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Chronicles. The results of two years of war.

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Methodology

- The field portion of the study was conducted from January 23 to January 29, 2024;
- Research method: CATI;
- Sampling methodology: RDD according to Rossvyaz data, stratified by

federal districts and two federal cities;

- Total number of interviewers and person/hours worked: 96 interviewers, 1206 hours;
- Number of contact attempts per number in the starting sample: 3;
- Final sample: 1619
- Estimated sampling error: 2.44% at 95% confidence interval;
- Average interview duration: 16 min. 15 sec.

¹This is the definition of a Russian military incursion into Ukrainian territory that is authorized for use by Russian authorities and safe for respondents and operators.

Dynamics of attitudes towards SMO over two years

Support/non-support SMO

For two years, the Chronicles project team has been conducting research into the opinions and attitudes of Russians towards the SMO, in particular their support or non-support for the special military operation and the dynamics of citizens' attitudes towards the military actions in Ukraine.

In an atmosphere of information restrictions (censorship, closure of independent media, etc.) and administrative and legislative pressure on Russians for an answer "I support" is often not the real position of the respondent, but the "normative response" of a person who does not want to or cannot oppose the official state policy. "opinion". Recognizing this phenomenon, the Chronicle team structured its research in such a way that it was possible to separate those respondents who consistently and consciously support the current policy of the Russian authorities from those who, for various reasons, only adhere to the "supporters".

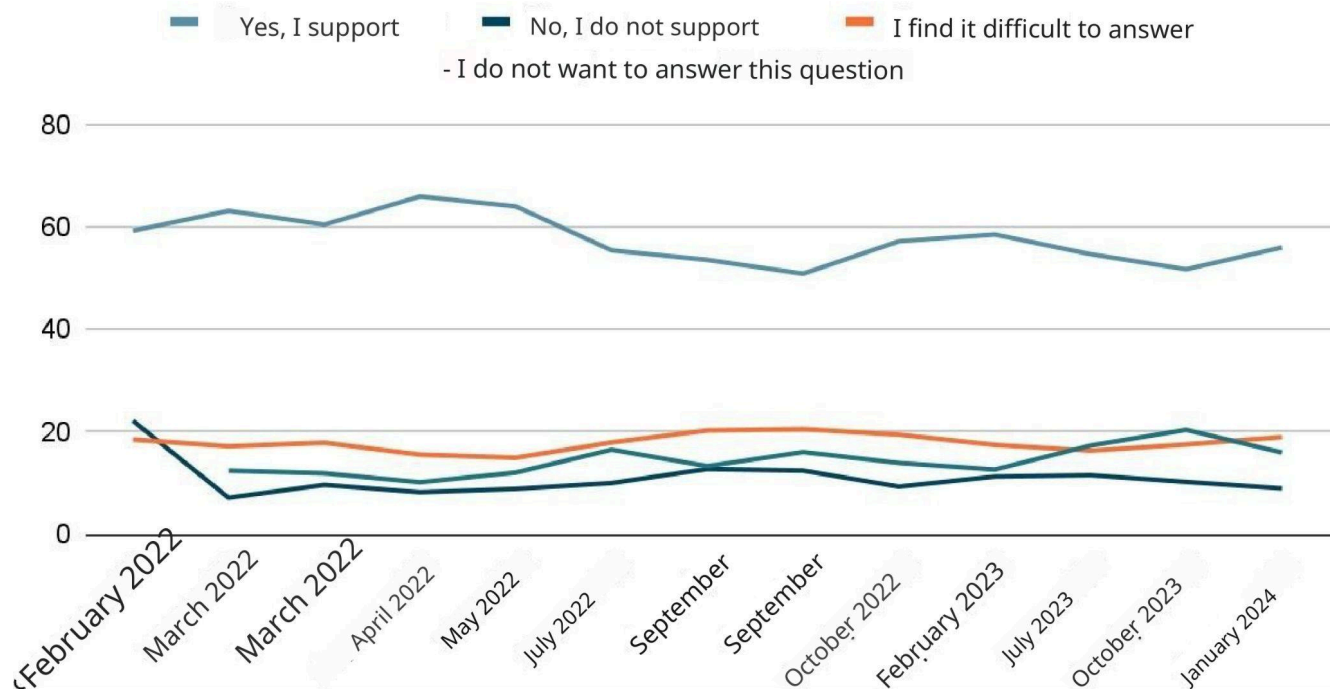
Therefore, the focus of the research is on narrower groups that are defined by responses to more than one question. Interviews include questions where the level of 'normativity' may be lower than in a direct question "do you support SMO?", but such questions are meaningfully related to the topic of interest.

Data from the January poll show that "framework" (or "normative") support for the SMO in Russian society remains stable. More than half of respondents (56%) said they support the special military operation, while only 9% said they do not support it. After a slight decline in October (from 55% to 52% support), the level of support for the SMO has returned to its previous level.

The share of those who support SMO is higher the older the respondents are: among young people (18-29) only 36% support it, in the group of 60+ the share of those who support it is twice as high - 72%.

Fig.1. Dynamics of support/non-support of SMOs

Support dynamics



To what extent are the groups of supporters and non-supporters of SMO antagonistic? This can be assessed through the attitude towards the supporters of the opposite position.

Representatives of both groups were asked symmetrical questions: how they treat those who take the opposite position. It turned out that among those who support the SMO, 39% treat non-supporters "with condemnation", and only

12% -with understanding (another 42% said they had a "neutral" attitude), i.e.

the ratio between those who condemn and those who understand is 3.25. Among the clearly of non-supporters of the SMO the share of those who condemn the adherents of the opposite position is 23%, and of those who understand - 14%, i.e. the same ratio is 1.64. The level of rejection of the "other" among supporters of SMO is twice as high as among its opponents.

Figure 2. Attitudes of SMO supporters and those who find it difficult to answer or refuses to answer the question about support for the SMO, to non-supporters of the SMO.

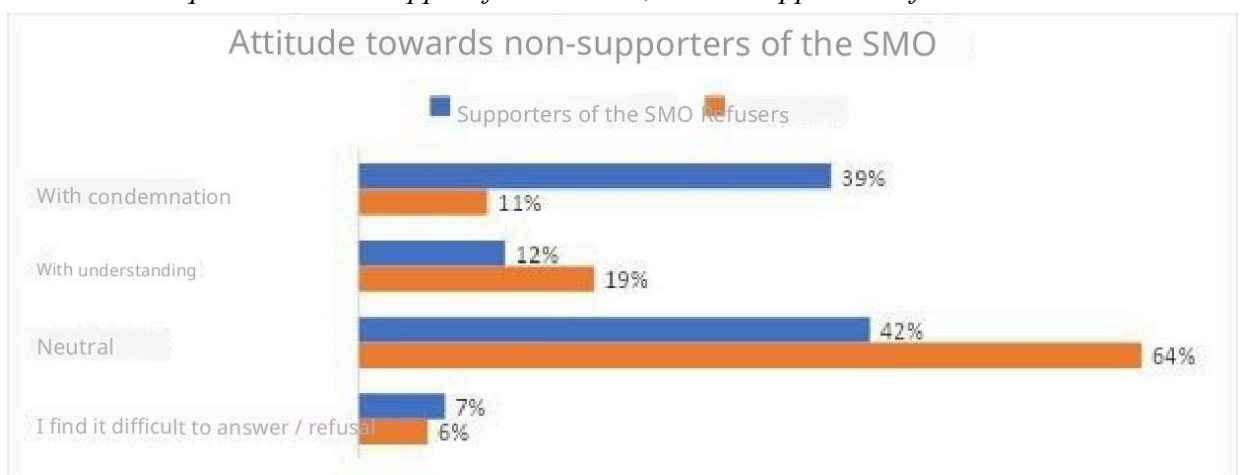
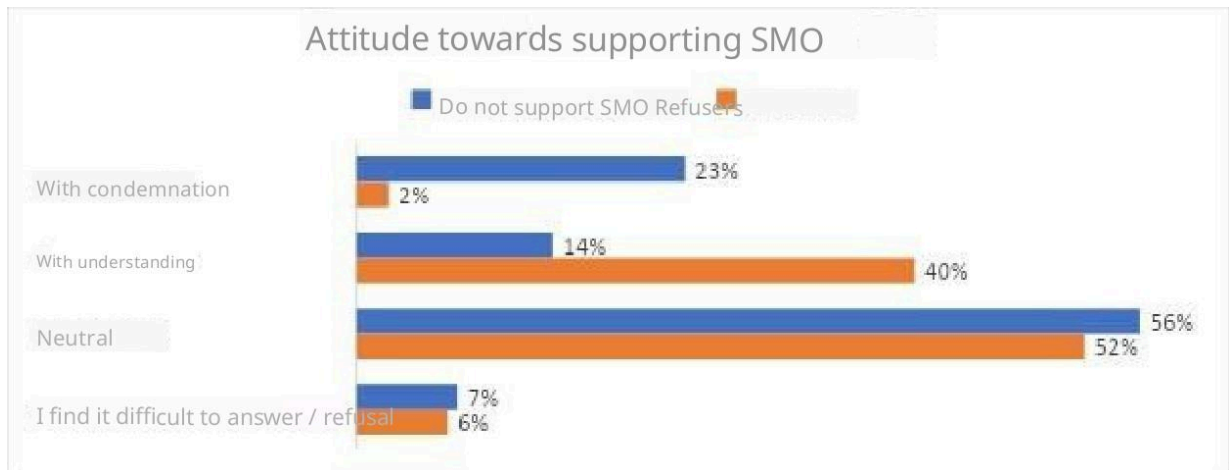


Fig.3. Attitude of those who do not support SMO and those who find it difficult to answer or refuse to answer the question about support for SMO to those who support SMO.



Traditionally, the share of those who find it difficult to answer or refuse to answer the question about support for SMO is traditionally high; in total, this share amounts to 35% of respondents. Let us call this subgroup "refusers".

The attitudes in this subgroup can be clarified with the help of the question about attitudes towards those who support and do not support the SMO: the differences in the answers suggest which position is closer to the "refuseniks" subgroup. More than half of the representatives of this subgroup have a "neutral" attitude towards supporters of both positions: 64% towards non-supporters of the SMO and 52% towards supporters. However, the ratio of "judging" and "understanding" are markedly different:

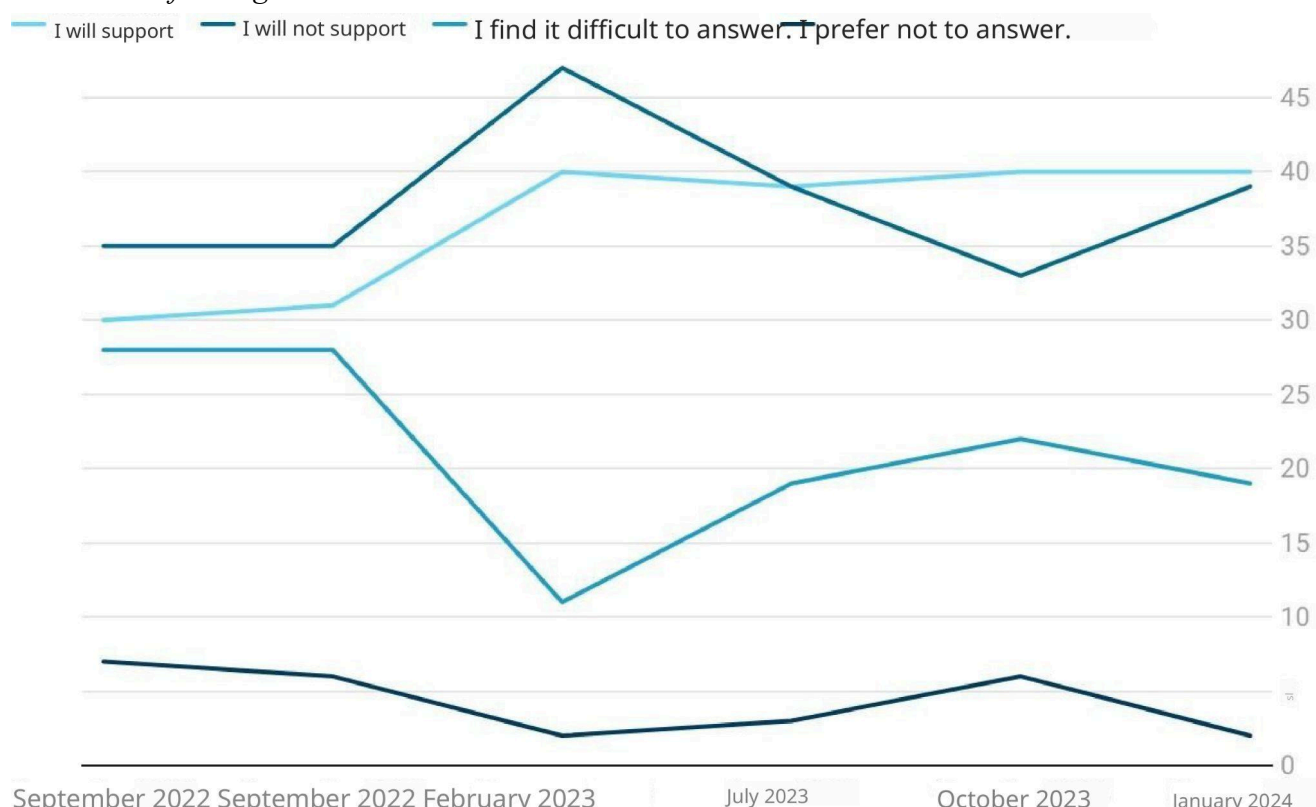
- 40% of "refuseniks" treat those supporting SMO "with understanding" and 2% — with disapproval,
- 19% of "refusers" view non-supportive SMOs with understanding and 11% — with disapproval,

Based on these indirect but indicative distributions, we can assume that the potential for shifting the position of "refuseniks" is directed rather towards support for the SMO than in the opposite direction (with the "neutral" position prevailing). Based on the responses of this group to other questions related to the SMO, it can be concluded that in particulars this subgroup is more peaceful than supporters of the SMO.

Attitudes towards truce

On the second key issue of monitoring the mood of Russians - support or not support for negotiations on a truce with the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine without achieving the stated goals - we observe a slight increase in the share of respondents who hold an aggressive position and do not agree to such a truce option: from 33% to 39% compared to data from October 2023. The share of Russians who would support a ceasefire has remained unchanged for four months, at 40%.

Fig.4. Dynamics of support for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine and ceasefire negotiations.



One of the issues that will arise in any case at the peace talks will be territorial. 13% of Russians believe it is acceptable to return the annexed territories to Ukraine in exchange for providing Russia with security guarantees, while 71% are sure that the territories should not be returned under any circumstances. It should be noted that among those who support the SMO there is almost complete and categorical unanimity: 88% believe that it is impossible to return the annexed lands to Ukraine. Opinions of non-supporters of the SMO are divided: 27% believe that the territories should not be returned, while 52% allow such a possibility provided that Russia provides security guarantees.

Those who found it difficult/refused to take a position on the SMO chose an intermediate position: they allow the return of territories more often than SMO supporters (18% vs. 6%), but less often than SMO opponents (18% vs. 52%). Thus, on this question "refuseniks" are somewhat closer in their views to those who support the SMO. However, when analyzing the answers to this question, it should be taken into account that respondents may be afraid to talk about the return of territories because of the fact that for the "calls against the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation" they may face administrative punishment (usually a large fine).

Table 1. Respondents' answers to the territorial question

	ALLS	Support SMO	Do not support SMO	The 'Refusers'
Can we return territories	13	4	52	18
Returning territories is not allowed	71	89	27	56
I am having difficulty to answer / refusal	15	7	21	26

Relation to military budget expenditures

The growth of militaristic attitudes was also manifested in the third key indicator of the survey. This is about the decision on what to spend the state budget on first - the army or social needs. Every third respondent in January 2024 (33%) believes that spending on the armed forces should be a priority, while 44% of respondents prioritize the social sphere.

The first indicator increased by 7 p.p. compared to the October poll, primarily (as in the case of other indicators) due to a decrease in the share of those who find it difficult to answer the question.

Attitude towards mobilization

The survey shows that there is no consensus in society on how mobilization or rotation of mobilized persons should be carried out in the near future. The relative majority of respondents (29%) believe that the mobilized should be returned home and new mobilization should not be carried out. New mobilization will be the least popular solution, only 17% of respondents support it. In favor of preserving the existing

not to rotate, but also not to recruit new mobilized people 26% of respondents are in favor. Even among supporters of the SMO, the relative majority supports maintaining the status quo (34%) and does not want mobilization and an increase in the size of the army. 12% of those supporting the SMO are in favor of demobilization.

Table 2. Respondents' attitude to mobilization

	Total number of respondents	Of them, support SMO	Of them, do not support SMO
To conduct a new mobilization to replace those mobilized	17	22	4
Leave everything as it is	26	34	4
To send those mobilized home, without conducting a new mobilization	29	12	79
I find it difficult to answer / refusal	29	32	13

Since the beginning of autumn 2023, there have been women's protests in Russia for the return of men mobilized to the SMO. 59% of respondents had heard nothing about these protests, and 9% considered them unimportant.

Key indicators of segmentation of Russian society in relation to SMO

Consistent supporters of the idea of a military solution to the issue ("support the SMO" + "oppose a ceasefire without achieving objectives" + "prioritize spending on the army") - accounts for 17% of the sample, up 5 p.p. from October (12%) but down from February 2023 (22%).

Consistent opponents of the SMO ("have not expressed support for the SMO" + "are ready for a truce without achieving the goals" + "prioritize social spending") are now 19%, and this figure has not changed since October.

	February 2023	October 2023	January 2024
Sequential supporters	23	12	17
Sequential opponents	20	18	19

In terms of consistent supporters/opponents of the SMO without considering the issue of budget spending priorities, the figure for SMO supporters is 32%

(up 5 p.p. from October 2023), and for opponents of SMO — 26% (up 1 p.p.)

	Апрель 2022	Май 2022	Июль 2022	Сентябрь 2022	Сентябрь 2021	Февраль 2023	Апрель 2023*	Июль 2023	Сентябрь 2023*	Октябрь 2023	Январь 2024
Последовательные сторонники СВО	59	55	41	29	27	40	35	32	32	27	32
Последовательные противники СВО	16	18	22	20	21	25	24	25	25	25	26

**According to ExtremeScan*

The decline in those who support the SMO has stopped: the numbers are back to spring/summer 2023 levels. Those respondents who in the fall of 2023 "doubted" on the issue of the attitude towards the SMO, returned to the support group for the military operation.

One of the possible factors influencing the reverse swing of the pendulum was the prevalence of perceptions of Russia's military successes. 54% of respondents believe that "over the past month" the situation in the SMO zone has changed in Russia's favor, and only 1% expressed the opposite opinion¹. Not surprisingly, positive trends are voiced by "those who support the SMO" (71%). But also among the "non-supporters" there are five times more of those who believe that the situation is changing in favor of Russia rather than Ukraine: 16% vs. 3% (the rest believe that the situation has not changed).

Those who use only Russian sources of information about the military operation are more likely to believe that the situation is changing in Russia's favor: 59% versus 47% of those who receive information from alternative sources. But this difference is not significant enough to speak of the exclusive role of propaganda in shaping the of the "front" painting.

The situation is the same with the types of information sources: among TV viewers the share of those who positively assess the situation at the front is higher than among readers TV channels (65% vs. 51%), but this difference is not so significant to speak about the "formative role" of television.

¹ The poll was conducted before the final assault on Avdeevka - amid the lack of major successes for the Russian army.

Table 3. Response to the question about changes in the situation in the military operation zone

U7 . Do you think that over the past month the situation in the war zone has changed in favor of Russia, in favor of Ukraine, or has the situation not changed over the past month?

Answer	%
The situation has changed in favor of Russia	54
The situation has changed in favor of Ukraine	1
The situation has not changed	30
I find it difficult to answer / refusal / I am not following the situation	15

Table 4. Responses to the question about changes in the situation in the military operation zone with a breakdown of respondents' attitudes towards the SMOs

	Support SMO	Do not support SMO	Struggled to respond	Refused to respond	
The situation has changed in favor of Russia	54	71	16	38	34
The situation has changed in favor of Ukraine	1	1	3	1	2
The situation has not changed	30	20	67	34	41

"Strategies for voting."

The analysis of the voting strategy for the upcoming March 2024 presidential election is built on the intersection of three issues:

E3. Do you or do you not plan to vote in the Russian presidential election this March?

E4. If you take part in the Russian presidential election, which of the listed candidates will you vote for?

E5. Is the Russian presidential candidate you would like to vote for running or not running, or is there no such candidate in principle?²

The most frequently expressed strategy by respondents is voting for V. Putin as "their" candidate (46%). Let's call this strategy "voting for candidate V. Putin."

16% of respondents have no "their" candidate or found it difficult to answer the question, but nevertheless they also plan to vote for V. Putin. This strategy can be called "tactical voting", when a voter supports a candidate who differs from his real preferences, as he assesses his chances of winning as the highest.

12% of respondents have "their" candidate and it is not V. Putin (candidates from LDPR, CPRF, "Communists of Russia" and other parties). Let's call this strategy "by voting for the other candidate."

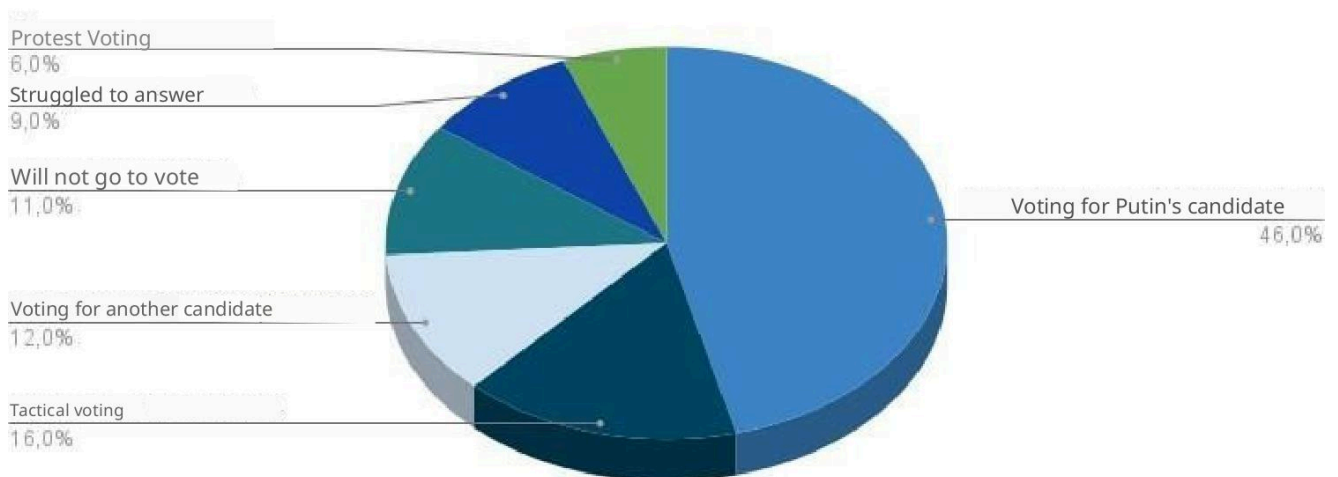
6% of respondents have no "their" candidate or found it difficult to answer the question, but they plan to vote for someone other than V. Putin. This strategy can be called "protest vote": "for anyone — but Putin".

9% do not have "their" candidate or find it difficult to answer the question and do not know for whom they will vote. This group can be called "those who found it difficult".

11% of respondents will not go to the polls.

Figure 1: "Voting strategies" of respondents.

Respondents' Voting Strategies



² Since question E5 was asked to half of the sample (n=867), the analysis, the results of which are presented in Figure 1, was conducted on the responses of only this subsample.

Characteristics of respondents

Regression analysis shows the differences of these six groups by socio-demographic characteristics, financial status and media consumption.

Table 5: Correlation between "voting strategies" and respondents' characteristics

	Voting for Putin	Tactical voting	Protest vote	Voting for another candidate	Difficult respondents	They won't go to vote
(Constant)	,498	,280	-,089	,088	,098	,126
Men	-,084**	-,039	,036**	-,006	,027	,066***
	,035	,026	,017	,025	,021	,024
18-34	,090	-,140***	,036	,049	-,029	-,006
	,067	,049	,032	,047	,040	,045
35-54	,171***	-,137***	,032	-,034	,015	-,048
	,058	,042	,028	,040	,035	,039
City, village	,006	,055**	-,022	-,046*	,001	,005
	,037	,028	,018	,026	,023	,025
I have a college degree	,022	-,042	-,025	,025	,042**	-,022
	,035	,026	,017	,025	,021	,023
Index of deterioration of the maturity status	-,073***	-,016	,031***	,011	,024**	,024*
	,019	,014	,009	,013	,011	,013
Low valuation of mate position	-,047	-,016	,040	-,016	,022	,018
	,058	,043	,028	,041	,035	,039
Below average	-,060	-,014	,060**	-,033	,048	-,001
	,049	,036	,024	,034	,029	,033
Average score	-,033	,017	,072***	-,015	,002	-,043

	,048	,035	,023	,034	,029	,032
Uses vpn	-,127***	,009	,069***	,039	-,052*	,063**
	,044	,032	,021	,031	,027	,029
Russian	-,080*	,010	-,034	,066*	-,016	,053*
	,048	,035	,023	,034	,029	,032
Did you yourself participate in the SMO or family member	,021	,012	-,024	-3E-05	-,019	,010
	,039	,028	,019	,027	,023	,026
Non-working pensioner	,148**	-,056	,029	-,021	-,062	-,038
	,072	,053	,035	,051	,044	,048
Government agencies	,056	-,012	,003	-,004	-,043	,001
	,058	,043	,028	,041	,035	,039
Hiring in private enterprise	,053	-,074*	,011	,009	-,036	,037
	,051	,038	,025	,036	,031	,034
Owner, IE	,067	-,003	,022	-,038	-,083**	,036
	,067	,049	,032	,047	,040	,045
Acquaintances, relatives, colleagues	-,005	,015	-,014	-,024	,015	,012
	,038	,028	,018	,026	,023	,025
TV, radio or newspapers	,187***	,038	-,035*	-,045*	-,047**	-,098***
	,038	,028	,018	,027	,023	,025
YouTube channels	-,087**	,003	,056***	-,005	,014	,020
	,042	,031	,021	,030	,026	,028
Telegram channel s	,008	-,002	-,027	,026	-,020	,015
	,040	,029	,019	,028	,024	,027

Various internet sites,	-,002	-,007	-,012	,032	,003	-,014
social networks, messengers, rootube	,034	,025	,017	,024	,021	,023
Awareness of the problems	-,026*	-,009	,030***	,009	,006	-,010
	,015	,011	,007	,010	,009	,010

Significance levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$.

In the group "voting for candidate Putin" women are more likely to be found, the average age of respondents is 35-54 years old. This group is more likely to include non-working pensioners; respondents who receive information about the SMO from TV, radio or newspapers. Less likely to fall into this group are respondents whose financial situation has deteriorated over the past year, as well as those who use vpn and receive information about SMO from Youtube.

There is an interesting group of "tactical" voters who do not have "their" candidate, have no intention to participate in the elections or have no answer to the question of who they will vote for, but who nevertheless plan to vote for V. Putin. In this group respondents of the age group of 55 years and older are overrepresented. It is important that this group differs from the previous one in the absence of a dominant source of information about the SMO.

Although the "protest voting" group accounts for only 6%, it has a distinct "portrait": they are, as a rule, men; respondents who have faced a deterioration in their financial situation (including a decline in income and the negative impact of sanctions). Most likely, these are respondents with an assessment of their financial situation below average. They are also those who use vpn, receive information about SMOs from Youtube channels and is well aware of Russian and world issues.

The group of those whose candidate is running in the elections and who plan to vote not for V. Putin does not differ from the other groups in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, financial situation and media consumption.

The "undecided" group is more likely to include respondents with higher education and deteriorating financial situation. It is less likely to include owners of enterprises and individual entrepreneurs; respondents who receive information about SMO from TV, radio and newspapers.

The group of those who do not plan to vote is more likely to be represented by men; respondents who use vpn and do not get information about SMO from TV, radio and newspapers.

Thus, we can conclude that the greatest effect on V. Putin's choice as a candidate is exerted by state sources of information (TV, radio and newspapers). And the greatest effect on "protest voting" — respondents' economic problems and their awareness of the problems in the country and the the world.

Expectations for the future

These groups have different attitudes to the decisions of the authorities and expectations of the future. It is interesting that the two groups of V. Putin's supporters see life after the elections differently: while in the group "voting for candidate V. Putin" one third of respondents (31%) believe that their life will change for the better, in the group "voting for candidate V. Putin" one third of respondents (31%) believe that their life will change for the better.

"tactical voting" this optimism is shared by only every fifth respondent (19%).

The most pessimistic expectations among respondents who chose the strategy of "protest voting", and those who do not plan to vote in the elections: 40% and 27% respectively believe that their life will worsen after the elections.

It should be noted that the groups "voting for candidate V. Putin" and "protest voting" (although it is the smallest) obviously stand out from the general list in terms of answers to other questions as well.

- 73% of "Putinists" support the SMO, in the "protest" group 18%. In these groups 2% and 51%, respectively, do not support the SMO.
- Putin's decision to withdraw troops from Ukraine without achieving his goals is supported by 34% of "Putinists" and 69% of respondents of the "protest" group.
- 84% of "Putinists" believe that Ukraine should not return territories in exchange for security guarantees, while 39% of respondents in the "protest" group share this opinion.
- Among the "Putinists" only 14% believe that it is necessary to return the mobilized to their homes and not to carry out a new mobilization. In the "protest" group, this position is shared by 66% of respondents.
- Of course, these two groups also differ in their perception of what state funds should be spent on in the first place: 48% of "Putin's supporters" believe that funds should be spent on the armed forces, while 32% of "Putin's supporters" believe that funds should be spent on the military, 32% of that on social services. In the "protest" group for spending on the armed 8% of respondents were in favor of force, and 78% of respondents were in favor of social expenditures.
- Respondents of the "protest" group feel more acutely than others that life in their locality has become more dangerous - 39% (among "Putinists" this answer was chosen by 9%).
- The majority of respondents in the "protest voting" group do not condemn Russians who left after the beginning of the SMO (80%) and are sympathetic to those who evaded participation in the SMO (82%). In the group "voting for candidate V. Putin" these positions are shared by 37% and 47% of respondents, respectively.

The "tactical voting" group does not have any statistically significant differences. Respondents from the "voting for another candidate" group differ in the following ways: lack of a definite position regarding the SMO and the withdrawal of troops from Ukraine without achieving the goals of the SMO. However, among them there is a statistically significantly higher share of those who believe that Ukraine can return the territories in exchange for providing Russia with security guarantees - 23%. 43% of the "voting for another candidate" group were in favor of returning the mobilized to their homes without conducting a new wave of mobilization. 60% of respondents in this group believe that public funds should be spent primarily on the social sphere.

The sixth group - those who will not go to vote - also generally takes an anti-militarist position. One in four (24%) do not support the SMO, while one in five (22%) believe that Ukraine can return territories in exchange for security guarantees. 47% believe that the mobilized should be returned home without being replaced by new mobilized. 56% do not understand the ultimate goal of the SMO, and 63% believe that the budget should be spent primarily on the social sphere. Respondents in this group also do not condemn those who left Russia after the start of the SMO (64%) and are sympathetic to those who evade participation in the SMO (77%).

Thus, the strategies of participation (or non-participation) of respondents in voting in the presidential election are correlated with their views on the SMO. In fact, refusal to participate in voting or choosing another candidate, even a candidate loyal to the authorities, means either a clear disagreement with the ongoing SMO and its influence on the life of the country (in the case of the "protest" group), or at least a desire to demilitarize the country (in the case of voters of candidates from LDPR, CPRF, etc.). One can cautiously assume that these respondents view the SMO and militarization exclusively as "V. Putin's program" and not as a "forced measure", something inevitable under any president or the only possible path for the country today.

Experiment. Post-election expectations and personal wishes of respondents

As part of the survey, an experiment was conducted to assess the differences between the respondents' image of the future in three possible scenarios: victory in the election of V. Putin, victory in the election of a conditional "ideal candidate" and the realization of the respondents' desires. Respondents were randomly divided into three subsamples. Each subsample was offered the same set of events and asked to assess expectations (in the case of the first two scenarios) and the desirability of their realization (the third option).

The wording of the questions was as follows:

E2.1. If Vladimir Putin wins the Russian presidential election, which of the following events do you think will happen in the next year?

E2.2 If the Russian presidential election is won by your ideal candidate, which of the following events do you think will happen in the next year?

E2.3 Which of the following events would you like to see happen in the coming year?

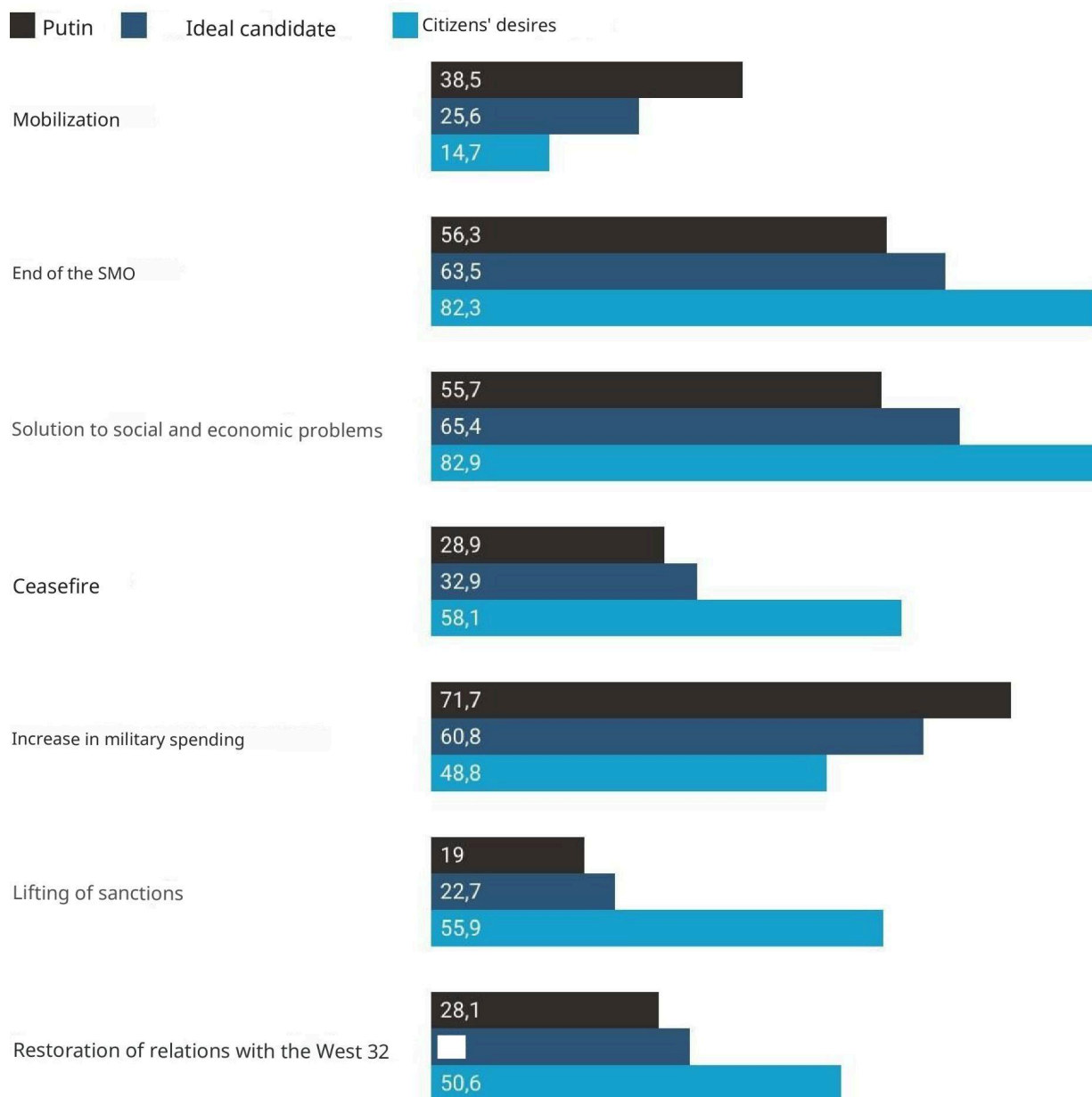
Listed events:

- Mobilization of Russian men to participate in the SMO;
- The end of the SMO after Russia has achieved its objectives;
- Addressing the internal, social and economic problems of the country;
- Truce with Ukraine;
- Increased budget spending on the military;
- Lifting of sanctions imposed on Russia;
- Restoring relations with Western countries.

The subsamples turned out to be almost identical in terms of socio-demographic indicators, the only significant difference was the question about the consumption of information about SMO: in the group that received the question with the scenario "V. Putin will win the election" the share of TV watchers is 6 p.p. lower than in the group with an ideal candidate.

Table 6. Distribution of events for each of the future scenarios.

The gap between citizens' desires and expectations of Putin



39% of respondents expect mobilization from V. Putin, 26% - from the ideal candidate, and only 15% would really like this mobilization. 56% of respondents expect from V. Putin the end of the SMO (when the goals are achieved), 64% - from the ideal candidate, and 82% would like it. For all events that are desirable for the majority of respondents, expectations from V. Putin are lower than from an ideal candidate, which is logical: respondents have their own "ideal candidate", close in principles and vision of the future, and those respondents who do not plan to vote for him worked with the scenario of V. Putin's victory. At the same time, the differences between Putin and the ideal candidate on the points of truce, removal of sanctions and improvement of relations with the West are only 3-4 p.p.. Apparently, the respondents realize that it will be difficult to implement these events even for an ideal candidate.

It is worth noting that respondents with low incomes are more skeptical about the actions of the new president, be it V. Putin or an ideal candidate. At the same time, their desires are not so different from those of respondents with medium and high incomes. The strongest difference (12 p.p.) between the poor and those living in affluence is seen in the assessment of V. Putin's actions related to mobilization and changing the focus on socio-economic issues.

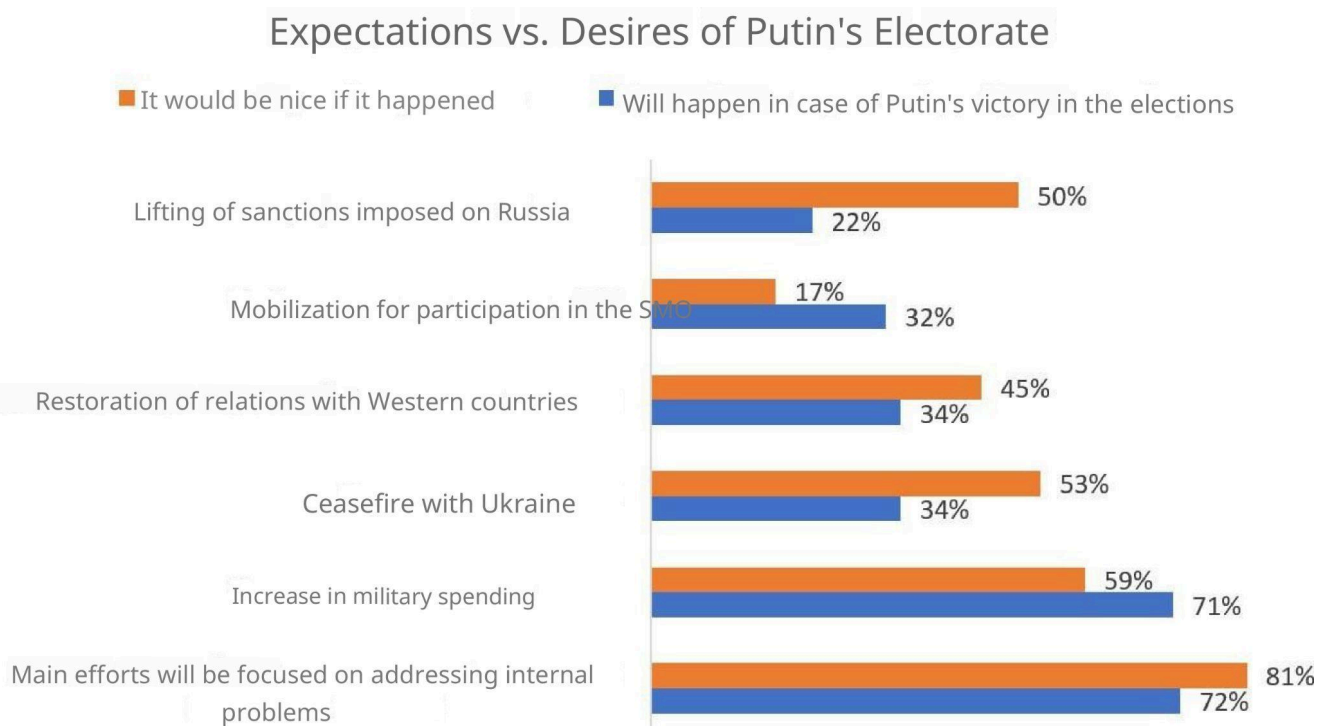
Table 7: Distribution of events for each of the future scenarios depending on the income level of respondents.

	Putin	The perfect candidate	Respondents' desire
	Mobilization		
Middle and high income	32.9%	23.1%	12.8%
Low income	44.6%	28.6%	16.3%
	Termination of the SMO		
Middle and high income	60.2%	68.0%	82.6%
Low income	52.6%	59.1%	81.9%
	Social Economy		
Middle and high income	61.7%	68.6%	83.4%
Low income	49.5%	62.3%	82.6%
	Truce		
Middle and high income	26.0%	32.6%	60.8%
Low income	31.0%	32.6%	55.6%
	Increase in military expenditures		
Middle and high income	69.8%	61.4%	48.4%
Low income	73.5%	60.1%	48.3%
	Withdrawal of sanctions		

Middle and high income	21.0%	24.0%	53.6%
Low income	17.2%	21.2%	58.5%
	Relations with the West		
Middle and high income	27.4%	31.9%	53.7%
Low income	29.0%	32.5%	47.3%

It is interesting how the expectations of V. Putin's electorate differ from those of the same group of respondents. Putin's expectations in case of his election victory differ from the desires of the same group of respondents: more than half of those who want sanctions to be lifted do not believe that V. Putin will be able to do so in the foreseeable future. Among Putin's voters, the share of those who believe that new mobilization is likely if he is elected is almost twice as high (32% vs. 17%) as the share of those who would like such a development. These are the most noticeable points of divergence between "desirable" and "probable" among this group, the most loyal to V. Putin.

Diagram 2: Expectations and desires of Putin's electorate

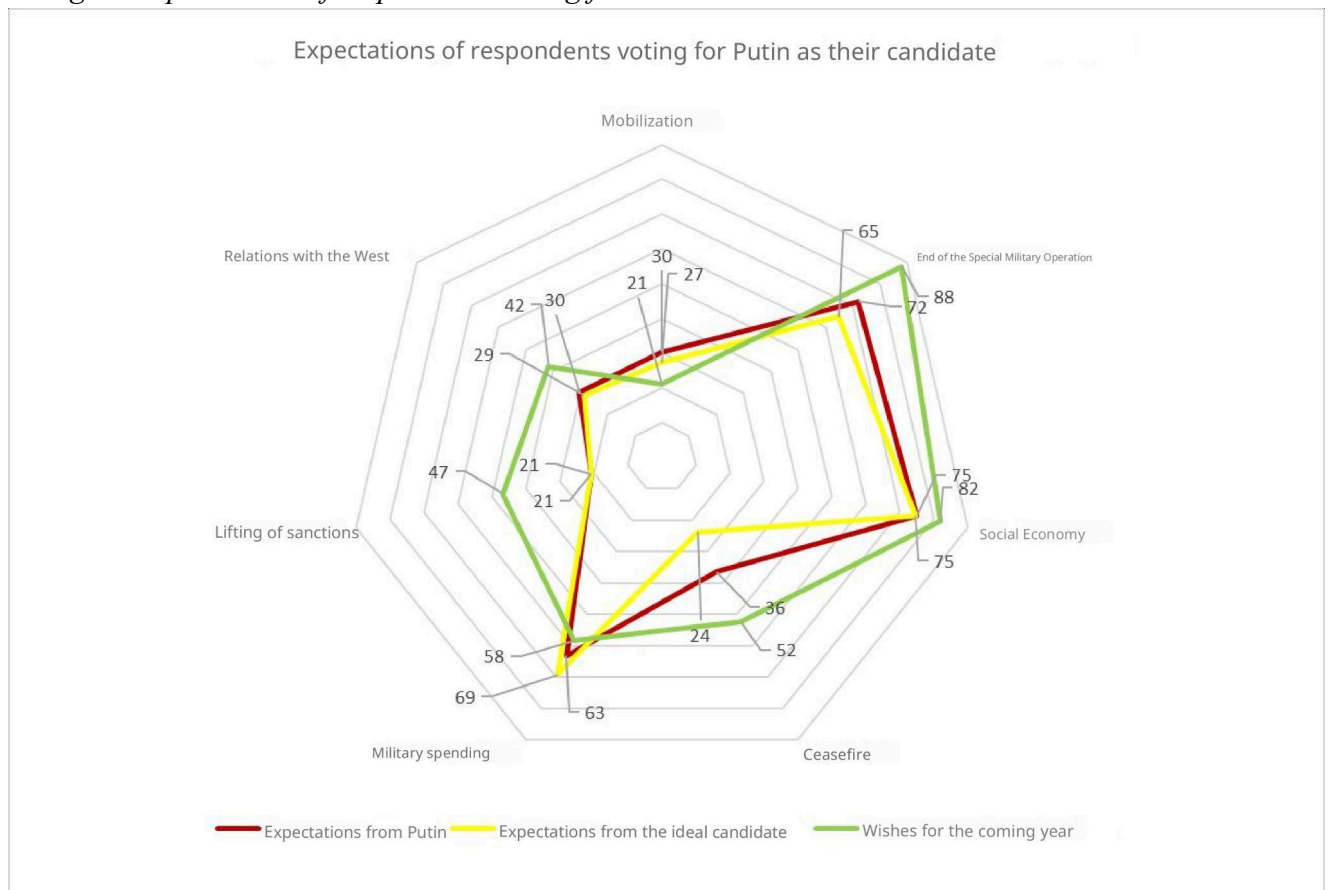


Respondents (Fig. 5) who plan to vote for V. Putin as their candidate (indicated V. Putin **and** answered that the candidate they would like to vote for is running in the elections, n=399), the image of the future in case of victory of the ideal candidate is as close as possible to the image of the future with Putin: mobilization is expected by 27% and 30% respectively, restoration of relations with the West - 29% and 30% respectively, solution of social and economic problems -

75% each, lifting of sanctions - 75% each from Russia - 21% each. An increase in budget spending on the army is expected more from the ideal candidate than from Putin - 69% vs. 63%, respectively. Ending the SMO after achieving its goals is more often expected from Putin than from the ideal candidate - 72% vs. 65%, respectively. The situation with the truce is the same - 36% vs. 24% respectively. That is, for this group of Putin's voters the ideal candidate is associated with victory in the SMO, but to a lesser extent with the ceasefire.

In general, neither Putin nor the ideal candidate meet the demand of Putin's voters for positive changes in 2024: 88% want the end of the SMO (after its goals are achieved), 82% want solutions to domestic, social and economic problems, of Russia's problems, 52% expect a truce with Ukraine, 47% expect sanctions to be lifted from Russia, and 42% improved relations with the West. In essence, both Putin and the ideal candidate can "offer" only what the respondents want the least - mobilization (the share of those who want it is 21%).

Fig. 5. Expectations of respondents voting for V. Putin as their candidate



We see a different map of expectations (Fig. 6) in the group of respondents who do not have their own candidate, but who also plan to vote for V. Putin (indicated V. Putin **and** answered that the candidate they would like to vote for is not running in the elections/ does not exist at all, or found it difficult to answer, n=136). We have labeled such a strategy as "tactical voting": voters support a candidate different from their real preferences because they estimate his/her chances of winning as higher. At least, this can happen in democratic regimes, while in the Russian reality it can be, for example, administrative pressure.

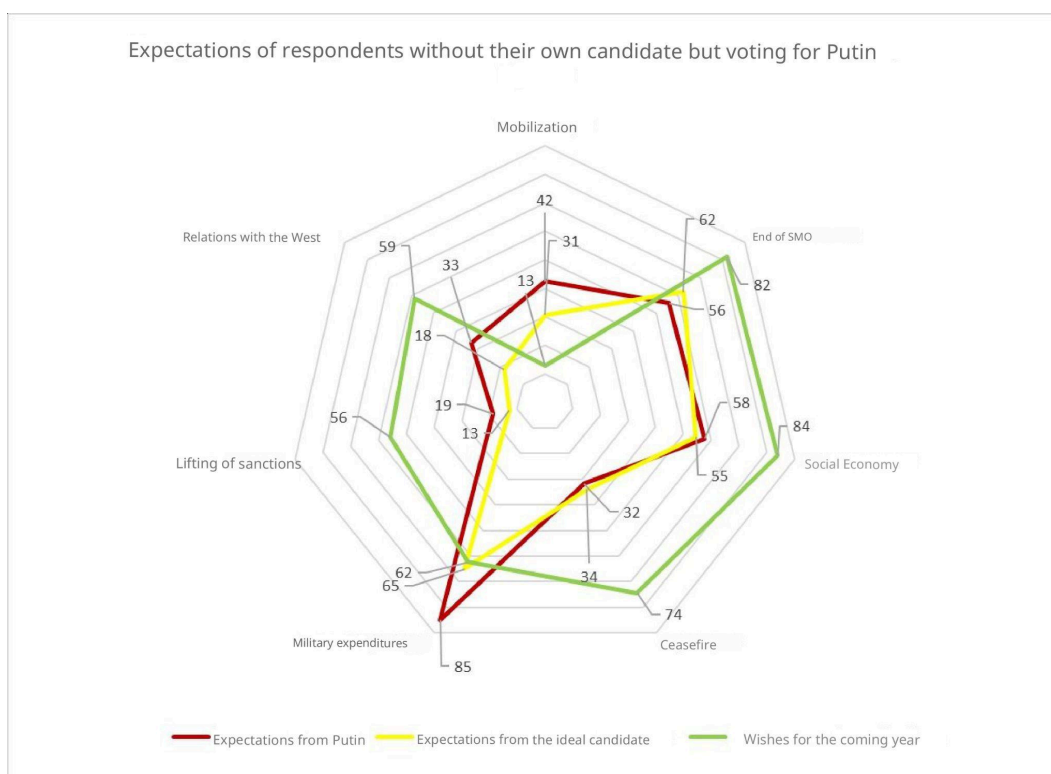
In this group the differences between expectations from Putin and from the ideal candidate are more obvious than in the previous group. According to respondents' perceptions, the ideal candidate is the one who will end the war: 62% of respondents expect from him the end of the SMO, 56% from Putin, 34% of respondents expect from him a ceasefire, 32% from Putin. Putin in this group is perceived as a militarist, and even more so than in the previous group: 42% of respondents expect new mobilization from him (in the first group - 30%), from the ideal candidate - 31%; 85% of respondents (in the first group - 63%) expect an increase in military spending from Putin, and from the ideal candidate - 65% of respondents.

However, in this group Putin plays a more important role in improving relations with the West and in lifting sanctions against Russia - 33% and 19% of respondents expect this from him, respectively (against 18% and 13% of the ideal candidate).

Compared to the first group, the desires of respondents in this group are much more divergent from their expectations - both from Putin and from the ideal candidate. In general, their desires are more anti-militaristic (except, perhaps, for increased military spending): 82% of respondents would like to see the end of the SMO after the achieving its goals (88% in the first group), 84% solving social and economic problems (82% in the first group), 74% truce with Ukraine (52% in the first group), 59% restoring relations with the West (42% in the first group), 56% lifting sanctions on Russia (47% in the first group), 13% — new mobilization (21% in the first group), 62% — increased military spending (58% in the first group).

It is likely that respondents in this group plan to vote for Putin because they see no other alternative and believe that he is capable of improving Russia's relations with other countries, although their image of the desired future is beyond Putin's capabilities.

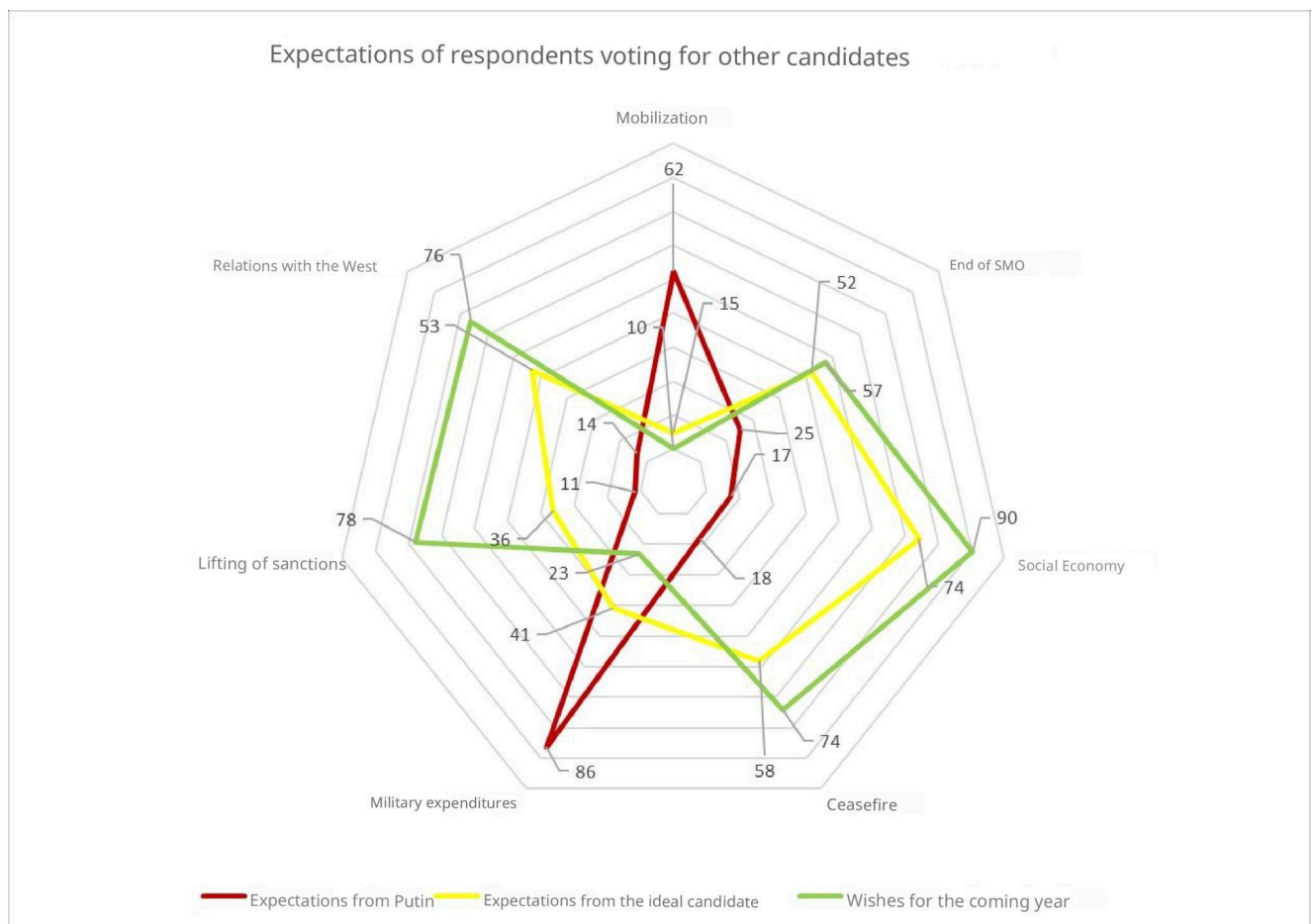
Fig. 6. Expectations of respondents who do not have their own candidate but vote for V. Putin.



Consider the expectations of respondents (Figure 7) who plan to vote for other candidates³ or responded that they are going to spoil the ballot (n=172, of which they will spoil the ballot n=5).

In this group, 52% voters of B. Nadezhdin, the only anti-war candidate, which provides an obvious difference between the expectations from V. Putin vs. expectations of an ideal candidate. Most of this subgroup of respondents expect from Putin only mobilization (62%) and an increase in military spending (86%). The ideal candidate has an advantage on all other parameters. The wishes of respondents in this group for 2024 are as anti-militarist as possible.

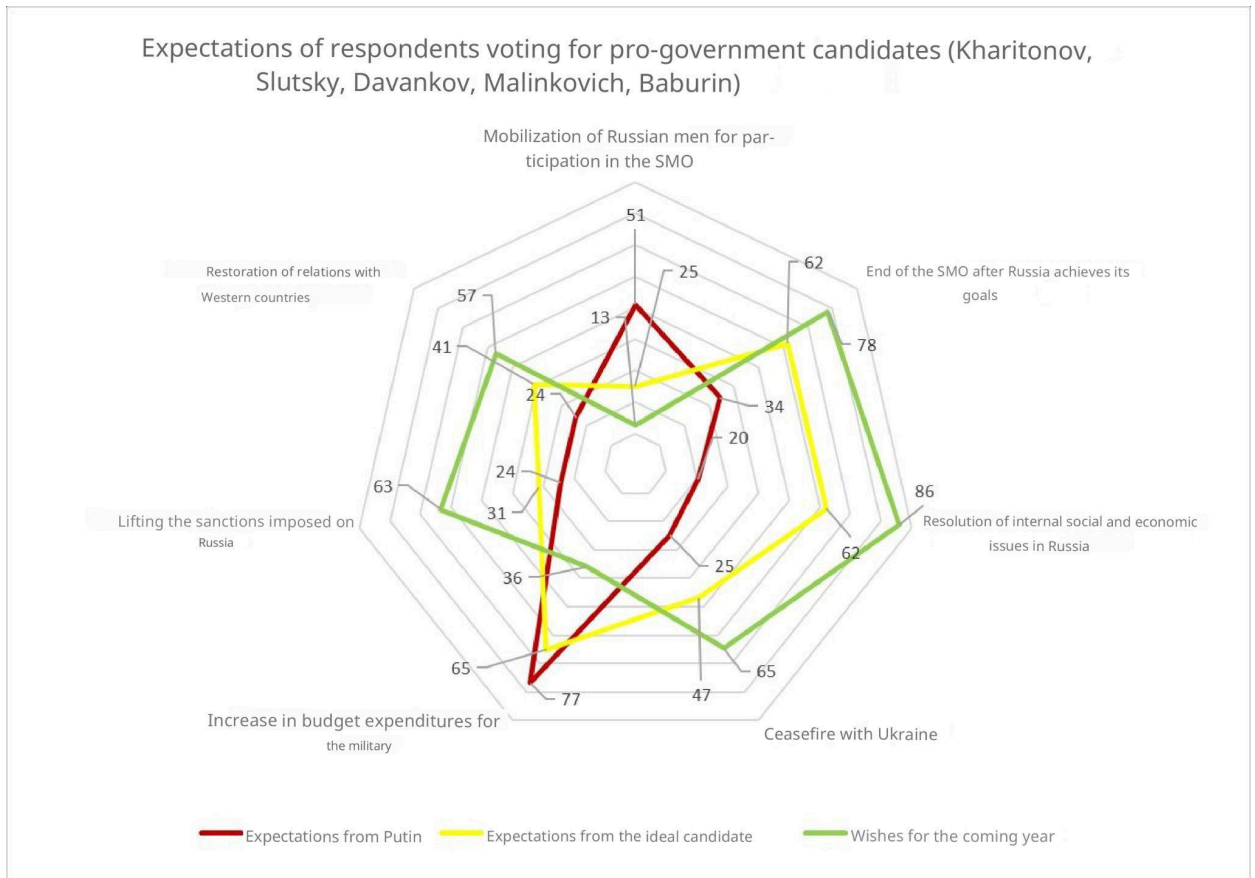
Figure 7. Expectations of respondents voting for other candidates.



³ At the time of the poll, the list included Nikolai Kharitonov of the CPRF, Leonid Slutsky of the LDPR, Vladislav Davankov of the New People party, Sergei Malinkovich of the Communists of Russia, Sergei Baburin of the Russian All-National Union, Boris Nadezhdin of the Civic Initiative, and position "the other candidate."

If we leave only the voters of pro-governmental candidates in the subsample, we will narrow the group (n=66) and will not be able to correctly construct a graph on such a number of observations (Fig. 8). Nevertheless, in general, we see a general tendency of anti-militarist vision of the future. This means that when planning to vote even for pro-Kremlin candidates, respondents keep an alternative image in their minds of the future — different from what they think Putin is offering them.

Fig. 8. Expectations of respondents voting for pro-government candidates.



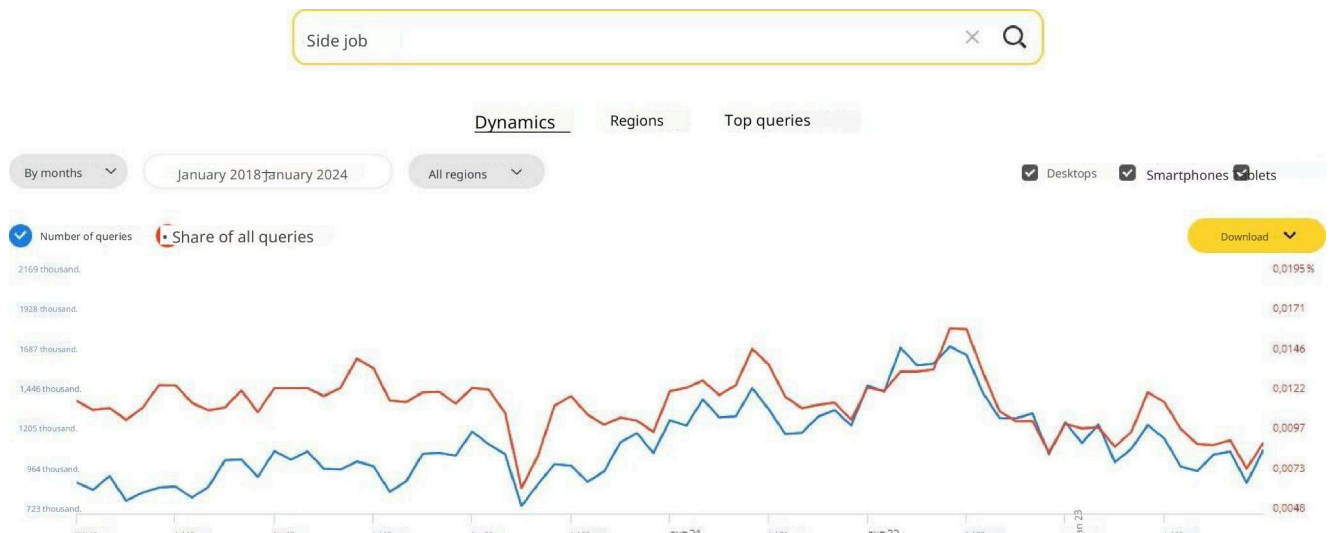
Dynamics of material status

Having analyzed the respondents' self-assessment of their financial situation according to the proposed categories, we can conclude about the cyclical dynamics of this indicator.

While in February-March 2022 about 20% of respondents were below the poverty line ("not enough money for food or clothes"), from March to May 2022 27% of respondents were below the poverty line. From July and through September 2022 (before mobilization), this figure fluctuated between 20-22%. In the mobilization shock of October 2022, this figure rose to 26%. From February 2022 to October 2023, the proportion of people below the poverty line was at 22- 23% before returning to 20% in January 2024.

It's worth noting that in roughly the same period — from the start of the war until the summer of 2022 there has been a historically maximum surge in the search for additional sources income (Fig. 9). In the winter of 2023-2024, the search for additional sources of income is located at a level comparable to that of the pre-Christian period.

Fig. 9. Schedule of search for additional sources of income (part-time work).



When analyzing the decrease in income (worsening of material situation) over the year, a slightly different dynamics is observed. From 31% to 44% of respondents (with the maximum value in October 2023) spoke about the decrease in income since the beginning of the war. By material status, among people below the poverty line, the majority of respondents (53% to 67%) spoke of such a decline, while among people with low incomes ("not enough to buy large household appliances"), 38% to 48% of respondents spoke of a decline in income. However, in January 2024, the share of respondents saying that their financial situation had decreased over the past year fell to 19% in the sample as a whole. At the same time, only 31% of the poor began to talk about a decline in income, and 23% of people with low incomes - 23%. At the same time, it should be noted that 37% of the poor talk about the **worsening of their financial situation**. Such a significant discrepancy between assessments of income reduction and deterioration of financial situation is observed only for the poor.

When analyzing the increase in income over the year (increase in material standing), a more stable dynamics is observed. From the beginning of the war until October 2023, from

13% to 20% of respondents spoke about the increase in income. In January 2024, 24% speak about the increase in income over the year, but only 17% speak about the improvement of material situation.

It can be assumed that this discrepancy is due to the fact that some respondents take into account the effect of inflation. If we analyze this discrepancy in the estimates of changes in income and changes in material situation, this discrepancy is most significant among the poor (11 p.p.), but it is also present among not the richest respondents. As a result, in January 2024, about the same number of respondents talk about the improvement of their financial situation as they did at the beginning of the war.

Table 8: Percentage of respondents who answered that their income/material status has increased over the year (since March 2022) (by material status)

	Not enough for food and clothing	Not enough for the purchase of large household appliances	We cannot buy a new car	Material hardships we do not experience Or there is enough money for every- thing, except for such expensive purchases as an apart- ment, house	Share by all BCOM categories
February 2022 *	7	10	19	30	17
April 2022 *	7	14	19	28	17
June 2022	12	17	18	26	18
August 2022 *	9	11	12	20	13
April 2022 *	7	14	19	28	17
September 2022 *	9	10	18	26	14
October 2023	8	15	25	40	21
January 2024 (Income)	17	18	28	32	24
January 2024 (Material Conditions)	6	12	21	30	17

**According to ExtremeScan*

The perception of the effect of sanctions has been declining since the beginning of the war. While in February-March 2022, 46% of respondents said that they felt the sanctions personally, in January 2024, only 30% of respondents say so. Both at the beginning of the war and now, the impact of sanctions is most strongly felt by poor respondents (below the poverty line and with low incomes). Thus, despite significant wage increases and budget expenditures on social payments to the poor in 2023, 37% of them say that their financial situation has

worsened, and they say that it has improved no more than at the beginning of the war.

Lower incomes and worsening material conditions significantly reduce support for SMO. However, from February 2023, this effect weakens, and in January 2024 it is comparable to the pre-mobilization effect of worsening material conditions.

The share of respondents expecting deterioration of their financial situation during the year was at its highest at the beginning of the war - up to March 2022 it reached 50%. By May 2022, this share had already dropped to 30%, and it continued to decline until mobilization in the September 2022. During the mobilization period, 39% of respondents expected their financial situation to worsen. Then this indicator fell again: in January 2024 it is at a minimum and amounts to 20%. It is worth noting, however, that from October 2023 to January 2024, significant improvements in expectations (i.e., a decrease in the expectation of deterioration in the material situation) are observed only among the poor.

The opposite situation is with expectations from the improvement of financial situation. In January 2024, the historical maximum of this expectation for the entire period of SMO is observed - 30%. At the same time, in October 2023, 20% of respondents expected improvement in their financial situation (which is comparable to the data for May 2022). In January 2024, middle-income people expect improvement more often than others: the share of those expecting improvement increased by 12 p.p. compared to October 2023.

Tab. 9. Share of respondents expecting deterioration of financial situation in the coming year

	Not enough for food and clothing	Not enough for the purchase of large household appliances	We can't buy a new car	We are not experiencing financial difficulties OR There is enough money for everything, except for such expensive pur- chases as an apartment or a house	Share across all categories
February 2022*	61	56	47	32	49
March 2022	63	55	43	26	50
March 2022	60	57	56	29	52
May 2022	48	35	27	15	32
August 2022*	37	27	23	12	24
October 2022	57	39	33	20	39
October 2023	43	29	20	11	26
January 2024	31	26	16	10	20

**According to ExtremeScan*

Reasons to participate in survey

In the January 2024 survey, respondents were asked an open-ended question at the end of the interview about why they agreed to participate in the survey.

Only 8% of respondents found it difficult to answer this question, the rest of the answers were collected in several semantic groups:

- It is interesting to listen to questions, what is happening in the country, what others think - 17%
- Nothing to do, had free time - 14%
- To express an opinion, to convey the truth, to influence the situation - 13%
- No reason, called, answered, 10%.
- Not indifferent to the situation in the country, it is important in general, it is needed now - 7%
- Asked, out of courtesy, for similar work experience - 7%
- Important for statistics, the opinion of the people, citizens - 7%
- Citizen, patriot (duty, obligation, responsibility) - 6%
- Usually participates in polls or has wanted to for a long time, interest in politics and polls - 4%
- Miscellaneous - 3%
- No calls, no more calls, 2%.
- Difficult to answer - 8%

Interestingly, the survey was most often perceived by respondents as an opportunity to hear another opinion, as if the very wording of the questions already implies the existence of some other opinion.

In the context of our study, it was important to understand how the motivation to participate in the survey differs between proponents and opponents of SMO.

30% of respondents who do not support the SMO indicated that they took part in the survey to express their opinion, to convey the truth and somehow influence the situation. Among supporters of the SMO the share of such answers is 12%. On the contrary, among those who support SMO, the share of those who call themselves citizens, patriots and consider it their duty or obligation to participate in polls is higher - 8% (Table 8).

Table 8. Reason for participation in the survey and attitude to SMO (%)

Reason for participating in the survey	Support SMO, %	Do not support SMO, %
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It's interesting to hear the questions, what's going on in the country, what others think	18	12
Nothing to do, had some free time	13	12
To express an opinion, to convey the truth, to influence a situation	12	30
No reason, you called, you answered.	10	10
Not indifferent to the situation in the country, it is generally important, we need now	8	3
Asked, out of courtesy, for similar work experience	7	7
It's important for statistics, the opinion of the people, the citizens	6	8
Citizen, patriot (duty, obligation, responsibility)	8	4
Usually participates in polls or has wanted to for a long time, interest in politics and polls	5	5

Respondents, whose incomes decreased during the course of SMO, more often than respondents of other groups, say about the desire to speak out (17%) and that surveys are important for statistics in general, so that the authorities know the opinion of the people, citizens (10%).

Table 9. Reason for participation in the survey and change in respondent's family income over the last year (%)

Reason for participating in the survey	Revenues increased, %	Revenues decreased, %
It's interesting to hear the questions, what's going on in the country, what others think	19	14
Nothing to do, had some free time	16	12

To express an opinion, to convey the truth, to influence a situation	12	17
For no reason, called — answered	9	10
Not indifferent to the situation in the country, it is generally important, we need now	7	10
Asked, out of courtesy, for similar work experience	6	5
It's important for statistics, the opinion of the people, the citizens	7	10
Citizen, patriot (duty, obligation, responsibility)	5	6
Usually participates in polls or has wanted to for a long time, interest in politics and polls	6	4

Respondents whose financial situation has improved over the last two years, the reason for participation in the survey more often indicate the availability of free time - 20% (Table 10). Respondents with worsened financial situation more often say that they care about the situation in the country (11%) and about the desire to speak out and bring the truth, to influence the situation (17%).

Table 10. Reason for participation in the survey and change in respondent's financial situation over the last year (%)

Reason for participating in the survey	The material situation has improved	The material situation has deteriorated	The material situation has not changed
It's interesting to hear the questions, what's going on in the country, what others think	19	13	18
Nothing to do, had some free time	20	13	13

To express an opinion, to convey the truth, to influence a situation	12	17	12
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For no reason, called —replied	8	11	11
Not indifferent to the situation in the country, it is generally important, we need now	6	11	7
Asked, out of courtesy, for similar work experience	6	7	8
It's important for statistics, the opinion of the people, the citizens	5	8	7
Citizen, patriot (duty, obligation, responsibility)	8	7	6
Usually participates in polls or has wanted to for a long time, interest in politics and polls	6	4	4

Thus, for at least one third of respondents (37%) the survey is either a way to express their opinion, to convey their civic position, or an important tool for measuring the opinion of citizens (answers "To express an opinion, to convey the truth, to influence the situation", "I care about the situation in the country, it is important in general, it is necessary now", "It is important for statistics, the opinion of the people, citizens", "Citizen, patriot (duty, obligation, responsibility)", "Usually participates in surveys or has long wanted to, interest in politics and surveys").

There is also an obvious correlation between dissatisfaction with the authorities' policy (in particular, with the conduct of the SMO), deterioration of respondents' financial situation and belonging to the most active group of respondents (the answer "To express an opinion, to convey the truth, to influence the situation"). Apparently, for many respondents the survey has become a way of participation in the political life of the country, a conversation with the authorities, which is still open and legitimate

Technical report

Numbers in the starting sample	450102
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No answer	25246
Rejected	164415
Soft refusal: "no time", "driving", "at work", etc.	3584
Hard refusal: "I won't talk for anything", "I don't participate in surveys on principle", "I don't talk to strangers", etc.	9976
Communication error	2
Busy	27923
Answering machine, wrong number, organization	117088
Defunct number	75946
No operators	2416
Call error	878
Under 18	676
Organization/Office	594
Language issues	250
Physical or mental non-responsiveness	388
AGREEMENT	2507
Interrupted ⁴	888
FULL	1619

Sampling methodology: ***RDD according to Rossvyaz data, stratified by federal districts and two federal cities;***

Estimated sampling error: **2.44% at 95% confidence interval;**

A full explanation of the weighting scheme, including details of how the weights were

developed and applied, and the demographics on which the weights were based (i.e. age, gender and spatial distribution of the population).

Two sets of coefficients were used in the study. The first one is for the array with complete questionnaires only (N=1602). The second one is for the array of questionnaires in which at least one field was filled in (N=2507).

⁴ **Statuses of interrupted interviews.** Fifteen interviews were selectively reviewed: 8 of them had an "interrupted" status in DEX, 2 had a "call back" status, 7 had a "rescheduled" status, and 3 had a "hard refusal" status.

The array is reweighted by gender, age, and federal district categories. Overweight coefficients are calculated on the basis of Rosstat data on the socio-demographic and territorial composition of the Russian population as of 01.01.2022. Weights by gender are calculated on the basis of the gender composition of the adult population of the whole Russia without taking into account the gender distribution of the population by federal districts. Weights by federal districts are calculated on the basis of the adult population of all federal districts. The weights are rounded to millionths. The weights are calculated using the formula:

$$\beta = \frac{X}{\alpha}$$

Where X is the weighting coefficient, α is the share of respondents in the sample population (in %, calculated in SPSS: frequency distributions of variables "gender" and "federal district"), β - share of respondents in the general population (in %, according to Rosstat data).

First set of coefficients

Calculation of weighting coefficients by federal districts:

<i>Federal District</i>	<i>adult share of population in the district, Rosstat (β)</i>	<i>the proportion of respondents from a given district in the sample (α)</i>	<i>weight coefficient (X)</i>
<i>CFA</i>	27,7%	27,9%	0,992832
<i>NWFD</i>	9,7%	10,2%	0,950980
<i>SFO</i>	11,4%	11,2%	1,017857
<i>NCFB</i>	6,4%	6,0%	1,066667
<i>FRP</i>	19,8%	20,5%	0,965854
<i>UVO</i>	8,2%	8,1%	1,012346

<i>SFO</i>	11,4%	11,1%	1,027027
<i>DFO</i>	5,4%	5,1%	1,058824

Calculation of weighting factors by gender:

<i>floor</i>	<i>share of adult population of a given sex, Rosstat (β)</i>	<i>the proportion of respondents of a given gender in the sample (α)</i>	<i>weight coefficient (X)</i>
<i>Male</i>	45,2%	52,6%	0,859316
<i>Female</i>	54,8%	47,4%	1,156118

Calculation of weighting coefficients by age groups:

<i>Age groups</i>	<i>adult share given age, Rosstat (β)</i>	<i>the proportion of respondents of a given age in the sample (α)</i>	<i>weight coefficient (X)</i>
18-29 years old	15,3%	11,7%	1,307692
30-39 years old	21,2%	20,1%	1,054726
40-49 years old	18,4%	20,2%	0,910891
50-59 years old	15,9%	19,5%	0,815385
60+ years	29,2%	28,5%	1,024561

Second set of coefficients

Calculation of weighting coefficients by federal districts:

<i>Federal District</i>	<i>adult share of population in the district, Rosstat (β)</i>	<i>the proportion of respondents from a given district in the sample (α)</i>	<i>weight coefficient (X)</i>
<i>CFA</i>	27,7%	26,5%	1,045283

<i>NWFD</i>	9,7%	9,3%	1,043011
<i>SFO</i>	11,4%	12,3%	0,926829
<i>NCFB</i>	6,4%	6,4%	1,000000

<i>FRP</i>	19,8%	21,1%	0,938389
<i>UVO</i>	8,2%	8,0%	1,025000
<i>SFO</i>	11,4%	11,1%	1,027027
<i>DFO</i>	5,4%	5,4%	1,000000

Calculation of weighting factors by gender:

<i>floor</i>	<i>share of adult population of a given sex, Rosstat (β)</i>	<i>the proportion of respondents of a given gender in the sample (α)</i>	<i>weight coefficient (X)</i>
<i>Male</i>	45,2%	53,0%	0,852830
<i>Female</i>	54,8%	47,0%	1,165957

Calculation of weighting coefficients by age groups:

<i>Age groups</i>	<i>adult share given age, Rosstat (β)</i>	<i>the proportion of respondents of a given age in the sample (α)</i>	<i>weight coefficient (X)</i>
18-29 years old	15,3%	11,9%	1,285714
30-39 years old	21,2%	20,3%	1,044335
40-49 years old	18,4%	20,7%	0,888889
50-59 years old	15,9%	17,1%	0,929825
60+ years	29,2%	30,1%	0,970100

Crumbling sampling

The first interview question was asked to 2507 respondents and the last interview question was asked to 1619 respondents. The process of sample shedding is presented in the following table:

Feature label	Number of records	Shattering	Question text
Q6001	2507	0%	In which Federal District do you reside?
A4	2507	0%	A4. What is your main occupation at present?
A5	2455	2%	A5. What is your highest level of education confirmed by a diploma, certificate?
A6	2347	6%	A6. Which of the listed descriptions most accurately corresponds to your family's financial situation?
A7	2308	8%	A7. Please tell me, did your family's income increase, decrease or generally remain the same over the last year?
Q709	2265	10%	Type of settlement
A10	2247	10%	A10. What nationality do you consider yourself to be?
N1	2230	11%	N1 Please tell me, in the last six months, how often did you watch the news on TV?
N2	2215	12%	N2. In the last six months, how often did you read or watch news on the Internet?
N4	2173	13%	Acquaintances, relatives, colleagues
N5	2140	15%	N5. Do you receive information about the special operation only from Russian sources, from other sources, or from both Russian and other sources?
N6	2038	19%	Problems with heating and water supply in Russia
U1	2018	20%	U1. Please tell me, do you support or do not support Russia's military operation on the territory of Ukraine, do you find it difficult to answer unequivocally?

U3	1965	22%	U3. Are you personally or someone from your family involved or participated in military actions within the framework of special operations on the territory of Ukraine? Or are there no such people?
U4	1948	22%	U4. If Vladimir Putin decides to withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine and starts truce talks, NOT accomplishing his goals....
U5	1924	23%	U5. In your opinion, what proportion of Russians would support Vladimir Putin's decision to withdraw troops? Please give your answer in percentages, in numbers.
U6	1875	25%	U6. Some believe that a new mobilization is needed to replace those mobilized in the fall of 2022. Others that it should be left as it is.
U7	1843	26%	U7. Do you think that over the last month the situation in the military operation zone has changed in favor of Russia, in favor of Ukraine or the situation has not changed recently?
U9	1775	29%	U9. Do you understand or do you not understand what the ultimate goal of the special operation on the territory of Ukraine is?
M1	1744	30%	M1. Over the last year, has your financial situation improved, worsened or remained generally unchanged?
M2	1743	30%	M2. In the coming year, do you think your financial situation will improve, worsen or remain the same?
M3	1731	31%	M3. Did the sanctions imposed against Russia have or did not have an impact on your family's financial situation? And if so, were they positive or negative?
M4	1723	31%	M4. In your opinion, where should public funds be spent first — on the armed forces or on the social sphere, including pensions, health care and education?
S1	1718	31%	S1. In recent months, has life in your community generally gotten safer, become more dangerous, or has nothing changed?

E1	1714	32%	Russia will hold presidential elections in March. E1. Do you think that after the presidential election your life will change for the better or for the worse, or will there be no noticeable changes after the election?
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E3	1659	34%	E3. Do you or do you not plan to vote in the Russian presidential election this March?
E6	1643	34%	E6. Do you think that in the election of the Russian president among your relatives, close friends
			will the majority vote for Vladimir Putin, for another candidate, or will they not participate in the elections?
X1	1641	35%	X1. Do you or do you not condemn those who left Russia after the SMO started and did not go back?
X2	1638	35%	X2. Some people treat Russians who shy away from participating in the SMO with condemnation. Others treat them with understanding. Which position is closer to you?
Q30	1632	35%	M2. How interesting were the questions in this questionnaire to you? Rate from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all interesting and 5 means very interesting.
Q32	1631	35%	M3. Tell us how safe you think it is to take part in sociological surveys by telephone on the topic of special operations on a scale from 1 to 5 , where 1 - is perfectly safe, and 5 is very dangerous.
Q999	1619	35%	These were all the questions we wanted to ask you. Thank you very much for taking part in the survey! QUESTION FOR THE OPERATOR How frank did you think the respondent was with you?