



GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



YOUTH VALUES
AND POLITICAL
ACTIVISM
IN GEORGIA

2021



GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies
Sh. Chitadze str. 3a
Tbilisi, Georgia



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YOUTH VALUES AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN GEORGIA

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Ekaterine Metreveli, GFSIS, Ketevan Emukhvari, GFSIS

AUTHORS

Tamar Khoshtaria (CRRC)
Nino Zubashvili (CRRC)
Ekaterine Metreveli (GFSIS)
Ketevan Emukhvari (GFSIS)

EDITING & PROOFREADING

Taylor Braun-Dorrell

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Nato Nozadze

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Abbreviations

CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Center - Georgia
EU	European Union
GFSIS	Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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1. Introduction

The Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020 - 2030¹, in line with the National Youth Policy Document of Georgia², recognizes youth's potential in contributing to the country's sustainable, democratic, and socio-economic development. To realize this potential, the Youth Policy Concept lays out strategic priorities for the state to respond to the challenges facing young people and to create the necessary conditions for the realization of their potential and active participation in all spheres of public life. Despite the progress made, according to the document, young people still face numerous challenges related to education, employment, access to resources, public and political participation and other issues. Considering these challenges, it is important to better understand young people's experiences and their attitudes towards public life, as well as how these issues relate to the country's development.

The study of youth values and their political participation in Georgia was initiated by the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS) and carried out by CRRC-Georgia using quantitative and qualitative methods. The study examines youth participation in political processes, as well as their perceptions and attitudes towards the following issues:

- ✓ Political participation and activism;
- ✓ Current situation within the country;
- ✓ Religious institutions;
- ✓ Foreign policy of the country;
- ✓ Challenges related to the conflicts/occupied regions;
- ✓ Values of Georgian society;
- ✓ Similarities and differences between Georgia, Europe, and other countries;
- ✓ The South Caucasus region;
- ✓ Political ideologies;
- ✓ Identity.

The study was carried out in July and August 2021. The survey is representative of the Georgian young adult (aged 18-29) population, excluding the occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Overall, more than 1,500 respondents were interviewed. The average margin of error is 1.5%. The qualitative component of the study included 17 focus group discussions that were carried out with the participation of young adults living in different cities and/or settlements.

This document presents the results of quantitative and qualitative data collection. The next section of the document describes the research methodology, followed by the findings of the study, which are divided into quantitative and qualitative parts. The report ends with a summary of the main findings of the study.

1. Parliament of Georgia. (2020). On Approval of the "Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020 - 2030", available at http://old.parliament.ge/ge/ajax/downloadFile/142491/National_Youth_Concept_ENG.pdf

2. Government of Georgia. (2014). National Youth Policy Document of Georgia. available at https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Georgia_2014_National_Youth_Policy.pdf



2. Methodology

To address the above-described research topics, CRRC-Georgia carried out a study using quantitative and qualitative methods. A quantitative study was conducted using telephone interviewing between July 23rd and August 18th, 2021. Simple random sampling was used with a random digit dialing method. The interviews were conducted in Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Russian languages.

The quantitative component included interviews with 1,539 respondents. The data is representative of the young adult population of Georgia, aged 18 to 29, excluding the youth residing in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The survey is also representative of the population aged 18-29 of the capital, other urban areas, and rural settlements. The average margin of error of the survey is 1.5%. The data presented in the report are weighted and analyzed by the settlement types (capital, urban, rural) and sex. Frequency tables and cross-tabulations that are not given in the main text are presented in Annex 1.

The qualitative component of the study included 17 focus group discussions that were carried out between August 9-20, 2021. Focus group participants were from the following locations in Georgia:

1. Tbilisi
2. Telavi (urban)
3. Kakheti (rural)
4. Shida Kartli (rural)
5. Kvemo Kartli (Ethnic Azerbaijani youth from urban settlements)
6. Kvemo Kartli (Ethnic Azerbaijani youth from rural settlements)
7. Kutaisi (urban)
8. Imereti (rural)
9. Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ethnic Armenian youth from urban settlements)
10. Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ethnic Armenian youth from rural settlements)
11. Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ethnic Georgian youth from urban settlements)
12. Batumi (urban)
13. Adjara (rural)
14. Zugdidi (urban)
15. Samegrelo (rural)
16. Svaneti (rural)
17. Racha (rural)

Focus groups were conducted using the Zoom video conferencing system. The duration of each focus group was approximately an hour and a half. Focus group recordings were transcribed to analyze the qualitative data. A summary table of focus group participants is provided in Annex 2.



3. Findings of the Study

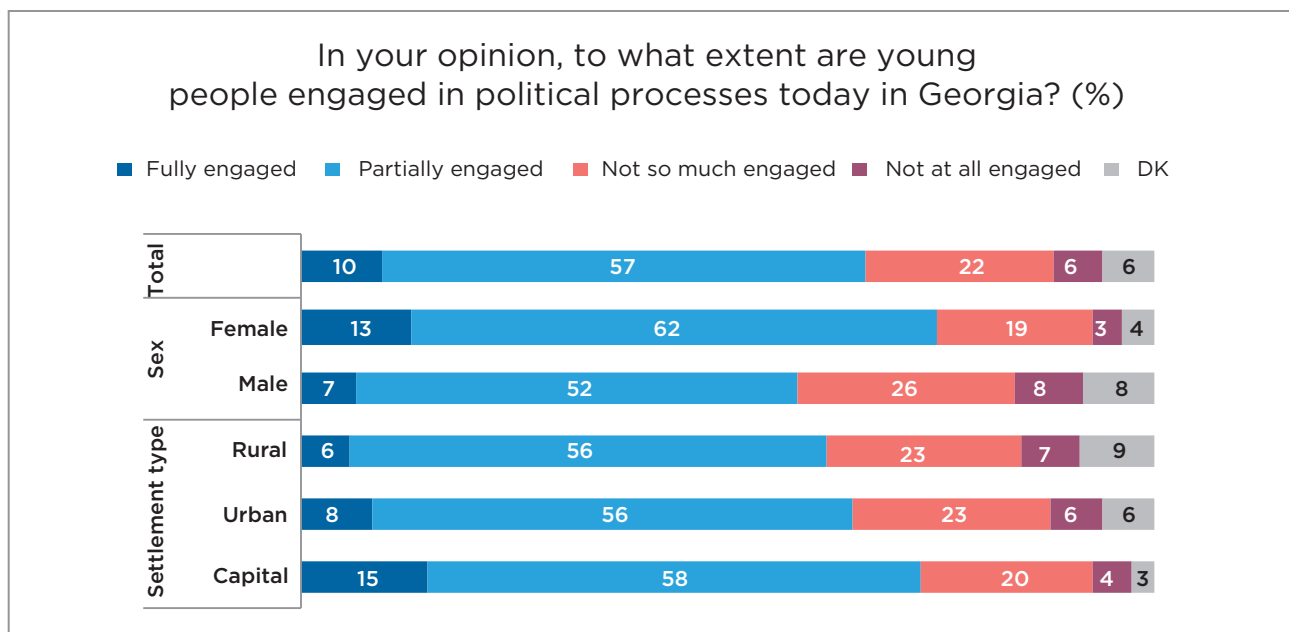
3.1. Quantitative Component

3.1.1 Youth political activism and values

Quantitative survey data shows that Georgia’s young adult population (aged 18 to 29) find their peers to be fully (10%) or partially (57%) engaged in the political processes of the country. A relatively small share of young people think that their peers are not at all (6%) or not so much engaged (22%) in politics.

Differences are found across sex and settlement types. Young women report their peers to be engaged in political processes more frequently compared to young men. Young people living in the capital report their peers to be engaged in political processes more frequently compared to young people living in other urban or rural areas (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Youth engagement in the political processes of the country.

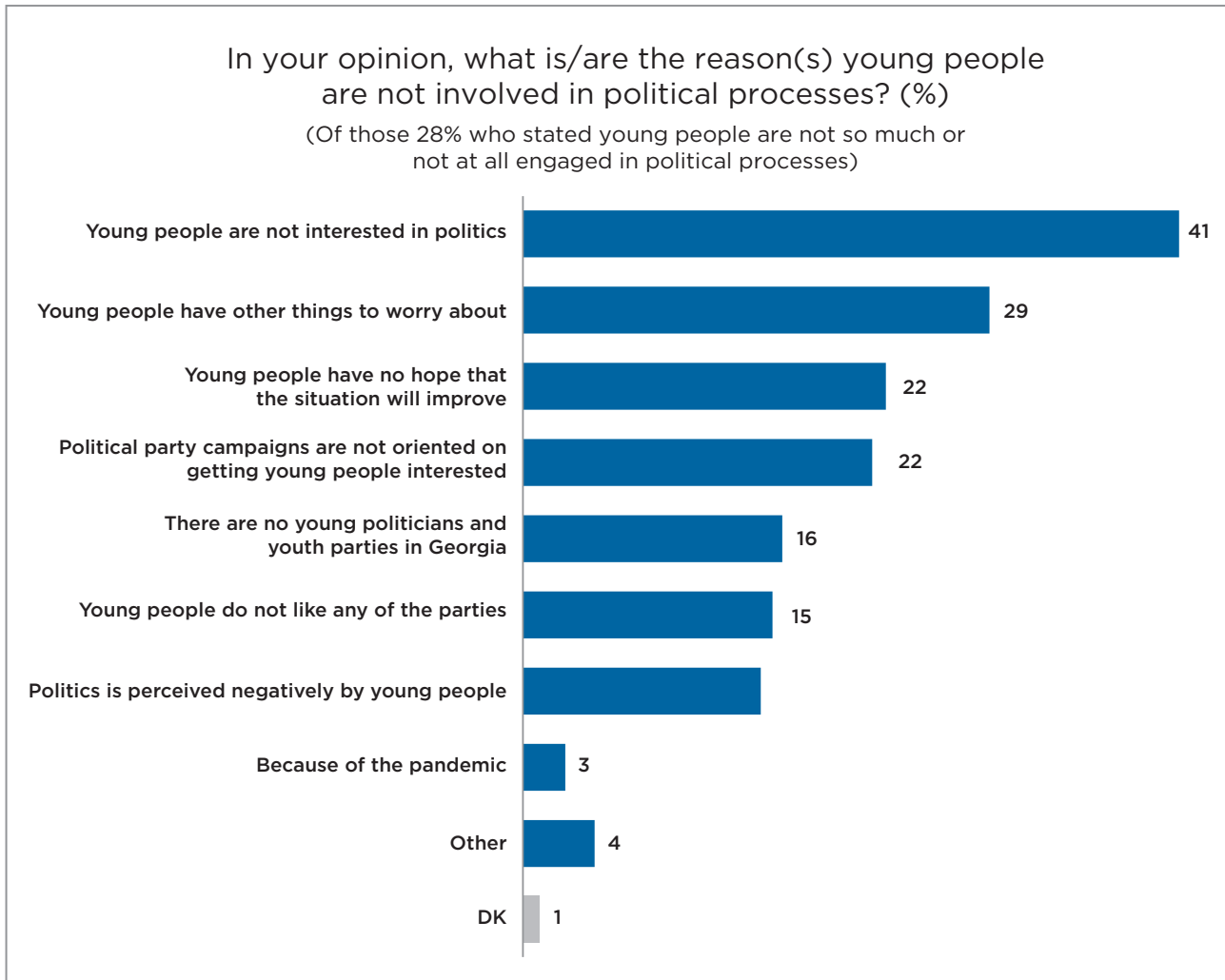


Those young people who report their peers to be not so much or not at all engaged in political processes (28% in total), name several arguments explaining their opinion: 41% state that young people are not interested in politics, while 29% state that young people have other things to worry about like their studies, work, etc. This latter is more frequently reported outside the capital in other urban and rural settlements (Table 2). 22% state that young people have no hope that the situation in the country will improve. Another 22% believe that political party campaigns are not oriented toward getting young people interested. This view was more frequently reported in the capital (28%) and rural settlements (23%), compared to urban areas (13%). 16% report that there are neither young politicians, nor youth political parties in Georgia, which explains young people’s passive engagement in the political processes. This latter is most frequently reported by the young people living in the capital (Table 2).

In addition to the abovementioned reasons, those young people reporting their peers to be not so much or not at all engaged in political processes state that young people do not like any of

the political parties (15%). Another 15% reported that politics is perceived negatively by the young people (e.g. “politics is a dirty business”, “only people not succeeding in other fields do politics”, “politics is unsuitable for a normal person”, etc.). This latter is most frequently reported in the capital, with almost a quarter of young people choosing this reason. Finally, 3% of young people explain their peers’ passive involvement in political processes with the pandemic (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Reasons young people are not involvement in political processes.

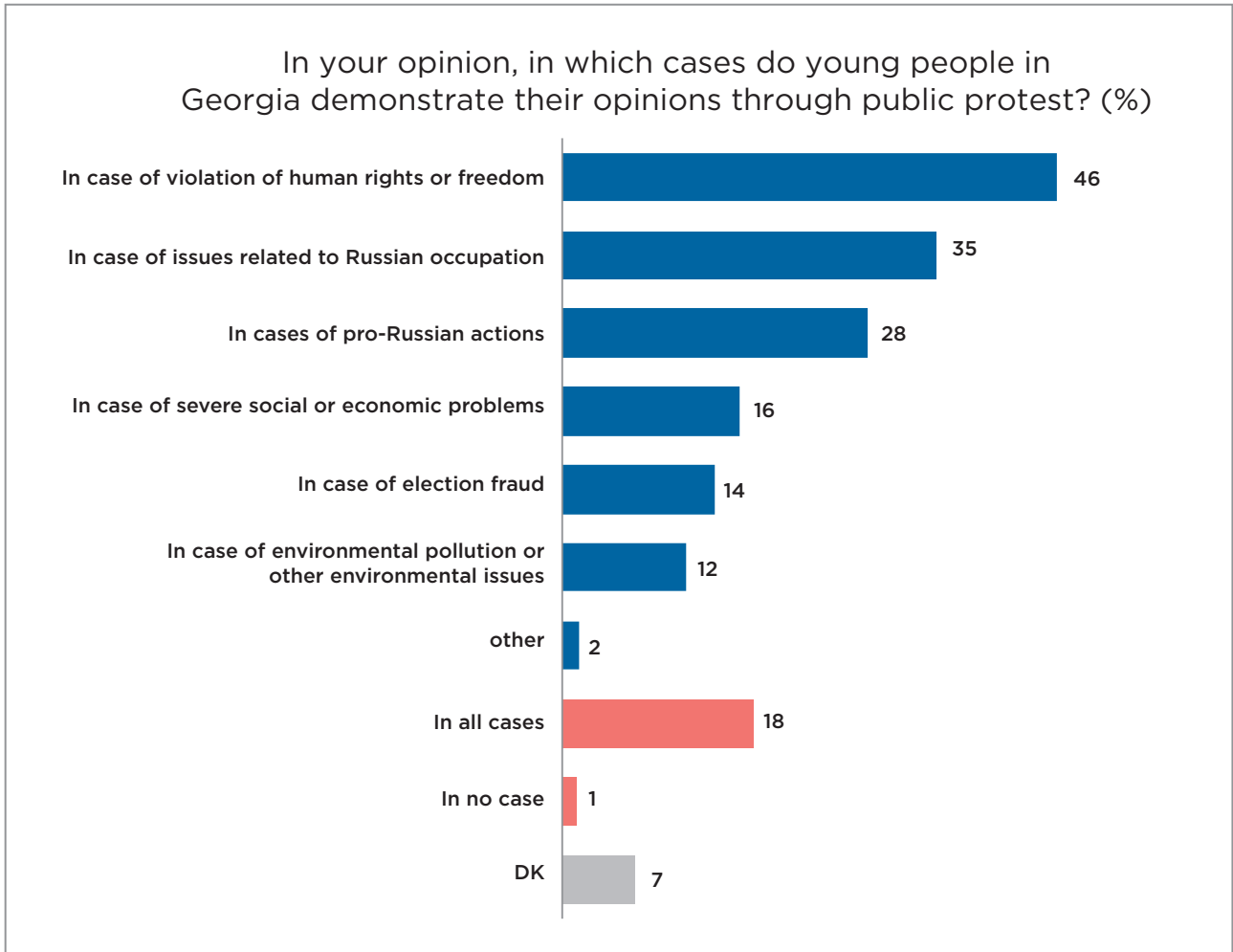


Young people in Georgia believe that their peers demonstrate their opinions through public protest on several occasions: when human rights or freedom is violated (46%), when there are issues related to Russian occupation (35%), and in cases of pro-Russian actions (e.g., Gavrilov’s visit*) (28%). All three of the abovementioned statements are more commonly reported by the young people living in the capital compared to those living in rural settlements. Furthermore, violations of human rights and freedom were mentioned more frequently by young women (52%) compared to young men (40%) (Table 3).

* June 20 events, also known as Gavrilov’s Night, took place on central Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi in 2019. The civic protests were caused by the visit of Sergei Gavrilov, a Communist Party member of the Russian Duma, visiting through an Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, Gavrilov sat in a chair reserved for the Head of the Parliament and delivered a speech in Russian, extolling the Orthodox brotherhood of Georgia and Russia.

In addition to the statements mentioned above, a relatively small share of young people reported that their peers demonstrate their opinions through a public protest in cases of serious social or economic problems (16%), election fraud (14%), environmental pollution and other environmental issues (12%). No differences were found across sex or settlement types for these responses (Table 3). Furthermore, 18% reported that young people participate in public protests in all cases (Figure 3).

Figure 3. When do young people participate in public protests.



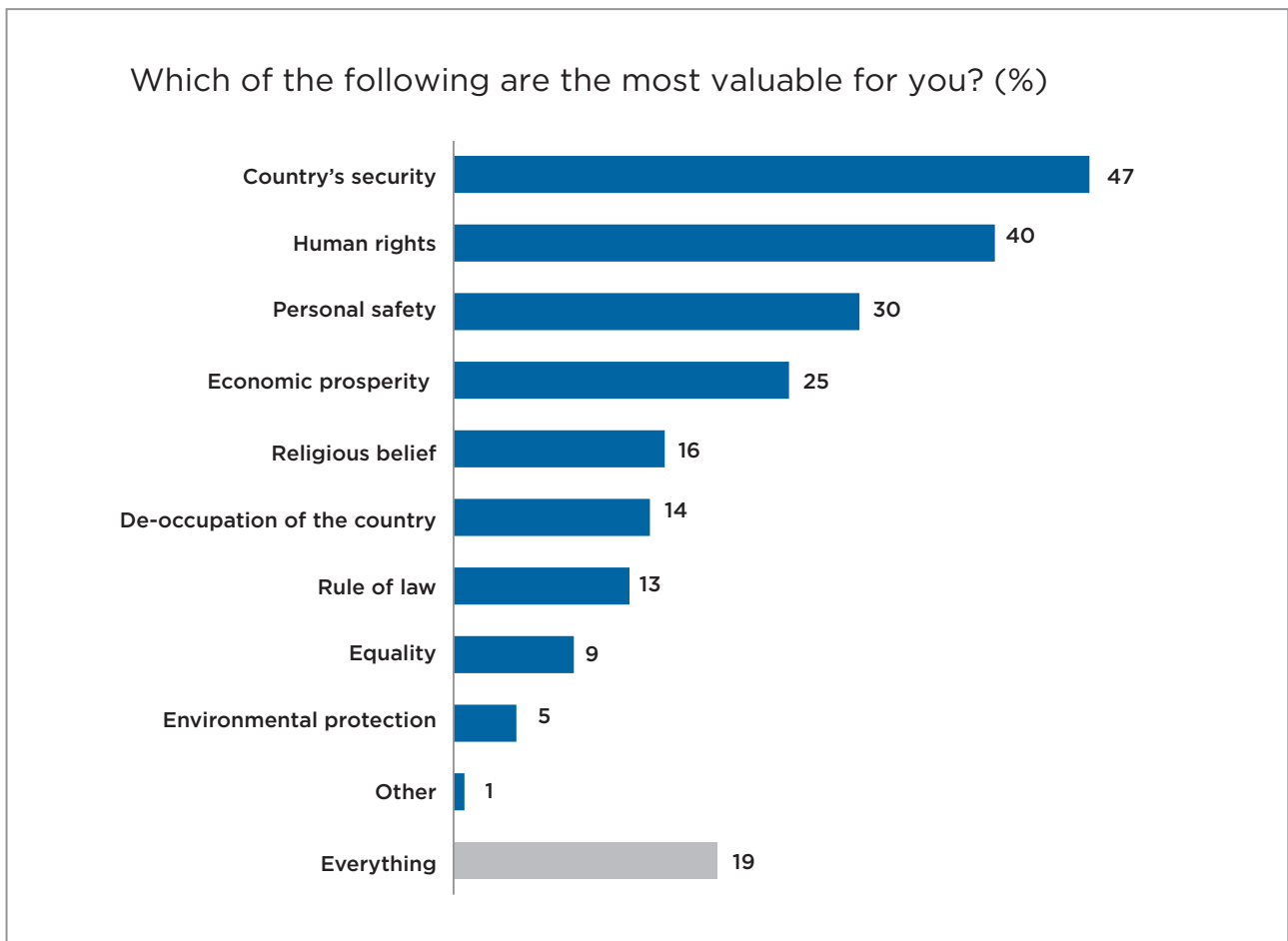
When asked about not their peer’s but rather about their own political activism, a large share of young people reported being politically active only during the elections: 67% stated that they had participated in the 2020 parliamentary elections, 29% stated they had not participated, while 4% said they were not 18 years old yet by the time of the elections. Notably, more young people living in urban (69%) and rural settlements (71%) reported having voted in the 2020 elections compared to those living in the capital (60%) (Table 5).

Apart from participation in elections, respondents were asked about their involvement in other political or civic processes. The data shows that only small shares of young people are civic activists (e.g., involved in solving problems in the region) (9%), members of a youth movement (3%), members of a political party (3%), members of a youth political club at a higher education

institution (2%), or are involved in political or civic processes in another way (5%). No notable differences were found across sex and settlement types (Table 4).

When asked whether any of the political parties in Georgia are close to their views, 64% of young people answered negatively, 29% reported that there is a party in Georgia close to their views, while 5% stated that there is a party that is partially close to their views. Compared to men (59%), a larger share of young women (69%) said that no party in Georgia is close to their views (Table 6). In the quantitative survey, young people were also asked about the most valuable issues for them. The most commonly reported valuable issues were security of the country (47%), human rights (40%), personal security (30%), and economic well-being (25%). Relatively fewer young people named religious beliefs (16%), de-occupation of the country (14%), rule of law (13%), equality (9%), and environment protection (5%). Nineteen percent of young people mentioned that all the above mentioned are highly valued to them (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The most valuable issues for young people.



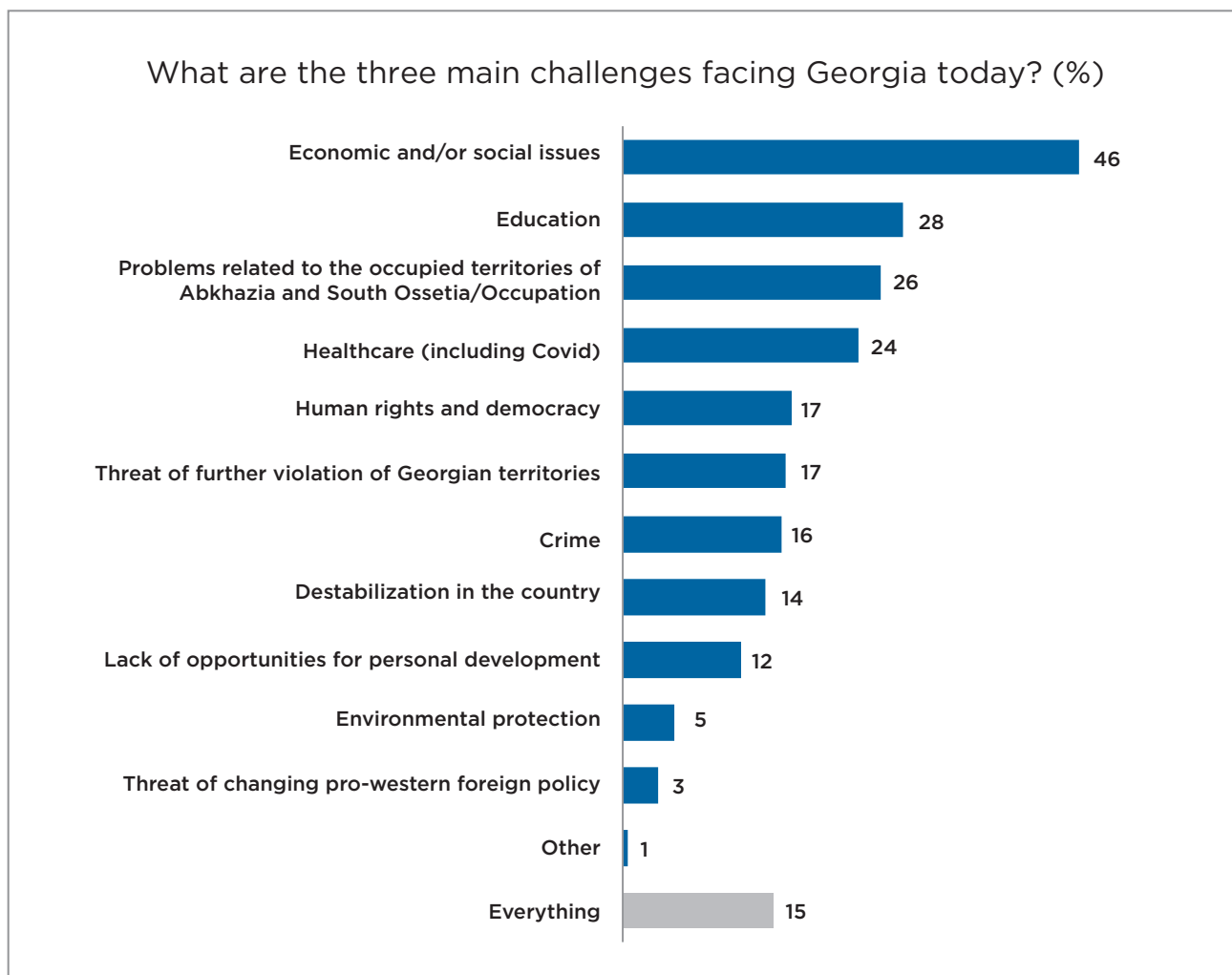
Certain differences were found across sex and settlement types. While the country's security and economic well-being are approximately equally valued by both men and women, human rights (46%, compared to 34%) and personal security (35%, compared to 25%) seem to be valued more by young women compared to young men. As for the differences across the settlement types, the security of the country was mentioned more often in the rural settlements (51%) compared to the

capital (41%). Moreover, economic well-being and the rule of law are valued more by the young people living in the capital compared to those living in rural settlements (Table 7).

3.1.2 Assessment of the internal situation by young people

In the quantitative survey, young people answered several questions related to the general situation in Georgia and named the issues facing the country. The issue mentioned most frequently is economic and/or social issues (46%). Other top issues young people reported are education (28%), territories/occupation of South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region and Abkhazia (26%), and healthcare issues (including Covid) (24%). A relatively small share of people reported human rights and democracy (17%), the threat of further violation of Georgian territorial integrity (17%), crime (16%), destabilization of the internal affairs of the country (14%), and lack of opportunities for personal development (12%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The main Challenges facing Georgia.



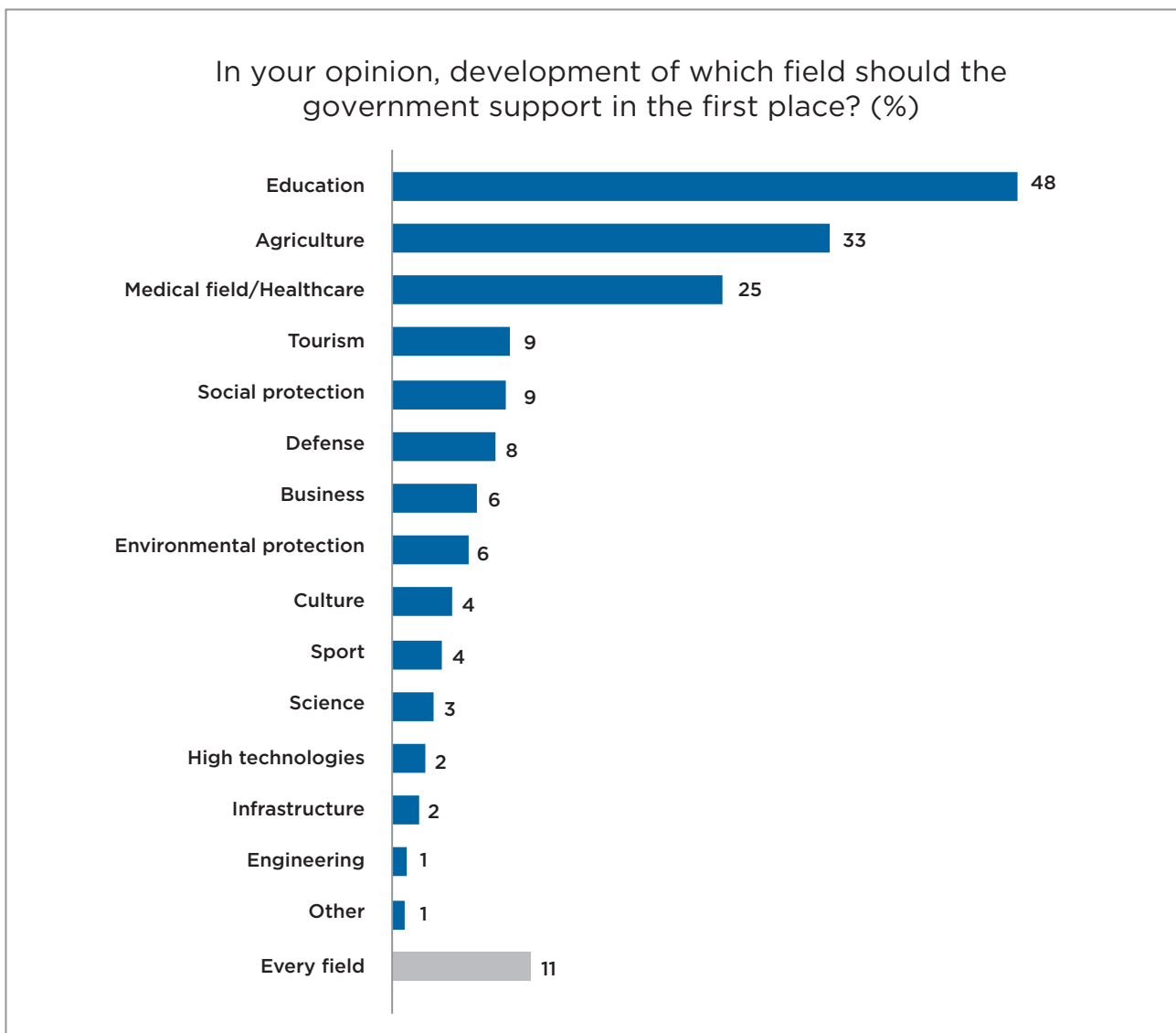
Slight differences were found across sex and settlement types. For instance, compared to men (19%), more young women (29%) report that healthcare (including Covid) to be the most important issue facing the country. As for the differences across settlement types, compared to the capital (42%), in rural settlements more young people (51%) believe that economic and/or social issues are the main problem facing Georgia. On the other hand, compared to rural settlements (22%), more

young people in capital named the issue of territories/occupation of South Ossetia/Tskhinvali and Abkhazia (30%) (Table 8).

In addition to these issues, young people also named fields that, in their opinion, the government should promote more. The most commonly reported fields were education (48%), agriculture (33%), and medicine/healthcare (25%). More young women named education and healthcare (52% and 32%, respectively) compared to men (43% and 18%, respectively). On the other hand, slightly more young men (37%) mentioned agriculture, compared to young women (30%). Differences were also notable across settlement types - more young people think that the government should promote education in other urban areas (49%) and the capital (53%), compared to rural settlements (42%). Young people living in rural areas (42%) understandably think agriculture should be promoted more frequently compared to those living in urban areas (26%) and capital (29%) (Table 9).

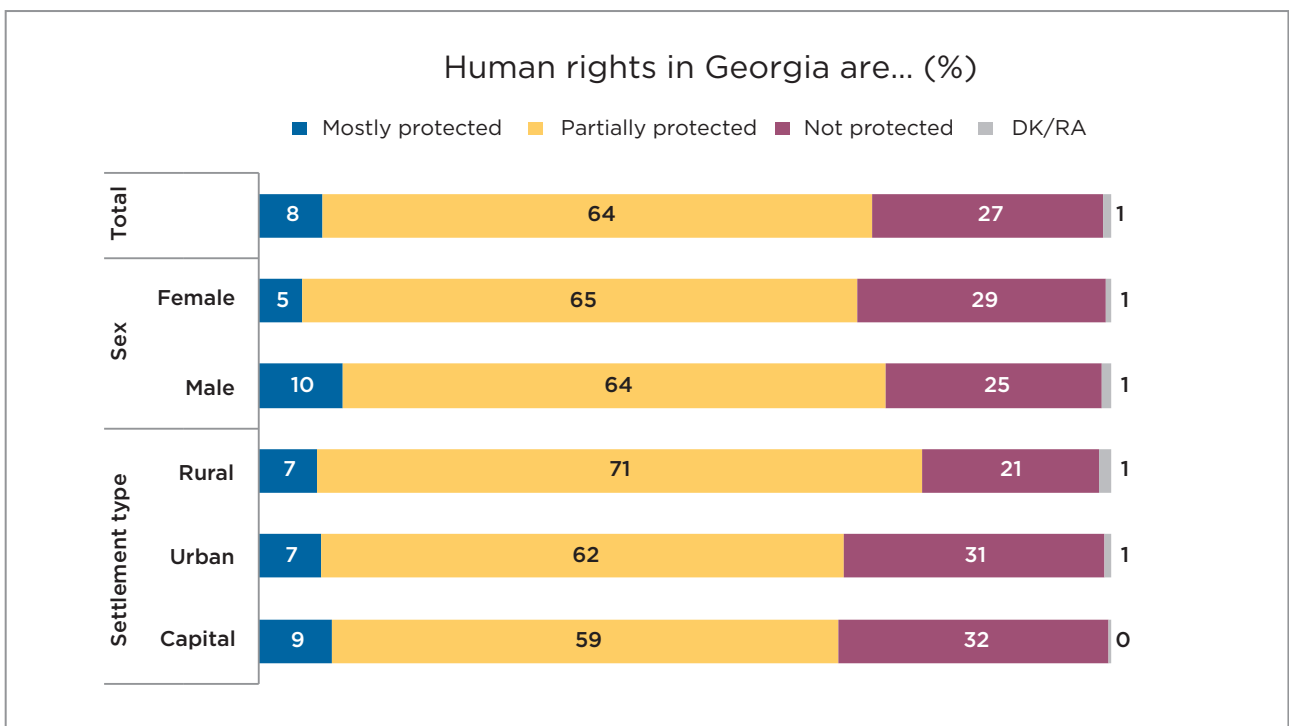
In addition to the above-mentioned issues, young people also reported that the government should promote the development of tourism (9%), social protection (9%), defense (8%), and other areas (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Fields, development of which should be promoted by the government in the first place.



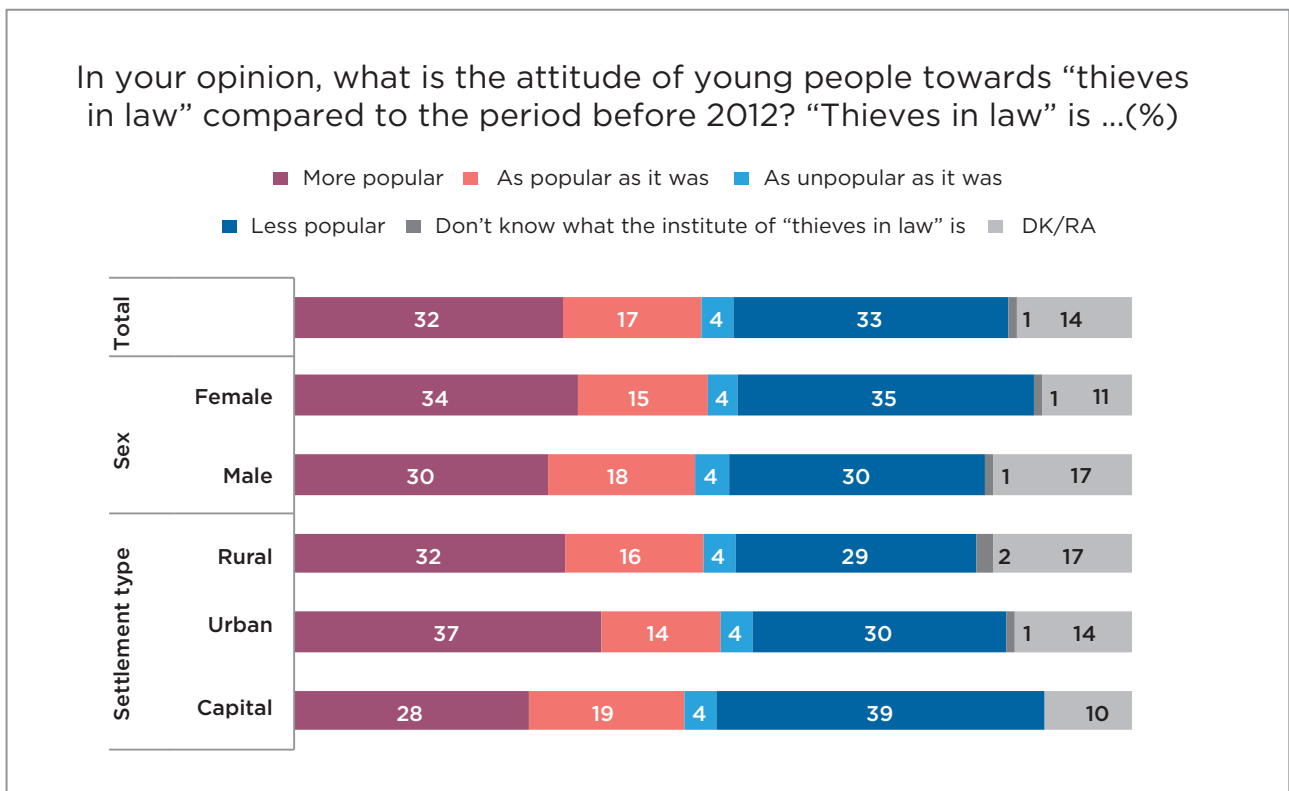
The importance of education for young people was once again highlighted when assessing the level of the education system in Georgia. A third of young people (33%) think that the level of education is unsatisfactory, and an additional 8% state that the education level is not satisfactory at all. Young people living in the capital (55%) are particularly dissatisfied with the level of education (Table 13). During the quantitative survey, young people were also asked to evaluate to what extent human rights are protected in Georgia. A large share of young people (64%) thinks that human rights are at least partially protected, only 8% think that they are mostly protected, and more than a quarter (27%) believe that human rights are not protected. No notable differences were found across sex. However, more young people living in urban settlements (31%), and the capital (32%) state that human rights are not protected in Georgia, compared to those living in rural settlements (21%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7. To what extent are human rights protected in Georgia.



During the survey, young people were also asked to evaluate the popularity of “thieves in law”. Opinions were divided when young people compared the popularity of “thieves in law” today to the period before 2012. A third (33%) of young people said this informal institution is less popular now compared to the period before 2012, while another third (32%) said it is more popular now. 17% of young people do not see notable differences and state that this institution is as popular now as it was before 2012. It should be noted that in the capital (39%), compared to other urban (30%) and rural settlements (29%), more young people find “thieves in law” less popular compared to the period before 2012 (Figure 8).

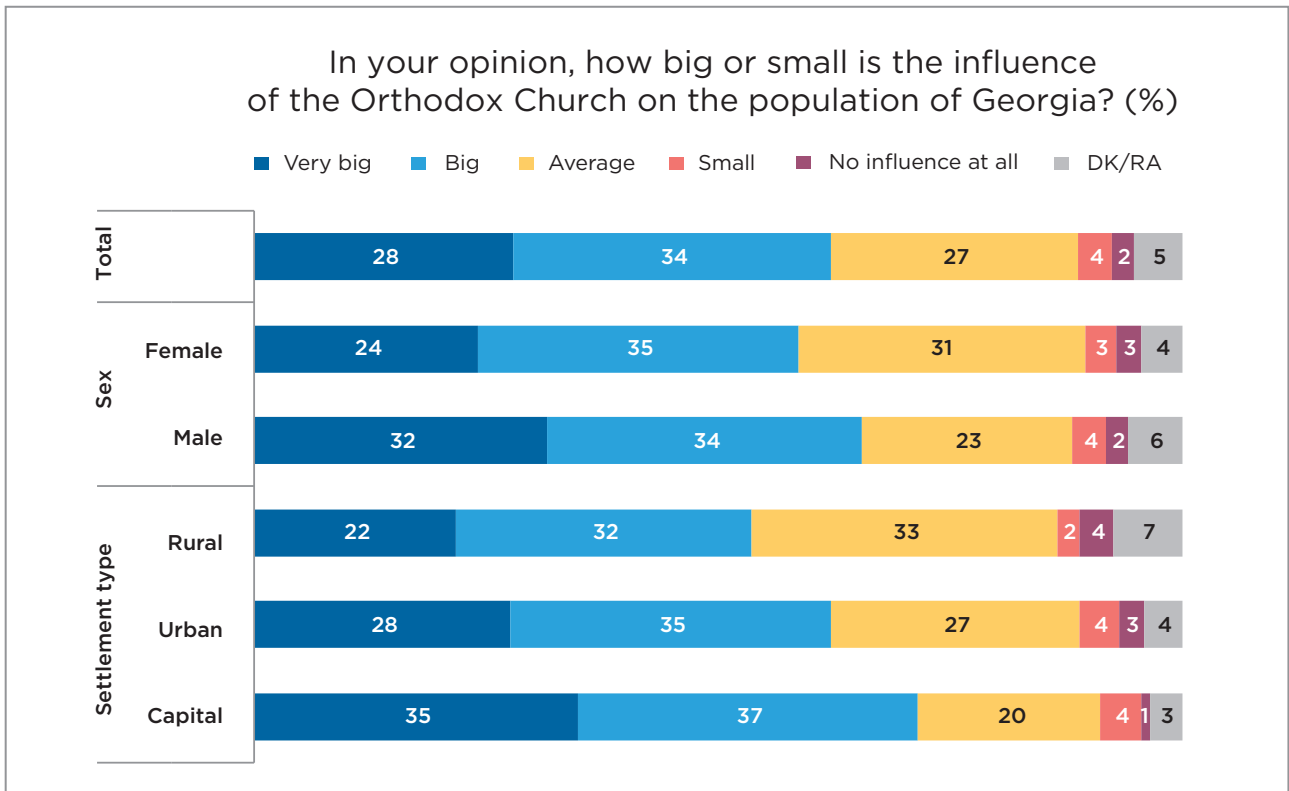
Figure 8. The popularity of “thieves in law” today compared to the period before 2012.



3.1.3 Assessment of the influence and the funding of religious institutions by young people

During the quantitative survey, young people were also asked to assess the influence of the Orthodox Church on the population of Georgia. According to the data, 62% of young people think that the Georgian Orthodox Church has a very big (28%) or big (34%) influence on the population of Georgia. 27% of youth believe that it has an average influence, while only a small share assess its influence as either very small (4%) or non-existent (2%). Notable differences were found across sex and settlement types. A larger share of young men (32%) thinks that the Orthodox Church has a big influence on the population of Georgia, compared to women (24%). Also, more young people living in the capital (35%) agree that the Church has a big influence compared to those living in rural (22%) and other urban settlements (28%) (Figure 9).

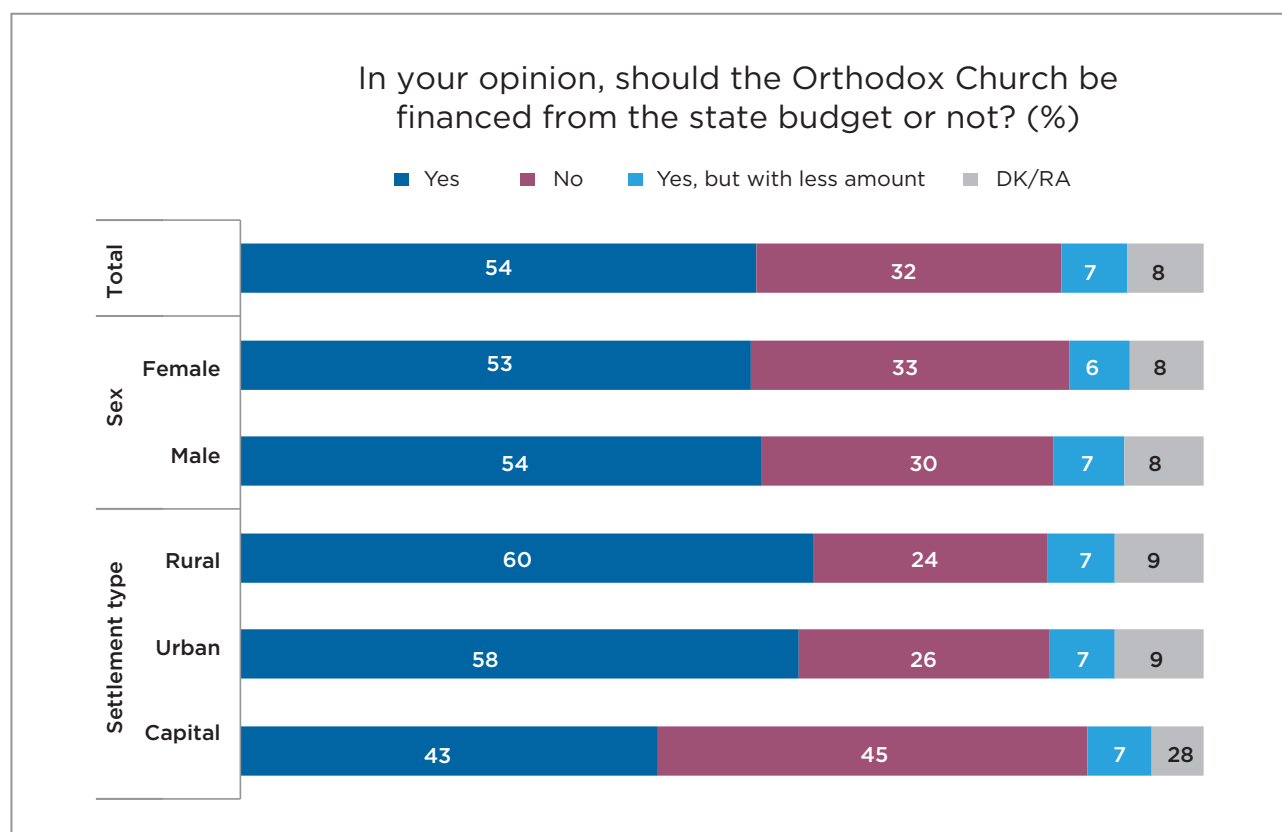
Figure 9. The influence of the Orthodox Church on the Georgian population.



In contrast to the influence of the Orthodox Church, the influence of Islam as a religion is relatively low on the Georgian population, according to young people. The majority think that Islam has little (38%) or no influence (19%). However, 23% think that Islam has a moderate influence on the population of Georgia. Only a small percentage believes that this influence is big (6%) or very big (2%). It should also be noted that compared to rural (31%) and urban settlements (37%), more young people living in the capital (47%) state that the influence of Islam is small (Table 15).

When asked whether the Orthodox Church should be financed from the state budget, 54% of young people responded positively. However, 7% state that the Church should be financed but with lesser amounts, while almost a third (32%) of young people think the Church should not be financed from the budget at all. Notable differences were found between the opinions of young people living in and outside of the capital. 43% of young people living in the capital support financing the Orthodox Church from the state budget, and this share is higher in urban (58%) and rural (60%) settlements (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Funding the Orthodox Church from the state budget



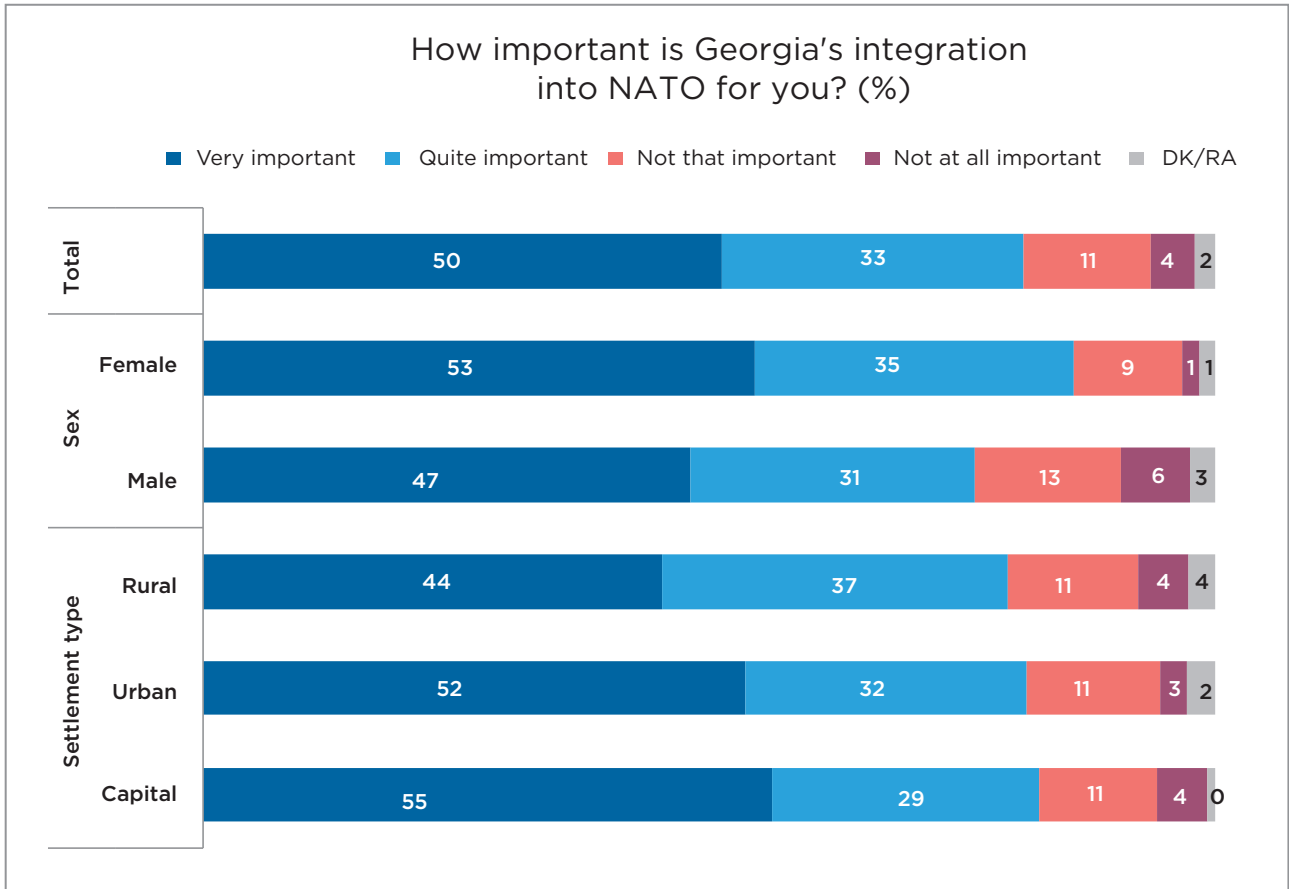
As opposed to the views on financing the Orthodox Church from the state budget, more than half (54%) of young people are against financing other religious groups/institutions from the state budget. 35% of young people agree that other institutions should also be funded, while 11% find it difficult to answer the question. Notable differences were found across the settlement types. More young people are against financing other religious institutions from the state budget in the capital (63%), compared to those living in rural (46%) and urban settlements (52%) (Table 17).

3.1.4 Assessment of country's foreign policy by young people

During the quantitative survey, young people were asked which country they would wish to go to for legal employment. Nearly a quarter (23%) of young people named the United States and fifth (20%) stated Germany. This was followed by France (6%) and Italy (5%), while other countries were named less frequently (Table 12).

Integration with the West and the European Union is important for the majority of young people in Georgia. Exactly half of the young people consider Georgia's integration into the European Union to be very important, while a third report that it is quite important. Integration is not that important (11%) or not at all important (4%) for only a small proportion of young people. Small differences were found across the settlement types. 55% of young people assess European integration as very important in the capital, while this figure is 44% among rural youth (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Georgia's integration into European Union.

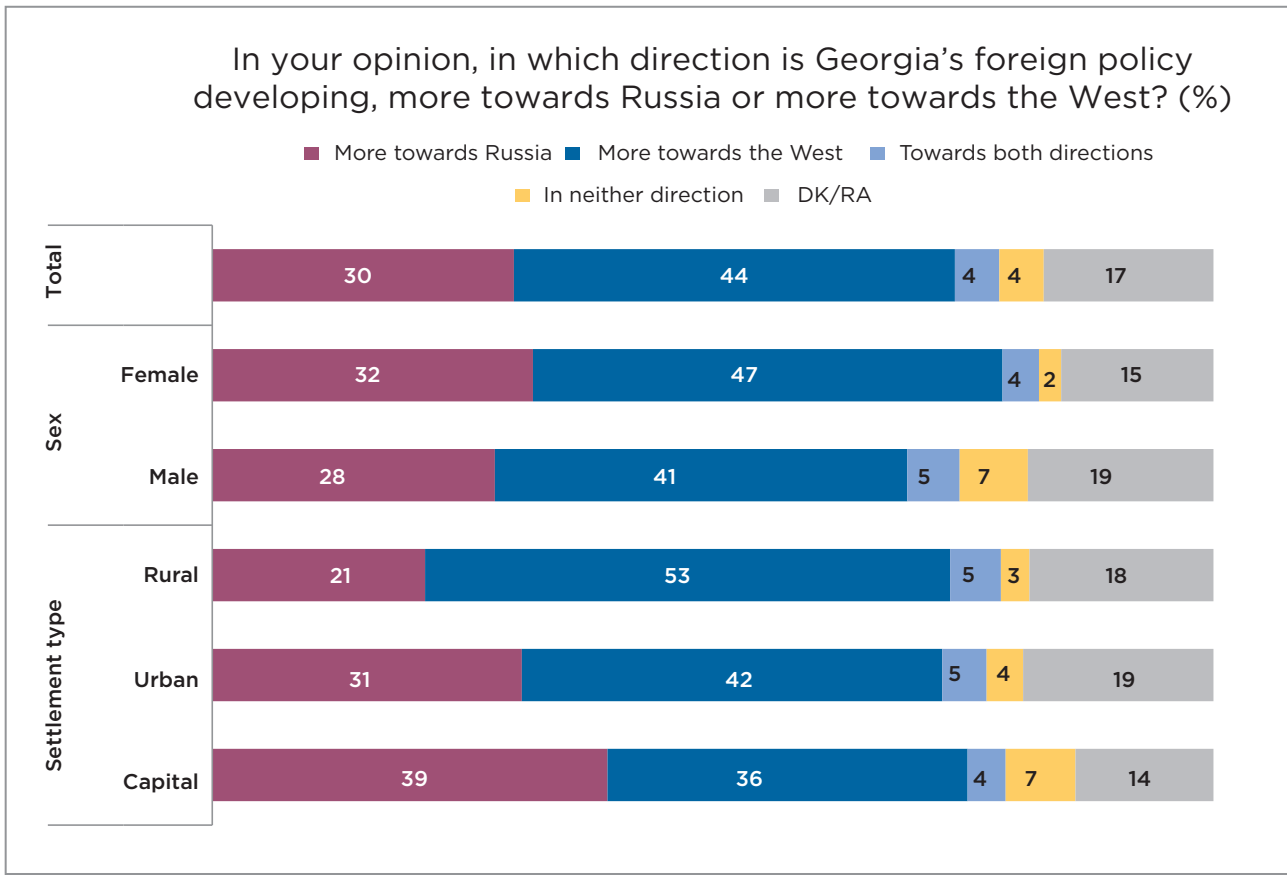


Similar to European integration, half (51%) of the young people living in Georgia think that country's integration into NATO is very important, while a third (30%) report it to be quite important. Differences are again found across settlement types. A larger share of young people living in the capital (56%) considers joining NATO to be very important, compared to the youth living in rural settlements (45%). Young women support both EU and NATO integration slightly more than young men (Table 19).

A large share of young people living in Georgia (44%) believes that Georgia's foreign policy direction is developing more towards the West. However, on the other hand, almost a third (30%) find the foreign direction to be developing more towards Russia.

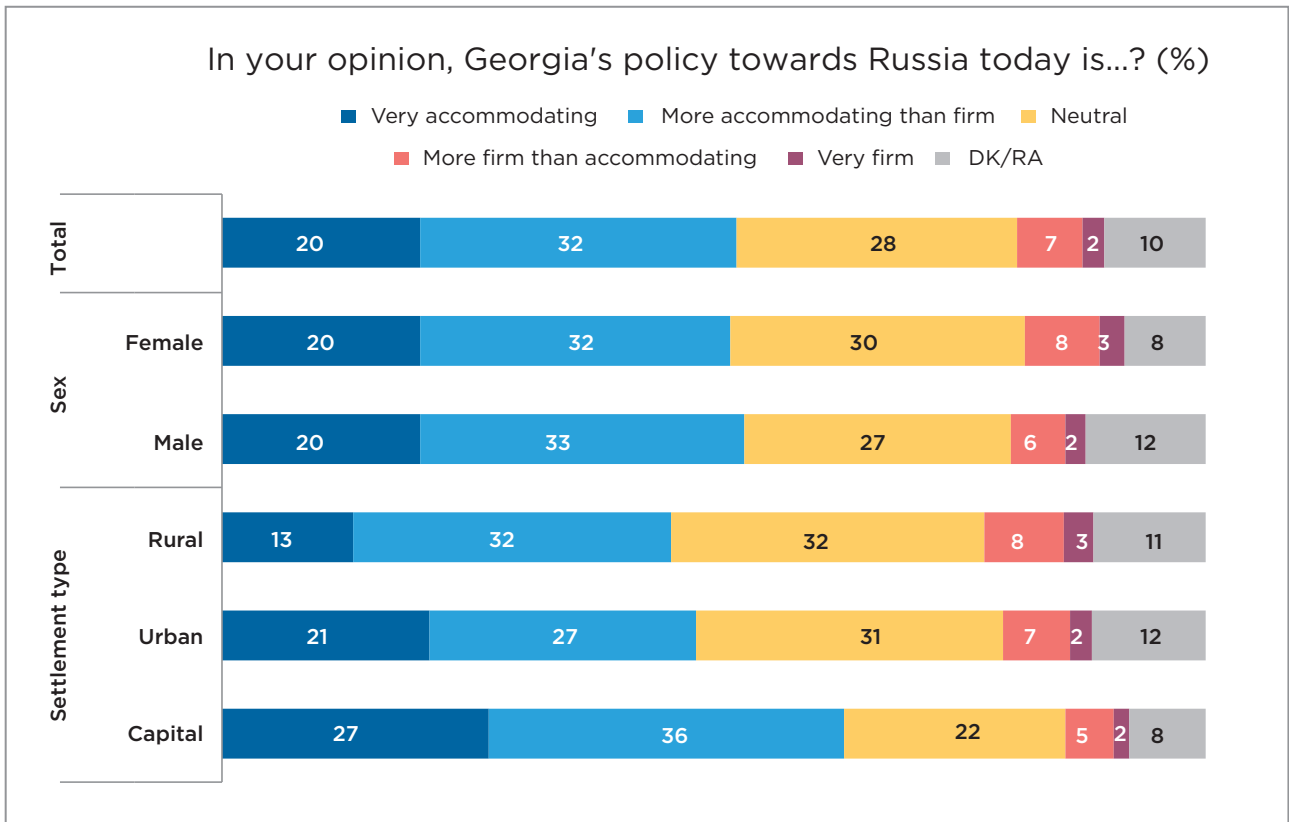
Compared to men (41%), more young women (47%) believe that Georgia's foreign policy direction is developing more towards the West. Differences were found across the settlement types as well. A higher share of young people living in urban (42%) and rural areas (53%) believe that Georgia's foreign policy is currently developing in a western direction, compared to young people living in the capital (36%). Consequently, almost twice as many young people in the capital believe that the county's foreign policy direction is developing towards Russia, as in rural settlements (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Georgia's foreign policy direction.



More than half of young people believe that Georgia's current policy towards Russia is very accommodating, out of which 20% find it very accommodating, while 32% find it more accommodating than firm. 28% of young people state that country's policy towards Russia is neutral. No differences were found across sex, while certain differences were found across settlement types. More young people living in the capital (27%) find Georgia's policy towards Russia to be very accommodating, compared to rural (13%) and urban settlements (21%) (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Georgia's policy towards Russia.



It is noteworthy that Georgia's current policy towards Russia is unacceptable for the majority of young people living in Georgia: a third (33%) find it completely unacceptable, while 35% find it more unacceptable than acceptable. 72% of young women chose one of these two answers, while this figure is smaller for men (63%). Differences were found across settlement types as well. Seventy-three percent of young people in the capital find Georgia's current policy towards Russia to be either completely unacceptable or more unacceptable than acceptable. This figure is smaller in urban and rural areas (65% and 65%, respectively) (Table 22).

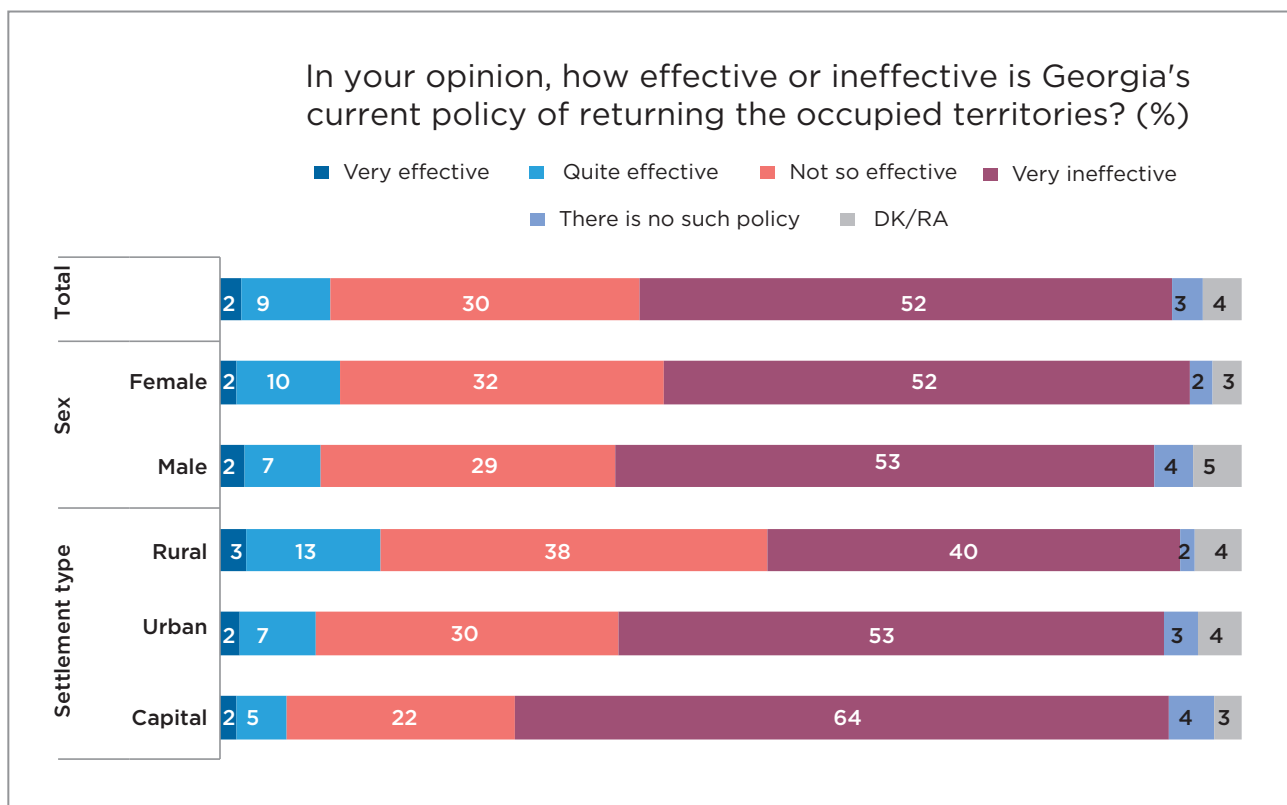
The quantitative survey data also shows which countries young people consider to be Georgia's main political partner and which are the main enemy. Data shows that 40% of young people find the United States to be Georgia's main political partner. Other countries were named relatively less frequently: Ukraine (4%), Azerbaijan (4%), Russia (3%), Turkey (3%), Germany (2%). It should also be noted that 13% of young people do not consider any of the countries to be Georgia's partner, while 24% found it difficult to answer the question (Table 23).

As for the main enemy of Georgia, 68% of young people consider it to be Russia, and a small share (4%) consider it to be Turkey. Hereby, 10% of young people do not consider any of the countries to be Georgia's enemy, while 12% either refused to or could not answer this question (Figure 24).

3.1.5 Young people’s perception of the occupied territories

As a part of the quantitative survey, young people answered several questions about the occupied territories. Data shows that the majority of young people find Georgia’s current policy of successfully reintegrating the occupied territories not so effective (30%) or very ineffective (52%). Young women and men have a similar position in this regard, although differences were found across the settlement types. Data shows that a larger share of young people living in the capital (64%) find Georgia’s policy of reintegrating the occupied territories to be very ineffective, compared to young people living in rural (40%) and urban areas (53%) (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Georgia’s policy toward returning occupied territories.



The majority of young people state that they never (76%) or rarely (10%) have any interaction with people currently living in Abkhazia or South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region (including both in-person and online interaction) (Table 26).

Further, young people rarely receive any information about the ongoing processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region. About a quarter of young people state that they never receive information about Abkhazia (25%) and South Ossetia (27%). Hereby, 45% and 47% of young people only rarely receive information about these two occupied territories, while 16% receive information sometimes (Tables 27 and 28).

Those young people that report receiving at least some information about the ongoing processes in Abkhazia and/or South Ossetia named the following sources of information: social networks (72%), television, excluding online transmissions (37%), family members, friends, relatives,

colleagues living in Abkhazia and/or South Ossetia (12%), websites of media sources (9%), and family members, friends, relatives, and colleagues living in Georgia proper (8%). No differences were found across sex. As for the differences across the settlement types, data show that a larger share of young people outside the capital (40% and 40% in rural and urban areas, respectively, compared to 31%) receive information about the ongoing processes in Abkhazia and/or South Ossetia through television (Table 29).

3.2 Qualitative Component

3.2.1 Assessment of general situation in Georgia

3.2.1.1. Perception of the situation in Georgia

Focus group participants assessed the economic, social, and political situation in the country mostly negatively, while Georgian people and Georgian culture were evaluated positively.

In Georgia today, young people appreciate close relationships, people who maintain warm relationships and always support each other. The fact that Georgia preserves its traditions and identity was also assessed positively. Participants often recall the tradition of hospitality, and Georgia's characteristics such as winemaking and cuisine, folklore, folk dance and cultural heritage. Achievements in arts and sports at the international level are often named as well, especially Georgian athletes' success at the Olympic Games. Focus group participants appreciate the landscape and geographical location of Georgia and believe it has huge potential for development. However, the fact that Georgia cannot use this potential per its interests was negatively assessed. Despite the abundance of positive assessments, participants also stated that Georgian people often only "look in the past" and are satisfied with past achievements, which hinders cultural development.

Indeed [our culture] can be considered the biggest strength of our country. What I dislike the most is that we are only busy glorifying the past ... If in the past our country was distinguished by religion and culture, we remember it but we do not have it today (Female, 20, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Adjara).

When discussing economic, social, or political issues, almost everyone agrees that situation in Georgia has improved compared to previous years. When making this comparison, participants find it difficult to name a specific period, although some participants refer to the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some to the 21st-century in general, or simply to "the previous years". Even though numerous challenges to democracy in Georgia were named – violations of freedom of speech, a police state, wiretapping, biased court, etc. – according to young people, there is more freedom to live, freedom of movement and speech, and more development opportunities compared to previous years. Young people see it as a positive development that more people in society, including young people, are engaged in public life, and more aware that the government is accountable towards society. Respondents often discuss and have different attitudes towards the Soviet heritage. Some believe that the Georgian people still have the Soviet mentality, especially the older generations, whilst others see the tendency to overcome it, especially among the younger generation.

Participants often link to democratic processes and negatively assess the great influence of the Patriarchate of Georgia, and its constant interference in state affairs.

I do not like such a huge influence of the Patriarchate. This goes against building both the secular and democratic state (Male, 21, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Batumi).

Opinions are divided regarding social and economic development. Hardly anyone argues that tourism is indeed developing. However, when it comes to general development, some believe that country is developing compared to previous years, while others think that it is going backward. Participants assess the education system similarly. According to some, the system is improving, while others think that the education system “has collapsed” and is not developing, the level of education is low, and access to education, especially higher, vocational, and non-formal education is low. It was also noted that despite the changes, Georgia still has a Soviet education system and approaches. Although education is highly appreciated and the demand for it is also growing, participants argue education is mostly just for display, and that Georgian society values diplomas more than knowledge. Highly valuing the diploma is also linked to the low prestige of vocational/technical education among Georgian society.

As I mentioned, education has a value, it is good that we strive towards it but at the same time, it is bad because the most important thing is to have a diploma. Often it is encouraged to obtain a diploma rather than to accumulate knowledge and experience. For example, if you have vocational education, you may be less credible compared to a higher education graduate (Female, 25, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Kutaisi).

When discussing what they dislike the most in Georgia today, young people often mention the economic hardship, poverty and unemployment, high prices and low wages, and the low prospect of finding a job matching one’s education. Young people often link this to labor migration, a high rate of youth emigration, and “brain drain”. Although the eradication of corruption is often cited as one of the positive aspects of Georgia at the same time, elite corruption and high levels of nepotism are often cited as problems.

For me and my generation in general, the most painful fact is that there is no prospect of development in the country... nepotism prevails... smart and educated young people are fleeing, brains are draining from the country... (Male, 23, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Kutaisi).

The current political situation, constant confrontation, and tensions between the political parties, as well as in society, general disorder, and constant protests are often mentioned in a negative context as well and are seen as indicative of the government not listening to the people.

I do not like that the political situation is so unstable ... there are always protests. There should be [protest], however, the government should accept people’s opinion, their words should be taken into account ... People should not have to arrange this many protests just to express their opinion (Female, 24, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Tbilisi).

Young people dislike that often the disorder is caused by division in society on the grounds of political, ethnic, religious identities, sexual orientation, intolerance towards different views and people, and xenophobic aggression.

When discussing internal unrest of the country, young people mention the increased level of crime on a national level. The media environment and challenges to media independence are also seen as highly problematic. Participants state that certain groups in the country are in an information vacuum, while the accessible information is mostly biased, negative, and stressful for the public. Issues such as infrastructure, environment, early marriage, etc. are not discussed often. Participants also addressed the issue of the pandemic, assessing its management, especially the restrictions on public transport, mostly negatively.

Similar to domestic politics, Georgia's foreign policy is assessed negatively. Even though young people believe that country's official foreign course is directed towards Euro-Atlantic integration, when discussing the challenges of country's foreign policy, they argue that Georgia is deviating from this course, which is perceived quite badly. However, the occupation of the Georgian territories and Russia's constant aggression are perceived as the most acute problem. Young people say that they do not feel safe due to constant threats from Russia, especially since the occupation of territories and creeping occupation.

I do not have a sense of security in my own country and this has been bothering me for a long time ... I mean more internal threats, as well as foreign ones, when I see that the borders are moving, especially when I live nearby, I have no sense of security... I do not like the political situation that people have no freedom of speech and if someone expresses something, it is always followed by violence ... (Female, 23, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Shida Kartli).

3.2.1.2. Evaluation of the history of independent Georgia

Focus group participants assessed the process of developing an independent Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and discussed both - the most positive and negative historical events of the last 30 years.

Young people assessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of independence, the adoption of the Constitution of Georgia, and creating of the national currency as the most positive historical events in the last 30 years. Georgia's accession to the UN is assessed positively and seen as the international recognition of the country's independence. Another event associated with independence and assessed as one of the most positive historical developments is regaining the autocephaly of the Georgian Orthodox Church.

Among the positive domestic political events, the most frequently mentioned is the Rose Revolution in 2003, which was seen as the beginning of the country's development and the construction of state institutions. The 2012 elections are often discussed as an important historical event, as for the first time in the history of Georgia, power was transferred through democratic elections, "without bloodshed", without violence.

After the restoration of independence, the country's Euro-Atlantic course, the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union, and visa liberalisation are perceived as very important historical processes. As a result of visa liberalisation Georgia became closer to Europe, travel, and sharing European culture became easier. Another important historical event for young people is the decision of the European Court on the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 in Georgia's favor.

The issue of visa liberalisation with Europe was probably one of the most important moments in the recent history of Georgia because we realized that we were moving in the right direction. At least we experienced it, our desire to be close to Europe was finally expressed in practice too. More or less, we have experienced that we want to be Europeans, proximity to Europe is no longer enough for us, we want to be part of Europe (Male, 24, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Telavi).

The most commonly mentioned negative events are the experiences of war in both 1990s and 2008 and the loss of territories that followed. Grievous political events that followed the restoration of independence, such as the assassination of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, civil tension, confrontation and bloodshed in Samegrelo, were also mentioned.

The civil war. The following events in Samachablo. They took place around the same time and then the war in Abkhazia. Then there are the constant protests since the 90s. This destabilization has led us to the complete collapse of the country's economy, and of the unity of the society (Male, 24, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Telavi).

Young people negatively assess not only the particular events of the last 30 years but also the general processes. Once again, the “creeping occupation” and kidnappings in settlements around the occupation line are mentioned. Other negative processes, such as the cases of state violence against citizens, or cases where the state has failed to protect its citizens from violence also hinder the building of democratic state institutions. Some of the most frequently mentioned events include the so-called “Gavrilov’s Night” – a public protest that was violently dispersed by the government, the dispersal of a peaceful student protest in Batumi, the large-scale violence on the grounds of homophobia in 2013 and 2021, the raid in a television station in 2007, and the uninvestigated murders on political grounds.

...We have already mentioned the war of 2008, but there were many other events, June 20, Gavrilov's night, other things that we might not recall specifically, June 5, media attacks, uninvestigated cases, Shakarashvili, Bachaleishvili, there were many such events that hindered the development of a democratic state (female, 24, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Samtskhe-Javakheti).

3.2.1.3. Georgia where young people would like to live

Discussing Georgia in which young people would like to live, they refer back to the issues mentioned during the assessment of the situation in Georgia.

Participants most frequently mention the desire to live in a democratic and economically prospered country, with sustainable peace and development, in a country that is integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. Regarding the economy, young people are talking about social equality, social programs tailored to citizens, a decent and safe work environment, and decent salaries. Young people want the country to reach a level of development where labor migration is reduced, for current labor migrants to return home, and for young people to have prospects of development in their own country. Young people also frequently talk about the need to improve the quality of education and increase the access to it. They wish for an education system and a job market that will enable young people to get a job in their chosen field. To achieve this, among other steps, nepotism must

be eliminated. Moreover, education opportunities should be increased in the regions outside of Tbilisi as well.

Young people have no opportunities to realize their potential, especially in the regions,... and in many cases, when they arrive in the city it is too late [to develop] their skills, for example in sports, culture, education, when you are eighteen or twenty years old, it is already too late to use these skills. Therefore, there is no space to realize the potential and we have a lot of problems in terms of education as well (Male, 28, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Svaneti).

Young people believe that the domestic production and agricultural sectors should be developed and that a safe and accessible environment for investment for the local population should be created, so that country depends less on imported products while contributing to rural development. Regarding the villages in rural settlements, the youth wants development opportunities for young people living there - workplaces, well-maintained transport, and other infrastructure, and the opportunity for a decent life without having to move to Tbilisi or other big cities.

In terms of democratic development, young people mostly wish for an independent and transparent court, fair elections, protection of human rights, guarantee of freedom of speech, and “laws tailored to the people”. Young people want to live in a democratic and secular state, where democratic institutions are strong, and the Patriarchate does not interfere in state affairs. Although more than half of young people support the funding of the Georgian Orthodox Church from the state budget, part of the focus group participants opposes it. Young people in Georgia want a free, diverse, and tolerant society, where being different is accepted, religious fanaticism is eliminated, political confrontations between political parties, as well as people, are rare, and people respect each other’s opinion.

First of all, [I want to see] a developed Georgia, politically, culturally, mentally, economically stable, with a high level of education, where being different is tolerated, respected ... Young people have more perspective and no one wants to run away, getting a job and planning one’s career and life as each of us wants is easy, which also means more freedom (Male, 21, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Adjara).

3.2.2 Important and less important values in Georgia

When talking about values, young people often discuss values together with traditions they would like to preserve or change.

Characteristics of the Georgian people, such as hospitality and mutual support are among the values young people would like to preserve. Participants also often mention family values and relationships, respect for the elderly, respect for women, brotherhood, unity, patriotism, and mutual respect and love among the generations, which is especially felt in families where several generations live together.

In my opinion, we, Georgians are generally hospitable and warm-hearted people, we love helping everyone, it is good, and I do not think it is something to be forgotten ... (Female, 24, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Tbilisi).

Participants value Georgian culture and cultural heritage, such as Georgian literature, folklore - mainly in folk dances and songs, together with a religious faith that, in the opinion of many, is intertwined with the culture.

When discussing tolerance, part of the focus group participants argue that Georgia is a multi-ethnic country and has always been tolerant, while others believe that the Georgian nation has lost its tolerance and should regain it. In addition to ethnic discrimination, gender and sexual discrimination were also reported. Young people pointed out and positively assessed that tolerance and acceptance are slowly increasing among younger generations compared to the older ones. The same applies to other values. Some of the participants point out that values can vary among people living in the same country, that people should not restrict each other's freedom to uphold the values one finds significant.

We know from our history that Georgia has always been a tolerant country ... Unfortunately, today we chase down people who dress or think differently with sticks in our hands. I want to regain that old tolerant Georgian character, so that people of different religious backgrounds, political beliefs, or outfits are not being chased, and everyone, the whole society, lives in harmony (Male, 28, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Svaneti).

While discussing values, participants recall characteristics of the Georgian people which are not desirable for preservation. For example, laziness, "inability to help out one another", excessive interest, and interference in each other's lives. Young people also mention the criminal mentality continuing obstinately from the 1990s.

Some people are more interested in other people's lives than in their own ... Who is gay, who has a nose pierced, who has dyed hair. We just should not be interested in it, this is what development is about, it is one's freedom (Female, 23, secondary technical education, ethnic Georgian, Samtskhe-Javakheti).

Young people dislike traditions that, in their opinion, have lost their original meaning, such as the tradition of "Kelekhi" (consolation feast), which includes eating and excessive drinking after the funeral of the deceased and the tradition of "supra" (feast) and "tamada" (toast-giver), which is only associated with "drinking until being unconscious". According to young people, this is a "distorted form" of tradition, and "meaningless drinking and eating" is not Georgian tradition. Among frequently mentioned traditions are pagan holidays, such as "Lomisoba", which is still practiced nowadays. The tradition of blood feud in the mountainous regions was also mentioned, which is gradually declining on its own.

Hospitality is a good tradition, however... we should always re-think our values and culture, be open to new experiences and adapt to modernity. In this regard, I think we have some bad traditions, the first one I can think of is always forcing someone to eat or drink during the feast, sometimes we have no control over how much to drink, which escalates into something bad (Male, 21, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Adjara).

While some young people report particular traditions they would like to preserve (for example, hospitality) or change (for example, "Kelekhi"), some simply state that they want to maintain "Georgian identity", "traditions" and "customs" but find it difficult to explain what exactly is meant

by these concepts. Rarely do young people still talk about values that they would not preserve but find it difficult to explain what is meant by these values in particular. For instance, they believe values that “capitalism brought about” should not be preserved, although cannot specifically name such values. They also mention values that oppose personal freedom should not be preserved, although they find it difficult to specifically name or define such values.

3.2.3 Georgia’s similarities and differences with Europe, and other countries, issue of identity

3.2.3.1. Perception of Georgia in European space

Focus group participants mostly believe that Georgia is part of different cultures, and is geographically also located at the crossroads of two continents - Europe and Asia. However, some participants consider Georgia to be more a part of Europe, yet some of them consider it to be more a part of Asia, while some find Georgia to be an equal part of both.

Some participants believe that striving towards Europe is Georgia’s historical choice, and despite the differences or challenges, Georgia can be considered as part of Europe. While others base their arguments more on the similarities and differences between Georgia and Europe. Young people mentioned the similarities and differences in values and levels of development.

Participants believe Europe is more developed than Georgia, both economically and socially. Wages are higher, society is more tolerant and rational, the culture of personal space is higher, society is more individualistic than collectivist. From the perspective of interpersonal relations, this matter is connected to the problem of loneliness that is more acute in Europe than in Georgia, according to young people. Opinions regarding tolerance differ. Part of the respondents thinks that tolerance is a relatively new phenomenon in Europe, while compared to some Asian countries, Georgia is quite tolerant. Religion is named among important similarities, Christianity being the most common religion both in Georgia and Europe. Georgia is more similar to Europe in terms of forms of governance, constitution, and laws. However, participants note that these similarities are often more formal, as Georgia faces challenges in implementation. As an example, participants name the Labor Code of Georgia, which was adopted but is not being implemented.

I believe that this is our historical choice and not just a whim, the fact that it comes from the period of King Tamar’s rule and the tolerance that was persistent in the period of King David the Builder, is the real proof that European values fit into our mentality and perceptions... The fact that we have signed the Association Agreement and that we are moving forward is a clear enough statement of the fact that we are part of Europe (Male, 21, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Batumi).

The Collectiveness in Georgia is seen as the main similarity to Asia, while gender-related issues are often mentioned as the major difference. Young people believe that women in Asia have less freedom, that Asian societies are stricter towards women. However, some still think that Georgia is more related to Asia than Europe.

I think that Georgia is more Asian than European ... our collectivist lifestyle is more Asian, and we have more emphasis on emotions and feelings than European people... we have kind of right balance of Asian in us (Male, 25, higher Education, ethnic Georgian, Telavi).

Some young people believe that due to its geographical location, Georgia is a “part of everything”, both of European and Asian cultures. Some mentioned that it would be best if Georgia could take something good from each culture, not just “blindly” adopt everything, while also maintaining its identity. Drastically negative attitudes towards either Europe or Asia are rarely expressed. Some participants are against making comparisons with either Europe or Asia as nations and countries differ on both continents. It was also pointed out that the Georgian society can also be divided into two – some sharing European values, such as freedom, human rights, gender equality, while some share more Asian values, such as more collectiveness, and more constraints.

We are mixed ... We are half Asian, half European... Most of what we have is from both [cultures], education is European, as according to the history, we were receiving European education, we were going towards Europe in terms of education, we have been conquered for so long that now it is 50% Europe and 50% Asia (Male, 19, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Tbilisi).

Participants find it quite difficult to name common features with particular countries, however, they recall several countries that have similar traditions, characteristics, cuisine, socio-economic condition, domestic or foreign policy, geopolitical situation to Georgia. Similarities are found with Italians in terms of the character of people, and importance of the family values, while the Italian Mafia is compared to the Georgian “thieves in law”. Participants also compare Georgians with French in terms of love and quality of the wine. Georgia is compared to Ukraine in terms of geopolitics and the common enemy because Russia is a constant threat to both Georgia and Ukraine. Emphasis was also made on the similarities with post-Soviet countries (mainly Eastern Europe) based on their common historical (Soviet) past. In terms of government, Some radical assessments such as comparing Georgia to Russia, North Korea, and Sierra Leone were made, stating that these are the only countries where “slavery” and autocratic rule prevail. Young people see similarities with Turkey as well, which is also considered as a mix of Europe and Asia, where society is also religious and has difficulty accepting changes. Similarity with Russia in terms of religion is mentioned, together with other similarities linked to Russia’s domination over Georgia for centuries.

3.2.3.2. Perception of identity

When it comes to perceptions over identity, focus group participants often talk about different layers of identity - local, ethnic, national, regional - while only a few refuse to define their identity through these indicators.

Being Georgian is an important identity for almost all participants, associated with common history, culture, and traditions. Some put local or ethnic identity first and state that they are, for example, Mingrelian, Kist, Armenian, etc. first, and then Georgian. Ethnic Azerbaijani youth rarely see themselves as Georgian and mostly consider themselves as Azerbaijanis or Turks living in Georgia.

I can say that I am a Kist first and then Georgian... This is my personal opinion because our Kist community settled in Georgia two centuries ago, two hundred years is not a long time to fully assimilate with Georgians, to change or forget our values. However, I think that our community has passed this stage of integration very successfully because a large part, or rather I can say the most of us speak Georgian well ... I was born in Georgia, grew up here, learned how to walk here (Female, 21, higher education/student, Ethnically Kist, Kakheti).

Along with the national identity, young people often talk about regional identity. Most often, young people consider themselves Europeans and often recall Zurab Zhvania's famous phrase - "I am Georgian, and therefore I am European." Young people see common identity in mindset, attitudes, and culture. On rarer occasions, being Caucasian is also mentioned as an intermediate layer between Georgian and European identities, as some participants see common traditions and characteristics among Caucasian people, such as courage.

Identity is a psychological perception of one's self... I believe that I am Georgian, I am Caucasian and I am European. Mr. Zurab Zhvania also said that "I am Georgian, and therefore I am European", that is how I see my identity that is what I would say (Female, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Samegrelo).

While discussing identity, the role of the Soviet Union was also highlighted. While assessing the situation in Georgia, participants often refer to Soviet mentality as an obstacle towards democratic development. Similarly, it was noted that the Soviet mentality still plays a role in shaping Georgian identity, and consequently, being a part of post-Soviet space, some participants see this as one of the layers of their identity.

Whether we want it or not, I think we are post-Soviet people, because, in my case at least, our parents grew up in the Soviet regime, still projecting their views on us... and so at this point, I think we are post-Soviet people with minor aspirations towards Europe (Female, 18, secondary education, ethnic Georgian, Kutaisi).

3.2.4 Perception of the South Caucasus region

Opinions among focus group participants are divided on whether the South Caucasus can be considered as one region, although it is rarely perceived as united. While young people distinguish certain common characteristics and values among the countries of the region, domestic or foreign policy directions, ethnic and territorial conflicts divide more than unite this region.

Part of the participants believes that the name "region" cannot determine whether people of different nationalities and cultures should be "boiled in one pot". Every country in the region is under the influence of different powerful states, and everyone focuses on themselves so much that "they will not necessarily sacrifice themselves for one another." However, it was also mentioned that to reduce the influence of "other" states, countries of the region should cooperate more.

Despite the cultural or religious differences, participants believe that South Caucasus is united by "culturally rich", tradition-oriented, and religious societies. The South Caucasus also shares the common experience of being part of the Soviet Union, "constantly having similar problems" and "having the same fate" - mostly conflicts and tense relationships with neighboring countries.

Participants also discuss more specific similarities and differences between Georgia and other countries of the South Caucasus.

In terms of similarities between Armenia and Georgia, religion (despite the different denominations), values, architecture, and hospitality are frequently referred. The most commonly stated difference is the mono-ethnicity of Armenia, lower tolerance, and less acceptance towards foreigners. Ethnic

Armenian young people believe that Armenians and Georgians are very similar in terms of family or other values and traditions. Despite their religious similarities, ethnic Armenians residing in Georgia point out that Georgians and Azerbaijanis are more religious than Armenians, and that religious beliefs are more important for them.

When it comes to similarities between Azerbaijan and Georgia, the warm personality, sociability, politeness, hospitality, and architecture are mentioned. As for the general differences, the participants believe that Azerbaijan differs from Georgia in terms of religion and culture. More specifically, participants point out that gender inequality is more persistent in Azerbaijan, patriarchy and family cult are stronger, while society has less spark of protest against the government. Ethnic Azerbaijani young people hardly see any similarities between Georgia and Azerbaijan.

As for Georgia's role in the South Caucasus, some believe that it has not changed, while others believe that it has decreased. The opinion that Georgia's role increased is rare.

... [Georgia's role in the South Caucasus] was especially weak in the 90s, and we have huge leap since then, we can claim to be one of -if not the only - the leading countries in the South Caucasus. Moving towards Europe has also contributed a lot - made us stronger and more distinctive from these two countries (Male, 23, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Adjara).

Participants argue that Georgia has been a leader in the region in many directions, as the main transit corridor, as a "cultural center", etc. However, it has lost its leading position in recent years due to the weakening of democratic, cultural, and economic development, and the dampened Euro-Atlantic course. Participants also argue that Georgia's weak diplomatic role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict indicates Georgia's low influence in the region, both politically and militarily.

... I believe we were in a stronger position, more on the road to development, maybe some even took examples from us but now that they see that not only are we incapable of helping, we need help ourselves... imagine when a person is strong and evolving, you know you can ask them for some advice, they seem more important, but when you see someone slowly collapsing, you no longer care about their opinion much, right? This is what is happening today in this region, in my opinion (Male, 21, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Shida Kartli).

3.2.5 Issues young people face, their political activism and perception of political ideologies

Perception of problems and challenges that young people face vary significantly by region, although the most frequently reported issues are the same everywhere. Economic issues, such as unemployment and low wages, low level of education, low civic engagement and activism, and inertness were named by focus group participants.

The problem of youth unemployment was listed both among national and local challenges. The limited employment opportunities that young people have are mostly concentrated in the capital, while there are no similar prospects in the regions and villages, which also contributes to the abandonment of the rural areas. Some participants link the issue of employment to the issue of unequal access to education and argue that education should be funded not only for students

who receive high scores but for those who did not have access to quality education or individual tutors as well. Secondary education is considered relatively accessible but the issues of quality are pointed out, especially in terms of teacher qualifications. Together with limited employment and educational opportunities, young people struggle with self-realization opportunities as well.

After graduating from university, young people who live in rural areas do not have the opportunity to work there. So they have to go back to big cities, work for modest wages, and fail to build a career. This creates a serious problem of rural depopulation – a problem that is especially prevalent in Upper Svaneti today, as villages are being abandoned by the young people, many villages are already deserted, and we may lose our culture and traditions because of it (Male, 21, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Svaneti).

The issues of road infrastructure and transportation were mentioned as creating barriers to social life outside Tbilisi, in both rural settlements and other urban areas. Along with transportation, focus group participants mentioned the lack of youth spaces, cultural spaces (cinema, theater, exhibitions, cultural evenings, etc.), recreational and entertainment zones (parks/squares, amusement parks), lack of sports infrastructure. Restrictions on electricity and internet access have been reported in some regions, posing many obstacles to young people, especially during the pandemic when classes, as well as many other activities, are held online.

There are no spaces for young people in Telavi and it is often misperceived that we only ask for clubs and bars... For example, there are many young people, children in Telavi who skate and there is not a single skate park... There is no decent street lighting and they have to head back home around eight or nine in the evening... (Male, 25, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Telavi).

When discussing the challenges facing the country, and the problems facing young people, the street mentality was mentioned in some regions, a “thieves in law” lifestyle that young people follow from a very young age. The issue of marijuana and alcohol abuse has also been discussed. Some participants believe that decriminalization has exacerbated this problem. Excessive use of other drugs among young people was also named as an acute problem.

The street mentality is a big problem for me too, and unfortunately, I know many people in person, I am talking about minors who go in that direction and already live like that. From my point of view [young people] are not interested in politics at all, all they care about is to have someone in politics who understands their criminal mentality (Female, 23, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Kutaisi).

Although the quantitative data show that a large proportion of young people (57%) consider their peers to be at least partially active politically, focus group discussions show a different picture. Participants noted that young people are either passively or not at all engaged in civic and political life. Low interest in political participation is primarily explained by the lack of choice, an unchanging political spectrum, and the constant anticipation of election fraud. Young people have a sense of nihilism and hopelessness, given the situation in the country. According to young people, interest in current political events is higher than interest in participation. Young people also point out that participation in political life does not necessarily mean joining any party, rather understanding the country's political life and making informed choices, for instance, during the elections.

Young people are passively involved in political processes ... Only very few participate in elections and the proportion of young people in these few is even less. Considering the political processes in the country, young people probably get a feeling of hopelessness, nihilism, etc., and therefore believe that nothing can be fixed. That is why involvement is so passive. I think [young people] receive [information] because, in today's reality, I cannot imagine being interested in something and not being able to find it, especially from social networks. There are too many information networks, making it impossible not to receive information, I do not think there is a problem with that. The problem is that when they see what is going on, they get a feeling of hopelessness and, therefore, lose interest (Male, 25, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Kutaisi).

It was also mentioned that young people are underrepresented in political parties, and thus, in local governments. Even when there are young candidates, public confidence in them is low, and middle-aged or older candidates are still prioritized during elections. Political parties should start recruiting younger and more progressive people. It is also important for political parties to focus their election programs and campaigns on the interests and needs of young people to increase youth participation in elections. Young people in politics are crucial in order to replace the politicians who still hold the Soviet mentality.

When local government elections are held and the government is staffed, society favors older candidates over young ones. For example, if you participate in elections, being young might be the only reason for low support. This is what is happening in our society and what government should change – there should be more young people in local government (Female, 28, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Imereti).

Although there is an agreement on young people's passivity in political and civic life, some believe that young people are more active today when compared to previous generations. Some even argue that if only older generations were active in previous years, now young people are more visible at the protest rallies. For some, the problem is that young people's words "have less power".

Opinions regarding sources for current political events in the country are divided. Almost everyone agrees that access to information is not an issue in Georgia today, although access to objective information is problematic, as most media outlets are biased. Ethnic minority youth cite the language barrier as one of the challenges to both accessing information and political participation.

Focus group participants believe that the state should pay more attention to young people's needs and take certain steps to increase youth political and civic activism. Social media campaigns that both state and political parties can carry out are mentioned as one of the means to achieving this. Part of the participants highlight the role of education and note that schools should stir interest in and raise awareness of political issues among youth.

For example, there is such subject at school - civic education, which should become more informative, teach children the benefits of participation in governance and so on. There are issues that civic education addresses, although children need more information if we want to build the society we want to live in (Male, 26, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Kakheti).

Some of the focus group participants are less familiar with political ideologies, as well as of ideologies of Georgian political parties, while others are more knowledgeable in this matter. Strong affiliation with any ideology is rare. Liberalism is mentioned most often.

A few participants referred to ideologies specifically, like left-wing, right-wing, and centrist ideologies or libertarianism, conservatism, and social democracy. However, arguments behind any reported ideological affiliation are rarely presented. Those who mention liberalism and libertarianism justify it with the respect for freedom of speech, right to property and personal freedom, while conservatives justify their position with the respect for tradition.

Participants think that political parties in Georgia rarely follow their officially declared ideologies, that ideologies are only for display, that the ideology of Georgian parties is “making money”, “divide and rule”, that the parties are often populist, often divert from the declared ideology and direction, and “are capable of doing everything” to achieve their goals.

Unfortunately, today our political parties are not committed to ideologies. They are populists and focus more on the population, on how to get votes. None of the big political parties are loyal to any ideology and their ideology is constantly changing. They adapt the ideology that works best for them in a given instance (Male, 28, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Svaneti).

It was also noted that Georgians are poorly aware of ideologies and rarely vote for any party for the sake of their ideological stance. While speaking about ideology, some young people state that the closest ideology to them is “democracy”, which is not “fulfilled” by any political party. Regarding this, young people often recall the political party “Girchi”, which, according to some of the participants, is libertarian. Apart from that, young people cannot name the ideologies of any particular party. However, the general perception is that Georgian political parties are closer to conservatism.

The closest one to me is libertarianism, it was called classical liberalism before, and as for political parties, none of them [follow this ideology] except for “Girchi”, which follows classical liberalism. Our [parties] are closer to conservatism (Male, 25, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Kutaisi).

3.2.6 Conflict resolution and foreign policy assessment

There are rather nihilistic attitudes towards the resolution of the conflict in the occupied territories, although the participants still talk about the role of the parties involved, as well as of various international organizations.

The Russian factor is extensively discussed, and participants’ opinions are divided. Some of them believe that communication and normalization of diplomatic relations with Russia are necessary given that it is a strong country and Georgia is not doing anything positive by irritating it. Others, on the contrary, believe that Georgia should not avoid irritating Russia and take more drastic steps. Participants noted that a change of government in Russia could lead to changes in the occupied territories because historical experience proves that the withdrawal of powerful dictators is

associated with change. On the other hand, some believe that centuries of experience of relations with Russia have proved that diplomatic relations with Russia are impossible and that Russia cannot be trusted.

Participants do not believe NATO can play any role in resolving the conflict, considering it will not accept Georgia while its territories remain occupied. Thus, participants believe that Georgia must either reclaim the territories and join NATO, or give up the occupied territories to join NATO. However, NATO membership can be a guarantee of security for the country, protection from Russian aggression, and further loss of territories. Some participants also argue that joining NATO will lead to more aggression from Russia. The process of resolving conflicts can be accelerated by European integration, although fewer arguments have been brought up regarding this matter.

Generally, young people are more in favor of diplomatic means of conflict resolution. When it comes to the prospect of returning the territories through negotiation, participants point out the necessity for negotiations with both - the separatist governments and Russia.

In my opinion, we will not be able to resolve relations with Russia through war and arms, because half of the world finds it difficult to confront a state like Russia. That is why it is unacceptable for me to resolve relations with them through constant war... Negotiations are the most important for me, I do not see any other way of communicating with Russia and returning lost territories (Male, 20, higher education/student, ethnic Georgian, Samegrelo).

It was just mentioned and I agree that no matter how strong the army is, I do not accept returning territories through military means. It is best to negotiate, but as far as I know, [Abkhazians and Ossetians] do not want to rejoin us and to be with us (Female, 23, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Racha).

Young people are mostly against the idea of returning the occupied territories by force, believing that a small country like Georgia cannot stand against Russia's military power, and the war in 2008 is brought up as an example of such a tragic confrontation. Despite this, a small part of the participants approve the return of territories by force and see the country's military empowerment as necessary condition for this. They believe this will also protect the country from further loss of territories.

Young people consider the economic and democratic development of Georgia to be of high importance in the conflict resolution process. If Georgia is economically and democratically developed and attractive, Abkhazians and Ossetians might want to return to Georgia. Participants also mentioned the importance of information campaigns, to provide young people living in the occupied territories with information about how good it is to live in a "free world". Sometimes, the importance of joining the EU is mentioned to achieve economic and democratic attractiveness. Generally, participants are not against the matter of granting autonomy to the regions, except for rare exceptions.

As for the role of the occupied territories, it was mentioned that nothing will change unless Abkhazians and Ossetians themselves want to return to Georgia. To achieve this, the generation that completely understands the Russian factor and sees Georgia as an alternative should come

in charge, which is unlikely. Although, this might happen if Georgia chooses a friendly, diplomatic, peaceful means to resolve conflicts.

The war of 2008 is a clear example that we cannot harm [Russia] by force, especially since it is a country a hundred times bigger than us and it has way advanced military equipment. More negotiations are needed. The most important thing now is that Abkhazians and Ossetians do not want to be with us, to be part of us, not only politics and government are at fault, they also do not think they should be part of Georgia (Female, 24, higher education, ethnic Georgian, Racha).

Focus group participants believe that the current government is not successful on the international level. One of the participants notes that the current government is “the least successful we have ever had.” Participants also recall the current government’s specific failures on the international arena, such as letters of “scolding” and “finger-pointing” from the US government, tensions around Davit Gareji, breach of the April 19 agreement, and weak political ties with Europe. It was also mentioned that events that took place around Tbilisi Pride in June 2021 “beheaded” Georgia in front of the international society. Young people find visa liberalization to be the only achievement, while other examples are rarely mentioned.



4. Conclusions

(Summary of the Quantitative and Qualitative components)

This report presents data on political activism and values of young people aged 18 to 29 living in Georgia. More specifically, the data from the study presents young people's perceptions around and assessments of the following issues:

- One's and their peers' political participation and activism;
- Country's current situation;
- Influence of religious institutions and matters of their funding;
- Country's foreign policy;
- Issues related to the occupied territories;
- Important and less important values in Georgia;
- Similarities and differences between Georgia and other countries;
- South Caucasus region;
- Political ideologies;
- Perceptions over one's identity.

The data and analysis presented in the previous sections lead to the following conclusions:

Conclusions derived from quantitative data analysis:

- Two-thirds of young people assess the level of their peer's political activism quite positively. Young people who think that their peers are not so much or not at all engaged in political processes in the country (28% in total), mostly explain such passivity by little interest in politics (41%), and concerns over other issues (e.g., education, work, etc.) (29%).
- Young people in Georgia believe that their peers demonstrate their opinion through public protests in several cases: violation of human rights or freedom (46%), issues related to Russian occupation (35%), and pro-Russian actions (e.g., Gavrilov's visit) (28%). These answer options were more frequently reported by young people living in the capital, compared to those living in rural settlements. Further, violation of human rights and freedom was more frequently reported by young women (52%), compared to young men (40%).
- A large number of young people reported being politically active only during the elections: 67% stated that they had participated in the 2020 parliamentary elections. More young people living in urban (69%) and rural settlements (71%) reported having voted in the 2020 elections compared to those living in the capital (60%). Further, only 29% of young people reported that there is a political party in Georgia close to their views.
- Out of the values listed in the quantitative questionnaire, the most commonly reported ones were country's security (47%), human rights (40%), personal security (30%), and economic well-being (25%). More young women seem to value human rights (46%) and personal safety (35%), compared to young men (34% and 25%, respectively). Young people from rural settlements were more likely to value the country's security (51%) compared to those living in the capital (41%), while young people in the capital find economic prosperity and the rule of law more valuable.
- While discussing issues facing Georgia, young people most frequently mentioned economic and/or social issues (46%). This was followed by education (28%), territories/occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (26%), and healthcare (including Covid) (24%). According to young people, fields that government should promote are education (48%), agriculture (33%), and medicine/healthcare (25%).
- The majority of young people (64%) think that human rights are partially protected in Georgia, and only 8% report that they are mostly protected. More than a quarter (27%) believe that human rights are not protected at all. More young people living in urban settlements (31%)

and the capital (32%) think that human rights are not protected in Georgia, compared to those living in rural settlements (21%).

- Roughly a third of young people (33%) reported that “thieves in law” are less popular in Georgia compared to the period before 2012, while another third (32%) finds it more popular today. More young people think that “thieves in law” is less popular now compared to the period before 2012 in the capital (39%), than in urban (30%) and rural settlements (29%).
- 62% of young people think that the Georgian Orthodox Church has either very big (28%) or big (34%) influence on Georgia’s population. At the same time young people find the impact of Islam as a religion on the population of Georgia to be quite small.
- The majority of young people (more than 80%) find Georgia’s integration into the EU and NATO important. All the while, a large proportion of young people (44%) believe that Georgia’s foreign policy direction is developing towards the West. However, on the other hand, almost a third (30%) state that this latter is developing more towards Russia. Roughly two-thirds of young people find Georgia’s current policy towards Russia unacceptable. 40% of young people consider the United States to be the country’s main political partner, and for 68%, Russia is the main enemy.
- The majority of young people find Georgia’s current policy of returning the occupied territories not so effective (30%) or very ineffective (52%). A larger share of young people living in the capital (64%) finds Georgia’s policy of reintegrating the occupied territories to be very ineffective, compared to young people living in rural (40%) and urban areas (53%).
- The majority of young people state that they never (76%) or rarely (10%) have any interaction with people currently living in Abkhazia or South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region (including both in-person and online interaction). They rarely receive any information about the ongoing processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region. Those who receive at least some information, name social networks (72%), or television (37%) as the main source.

Conclusions derived from qualitative data analysis:

- When discussing what they do and do not like in Georgia today, focus group participants touch upon numerous aspects of the country’s life. They do not like the severe economic, social, and political situation. The most commonly named issues are poverty, unemployment, low wages, the education system, constant political tensions, and unresolved conflicts.
- Interpersonal relations and Georgian culture are among the most commonly named positive aspects of the country’s life. Young people appreciate warm and supportive people, Georgian nature, folklore, and achievements in sports.
- The most positively assessed historical events of the past 30 years are the restoration of independence, the Rose Revolution, the democratic transfer of power in 2012, the European Union Association Agreement, and visa liberalization. While among the most negative ones are conflicts and wars that have occurred after the restoration of independence, the dispersal of peaceful demonstrations by different political authorities, and public controversies regarding homophobia.
- Young people want to live in a democratic, secular, and economically prospered country, with sustainable peace and development, and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Among other issues, safe and decent working environment, affordable and quality education are often mentioned as of utmost importance.
- Focus group participants find it difficult to argumentatively talk about the values in Georgia, and often discuss values together with the nature of the Georgian people, and Georgian traditions. Participants often point out the importance of preserving values related to interpersonal relationships, such as hospitality, family bonds, and mutual support. However, young people are against preserving the “distorted” traditions.

- Focus group participants mostly believe that Georgia is part of different cultures, and is geographically also located at the crossroads of two continents - Europe and Asia. Most participants consider Georgia to be part of Europe more, however, some of them consider it to be a part of Asia, while some find Georgia to be an equal part of both. Focus group participants argue that despite huge differences in terms of development, Europe is Georgia's historical choice and that Georgia is closer to Europe in terms of religion or values.
- Almost all focus group participants agree that being Georgian is an important identity, although several different layers of identity are often mentioned - local, ethnic, national, and regional. Some of the participants put either local or ethnic identity before national identity. While discussing regional identity, the most commonly reported identity after national identity, is being European.
- South Caucasus is rarely perceived as a united region. While young people distinguish certain common characteristics and values among the countries of the region, domestic or foreign policy directions, ethnic and territorial conflicts divide this region more than unite it.
- Perception of problems and challenges that young people face vary significantly by region, although the most frequently reported challenges are the same everywhere. Economic challenges, such as unemployment and low wages, low level of education, low civic engagement and activism, inertness are named. On a regional level, young people are mostly concerned about the underdeveloped infrastructure, lack of transport, and youth spaces.
- Focus group participants mostly believe that young people are either passively or not at all involved in civic and political life. Low interest in political participation is mainly explained by the lack of choice and lack of change of the political spectrum, the constant expectation of election fraud. Moreover, the lack of interest from political parties to involve young people in their activities, little confidence in young politicians among the Georgian public, and low civic awareness amongst young people also discourage young people. Nevertheless, participants find that the civic and political engagement of young people has been increasing compared to previous years.
- Some of the focus group participants are less familiar with political ideologies, as well as of ideologies of Georgian political parties, while others are more knowledgeable in this matter. Strong affiliation with any ideology is rare, and arguments behind any reported ideological affiliation are rarely presented. Most frequently, young people mention liberalism and libertarianism, explaining their sympathies with respect for personal freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of property.
- Participants think that political parties in Georgia rarely follow their officially declared ideologies; that ideologies are only for display. It was also noted that Georgians are poorly aware of ideologies and rarely vote for any party for the sake of their ideological stance.
- Attitudes towards resolving the conflict in the occupied territories are quite nihilistic. Generally, young people are more in favor of diplomatic means of conflict resolution. When it comes to the prospect of returning the territories through negotiation, participants point out the necessity for negotiations with both - the separatist governments and Russia. Participants believe Russia has a great impact on the resolution of conflicts, and that there is the difficulty of talking with Russia either diplomatically or militarily. Participants perceive NATO and the EU as a guarantor of security but believe that NATO will not accept Georgia while its territories remain occupied, neither will it help Georgia to reclaim them. The only way for Georgia to reintegrate Abkhazians and Ossetians is through its economic and democratic development so that Abkhazians and Ossetians themselves are willing to return to Georgia.
- Focus group participants believe that the current government is not successful on the international level. Young people find visa liberalization to be the only achievement.



Annexes

Annex 1: Cross-tabulations by age groups and settlement type³

Table 1. In your opinion, to what extent are young people involved in political processes today in Georgia? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Fully involved	15	8	6	7	13	10
Partially involved	58	56	56	52	62	57
Not so much involved	20	23	23	26	19	22
Not at all involved	4	6	7	8	3	6
Don't know	3	6	9	8	4	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2. In your opinion, what is/are the reason(s) young people are not involved in political processes? (Respondents could choose up to three answers) (Asked to 28% who think that young people are either not so much or not at all involved in the ongoing political processes in the country) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Young people are not interested in politics	39	44	40	38	45	41
Young people have other things to worry about (e.g., study, job, etc.)	18	33	34	28	30	29
Young people have no hope that the situation will improve (e.g., “there is no hope for Georgia”, “no one cares about the people”, “we won't be able to change anything anyways”, etc.)	20	28	21	25	19	22
Political party campaigns are not oriented on getting young people interested	28	13	23	20	25	22
There are no young politicians and youth parties in Georgia	21	15	13	16	17	16
Young people do not like any of the parties	18	11	17	19	11	15
Politics is perceived negatively by young people (e.g., “politics is a dirty business”, “only people not succeeding in other fields do politics”, “politics is unsuitable for a normal person”, etc.)	23	12	10	15	14	15
Because of the pandemic		2	5	1	5	3
Other	8	1	4	5	3	4
Don't know		3	0	0	2	1

3. In some cases the answer options do not add up to 100% which is because of the fractions and rounding, or because the respondents could choose more than one answer option.

Table 3. In your opinion, in which cases do young people in Georgia express their opinion by going to rallies? (Respondents could give multiple answers) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
In case of restriction of human rights or freedom (e.g., Basiani events)	52	43	42	40	52	46
In case of issues related to Russian occupation	39	37	30	35	35	35
In cases of pro-Russian actions (e.g., Gavrilov's visit)	34	28	24	31	26	28
In case of severe social or economic problems	15	16	18	18	15	16
In case of election fraud	15	16	13	13	15	14
In case of environmental pollution or other environmental issues	13	9	12	11	12	12
Other	2	1	1	3	0	2
Young people are going to rallies in all cases	17	19	18	18	18	18
Young people are going to rallies in no cases	1	1	1	2	0	1
Don't know	4	5	10	7	6	7

Table 4. Are you personally involved in political or civil processes in the following form: (% of those who answered "yes") (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Civil activist (e.g., participating in solving problems in the region)	8	7	11	11	6	9
Member of a youth movement	3	3	4	4	3	3
Member of a political party	1	3	4	4	2	3
Member of a youth, political club at a higher education institution	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other	6	3	5	4	5	5

Table 5. Did you participate in the 2020 Parliamentary elections? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Yes	60	69	71	69	65	67
No	37	25	24	27	31	29
I was not yet 18	2	4	4	4	3	4
Don't remember	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6. Is there a political party in Georgia, you feel is close to your views? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Yes	29	29	28	32	25	29
No	62	64	65	59	69	64
There is a party, which partially shares my views	7	5	3	6	4	5
Don't know	1	1	2	2	1	2
Refuse to answer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 7. From the list, what is the most valuable to you? (Respondents could choose up to three answers) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Country's security	41	48	51	46	48	47
Human rights	41	40	39	34	46	40
Personal safety	29	29	32	25	35	30
Economic prosperity	27	27	21	25	25	25
Religious belief	13	14	19	18	13	16
De-occupation of the country	18	14	12	15	14	14
Rule of law	17	13	10	14	11	13
Equality	8	9	10	10	8	9
Environmental protection	4	5	4	5	4	5
Other	2	0	0	2	0	1
Everything	20	19	19	19	20	19

Table 8. What are the three main challenges facing Georgia? (Respondents could choose up to three answers) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Economic and/or social issues (e.g., unemployment, job loss)	42	45	51	44	48	46
Education	31	26	28	26	30	28
Problems related to the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/ Occupation	30	26	22	26	26	26
Healthcare (including Covid)	22	22	27	19	29	24
Human rights and democracy	18	16	17	16	19	17
Threat of further violation of Georgian territories	15	19	16	15	18	17
Crime	16	17	16	14	18	16
Destabilization in the country	15	17	12	16	13	14

Lack of opportunities for personal development	10	11	14	11	13	12
Environmental protection	4	6	6	6	5	5
Threat of changing pro-western foreign policy	5	3	2	4	3	3
Other	1	0		1	1	1
Everything	16	15	14	16	14	15

Table 9. In your opinion, development of which field should the government support in the first place? (Respondents could choose up to 2 answers) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Education	53	49	42	43	52	48
Agriculture	29	26	42	37	30	33
Medical field/Healthcare	23	29	24	18	32	25
Tourism	9	8	10	9	9	9
Social protection	7	9	9	7	11	9
Defense	8	9	7	10	6	8
Business	9	6	4	7	5	6
Environmental protection	5	5	7	5	7	6
Culture	4	5	5	4	5	4
Sport	3	3	5	7	1	4
Science	4	2	3	3	3	3
High technologies	4	2	1	4	1	2
Infrastructure	2	2	2	3	1	2
Engineering	2	0	1	1	1	1
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1
Every field	9	13	10	11	10	11

Table 10. Human rights in Georgia are... (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Mostly protected	9	7	7	10	5	8
Partially protected	59	61	71	64	65	64
Not protected	32	31	21	25	29	27
Don't know/Refuse to answer	0	1	1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 11. In your opinion, what is the attitude of young people towards “thieves in law” compared to the period before 2012? “Thieves in law” is ... (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
More popular	28	37	32	30	34	32
As popular as it was	19	14	16	18	15	17
As unpopular as it was	4	4	4	4	4	4
Less popular	39	30	29	30	35	33
Don't know what “thieves in law” is		1	2	1	1	1
Don't know/Refuse to answer	10	14	17	17	11	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 12. If you had the opportunity, in which country would you go to work legally? (Respondents could choose multiple answers) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
USA	28	24	18	24	22	23
Germany	21	18	21	17	24	20
France	6	4	7	6	6	6
Italy	5	4	5	4	6	5
Spain	3	1	2	3	2	2
Israel	2	3	1	3	2	2
Turkey	2	1	3	1	3	2
Russia	1	1	2	2	0	1
Greece	1	1		1	1	1
Other	24	14	17	22	14	18
Doesn't matter/ would go everywhere	0	1	1	1	1	1
Nowhere	27	37	38	34	34	34
Don't know/Refuse to answer	5	6	3	3	6	4

Table 13. In your opinion, to what extent is the level of education in Georgian higher education institutions satisfactory? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Completely satisfactory	2	6	6	3	6	5
Satisfactory	41	49	57	46	53	49
Not satisfactory	42	33	25	34	32	33
Not at all satisfactory	13	7	4	9	7	8
Don't know	3	5	7	7	2	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 14. In your opinion, how big or small is the influence of Georgian Orthodox Church on the population of Georgia? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very big influence	35	28	22	32	24	28
Big influence	37	35	32	34	35	34
Average	20	27	33	23	31	27
Small influence	4	4	2	4	3	4
No influence at all	1	3	4	2	3	2
Don't know/Refuse to answer	3	4	7	6	4	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 15. In your opinion, how big or small is the influence of Islam religion on the population of Georgia? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very big influence	1	2	2	2	1	2
Big influence	5	7	7	6	7	6
Average	18	22	29	21	25	23
Small influence	47	37	31	36	39	38
No influence at all	21	20	18	19	19	19
Don't know/Refuse to answer	8	12	14	15	8	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 16. In your opinion, should the Georgian Orthodox Church be financed from the state budget or not? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Yes	43	58	60	54	53	54
No	45	26	24	30	33	32
Yes, but with less amount	7	7	7	7	6	7
Don't know/Refuse to answer	5	9	9	8	8	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 17. In your opinion, should other religious institutions/groups be financed from the state budget or not? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Wom- en	
Yes	30	35	40	34	37	35
No	63	52	46	54	53	54
Don't know/Refuse to answer	7	13	13	12	10	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 18. How important is Georgia's integration into the European Union for you? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very important	55	52	44	47	53	50
Quite important	29	32	37	31	35	33
Not that important	11	11	11	13	9	11
Not at all important	4	3	4	6	1	4
Don't know	0	2	4	3	1	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 19. How important is Georgia's integration into NATO for you? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very important	56	54	45	48	55	51
Quite important	26	28	34	28	32	30
Not that important	12	13	13	14	11	13
Not at all important	5	3	5	7	2	4
Don't know/Refuse to answer	1	3	3	2	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 20. In your opinion, in which direction is Georgia's foreign policy developing, more towards Russia, or more towards the West? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
More towards Russia	39	31	21	28	32	30
More towards the West	36	42	53	41	47	44
Towards both directions	4	5	5	5	4	4
In neither direction	7	4	3	7	2	4
Don't know/Refuse to answer	14	19	18	19	15	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 21. In your opinion, Georgia's policy towards Russia today is... (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very accommodating/submissive	27	21	13	20	20	20
More accommodating/submissive than firm	36	27	32	33	32	32
Neutral	22	31	32	27	30	28
More firm than accommodating/submissive	5	7	8	6	8	7
Very firm	2	2	3	2	3	2
Don't know/Refuse to answer	8	12	11	12	8	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 22. How acceptable or unacceptable is Georgia's current policy towards Russia? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Absolutely acceptable	1	2	3	2	2	2
More acceptable, than unacceptable	16	16	20	19	16	18
More unacceptable, than acceptable	34	35	36	32	38	35
Not at all acceptable	39	30	29	31	34	33
Don't know/Refuse to answer	11	17	12	15	11	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 23. In your opinion, which country is Georgia's main political partner? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
USA	42	42	37	37	43	40
Ukraine	5	5	3	6	2	4
Azerbaijan	1	3	8	4	4	4
Russia	4	2	4	5	2	3
Turkey	4	3	3	4	3	3
Germany	1	3	3	2	2	2
Other	6	5	6	6	6	6
None	16	13	10	15	11	13
All	0	1	1	1	0	1
Don't know/Refuse to answer	22	24	26	22	25	24
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 24. In your opinion, which country is Georgia's main political enemy? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Russia	71	72	62	63	72	68
Turkey	3	3	6	6	2	4
USA	3	1	1	2	0	1
Armenia	0	0	1	1	0	1
Other	1	0	1	2	0	1
None	9	9	13	10	10	10
All	3	3	2	5	1	3
Don't know/Refuse to answer	9	13	15	12	13	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 25. In your opinion, how effective or ineffective is Georgia’s current policy of returning the occupied territories? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very effective	2	2	3	2	2	2
Quite effective	5	7	13	7	10	9
Not so effective	22	30	38	29	32	30
Very ineffective	64	53	40	53	52	52
There is no policy of returning the occupied territories	4	3	2	4	2	3
Don’t know/Refuse to answer	3	4	4	5	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 26. How often do you interact with people currently living in Abkhazia or the South Ossetia / Tskhinvali region (including both in-person and online communication)? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very often	3	2	3	3	3	3
Often	6	8	4	7	5	6
Sometimes	4	5	6	5	5	5
Rarely	12	8	10	11	9	10
Never	75	77	77	75	77	76
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 27. How often do you receive information about the ongoing processes/events in Abkhazia? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very often	3	1	4	3	3	3
Often	13	14	8	12	11	11
Sometimes	17	16	15	17	15	16
Rarely	45	43	45	42	47	45
Never	22	25	27	26	23	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 28. How often do you receive information about the ongoing processes/events in the South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region? (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Very often	2	0	2	1	2	1
Often	10	11	7	10	9	9
Sometimes	16	16	16	15	16	16
Rarely	49	45	46	44	50	47
Never	24	27	29	29	24	27
Don't know/Refuse to answer	0	1		0		0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 29. What is/are your main source(s) of information regarding the ongoing events in Abkhazia/South Ossetia? (Respondents could give up to 2 answers) (Asked to 76% who said that they still receive information about the ongoing processes in South Ossetia or Abkhazia to some extent) (%)

	Settlement Type			Sex		Total
	Capital	Urban	Rural	Men	Women	
Social Networks	73	74	70	72	73	72
Television (excluding online transmissions)	31	40	40	37	37	37
Family members, Friends, relatives, colleagues living in Abkhazia/South Ossetia	12	14	12	12	13	12
Websites of media sources	11	8	9	10	9	9
Family members, Friends, relatives, colleagues living in Georgia	10	6	8	10	6	8
Educational institutions	1	0	0	0	1	1
Other	3	1	1	1	1	1

Annex 2: Focus group participant characteristics

Number of focus groups participants by settlement type and sex.

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Tbilisi	4	4	8
2	Telavi (urban)	4	4	8
3	Kakheti (rural)	4	5	9
4	Shida Kartli (rural)	4	4	8
5	Kvemo Kartli (Ethnic Azerbaijani youth from urban settlements)	4	4	8
6	Kvemo Kartli (Ethnic Azerbaijani youth from rural settlements)	4	1	5
7	Kutaisi (urban)	4	4	8
8	Imereti (rural)	4	4	8
9	Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ethnic Armenian youth from urban settlements)	4	4	8
10	Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ethnic Armenians youth from rural settlements)	4	4	8
11	Samtskhe-Javakheti (Ethnic Georgian youth from urban settlements)	4	4	8
12	Batumi (urban)	4	4	8
13	Adjara (rural)	3	5	8
14	Zugdidi (urban)	4	4	8
15	Samegrelo (rural)	3	5	8
16	Svaneti (rural)	4	4	8
17	Racha (rural)	2	6	8
	Total	64	70	134