

Social Political & Economic Aspects in Explaining Contemporary Russian Politics

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Explaining Russian Politics: National Images and Their Implications

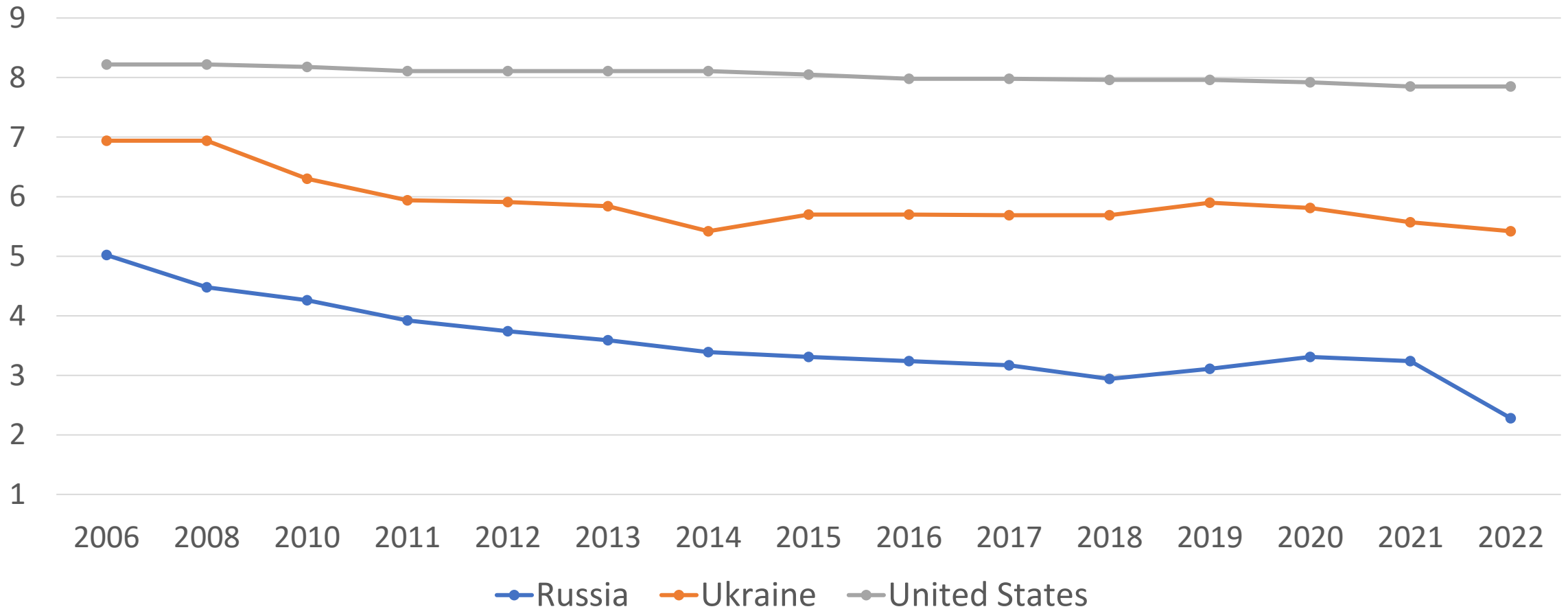
- *Russia's patriotism and nationalism*
 - Great power imagery
 - Sense of decline due to external (western) forces
- *Russia's messianism*
 - Eastern Orthodoxy and the Judeo-Christian values
 - The Third Rome imagery: value-based empire
- *Russia's conservatism*
 - Alternative to Western conservatism (Dugin)
- *Russia's (neo)-Eurasianism (Arbatova):*
 - Historically shaped (Horde system)
 - Ideologically defined (nationalist + conservative ideology)
 - Imperially driven (restoration of the Russian empire from its “golden age”)

Russian Politics: Internal Sources and Outcomes

- Russia's evolution from "managed democracy" to "competitive authoritarian regime."
- *Institutional basis* for Russian foreign policy:
 - Presidential powers and the constitution
 - The power vertical: center-periphery
 - Russian party politics: the presidential party of power
 - President's style and apparatus
- *Cultural basis*: a system of patronage and clientelism (historically based system)

Russia's Parties, Media and Elections Reflect the State of Democracy in the Country (Source: EIU)

State of Democracy in Russia, Ukraine and the United States (Source: EIU)



Internal Sources to Russian Politics (cont'd)

- *Elite basis:*
 - “Siloviki”/ “силовики” and loyalists (Pitertsy/ Питерцы)
 - Elite relations: non-zero-sum game
- Other sources:
 - *Regime Ideology* (see discussion about images)
 - *Regime Popularity*. Sources of popularity:
 - Governmental machine (party, local leadership, etc.)
 - Mass Media
 - *Regime Policies*. Sources of policy perceptions:
 - Stabilization vs. chaos
 - Great country with great traditions that fell on hard times between 1980 and 2000.
 - *Pragmatism*: need for leadership who can get the job done (V. Putin)
- Issues of sustainability related to Russia’s political regime

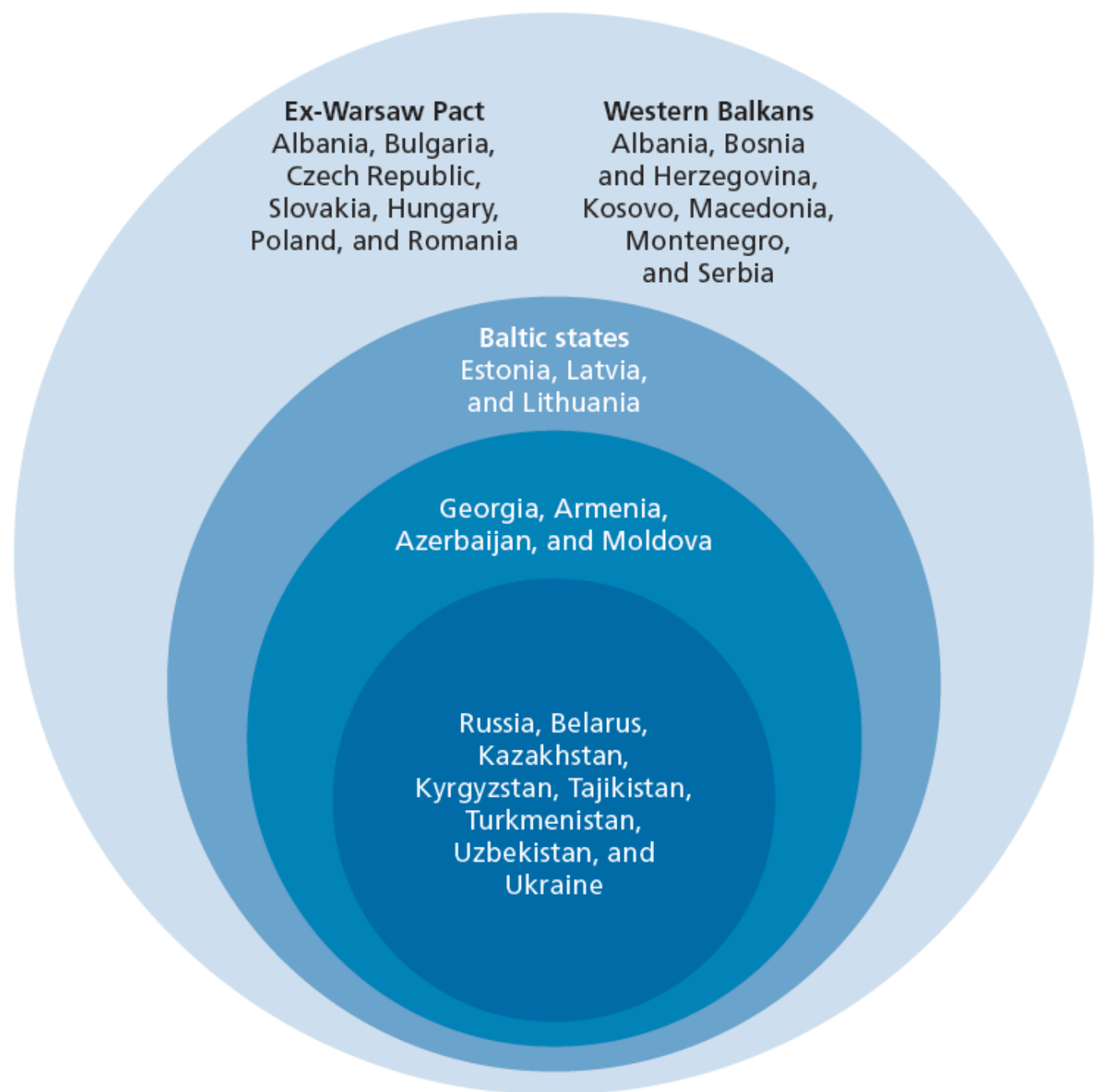
Russian Politics: External Sources

- Russia's neo-revisionism as an outcome of Russia's foreign affairs.
Sources:
 - Clashing visions of the post-Cold War world order:
 - American hegemony vs. Russian vision of a multi-polar world
 - Post-Cold War European security architecture:
 - Inclusive security architecture from Vancouver to Vladivostok
 - Exclusive security architecture of a western liberal values vs. the rest
 - Russia's policies as a response to western liberal triumphalism. Major differences with the West:
 - Differences on the right to use force in international affairs
 - Differences on the right to support regime change in Europe and around the globe

Russian Politics: External Outcomes

- Instability in the adjacent territories (“near abroad”) as a result of frozen conflicts:
 - Transnistria (Moldova)
 - Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia)
 - Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia and Azerbaijan)
- Resistance to western expansionism into post-Soviet territories
 - Intervention in Georgia (2008)
 - The conflict in Ukraine (2014) and the invasion of 2022
- Loyalism of the CIS regimes (Belarus, Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan)
- Irregular, asymmetric and hybrid warfare as a form of punishment (the Baltics, Ukraine, etc.)

Russia's Desired Spheres of Influence (Rand, 2017)

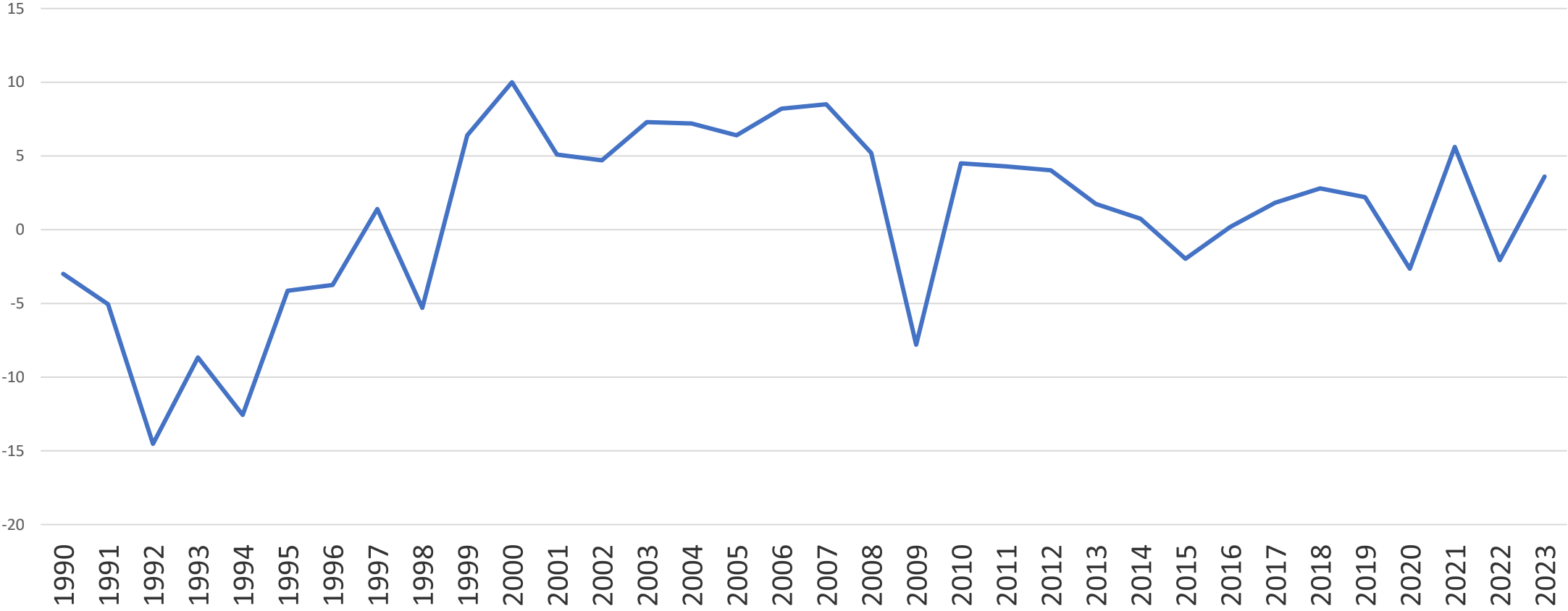


Russia's Domestic Politics: Economic Implications from the War in Ukraine

- Rocky economic transition in the 1990s
- Stability and sustainable economic growth in the early 2000s due to petrodollars
 - Fiscal (1% deficit) and monetary reforms to stabilize the economy: reserve fund from petrochemicals for rainy days
 - Tax reforms (13% flat income tax) and recentralization of the economy
- Management of the 2008-09 Great Recession: currency devaluation and stimulus to support the economy
- The 2015-16 recession:
 - Externally caused shock as a result of foreign policy (Crimea) and economic sanctions
- Implications of wartime economy (2022-24):
 - Rapid decline of economic performance in 2022
 - Economic resilience in 2023 and possibly 2024. Jumping of sanctions through Central Asia.

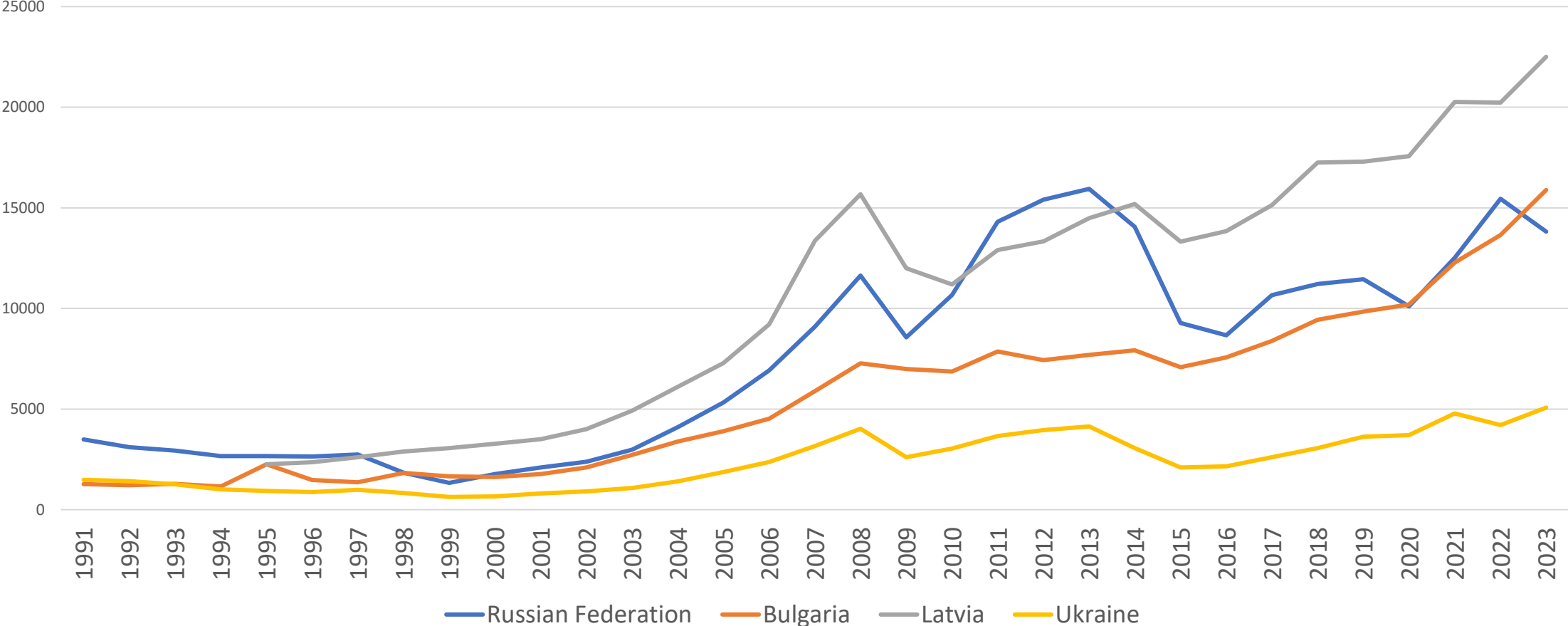
Russia's GDP Growth Rate, 1991-2023

Russia GDP Growth Rate (1991-2022). Source: The World Bank



Russia's GDP Per Capita in Comparative Perspective: Bulgaria, Latvia (EU), Ukraine (non-EU)

GDP per capita (current, US\$): Russia, Bulgaria, Latvia and Ukraine

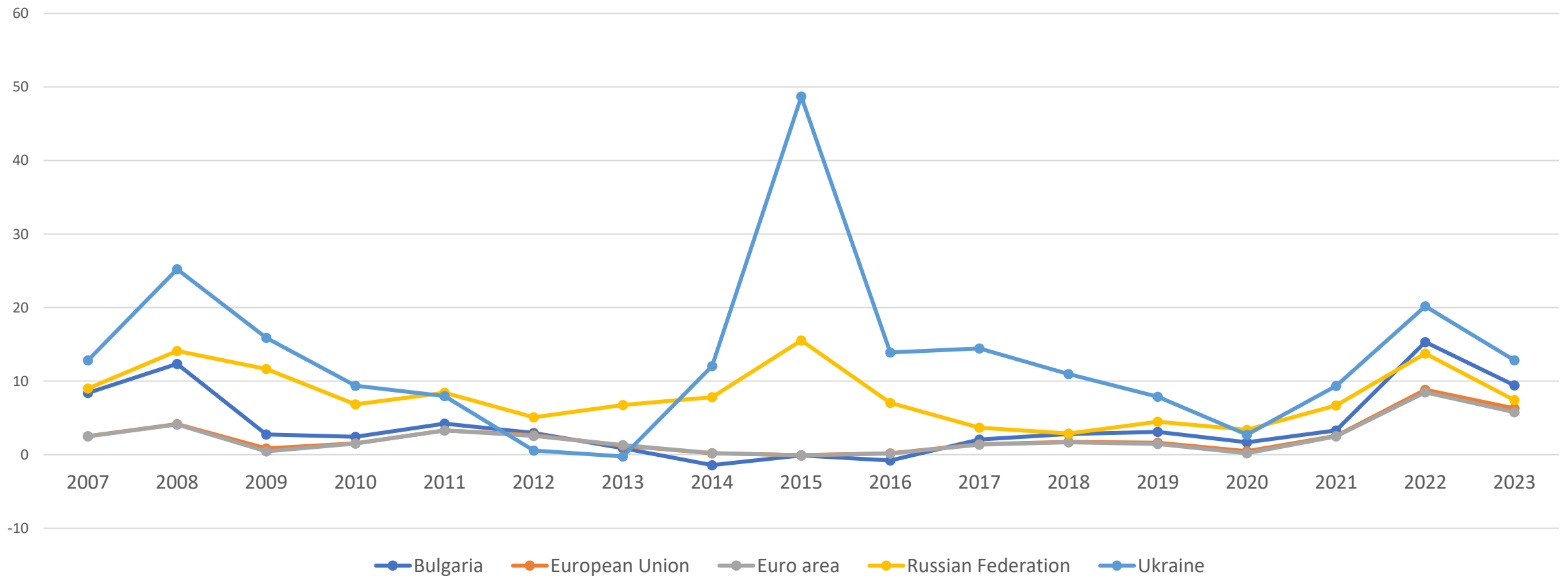


Economic Costs and Implications of the War in Ukraine (Liadze et al, 2022)

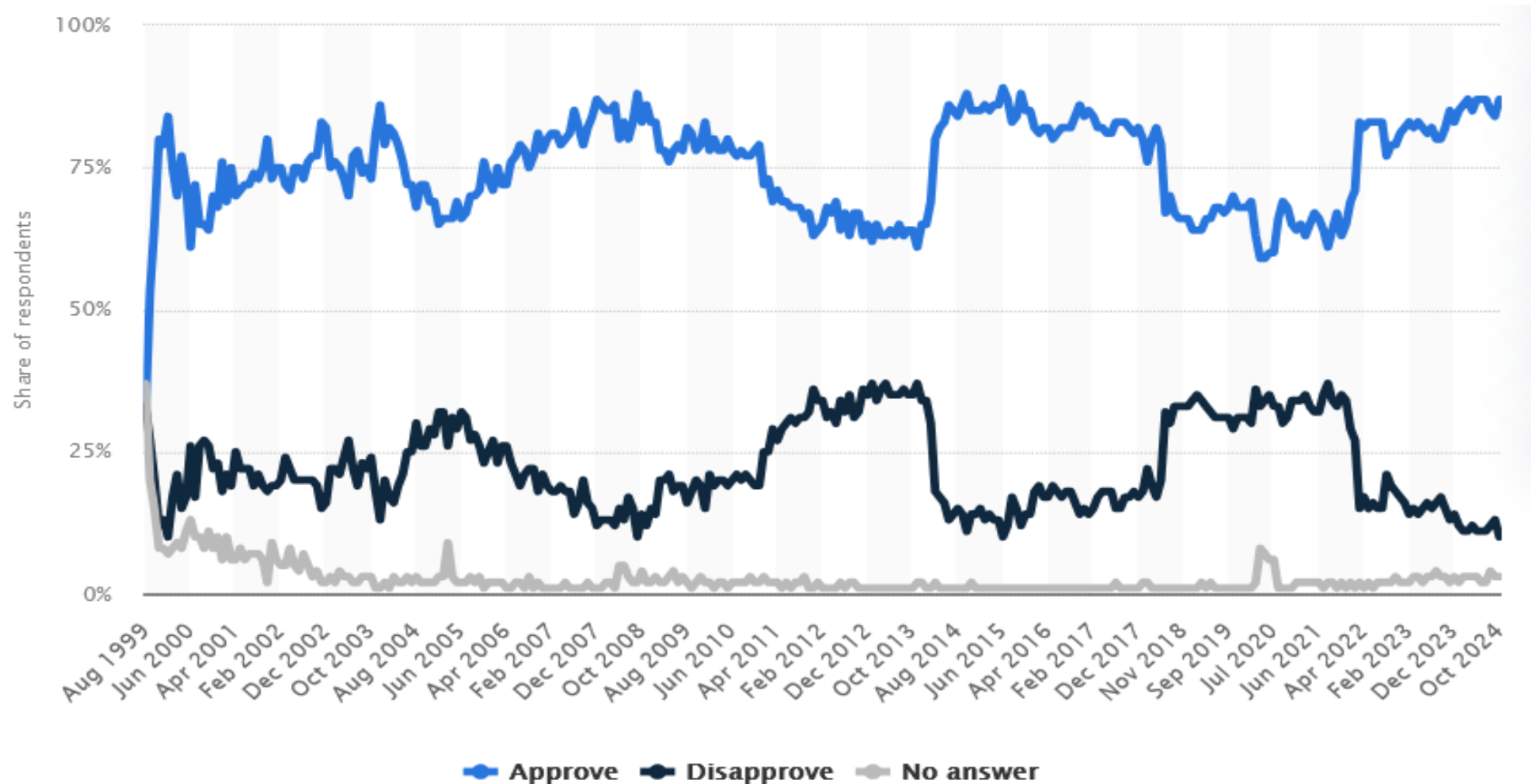
- Supply side effects vs. demand side effects of conflict in Ukraine
- Inflation effects:
 - **Food products:** Ukrainian exports linked to the Russian naval blockade in the Black Sea
 - **Transportation:** impact of Russian exports of rare metals (e.g., titanium), fertilizers, etc.
 - **Energy resources:** markets have capacity to adapt to keep inflation low
 - **Trade restrictions** and technology bans: discontinuing from SWIFT most impactful
- Risks for Europe: (1) refugees; (2) public expenditures; (3) political risk and uncertainty
- Overall implications for the whole world – patterns of economic development and great power competition (e.g., Europe, Russia, China and the U.S.).

Inflation Rates in Russia: Comparison with the Bulgaria, the EU Eurozone

Russia's Inflation Rate in Comparative Perspective, 2007-2023. Source: World Bank



President Putin's Favorability at Home, 1999-24 (Levada Center)

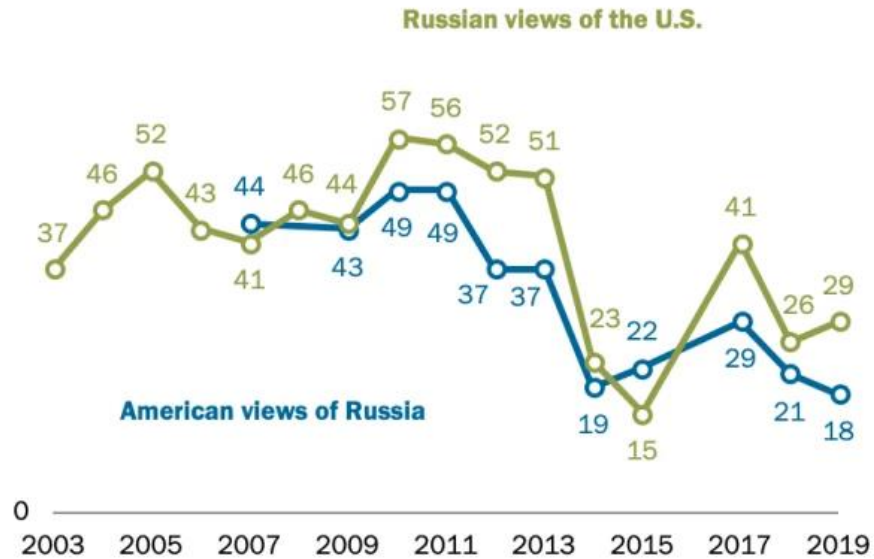


Favorability in Russia and the US pre-2022. Putin's Popularity Among Republicans and Democrats

Few in Russia, U.S. see other country positively

% who have a favorable opinion of Russia/U.S.

100%



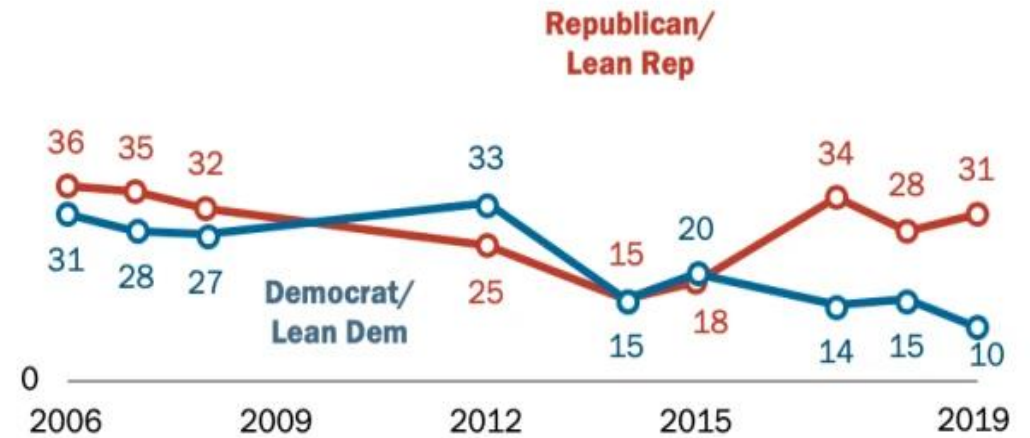
Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q8a & Q8c.

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About a third of U.S. Republicans have confidence in Putin, up significantly since 2015

% who say they have confidence in Russian President Vladimir Putin to do the right thing concerning world affairs

100%

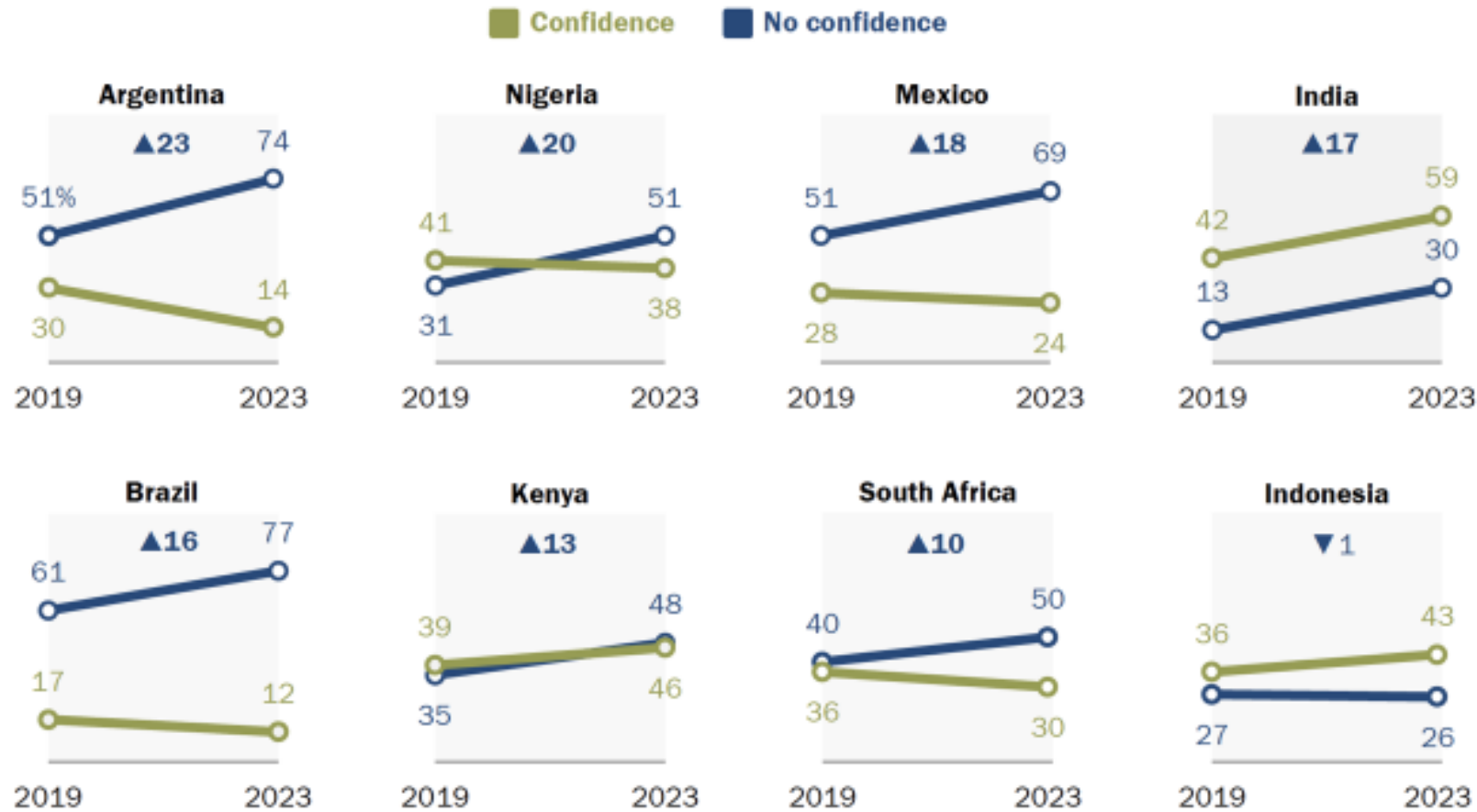


Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q38c.

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Sharp rise in negative opinion on Putin in middle-income countries since 2019

% who have ___ in Russian President Vladimir Putin to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Note: Statistically significant differences are shown in **bold**. Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey, Q15c.

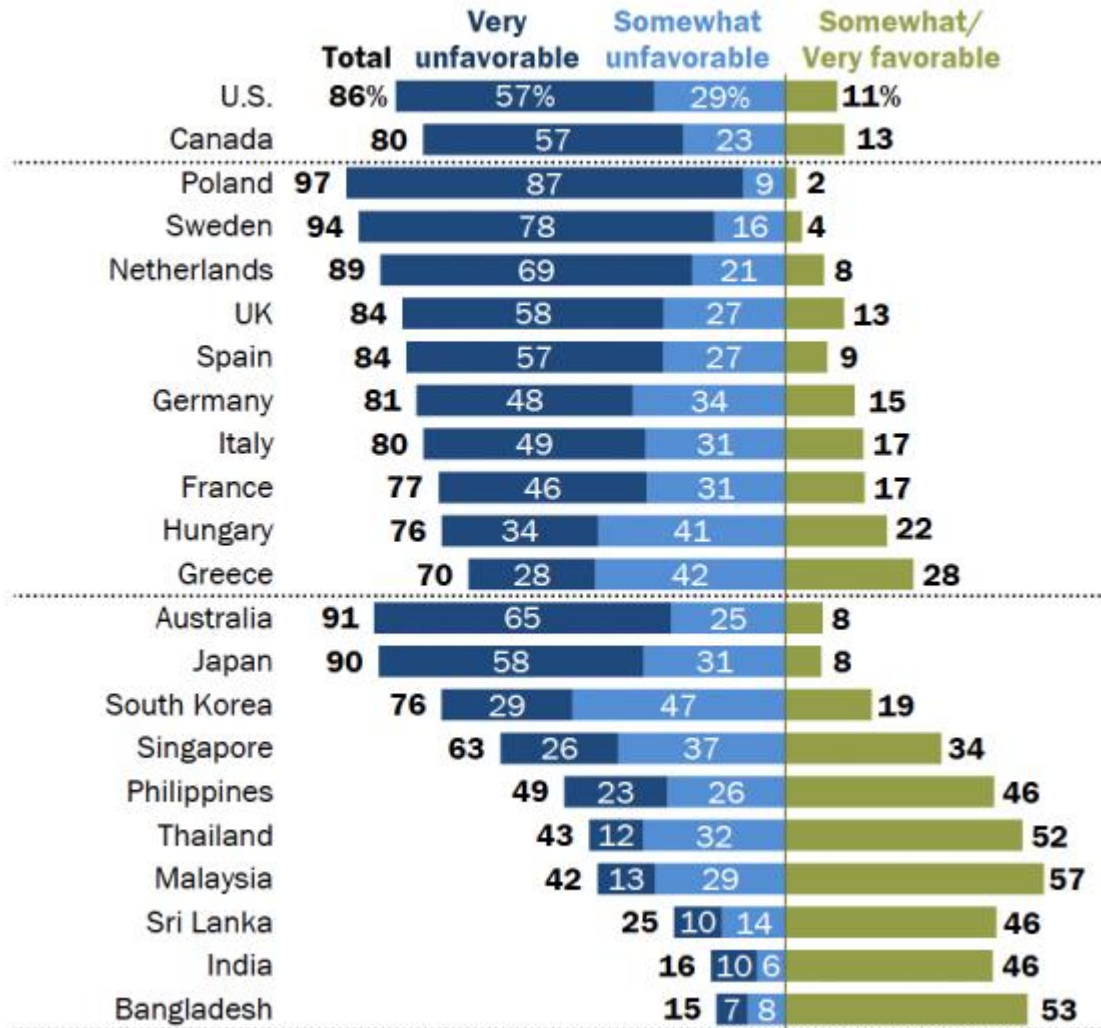
"Large Shares See Russia and Putin in Negative Light, While Views of Zelenskyy More Mixed"

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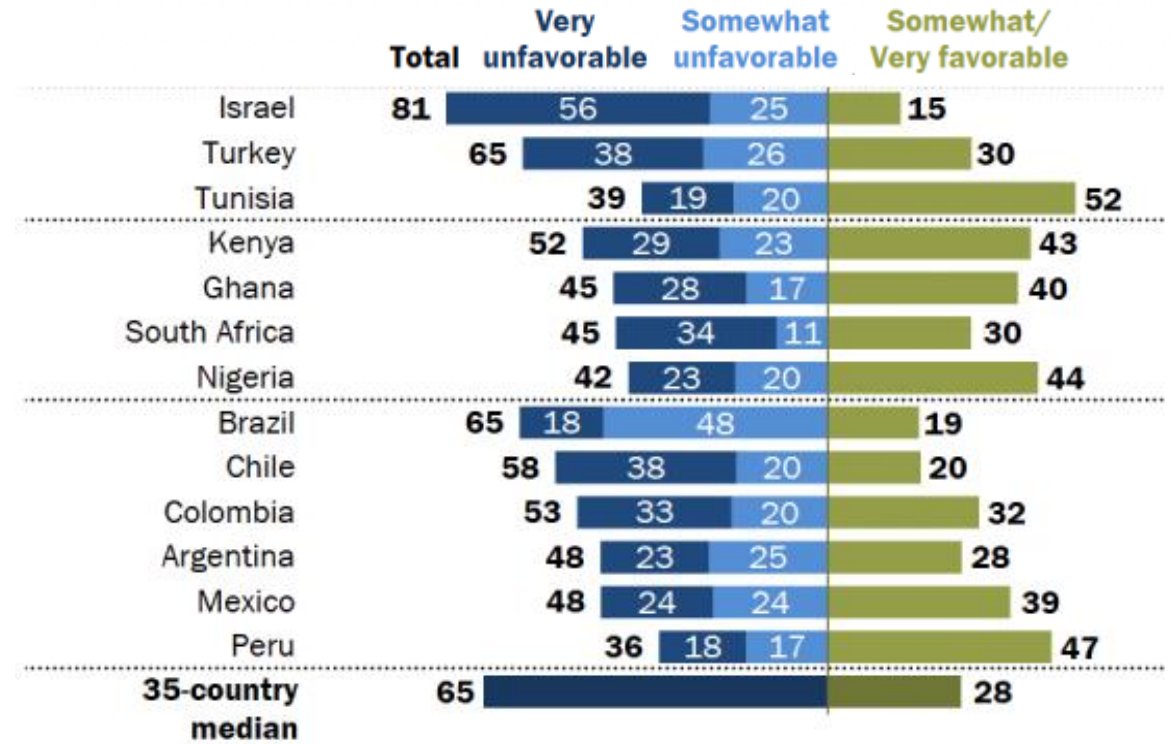
Rise in
Negative
Opinion on
Putin
Around
the Globe,
2019-23

Russia's Favorability Around the Globe, Spring 2024

% who have a ___ opinion of Russia

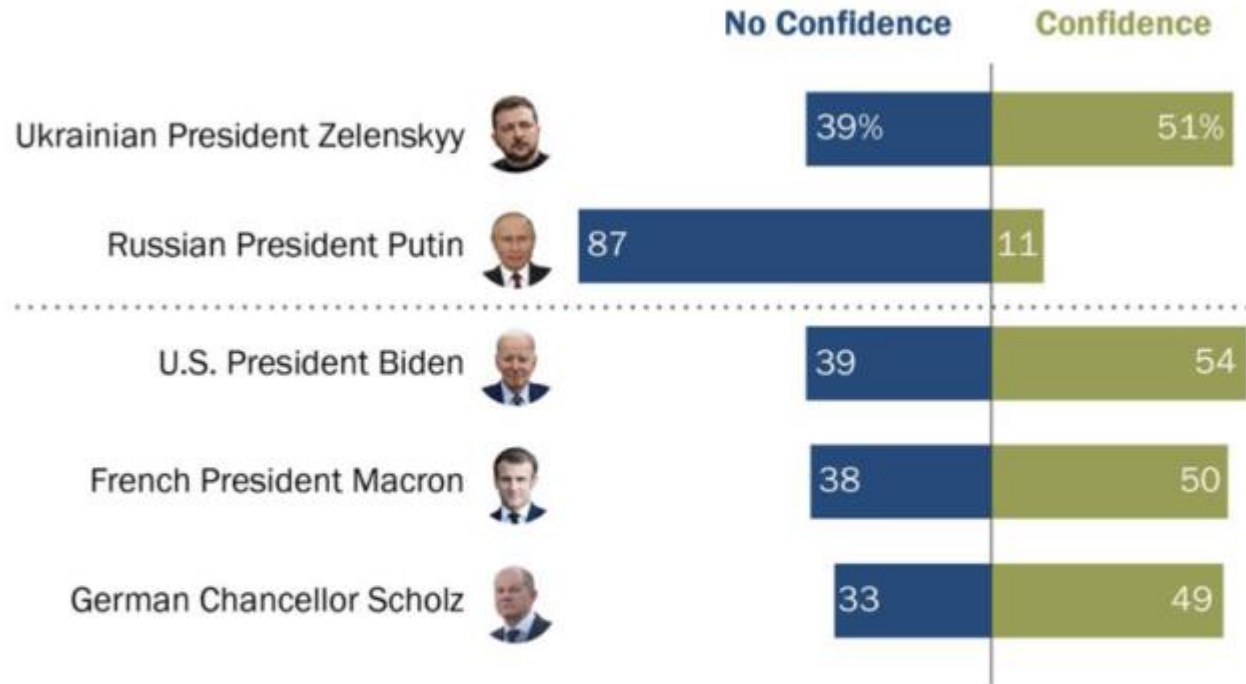


% who have a ___ opinion of Russia



International image of world leaders

% who have **confidence** in each world leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Note: Biden confidence are medians based on 23 countries. All other confidence percentages are medians based on 24 countries.

Source: Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15a, c-f.

"Large Shares See Russia and Putin in Negative Light, While Views of Zelensky More Mixed"

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World Leader' Favorability in Comparative Perspective, 2023

NATO, Zelensky seen in more positive light than Russia and Putin

% who have a(n) ___ opinion of ...

% who have ___ in each world leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Note: NATO favorability percentages are medians based on 11 NATO member countries. Russia favorability, Zelensky confidence and Putin confidence percentages are medians based on 24 countries.

Source: Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey. Q3e, f & Q15c, f.

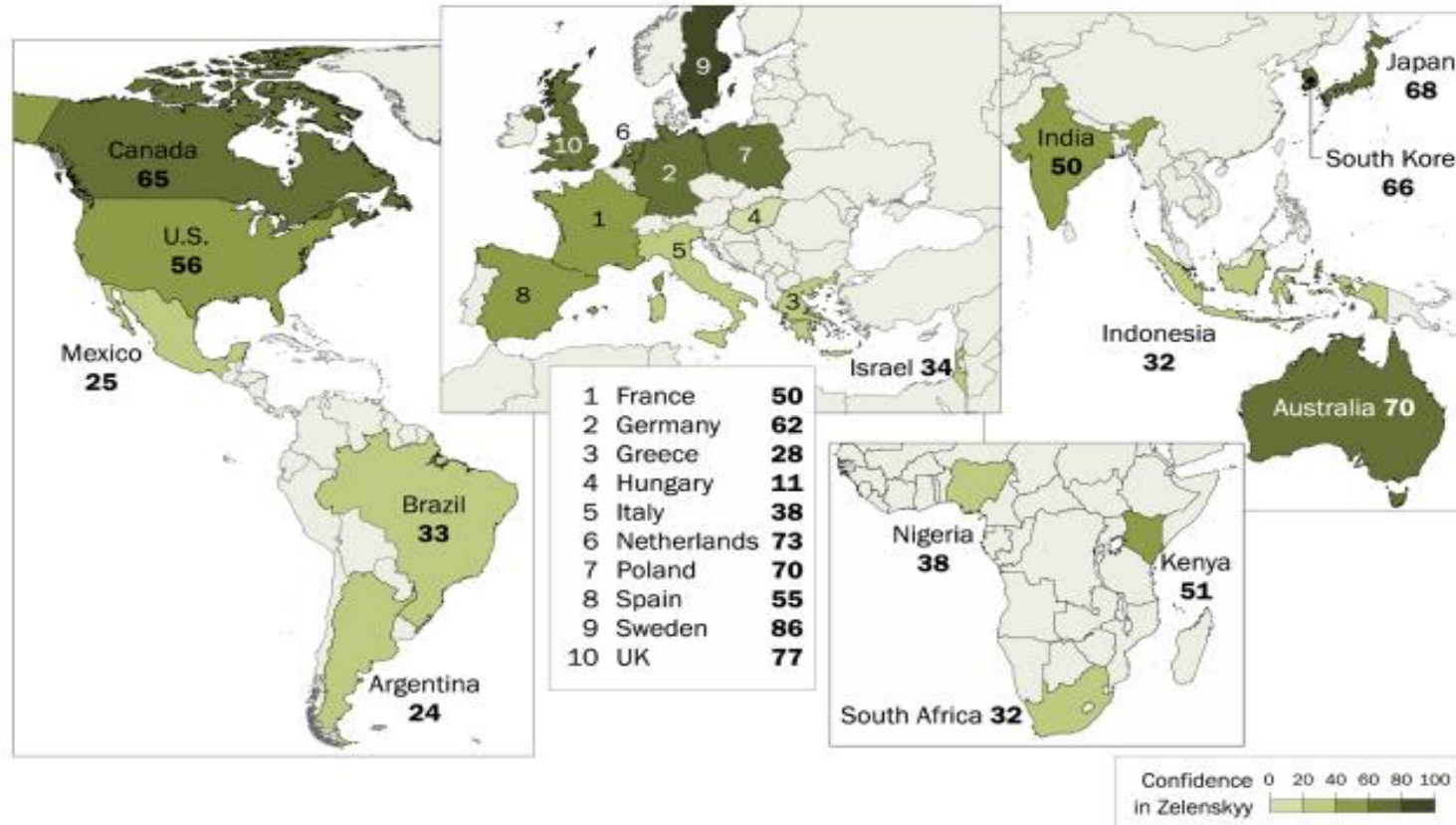
"Large Shares See Russia and Putin in Negative Light, While Views of Zelensky More Mixed"

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View of Zelensky Around the World, 2023

Views of Zelensky around the world

% who say they have **confidence** in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to do the right thing regarding world affairs



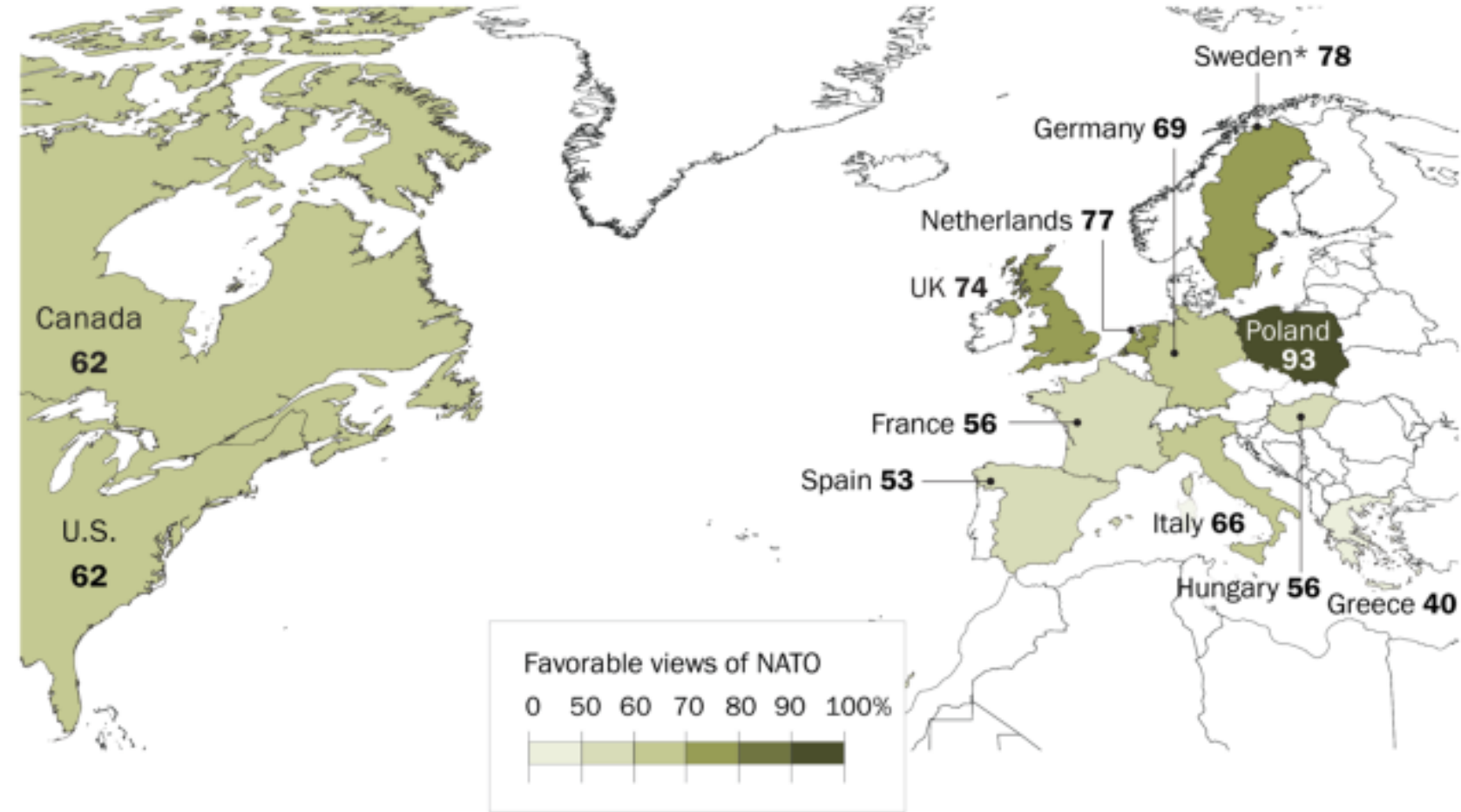
- Overall strong support for Zelensky around the globe
- Variation of support in European allies:
 - Weak support in Eastern Europe (e.g., Hungary)
 - Weak support in Southern Europe (e.g., Italy and Greece)

Source: Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15f.

"Large Shares See Russia and Putin in Negative Light, While Views of Zelenskyy More Mixed"

NATO viewed favorably by majorities across most member states

% who have a *favorable* opinion of NATO



*Sweden is an invitee to NATO and not an official member state.
Source: Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey. Q3e.
"Large Shares See Russia and Putin in Negative Light, While Views of Zelenskyy More Mixed"

NATO Favorability Across the North Atlantic Area

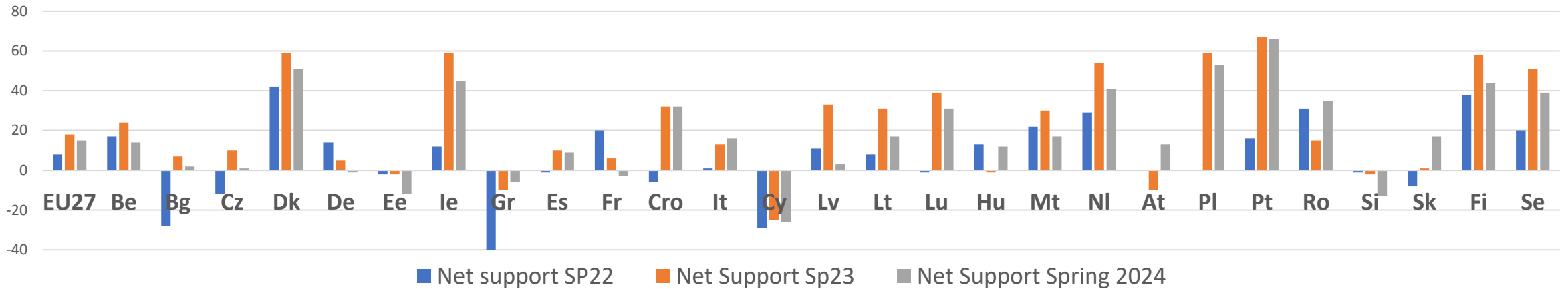
- Robust Support in the West and near Russia
- Variation of support in Eastern and Southern Europe
- Sources of these patterns: social, cultural and historical factors

EU Support for Ukraine: Variation of Support for Two Years of War

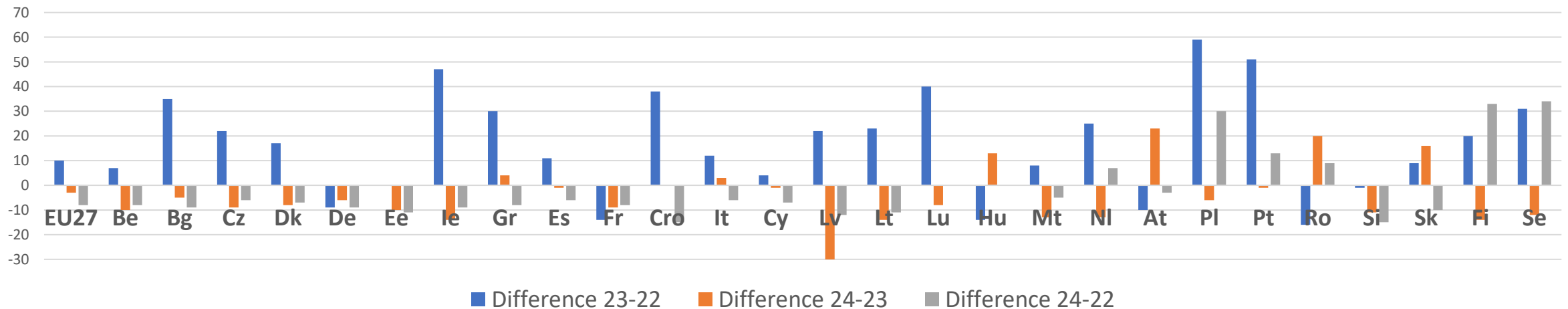
- Variation of support: different clusters or clubs of EU members with varying support for Ukraine:
 - A group of skeptical allies for CEE about supporting Ukraine
 - Overall, an expectation for decline of long-term support for Ukraine and support for sanctions on Russia
 - Alarming decline of support for economic sanctions
- It is possible and likely to expect that this skepticism can easily translate into votes for Euro-skeptic parties and increase pressure for:
 - Withdrawal of support for Ukraine
 - Pressure for a negotiated settlement (ceasefire or a truce)
- Implications for the conflict, European security and global stability

Support for EU Policies on Ukraine, 2022-24

Net Support for EU Policies on Ukraine, 2022-24

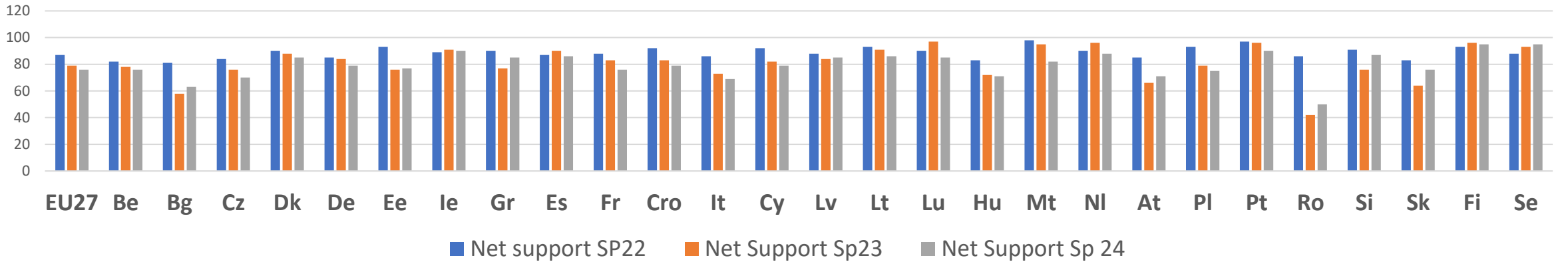


Change of Support for EU Policies on Ukraine, 2022-24

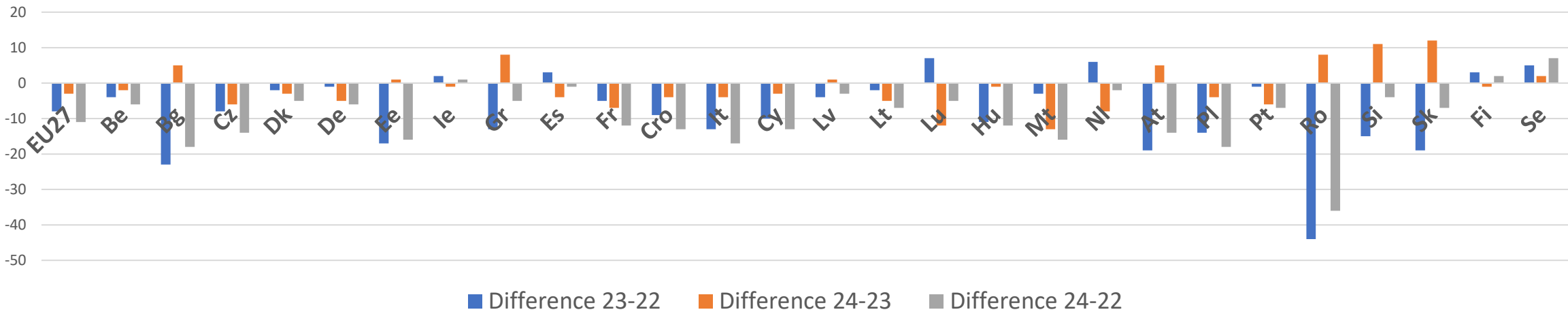


Humanitarian Support for Ukrainians Fleeing from the War

Net Support for Humanitarian Assistance for Ukraine, 2022-24

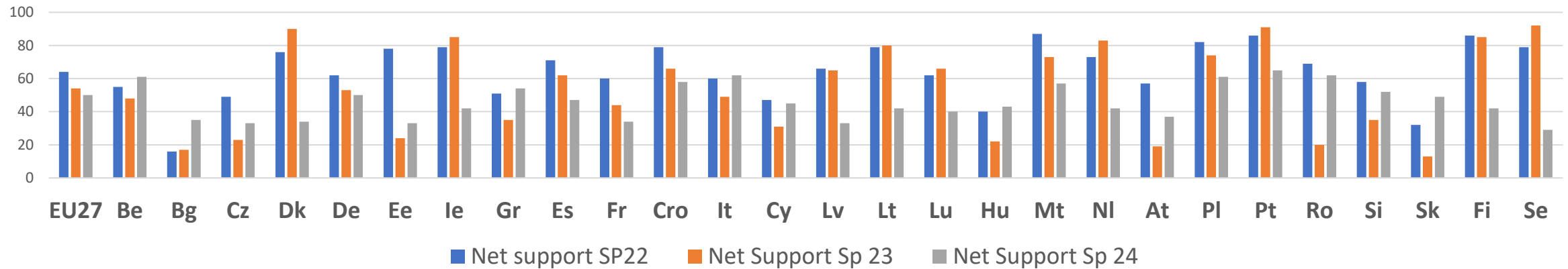


Difference in Humanitarian Support for Ukraine, 2022-24

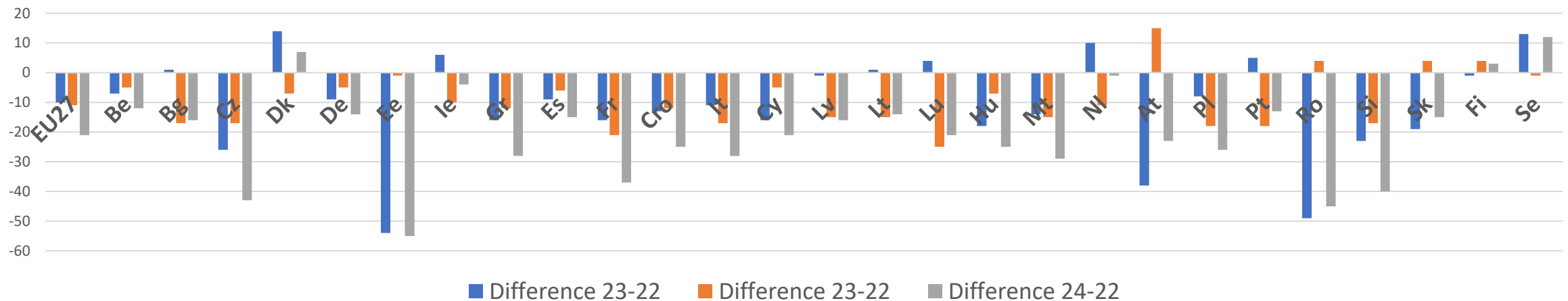


Support for Financial Assistance for Ukraine

Net Support for Financial Assistance for Ukraine, 2022-24

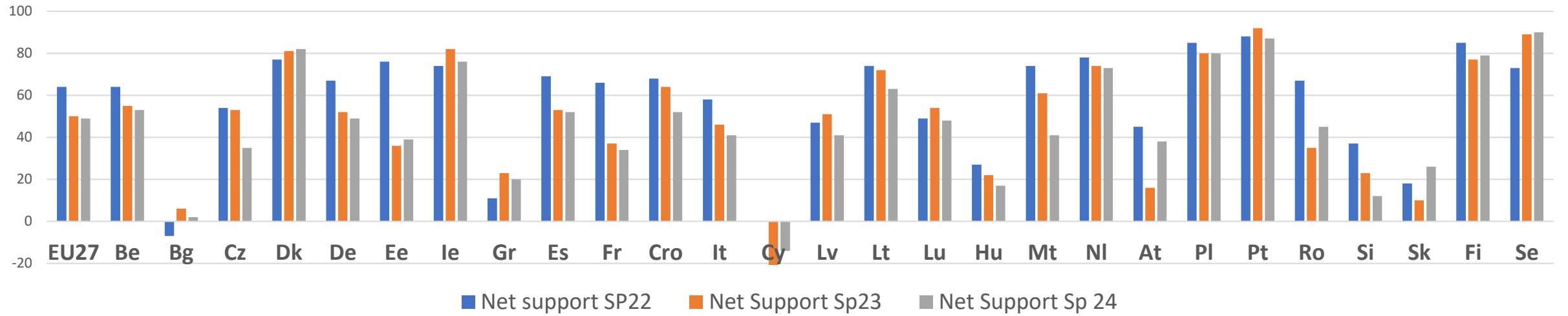


Difference in Support for Financial Assistance to Ukraine, 2022-24

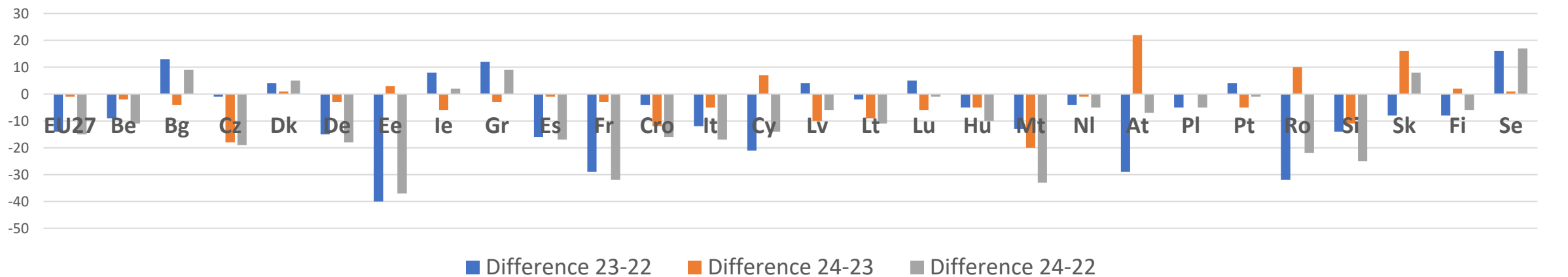


Support for Economic Sanctions on Russia

Net Support for Economic Sanctions on Russia, 2022-24

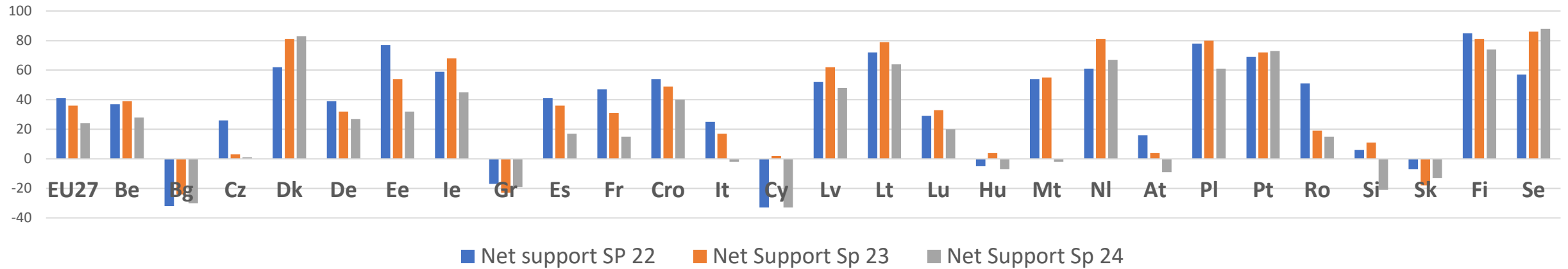


Change in Support for Economic Sanctions on Russia, 2022-24

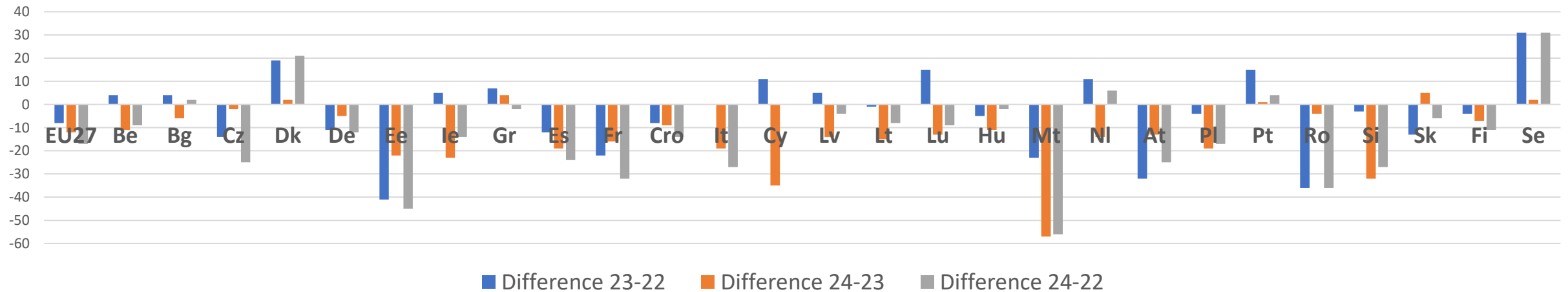


Support for Purchasing Military Equipment for Ukraine, 2022-24

Net Support for Purchasing Military Equipment for Ukraine, 2022-24



Difference in Support for Purchasing Military Equipment for Ukraine, 2022-24



Domestic and International Implications of Ongoing Patterns in Russia: Concluding Remarks

- Expected poor economic performance in the aftermath of the war with notable resilience of the Russian economy
- Long-term stagnation of Russian economy: Putin's social contract
- Public opinion paradox: economic and social challenges combined with high level of public support for the regime. Why is this the case?
 - The rally-round-the-flag effect of wartime politics: support for the leader as a patriotic duty
 - War efforts as a tool to make the regime popular at home at the expense of anti-western propaganda
- What are the long-term implications about the survivability of the regime: support can shift very quickly when the public in Russia realizes it is being manipulated leading to revolutions.
 - Should we expect another Russian revolution soon?
 - Whose public is more likely to give in to external pressures” the Western or the Russian ?

Sources:

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