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# Russians Say Their Government Did Not Try to Influence U.S. Presidential Election

*Most say Russia is playing an increasingly important role in world affairs*

**BY** *Jacob Poushter*

**FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:**

Jacob Poushter, Senior Researcher  
Rhonda Stewart, Senior Communications Manager

202.419.4372  
[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

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# Russians Say Their Government Did Not Try to Influence U.S. Presidential Election

*Most say Russia is playing an increasingly important role in world affairs*

In the wake of allegations that the Russian government used social media and other tactics to disrupt the 2016 United States presidential election, roughly seven-in-ten Russians believe their government *did not* try to influence the election. Only 15% say their government did try to meddle, a new Pew Research Center survey shows.

More broadly, Russians are about evenly split over whether their country tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries: 45% say yes, 46% say no. In contrast, an overwhelming majority of Russians (85%) think the U.S. government interferes in the domestic affairs of other countries.

Regarding relations with the West, roughly eight-in-ten Russians think that Western sanctions, initially imposed on account of Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, are having an effect on the Russian economy, with 47% saying the sanctions are having a *major* effect. Tensions with the West are palpable for many Russians: Eight-in-ten consider NATO a threat, with 45% saying the organization is a *major* threat to their country.

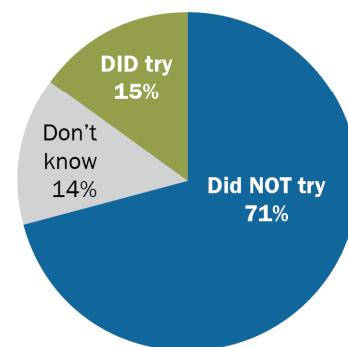
Globally, Russians believe their country is playing an increasingly important role. Nearly three-in-four (72%) think Russia plays a more important role in the world than it did 10 years ago, up from 59% last year. Most, however, also believe Russia does not get the respect it deserves. About six-in-ten say Russia should get more respect internationally than it does, with roughly half as many (32%) saying Russia is as respected as it should be.

Russian President Vladimir Putin retains the confidence of his people in handling international affairs. A majority (58%) has a lot of confidence in his abilities, with an additional 23% expressing some confidence in him. Only 14% have little or no confidence in their leader's international acumen.

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## Most Russians do not believe their government tried to influence the 2016 U.S. election

*The Russian government \_\_\_ to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election*



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, Q69.

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Domestically, a slim majority of Russians are satisfied with the direction of the country, even as four-in-ten express dissatisfaction. Economic issues top the list of Russia's biggest problems, with nearly seven-in-ten (69%) saying inflation is a very big problem. Additionally, majorities are very concerned about unemployment and inequality. Despite the positive feelings for Putin and their country, 59% say corrupt political leaders are a major concern in Russia today.

These are among the findings of a Pew Research Center survey conducted among 1,000 respondents in Russia from May 22 to June 23, 2018. The survey was nationally representative and occurred mostly before the start of the FIFA World Cup, as well as the government's proposal to increase the retirement age, which has [caused some political backlash](#) against Putin and the government.

## Russians: We did not interfere in U.S. election, but U.S. interferes plenty in other countries

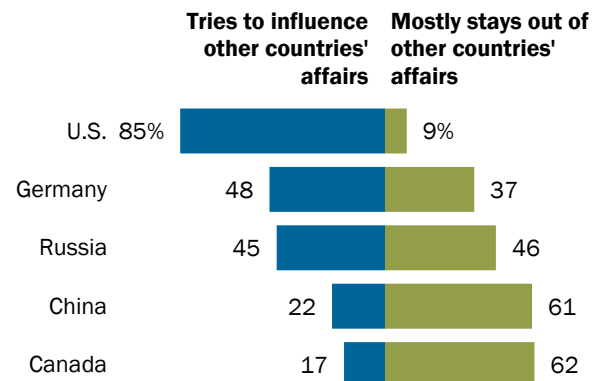
When asked whether the Russian government tried to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election, 71% of Russians say no. Only 15% believe their government did try to influence the outcome, while 14% offer no opinion. (A [January 2017 assessment](#) by the U.S. intelligence community concluded that the Russian president "ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election.")

Older Russians are more convinced that the government did not meddle – 77% of Russians ages 50 and older say this, compared with 66% of those under 50.

When asked about the possibility of influencing the internal affairs of other countries, Russians are divided on their own government's actions. Nearly equal numbers say the Russian government mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries (46%) as say it does try to influence other nations (45%). Young Russians (ages 18 to 29) are more likely to say Russia tries to interfere abroad (56%) than those 50 and older (41%). Those Russians who lack confidence in Putin are also more willing to say Russia tries to influence other countries (63%).

### Russians see U.S. as most intrusive in other nations' internal affairs

*Do you think \_\_\_ tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries or do you think \_\_\_ mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries?*



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q68a-e.

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However, Russians clearly see the U.S. as an interfering power, with 85% saying the U.S. tries to shape the internal affairs of other countries versus only 9% who say the U.S. stays out.

In looking at other countries, roughly six-in-ten in Russia say that Canada (62%) and China (61%) avoid meddling, but 48% say that Germany *does* try to influence the affairs of other countries.

## Concern over NATO and Western sanctions

Most Russians say that Western sanctions are having an effect on their economy, and nearly half (47%) say it is a major effect. This concern is little changed from surveys in 2015 and 2017.

Relatedly, 80% of Russians see NATO as a military threat, with 45% stating it is a *major* threat. Similar sentiments toward the organization were shared in 2015 and 2017.

### Russians say Western sanctions are having an effect on their economy and also see NATO as a threat

*In your opinion, how much of an effect have the Western sanctions on Russia had on the country's economy?*



*In your opinion, how much of a military threat is NATO to our country?*



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q43 & Q66.

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## Most say Russia is becoming more important in the world but still does not get enough respect

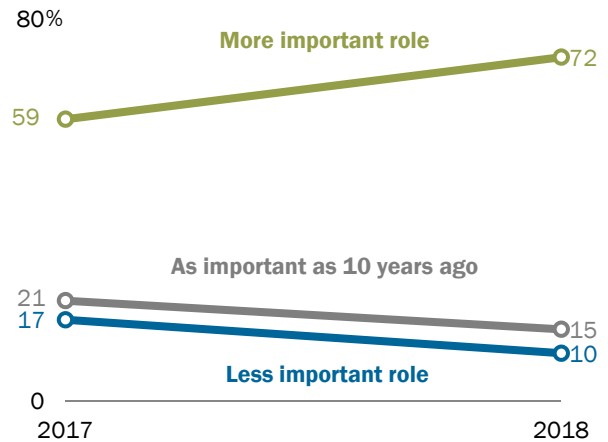
Russians are increasingly likely to say their country plays a more important role in the world today than it did 10 years ago. Overall, 72% of Russians say this now compared to 59% who did in 2017. Only 10% believe Russia is less important.

Russians who are confident in Putin's handling of global issues are much more likely to say their country plays a more important role in the world today (79%) than those who lack confidence in their president (41%).

When it comes to international perceptions of Russia, a majority of Russians say their country should be more respected around the world. Roughly six-in-ten (61%) say Russia does not get enough respect, with only about half that (32%) saying Russia is as respected around the world as it should be. These sentiments are largely unchanged since 2017, but since 2012, feelings that Russia is as respected as it should be have doubled.

## Majority of Russians see their nation as playing an increasingly important role in the world today

*Do you think Russia plays a more important role in the world today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role, or about as important a role in the world as it did 10 years ago?*



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q32b.

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## Russians want more respect on the world stage

*Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right?*

**Russia is as respected around the world as it should be**      **Russia should be more respected around the world than it is**



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q19.

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About half of Russians (51%) say their country should intervene in neighboring countries if there are threats to ethnic Russians there. People who express confidence in Putin are more likely to support such interventions (55%) than are those who have little or no confidence in the president (36%).

## Lots of confidence in Putin, but economic worries linger

President Putin remains a popular figure in Russia. Roughly eight-in-ten Russians (81%) have at least some confidence in his ability to handle international affairs, with 58% expressing “a lot of confidence.” Confidence in Putin has been especially high, and intense, since 2014, the year Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine.

Putin retains high levels of confidence among all age groups and education and income levels, as well as both men and women. However, those who have a favorable view of his political party, United Russia (Edinaya Rossiya), are almost unanimous in their confidence in his international leadership (94%).

## Russians say they should intervene to help ethnic Russians in other countries

*Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right?*

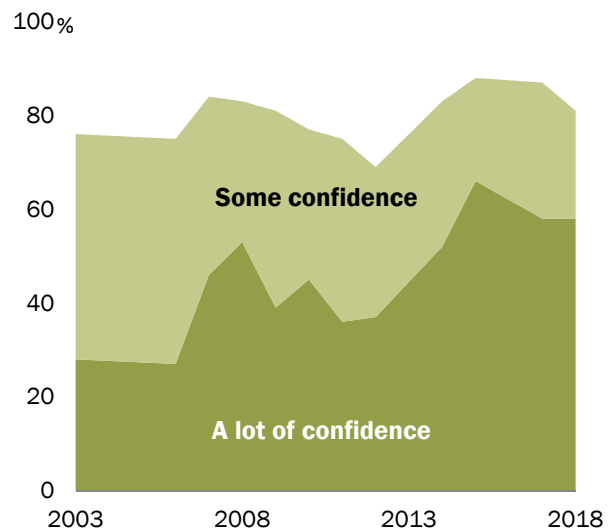


Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q50.

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## Putin retains the confidence of his people

*How much confidence do you have in Russian President Vladimir Putin to do the right thing regarding world affairs?*



Note: Between 2009 and 2011, asked “Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.”

Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q35c.

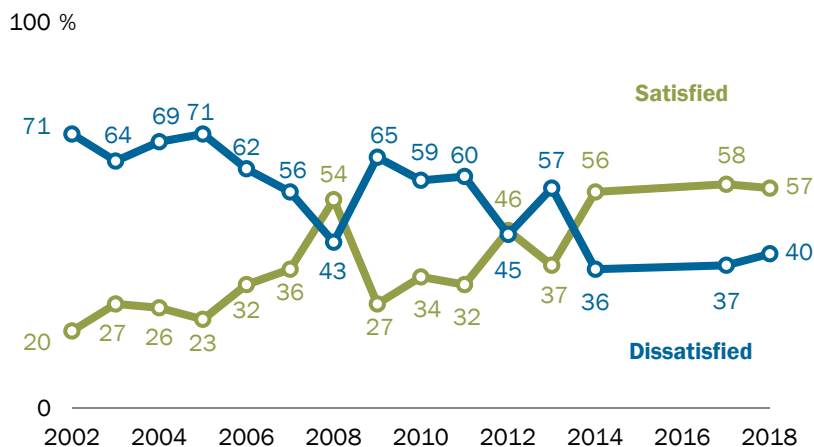
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Along with confidence in their leader, a majority of Russians are also satisfied with the direction of their country. In 2018, 57% of Russians say they are satisfied with the way things are going in Russia today, compared with 40% who are dissatisfied. Russians have been satisfied with the current state of the nation since 2014, but before then, stretching back to 2002, Russian attitudes were generally more negative about the direction of the country. Those who have confidence in Putin are about three times as likely to say the country is going in the right direction (63% satisfied) compared with those who lack confidence (20%).

Despite satisfaction with the country's overall direction, the Russian public still sees a bevy of problems. Among these, economic issues are the most pressing, especially inflation: 69% say rising prices are a very big problem for Russia. An additional 25% say inflation is a moderately big problem, meaning that 94% of the public is concerned about the issue. Other economic issues near the top in the survey are income inequality and a lack of jobs, with 57% of Russians saying these are very big problems. Inequality, in particular, is considered a bigger problem among Russians ages 50 and older (66% say it is a very big

## Since 2014, most Russians have been satisfied with their country's direction

Overall, are you \_\_\_ with the way things are going in our country today?

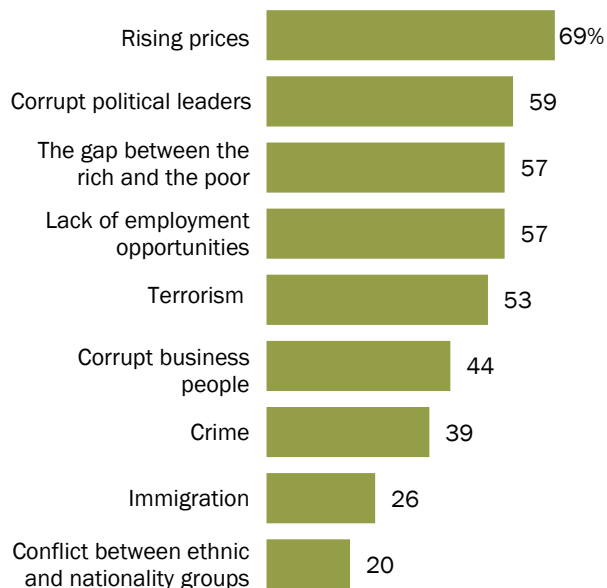


Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q1.

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## Economic issues and corruption are seen as Russia's biggest problems

\_\_\_ is a very big problem



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q67a-i.

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problem) and those whose income is below the country median (62%).

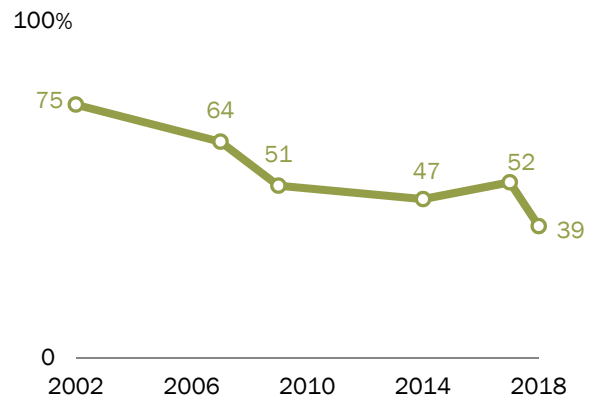
Corruption among the political elite is also a pressing concern among Russians, with 59% saying it is a very big problem. Concern about corruption is especially common among people who lack confidence in Putin (of whom 69% see it as very big problem) or do not support United Russia (67%). Fewer Russians are concerned about corrupt business leaders (44%).

Terrorism is an issue that garners acute concern from more than half the populace (53%). Crime, however, is less of an issue in Russia than in previous years, with only 39% saying it is a very serious problem. In 2017, 52% said it was a top concern, which was already significantly lower than the three-quarters of Russians who were very concerned in 2002.

On the bottom end of concerns in Russia are immigration and conflict between ethnic and nationality groups. Only 26% and 20%, respectively, name these as very big problems.

### Fewer see crime as a serious problem in Russia since 2002

*Crime is a very big problem*



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, Q67a.

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Danielle Cuddington, *Research Associate*

Claudia Deane, *Vice President, Research*

Kat Devlin, *Research Associate*

Moira Fagan, *Research Assistant*

Janell Fetterolf, *Research Associate*

Courtney Johnson, *Research Associate*

Christine Huang, *Research Assistant*

Michael Keegan, *Senior Information Graphics Designer*

David Kent, *Copy Editor*

Clark Letterman, *Senior Researcher*

Martha McRoy, *Research Methodologist*

Patrick Moynihan, *Associate Director, International Research Methods*

Courtney Nelson, *Research Assistant*

Audrey Powers, *Senior Operations Associate*

Ariana Rodriguez-Gitler, *Digital Producer*

Laura Silver, *Senior Researcher*

Rhonda Stewart, *Senior Communications Manager*

Bruce Stokes, *Director, Global Economic Attitudes*

Christine Tamir, *Research Assistant*

Kyle Taylor, *Research Analyst*

Richard Wike, *Director, Global Attitudes Research*

## Methodology

### About the Pew Research Center's Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey

Results for the survey are based on face-to-face interviews conducted under the direction of D3 Systems, Inc. The results are based on national samples, unless otherwise noted. More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are available [here](#).

<b>Country:</b>	Russia
<b>Year:</b>	2018
<b>Survey:</b>	Global Attitudes Survey
<b>Sample design:</b>	Multi-stage, area probability design. Primary sampling units (PSUs) are administrative units (cities, towns, and rural villages) stratified by region and urbanity. Moscow and St. Petersburg are selected with certainty. Within these cities, the PSUs are electoral districts. The number of effective PSUs is 100. Individuals within households are selected at random via tablet. Up to three attempts are made to complete the interview with the selected respondent.
<b>Mode:</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Language(s):</b>	Russian
<b>Fieldwork dates:</b>	May 22 - June 23, 2018
<b>Sample size:</b>	1,000
<b>Margin of error:</b>	4.4 percentage points
<b>Representative:</b>	Adult population 18 plus (excluding institutionalized populations, officially "closed" cities, military areas or areas with border guarding regime, some difficult-to-reach places of Far North and areas with severe security issues, mostly in the Chechen Republic)
<b>Primary vendor:</b>	D3 Systems, Inc.
<b>Weighting variables:</b>	Gender, age, education, region, urbanity and probability of selection of respondent
<b>Design effects:</b>	1.98

# Topline Questionnaire

**Pew Research Center  
Spring 2018 Survey  
August 21, 2018 Release**

## Methodological notes:

- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.
- Since 2007, the Pew Research Center has used an automated process to generate toplines for its Global Attitudes surveys. As a result, numbers may differ slightly from those published prior to 2007.
- For some countries, trends for certain years are omitted due to differences in sample design or population coverage. Omitted trends often reflect less representative samples than more recent surveys in the same countries. Trends that are omitted include:
  - Russia in March 2003 and Fall 2002
- Not all questions included in the Spring 2018 survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.

		Q1. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?			
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	57	40	3	100
	Spring, 2017	58	37	5	100
	Spring, 2014	56	36	7	100
	Spring, 2013	37	57	6	100
	Spring, 2012	46	45	9	100
	Spring, 2011	32	60	8	100
	Spring, 2010	34	59	7	100
	Fall, 2009	34	60	6	100
	Spring, 2009	27	65	9	100
	Spring, 2008	54	43	4	100
	Spring, 2007	36	56	9	100
	Spring, 2006	32	62	7	100
	Spring, 2005	23	71	6	100
	Spring, 2004	26	69	5	100
	May, 2003	27	64	9	100
Summer, 2002	20	71	9	100	

		Q19. Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right? Russia is as respected around the world as it should be OR Russia should be more respected around the world than it is?					
		Russia is as respected around the world as it should be	Russia should be more respected around the world than it is	Both (DO NOT READ)	Neither (DO NOT READ)	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	32	61	2	3	1	100
	Spring, 2017	34	56	5	0	6	100
	Spring, 2012	16	73	9	0	2	100

		Q32b. Do you think ____ plays a more important role in the world today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role, or about as important a role in the world as it did 10 years ago? b. Russia				
		More important role	Less important role	As important as 10 years ago	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	72	10	15	3	100
	Spring, 2017	59	17	21	3	100

		Q35c. For each, tell me how much confidence you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs – a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence, or no confidence at all. c. Russian President Vladimir Putin					
		A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Not too much confidence	No confidence at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	58	23	9	5	5	100
	Spring, 2017	58	29	8	4	2	100
	Spring, 2015	66	22	7	2	2	100
	Spring, 2014	52	31	11	3	3	100
	Spring, 2012	37	32	16	8	7	100
	Spring, 2011	36	39	14	5	6	100
	Spring, 2010	45	32	12	4	7	100
	Spring, 2009	39	42	11	3	4	100
	Spring, 2008	53	30	10	3	4	100
	Spring, 2007	46	38	8	2	6	100
	Spring, 2006	27	48	13	4	8	100
	May, 2003	28	48	19	3	1	100

Between 2009 and 2011, asked 'Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.'

		Q43. In your opinion, how much of a military threat is NATO to our country? A major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat?				
		Major threat	Minor threat	Not a threat	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	45	35	14	6	100
	Spring, 2017	41	39	16	5	100
	Spring, 2015	50	31	10	8	100

		Q50. Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right?					
		Russia should intervene when there are threats to ethnic Russians in neighboring countries	Russia should not intervene in the internal affairs of neighboring countries	Both (DO NOT READ)	Neither (DO NOT READ)	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	51	36	3	3	6	100
	Spring, 2017	52	41	3	1	4	100

		Q66. In your opinion, how much of an effect have the Western sanctions on Russia had on our economy – major effect, minor effect, or no effect at all?				
		Major effect	Minor effect	No effect at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	47	35	13	6	100
	Spring, 2017	43	37	15	5	100
	Spring, 2015	45	41	8	5	100

		Q67a. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. a. crime					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	39	43	17	1	1	100
	Spring, 2017	52	38	8	1	1	100
	Spring, 2014	47	44	8	1	1	100
	Fall, 2009	51	41	6	1	1	100
	Spring, 2007	64	31	4	0	0	100
	Summer, 2002	75	23	2	0	0	100

		Q67b. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. b. lack of employment opportunities					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	57	29	11	2	1	100
	Spring, 2017	54	33	10	2	1	100
	Spring, 2014	48	32	14	4	2	100
	Spring, 2013	57	30	11	1	1	100

		Q67c. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. c. conflict between ethnic and nationality groups					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	20	34	31	8	6	100
	Spring, 2017	34	32	27	5	2	100
	Fall, 2009	23	44	23	6	3	100
	Spring, 2007	28	41	24	4	3	100
	Summer, 2002	41	39	13	2	5	100

		Q67d. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. d. the gap between the rich and the poor					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	57	31	10	2	1	100
	Spring, 2017	53	31	12	2	1	100
	Spring, 2014	50	30	15	4	1	100
	Spring, 2013	59	29	8	3	1	100

		Q67e. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. e. corrupt political leaders					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	59	30	7	1	3	100
	Spring, 2017	58	31	9	1	2	100
	Spring, 2014	65	27	6	1	2	100
	Fall, 2009	52	33	8	3	5	100
	Spring, 2007	53	29	11	1	5	100
	Summer, 2002	61	27	6	1	6	100

		Q67f. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. f. corrupt business people					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	44	35	12	3	7	100
	Spring, 2017	50	33	11	2	4	100

		Q67g. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. g. terrorism					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	53	28	16	2	1	100
	Spring, 2017	54	27	16	2	1	100
	Fall, 2009	48	36	11	3	2	100
	Spring, 2007	48	36	13	2	1	100
	Summer, 2002	65	27	6	1	0	100

		Q67h. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. h. immigration					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	26	36	29	4	4	100
	Spring, 2017	34	32	28	4	3	100
	Fall, 2009	17	31	30	13	9	100
	Spring, 2007	20	26	32	12	9	100
	Summer, 2002	14	26	32	17	11	100

		Q67i. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all. i. rising prices					
		Very big problem	Moderately big problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	69	25	4	0	1	100
	Spring, 2017	71	22	5	1	1	100
	Spring, 2014	58	34	7	0	0	100
	Spring, 2013	67	27	5	0	1	100



		Q68a. Do you think ____ tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries or do you think ____ mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries? a. Russia			
		Tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries	Mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	45	46	9	100

		Q68b. Do you think ____ tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries or do you think ____ mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries? b. The United States			
		Tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries	Mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	85	9	6	100

		Q68c. Do you think ____ tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries or do you think ____ mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries? c. China			
		Tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries	Mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	22	61	17	100

		Q68d. Do you think ____ tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries or do you think ____ mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries? d. Canada			
		Tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries	Mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	17	62	21	100

		Q68e. Do you think ____ tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries or do you think ____ mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries? e. Germany			
		Tries to influence the internal affairs of other countries	Mostly stays out of the internal affairs of other countries	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	48	37	15	100

		Q69. Do you think the Russian government did or did not try to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election?			
		Did	Did not	DK/Refused	Total
Russia	Spring, 2018	15	71	14	100