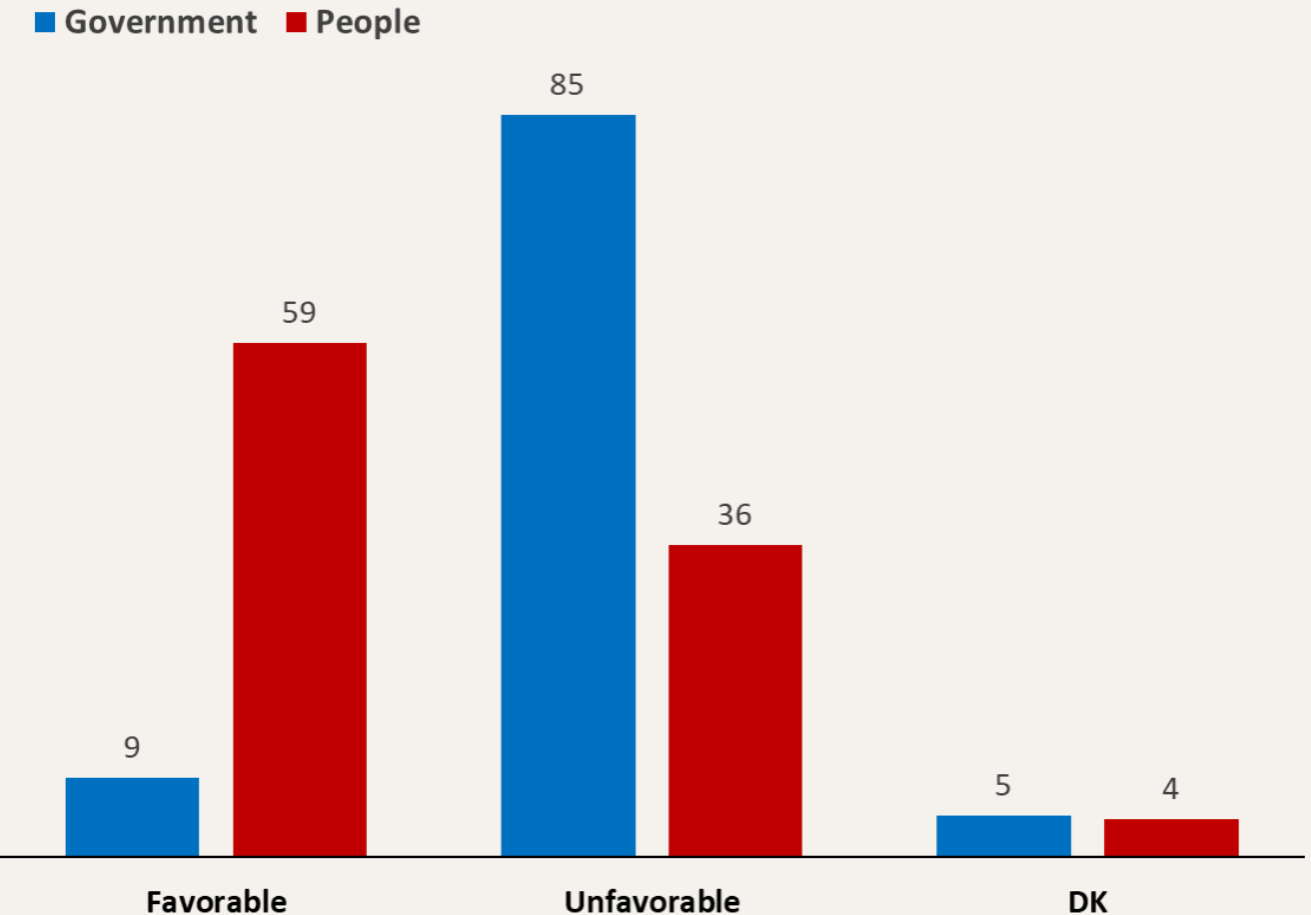
# Russia and Russians

#slavaukraini

# Georgians say #notallrussians

## Russian people viewed more favourably than Russian government

What is your overall opinion of the government/people of Russia? (q24, q25)

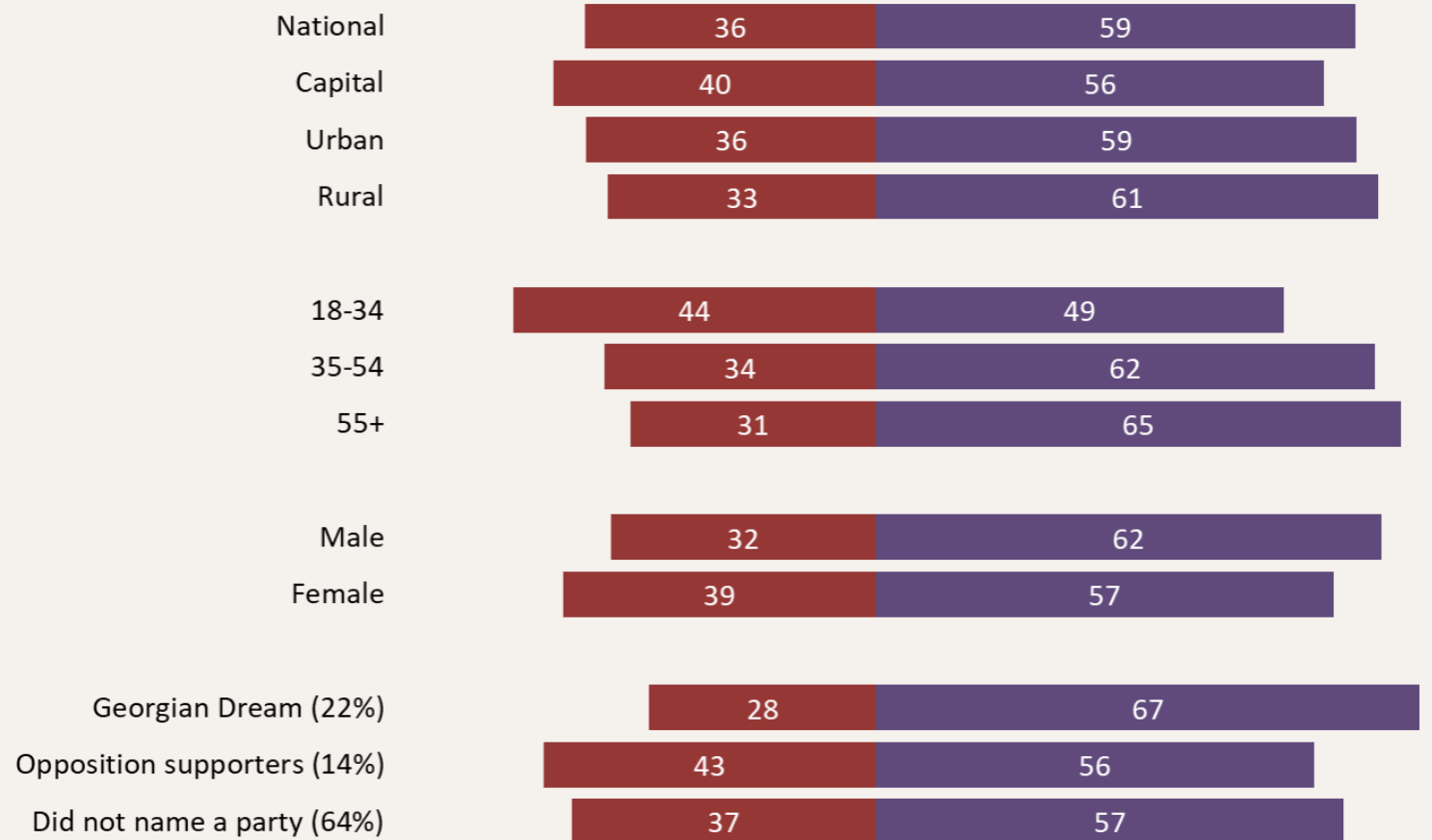


# Georgians say #notallrussians

## Georgians say #notallrussians

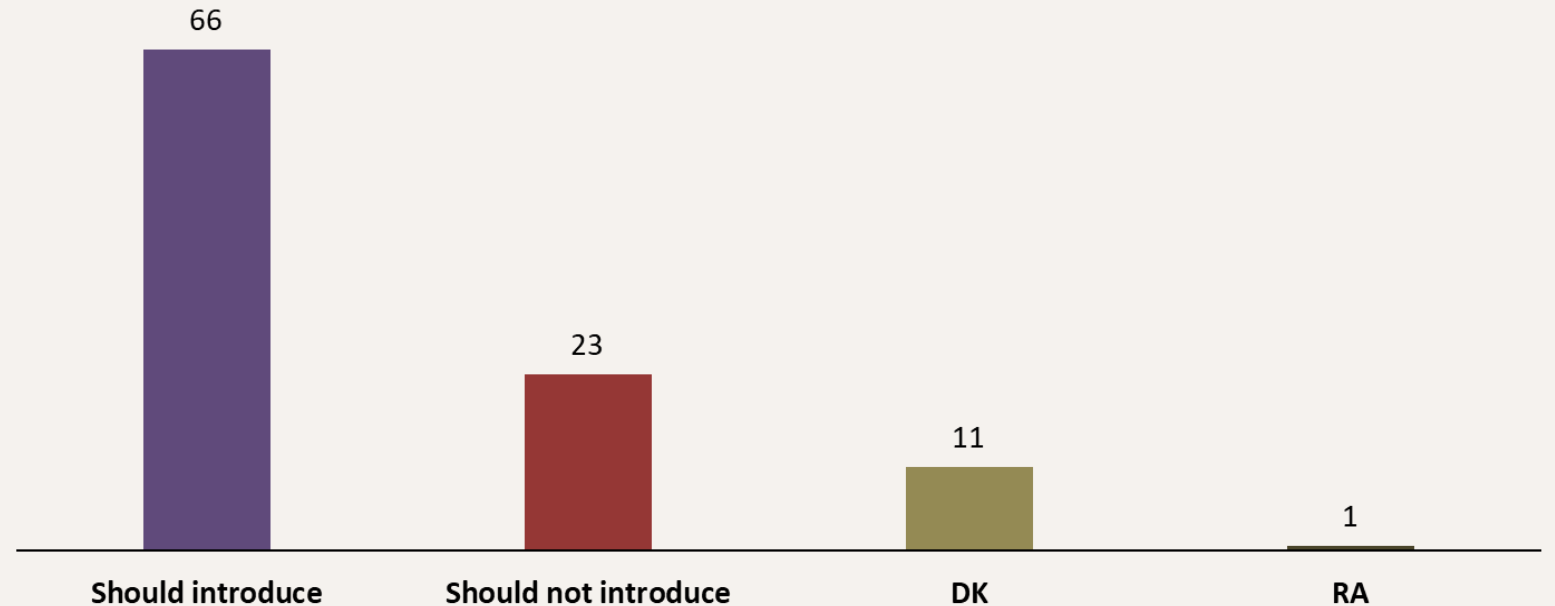
What is your overall opinion of the people of Russia? (q25 X Settlement, Age, Gender, Party closest to you)

■ Unfavorable ■ Favorable



# Overwhelming support for introduction of visa regime for Russians

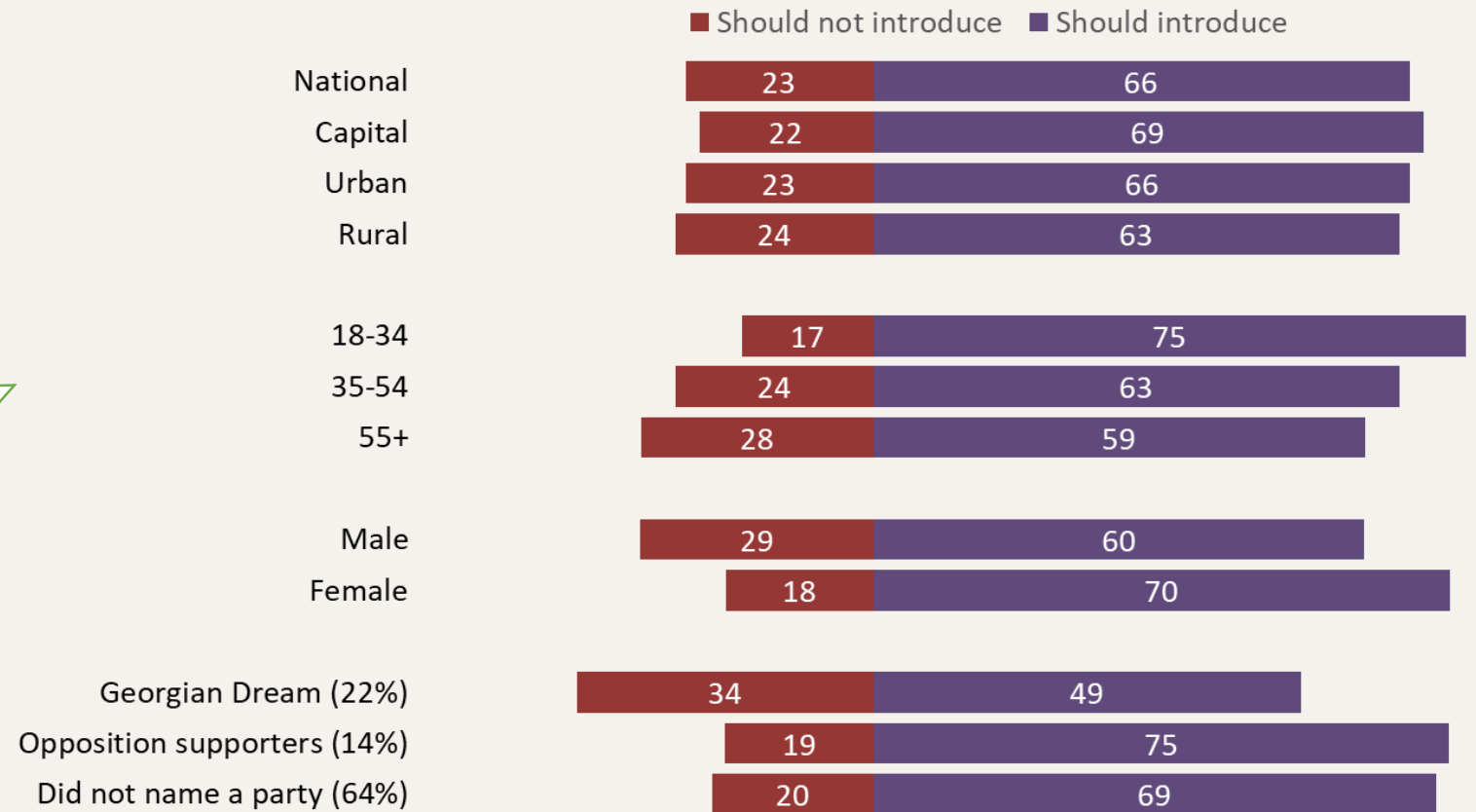
Currently Russian citizens don't need visas for entering Georgia. Do you think Georgian government should introduce a visa regime for Russian citizens? (q34)



GD supporters, men and older citizens are more against introduction of visa regime, than others

“We should not turn them [Russians] away, because some Georgians are living in Russia who are providing for their families. If we turn Russians away, they might do similar to Georgians living in Russia.” - **Tbilisi, female, 72 y/o**

### Currently Russian citizens don't need visas for entering Georgia. Do you think Georgian government should introduce a visa regime for Russian citizens? (q34 X Settlement, Age, Gender, Party closest to you)



Future

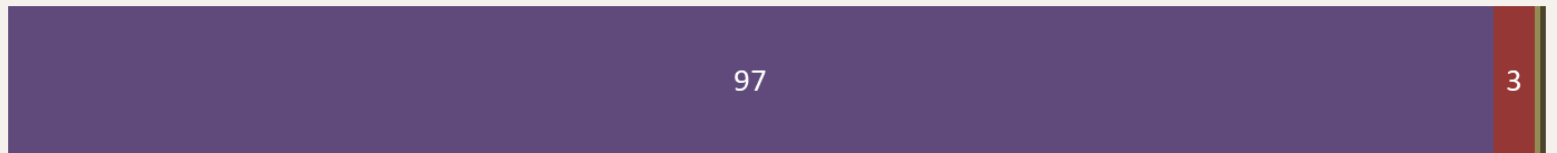
# Georgians don't intend to live their country, but some have doubts about government's ability to handle crisis

Young people, Tbilisi residents and opposition supporters are more skeptical than others that Georgian government will make right decisions during a time of crisis.

## How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (q32)

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ DK ■ RA

My country is my home and I don't intend to leave it



In my society there is a high level of social solidarity (mutual assistance and concern for one another)



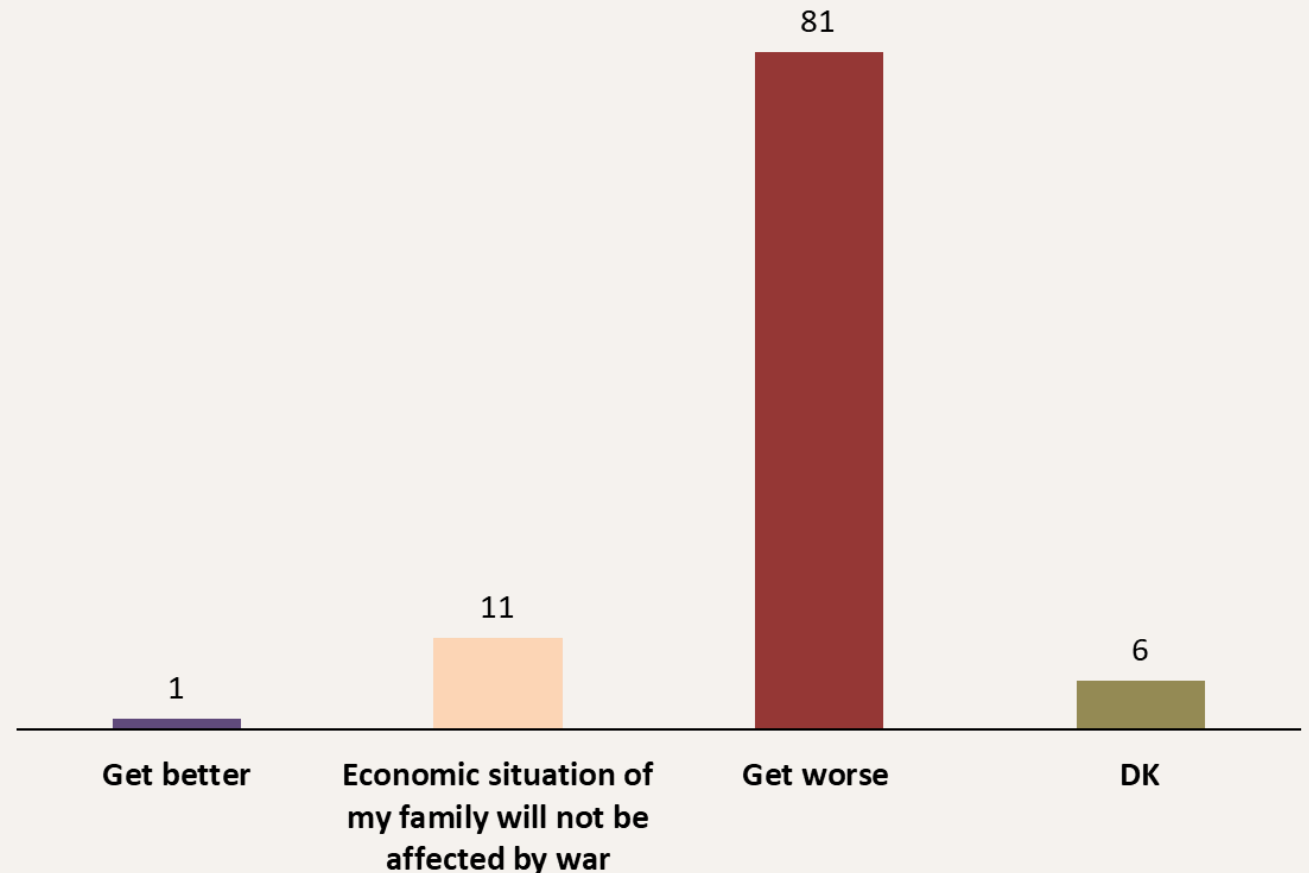
I believe that my government will make the right decision during a time of crisis





Majority believe the war will negatively affect their family's economic well-being

Thinking about the War in Ukraine, how do you feel it may affect your and your family's economic well-being?  
Economic situation of you and your family will ... (q31)



# Majority expect economic decline, advancement of pro-Russian forces and Russian military aggression

Younger demographic is expecting the worst. Tbilisi residents more worried about advancement of pro-Russian political forces.

Considering the current situation, please tell me how likely or unlikely it is that the following scenarios will unfold in Georgia during the next year? (q30)

Legend: ■ Likely ■ Less likely ■ Not likely ■ DK ■ RA

Economic decline / hardship in Georgia



Advancement of pro-Russian political forces in Georgia



Russian military aggression against Georgia



Worsened relationship with EU



Research is funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the foreign, commonwealth and development office's good governance fund.

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