**caucasus
analytical
digest**

GENERATION CHANGE IN GEORGIA? CAUCASUS BAROMETER RESULTS

Special Editor: Koba Turmanidze (CRRC-Georgia)

The Story of Generation Change? The Caucasus Barometer 2013–2024

Introduction by Special Editor Koba Turmanidze (CRRC-Georgia)

The key observation from the Caucasus Barometer survey, the most extensive publicly available study in the region, is that public opinion and attitudes evolve at a gradual pace. However, recent political developments in Georgia have sparked a debate on whether we are witnessing a relatively rapid and substantial shift in attitudes, particularly among the youth. The younger generation passionately protested the Government of Georgia's attempt to legislate against civil society and media independence in 2023. The protest was so intense that the government retracted the draft law. However, the law resurfaced in 2024 and was passed amidst massive demonstrations by the young generation cohort once again.

The 2024 wave of the Caucasus Barometer, conducted during widespread demonstrations against the government's anti-democratic actions, raises the question of whether the Barometer has effectively captured a shift in attitudes, especially among different age cohorts, amidst these significant events. This special issue will address this question by examining three interconnected topics: media consumption patterns, attitudes toward political participation, and perceptions of the past.

In the first article, Makhare Atchaidze overviews the Georgian public's media consumption patterns, including trust in media, primary information sources, and social media. The author tracks significant changes over a decade—between 2013 and 2024 and shows how the Georgian public has navigated the information age, mainly moving away from traditional media to digital platforms. Using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, the article pays particular attention to the increasing generational gap regarding trust, primary information sources, internet usage, and activities on social media platforms. The article's findings of these changing media consumption patterns have profound implications for Georgia's democratic development, underlining the need for continued monitoring of trends in the future.

In the second article, Koba Turmanidze and Mariam Gabedava look at the increased generation gap over a decade regarding various forms of political participation. The authors analyse attitudes to democracy, trust in democratic institutions, and attitudes to formal and informal channels of political participation across generational cohorts. The article shows an overall increase of differences across age cohorts regarding most aspects of political participation. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that while the youngest age cohort is the most demanding towards democratic institutions and supports informal political engagement, it is significantly less likely to use formal channels of political participation than older age cohorts.

In the third article, Salome Dolidze and Tamar Khoshtaria examine the evolution of public opinion regarding Georgia's recent past. Specifically, the authors look at perceptions regarding the Soviet Union, perceptions of current living conditions compared to the Soviet era, and attitudes toward Stalin. The study analyses the scale of changes in perceptions by using the most recent wave of the Caucasus Barometer and comparing it to the data from earlier waves. The findings suggest that while the attitudes towards Stalin, as well as towards the Soviet Union, have always differed among various age groups, the generally positive assessment of the dissolution of the Soviet Union has increased significantly. In addition, using regression analysis, the article concludes that the younger generation is less likely to hold positive sentiments about the Soviet Union and is more likely to hold pro-Western values.

Together, these three articles paint a picture of significant and growing discrepancies between generational cohorts in Georgian society. Despite Georgia's democratic backsliding over the decade, all generational cohorts maintain their allegiance to the ideals of democracy and accountability. At the same time, the overall shift from traditional to online media and growing distrust of the media and democratic institutions is evident, especially among the young. Moreover, the generational gap applies not only to the attitudes toward current events but also to the events from the past. The critical assessment of the democratic institutions points towards disillusionment with the workings of these institutions, and the youngest cohort is most potent in its criticism. While the youngest, most critical and dynamic cohort is so far abstaining from participation in traditional democratic institutions, like voting, instead favouring non-electoral methods of participation, the upcoming crucial parliamentary elections in October 2024 will inevitably serve as a litmus test for their willingness to act upon their convictions and values.

Koba Turmanidze
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ANALYSIS

Tracking Georgia's Media, Internet Usage and Perceptions Over a Decade

Makhare Atchaidze (CRRC-Georgia)

Abstract

The article is an overview of the Georgian public's media consumption patterns, including trust in media, primary information sources, and social media, using data from CRRC Georgia's Caucasus Barometer surveys. The study tracks significant changes that occurred over a decade—between 2013 and 2024. It explores how the Georgian public has navigated the information age, mainly moving away from traditional media to digital platforms. The article also highlights the rise in everyday internet usage and the dominance of social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube among younger and more educated users. Using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, this study gives particular attention to the increasing generational gap in terms of trust, primary information sources, internet usage, and activities on social media platforms. This analysis additionally highlights an increasingly polarized sense of trust in the media, with a large portion of the population expressing scepticism towards all TV channels.

Introduction

In 2024, Georgia ranks 103rd out of 180 countries on RSF's (Reporters Without Borders) World Press Freedom Index. This indicates a significant decline from the previous year when the country was ranked 77th. The RSF highlights several challenges, including government influence on press freedom and creating a hostile environment for independent and opposition media. There are increasing verbal and physical attacks on journalists, along with legislative attempts to marginalize independent media and to restrict free speech (RSF, 2024).

Generally, Georgia's information landscape is considered pluralistic, with television being the primary source of information, followed by social media (Keshelashvili et al 2021, p. 5). According to the TV audience measuring company Tri Media Intelligence, most people watch TV Imedi (24.5%), TV Rustavi-2 (7.3%), Georgian Public Broadcaster Channel 1 (6.7%), and POSTV (6.5%) (tmi.ge, 2024).

Although Georgia's media landscape is considered pluralistic, there is still controversy about this. Some TV channels are believed to be fully, or at least partially, controlled by government actors, including TV Imedi, PosTV, and Rustavi 2. These channels typically broadcast the Georgian Dream party's partisan views with a pro-government and often propaganda-oriented editorial policy. There is also critical and oppositional media, including TV Mtavari, TV Pirveli, TV Formula, and Kavkasia TV. Additionally, there are TV channels that express more pro-Russian views, such as TV Obiektivi and Alt-Info; however, their audience is relatively small (Georgia's Reforms Associates—GRASS, 2022).

Over the years, there has been a noticeable rise in media distrust. The Caucasus Barometer data indicate that this trend is increasing (CRRC-Georgia, 2024). Studies suggest that distrust towards the media is due to its partisan and polarized nature, with many outlets representing the political interests of their owners. Additionally, pervasive disinformation campaigns on social media by both pro-government and oppositional outlets have made it difficult for Georgians to find reliable and objective information (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2021).

However, in addition to television, Georgians increasingly use online media, including social media. Ninety-six percent of internet users engage with social media, the most common platforms in 2021 being Facebook (69% of internet users) and YouTube (61% of internet users) (Fabos, 2024).

Current trends suggest that in addition to the increasing use of digital media, social media is more commonly used by younger people. Individuals 18–34 years of age use, on average, approximately three social media platforms (2.71), which is greater than that of any other age group. Additionally, among all platforms surveyed, this group is most likely to use each of the surveyed platforms (Fabos, 2024).

The purpose of the following study is to provide a comprehensive overview of Georgian society's media consumption, trust, online behaviours, and changing platform usage among various generations over the course of the past decade.

Methodology

This study utilizes data from the Caucasus Barometer surveys conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) in 2009, 2013, and 2024 (CRRC-Georgia, n.d.). The results represent the adult (+18) population of Georgia, excluding those living in the Tskhinvali and Abkhazia regions, and were collected via the multistage stratified cluster sampling method. The 2024 survey included 1,509 respondents, for a 23% response

rate. The 2013 survey included 2,133 respondents, for a 69% response rate. In 2009, 1991 respondents with a 70% response rate were surveyed.

This study examines data from 2013 to 2024, with a single analysis of data from 2009 using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequencies, cross-tabulations, chi-square tests, symmetric measures (Phi, Cramer's V, and contingency coefficient), and multiple regression models (binary, multinomial and ordinal logistic regressions). The analysis replication script is available at Github.

Analysis

Sources of Information on Current Events in Georgia
The Caucasus Barometer 2024 highlights a significant shift in information sources in Georgia. While this article summarizes data over a decade, the 2013 survey did not include questions about the main source of information. Therefore, data from the 2009 survey are used for comparison. The findings indicate a move from traditional media to digital media (see Figure 1 on p. 7).

Television remains the primary source of information for Georgian citizens, but TV usage has decreased from 88% to 49%, whereas the use of the internet, including social media, has increased dramatically from 2% to 40%. Word-of-mouth is still less likely to be a primary source of information. The combined total number of family members, neighbours, friends, and colleagues, as primary sources of information about Georgia's current events, does not exceed 10% in 2024 (see Figure 2 on p. 7).

The use of the internet, including social media, as a secondary source has increased significantly from 6% to 38%. Traditional sources such as newspapers, radio, and neighbours / friends have seen notable declines, whereas TV usage as a second source has increased from 5% to 18%.

These trends highlight a significant shift towards digital media, suggesting generational changes in information consumption that could impact public opinion and democratic processes in Georgia. A multinomial regression model reveals that several factors significantly influence the choice of one's main source of information. Age, wealth index, sex, education level, settlement type, and partisanship are significantly associated with the main source of information. Each of these predictors contributes meaningfully to the model, as indicated by their chi-square values and p values. Age has the strongest association with the source of information.

Figure 3 highlights cross-tabulation of one's main source of information in Georgia with factors that were statistically significant. Accordingly, older individuals are four times more likely to mention TV as their main source than are those between 18 and 34 years of age. Additionally, internet and social media, as well as word-of-mouth, are more common among young people (65% and 14%, respectively). In 2009, TV dominated among all age groups, similar to its status as a main source (CRRC-Georgia, 2009). Additionally, internet and social media as the main sources of information are more common in female respondents (42%), those with incomplete or complete tertiary education (58%), Tbilisi residents (58%), wealthier individuals (48%), and other supporters than "Georgian Dream". Word-of-mouth in 2024 has the smallest share in each group. Nevertheless, more people from rural settlements (18%), those with secondary or lower education (16%), those who are less wealthy (13%), and younger (14%) people mention word-of-mouth as the main source of information (see Figure 3 on p. 8).

In summary, television, once the dominant source of information, has significantly declined, whereas internet and social media usage have increased. This change is particularly evident among younger generations, who are more inclined to use digital channels. Additionally, factors such as education level, income, and geography influence information sources, with urban, educated, and wealthier individuals turning to the internet and social media more often.

Trust in the Media in Georgia
In addition to media consumption, the Caucasus Barometer data allow us to explore how much people trust the media. During the last decade, the public has continued to perceive the media to be an untrustworthy institution. Only one fourth of the public claims to trust the media (see Figure 4 on p. 8).

In 2013, the majority of respondents (55%) had a neutral attitude towards the media, with only 12% expressing distrust. By 2024, as a generational shift unfolded, the distrust towards media tripled to 36%.

Figure 4 indicates that overall, Georgians have a low level of trust in the media. However, how much they trust their main source of information is interesting. As shown in the previous section, television is the most common source of information for the Georgian public. The data allow us to examine the level of trust Georgians have in various TV channels (see Figure 5 on p. 9).

According to the 2024 Caucasus Barometer survey (Figure 5), trust in Georgian TV channels varies significantly. "Imedi" leads with 22% of trust, followed by "Mtavari Arkhi" at 8% and "Rustavi 2" at 8%. "TV Pirveli" garners 6% trust, whereas "Formula" and the "Public Broadcaster" each have 2% trust. The other TV channels each have minimal trust at 1% or lower. Additionally, one in four people does not trust any TV stations. Furthermore, 16% do not watch TV, and 6% are uncertain or reluctant to express their views on TV station trust.

These data allow us to examine whether trust in specific TV channels is associated with political preferences. The following figure shows the relation between trust in TV channels and political party affiliation (see Figure 6 on p. 9).

The graph above suggests that those who trust "Imedi," "Rustavi 2," or "POSTV" support "Georgian Dream" the most, with 43%. Similarly, those who trust non-pro-government TV stations are more likely to say that nonruling parties are closer to their views (35%) than others are.

This analysis confirmed a moderately strong association between trust in the mentioned TV channels and political preferences. This reinforces Georgians' perceptions that the media landscape is polarized (Silagadze, 2023).

To summarize, trust in the media in Georgia has declined. Television remains the primary source of information, but trust in specific TV channels varies, reflecting political biases. A sizeable portion of the population does not trust TV channels and does not align with any political party, highlighting widespread media scepticism and political disillusionment.

Internet Usage

The Caucasus Barometer 2024 survey highlights that TV persists as a primary source for information, but a significant share of the public is switching to digital platforms for information. The trend suggests that Georgia matches a global pattern of increased internet usage and its role in dispersing information.

The following figure highlights a significant generational shift in internet usage among the Georgian public from 2013 to 2024. In 2024, 76% of the respondents used the internet daily, a substantial increase from 30% in 2013. The percentage of those who never use the internet dramatically decreased from 45% in 2013 to 14% in 2024. Additionally, the number of people unfamiliar with the internet decreased to zero in 2024, compared with 5% in 2013. These data underscore a marked increase in daily internet engagement over the past decade (see Figure 7 on p. 9). An ordinal logistic regression model, which is based on current 2024, Caucasus Barometer data of internet usage frequency as the dependent variable and sex, age group, education, and settlement type as independent variables, shows that all of these factors are statistically significantly associated with internet usage (at the p value < 0.01 level). Specifically, females, older people, those living in urban and rural settlements, and individuals with vocational or secondary or lower education use the internet less frequently than males, 18–34-year-olds, capital residents, and those with incomplete or complete tertiary education do. Older individuals, particularly those aged 55

and above (odds ratio—Exp(B) = 18.78, estimate = 2.93, Wald = 367732), have significantly higher odds ratios. They are likely to use the internet almost 19 times less frequently than the 18–34 age group is.

The 2013 Caucasus Barometer data suggest the same pattern. A similar model was used for the 2013 Barometer data. The results show that the only difference in this association is for gender. Although in 2013, more women than men were likely to use the internet more frequently, in 2024, men were more likely to engage with the internet than women were.

As the data suggest during the last decade, not only has the frequency of internet use changed, but activities on the internet have also changed (see Figure 8 on p. 10).

In 2024, Facebook and other social networking platforms were asked about separately, unlike in 2013. For this analysis, mentions of Facebook and other social networking platforms in 2024 were combined.

Similarly, in 2013, Skype and other instant messaging and call apps were asked about separately, whereas in 2024, they were grouped as one option. For this analysis, Skype and other apps were combined in the 2013 data.

Figure 8 shows that more people use social networking platforms (+9%) and messaging/calling apps (+6%) in 2024 than in 2013. However, there is a significant decrease in the use of search engines for information. From 2013 to 2024, 22% fewer people used the internet to search for information. Additionally, online gaming slightly decreased (–8%), emailing (–5%), and read(ing) / listen(ing) to / watch(ing) the news online (–5%). Other activities were mentioned less frequently, and there were no significant changes.

The decrease in Georgians mentioning search engines as an internet activity over the past decade could be explained by people's perceptions of them. For example, smartphones and mobile internet have made accessing information more seamless and integrated into daily life. Second, the rise of AI-powered tools such as chatbots and virtual assistants has transformed how people interact with search engines, often doing so without realizing that they are conducting a search. Finally, the diversification of online activities, such as social media, streaming services, and apps, has shifted the focus away from traditional web searches (see Figure 9 on p. 10).

In 2024, respondents were asked about their use of social media platforms. Figure 9 shows that the vast majority of internet users in Georgia use Facebook (88%). The second most popular platform is YouTube, which is used by 60% of internet users. Approximately one-third of internet users engage with Instagram and TikTok. Other platforms are less commonly used in Georgia.

In addition, 21% of internet users exclusively use Facebook. A very small percentage use only YouTube (2%), only Instagram (0.3%), or only TikTok (1%).

All platforms are more commonly used in urban areas, and individuals with a higher education level. There are no significant differences between men and women in terms of social media platform usage, except for Instagram, which is used more by women than men. Additionally, age is another significant factor associated with the use of social media platforms (see Figure 10 on p. 10).

With the exception of Facebook usage, which is relatively consistent across all age groups, younger individuals (18–34) are significantly more active on platforms such as Instagram (58%), TikTok (51%), and YouTube (73%) than older individuals are. The 35–54 age group shows moderate usage of YouTube (58%), Instagram (28%) and TikTok (26%). The 55+ age group has the lowest usage across most platforms, and Facebook and YouTube are the most common platforms for this group. Telegram and X (Twitter) have minimal usage across all age groups, with slightly higher engagement among the youngest group.

Overall, internet use in Georgia has surged in the past decade, particularly among younger generations. Social media platforms dominate online activity, with Facebook leading the way. However, usage patterns vary significantly by age, with younger demographics being more engaged in platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

Conclusion

This analysis of media consumption and trust in Georgia from 2013 to 2024 reveals significant generational shifts. A marked shift from traditional to digital media is evident, with television dominance as the primary source of information significantly waning from 88% in 2009 to 49% in 2024. Conversely, the internet, including social media platforms, has surged as a primary information source, reflecting broader global trends towards digital engagement. This shift impacts on democratic processes in the country, while increases media diversity and enriches public dialogue, allowing citizens to engage more directly with political leaders and potentially enhance accountability and transparency. However, there is a growing need for digital literacy to prevent misinformation and ensure access to reliable sources of information. This generational change highlights younger Georgians' preference for online channels, as they increasingly turn to digital platforms for news, whereas older generations remain more reliant on television.

The decline in television's role is mirrored by a steep increase in internet usage, with daily internet engagement rising dramatically from 30% in 2013 to 76% in 2024. This shift is evident not only in the volume of usage but also in the nature of online activities, with a notable rise in social media interaction and a decline in traditional search engine use. This suggests a changing landscape in which social media and mobile applications are central to how information is accessed and shared.

Furthermore, the level of trust in the media has declined, with overall trust in media institutions decreasing significantly and political biases becoming more pronounced. Trust in TV channels is deeply intertwined with political preferences, illustrating a polarized media landscape. Despite television's continued role as a primary information source for many, the distrust and rising importance of digital media indicate a complex and evolving media environment in Georgia.

In summary, the data reveal a clear trend of increasing digital media reliance and a generational shift in media consumption.

About the Author
Makhare Atchaidze is a researcher at CRRC-Georgia and works as an academic assistant and visiting lecturer at GIPA, as well as a visiting lecturer at SABAUNI. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Sociology of Culture and Media at Tbilisi State University.

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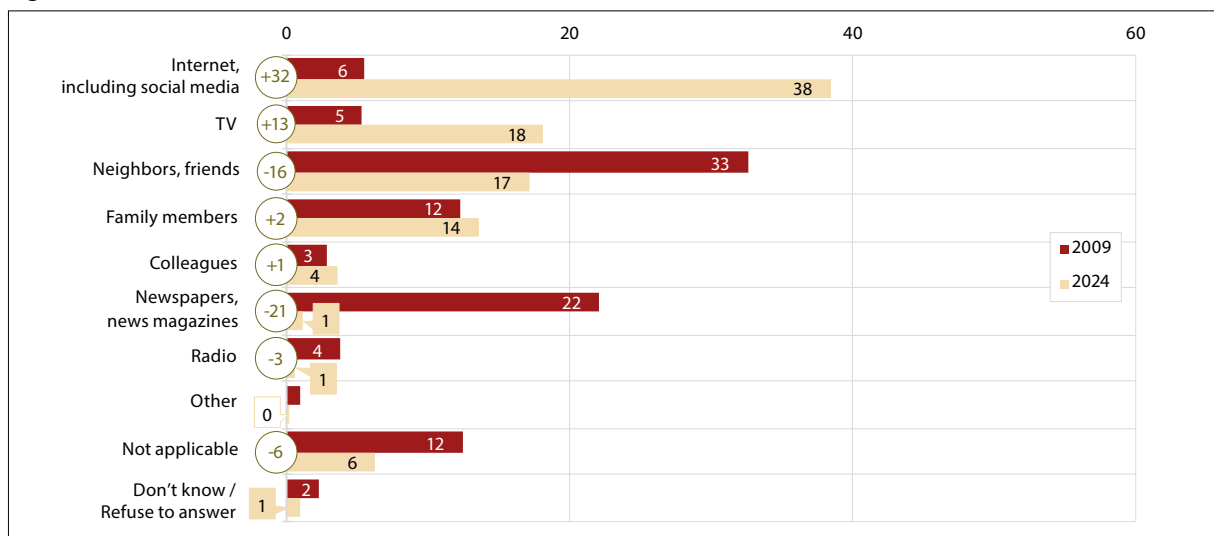- Tri Media Intelligence. (2024, July). Retrieved 08-05-2024, from tmi.ge: https://www.tmi.ge/en/

Appendix

Figure 1:   Main Source of Information (%)
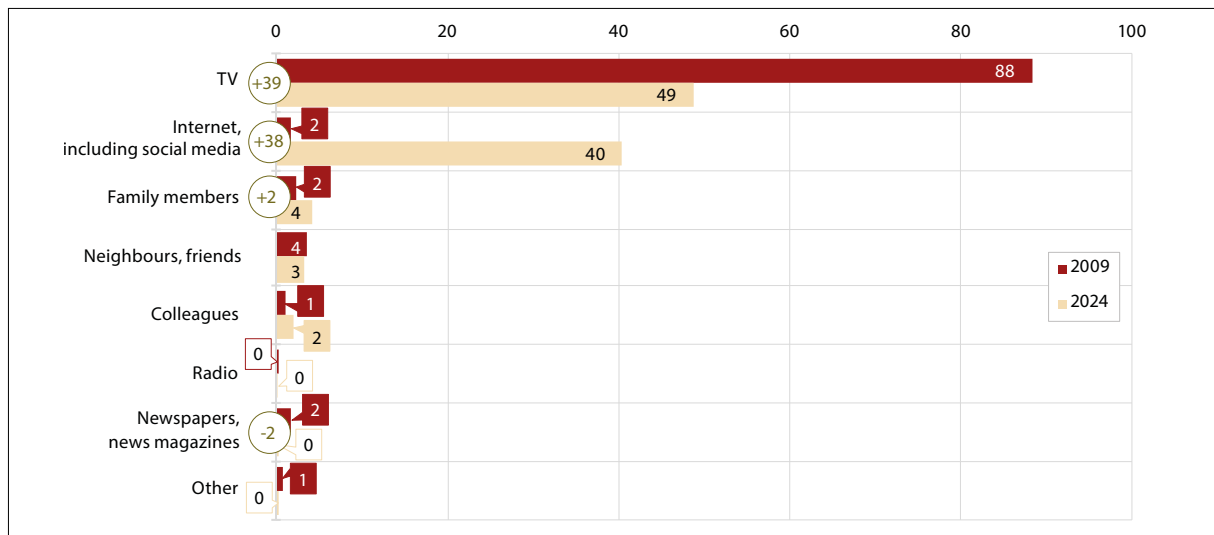
Source: Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2024.

Note: Due to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%.
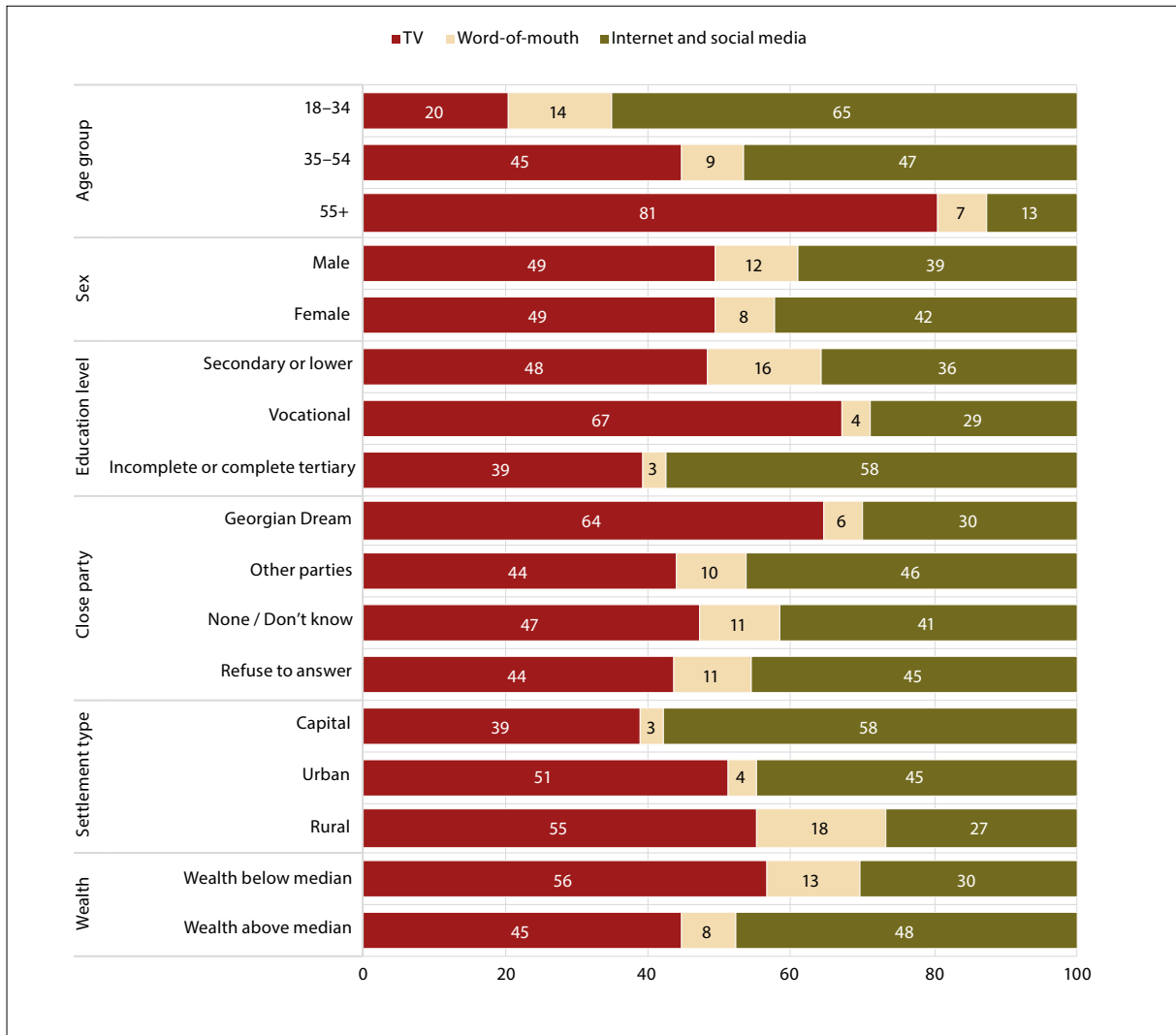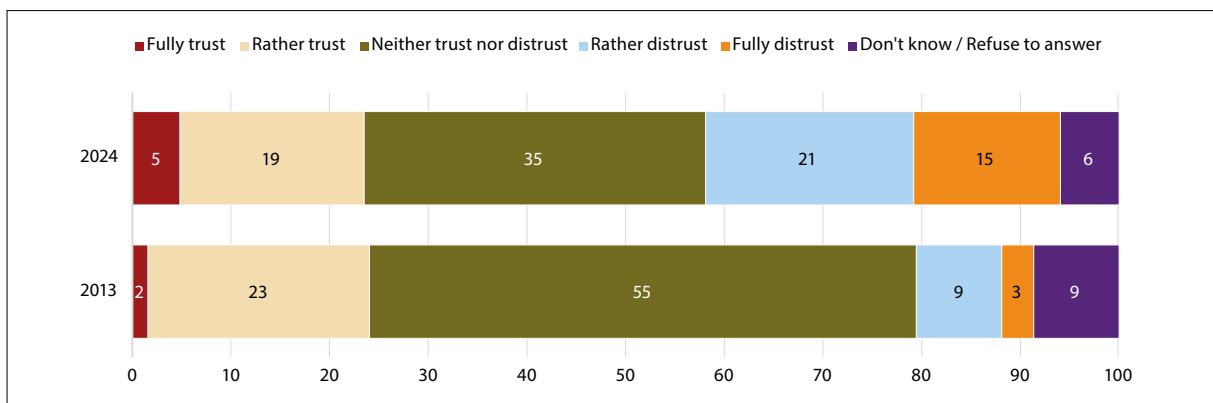
Figure 2:   Second Main Source of Information (%)

Source: Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2024.

Note: Due to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%.

Figure 3:   Main Sources of Information in Georgia by Varied Factors (Crosstabulation, %)

Source: Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2024.

Note: Due to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%.
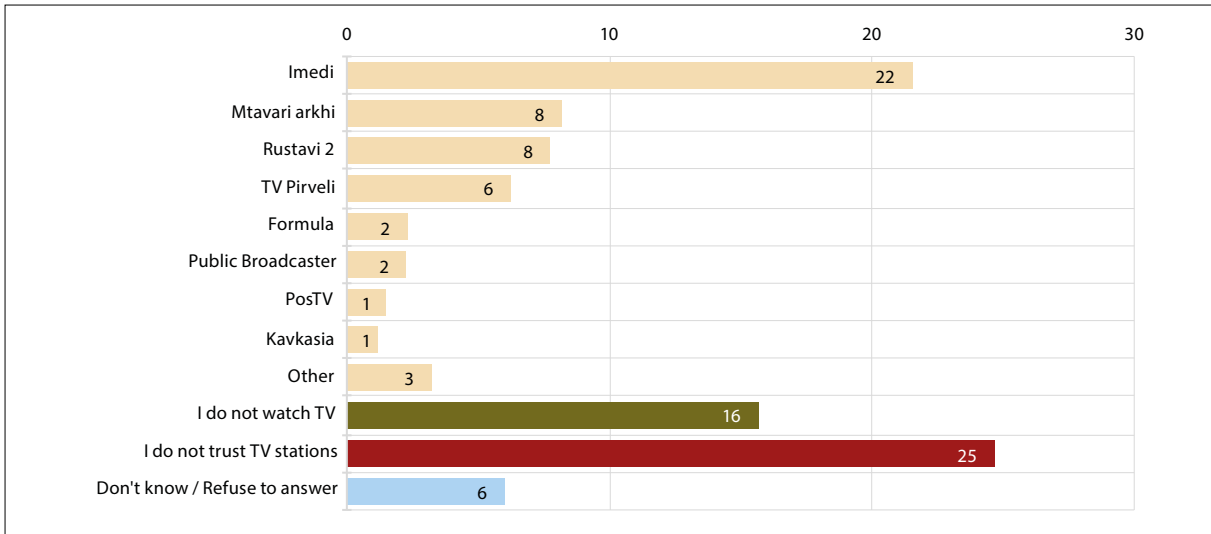
Figure 4:   Level of Trust in the Media (%)

Source: Caucasus Barometer 2009 and 2024.

Note: Due to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%.

Figure 5:　Which TV Station Do You Trust in News on Politics and Events in Georgia? (%)

Source: Caucasus Barometer 2024.

Note: The answer options "Adjara TV", "Maestro", "Alt-info", "Euronews Georgia", "RTR", "ORT", "Obieqtivi" and "NTV" were all grouped into "Other TV stations." Owing to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%.

Figure 6:　Which Political Party Is Closest to You? By Trust of TV Channels (Crosstabulation, %)
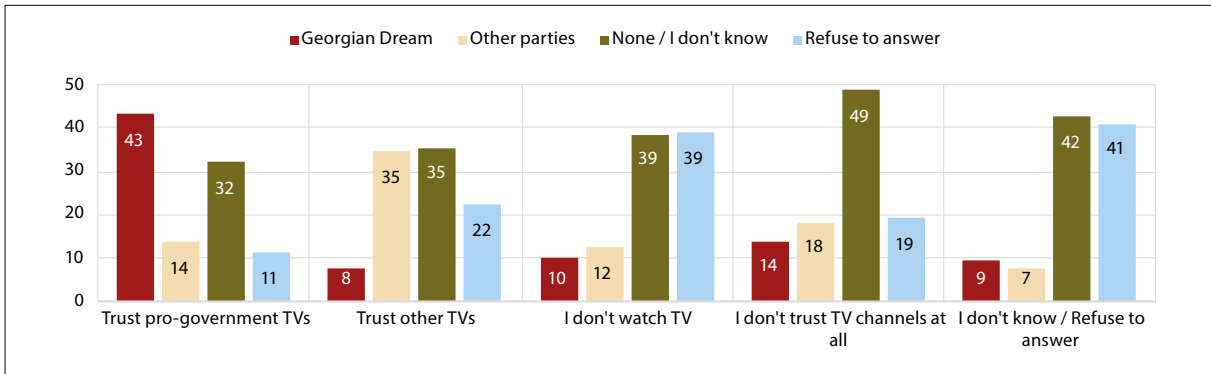
Source: Caucasus Barometer 2024.

Note: Category "Trust pro-government TVs" combines the trust of "Imedi," "POSTV," and "Rustavi 2", whereas other TV channels combine into the category "Trust other TVs." Due to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%. The associations were checked via multinomial logistic regression, which revealed statistically significant associations between these variables.
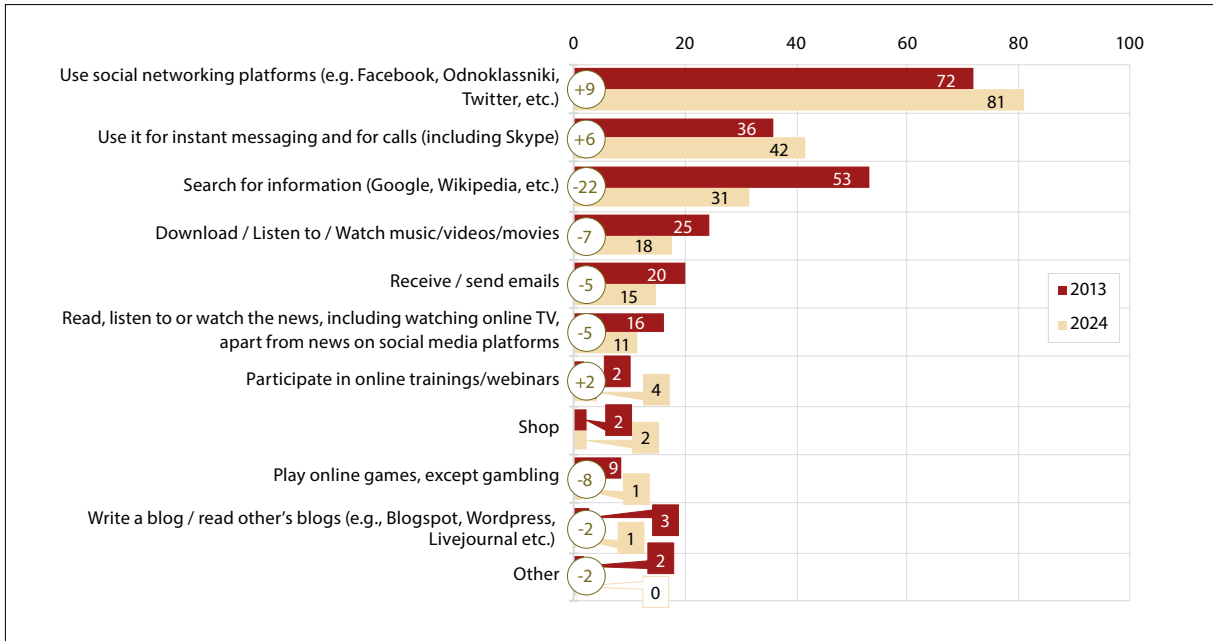
Figure 7:　How Often Do You Use the Internet? (%)
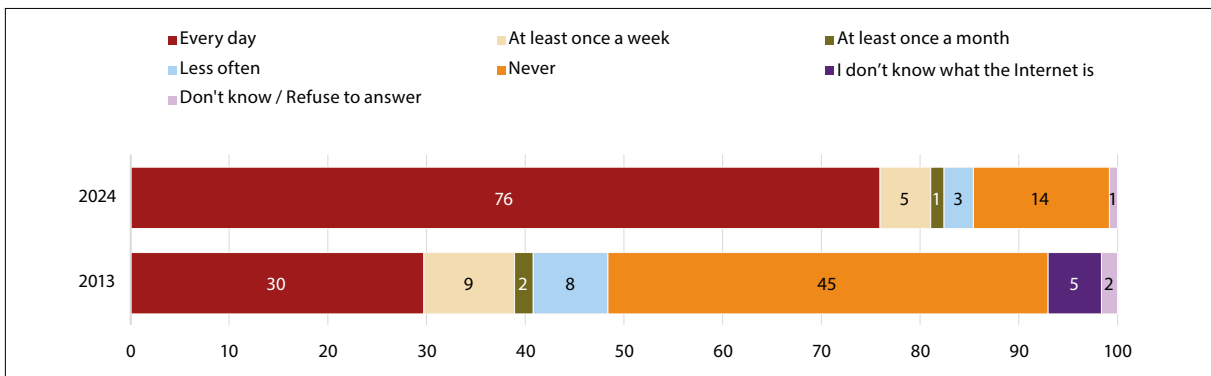
Sources: Caucasus Barometer 2013–2024.

Note: Due to rounding errors, the sum of percentages in response to this question does not always equal 100%.
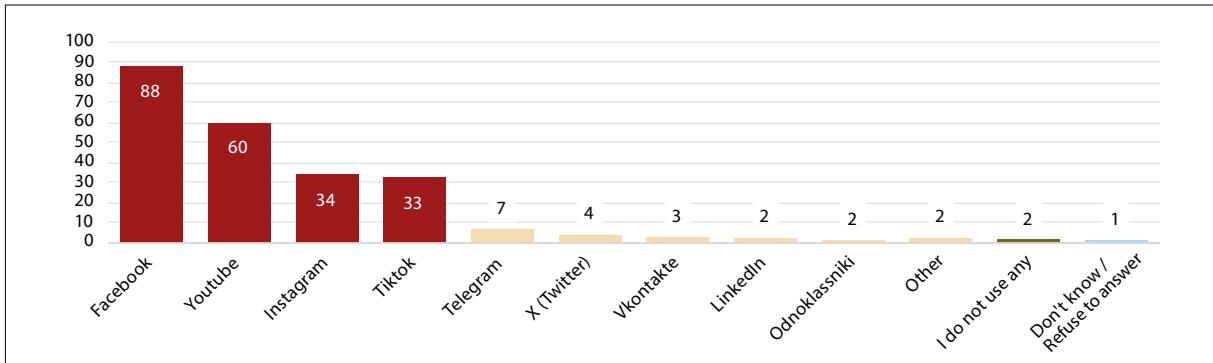
Figure 8: **Which of the Following Do You Do Most Frequently When You Are Browsing the Internet? (%)**

Sources: Caucasus Barometer 2013–2024.

Note: The questions were asked of the respondents who use the internet. Multiple answers were allowed.

Figure 9: **Do You Use the Following Social Media Platforms and Applications: (%)**

Source: Caucasus Barometer 2024.

Note: The questions were asked of the respondents who use the internet. Multiple answers were allowed.

Figure 10: **The Most Commonly Used Social Media Platforms and Applications by Age Group. (Crosstabulation, %)**

Source: Caucasus Barometer 2024.

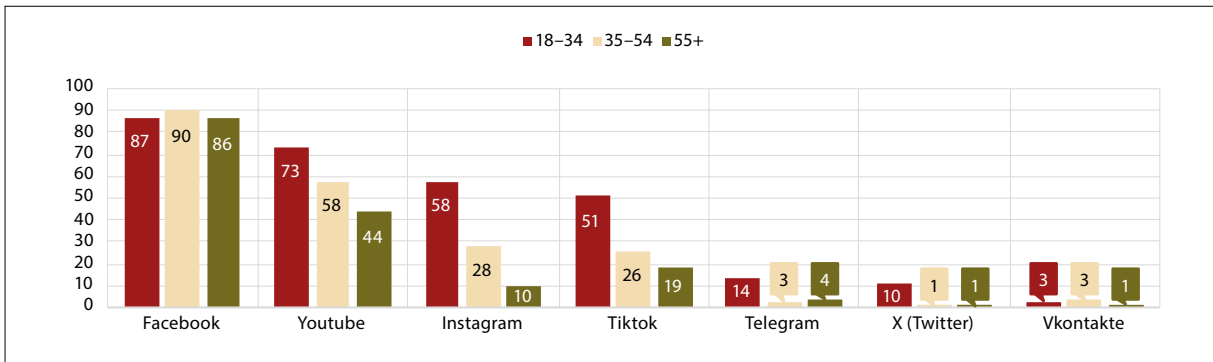*Note: The questions were asked of the respondents who use the internet. Multiple answers were allowed.*

Are Younger People Becoming More Active Citizens? Results from the Caucasus Barometer Surveys

Koba Turmanidze (CRRC-Georgia) and Mariam Gabedava (freelance researcher)

Abstract

This article explores the political engagement among different age groups in Georgia. By analyzing data from the 2013 and 2024 Caucasus Barometer surveys, the article highlights changes in attitudes toward democratic institutions and political participation. It reveals a growing skepticism among younger generations toward democratic institutions and a significant decline in electoral participation, contrasted by increased acceptance of non-electoral activism, such as protests. Despite their visible activism in recent demonstrations, young Georgians remain disillusioned with political parties and election processes, contributing to a grim outlook for democratic participation in the country.

Introduction

Young voters aged 18 to 35 constitute approximately one-fifth of Georgia's population (Geostat 2023). Consequently, their political participation significantly influences the outcome of the country's political system. Recently, young people have been hailed as a source of hope for Georgian democracy because of their role in opposition to the Russian-style Foreign Influence Law over the past two years (The Guardian 2024; Civil.ge 2024a). The opposition exalts the youth, while the government calls them "confused" at best (Civil.ge 2024b). However, Georgian political parties still offer little to engage the youth (Kandelaki 2024). The upcoming parliamentary elections in October 2024 may show the true colours of Georgian youth's activism and how much it will matter.

In the meantime, do nationally representative surveys support the lay observation of increased youth activism? In this article, we tackle this question by looking at continuity and change in Georgian youth's political engagement over the past decade across two questions: (1) attitudes to participation across age groups and (2) the shift in the differences among the age groups in the last ten years. To this end, the latest wave of the Caucasus Barometer (CRRC 2024) survey is compared to the 2013 Barometer (CRRC 2013) results.

Despite significant contextual differences between 2024 and 2013, the data indicates a few notable trends. Support for democracy has remained strong among all age groups. However, when it comes to trusting the institutions necessary for the functioning of democracy, the younger age group has become relatively skeptical over the past decade. While the younger generation's willingness to engage in non-electoral civic activities is significantly higher than the older generation's, the older citizens remain more committed to electoral channels of political participation. If the situation does not change, in the 2024 parliamentary elections, grandmas and grandpas are more likely to decide their grandchildren's future than their grandchildren themselves.

Data Sources and Analysis

The categorisation of youth into age groups or generational cohorts is far from uniform (Pew Research Center 2023a; Pew Research Center 2023b). Without engaging in the debates about generational boundaries, this article uses the traditional division of age groups of the Caucasus Barometer: 18 to 35, 36 to 55, and 55 and older. Using the data from 2013 and 2024 waves, we look at generational differences within and across the waves. Additionally, we examine if changes in attitudes and opinions between the age groups increased or decreased during the decade.

For each wave, we ran binary and multinomial logistic regression models, where there is one of the following variables of interest on the left-hand side: attitudes to democracy, perception of the government, trust towards institutions, reported past and future turnout, assessment of election fairness, acceptability of protest actions and reported participation in civic activities. On the right-hand side, along the age group variable, we include a few other control variables, such as respondent's gender, education (tertiary or below tertiary), employment, settlement type (capital, urban or rural), household's wealth (above or below the median). Due to the focus of this article, we report predicted probabilities of age groups only. This, however, does not mean that attitudes and opinions are solely shaped by belonging to a particular age group. Instead, report results should be interpreted as probabilities of attitudes of each age group while bearing in mind the influence of individuals' other essential demographic characteristics.

For easy and straightforward interpretation, the left-hand side variables are recoded into binary variables, except for trust in institutions. In that case, we use

a summative index of trust in nine institutions vital to democracy's functioning. Consequently, the reported results about trust should be interpreted as aggregated net trust in institutions.

The Historical Obstacles to Activism

Georgia's Soviet past had a massive influence on how activism and political participation in general—particularly of young people—have been viewed since independence. During the Soviet period, the Communist party permeated the lives of all Soviet citizens, beginning at early childhood. All Soviet citizens went through a political indoctrination system, and to succeed in the system, one had to demonstrate loyalty and active participation. Given this experience, cynicism towards altruistic motivations for civic or political activism has primarily defined Georgia's political climate since independence.

After independence, Georgian parties kept with the Communist tradition of having dedicated "youth wings" of their own. This means that whichever party is in power usually has the largest youth organisation and the most direct ties with student unions at the state universities.

The first strong youth movement, not directly linked to any party, was Kmara (Enough), which began in 2003 in Tbilisi as a call against corruption at the universities and in the government. While nominally non-partisan, they aligned with the United National Movement (UNM) and supported the Rose Revolution in 2003. Modeled on the Serbian youth movement against the dictatorship of Slobodan Milosevic and supported by the Soros Foundation, it employed non-violent protest tactics against the crumbling state apparatus (Nikolayenko 2007). However, the quick disappearance of Kmara and its absorption into the now-ruling UNM party after the revolution did nothing to ease the perception that activism was a thinly veiled tactic for career advancement. Other student protests over the years have largely focused on mismanagement at the university level and the social conditions of students, but so far have not managed to exert any visible influence on major political parties.

Fostering youth participation in civic and political life has been essential to many democratisation support initiatives for decades. Civic education was first introduced in the Georgian school curriculum in 2008 for grades 9 and 10 (i.e. 15–16-year-old students), and since then, it has been introduced as early as grade 5 (10-year-old students). Interestingly, the evidence from outside Georgian context suggests that civic education programmes promote certain forms of political participation, but not necessarily voting, which is more related to the sense that people can make a difference (Manning and Edwards 2014).

This general cynicism towards youth activism seems to be shared by the young people, too, who report dismal civic engagement (UNFPA 2020). Most Georgian youth feel that their interests are not represented in national politics (63%). However, with 75% reporting no participation in any political activity (e.g., volunteering, donating, petition signing, demonstrating, etc.) and disinterest in taking up political functions (80%), they would unlikely see political parties catering to their wishes. In this way, Georgian youth are like other youth worldwide who predominantly do not engage in traditional electoral political participation, favouring online campaigns and flash mobs. There is an established link between young people's activism and their level of engagement in universities and workplaces (Krawetzek, 2022). This link likely holds true in Georgia as well. The fact that about 31% of Georgian youth are neither studying nor working formally (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2023) may contribute to their disengagement.

What the Caucasus Barometer Shows

Support for democracy is nearly even across the age groups in Georgia: Over 60% believes democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. During the decade discussed in this article, fidelity to democracy has remained essentially unchanged.

Furthermore, the Georgian population seems to have a consistent idea of what democracy means as well as the roles of the populace and government. The notion of the "Mommy State"—that the people are like children and the government should take care of them rather than being accountable to them as the source of its power—is inversely correlated with the preference for democracy. Theoretically, younger age groups are less likely to subscribe to the maternal state idea; however, the share has not budged over the past decade. Perhaps surprisingly, the 56+ age group has registered a modest four-point decline in this belief (see Figures 1, 2 on p. 15).

While subscribing to democracy as an idea is essential, making democracy work depends on the institutions that ensure the governing. These institutions are both the elected ones, like the parliament, central and local governments, and the president, and those who are structurally in place to ensure they are checked and balanced. These latter include the political parties, courts, the Ombudsman, the media, and civil society organisations. On the aggregated index of trust in 2024, the younger the respondent, the lower the trust score was, and the predicted trust score increased by 18 percentage points for the oldest respondents.[1] In contrast, ten

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1   Examining the index's components, in 2024, there are statistically significant and positive correlations between age and trust in the following institutions: Parliament, the executive government, political parties, the media, and local government.

years ago, age did not play a statistically significant role in whether aggregated institutional trust was high or low (see Figure 3 on p. 15).[2]

Government by the people does not work unless the people partake in the governing. In representative democracies, which by now is the only viable form of democracy, this happens by voting. The right to vote was hard won by all sorts of oppressed groups, from the poor to women to ethnic and religious minorities, but many people in Georgia seem unwilling to use their vote to help determine the kind of government they would like to have for themselves. As expected, the younger the person, the less likely they will have voted in the previous elections. While this trend holds over the decade, election participation has declined across all age groups, but most dramatically among the younger people, by a whopping 18 percentage points, three times the decline of the older age groups (6 percentage points each) (see Figures 4 and 5 on p. 15–16).

When asked about the intention to vote in the upcoming elections, the situation is the same. Again, the older groups were and continue to be more likely to say they will cast their votes compared to the younger cohorts. Here, too, the population's willingness to participate in electoral democracy has declined over the decade, and again, most sharply for the youngest age group. Their decline is in double digits again (13 percentage points) compared to the more modest decline for the older age groups. Interestingly, trust in the fairness of the elections has also declined significantly across all age groups, but not equally so. While in 2013, all age groups had high and relatively similar levels of trust in the fairness of the last elections, in 2024, the drop in the perceived fairness for the younger age group is a dramatic 35 percentage points, compared to the nearly 20 percentage point drop for the older groups. Securing the trust of less than half of young people would not bode well for the legitimacy of Georgian democracy (see Figure 6 on p. 16).

The disenchantment with voting and elections seems universal in Georgia, the gap between the generations has widened, and the younger people have turned their backs on the most crucial democratic instrument they possess. Although the Caucasus Barometer does not have data from ten years earlier to compare, the 2024 data regarding party identification across the age groups offers insight into the situation. Younger people are much more opposition-leaning than older age groups, who lean towards the ruling party. This is logical, con-

sidering that the older generations tend to support stability and the status quo rather than change, which the younger generations favour. One significant characteristic of Georgian voters, however, is that a plurality in each age group reports no party they feel close to in the Georgian political landscape. Also, at least a fifth in each group refuses to answer the party identification question. At the same time, younger people are much more non-partisan, and partisanship increases as people age, which is closely reflected in past and intended voting activity that people report. A lack of enthusiasm for voting is understandable when voters do not feel they have a party representing their interests.

In this atmosphere, non-electoral forms of democratic participation have gained more credence. Survey data shows that when Georgians are asked about democracy, the first thing that comes to their mind is freedom of expression. Overwhelmingly, all age groups agree that people like themselves can openly say what they think. However, this sentiment has declined across all groups over the decade, affecting the youngest age group slightly more than the rest. Interestingly, despite this decline in freedom of expression, the sentiment that people should participate in protests against the government has more support than a decade ago across all groups. The younger generation's acceptance of protest has grown by an impressive 22 percentage points, reaching 79% (see Figures 7 and 8 on p. 16).

This should logically suggest that people exercise these rights and make their voices heard. However, actual participation in non-electoral activities—already relatively unimpressive—suffered a perceptible decline across all three age groups over the decade. The reduction of activism is at least ten percentage points for each group. In this case, the middle-aged group has seen the most significant loss. Despite the overall dwindling participation, one thing has remained constant: younger people are still much more likely to participate in protests, sign petitions, and engage in NGO activities and online activism than any other age group.[3]

Conclusions

The data analysis over a decade shows that the Georgian population has a clear preference for democracy and an understanding that the government ought to be accountable to them. They also feel they have a right to freely express their opinions and make them heard by the government through protest. However, disillusionment with the workings of democratic institutions in

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2 In contrast to the data from a decade ago, in 2013, trust in NGOs is the only trust variable significantly and negatively associated with age.

3 It should be noted that questions about non-electoral ways of political participation are not directly comparable in the 2013 and 2024 waves of the Caucasus Barometer. In 2013, questions were asked about attending a public meeting, signing a petition, making a comment online, and writing a letter / making a phone call to a media outlet. In the 2024 wave, the questions were about attending a protest rally, participating in an NGO activity, signing a petition and writing/talking to a government representative.

Georgia is palpable, and the young people are hardest hit. The root problem for this seems to be the failure of Georgian parties to connect with and win the hearts and minds of this demographic group. As long as the most popular party in Georgia continues to be "none of the listed parties", it comes as little surprise that elections do not elicit much enthusiasm. Again, the young people are most skeptical. They participate the least in elections and trust the least in their fairness. Perhaps because of this disillusionment, younger people use their voices to engage in non-electoral political participation more than other age groups. However, while the appro-

val of participation in protests is higher than ever across all age groups, actual participation tends to decline for all. This detachment from politics shown in the polls comes as a surprising contradiction to the expectation created by the visibility of youth mobilisation in weeks-long protests against the government's anti-democratic policy. While most young people neither trust demo-cratic institutions nor exhibit much enthusiasm for polit-ical engagement, the 2024 parliamentary elections will soon determine whether this trend of nihilism persists or if the small segment of politically active youth will inspire their peers to become more active citizens.

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Appendix

Figure 1:   Support for Democracy. Democracy Is Preferable to Any Other Kind of Government. (Yes Only, %)
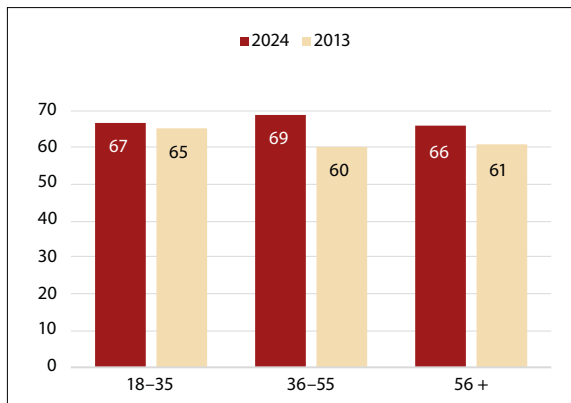

Figure 2:   Perceptions of the Government. People Are like Children, the Government Should Take Care of Them like a Parent (Yes Only, %)
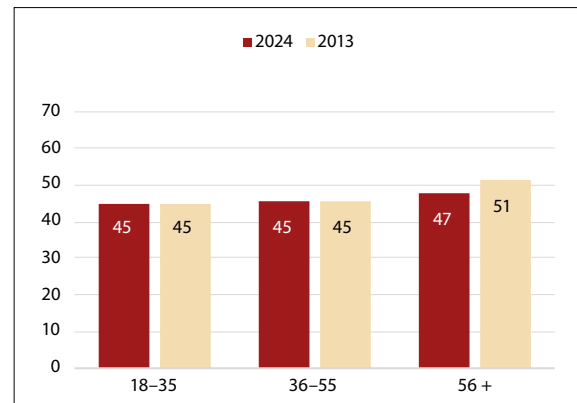

Figure 3:   Index of Trust Towards Institutions. Trust Towards Institutions (Index, Above the Median, %)
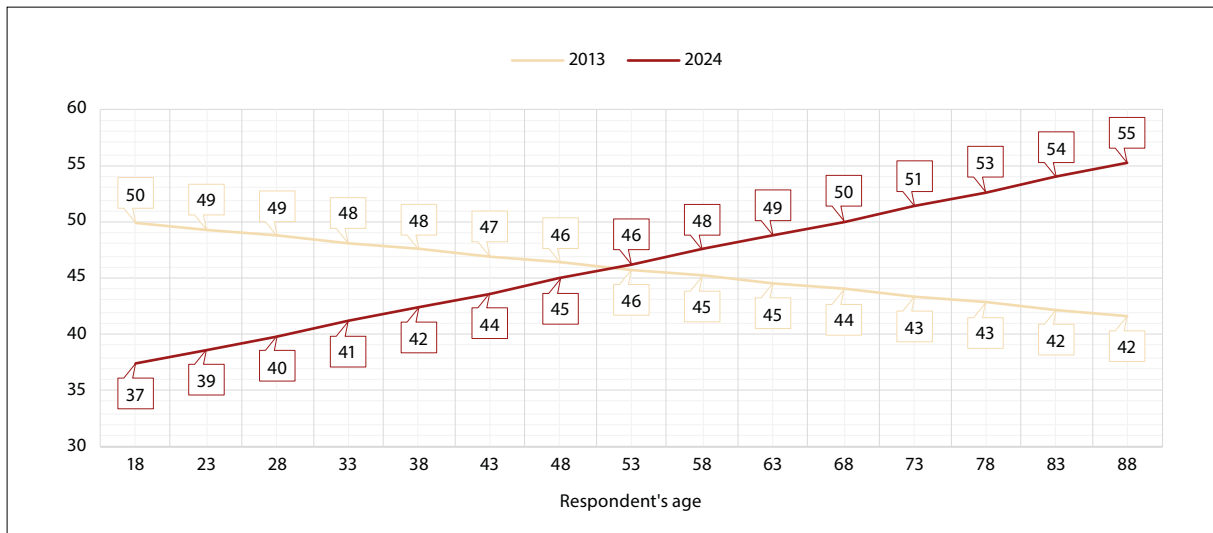
Figure 4: Reported Past Turnout. Did You Participate in the Last Parliamentary Elections? (Yes Only, %)
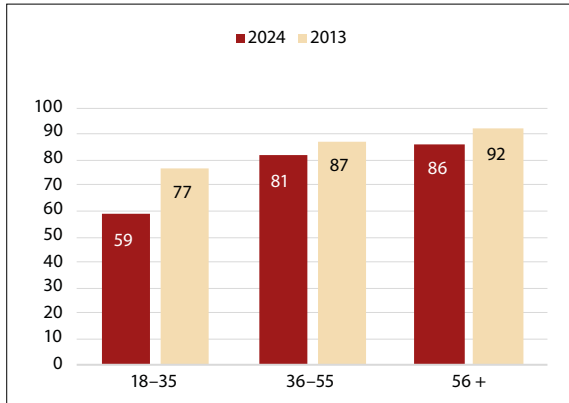

Figure 5: Reported Future Turnout. Would You Vote If Parliamentary Elections Were Held Next Sunday? (Yes Only, %)
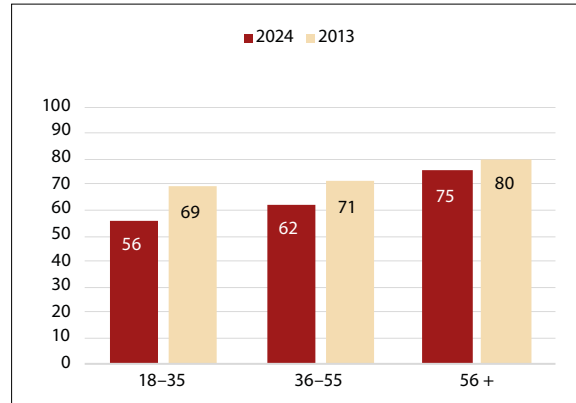

Figure 6: Assessment of Election Fairness. How Fairly Were Last Elections Conducted? (At Least to Some Extent Fairly, %)
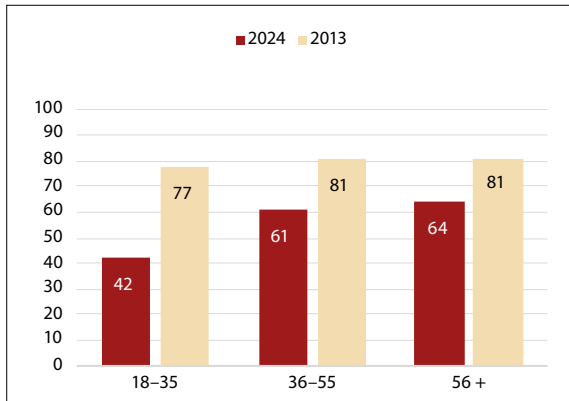

Figure 7: Acceptance of Protests. People Should Participate in Protest Actions Against the Government (Yes Only, %)
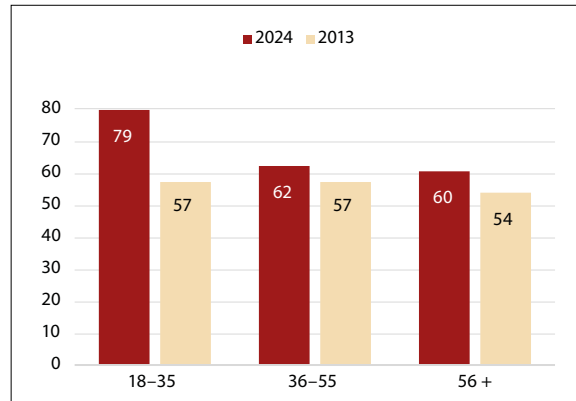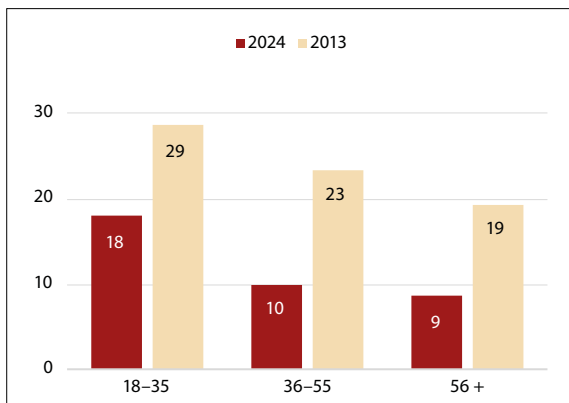

Figure 8: Non-Electoral Forms of Participation. Index of Activism / Engagement (%)

ANALYSIS

Attitudes Towards the Soviet Union and Stalin over Time: Who Still Has Positive Sentiments?

Salome Dolidze and Tamar Khoshtaria (both CRRC-Georgia)

Abstract

This article examines the evolution of public opinion in Georgia regarding the dissolution of the Soviet Union and attitudes towards Stalin. Using the most recent wave of the Caucasus Barometer (CB) and comparing it to the wave a decade ago, the study analyses the scale of changes in perceptions. The findings suggest that while the attitudes towards Stalin—as well as towards the Soviet Union—have always differed among various age groups, the generally positive assessment of the dissolution of the Soviet Union has increased significantly. In addition, using regression analysis, the article examines the characteristics of people who are more or less likely to reflect positively on the Soviet era and Stalin, including members of the younger generation, who are more likely to have pro-Western values.

Introduction

Georgians' attitudes towards the Soviet era—as well as towards Stalin—remain a controversial topic (Gugushvili et al 2015). While almost half of Georgians are proud of Stalin's Georgian heritage, a significant part categorically or partially disagrees (CRRC-Georgia, 2021). This ambivalence reflects a sense of pride in Stalin's Georgian origins, but also an acknowledgment of the harms of his regime (Bakradze, 2013).

Since 2012, monuments honouring Stalin have been erected across the country. In the past few years, 12 such statues have been constructed, with some receiving funding from local authorities and others from private sources. The motivation behind the building of these monuments is not entirely clear. Critics argue that it is not simply an expression of national pride in Stalin's Georgian origins, but a calculated effort to promote a pro-Russian agenda in Georgia (Boffey, 2024).

As Georgians think about their history, the Soviet past continues to influence public opinion. The Soviet era brought significant industrialisation, urban growth and social change, but it also brought loss of independence, repression and cultural suppression. This mixed heritage has led to different attitudes towards the Soviet era among different demographic groups. Although some people still nostalgically view the Soviet era as a time of better social conditions (Pfeilschifter, 2022) and economic prosperity (Nechepurenko, 2024), the overall assessment of its demise is increasingly positive, especially among the new generation (CRRC-Georgia, 2020).

While various studies, not only in Georgia, but also outside the country, and especially in post-soviet space study these complexities (e.g., Shkliarov et al., 2022), our article focuses on exploring the latest trends in Georgian public opinion by analysing data from the 2024 Caucasus Barometer (CB), comparing recent and past survey results. It shows the multifaceted interaction between various factors, with a special focus on age differences, which determined how the Georgian population viewed both Stalin and the Soviet Union, reflecting a complex and contradictory legacy.

Methodology

This paper is based on the CB survey conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center—Georgia (CRRC-Georgia) during 2024, comparing it with the 2021, 2019 and 2012 survey waves. The paper focuses on two variables regarding the Soviet Union and Stalin and looks at the changing trends by comparing them to previous waves depending on when the questions were asked.

In addition to looking at the changing perceptions towards the Soviet Union and Stalin since 2012, the paper also uses multinomial regression models to analyse the characteristics of people who are more or less likely (1) To support the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as well as (2) To have positive attitudes towards Stalin. The two regression models share the following dependent variables:

1. *Support of the dissolution of the Soviet Union*, where respondents had to answer the question "In your opinion, was the dissolution of the Soviet Union a good thing or a bad thing for Georgia?" In the regression model, this dependent variable has three categories: (a) "a good thing" (first category); (b) "a bad thing" (second category / base); (c) answer option "don't know". Answer option "refuse to answer" was dropped from analysis due to the small number of respondents.

2. *Positive attitudes towards Stalin*, which is operationalised through respondents' choice to describe their attitudes towards Stalin from the following list: admiration; respect; sympathy; indifference; antipathy; irritation; fear; and disgust, hatred. For ana-

lytical purposes, the question has been recoded as follows: (a) "positive attitudes towards Stalin" (first category) incorporates admiration, respect, and sympathy; (b) "negative attitudes towards Stalin" (second category / base) combines antipathy, irritation, fear, disgust hatred; and (c) "neutral attitudes towards Stalin" (third category), which includes indifference; as well as answer option "don't know". Answer options "refuse to answer" and "I don't know who Stalin is" were dropped from analysis due to the small number of respondents.

In order to identify statistically significant differences between various demographic groups, we included the following characteristics in each model: settlement type (capital, urban or rural), gender (male or female), age groups (18–34, 35–54 or 55+), level of education (secondary or lower, vocational or higher education), employment status (unemployed[1] or employed), ethnicity (non-Georgian or Georgian ethnicity),[2] and economic condition calculated from an index based on the number of items the respondents' household owned.[3] We divided the ownership of the number of items variable into two quantiles, representing the lower and upper wealth groups.

In addition to demographic variables, each model included predictors examining pro-western/anti-western sentiments, as well as people's perceptions of the role of government in order to better understand how political and ideological attitudes might correlate with pro-Soviet perceptions. Based on the assumption that attitudes towards EU integration, as well as perceptions of the role of the government, might correlate with attitudes towards the Soviet past, we operationalised the predictors as follows:

(1) Level of support towards Georgia's integration in the EU, measured by a question in which respondents had to assess the extent to which they support Georgia's membership in the EU.[4]

(2) The second predictor was operationalised through respondents' choice to select one of the two statements: (a) People are like children; the government should take care of them like a parent. (b) Govern-

ment is like an employee; the people should be the bosses who control the government.[5]

We used the regression analysis on previous waves of CB as well to look at how the predicators changed over time. The findings of the regression analysis are reported as predicted probabilities.[6]

Findings

In this article, we examine attitudes towards the Soviet Union and Stalin separately and compare each of them to previous waves of the Caucasus Barometer surveys.

Attitudes Towards the Soviet Union

Attitudes towards the Soviet Union have changed during recent years and those who say that the dissolution was a good thing has increased from 41% in 2019 to 57% in 2024. At the same time, the share of those who think that the dissolution was a bad thing has dropped by almost 20 percentage points, from 42% to 23%.

Figure 1:   In Your Opinion, Was the Dissolution of the Soviet Union a Good Thing or a Bad Thing for Georgia? (Caucasus Barometer 2019, 2021, 2024, %)
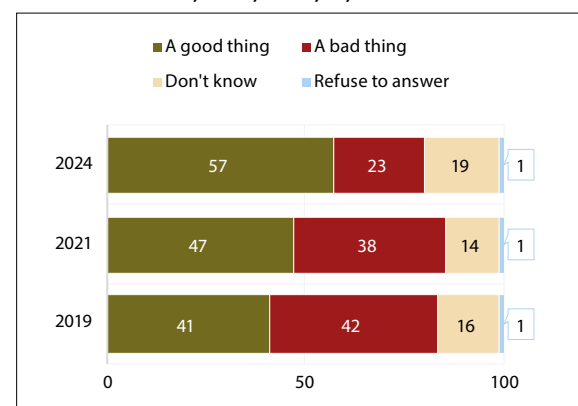
Increasing negative attitudes towards the Soviet Union are also evident in other questions. For example, in 2024 almost half of the population thinks that people, in general, live better now compared to the Soviet period.

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1   This includes the following categories in 2024: Retired and not employed; Student and not employed; Not employed and not looking for a job; Not employed but looking for a job; and Disabled and unable to work.

2   Non-Georgian ethnicities are: Armenian; Azerbaijani; other Caucasian ethnicities (Abkhazian, Lezgin, Ossetian, etc.); Russian; Kurd; or Yezidi and other.

3   The list include colour television (1), automatic washing machine (2), refrigerator (3), air conditioner (4), car (5), land line phone (6), computer—including laptop or tablet (7), and cell phone (8).

4   A dummy variable was generated, where "fully support" and "rather support" were grouped as "EU supporters" (coded as 1) and all other answer options as "Not EU supporters" (coded as 0). Answer option "refuse to answer" was dropped from analysis due to the small number of respondents;

5   The question was dichotomised where the first statement was coded as "Government as parent" (coded as 0) and the second statement as "Government as employee" (coded as 1). All other answer options (e.g., "agree with neither / both statements", "don't know" and "refuse to answer") were dropped from analysis due to small numbers.

6   For nominal and ordinal scales the first listed answer options are the base categories.

The share of such people claiming this has increased by 18 percentage points from 30% to 48% since 2021.

In order to take a closer look at different groups in the population and study who is more or less inclined to have positive or negative images and perceptions of the Soviet Union, we applied a multinomial logistic regression analysis, according to which there are variations in attitudes towards the dissolution of the Soviet Union based on age, education, economic wealth, settlement type and ethnicity. For example, people aged 55+ are less likely to assess the dissolution of the USSR as a good thing and are also less likely to have uncertain attitudes, rather than negative attitudes, compared to those who are 18 to 34. On the other hand, ethnic Georgians and those with higher education are more likely to view the dissolution of the Soviet Union as rather positive compared to ethnic minorities and those with secondary or lower education. In addition, those who are in the upper economic wealth rung are also more likely to have a positive assessment of the disso-

lution compared to those in the low economic rung. As for settlement type, the model shows that those living in the urban areas are more likely to have neutral, rather than negative, attitudes towards the dissolution, compared to those living in the capital. Interestingly, this model does not show significant relations when it comes to Georgian people's gender or employment status (see Figure 2).

Besides demographic predictors, the model also shows differences among pro-western and anti-western groups. Specifically, those respondents who are EU supporters are more likely to say that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a good thing rather than a bad thing compared to their opponents. In addition, those respondents who regard the government as an employee, which should be controlled by people, are also more likely to have a positive attitude towards the dissolution of the Soviet Union, compared to those who regard the government as a parent who should take care of the citizens (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities of the Responses to the Question: "In Your Opinion, Was the Dissolution of the Soviet Union a Good Thing or a Bad Thing for Georgia?" (Caucasus Barometer 2019 and 2024, Age Groups %)
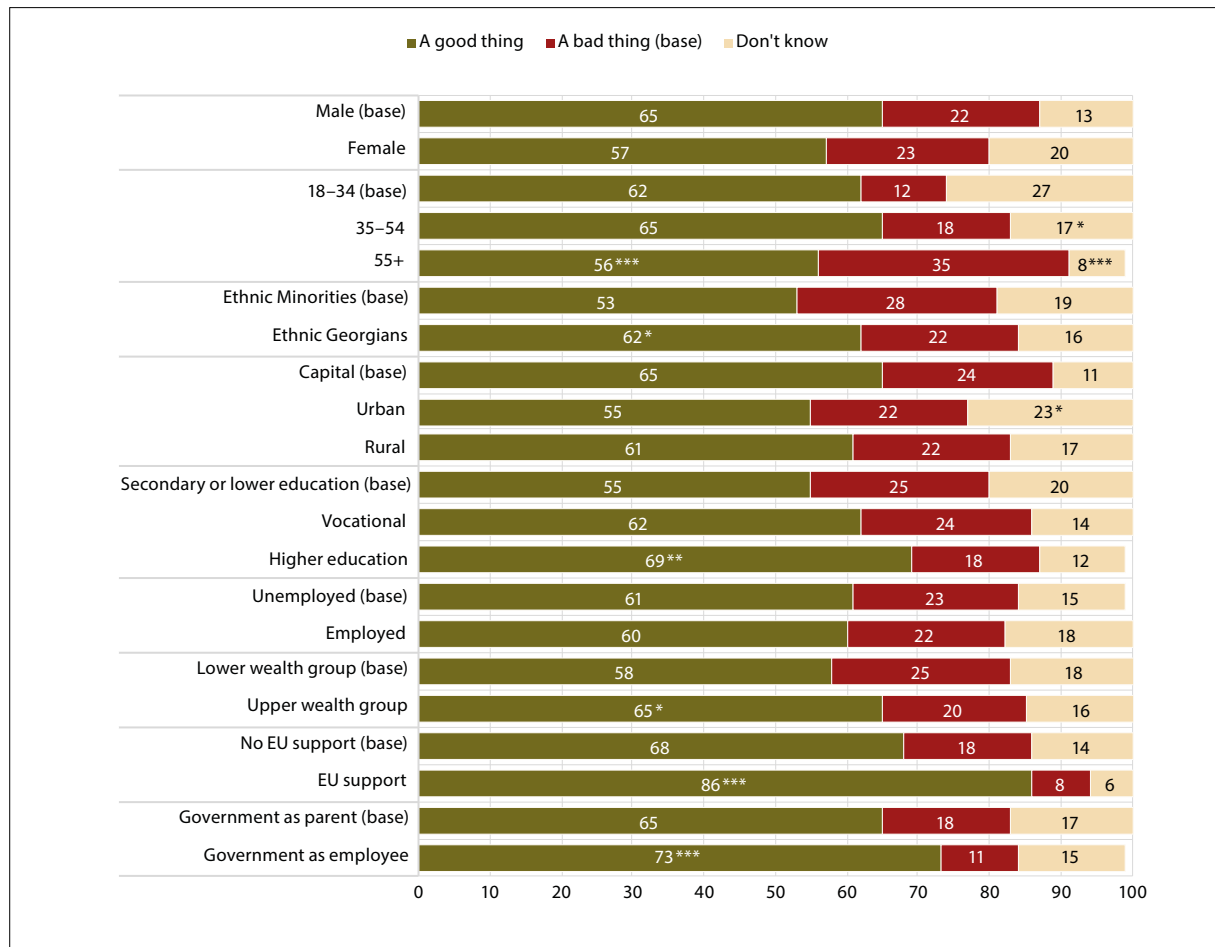
Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Figure 3: Predicted Probabilities of the Responses to the Question: "In Your Opinion, Was the Dissolution of the Soviet Union a Good Thing or a Bad Thing for Georgia?" (Caucasus Barometer 2019 and 2024, Age Groups %)
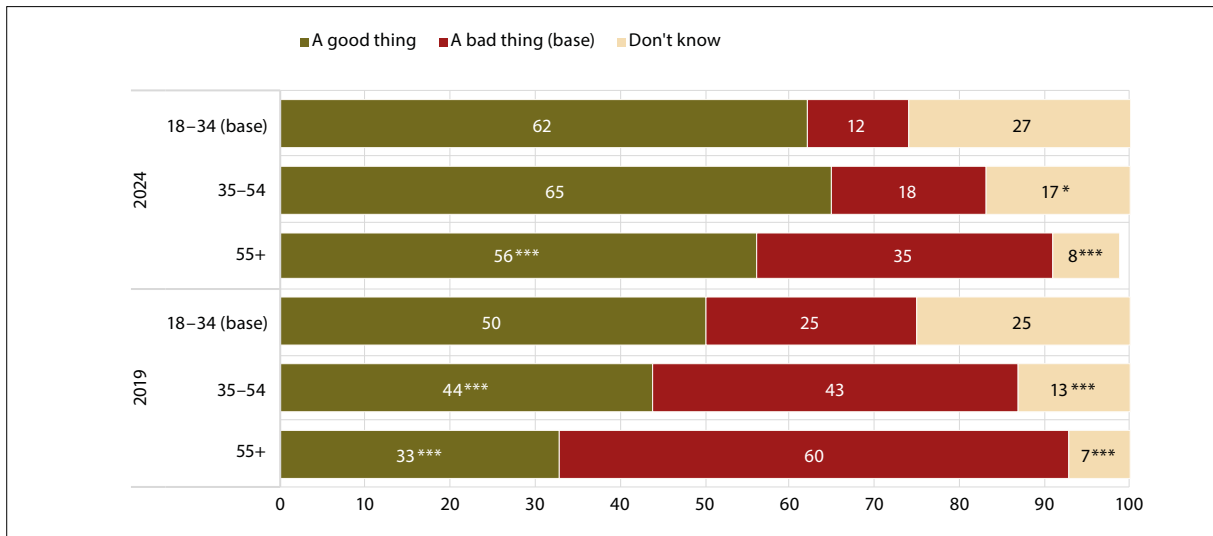
*Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

In order to see whether the predictors have changed over the years, we used the same model on 2019 CB data. The results show that age was a significant predictor in 2019 as well. People who were 35+ years were less likely to assess the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a good thing, and were also less likely to have uncertain, rather than negative attitudes compared to the young generation of 18 to 34 (see Figure 3).

In addition to age, a number of other factors were also significant predictors for attitudes towards the Soviet Union. Similar to 2024 data, in 2019 those who had higher education, were EU supporters or perceived the government as an employee, were more likely to have positive, rather than negative attitudes towards the dissolution, compared to those with secondary or lower education, lack of support for EU integration and perceiving the government as a parent.

As for the differences between the two waves, in 2019, rural residents were significantly less likely to perceive the dissolution as a good thing, compared to Tbilisi residents and women who were more likely to have uncertain rather than negative attitudes towards the dissolution.

Figure 4: Which of the Words from This List Best Describes Your Attitude Towards Stalin? (Caucasus Barometer 2012 and 2024, %)
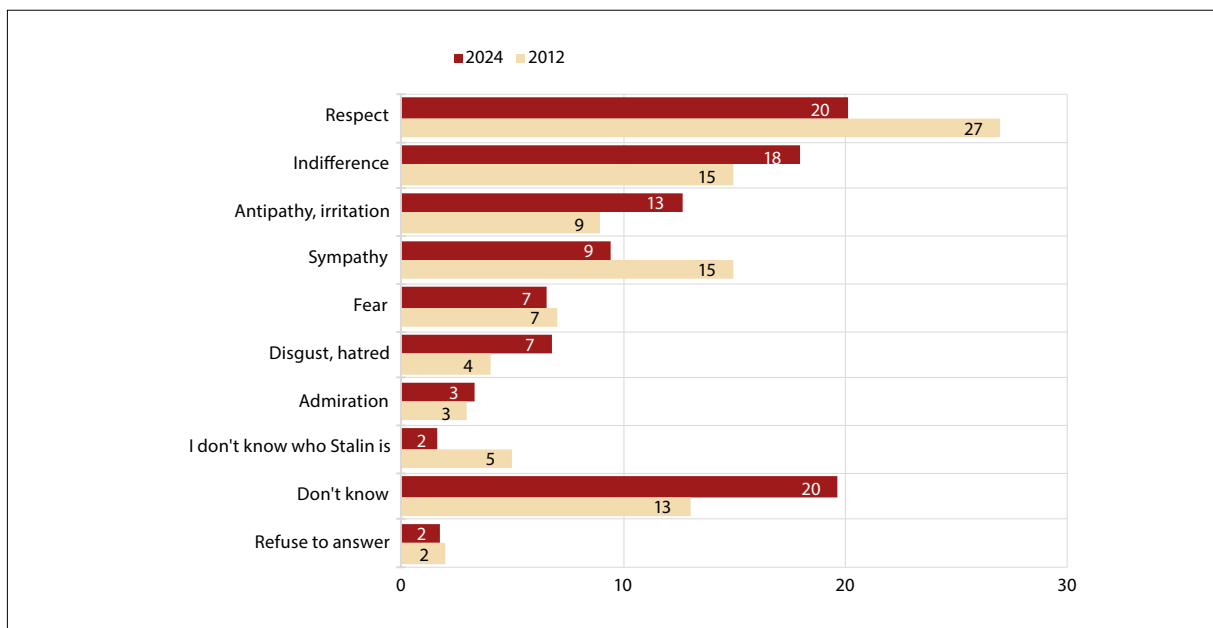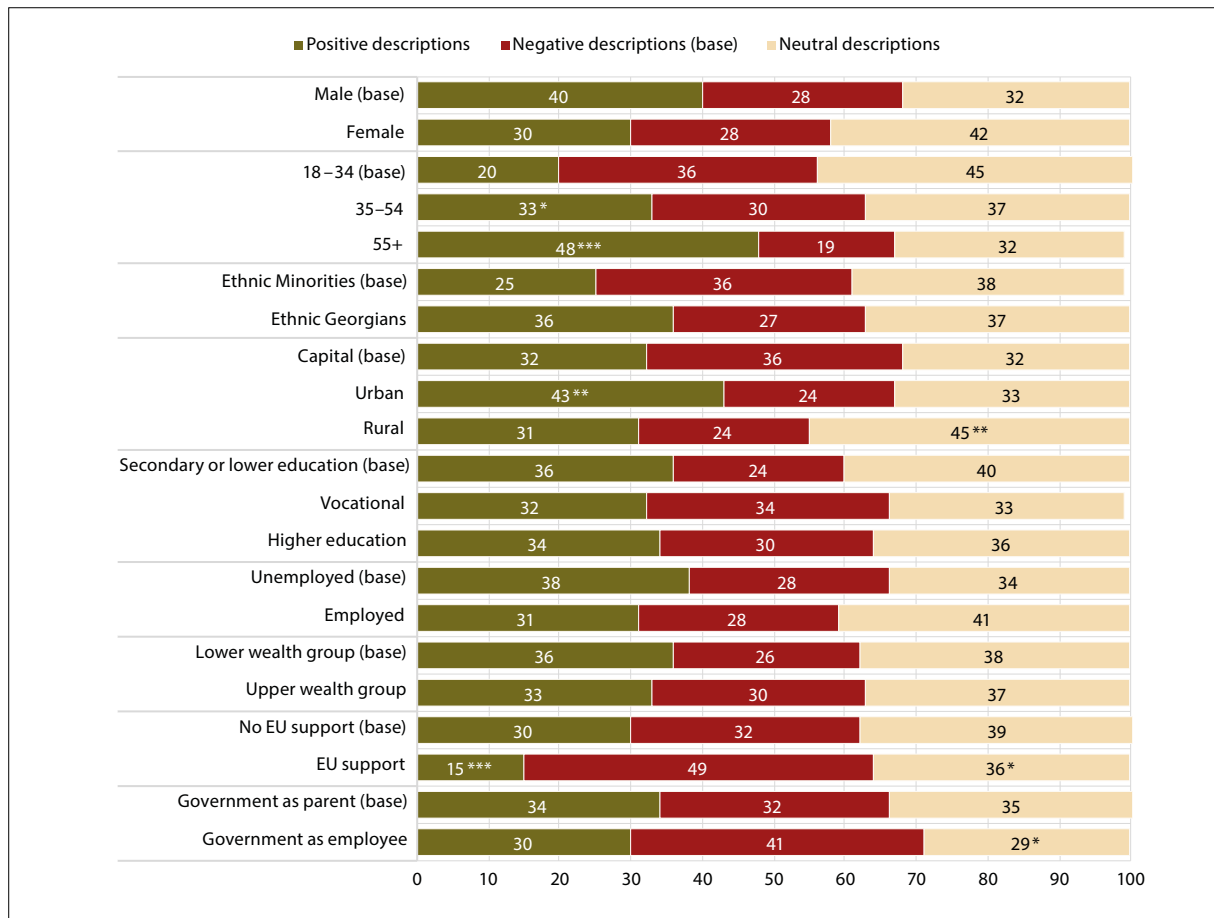
Figure 5:   Predicted Probabilities of Responses to the Question, "Which of the Words from This List Best Describes Your Attitude Towards Stalin?" (Caucasus Barometer 2024, %)

	Positive descriptions	Negative descriptions (base)	Neutral descriptions
Male (base)	40	28	32
Female	30	28	42
18–34 (base)	20	36	45
35–54	33*	30	37
55+	48***	19	32
Ethnic Minorities (base)	25	36	38
Ethnic Georgians	36	27	37
Capital (base)	32	36	32
Urban	43**	24	33
Rural	31	24	45**
Secondary or lower education (base)	36	24	40
Vocational	32	34	33
Higher education	34	30	36
Unemployed (base)	38	28	34
Employed	31	28	41
Lower wealth group (base)	36	26	38
Upper wealth group	33	30	37
No EU support (base)	30	32	39
EU support	15***	49	36*
Government as parent (base)	34	32	35
Government as employee	30	41	29*

*Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Attitudes Towards Stalin

This article also examines Georgian peoples' attitudes towards Stalin. When the respondents had to select one word which, in their view, best described Stalin, one-fifth of the population chose the word "respect" (20%). This share dropped by seven percent points since 2012 (27%). The second most frequent choice was "indifference", which was selected by 18% of the Georgian population, followed by "antipathy, irritation" (13%) and "sympathy" (9%). Notably, these last attitudes have changed since 2012. Overall, while some positive attitudes were replaced with negative connotations, "respect" and "indifference" remain the terms most frequently associated with Stalin (see Figure 4 on p. 20).

Like the question about the dissolution of the Soviet Union, we tried to identify demographic groups more and less likely to have positive, negative or neutral attitudes towards Stalin. As regression analyses show, there are variations in attitudes based on age, and settlement type. People aged 35+, as well as urban residents, are more likely to have a positive attitude towards Stalin compared to young generations (aged 18–34) and those living in the capital. Conversely, rural residents are more likely to assess their attitude towards Stalin as neutral rather than negative compared to those living in the capital. Interestingly, this model does not show any significant relations when it comes to other demographic factors, such as gender, ethnicity, education, employment or economic wealth condition of the respondents (see Figure 5).

Another factor which showed a significant relation to one's attitude towards Stalin is one's support for EU membership. As expected, those who support Georgia's membership in the EU are more likely to have negative sentiments towards Stalin. In addition, those who regard the government as an employee are also more likely to have negative, rather than neutral sentiments (see Figure 5).

When using the same regression model on the 2012 CB data, the results show that among demographic factors, age again remains a significant predictor. Similar to 2024 data, people aged 55+ were more likely to have positive feelings towards Stalin compared

Figure 6:   **Predicted Probabilities of Responses to the Question, "Which of the Words from This List Best Describes Your Attitude Towards Stalin?" (Caucasus Barometer 2012 and 2024, Age Groups %)**
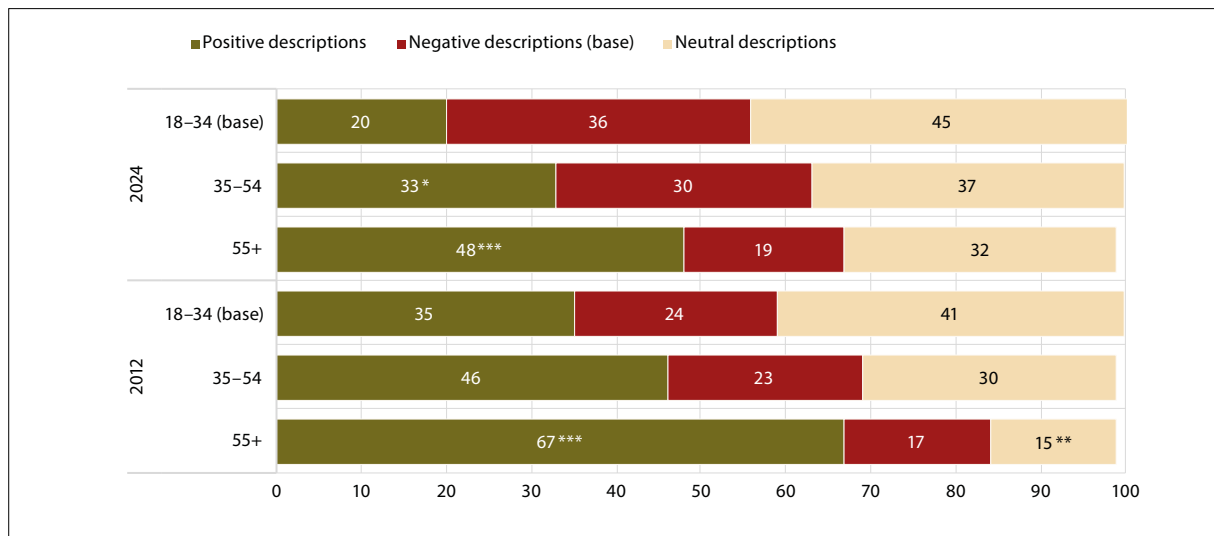
Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

to younger people (18–35). Unlike 2024 data, there were no significant differences between the age groups 34–55 and 18–34 in 2012 (see Figure 6).

In addition to age, 2012 data shows that gender also was a significant predictor as women were less likely to have positive, rather than negative feelings towards Stalin. Finally, like the 2024 data, those who supported EU membership in 2012 were less likely to have positive sentiments regarding Stalin.

In comparing the results of 2012 and 2024, we can assume that while among demographic variables, age and gender were the significant predictors for positive attitudes towards Stalin in 2012, these variables became age and settlement type in 2024. Consequently, age remains the only significant factor from a demographic perspective. In addition, support for EU membership continues to show a significant relation with negative sentiments towards Stalin. Interestingly, these two models do not show any significant relation when it comes to other demographic factors, such as ethnicity, education, employment or economic wealth condition of the respondents.

Conclusions

While the Soviet Union and its influential, Georgian-born leader Joseph Stalin are still frequently discussed in Georgia, this article looks at the Caucasus Barometer data which portrays the attitudes of the Georgian population towards the Soviet Union as well as Stalin. The analysis shows significant positive changes in Georgia's population towards the dissolution of the Soviet Union in recent years. This trend is further confirmed by the finding that almost half of the public believes that people are living better now compared to Soviet times.

Multinomial logistic regression analysis highlights the demographic variations in this attitude. In 2024, older people, people with less education, ethnic minorities and people in lower wealth category are less likely to view the dissolution of Soviet Union positively. In contrast, younger generation, ethnic Georgians, those with higher education and those in higher economic rung are more likely to consider it beneficial. Political values also play a role, with pro-Western respondents being more likely to favour dissolution than their anti-Western counterparts. Similarly, those who perceive the government as an employee rather than as a parent are also more likely to assess the dissolution positively.

Some of the variables turned out to be significant predictors over recent years. Specifically, 2019 data, like 2024 data, reveal that the young generation, those who have higher education, EU supporters and those who perceive the government as an employee, are more likely to have positive, rather than negative attitudes towards the dissolution, compared to those with secondary or lower education, not supporting EU integration and perceiving the government as a parent.

As for the attitude towards Stalin, the decline of positive sentiments is obvious. In 2024, "antipathy, irritation", "indifference" and undecided assessments became more prevalent. Demographic differences are also evident, with younger people and capital dwellers more likely to have negative views of Stalin. It should be noted that support for EU membership is associated with less favourable views of Stalin.

When comparing 2024 with 2012 data, only two variables from the model—age as well as support of EU membership—continue to show a significant relation

with sentiments towards Stalin. Younger people (18–35) as well as EU supporters were less likely to have positive assessments of Stalin.

Overall, these findings indicate a growing trend towards rather negative perceptions of the Soviet era and a shift in attitudes toward Stalin.

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