

SURVEY OF RUSSIAN ELITES 2020

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 245 Moscow-based elites
 - Seven subgroups: high-ranking individuals in Russia's federal bureaucracy, parliament, military and security agencies, private businesses, state-owned enterprises, academic research institutes, and media outlets
 - Face-to-face interviews lasting an average of 52 minutes
 - Interviews conducted in February-March 2020
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2020 SURVEY SPONSORSHIP AND DIRECTION

- Principal Investigator: Sharon Werning Rivera, Professor and Chair of Government, Hamilton College
- Co-PI: William Zimmerman, University of Michigan
- Funding provide by the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center and Office of the Dean of Faculty at Hamilton College, National Science Foundation, and University of Michigan
- Seven previous surveys (1993, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016)



ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

- Conducted by students in Professor Rivera's course, Govt 333: Topics in Survey Research
 - Sterling Bray '20
 - James Cho '22
 - Max Gersch '23
 - Marykate McNeil '20
 - Alexander Nemeth '22
 - Spencer Royal '22
 - John Rutecki '22
 - Huzefah Umer '21

With input from Jack Benjamin (Northwestern University '20)

KEY THEMES

- **“CUEING” EFFECTS**

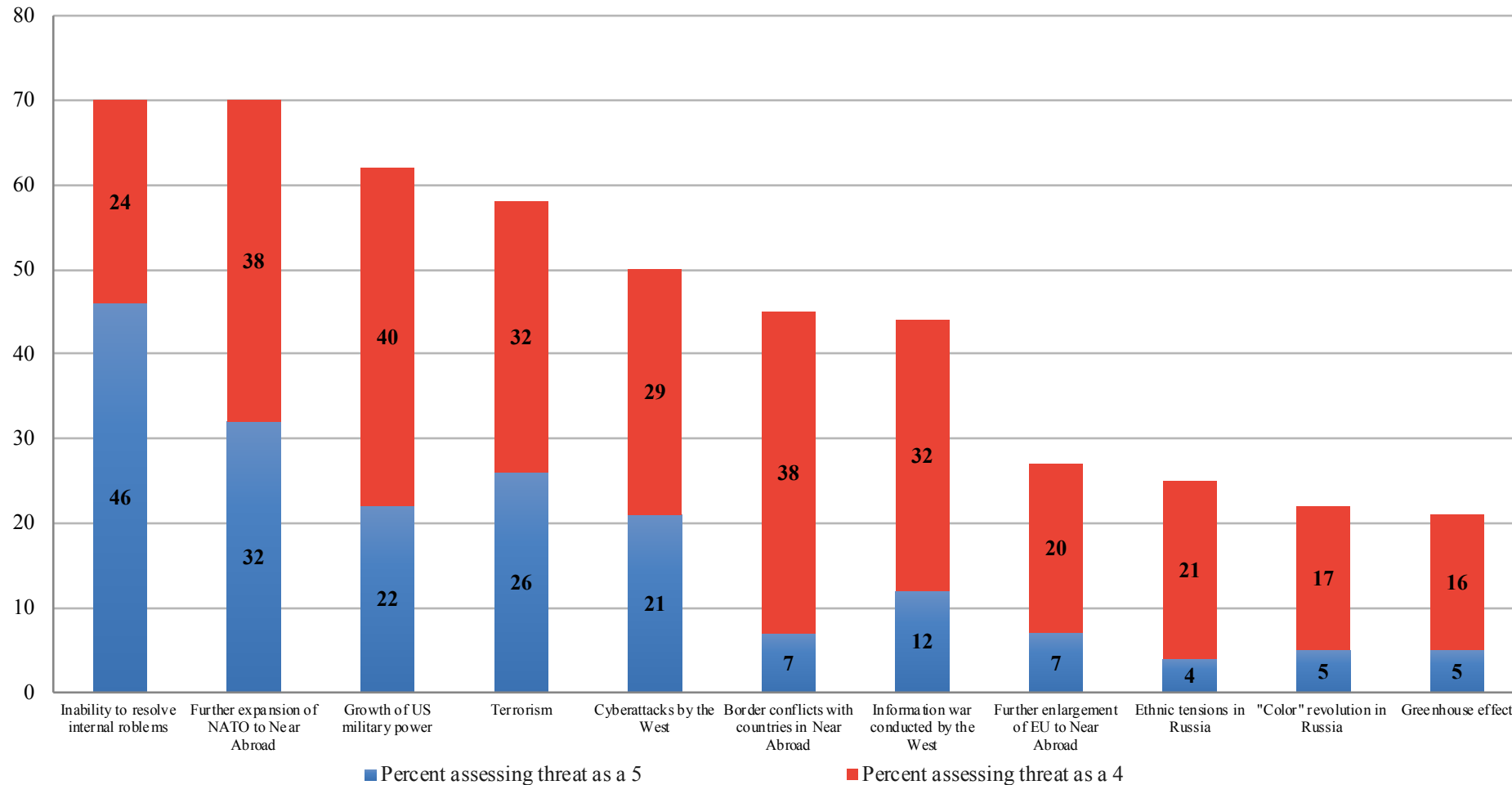
- Evidence that elites (especially “core” elites who work in the executive or legislative branches, the military, or security agencies) carefully read Kremlin signals and adopt policies that mirror those of the top leadership in several important foreign policy arenas, such as Syria and China.
- “Cueing” effects not visible in attitudes toward several crucial domestic issues related to the insulation of Russia from foreign meddling (e.g., the threat of a “color” revolution in Russia).

- **DIFFERENT ASSESSMENTS OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY**

- Satisfaction with Russia’s foreign policy achievements and efforts to restore Russia’s standing on the world stage.
- Lower marks for domestic policy achievements, especially in the economic realm, and elevated concern about the need to address Russia’s domestic problems.

- **CONTINUATION OF TRENDS FROM PREVIOUS SURVEYS** (e.g., attitudes toward unification of Russia and Ukraine, Stalin, and Western media sources)

Figure 2.3
Threats to Russian Security, 2020

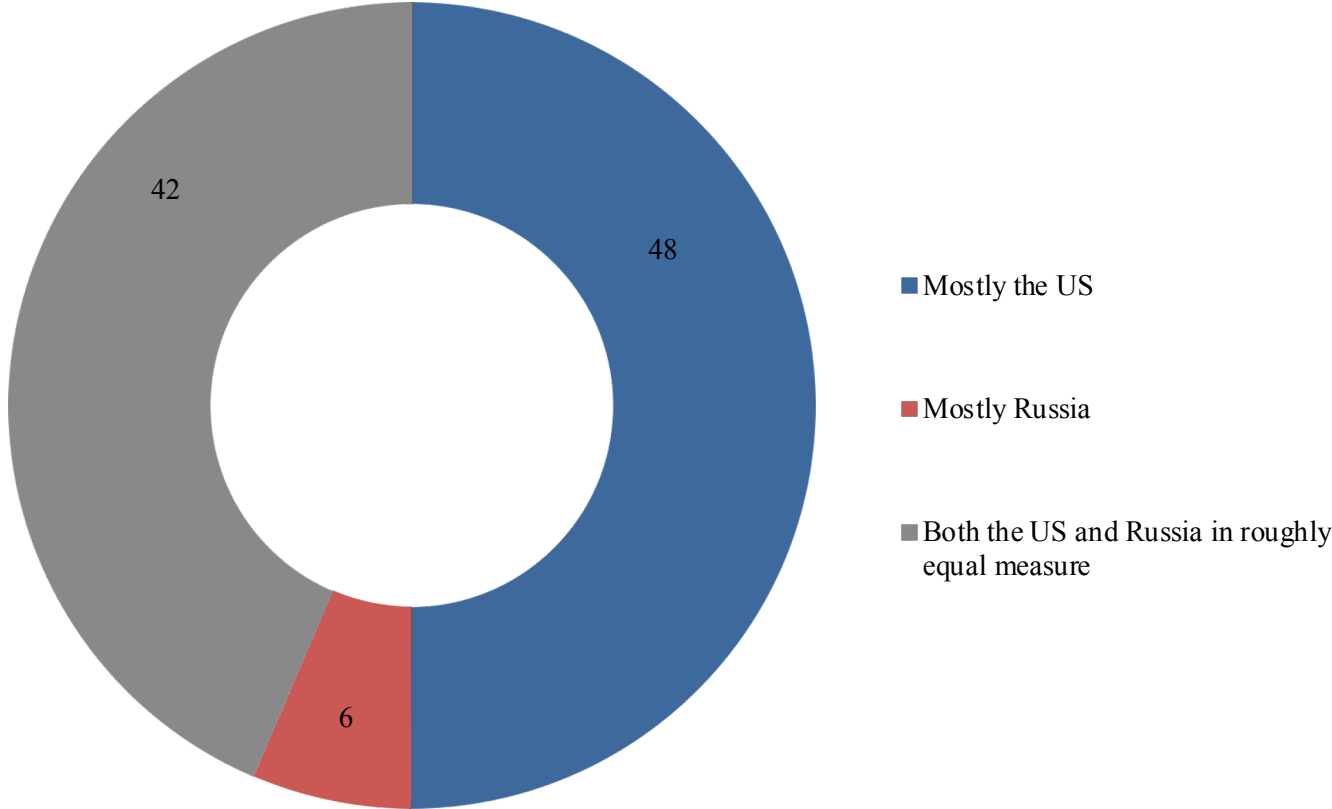


Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites, 2020 (n=245).

Note: The figure displays the percentage of all respondents, including those who answered “don’t know” or refused to answer.

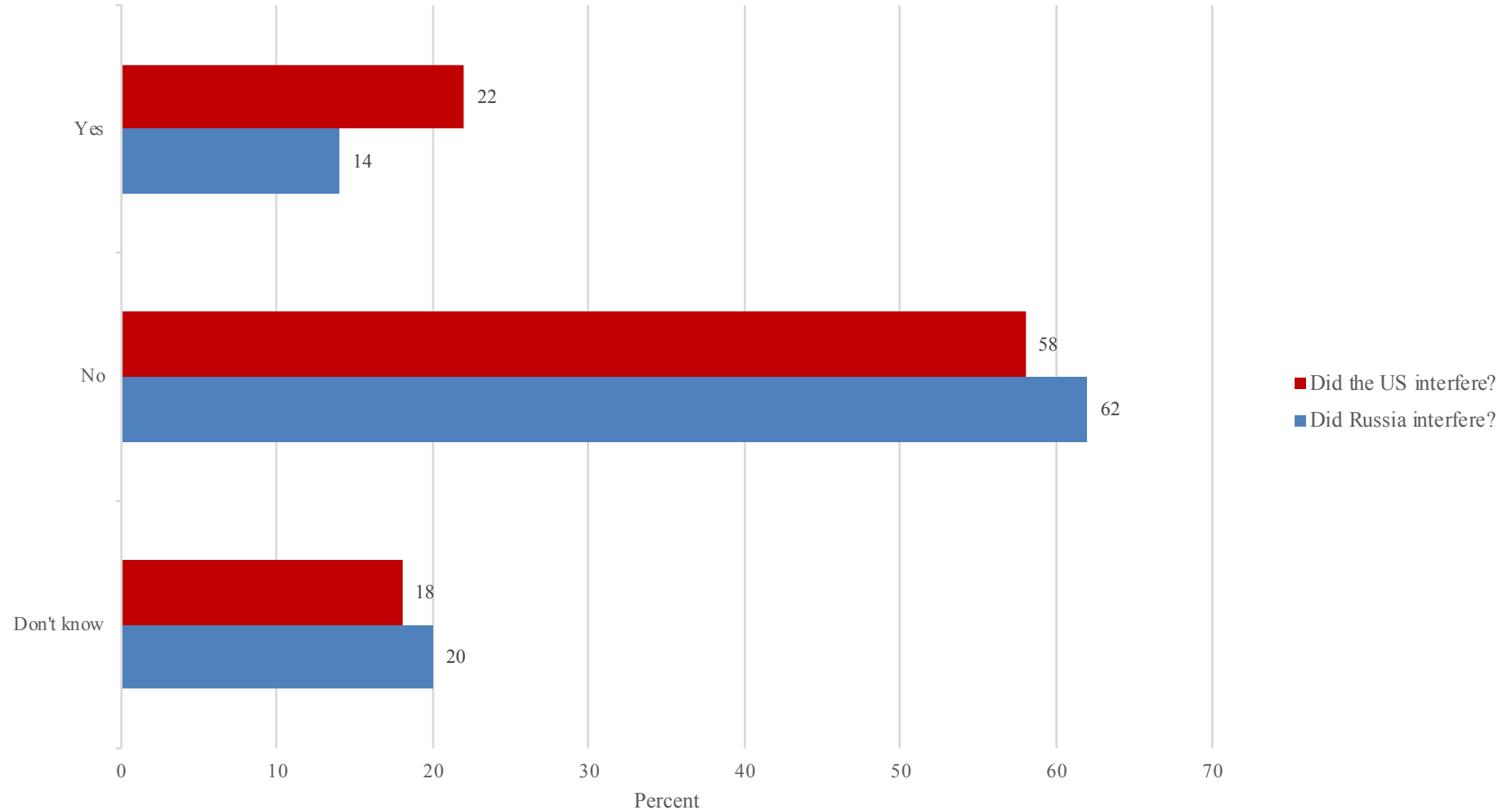
Question Wording: “Which of the following represent the greatest threat to the security of Russia and which do not represent any threat whatsoever? Rate the level of threat on a five-point scale, where 1 means the ‘absence of danger’ and 5 means ‘the utmost danger.’ 1. The growth of US military power compared to that of Russia, 2. The inability of Russia to resolve its internal problems, 3. Terrorism, 4. Border conflicts between Russia and countries in the Near Abroad, 5. A rise in ethnic tensions between Russians and other nationalities in Russia, 6. A ‘color’ revolution in Russia, 7. An information war against Russia conducted by the West, 8. Further expansion of NATO to countries in the Near Abroad, 9. Further enlargement of the EU to countries in the Near Abroad, 10. Cyberattacks on Russia’s critical infrastructure launched by the West, 11. The greenhouse effect and other negative influences on the global climate.”

Figure 3.1
Who Is Responsible for the Deterioration of US-Russian Relations Over the Past 5-10 Years? (%)



Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites, 2020 (n=245).
Note: The figure displays the percentage of all respondents, including those who answered “don’t know” or refused to answer.
Question Wording: “In your view, who is responsible for the deterioration of US-Russian relations over the past 5 to 10 years? 1. Mostly the US, 2. Mostly Russia, 3. Both the US and Russia in roughly equal measure.”

Figure 3.3
Elites' Perceptions of Interference in US and Russian Electoral Processes

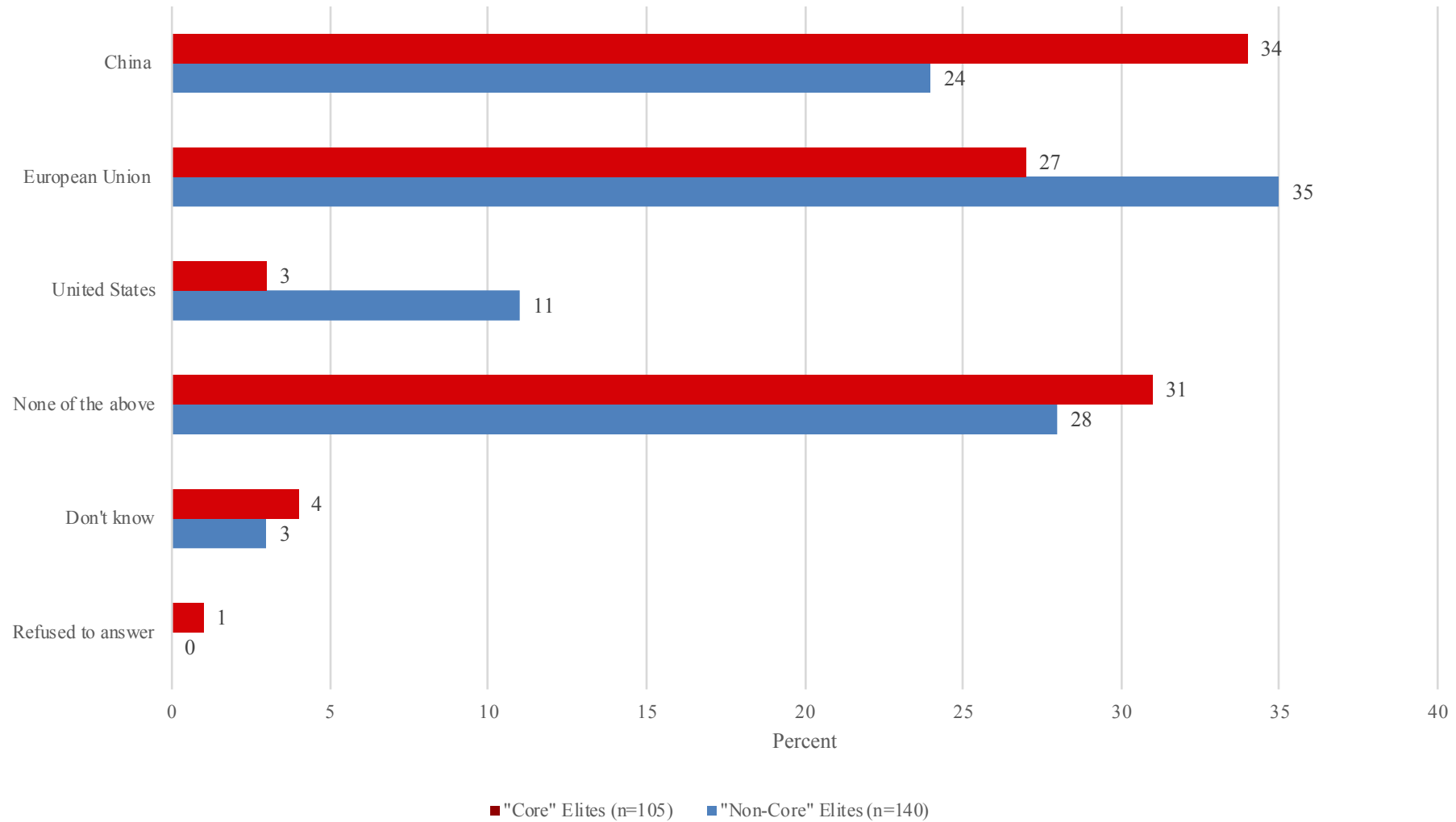


Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites, 2020 (n=245).

Notes: Responses to two separate questions are displayed. “Yes” includes “Definitely yes” and “Probably yes” responses. “No” includes “Definitely not” and “Probably not” responses. Refusals are not shown.

Question Wordings: “Do you think that the US interfered in Russian politics during the 2011-12 electoral cycle? 1. Definitely yes, 2. Probably yes, 3. Probably not, 4. Definitely not”; “Do you think that Russia interfered in the 2016 US presidential election? 1. Definitely yes, 2. Probably yes, 3. Probably not, 4. Definitely not.”

Figure 4.2
Desirable Partnerships by "Core" and "Non-Core" Elite Status, 2020

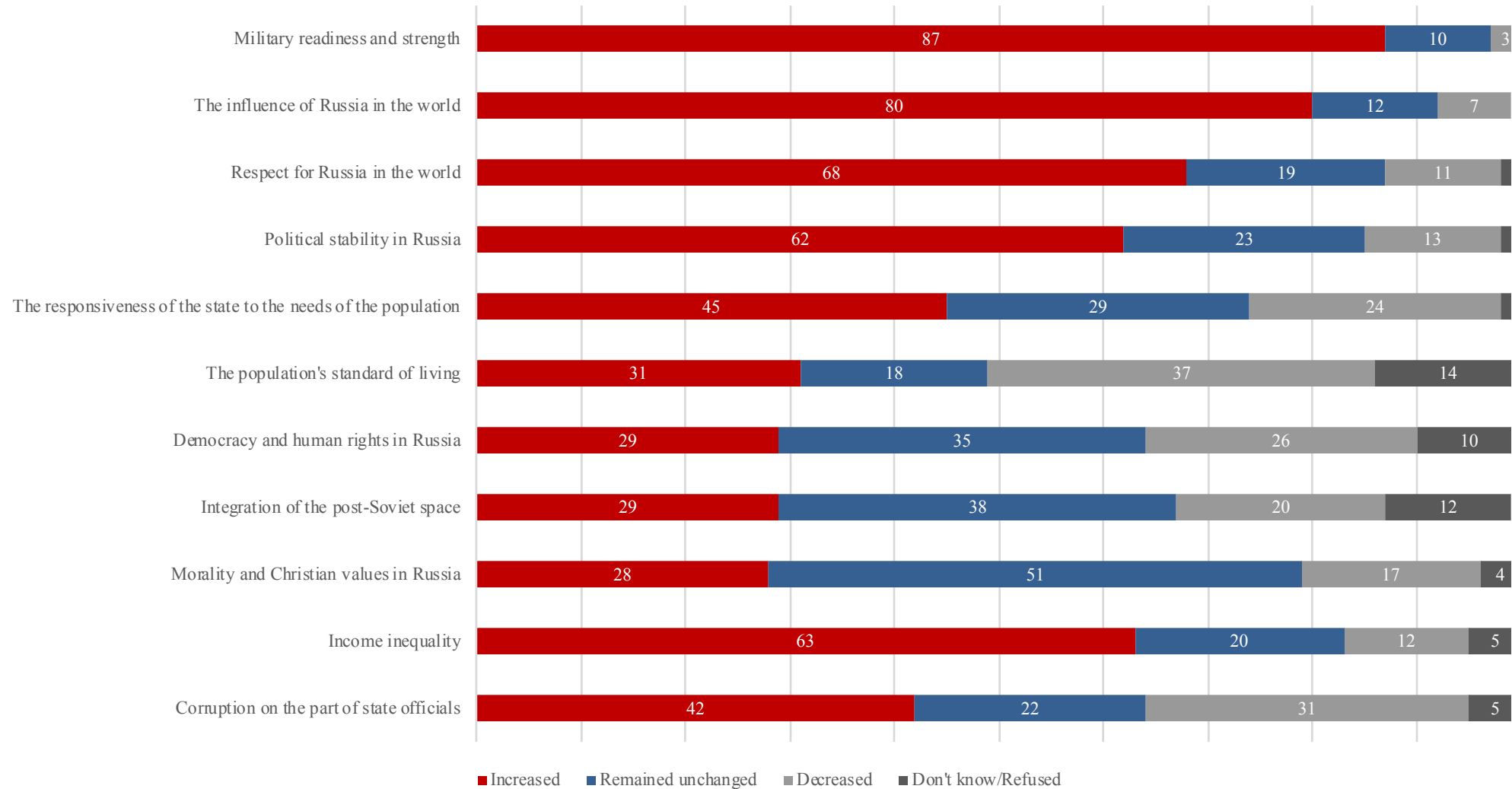


Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites, 2020 (n=245).

Notes: "Core" elites as defined by Noah Buckley and Joshua Tucker include respondents who work in the executive or legislative branches, the military, or security agencies." "Non-core" elites are those in the media, science and education fields, state-owned enterprises, or private business.

Question Wording: As in Figure 4.1.

Figure 5.3
Putin's Performance Over the Past Twenty Years (%)

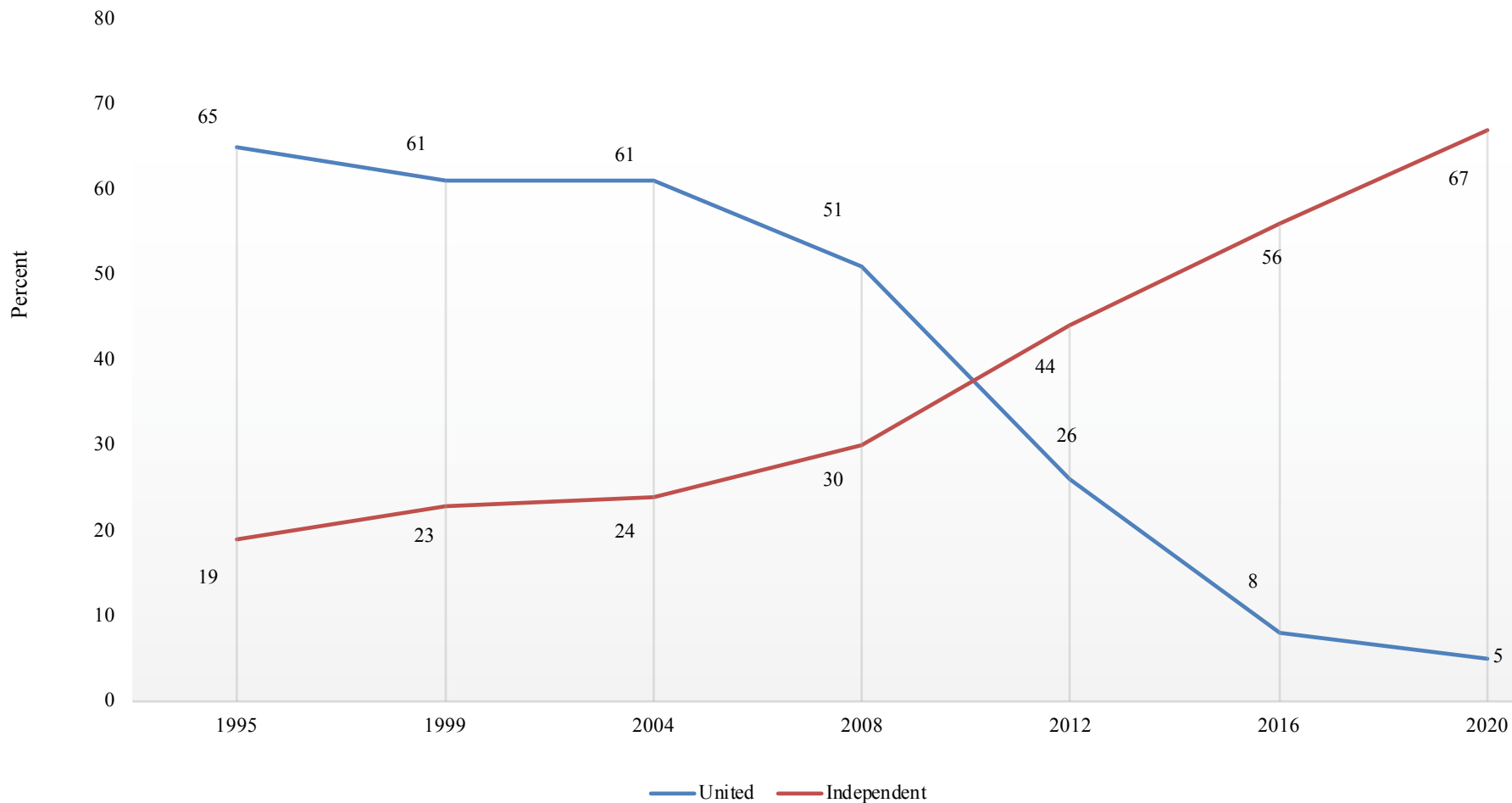


Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites, 2020 (n=245).

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding.

Question Wording: “In the last 20 years since the year 2000, when Putin first became president, do you think the following things have increased, decreased, or remained unchanged? 1. Corruption on the part of state officials, 2. Income inequality, 3. Political stability in Russia, 4. The influence of Russia in the world, 5. Democracy and human rights in Russia, 6. The responsiveness of the state to the needs of the population, 7. The population’s standard of living, 8. Respect for Russia in the world, 9. Morality and Christian values in Russia, 10. Military readiness and strength, 11. Integration of the post-Soviet space.”

Figure 6.1
Should Ukraine and Russia be Completely Independent or United into a Single Country?

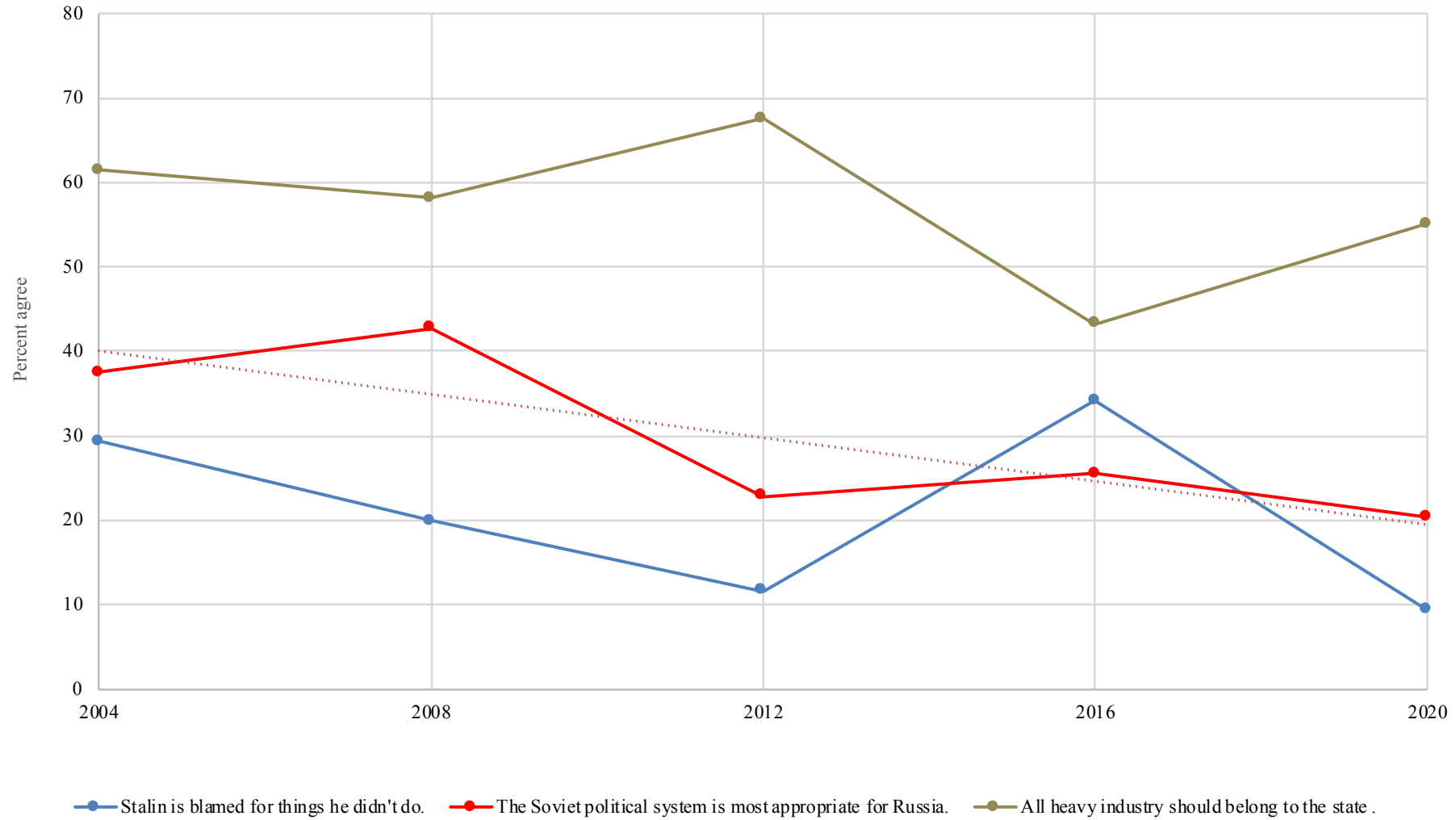


Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites.

Notes: “United” includes responses ranging from 4 to 5 (1995-1999: 5-7). “Independent” includes responses ranging from 1 to 2 (1995-1999: 1 to 3). The figure displays the percentage of all respondents, including those who answered “don’t know” or refused to answer.

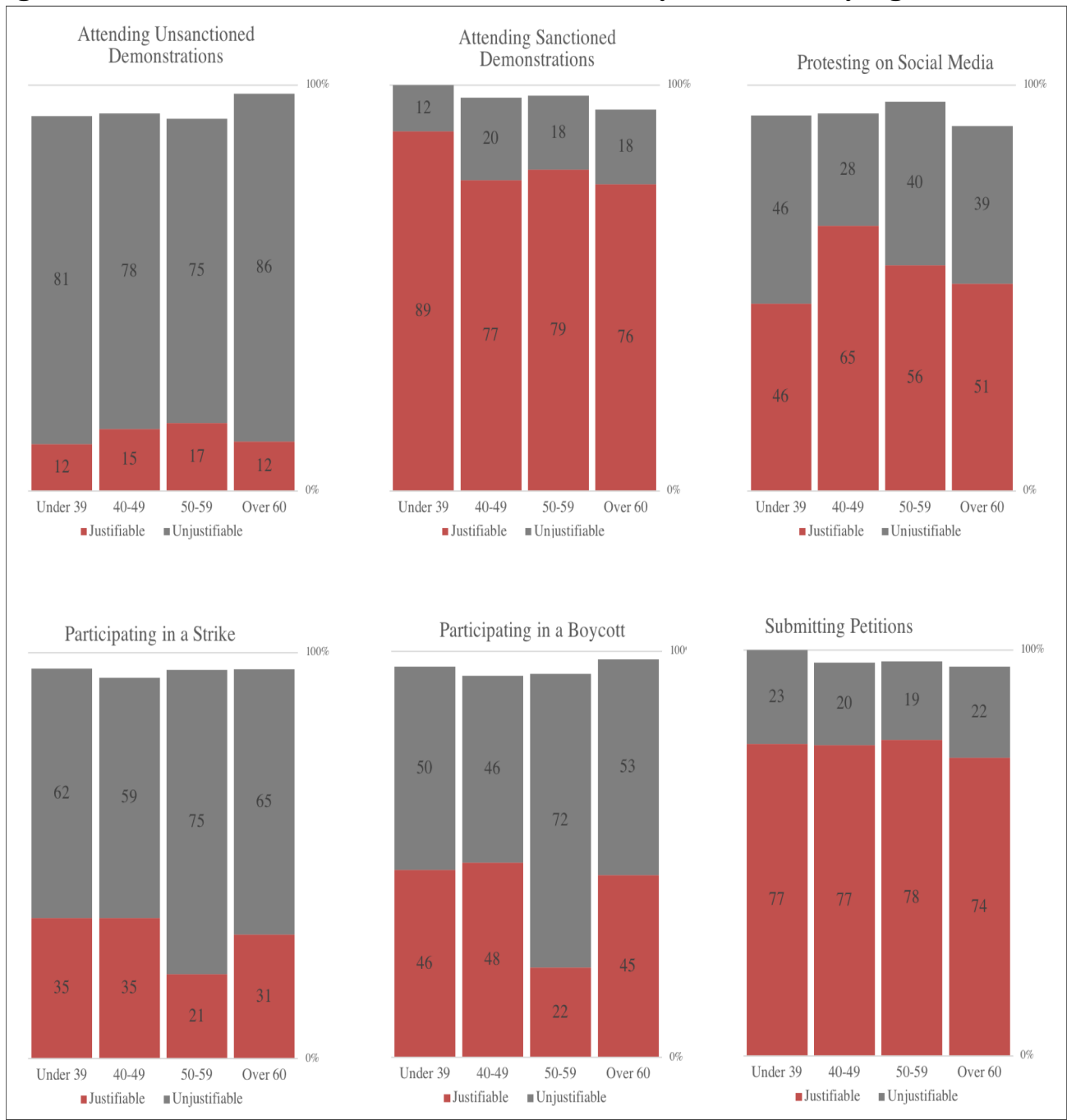
Question Wording: “There are also various opinions concerning the relations that Russia should have with Ukraine. Using a five-point (1995-1999: seven-point) scale (where 1 means that Russia and Ukraine should be completely independent countries and 5 means that they should be united into a single country), please indicate which position is closer to your point of view.”

Figure 7.1
Indicators of Soviet Nostalgia



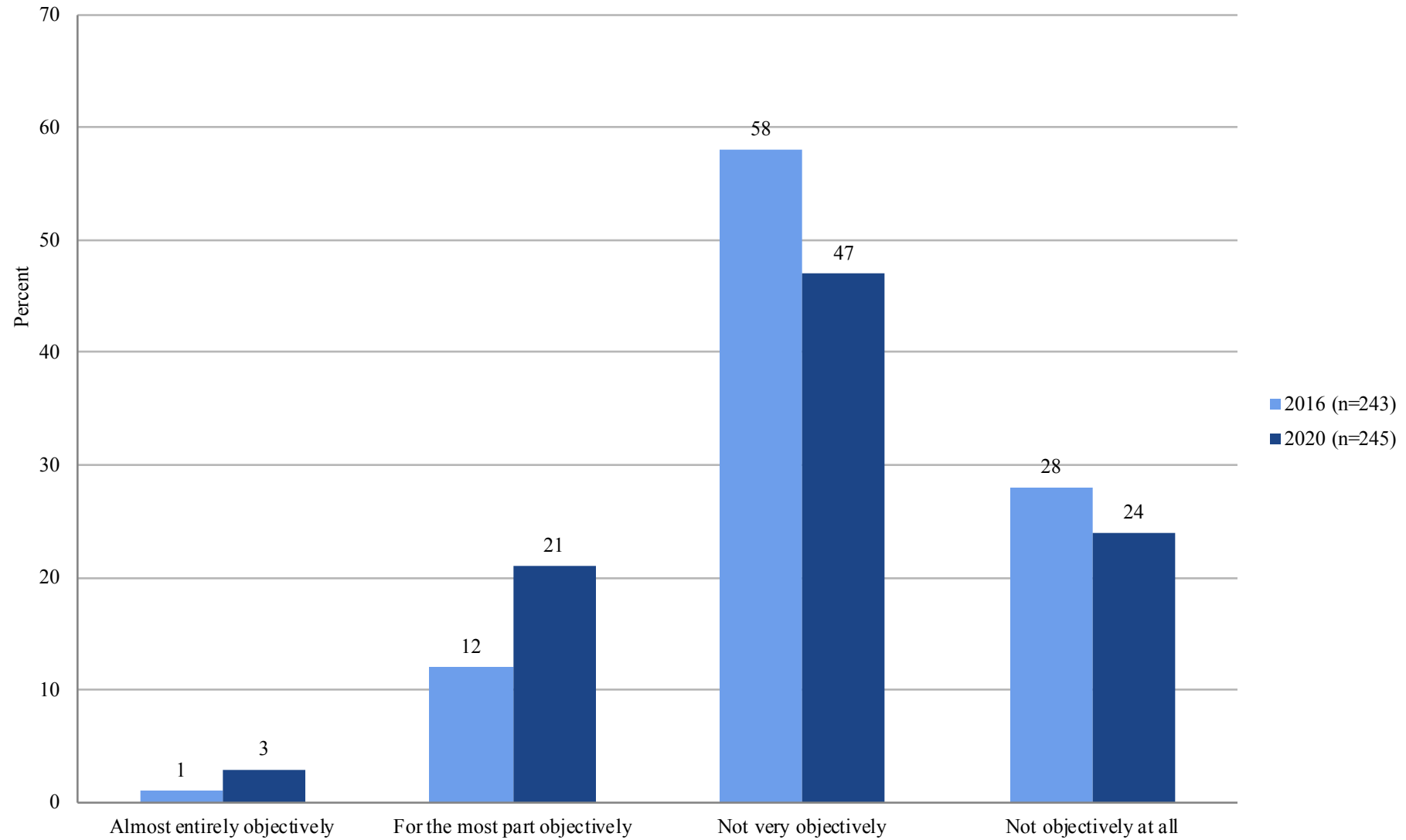
Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites.
Notes and Question Wordings: As in Tables 7.1-7.3.

Figure 8.1 Elites' Attitudes Toward the Justifiability of Protests by Age Cohort, 2020



Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites, 2020 (n=245).
Notes: “Unjustifiable” includes responses ranging from 1 to 5. “Justifiable” includes responses ranging from 6 to 10. For all questions, n=26 (under 39), n=98 (40-49), n=72 (50-59), and n=49 (over 60). The figure displays the percentage of all respondents, including those who answered “don’t know” or refused to answer.
Question Wording: “Please look at this card. It lists various types of political protest activity in which people can engage. Rate each of these activities on a ten-point scale according to how justifiable they are, where 10 means ‘completely justifiable’ and 1 means ‘completely unjustifiable’ [Submitting petitions, Participating in a boycott, Attending demonstrations sanctioned by the government, Attending unsanctioned demonstrations, Participating in a strike, Protesting on social media].” Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding.

Figure 9.1
Perceptions of the Western Media's Coverage of World Events



Source: Data from Survey of Russian Elites.

Note: The figure displays the percentage of all respondents, including those who answered “don’t know” or refused to answer.

Question Wording: “How objectively do you think that events in Russia and in the world as a whole are covered by...[Western media sources]?
1. Almost entirely objectively, 2. For the most part objectively, 3. Not very objectively, 4. Not objectively at all.”

THANK YOU!

Questions and comments should be sent to Prof. Sharon Rivera at srivera@hamilton.edu.

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Video produced by Hà Trần'22.
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