



Mystification and Demystification of Putin's Russia

Research Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Vladimir Putin's Russia has been rather unsuccessful since the annexation of Crimea in employing traditional soft power tools; i.e., in making Russia more attractive. However, it has been highly successful in a certain sense of sharp power; i.e., in creating the illusion of near omnipotence in influencing Western policy processes, changing electoral outcomes and replacing leaders. This mystification of Russia in the whole Western world is the greatest result that the Kremlin's spin doctors might have achieved so far.
- Our research demonstrated that the vast majority of the Hungarian population tend to overestimate Russia's military potential and its economic power compared either to facts or to the performance of the other countries, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary and China.
- Two-thirds of Hungarians overestimate Russia's relative military expenditure, putting it frequently ahead of the United States and China - while the former spends ten times as much and the latter three times as much as Russia.
- Half of the respondents rank Russia in the top six among Hungary's export partners and a further 31% estimates its rank to be between place 7 and 12, while in reality it was in 17th position according to data from 2017.
- There is a minority that massively overestimates Russia in nearly all aspects, albeit they still constitute a significant part of the Hungarian population. Those preferring Hungary to have closer relations with Russia are a lot more likely to overestimate Russia's economic potential and its importance. These voters are overrepresented in Viktor Orbán's ruling pro-Russian Fidesz party. Additionally, the voters of some opposition parties that often mention Russia's rising influence tend to overestimate Russia's economic potential as well.
- Therefore, the Kremlin's information policy aimed at depicting the country as more powerful than it really is highly successful in Hungary, as the Hungarian population indeed overestimates the country's military and economic potential.
- While this study focused on Hungarian public opinion, our presumption is that this is more of a general trend in the Western World. Results from Pew Research support this hypothesis: the relative majority of citizens on the globe think that Russia is stronger now than it was ten years ago.
- While a certain level of alarmism is definitely welcome about Russia, especially given the hybrid warfare it wages against the West, the flipside of this alarmism can be a vast overestimation of Russia's economic and military potential - the largest sharp power success of Russia so far. While the Kremlin is not successful in painting Russia as a likeable country, it is indeed successful in painting Russia as stronger, bigger, and more powerful than it really is. In the context of information warfare, this false perception is definitely an asset that Russia can exploit, creating an admiration based on its perceived strength compared to the weaknesses of the Western world.
- To counter this tendency, politicians, policy-makers, pundits and journalists should talk more about the weaknesses of Vladimir Putin's Russia, especially when it comes to its economic potential and ability to change political outcomes in the West.

FOREWORD

The present paper is the summary of the research project entitled “*Mystification and Demystification of Putin’s Russia*,” which contrasts the views of the Hungarian population on Russia’s military and economic potential with facts. By combining public opinion polling and conventional descriptive research, the project intends to provide an innovative contribution to the ongoing academic and policy discourse on Russia’s power potential and influence.

Unquestionably, the impact and perception of Russia has long been a highly popular subject of study, particularly since the events that took place in Ukraine in 2014. There have been numerous research projects conducted on Russia’s power potential, Moscow’s global role and Russia’s military, economic and energetic power. Most recently, Chatham House’s Keir Giles published an extensive study on why Russia is set on a confrontational course with the West, entitled “*Moscow Rules. What Drives Russia to Confront the West*.¹ According to Giles’s analysis, Russia is unlikely to abandon its confrontational policy in its relations to the West as long as the composition of Russian elites remain unchanged.

Hungarian scholars have also published important works on Russia’s economic and military power. András Deák’s work on Moscow’s economic potential² is a must-read for those interested in the topic, and the studies of Csaba Weiner³ and of the late Zsuzsa Ludvig can also be of similar interest to them.⁴ All three authors have also addressed economic relations between Russia and Hungary specifically. Zoltán Sz. Bíró’s article series⁵ on Russian foreign policy, published in the journal *Nemzet és Biztonság*, is of similar importance on foreign affairs, while Anita Deák, János Deák,⁶ László Nagy,⁷ and Krisztián Jójárt⁸ have published extensively on Russia’s military potential.

However, of course, it is not only the fundamentals what matter, but perception as well – especially in the context of hybrid warfare. Concentrated academic and policy attention has also been paid to public opinion on Russia. In the Central-European context, the Bratislava-based GLOBSEC Policy Institute has been conducting surveys since 2017 on the geopolitical and Russia-related attitudes of the Visegrad countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary).⁹ Their last survey showed, for example, that in three out of the four Visegrad countries, Russian President Vladimir Putin is more popular than German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The International Republican Institute did a somewhat similar survey on how the Visegrad populations assess the role and power of Russia, including the possibility of security cooperation with Moscow.¹⁰

In Hungary, the Center for Russian Studies at the Eötvös Loránt University has been surveying the Russia-related attitudes of Hungarian society since 2006.¹¹ Their surveys provide the sole available, long-term dataset on how Hungarian public opinion on Russia has changed in the last decade. Political Capital Institute

1 GILES, K.: *Moscow Rules. What Drives Russia to Confront the West*. Brooking Institution, 2018, Washington D.C.

2 DEÁK, A.: *A kéretlen integráció. A putyini Oroszország világgazdasági beilleszkedése, 2000-2013*, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2017, Budapest.

3 WEINER, Cs.: “Tracking Russian FDI in Hungary”, In: DEÁK, A. (ed.): *The End of an Era in Eurasia? Conflict in Eastern Ukraine and Economic Downturn in the Post-Soviet Space*. East European Studies, No. 6. Institute of World Economics, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, pp. 120–168, 2015, available: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2837232 Retrieved on February 4, 2019.

4 LUDVIG, Zs.: *Oroszország és a kibővült Európai Unió gazdasági kapcsolatai*, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2008, Budapest.

5 SZ. BíRÓ, Z.: “Oroszország és a poszt-szovjet térség biztonságpolitikája, 1991-2014 (I.)”, *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 2014/3, pp. 41-54., available: <http://nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/letoltes.php?letolt=607> Retrieved on February 21, 2019. Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

6 DEÁK A. – DEÁK J.: “Az Oroszországi Föderáció fegyveres erői átalakításának helyzete, az abból levonható következtetések”, *Hadtudomány*, 2012/1-2., pp. 35-46., available: http://mhett.eu/hadtudomany/2012/1_2/HT_2012_1-2_4.pdf Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

7 NAGY L.: “Oroszország biztonságpolitikája, különös tekintettel az orosz-atlanti kapcsolatokra”, *Hadtudomány*, 2018/1, pp. 73-89., available: http://real.mtak.hu/77913/1/HT20181_75_91_u.pdf Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

8 JÓJÁRT, K.: “Az orosz haderőreform értékelése IV. – védelmi költségvetés”, *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 2017/6., pp. 79-88., available: <http://nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/letoltes.php?letolt=851> Retrieved on February 4, 2019.

9 GLOBSEC Trends 2018, Globsec Policy Institute, 2018, Bratislava, available: <https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GLOBSEC-Trends-2018.pdf> Retrieved on February 22, 2019.

10 Visegrad Four Poll Reveals Vulnerabilities to Russian Influence, International Republican Institute, May 24, 2017, p. 31, 37-41, 47., available: <https://www.iri.org/resource/visegrad-four-poll-reveals-vulnerabilities-russian-influence> Retrieved on February 22, 2019.

11 SZVÁK, Gy.: (ed): *A magyarok orosz képe (2006-2016)*, Russica Pannonicana, 2017, Budapest.

also conducted numerous surveys on the topic, and wrote analyses on how people's political party preferences affect their views on Russia and Russia's role in supporting Hungary's far-right groups.¹² Moreover, the Global Attitudes and Trends project of the PEW Research Center is covering the Hungarian populations' attitude on Russia, including the perception of Russia in general and that of Russian President Vladimir Putin.¹³ Most recently, an overview was prepared by one of the authors on the Hungarian population's attitudes towards Russia in terms of geopolitical orientation and political preferences.¹⁴ It shows that Russia's perception have improved significantly since 2006 in Hungarian public opinion, and the change since 2010 is even more notable.

In the context of hybrid warfare and intensifying Russian attempts to project its sharp power in the Western world, the most crucial question is how successful the Kremlin can be in persuading the Western public that Russia is big, good and strong. Polls by Pew Research indicate that so far, Russia has been rather unsuccessful in the classical sense of soft power; i.e., in making Russia more attractive and likable. In fact, there has been a considerable decline in Russia's perception in the West since the annexation of Crimea, with a few exceptions among EU/NATO member states (e.g. Greece and Hungary) and segments of the political landscape (voters of parties on the radical right).¹⁵ However, Russia (and China) can be successful in changing perceptions through other means; namely, sharp power. Using the sharp power toolkit, "they seek to pierce, penetrate, or perforate the political and information environments of targeted countries,"¹⁶ which is what Russia seeks to do by exporting conspiracy theories.¹⁷ "This authoritarian influence is not principally about attraction or even persuasion; instead, it centers on distraction and manipulation."¹⁸ In line with this, some experts on Russia, such as Mark Galeotti, have the opinion that Vladimir Putin has been highly successful in one thing, namely creating the illusion of an almost omnipotent leader through generating a lot of discussion on Russian influence.¹⁹ In line with this statement, a recent Pew Research study found that a relative majority of the global population think that Russia is a more important geopolitical player than it was ten years ago.

Up to this point, no research we know of has combined the logic of descriptive, analytical Russia studies with public opinion polling, providing a reality check by comparing how the Hungarian population assesses Russia's military, economic, geographical and social potential with Moscow's actual power. Political Capital intends to use this assessment to contribute both to Hungarian and international research and public discourse on Russia. Additionally, our results will have important policy implications as well on ways to demystify Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Following a methodological introduction, the paper assesses altogether nine aspects of Russia's power, structured into three main blocks. First, Russia's military potential and readiness to use force gets contrasted to the Hungarian population's perception of such issues. Second, the country's economic strength, its importance in EU gas supplies and in Hungary's export are analysed, while the third block assesses Hungarian public opinion on Russia from the geographic and human security aspects.

12 JUHÁSZ, A. – GYÓRI L. – ZGUT, E. – DEZSŐ, A.: "The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is" The Activity of Pro-Russian Extremist Groups in Hungary, Political Capital, April 2017, available: http://www.politicalcapital.hu/pc-admin/source/documents/PC_NED_country_study_HU_20170428.pdf Retrieved on February 22, 2019.

13 Pew Global Research: Global Indicators Database, available: <http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/27/survey/all/> Retrieved on February 22, 2019.

14 KREKÓ, P.: "Russia in Hungarian public opinion", TÁRKI Social Report 2019, pp. 358-371., available: http://www.tarki.hu/sites/default/files/2019-02/358_371_Kreko.pdf

15 LETTERMAN, C.: Image of Putin, Russia suffers internationally. Pew Research Center, December 2018, available: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/12/06/image-of-putin-russia-suffers-internationally> Retrieved on February 22, 2019.

16 Walker, C. (2018). What Is "Sharp Power"? *Journal of Democracy*, 29(3), 9-23.

17 See for example: Ilya Yablokov. 2015. *Conspiracy Theories as a Russian Public Diplomacy Tool: The Case of Russia Today (RT)*, Politics, 35 (3/4): 301-315. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9256.12097>. Retrieved 1 January 2018. See also Political Capital's research on conspiracy theories: <http://www.politicalcapital.hu/pc-admin/source/documents/pc-boll-konteo-20181107.pdf>

18 Walker, C., & Ludwig, J. (2017). *From 'Soft Power' to 'Sharp Power': Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World*. National Endowment for Democracy.

19 GALEOTTI, M.: *We need to talk about Putin: Why the West gets him wrong and how to get him right*, Penguin Books, 2019.

FOREWORD

The paper follows an inductive and critical approach. Every part starts with assessing how the Hungarian population perceives Russia's power in the given field. Thereafter, it contrasts their opinion with reality. During the project, expert interviews were conducted with Hungarian scholars, policy analysts and journalists covering Russia to enrich research results with additional details.

In sum, we found that the Hungarian public sees Russia as stronger, more populous, and economically more influential than it is. Studying the reasons of this discrepancy was not among the objectives of the project. While the interviewed experts provided some explanations, and we came up with some hypothesis of our own, this study did not ambition to assess them in detail. The question of why perceptions differ so much from reality has the potential to serve as the basis of a future project. Moreover, the replication of this research in other countries would be really important to check how widespread the mystification of Russia is.

This research, conducted between September 2018 and February 2019, would not have been possible without the generous support of the British Embassy in Budapest, for which Political Capital is particularly grateful. Our sincere hope is that this innovative research may contribute not only to the policy discussion on Russia but may also serve as an example for other countries to conduct similar projects that contrast the local public opinion on Russia to Moscow's real power potential and importance for the given country. In addition, we are thankful for the experts we interviewed, who provided their take on the results and helped interpret the data. We are thankful for our colleague Patrik Szicherle as well, who helped to improve the text. All errors possibly remaining in the text are solely of the authors' responsibility.

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OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

SURVEY

As the main part of our research project, we commissioned a face-to-face survey (CAPI) to measure how Hungarians assess Russia's military, economic, geographical and social potential. The poll was conducted by Medián in October 2018. 1,200 persons were interviewed, the sample is representative of the adult population in terms of gender, age, education and type of settlement. The margin of sampling error is +/- 2.8%.

The questionnaire was developed by Political Capital. We put various types of questions on the questionnaire. The most used variety asked respondents to rank the relative positions of selected countries according to their military, economic, geographical or social potential. The countries in focus are Russia, the subject of our research; China and the United States of America, world powers competing with Russia; Germany and the United Kingdom, major European powers; and Hungary. Besides these relative rankings, we also asked respondents to estimate the exact population of China, Russia and the US. Furthermore, we asked them about the perceived natural gas dependency of the EU on Russian imports and the perceived importance of Russia as a foreign trade partner of Hungary. In order to measure the active, hostile influence potential of Russia, we asked respondents to assess how conceivable it is that Russia spreads fake news and disinformation to influence the views of Europeans or that Russian spies secretly commit targeted liquidations within the EU.

The questions and tabulated distributions of answers in the total sample are available in the Appendix.

INTERVIEWS

During the research, eleven expert interviews were conducted with policy-makers, analysts, academics, other Russia experts and specialists on security policy. All interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way, addressing all questions of the survey, but not necessarily in the same order.

As all interviewees, except for two, spoke on the condition of anonymity, it was decided not to mention any names or other information that would make the identification of any of them possible. Nevertheless, the authors would like to express their utmost gratitude to all the interviewees for their insightful comments.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout this document the following abbreviations are used:

- Countries: CN (China), DE (Germany), HU (Hungary), RU (Russia), UK (United Kingdom), US (United States of America).
- Political parties: DK (Democratic Coalition / Demokratikus Koalíció), LMP (Politics Can Be Different / Lehet Más a Politika), MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party / Magyar Szocialista Párt).

CHAPTER 1: RUSSIA'S MILITARY POTENTIAL

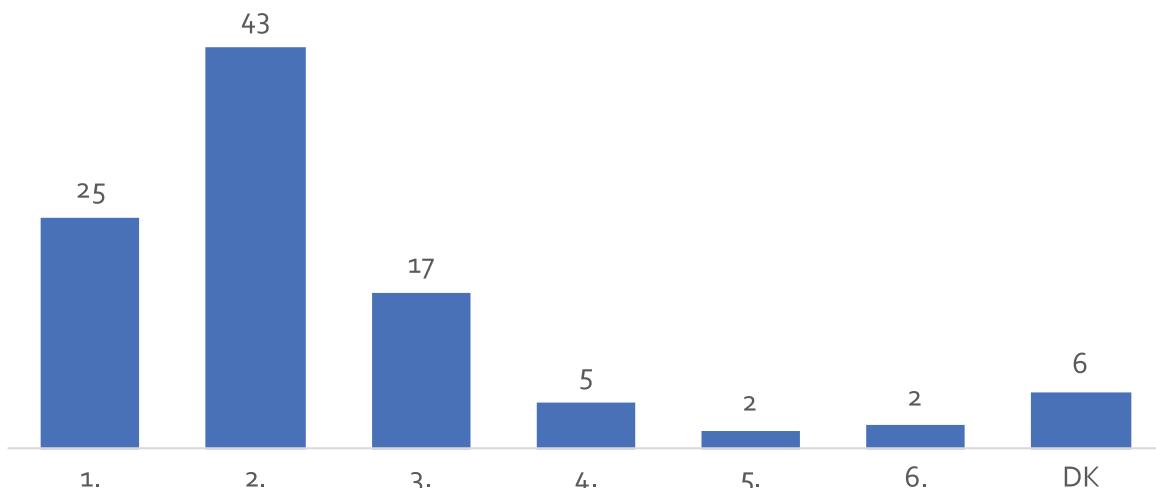
In the first chapter, we assess how the Hungarian public perceives certain aspects of Russia's military might and then provide a reality check on their assumptions. The factors studied are Russia's military budget, Moscow's readiness to conduct violent special operations (i.e. targeted killings) abroad and whether Russia is using online information operations and propaganda to influence European public opinion.

RUSSIA'S MILITARY BUDGET

Measuring the perceived military strength of a country in survey is a complex problem. We needed to find an indicator which describes military power adequately and, at the same time, is easily understandable by an average respondent. We finally chose military expenditure as the most important indicator. **The largest proportion of respondents (43%) rank Russia second and a further 25% think that Russia spends the most on its military among our focus countries.**

Perceived relative rank of Russia according to its military expenditure

Proportion of answers in the total sample, in %



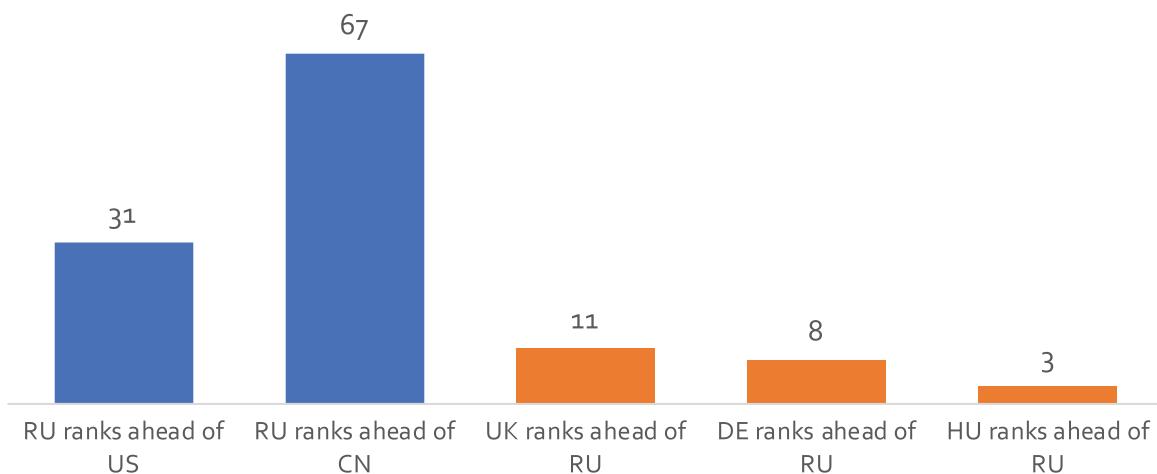
In reality, the defence budget of Russia is ten times less than the one of the United States and only ranks third globally, although the country is unquestionably a military great power. According to the Military Expenditure Database of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI),²⁰ Russia's 2017 military budget was approximately USD 55.3 billion at constant 2016 USD prices. This amount equalled almost exactly 12% of total government spending and 4.3% of the GDP.

The factual difference is striking compared to the United States. In 2017, the US spent some USD 597.2 billion on its military. In terms of the US military budget's proportion compared to total government spending, this massive amount constituted only 8.8% of it and equalled 3.1% of the GDP. China also spends much more on defence than Russia: in 2017, China's military budget was approximately USD 228.2 billion, constituting 6.1% of total government spending and only 1.9% of the GDP. Meanwhile, the UK spent slightly more than Germany (USD 47.1 billion and 44.3 billion, respectively). Although the difference is quite small, their relative position has not changed since 2000. Hungary spent USD 1.415 million on its military in 2017, enough for 54th place globally.

²⁰ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, available: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI-Milex-data-1949-2017.xlsx> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

Over- and underestimation of Russia's military expenditure in country comparisons

Proportion of incorrect answers in the total sample, in %. Underestimation in yellow.



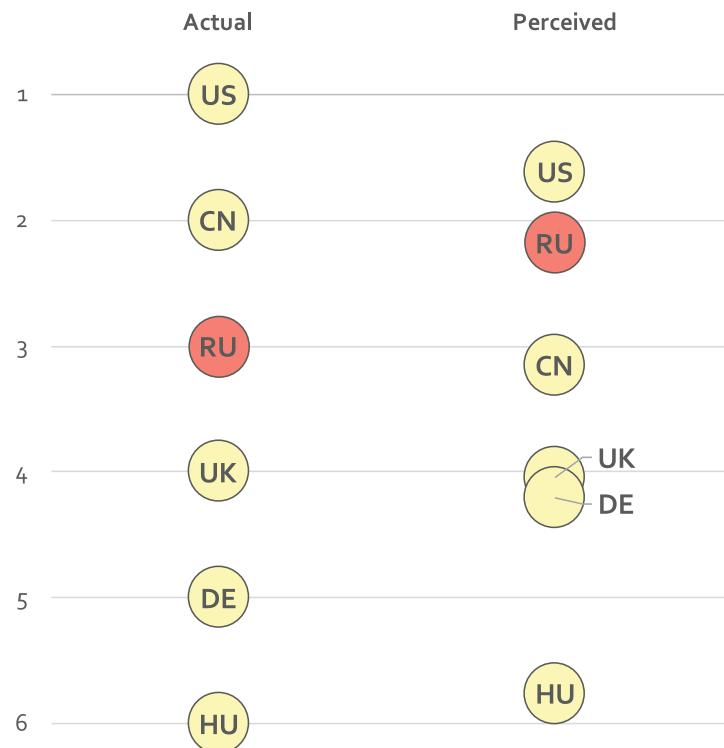
One needs to add that the low level of transparency in security-related budgetary titles negatively affects the accuracy of estimates on Russia's military budget. Due to significantly lower labour and production costs, Russia remains capable of continuing its ongoing military reform, albeit with considerable cuts and modifications.²¹ Moreover, Moscow is able to maintain its military presence in Syria and Ukraine too.

However, differences are still spectacular: the U.S. spends around ten times and China four times more than Russia. Meanwhile, in both countries these expenses constitute a much lower share of both the GDP and of total government spending than in Russia. **In other words, Russia is evidently far from being able to maintain parity even with China, regardless of its much more economically taxing efforts. As a result, in terms of military spending, Moscow is clearly third in the world, lagging both behind the US and China.**

Hence, we may conclude that **two-thirds of Hungarians overestimate Russia's relative military expenditure.** The average position of Russia in the total sample is 2,18. **Those living in Budapest tend to see Russia's military strength more accurately – as the mean ranking is 2.55 in this group.** Those living in the countryside are more likely overestimate

Actual and perceived relative rankings of countries, according to their military expenditure

Perceived ranking represents the mean of rankings in the total sample.



²¹ JÓJÁRT, op. cit.

Russia's military expenditure. **When it comes to party preference groups, interestingly, supporters of LMP, Momentum and the other small parties rate Russia the highest.** Their average ranking is around 1.84. The least likely to overestimate Russia are the voters of the Democratic Coalition.

We also paired Russia with all other countries and observed if respondents ranked Russia ahead or below of the given country. Subsequently, we tested whether they picked the right order, or they got it wrong, over- or underestimating Russia.

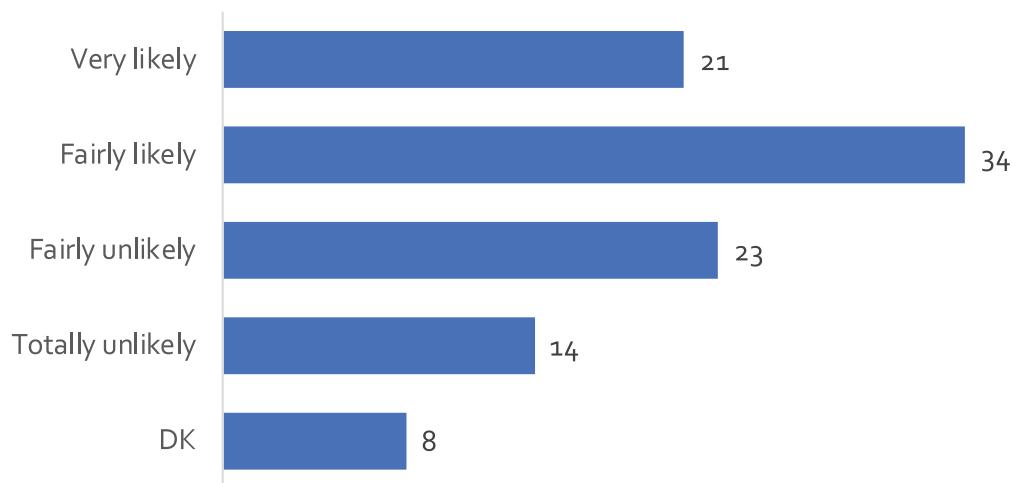
It is the China-Russia relation which was perceived incorrectly by the most respondents. **Two-thirds of respondents perceive Russian military spending to be larger than the Chinese** despite the fact that China spends more than three times more than Russia. The military budget of the US was ranked ahead of Russia's by a clear majority, however there is a significant share of respondents (31%) who think that Russia spends more on the military than the US does. The vast majority perceive the relative positions of the other three country-pairs correctly.

RUSSIA'S READINESS TO CONDUCT TARGETED LIQUIDATIONS WITHIN THE EU

The majority of Hungarians find it possible that Russia commits violent special operations on EU territory. When asked about the possibility of Russian intelligence operatives²² secretly committing targeted liquidations in an EU member state, 55% find it possible to believe (21% very likely and a further 34% fairly likely).

Perceived possibility of Russian spies secretly committing targeted liquidations in an EU member state

Proportion of answer in the total sample, in %



Men tend to find this to be slightly more likely than women. **In terms of party preferences, Fidesz voters are the least likely to see this kind of action possible. However, the 50% share we measured among them is only slightly below-average. Supporters of the Democratic Coalition stand at the opposite end of the spectrum.** Three out of every four of them perceive the hostile acts of Russian intelligence operatives as a possibility.

²² In order to make the question easier to understand for the wider public, the questionnaire used the word 'spy' (*kém* in Hungarian)

Those who support stronger ties with the US only or neither the US nor Russia tend to find liquidations by Russian spies more likely.²³ In contrast, those who prefer stronger ties with both countries or with Russia only are more likely to perceive this as unlikely.

In reality, Russia has a rich record of conducting a wide variety of violent special operations on the territory of EU countries. This shall not be surprising to anyone considering the historical roots of such actions. The Soviet Union already employed targeted killing as an integral part of its political toolbox, described in detail by now declassified Cold War documents.²⁴ Since then, the post-Soviet Russian state has also employed similar methods, first against Chechen leaders in the 2000s.²⁵ The practice was ‘legalized’ by Russia’s counter-terrorism law adopted in 2006 and amended in 2014, openly authorising the armed forces of the Russian Federation to suppress terrorists abroad.²⁶ Even though the premeditated killing of Chechen leaders and warlords did not achieve the desired impact, they nevertheless proved Russia’s ability and willingness to conduct such operations abroad.

Although most emigrant Chechen leaders were eliminated in the Middle East, there was at least one attack in EU territory as well, namely against Umar Israilov in Vienna in 2009. In fact, conducting such actions on the EU territory apparently does not constitute much of a difference for Russia.

The most recent case of this nature is the poisoning of former GRU officers Sergey Skripal and his daughter, Yuliya Skripal in Salisbury, on British territory. Another incident on British territory was Alexander Litvinenko’s murder, a former officer of Russia’s domestic security service, the FSB, in 2006. What made the case of Litvinenko particularly spectacular and important was that the perpetrators used radioactive polonium to carry out the murder and left behind a considerable trail of contamination. One may also mention the kidnapping of Estonian security officer Eston Kohver from Estonian territory on 4 September 2014. Kohver spent slightly more than a year in captivity in Russia. Finally, he was exchanged for an Estonian security officer sentenced 16 years of imprisonment for spying for Russia in late September 2015.²⁷

Regardless of all this evidence, over one-third (37%) of the Hungarian population still thinks that it is fairly or totally unlikely that Russia would conduct targeted liquidation operations on the EU's territory. The fact that there is both long-known and recent information on such cases, like the Litvinenko and Skripal ones, has apparently not been convincing enough for 37% of Hungarians.

23 We also asked respondents whether Hungary should rather have closer relations with Russia or the United States of America. They could choose from all four potential answer options: (1) Hungary should have closer relations with both countries; (2) with the United States of America only; (3) with Russia only and (4) with none of the countries. Our primary purpose with this question was to use it as a background variable for analysis. Therefore, we publish the distribution of the answers in the Appendix and not here.

24 Central Intelligence Agency: *Soviet Use of Assassination and Kidnapping. A 1964 view of KGB Methods. Declassified: September 22, 1993*, available: https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol19no3/html/v19i3a01p_0001.htm Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

25 MOREHOUSE, M. A.: “The Claws of the Bear: Russia’s Targeted Killing Program”, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol .28, 2015, pp. 269-298., available: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13518046.2015.1030231?journalCode=fslv20> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

26 State Duma of the Russian Federation: Federal Law No. 35-FZ of March 6, 2006 “On Counteraction to Terrorism” (amended by the Federal Law No. 505-FZ of December 31, 2014), Article 10, available: <https://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/22066> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

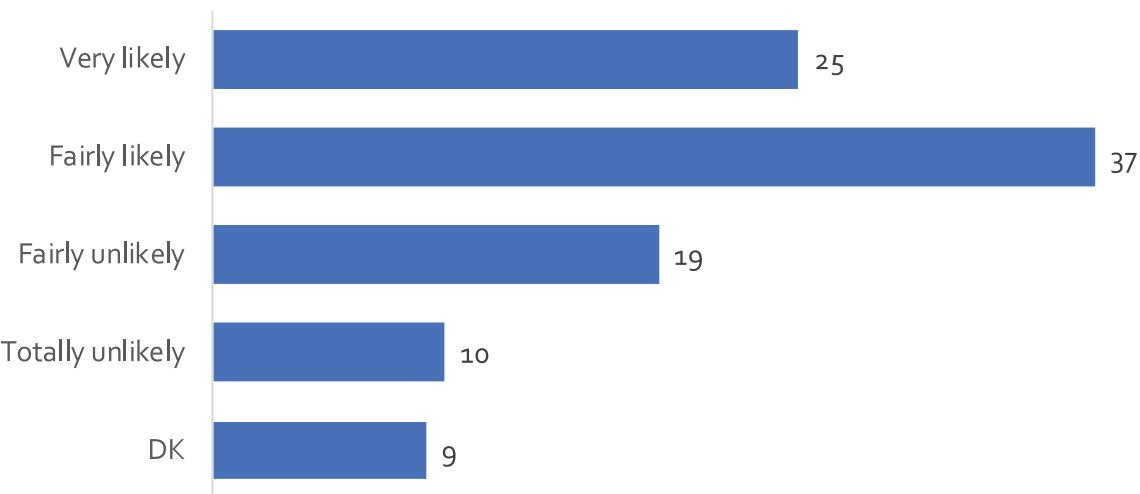
27 “Russia frees Estonian officer in cold war-style spy swap”, *The Guardian*, Sept 27, 2015, available: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/27/russia-frees-estonian-officer-spy-swap> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

SPREADING FAKE NEWS AND DISINFORMATION

Hungarians find it possible that Russia spreads fake news and disinformation on the internet and on Facebook in order to influence European people's views. 62% of respondents say it is very or fairly likely.

The perceived possibility of Russia influencing European people's views to align them with Russian interests through disinformation, fake news spread on the internet and Facebook

Proportion of answer in the total sample, in %



A higher level of education slightly increases the chance of perceiving Russian propaganda on the internet to be possible.²⁸ Those living in Budapest see a higher possibility too. Regarding party preference groups, the results are similar to the patterns in the case of liquidations: **Supporters of the ruling party Fidesz are the least likely to view it as a possibility, while supporters of Democratic Coalition, LMP and Momentum find this to be the most likely.**

Contrary to the opinion of those who find it fairly or completely unlikely that Russia would conduct such information operations, **Russia has a long and rich tradition of trying to change public opinion in the West.** Roots stem back to the pre-Second World War era, when the propaganda machinery of the Soviet Union was created. From then on Moscow used a comprehensive arsenal of *active measures* (активные мероприятия) basically until the Soviet Union's dissolution. Active measures as a term was a collective name for all political warfare actions, ranging from disinformation campaigns and smearing operations to targeted killings.²⁹

Russia has been openly pursuing a more active and more confrontational foreign policy vis-à-vis the West and the European Union since Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency in 2012³⁰ (although this did not come as a complete surprise: the speech delivered by Vladimir Putin in 2007 at the Munich Security conference already projected a way more confrontational approach). This has become a lot more intensive from 2014, following the start of the Ukrainian crisis and especially since the annexation of Crimea.

²⁸ While 67% of those with a university degree consider this kind of operation to be likely, this number is only 62% among those who have finished primary education only.

²⁹ PYNNÖNIEMI, K. – RÁCZ, A. (eds.) *Fog of Falsehood. Russia's Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine. Report No. 45. The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2016, Helsinki*, available: https://storage.googleapis.com/uip-live/2017/01/fiareport45_fogoffalsehood.pdf Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

³⁰ SHERR, James: *Hard Diplomacy and Soft Coercion: Russia's Influence Abroad*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

The policy toolbox Russia is using is rich and comprehensive, and informational warfare and influence operations are integral parts of it. As the Carnegie Moscow Foundation puts it in one of their publications from 2019:

The Kremlin frequently exploits new opportunities in the digital domain to promote narratives conducive to Russian interests and to undermine liberal Western governments. Moscow pushes these narratives via a variety of platforms, including traditional and social media; educational, cultural, and entertainment programs; and cyber-enabled information operations. In countries with Russian-speaking populations, Moscow-backed Russian-language media, including pop culture and entertainment programming, are powerful tools.³¹

Official Russian documents use absolutely clear wording about the tasks of the information arsenal of the Russian state. The founding document of the Rossiya Segodnya state agency, which is operating both the RIA Novosti and the Sputnik news channels, signed in December 2013 states that the main task of the agency is to “shed light on the state policies of the Russian Federation abroad.”³² With other words, the very founding document of RIA and Sputnik state that they are in fact not news channels striving for objective reporting, but parts of the state’s information apparatus. The Russian Military Doctrine adopted in 2014 depicted modern conflicts as warfare simultaneously being waged in the aerospace, land, sea and information space.³³ This wording indicates the crucial importance of information warfare in contemporary Russian military thinking, and so does the separate information security doctrine adopted in December 2016.³⁴

Last, but not least, Russian information pressure forced both the EU and NATO, and several individual member states to take action against this form of hybrid threat. Among others, one may mention the NATO Center for Excellence for Strategic Communication operating in Riga, the EU’s East Stratcom Task Force,³⁵ a separate Centre Against Terrorism and Hybrid Threats set up in the Czech Republic under the Ministry of Interior,³⁶ generous grants and other forms of support given to NGOs researching the threat, and many other measures. **In fact, in the whole Central-European and Baltic region Hungary is the only country where no visible, state-level measures have been taken against the information pressure from Russia despite the fact that even Hungary herself was also targeted a number of times.**³⁷

To sum up, a slightly higher number of Hungarians believe that Russia has been conducting information influence operations than the number of respondents agreeing that Moscow has ordered targeted killings. One of the interviewed experts wryly noted that despite the fact that Hungary is reported to have increasingly cordial relations with Russia, Hungarians still think that the Kremlin is conducting informational operations. As the same expert noted, this might well be because of the everyday information pressure Hungarians are experiencing from their own state media apparatus.

31 Carnegie Endowment Russia: *The Return of Global Russia*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019, available: <https://carnegieendowment.org/publications/interactive/global-russia> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

32 President of Russia: *Ukaz prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii o nekotorykh merakh po povysheniyu effektivnosti deatel’nosti gosudarstvennykh sredstv massovoy informatsii*, December 9, 2013, Point 4a., available: <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d4a95e0e2d01da1117.pdf> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

33 President of Russia: *Voennaya doktrina Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, 2014, Point 15/c, available: <https://rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html>, Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

34 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation: *Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation*, 5 December 2016, available: http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2563163 Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

35 EU vs. Disinfo, available: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

36 Ministerstvo Vnitri České republiky: *Centre Against Terrorism and Hybrid Threats*, available: <https://www.mvcr.cz/cthh/clanek/centre-against-terrorism-and-hybrid-threats.aspx> Retrieved on February 23, 2019.

37 PYNÖNIEMI, K. – RÁCZ, A. (eds.), op. cit., pp.235-236.

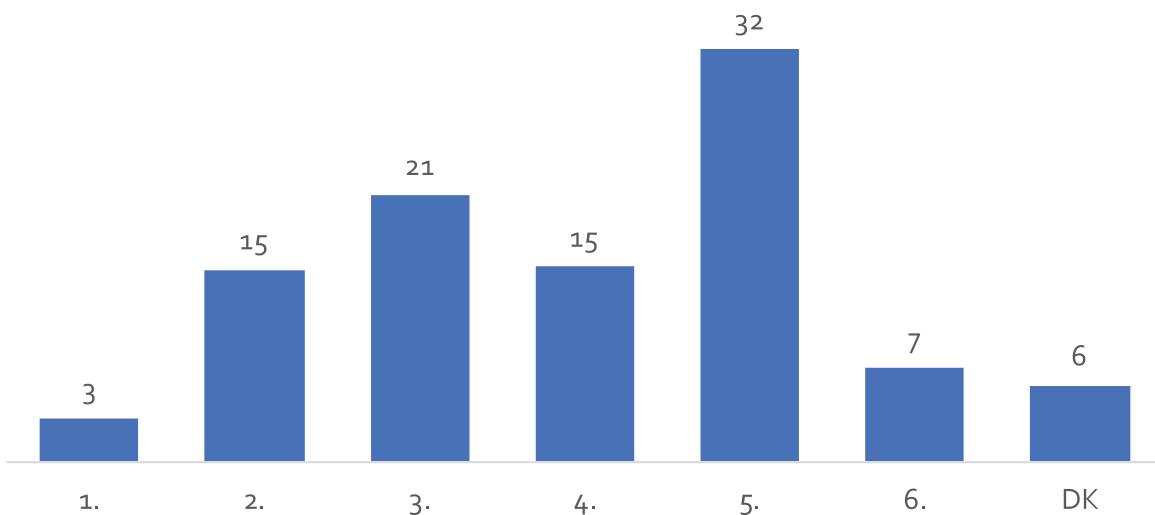
CHAPTER 2: RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC POWER

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

To measure the perceived relative economic strength of Russia, we asked respondents to rank all six countries according to their gross domestic product (GDP).³⁸ Hungarians are quite uncertain about this question, as at least 15% of respondents selected all options from rank 2 to 5 and the most chosen answer (rank 5) got only 32%. What they are quite certain about is that Russia is not the first and not the last among these countries.

Perceived relative rank of Russia according to its GDP

Proportion of answer in the total sample, in %



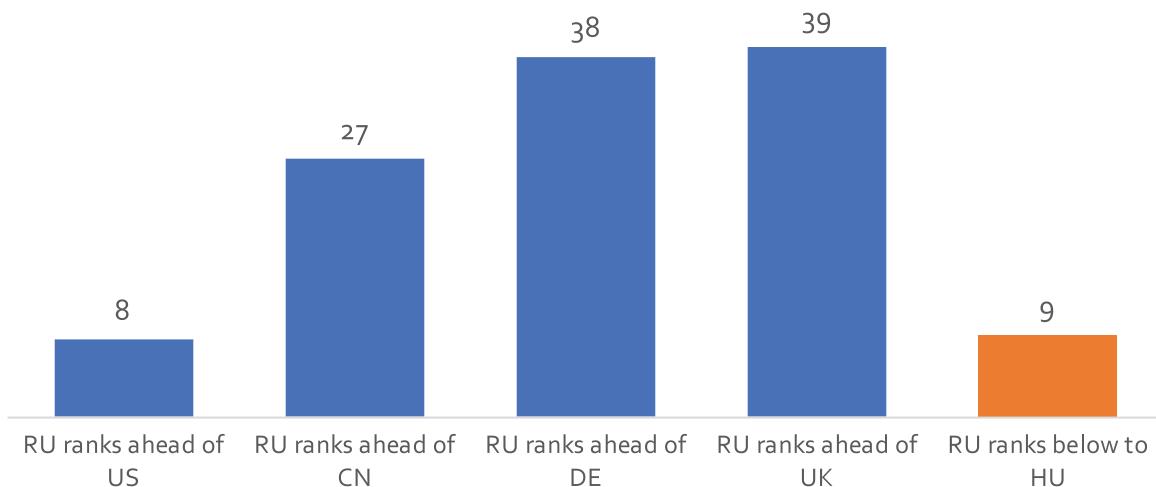
In reality, according to data coming from the October 2018 edition of the World Economic Outlook,³⁹ the United States ranks first, followed by China, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. Russia is 12th, while Hungary is 58th. In our ranking, Russia's position is the fifth, following US, China, Germany and the United Kingdom⁴⁰.

One-third of Hungarians perceive Russia's relative position right, ranking it fifth. However, 54% of respondents rank Russia in the top 4, considering the relative size of the Russian economy to be bigger than it really is. There are no significant differences between the distribution of answers within neither the main socio-demographic groups nor the party preference groups. However, we observed a clear connection to one's geographical orientation. **Those who say that Hungary should only have closer relations with the US tend to rank Russia lower (3.59) while those who prefer Russia to the US rate Russia higher (4.21) in terms of economic strength.** The results might be an indication that the Hungarian ruling party's argument about the need for closer relations with Russia because of the latter's economic might resonates with the public.

³⁸ We could experience a level of uncertainty: options to 2 to 5 received at least 15% and the most chosen answer option (rank 5) got only 32%. But respondents were quite sure that Russia is not the first and not the last among these countries.

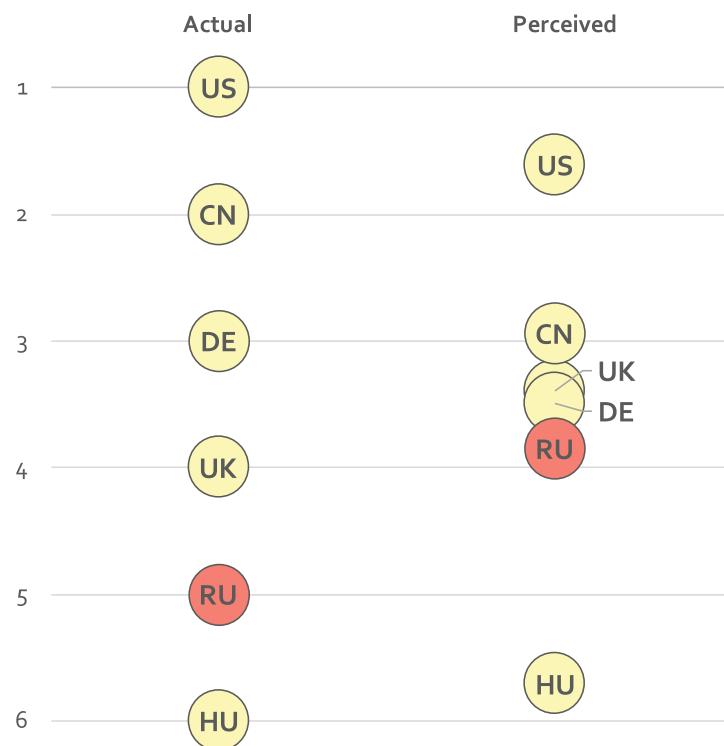
³⁹ In order to compare the overall economic strength of these countries we used IMF's data on gross domestic product (GDP), measured in current prices, in US Dollars. International Monetary Fund: GDP, current prices, 2018 available: <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD?year=2018> Retrieved on December 18, 2018.

⁴⁰ The relative ranking of our countries in focus has not been changed since 2007. So, the positions are quite stable. This is an important factor when evaluating the responses.

Over- and underestimation of Russia's GDP in country comparisons*Proportion of incorrect answers in the total sample, in %. Underestimation in yellow.*

We also paired Russia with all other countries to see if respondents ranked Russia ahead of or below the given country. There is a clear agreement that the economy of the US is larger, while the economy of Hungary is smaller than that of Russia. 84-86 per cent picked the right order. Regarding the China-Russia comparison, 27% perceive that the Russian economy is bigger – wrongly. When it comes to Germany and the United Kingdom, the overestimation is even more visible. **A large proportion of Actual and perceived relative rankings of countries, according to their GDP economy is bigger than the German or the British – 38% and 39%, respectively.**

When looking for the reasons why more than half of Hungarians overestimate the economic power of Russia, two of our interviewed experts noted that this exaggeration is probably due to the fact that **Russia is mentioned so often in the news in connection with military operations, military technological advancements and as a crucial energy supplier that for the society it is simply hard to comprehend that at the same time Russia is very far from being an economic great power.**

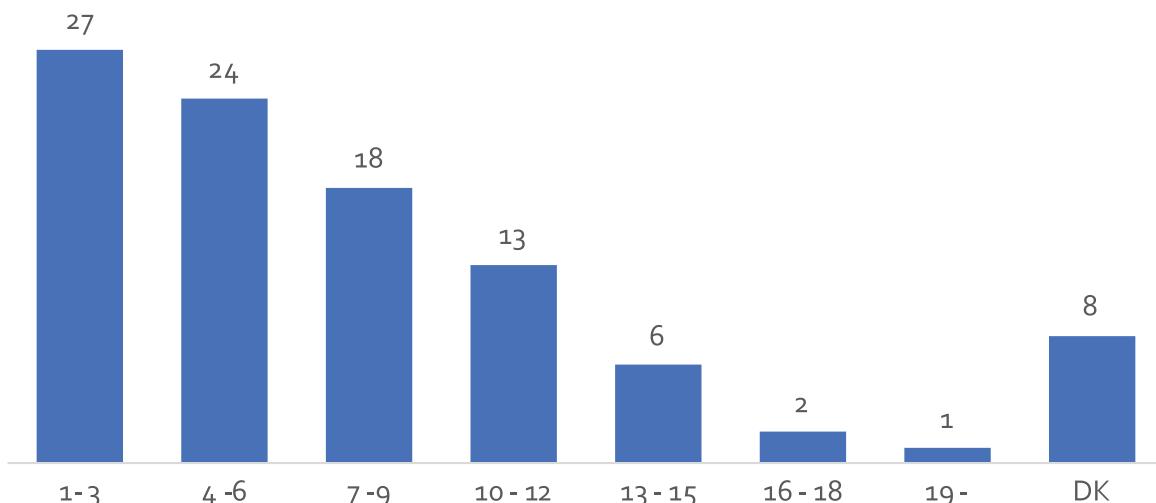


RUSSIA'S IMPORTANCE IN HUNGARY'S FOREIGN TRADE

We asked respondents to evaluate the importance of Russia as a foreign trade partner of Hungary. More precisely, they had to estimate the rank of Russia among Hungary's exports partners.⁴¹ **Most Hungarians think that Russia is a quite significant export partner of Hungary. Half of the respondents rank Russia in the top six, and a further 31% estimates its rank to be between place 7 and 12.**

Perceived rank of Russia among Hungary's export partners

Proportion of answers in the total sample, in %



In reality, Russia is only the 17th largest export partner of Hungary according to the Central Statistical Office of Hungary (KSH). The volume of Hungarian exports to Russia was HUF 530,777 million in 2017. In the two years before, Russia was ranked 16th. Before the implementation of the sanctions and countersanctions, Russia's relative position as an export partner was better, but still not close to the estimation of the population (13th place in 2013).

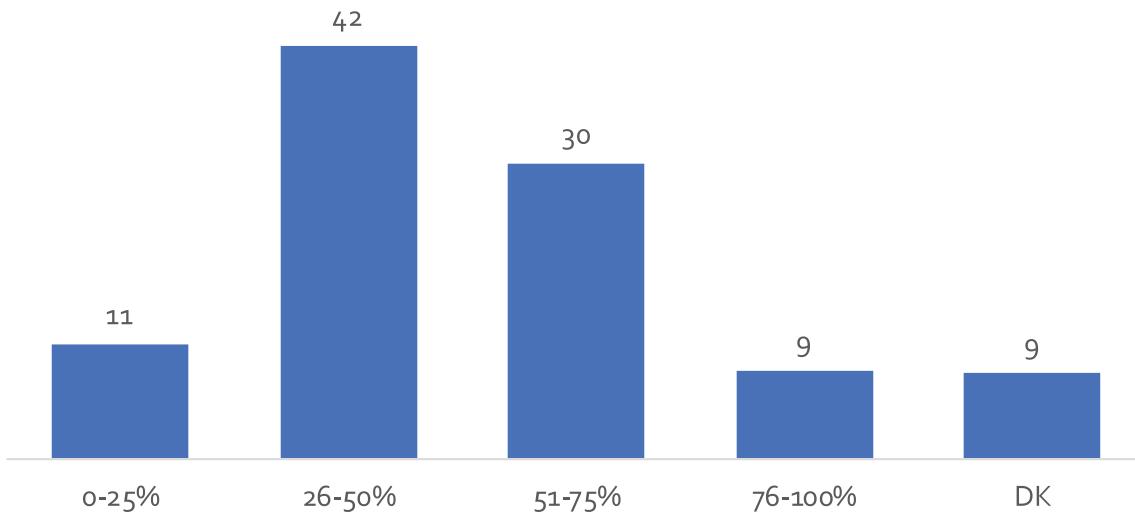
In short: Hungarians highly overestimate Russia's importance as Hungary's export partner. According to the assessment of our interviewed experts, **the continuous governmental narrative on the alleged success of Hungary's eastern trade policy obviously played a role.** An interviewed journalist with decades-long experience on reporting about Russia added that history also has a role to play here: **memories of Soviet times when the Soviet Union was a highly important export market for Hungary most probably still influence the opinions of older generations.**

PERCEIVED DEPENDENCE OF THE EU ON RUSSIAN NATURAL GAS

Gas dependency has been a very sensitive issue not just in Eastern Europe but in the EU as well. From time to time, Russia uses its gas exports as a foreign policy tool. Therefore, decreasing gas dependency has been on the agenda for several years, and especially since the gas shortage of 2008. We asked respondents to estimate what percentage of natural gas imported to the EU from a third country comes from Russia.

Hungarians are quite aware of Europe's gas dependence on Russia. 9% of the respondents thought that 75% of the gas used in the EU comes from Russia and a further 30% estimated this proportion to be between 51% and 75%. Only 11% of the respondents think that it less than 25%.

⁴¹ The reason why we did not survey external trade as a whole and focused solely on exports is that in the Hungarian official government narrative improving Hungary's export potential is of paramount importance, it is of primary importance at least since 2014 (See, for example: "Szíjjártó: A kormány külügazdaság-orientált külpolitikát folytat", *Magyar Nemzet*, May 11, 2015, available: <https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/gazdasag-archivum/szijjarto-a-kormany-kulgazdasag-orientalt-kulpolitikat-folytat-4038583/> Retrieved on February 20, 2019) Hence, it was reasonable to contrast the public opinion with the reality on exports specifically.

Perceived dependence of the EU on Russian gas*Proportion of answers in the total sample, in %*

In reality, **according to Eurostat, the EU still relies heavily on energy imports from non-EU countries, which provided slightly more than half of all energy consumed in 2016**. The main supplier of energy to the EU in 2016 continued to be Russia, which supplied 40.2 % of gas imports⁴². The relative majority of respondents' estimates were correct, saying that 26-50% of European gas consumption comes from Russia. Those who gave wrong answers were more likely to overestimate Europe's dependence than to underestimate it.

Regarding party preference groups, **voters of Jobbik tend to overestimate Europe's gas dependence on Russia the most**. 54% of them believe this rate is above 50%. Supporters of the Democratic Coalition and MSZP stand at the other end of the spectrum with 24% and 27%, respectively. **Those who prefer having stronger ties with Russia tend to overestimate the EU's natural gas dependence.**

⁴² European Commission: *Smarter, greener, more inclusive? Indicators to support the Europe 2020 Strategy*, 2018, available: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/9087772/KS-02-18-728-EN-N.pdf/3f01e3c4-1c01-4036-bd6a-814dec66c58c>. Retrieved on January 9, 2019.

CHAPTER 3: RUSSIA AS A COUNTRY

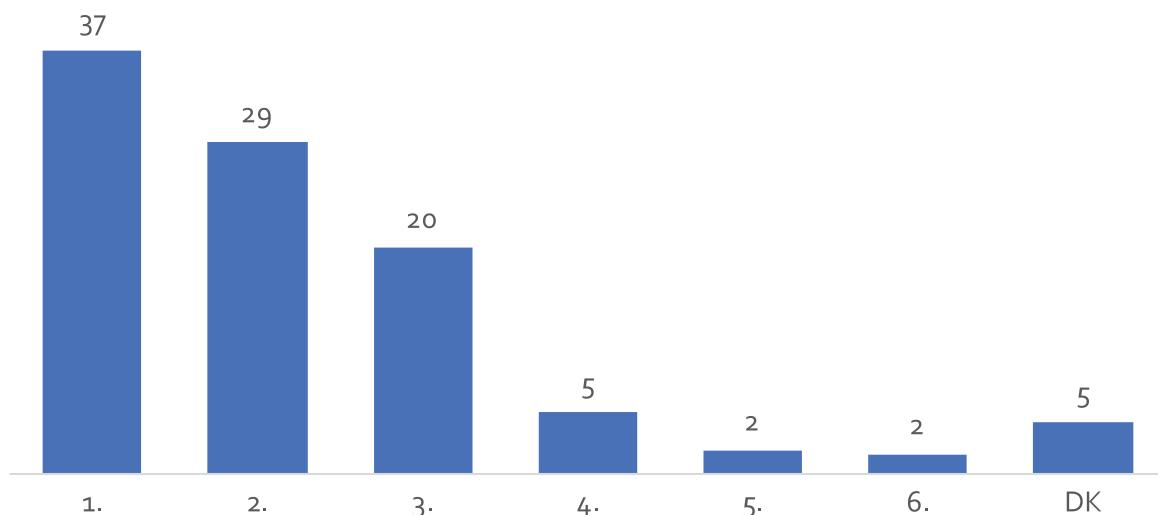
The third part of the research focused on Hungarians' assessment of Russia's territory, population and life expectancy in the country in comparison with the United States, China, Germany, Hungary and the United Kingdom.

TERRITORY

We asked respondents to rank the six countries according to their territory. Regarding Russia, most of the answers rank the country between first and third place. The relative majority, 37% perceive Russia as the largest country. Smaller groups – although still significant in size – estimate Russia's relative rank to be 2nd or 3rd, 29% and 20%, respectively. Overall, it seems that Hungarians are rather unsure about the order of the 'big three', i.e. of China, Russia and the US.

Perceived relative rank of Russia according to its area

Proportion of answers in the total sample, in %



In fact - according to CIA's World Factbook,⁴³ **Russia has the largest area on Earth, slightly above 17 million km²**. The US is 4th after the condominium Antarctica and Canada with 9.8 million km². China has a territory of 9.6 million km² (5th), Germany 357,000 (64th), the UK 244,000 (81st) and Hungary 93,000 (111th).

37% of respondents answered correctly and marked Russia as the largest. Those living in Budapest are slightly less accurate compared to those who live in the countryside.

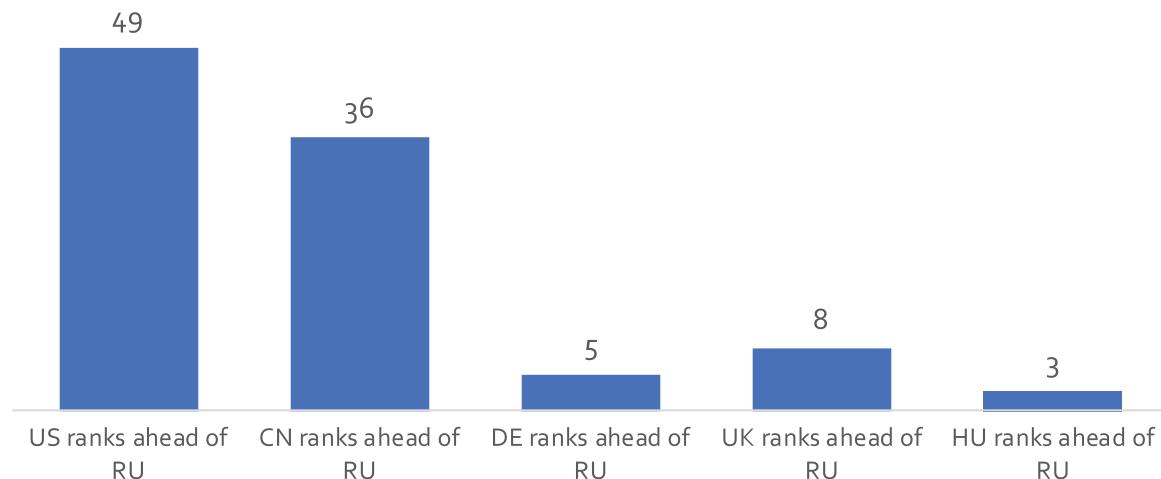
When it comes to country comparisons, the relative size of the territories of Russia and the US are the toughest to judge. Nearly as many people think the US is bigger (49%) as who believe Russia is larger (47%). There is an uncertainty surrounding China as well, albeit to a much lesser extent. Nevertheless, 36% think that China's area is larger than Russia's. Regarding the remaining three countries, respondents were really sure that they are smaller than Russia, about 90% picked the right order.

The data above also indicates that while the decisive majority of respondents tend to overestimate the territory of the United States or China in comparison to Russia, 16% of the respondents have only a very vague understanding of basic geography. This applies particularly to those claiming that Hungary's territory is bigger than that of the Russian Federation.

⁴³ Link to source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/279rank.html>. Retrieved on January 3, 2019.

Underestimation of Russia's relative area in country comparisons

Proportion of incorrect answers in the total sample, in %

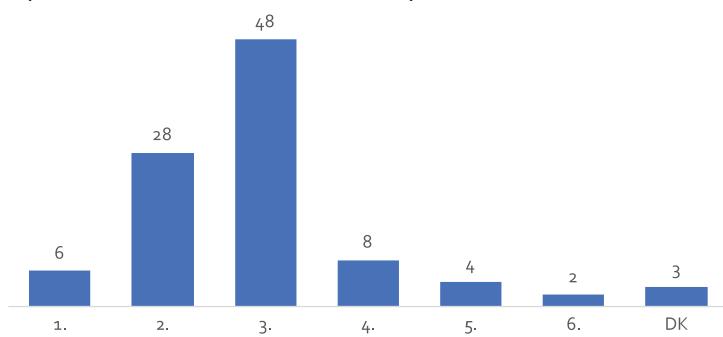


POPULATION

There is a Hungarian proverb “There are as many of them as Russians,” which is often used when we wish to emphasize the extremely large size of a given group of people.⁴⁴ This suggests that Hungarians tend to overestimate the population of Russia. In order to test this hypothesis, we applied two techniques: we asked respondents to (1) rank the countries according to their population, (2) to estimate the number of people living in Russia.

Perceived relative rank of Russia according to its population

Proportion of answer in the total sample, in %



Regarding the relative population, almost half of our respondents rank Russia in third. 28% perceived it as the second most populous, while a further 6% think that Russia has the largest population. Ranks 4 to 6 was mentioned by 14% of Hungarians.

For the actual ranking of the selected countries we used IMF's data on population⁴⁵. In 2017, the Chinese population was the highest with 1.390 million people. The US came in third place after India with 326 million. Russia was ranked 10th with 144 million. Germany had 83 million inhabitants (18th), the UK 66 million (22nd) and Hungary 10 million (90th). The relative positions of these countries have not changed for decades.

We can conclude that almost half of Hungarians rank Russian correctly in terms of its population. At the same time, those who answer incorrectly are more likely to overestimate the population of Russia.

Regarding the country-pair comparisons with Russia, only the US versus Russia question is a real challenge for Hungarians. **Three out of every ten respondents perceive Russian population as bigger than that of the US.** For all other countries, well over 80% was right about the relative population size.

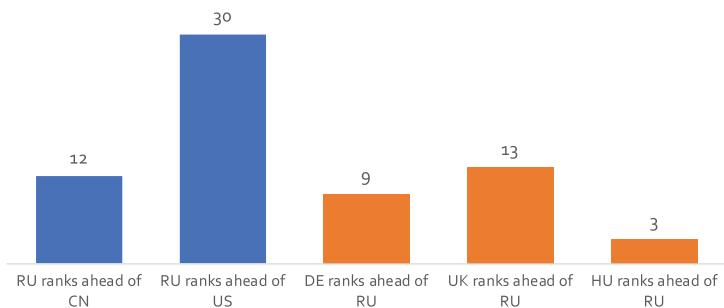
Besides ranking the countries, respondents gave an explicit estimate of the population of China, Russia and the US. The following table shows both the median and the mean of estimations and the actual value as well.

⁴⁴ Link to source: <http://mek.oszk.hu/00200/00242/00242.htm>. Retrieved on 19 February, 2019.

⁴⁵ Link to source: <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/LP@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD?year=2017>. Retrieved on January 3, 2019.

As we observed several outliers (extremely large values), we prefer using the median instead of the mean. It has to be highlighted that the proportion of respondents not answering these questions was very high in all cases, 42%-43%.

Overall, three conclusions can be drawn:
(1) Hungarians are very uncertain when it comes to estimating a population's size; (2) **they tend to underestimate the population of China and the US and (3) they are more likely to overestimate the population of Russia.**



Main metrics of populations estimates (in thousands)

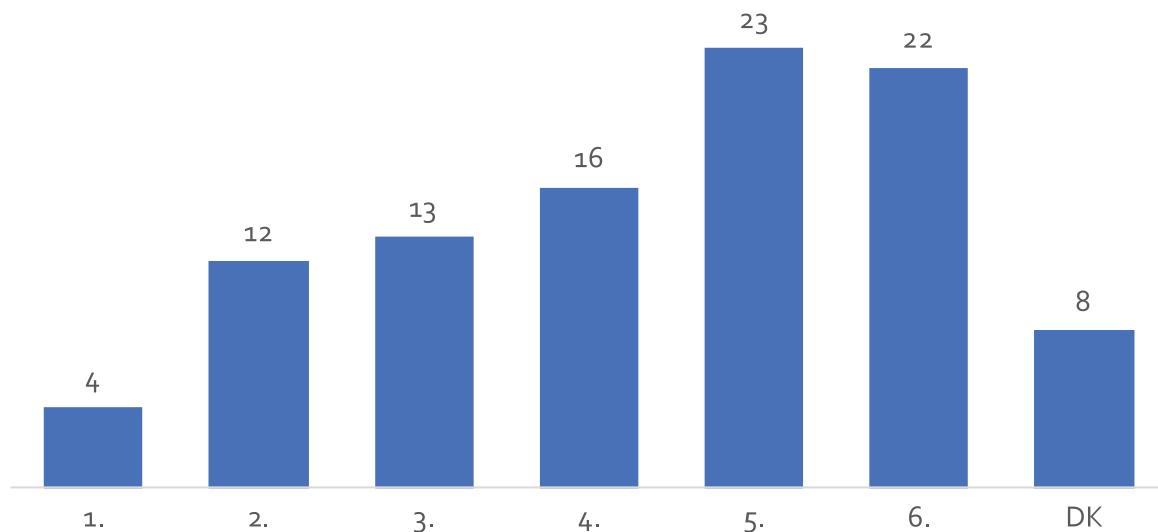
Country	Median of estimates	Mean of estimates	Actual value
China	1,000	1,028	1,390
Russia	200	284	144
US	300	340	326

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Estimating life expectancy rankings turned out to be a very difficult task for Hungarians. Regarding Russia's rating, five out of the six possible answers were selected by at least 12% of the respondents. The distribution of answers is slightly skewed to the left. 45% ranked Russia in the bottom two. In contrast, 29% perceive the average life expectancy of Russians as one of the top three.

Perceived relative rank of Russia according to life expectancy

Proportion of answer in the total sample, in %



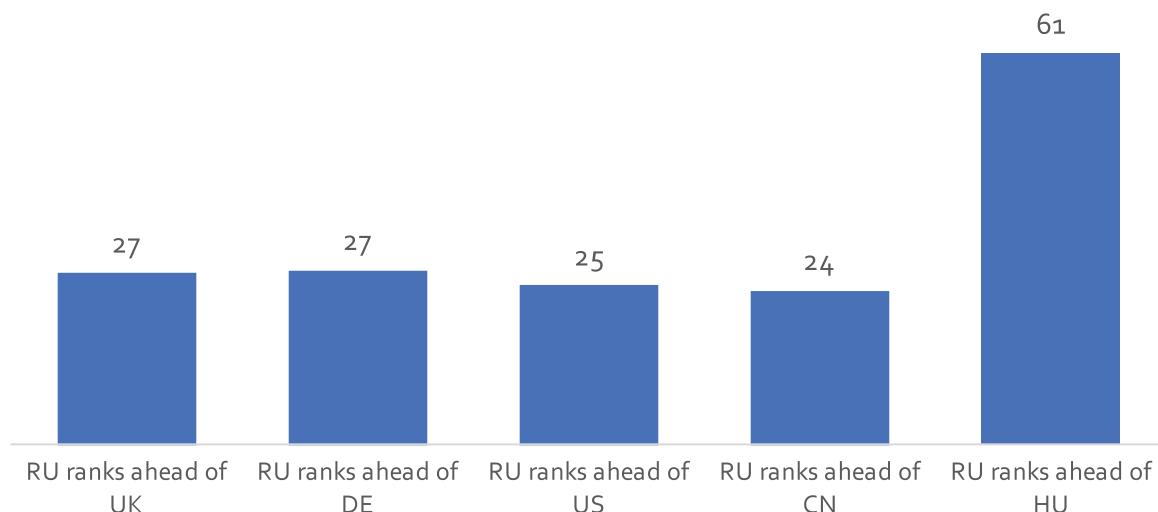
In reality - according to data by World Health Organization,⁴⁶ life expectancy at birth in 2016 was the highest in Japan with 84.2 years. Among the countries studied, the United Kingdom takes the lead at 21st place globally with 81.4 years. Germany follows with 81.0 years (26th), then comes the US (78.5 years, 34th), China (76.4, 50th), Hungary (76.0, 58th) and finally Russia (71.9, 103rd). The relative positions of the last four countries have not changed since 2000. Only the top two changed places in 2008; Germany had been ahead of the UK earlier, but since 2009 life expectancy is higher among people living in the UK.

We can conclude that although the relative majority estimate Russia's position rather correctly (5th or 6th place among the examined nations), 29% overestimate life expectancy in Russia by far – they miss by at least three positions. Those who prefer Hungary to have closer relations with Russia only are the most likely to belong to the latter group. 41% of these respondents rank Russia in the top 3. Those who think we should have closer relations with the US only are the least likely to overestimate life expectancy in Russia. Within this subgroup, the same proportion is only 28%.

Regarding country-pair comparisons, quite similar patterns emerged. Around one-fourth of respondents think falsely that the life expectancy in Russia is better than in China, Germany, the United Kingdom or the US. It is interesting, albeit unsurprising, that the absolute majority sees the Hungarian life expectancy as worse than in Russia. Only 30% picked the right relative position.

Overestimation of average life expectancy of Russians in country comparisons

Proportion of incorrect answers in the total sample, in %



⁴⁶ Source of data: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.688?lang=en>. Retrieved on January 4, 2019.

CONCLUSIONS

The research demonstrated that a vast majority of the Hungarian population tends to overestimate Russia's military potential and particularly its economic power compared either to facts or to the performance of the other countries, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary and China. Meanwhile, In contrast, the majority of respondents generally assessed Russia correctly in terms of geographical and human security.

Approximately two-thirds of Hungarians somewhat overestimated Russia's military budget. Meanwhile, the majority, 55% believed at least partially that Russia conducts targeted killings abroad. Slightly more people, 62% of all respondents believed fully or partially that Russia conducts information operations in order to influence the European public.

When it comes to economic potential, only one-third of respondents perceived Russia's relative position correctly. Meanwhile, a substantial share of the population, 39% assessed the size of the Russian economy to be much bigger than it actually is. Differences are even more spectacular when Hungarians are asked about Russia's share in Hungarian exports. Half of the respondents rank Russia in the top six among Hungary's export partners and a further 31% estimates its rank to be between place 7 and 12, while in reality it was in 17th position according to data from 2017.

In terms of Russia's territory and population, the majority of Hungarians generally have realistic views. Regarding territory, the relative majority (37%) of respondents rightly assessed that Russia is the largest of the countries compared and another 29% missed by only one place. Almost a half of Hungarians assessed Russia's population correctly, while the ones who were wrong generally overestimated it to various extents. Meanwhile, estimating average life expectancy in the country turned out to be a highly challenging task for most of the respondents. While the relative majority assessed Russia rather correctly, 29% overestimate the life expectancy of the Russian population considerably, missing by at least three places on the relative rankings.

The project also revealed that there is a minority that massively overestimates Russia in nearly all aspects, albeit they still constitute a significant part of the Hungarian population. Domestic party preference and geopolitical orientation were the most important factors behind overestimation. **Those preferring Hungary to have closer relations with Russia are a lot more likely to overestimate Russia's potential.** In certain issues (such as economic power), supporters of Fidesz tend to overestimate Russia to a higher degree than voters of the other parties. However, in other issues (such as military power), the supporters of some opposition parties are more likely to overestimate Russia's potential. **We can conclude that overestimation is prevalent among voters of Fidesz and opposition parties alike, but in different ways.**

Russia's information policy aimed at depicting the country as more powerful than it really is is highly successful in Hungary, as the Hungarian population indeed overestimates the country's military and economic potential. Hence, the question of to what extent this overestimation is a result of Russia's own narratives and of those in the Hungarian information space about Russia arises. Despite the fact that studying the exact reasons behind this phenomenon was not in the focus of the present study, most interviewed experts pointed out the nature of the Hungarian news environment as the core cause of its prevalence. **According to an interviewed veteran journalist dealing with Russian affairs, somewhat paradoxically both pro-government and independent news contribute to this overestimating effect, albeit from different angles.** While in the government-influenced media there are hardly any critical remarks on Russia and there are regular reports on the successes of bilateral Russia-Hungary relations, the remaining independent media channels frequently give room to articles about Russia's information operations, the war in Ukraine, human rights violations in Syria, interference in various elections and many other Russia-critical topics. Nevertheless, the effect is the same: the average reader gets the impression that Russia is a competent, highly important – and often dangerous – player in international relations.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, one needs to keep in mind that the present research records the situation only in one particular point in time, in the social, economic, political and informational circumstances of the given moment. In order to draw more substantial conclusions on relevant trends and how the opinion and knowledge of the Hungarian public on Russia changes, the research would need to be repeated, preferably regularly. In addition to all these, the methodology behind the present research; i.e., conducting a reality check on public opinion on Russia might indeed be relevant for other countries as well.

But one thing is sure: while a certain level of alarmism is definitely welcome about Russia, the flipside of this phenomenon can be a vast overestimation of Russia's economic and military potential - the biggest sharp power success of Russia so far. In the context of an information warfare, this false perception is definitely an asset that Russia can exploit. While the Kremlin is not successful in painting Russia as a likeable country, it is indeed successful in painting Russia as stronger, bigger, and more powerful than it really is.

APPENDIX

This Appendix presents the distribution of answers in the total sample, in per cent. Due to rounding the numbers may not add up to 100. The Total column/row shows always 100 as it is based on unrounded numbers. The original questionnaire in Hungarian is available from here⁴⁷.

Now I am asking you to rank countries according to some economic, social and military indicators. We are asking about indicators people do not come across in their daily lives. Thus, it is not a problem if you do not know these values. Please think about what how these countries stand compared to each other. Award a value between 1 to 6 to all countries, where 1 is the highest ranked nation and 6 is the lowest ranked one.

First, please rank these countries according to their gross domestic product, the GDP; i.e., which country's economy is the largest and which one's is the smallest?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	DK	Total
RU	3	15	21	15	32	7	6	100
CN	18	22	18	20	12	3	6	100
DE	7	16	22	23	21	3	6	100
HU	0	1	1	4	8	79	6	100
UK	7	16	24	27	19	1	7	100
US	58	23	10	3	1	1	5	100

Now, please rank the same countries according to their population; i.e., which one has the most and which one has the least inhabitants.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	DK	Total
RU	6	28	48	8	4	2	3	100
CN	72	14	6	3	2	0	3	100
DE	1	2	5	47	38	4	4	100
HU	1	0	1	1	5	88	4	100
UK	1	4	10	35	45	2	4	100
US	16	50	27	2	1	1	3	100

Now, please rank the countries according to their territory; meaning which has the largest and which one has the smallest territory.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	DK	Total
RU	37	29	20	5	2	2	5	100
CN	21	26	37	7	4	0	5	100
DE	1	1	5	43	41	4	5	100
HU	0	0	1	1	6	86	5	100
UK	2	4	9	37	41	3	5	100
US	34	36	23	2	0	0	4	100

⁴⁷ http://www.politicalcapital.hu/pc-admin/source/documents/demystification_of_russia_questionnaire_hun.pdf

APPENDIX

Please, now rank the countries according to the average life expectancy in them; i.e., where do you think the average life expectancy of people is the highest and the lowest.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	DK	Total
RU	4	12	13	16	23	22	8	100
CN	27	9	13	19	16	7	8	100
DE	16	21	21	16	14	5	8	100
HU	2	2	5	15	22	46	7	100
UK	18	26	20	15	12	2	8	100
US	24	21	20	13	5	8	7	100

Now, please rank the countries according to their military spending. Which do you think spends the most on its military and which one spends the least?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	DK	Total
RU	25	43	17	5	2	2	6	100
CN	10	17	35	13	16	2	7	100
DE	2	4	16	30	35	6	7	100
HU	1	0	1	4	8	79	8	100
UK	2	5	14	39	30	3	8	100
US	54	25	12	2	1	0	6	100

How important do you think Russia is to Hungary as a foreign trade partner? I.e., where does Russia rank according to our exports to the country?

	%
In the top 3	27
between 4-6	24
between 7-9	18
between 10-12	13
between 13-15	6
between 16-18	2
higher than 18	1
DK	8
Total	100

How dependent do you think the EU is on natural gas imported from Russia? I.e., what percentage of natural gas imported to the EU from a third country comes from Russia?

	%
0-25%	11
26-50%	42
51-75%	30
76-100%	9
DK	9
Total	100

APPENDIX

Hungarians have differing views on whether the country should rather have closer relations with Russia or the United States of America. Please, tell me what do you think about this.

	%
Hungary should only have closer relations with the United States of America, and not Russia.	10
Hungary should only have closer relations with Russia, and not the United States of America.	14
Hungary should have closer relations with both.	54
Hungary should not have closer relations with either.	16
DK	6
Total	100

In the following, I will list some military acts. Please tell me about each of them how likely you think it is that Russia commits them within EU territory.

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Fairly unlikely	Totally unlikely	DK	Total
Russian spies secretly commit targeted liquidations in an EU member state.	21	34	23	14	8	100
They influence European people's views to align them with Russian interests through disinformation, fake news spread on the internet and Facebook.	25	37	19	10	9	100