



GENERATION IN TRANSITION

Youth Study 2016 – Georgia

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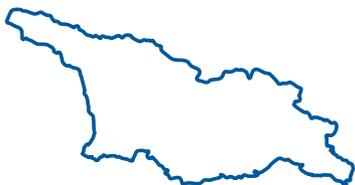


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Like many post-Soviet states, the South Caucasus countries are still in transition. Georgia rates as a lighthouse in the region in terms of many factors. The country has made considerable steps in terms of democratization as well as the transition into a market economy. The anchor for these steps is close cooperation with the European Union. Euro-Atlantic integration is the most important foreign policy nexus, and serves as a balance for the onholding tense relationship with Russia. However, in terms of political culture, Georgia is still influenced by its Soviet legacy.

The study at hand explores the worries, aspirations, values and lifestyles of Georgia's youth. Youngsters that are aged between 14 and 29 years today are the youngsters who grew up after the break-down of the Soviet Union and in an independent Georgia. They are an important indicator for the relationship to the Soviet legacy on one hand, and to the future development of their society on the other.

The research involved a country-wide, representative survey that was conducted from May to June 2016 in Georgia among the youth aged between 14 and 29 years. It is orientated towards the Shell Youth Study that has been periodically conducted in Germany since 1953, and that has proven to be a valuable indicator of the society's mid-term development. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung implemented a series of similar studies in Western Balkan countries, as well as in Central Asia. This study is part of a series in Eastern Partnership Countries, together with the Armenian study, that was the first one to be completed. All of the studies are designed to allow a comparison between the surveyed countries.

The results of the study draw an interesting picture of Georgian youth by showing the challenges of young Georgians in terms of private, economic, and political life. Youth in Georgia seem to still separate private life from public/political life, while their focus is strongly on their private life. The immediate family is the most trusted social reference point, and leading a good family life ranks among the top priorities. At the same time, political indifference among youngsters is high, with political and civic engagement being relatively weakly developed. Trust levels towards political institutions are low, and it is believed that the interests of young people are not adequately taken up by the government. The younger generation also has achieved a consensus regarding accession to the EU and NATO, even though accession is considered to cause an increase in tension with Russia.

Accession is linked to better economic development and better living conditions.

The young generation of youngsters in Georgia is strongly attached to the preservation of Georgian culture, tending to reproduce traditional values. The church, representing these values, is the most trusted institution. At the same time, levels of tolerance as well as wide acceptance of diversity and equality are very low. The survey also discloses huge disparities between youngsters in the capital and youngsters in rural areas, as well as between females and males. Whereas young people in rural areas tend to be more conservative, their peers in urban areas, especially in the capital, tend to pursue more liberal values.

The study is supposed to be a starting point for deeper analysis and political discussion. It is targeted to decision-makers, academics, NGOs, and youth organizations both in Georgia and abroad. By indicating worries, aspirations, and lifestyles, youth are given a voice. The study aims to fuel a debate on how to tackle the challenges youth struggle with in order to keep this rich potential for the development of the country.

To close, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the whole ACT team, which has been a reliant and very professional partner in this project, especially Sopho Omanadze, who served as the head of the project team. I am also very thankful to Klaus Hurrelmann, Hertie School of Governance, for his valuable advice; to all of the Georgian experts that were involved as consultants; and – last but not least - to the FES Georgia team, especially the responsible project coordinator, Salome Alania, for her hard and excellent work.

Julia Bläsius

Director

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Executive Summary

Young people are the biggest assets for any country to ensure the democratic and socio-economic development of the region. In addition, they are catalysts for change and motivators of innovations in many different fields. State policies, such as the National Youth Policy within the joint efforts of the youth, civil society, international organizations, and private sector regulate a wide range of issues related to the development of people in the 14-29 age category. Georgian youth, however, still encounter different challenges in political, social, and cultural life. No comprehensive study of youth has been conducted in Georgia in recent years to identify the existing challenges and aspirations of young people in the country. For this reason, Friedrich – Ebert – Stiftung (FES) South Caucasus Office took the initiative to commission a nationwide study on Georgian youth in order to have an understanding of the young generation’s perceptions, awareness, expectations, and approaches towards their changing reality. The Study is based on the model of the Renowned Shell Youth Study, which has been carried out in Germany as well as many other European countries since 1953.

The methodology for the survey was created by the Analysis and Consulting team (ACT) in compliance with Friedrich – Ebert – Stiftung (FES) South Caucasus Office requirements. Survey techniques included quantitative as well as qualitative survey methodologies, particularly face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The quantitative study was conducted from May-June 2016, whereas the qualitative study was conducted after the initial analysis of the quantitative survey, in particular July 2016. In total, 1200 completed face-to-face interviews and 24 focus group discussions were conducted throughout the country.

The study focused investigating various aspects of youth, starting from basic socio-economic characteristics of young people, including experience and attitudes related to employment, education, democracy, foreign policy, family and friends, identity value, religion, lifestyle, and concerns and aspirations.

As it appeared, 41 % of young people were still studying during the survey period. Those who dropped out of an educational institution at any stage (8%) declare that reasons for abandoning their studies include the inability to pay a fee (27%), family conditions (9%), and marriage (19%). More than half of the survey respondents (52%) believe that the level of education in Georgia is moderately satisfying.

Nineteen percent of young people are employed full-time, and 7% are employed part-time or self-employed. The majority of students (71%) feel optimistic about their employment opportunities and believe that they will be able to find a job right after or soon after graduation. Seventy-five percent of young people believe that the most important factor for finding a job in Georgia is that of friends/acquaintances. Interestingly, despite the low level of trust in government, 42% of youth are interested in a public sector job.

Georgian youth expressed the highest level of trust towards their immediate families. Seventy percent of young people live with their parents, and 62% of respondents are financially supported by their parents. Fifty-five percent of young people get along with their parents very well, and the same share of respondents declare that their political views are somewhat aligned with those of their parents. Almost half of young people (48%) make decisions with their parents, however, a significant part of them declares that they are free and independent in the decision-making process (44%). Approximately one-third of the respondents declare that their mother can have an influence on important decisions (34%).

According to the study results, close personal relations are valued by young people. Ninety-five percent of respondents consider it very important to have a partner you can trust. In addition, the vast majority of young people consider it very important to lead a good family life (91%). Almost one-fourth (24%) of young people are in a registered marriage, while the majority (69%) are still single. In terms of future plans, the majority of young people (90%) plan to get married. A rather significant part of Georgian youngsters (43%) believe that one advantage of marriage over an unmarried relationship is that marriage assigns more responsibility between partners. However, one-fourth (25%) of young respondents think of marriage as a priority, because in Georgia, marriage is more respected than cohabitation. More than one-third of inquired respondents believe that the optimal age for getting married is 25 years for both women and men. In choosing a future spouse, the majority of young people believe that the most important factors are personality (64%) and common interests (56%).

A majority of young people (74%) do not have a child. A large portion of young people want two (41%) or three (34%) children, while every tenth youngster (11%) wants four children. According to the study results, among those who do not have a child yet, the majority (45%) plans to have one when they are between 26 and 31 years old.

According to study results, top activities practiced by young people on a regular basis involve entertainment and relaxation, i.e. listening to music, watching films/TV, and going out with friends. The tendency of spending free time in a certain way on a regular basis (listening to music, going out with friends, reading, writing,

painting, sporting and playing video games) is the same among all youth groups. Although it should be mentioned that, the older the age, the lesser the share of youth practicing a certain type of an activity, structured or unstructured, on a regular basis.

Thirty-six percent of males appeared to be regular smokers, whereas only seven percent of females smoke on a regular basis. Two percent of youth declared that they drink alcohol every day. Generally, the consumption of alcohol is prevalent in 70% of youngsters, including both those who drink on a regular basis and those who drink very rarely. Eighty-eight percent of youth has never smoked marijuana, while eight percent rarely exercises this activity. Among those eight percent, males are dominant (14%).

Among the least important values for youth is political engagement – only 20% of young people think that it is important to be politically engaged. The level of interest in global, regional, and national politics is not high among young Georgians, however, they are relatively more interested in domestic politics. A nihilistic attitude towards political issues might be caused by young people thinking that their interests are either under-represented or not represented at all in today's politics.

Negative attitudes towards political activism are verified by the extent youth trust local political institutions – political parties, Parliament, and central and local governments are the least trusted organizations by young people (25%-26%). Attitudes towards international and non-governmental organizations turned out to be quite interesting. Trust towards these organizations is lower than the index of trust towards the church, the army, and the police, but on the other hand, international and non-governmental organizations are more trusted than local political institutions.

Seventy-four percent of youth support Georgia's accession to the EU. Young people believe that the EU will assist the country's economic development (83%), which is connected to better employment opportunities (80%) and the improvement of the socio-economic situation (81%). Accession to the EU is also considered to be a precondition for better education (84%). Fifty-two percent of young people believe that an undesirable result of EU integration is the possibility of increased aggression from Russia, and 28% of respondents believe that by integrating into the EU, Georgia will finally lose its chance to have Abkhazia and Tskhinvali returned. As for young peoples' attitudes towards NATO, the number of respondents that agree with Georgia's accession to NATO is slightly lower than the number of those supporting accession to the EU and equals 68%. Ninety-two percent of respondents believe that forging closer ties with NATO is not desirable for Georgia, as it will escalate the conflict with Russia. The second most important

reason why Georgian young people do not approve of Georgia's accession to NATO is that the number of Georgian soldiers lost in NATO military missions will potentially increase (85%).

Study results verified the tendency of recent years, according to which religious institutions have a high level of trust. Eighty-one percent of inquired youngsters trust the church and religious institutions in general (very much – 58%, to some degree – 23%). It is quite interesting that after religious institutions, the army (76%) and police (62%) are leaders in terms of trust. Religious leaders are among the top three categories of people towards which respondents expressed a high level of trust. The importance of religiosity and spiritual life is once again confirmed by survey data - among the most important values, the majority of youth in Georgia named belief in God (90%).

The least amount of trust is given to LGBT people. This is the only result that is below the level of distrust (a score of five indicates the center). A significant amount of social distance is evident in the case of homosexuals – 44 percent of respondents' state that they would not be happy if a homosexual person or couple moved into their neighborhood. However, it is worth mentioning that the share of respondents stating that they would not care is also quite high (45%- not interested).

As a conclusion it can be assumed, that study results reflect tendencies related to a mismatch between the labor market supply and demand spread throughout the population. According to the study, youth believes that there are several reasons for the mismatch. On one hand, it is the choice not driven by the youth themselves and on the other, it is the curricula of higher education institutions lacking practical components in the study process. Speaking of employment and education, one-fifth of respondents have a strong desire to emigrate mainly due to improving living conditions, have better access to education employment.

The survey results also verify the findings of other recently conducted studies in terms of the political indifference of Georgian youngsters. Georgian young people are not very interested in politics. Apart from low political involvement, the civic engagement of youth is also very insignificant. Despite low political engagement, a majority of Georgian young people support accession to the EU as well as NATO, even though both are associated with similar threats to Georgia, in particular the threats are related to escalated Russian aggression, larger outmigration, increase the number of Georgian troops in NATO missions, resulting in larger casualties.

On the global map of values, Georgia is more inclined towards the traditional values and survival values poles. The dominance of traditional values can be explained by the influence of the traditional social environment in which young people go through the socialization process in their childhood and youth, the social groups with which they interact, and the older generation, which largely influences their worldview. Traditional values are largely reflected in family being one of the most important values for youth.

Introduction

Young people are the biggest assets for any country in order to ensure the democratic and socio-economic development of the region. In addition, they are catalysts for change and the motivators of innovations in many different fields. State policies, such as the National Youth Policy, within the joint efforts of the youth, civil society, international organizations, and private sector regulate a wide range of issues related to the development of persons between 14 and 29 years of age. Georgian youth, however, still encounter different challenges in political, social, and cultural life. No comprehensive study of youth has been conducted in Georgia in recent years to identify the existing challenges and aspirations of young people in the country. For this reason, Friedrich – Ebert – Stiftung (FES) South Caucasus Office took the initiative to commission a nationwide study on Georgian youth in order to have an understanding the young generation's perceptions, awareness, expectations, and approaches towards the changing reality. The Study is based on the model of the Renowned Shell Youth Study, which has been carried out in Germany as well as many other European countries since 1953.

Young people are an important part of society, not only in terms of future development, but also in terms of number. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, every fifth person in Georgia falls into the 15-29 age category. The decrease in the population of Georgia affected the share of youth as well. If youth aged 15-29 amounted to 24% of the population a decade ago, the share of youth decreased by four percent in 10 years.

Attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of youth form the future of the society and the country that young people live in. 'The events of the past two decades in Georgia have drastically changed both the political and economic environments. Social transformation usually initiates a process of value change and if this indeed was the case it should be reflected in the values of the young, the generation which was brought up in the changed environment' (Sumbadze, Generations and Values, 2012). According to Sumbadze and Tarkhan Mouravi, Georgian youth have accelerated the pace of transition to adulthood compared to western societies. Georgian youth are also different from the older generation, since people aged 14-29 were born after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus, they grew up in a changed environment and could not share the communist ideology and socialist life experience that have formed the value orientations and habits of older generations. Even though Georgian youth are perceived to be more westernized, their participation in social and political life is still very low.

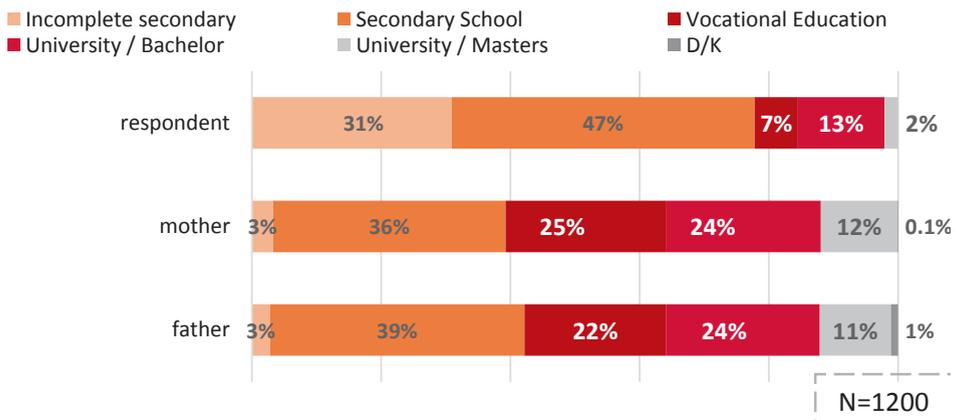
Considering the fact that there can be some gaps between the older and younger generations, it is important to take a closer look at the basic socio economic characteristics of youth. In particular, analyzing their cultural capital, family and

living conditions, as well as their financial independence is an essential part of drafting the context in which young people live.

Cultural Capital

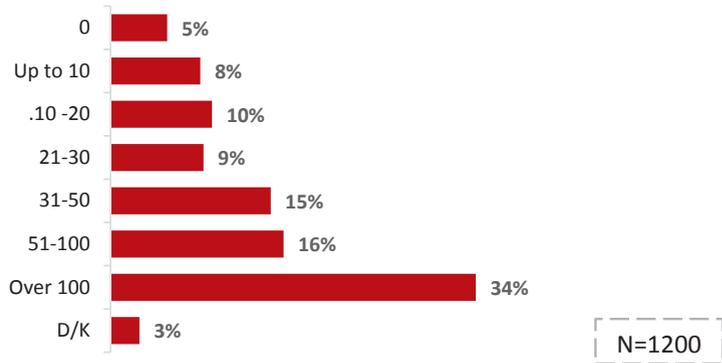
In the scope of the survey, we asked the respondents about their educational attainment, as well as the educational attainment of their parents. As it appeared, 41,4% of young people were still in the process of completing education. According to results, in terms of higher education degrees, there is no significant difference between respondents from the capital city Tbilisi and other cities, (21% of respondents from Tbilisi hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree, compared to 20% in other cities). In rural areas, however, only seven percent of respondents hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Educational attainments of parents, which might be connected with the educational achievements of young people, also differ according to region. The education levels of parents is higher in the cities than in the countryside: tertiary and post-graduate education of mothers (Bachelor's/Master's/PhD): Tbilisi-58, 1%; urban-38, 7%; rural-15, 4%, tertiary and post-graduate education of fathers (Bachelor's/Master's/PhD): Tbilisi-58, 1%; urban-35, 5%; rural-15, 2%.

Figure # 1.1 – Education qualification and cultural capital



In order to measure the cultural capital of the families of respondents, we asked them about the number of books in their household. The number of books in the apartment/house also differs according to territorial disposition. In Tbilisi, almost half of the respondents (49%) mentioned that they have over 100 books, while 36% of respondents from other cities in Georgia said that they have over 100 books. In the countryside, every fifth respondent (21%) mentioned the same. In general, only five percent of respondents noted that they don't have any books.

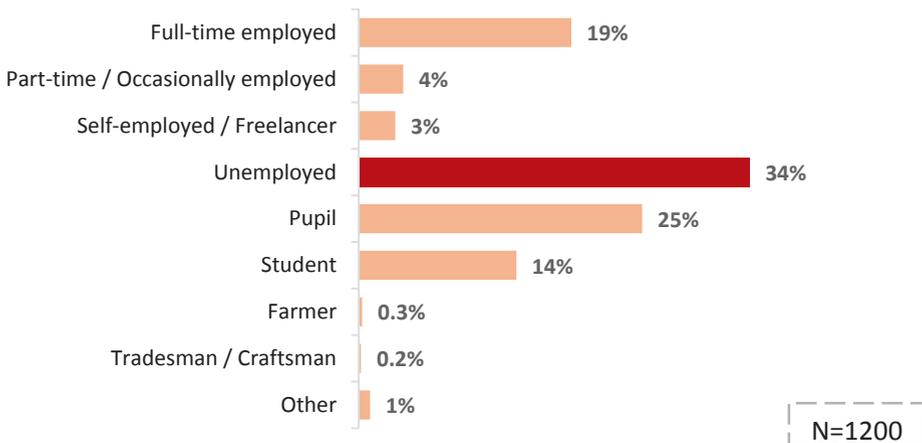
Figure # 1.2 – The number of books in the household



Employment Status

Nineteen percent of young people are employed full-time, and seven percent are employed part-time or are self-employed. Employment opportunities are much greater in the capital city of Tbilisi (27%- employed full-time), while in the countryside only 11% of respondents are employed, and almost every second young person (46%) is unemployed. As it appeared, male respondents have a slightly better situation and 28% of them are unemployed, while 40% of females remain unemployed.

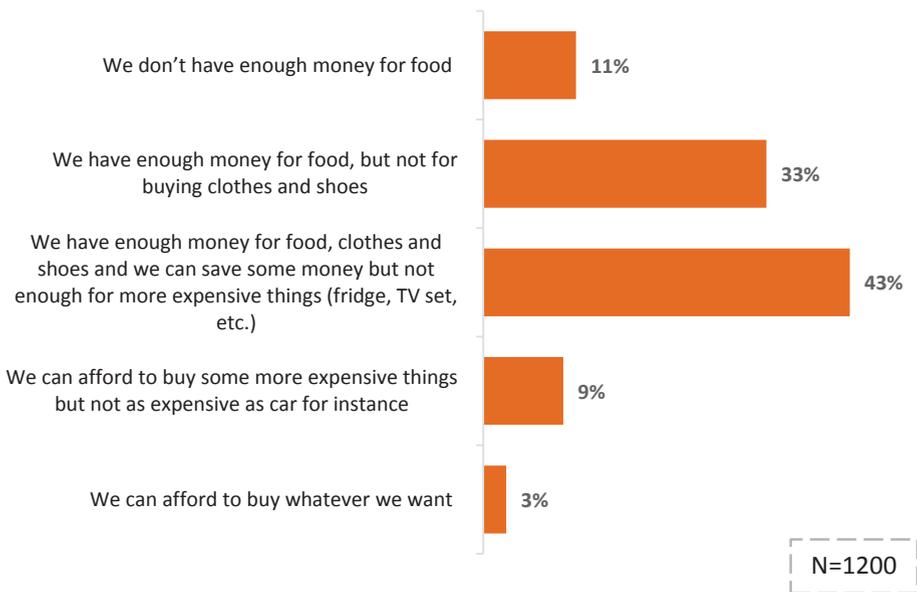
Figure # 1.3 – The employment status of youth



Material status of the household of young people

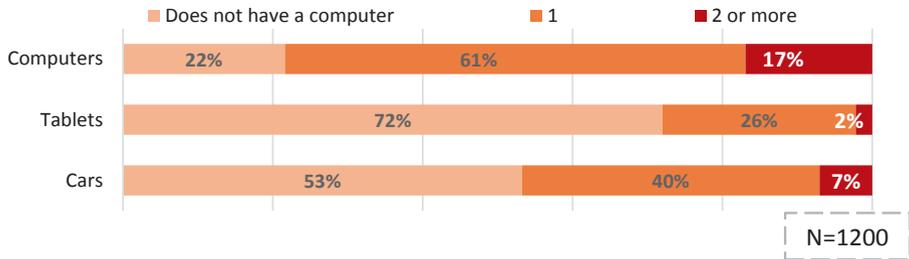
We also have examined the living standards of the households in which young people live. Firstly, we asked them what the financial situation of their household is, and this measure is an approximation of the material standard that is based on their perception. Only three percent of young people do not have any financial problem and can buy whatever they want. In turn, 11% of young people don't have enough money for food. The material status of household is most critical in villages, where every fifth person (20%) noted that they don't have enough money for food. The material situation of young people is connected with where they live, as the situation is somewhat better in the city than in the countryside.

Figure # 1.4 – Financial situation of household



Cars are owned by 47% of respondent households (39, 5% - one, 7, 5% - more than one), while 53% of respondent households do not have a car. Car ownership does not appear to be strongly related to where respondents live (do not have a car; Tbilisi-51%, urban-50, 7%, rural-56, 4%). There is a very small distinction in terms of car ownership in Tbilisi and the countryside, but the difference is more obvious when it comes to the ownership of computers. In Tbilisi, only six percent of respondent households do not have a computer while 15% of respondent households in other cities do not have a computer, and 39% of respondent households in the countryside do not have a computer.

Figure # 1.5 – Number of computers in the household

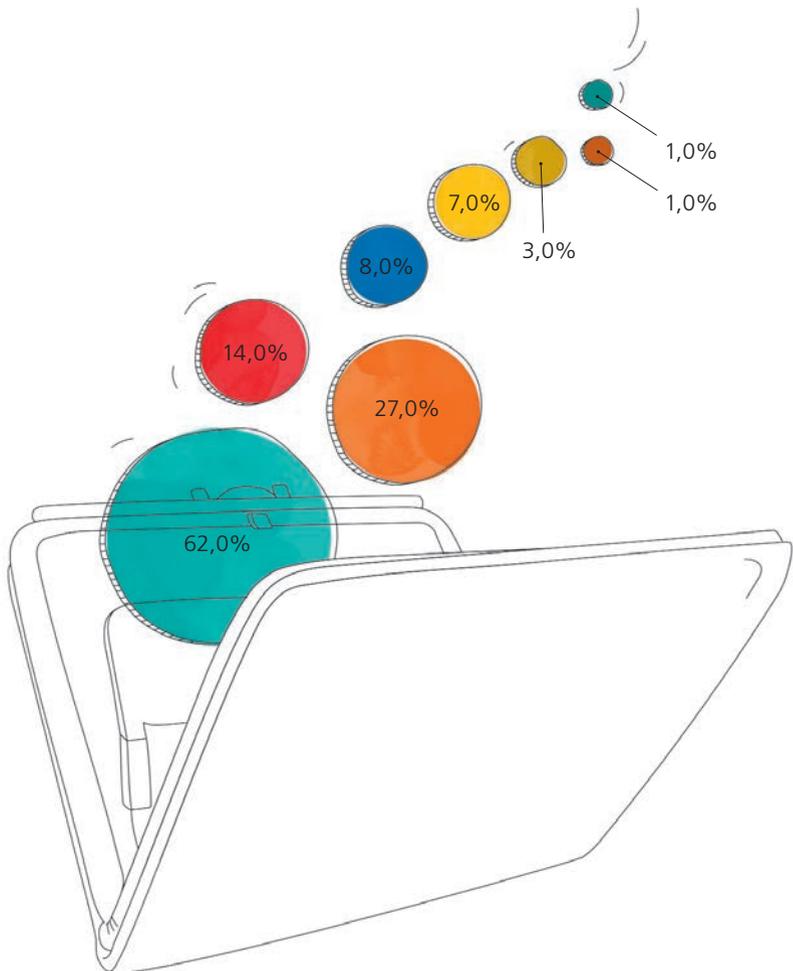


Financial and housing conditions of young people

To check the degree of financial independence, we asked young people to specify all of the income they have, as well as who supports them if they have no income. As a result, 62% of respondents are financially supported by their parents. Personal income is more accessible in Tbilisi, where 35% of respondents mentioned that they have personal income, while 27% in other cities and every fifth young person in the countryside has this kind of income.

The strongest connection with financial autonomy is, as expected, the age of the young person. With increasing age, financial dependence on parents declines. (In the 14-18 age category, 96% of respondents are dependent; in the 19-24 age category – 64% are dependent, and in the 25-29 age category – 33.5% are dependent).

Figure #1.6 – Income and financial independence of youth



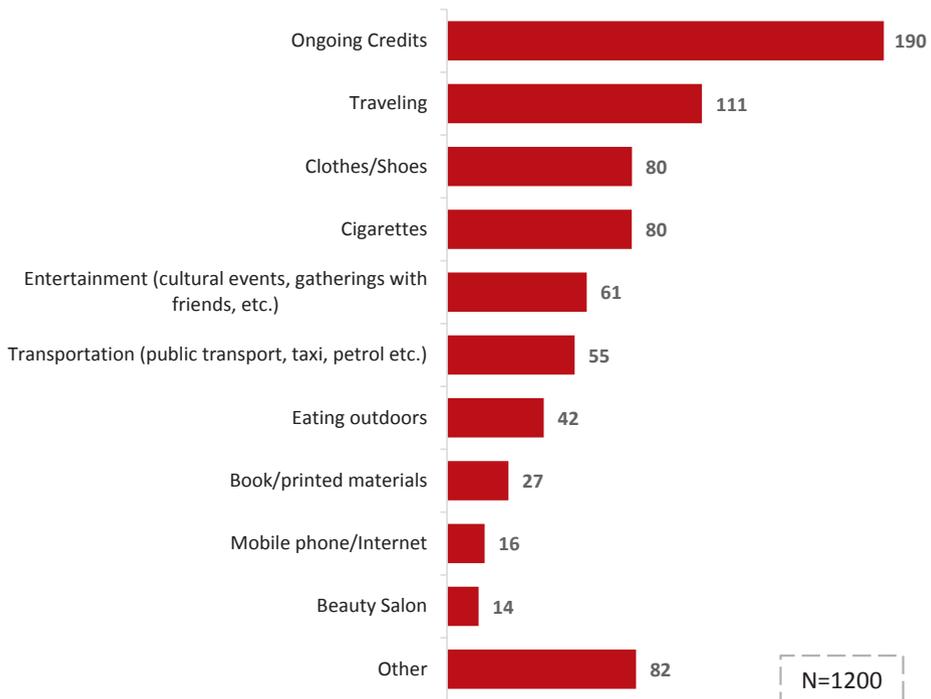
- Maintained by parents
- I have personal income (wage, fee, etc.)
- Maintained by partner (boy/girlfriend, spouse)
- Financial help from parents/relatives
- Family pension
- State support
- Other
- D/K

N=1200

Survey participants were also asked to categorize their expenses and indicate their average monthly expenses per category, excluding fixed living expenses, such as bills, food, etc.

The largest share of expenses is taken by ongoing credits, with an average monthly payment of nearly 190 GEL (20% of youth pay ongoing credits). Quite notably, such expenditures were found to be the highest in urban areas outside of Tbilisi. The second largest amount - 110 GEL - is spent on travel, while shopping for clothes, shoes and cigarettes requires 80 GEL for each category. Georgian youth also spends about 60 GEL per month on entertainment purposes, including cultural events and gatherings with friends, while daily transportation accumulates an average of 55 GEL. Eating outdoors is a somewhat notable expenditure category with a 42 GEL average monthly cost. Purchasing books/printed materials, mobile phone bills, and beauty salon expenditures are the least costly expenditures for Georgian youth.

Figure # 1.7 – Expenses of youth in GEL

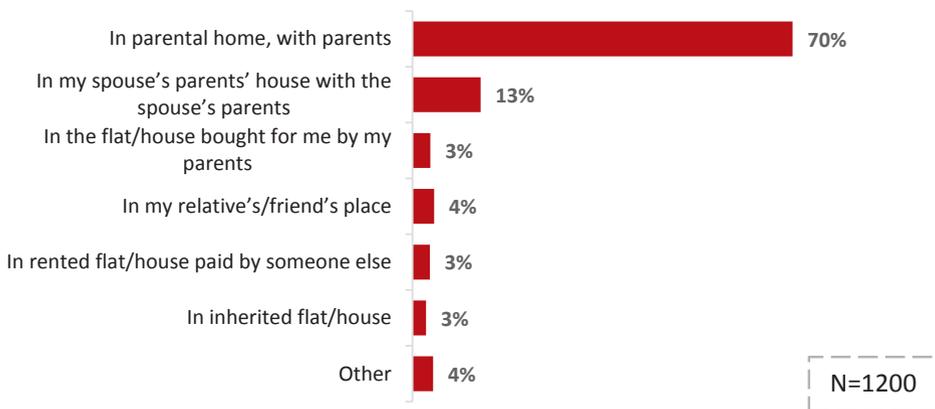


Most likely due to higher income, young Georgian men spend more money than women on transportation, entertainment, eating outdoors, and cigarettes. The only expenditure type that is higher for women is their monthly expenditure for visiting beauty salons.

Quite expectedly, expenditures are higher for employed people, as well as for young participants from higher social classes. Expenditures also increase with age.

Seventy percent of young people live with their parents. The level of dependency on parents, as expected, decreases with age. In the youngest group (14-18 age range), 90% of young people live with their parents. In the middle group (19-24 age range), this figure equals 67%, while more than one-half (52%) of respondents in the 25-29 age category lives in their parents' home. When it comes to distinctions between genders, 81% of male respondents said they live with their parents, while 54% of female respondents report living with their parents. It should be mentioned, however, that 21% of female respondents live with their spouses' parents.

Figure #1.8 – Housing of youth



In 5,1% of households in which young people live, there is only one room shared by all members of the household. Fourteen percent of respondents live in a house with two bedrooms, 28% live in a household with three bedrooms, and others live in a house that has four or more bedrooms. The number of rooms in the household is clearly related to the place of residence, and households with young people in the countryside have more rooms than those in the city.

Methodology

The methodology for the survey was created by the Analysis and Consulting team (ACT) in compliance with Friedrich – Ebert – Stiftung (FES) South Caucasus Office requirements. Survey techniques included quantitative as well as qualitative survey methodologies, particularly face-to-face interviews and focus groups discussions. The quantitative study was conducted May-June 2016, whereas

the qualitative study was conducted after the initial analysis of the quantitative survey, in particular July 2016.

Sampling for the quantitative survey was developed by an ACT sampling specialist. In the scope of the Georgian Youth Study, two-staged clustered sampling with preliminary stratification was applied. Census data from 2002 was used as a sampling frame for the study. The Primary Sampling Unit (PSU) was cluster, the secondary sampling unit (SSU) was the household, and the final sampling unit (FSU) was a person from the household aged 14-29, who was selected from the representatives of this age group based on the “last birthday” principle. Two main criteria were used for stratification:

1. Administrative division- 11 regions (including the capital)
2. Settlement type – urban and rural

A combination of all stratification criteria resulted in 22 sub-strata in total. The total sample size of the study was 1200 completed interviews. Interviews were conducted in rural as well as in urban settlements. The table below represents the distribution of the interviews in the regions of Georgia.

Table 1 – Distribution of interviews

Region	Number of Interviews Conducted
Tbilisi (Capital)	330
Adjara	120
Guria	30
Imereti	170
Kakheti	100
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	30
Kvemo Kartli	140
Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti	20
Samtskhe-Javakheti	60
Samegrelo, Zemo Svaneti	120
Shida Kartli	80

The instrument for the quantitative study face-to-face interviews was provided by FES South Caucasus. The basis for the Georgian questionnaire used for the study was the instrument used for similar studies in Serbia and Armenia. The instrument was translated and adapted to the local (Georgian) language by ACT. The questionnaire was shared with various stakeholders at a workshop organized by FES on 29 February 2016. Stakeholders shared their ideas and recommendations during the workshop. All recommendations provided by workshop participants

were considered in the pilot study instrument to the fullest extent possible. The pilot study of the instrument (20 pilot interviews and up to five cognitive interviews) identified technical issues as well as issues related to comprehension of the questions, resulting in an improved instrument for the final fieldwork. The questionnaire included a set of sensitive questions. These questions were provided to the respondents on hand out questionnaires, and the respondents answered the questions themselves. A similar approach towards sensitive questions was used in the Youth Study conducted in Armenia during 2016. This approach boosted the levels of frankness among respondents. Please refer to Annex 1 for the Quantitative Study Instrument.

Since the age of part of the study target segment was below 18, consent from parents or other responsible persons was obtained prior to conducting the interviews.

The quantitative study data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Quantitative data analysis also included factor and cluster analysis. The data collected through the study is represented in the thematic subchapters of this report.

In order to get a more in-depth analysis about the needs, attitudes, and perceptions of young people towards study issues, after the initial analysis of the quantitative study, ACT conducted a qualitative study using the focus group (FG) discussion technique.

Prior to conducting FG discussions, research instrument (FG guides) were developed in accordance with the study objectives. Guides were prepared based on Youth Shell Study instruments that were adapted and adjusted to the Georgian context. Please refer to Annex 2 for the Qualitative Study Instrument.

In total, 24 focus groups were conducted. The table below represents the distribution of FGs by region and composition.

Table 2 – Distribution of FGs

Region	Number of FGs	Composition
Tbilisi	1	14-18 (Mixed Gender)
	1	19-29 (Mixed Gender)
Kakheti	1	14-18 (Urban)
	1	19-29 (Urban)
	1	14-29 (Rural)

Akhaltsikhe	1	14-18 Ethnic Minorities (Mixed Gender/ Settlement)
	1	19-29 Ethnic Minorities (Mixed Gender/ Settlement)
Adjara/Guria	1	14-18 (Urban)
	1	19-29 (Urban)
	1	14-29 (Rural)
Imereti/Racha- Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti	1	14-18 (Urban)
	1	19-29 (Urban)
	1	14-29 (Rural)
Samegrelo/Zemo Svaneti	1	14-18 (Urban)
	1	19-29 (Urban)
	1	14-29 (Rural)
Kvemo Kartli	1	14-18 Ethnic Minorities (Mixed Gender/ Settlement)
	1	19-29 Ethnic Minorities (Mixed Gender/ Settlement)
Shida Kartli	1	14-18 (Urban)
	1	19-29 (Urban)
	1	14-29 (Rural)
Mtkheta-Mtianeti	1	14-18 (Urban)
	1	19-29 (Urban)
	1	14-29 (Rural)

The FGs were video and audio recorded with the consent of FG participants. Detailed transcripts of the FGs were prepared. The analysis of the qualitative study was based on the transcripts. The data collected through the qualitative study is presented in the thematic subchapters of this report, together with the quantitative study results.

Education and Employment

Introduction

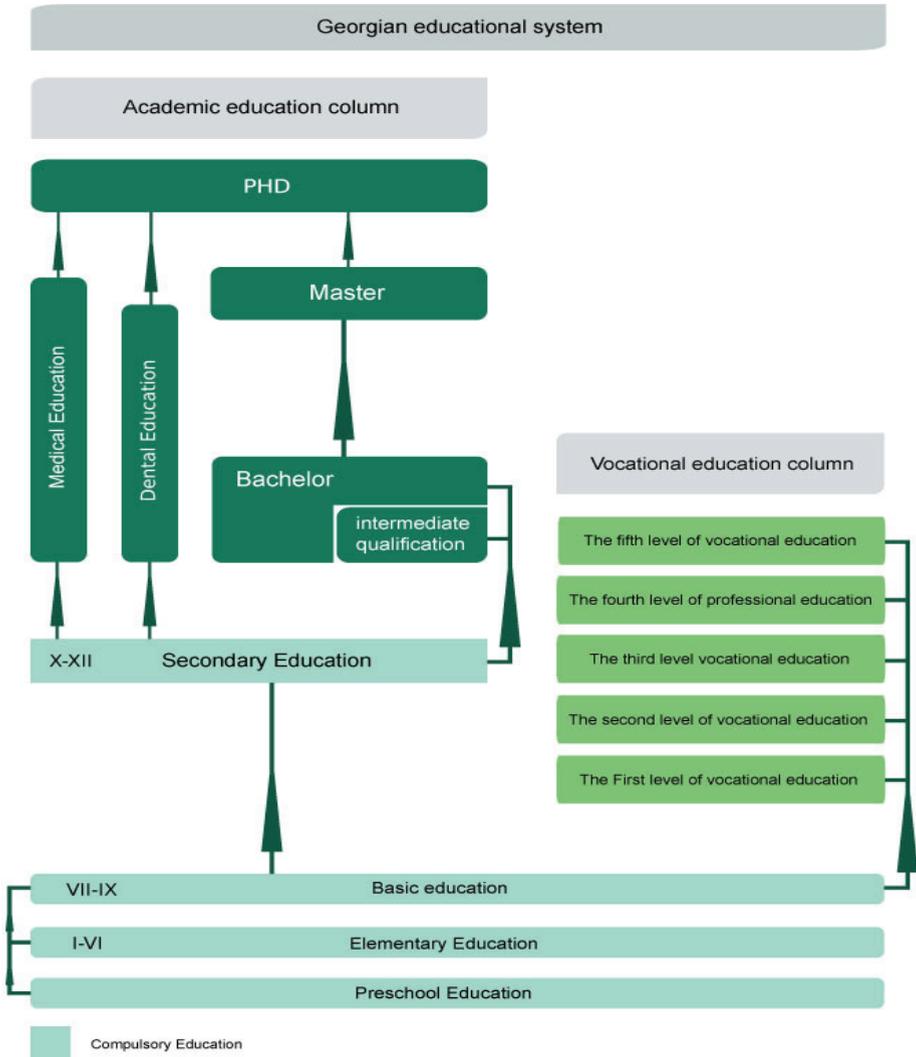
Since its independence, Georgia has been revising the education system, with major changes occurring after the 2003 Rose Revolution. Between 2004 and 2007, Georgia adopted new legal frameworks for general, higher and vocational education systems. In 2005, Georgia became a member of the Bologna Process, ensuring the comparability and quality of the Georgian higher education system with those of European countries.

The National Examination Center, which was created in 2006, is also reported to be a vital mechanism in overcoming the barrier of attaining higher education, as this mechanism created equal opportunity and a corruption-free environment for entering the higher education system.

The Georgian education system consists of several stages, starting from pre-school to PhD. The figure below describes the education system currently operating in the country.

Even though educational reforms have been progressing in Georgia, current surveys assessing labor market conditions still report a significant imbalance between the demand for and the supply of workforce. According to the results of research carried out across Georgia in 2010 by USAID and IOM, '34% of employers experience problems while identifying and recruiting personnel of required professions. Research results essentially indicate that personnel of specific professions required by employers are not trained in the country, or the professional qualifications of trained personnel are considered unsatisfactory by employers' (USAID, IOM, 2011).

Figure # 2.1– Georgian Education System



It should be mentioned that ‘unemployment represents the most acute socio-economic problem for modern Georgia and the country’s most significant challenge’ (USAID, IOM, 2011). The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia carried out a “Survey on Local Labor Market Demand” from March-July 2015. According to this survey, there are 908,374 people employed in 63,387 organizations. Among them, the largest share is in Tbilisi (497,135). Tbilisi is followed by the Imereti region (78,303), Autonomous Republic of Adjara (78,766),

and Kvemo Kartli (73,279). As for the gender distribution of employed individuals, according to the results of the mentioned survey, 51% of employees (459,349) are men and 49% are women (448,689) (MoLSHA, 2015).

According to the results of the mentioned survey, there is a lack of positions on the labor market in which individuals with vocational education are hired. It is also worth mentioning that based on the survey results, the main problem in the process of hiring labor resources is a lack of necessary skills and qualifications, which points out the necessity of actions to be taken on the labor market in terms of existing policy.

According to the ‘Survey on Local Labor Market Demand’, the most popular way of finding future employees is through the use of non-formal connections. This method constitutes 60% of the entire generality. The tendency of hiring required personnel through informal ways can be explained by low qualification skills. If official documents proving the level of attained education (certificates, diplomas, etc.) fail to prove the real capabilities of a person, employers have to find alternative ways of identifying required skills. In this case, informal connections and acquaintances bring a higher level of trust towards the person to be hired.

The chapter below explores the attitudes of the youth engaged in the education system, their perceptions of the quality of education in Georgia, as well as their attitudes towards their employability and future goals.

Main Findings

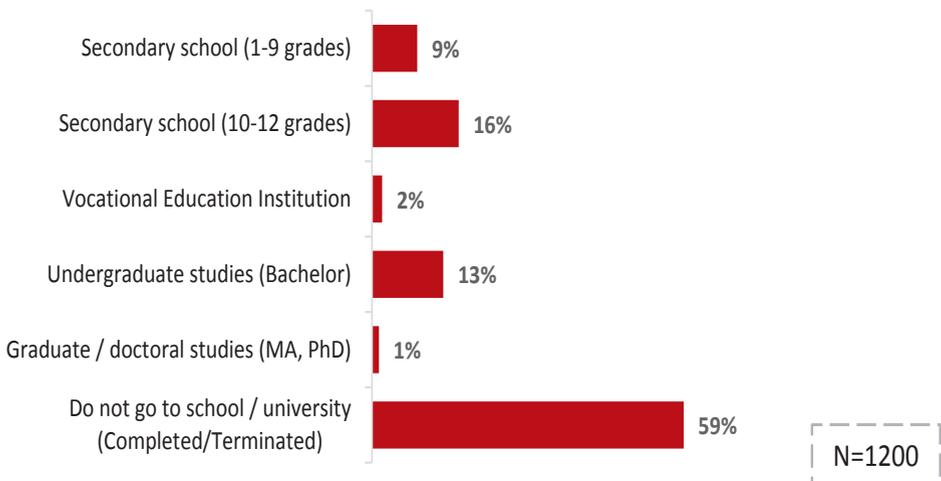
- Fifty-nine percent of youth are not engaged with any educational institution, and a large share of the youth who are not engaged in the education systems are people aged 19-24 (63%) and 25-29 (95%);
- Four out of ten respondents use the internet for school, work, or finding any kind of information. Among them, the majority is composed of individuals representing the 14-18 age category;
- Fifty-eight percent of young people believe that they go to school or university eagerly, although almost half of Georgian youth (51%) believe that everyday life in educational institutions is hard and stressful;
- Sixty-eight percent of youth think that bribing teachers/lecturers and buying grades practically does not exist in educational institutions;
- Fifty-two percent of youth believes that the level of education in Georgia is moderately satisfying. Unlike the results of the quantitative survey, in the qualitative survey, participants noted that the educational environment in general is unsatisfactory. The same attitude was expressed towards the quality of education;
- Fifty-one percent of people aged 19-24 read books/newspapers often or at least sometimes, while the share of such individuals aged 25-29 is lower (38%);
- Seventy-nine percent of youth believe that level of education is one of the most important factors when selecting a future spouse;
- A large share of respondents prefer state universities, whether in Georgia (40%) or abroad (31%);
- Eighty-five percent of young people believe that the employment situation in the country is alarming;
- Thirty-one percent of employed youngsters work completely or partially in the profession they were educated for, and 35% are employed in a different field than the profession they were educated for;
- Young people living in regional towns and villages think that it would be good for them to change their place of residence for the purpose of obtaining better education (20% and 18% respectively);
- The tendency of changing place of residence is the same in terms of employment opportunities.

Analysis

General Education Environment

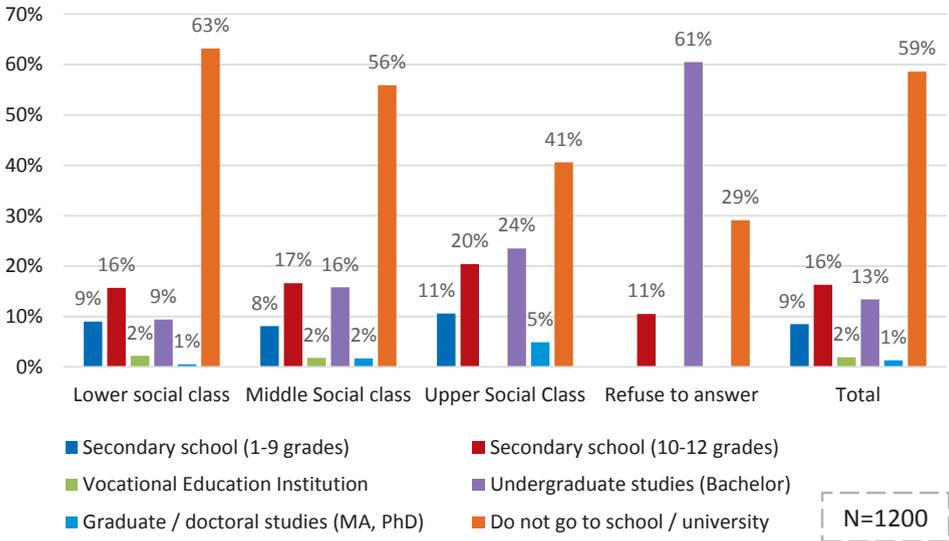
According to the results of the quantitative study, it can be assumed that more than half of young people (59%) have no connection with any type of educational institution. However, after analyzing these results by age, it can be clearly seen that only people aged 19-24 (63%) and 25-29 (95%) are not involved in the educational process. Those, who dropped out of an educational institution at any stage (8%) declare that reasons for abandoning their studies include the inability to pay a fee (27%), family conditions (9%), and marriage (19%). It must also be noted that the termination of studies due to marriage was named by 36% of female and 5% of male youngsters.

Figure # 2.2 – Current level of education



Based on the quantitative results, we can conclude that among those who do not go to school or a higher education institution, the majority are from the lower social class (lower social class – 54%, middle social class – 48%, upper social class – 33%). It is also worth mentioning that a Bachelor’s degree is mostly acquired by young people from the upper social class (lower social class – 8%, middle social class – 13%, upper social class – 22%).

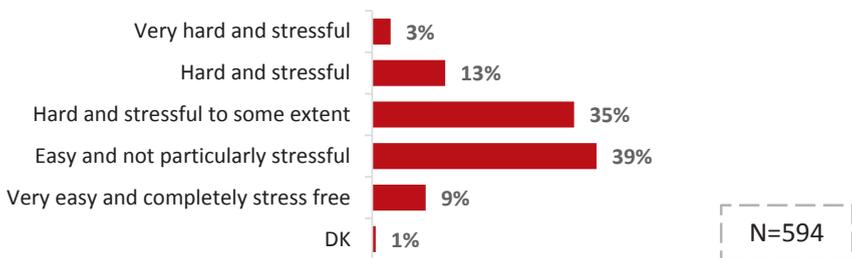
Figure # 2.3 – Current level of education by social class



The majority of young people believe that they go to school/university eagerly (very eagerly: 22%; eagerly: 36%; sometimes eagerly, sometimes not eagerly: 34%). Among those who go to an educational institution eagerly, students of Masters/Doctorate programs represent the majority (91%) while school pupils are the minority (51%).

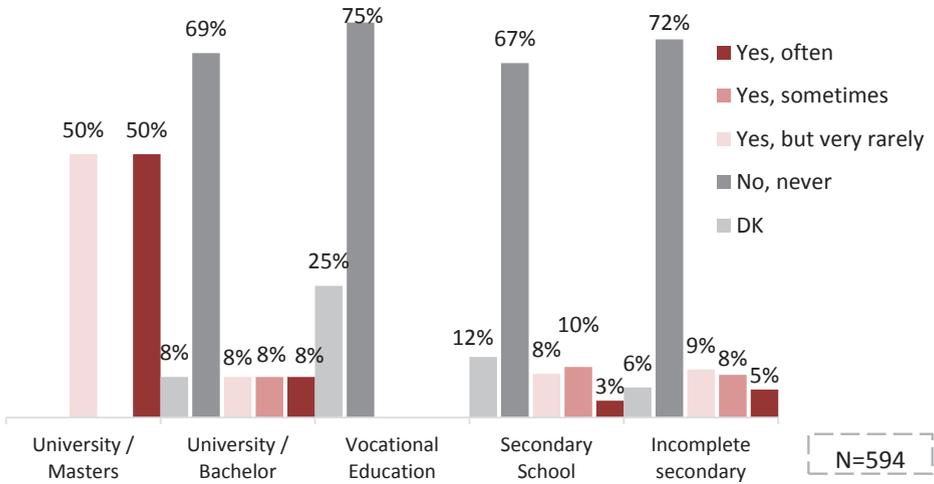
Despite the high rates of eagerness in terms of attending a school or university, almost half of Georgian youth (51%) believe that everyday life in educational institutions is hard and stressful. Compared to others, students of Masters and Doctorate programs (65%) perceive the studying environment to be more stressful. Among those who think that everyday life in schools and universities is easy and not stressful, the majority are school pupils (51%).

Figure # 2.4 – Everyday life at school/university



As believed by a large portion of Georgian youth, bribing teachers/lecturers and buying grades practically does not exist in educational institutions (68%). It is worth mentioning that attitudes towards buying grades are different while analyzing the results by the specific stage of education level the respondent currently pursues. It turns out that among those who think that educational assessment is influenced by factors other than educational achievement, i.e. bribery, acquaintance, etc., the majority are students of Masters and Doctorate programs (49%).

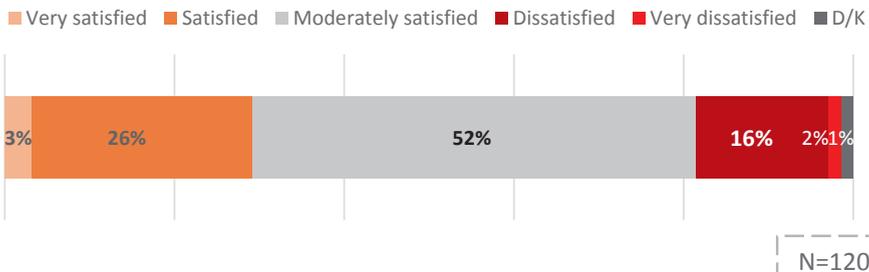
Figure # 2.5 – Bribing/buying grades



According to the results of the quantitative survey, young people who are currently pursuing any type of education spend an average of 3.5 hours per day on their studies.

As for satisfaction with the quality of education, more than half of the survey respondents (52%) believe that the level of education in Georgia is moderately satisfying.

Figure # 2.6 – Satisfaction with the quality of education



While speaking about educational environment, the evaluations of focus group discussion participants are more skeptical when compared to the results of the quantitative survey. Unlike the results of the quantitative survey, qualitative survey participants noted that the educational environment in general is unsatisfactory, and the same attitude was expressed towards the quality of education.

I agree that the number is exaggerated (76%). If we take an example of university, I mean, I'm not saying that they don't teach me anything – they just teach me lots of things that can never be useful. A lot of things can be introduced in the system, and changes can be made to enable us to use our knowledge in practice. Everywhere we go, experience is required, and university does not enable us to gain experience. [Kakheti, rural, female, 16-23 age category]

Quantitative survey participants evaluated general education among young people. It was determined that large portion of respondents (76%) believe that Georgian youth is more educated than uneducated.

Speaking of general education, study results also shed light towards the tendency to read books. It can be said that the frequency of reading books decreases as the age of young people increases. Despite the fact that almost half of the respondents (49%) state that they read books/newspapers often or at least sometimes, the majority of them are young people in the 14-18 age category (62%). According to survey results, 51% of people aged 19-24 carry out this activity on a regular bases (read books/newspapers often or at least sometimes), while share of such individuals aged 25-29 is lower (38%).

Even though the majority (86%) of youth uses the internet for social networking, four out of ten respondents use the internet for school, work, or finding any kind of information. Among them, the majority belong to the 14-18 age category. It is also worth mentioning that only 16% of respondents use the internet to download books/articles, and individuals in the 25-29 age category carry out this activity the least (14-18:18%; 19-24:20%; 25-29:8%).

It is also worth mentioning that the majority of those respondents who are not married – eight out of ten respondents (79%), believe that the level of education is one of the most important factors in selecting a future spouse. However, while analyzing this factor according to type of settlement, it turned out that level of education is relatively more important for youth living in Tbilisi (91%) than to respondents living in other cities (81%) or villages (68%).

At focus group discussions, young people were asked to describe their perception of an “educated person”. According to the majority of FGD participants, an educated person should have a good general education and be more or less aware of issues that are not related only to his/her field of expertise. A large portion of

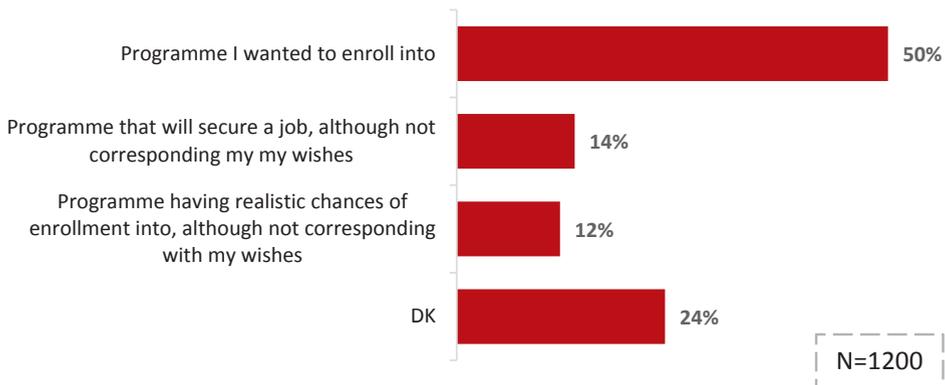
respondents believe that an educated person should have basic knowledge in fields such as history, geography, art, and culture. Respondents of the qualitative study also believe that an important factor associated with an educated person is the presence of characteristics and features such as politeness, the ability to respect others, tolerance, etc.

I have a friend who has not graduated from school but knows much more than those who studied for four years. This person shows more features of humanity and tolerance. [Samegrelo/Zemo Svaneti, rural, female, 16-23 age category]

Importance of Higher and Vocational Education

The majority of respondents inquired within the quantitative survey prefer state universities whether in Georgia (40%) or abroad (31%). As for prioritizing factors that influence the decision of choosing a program, even though half of the young respondents (50%) studied or are studying the program they wanted to enroll in, about seven out of ten respondents believe that they would have chosen a study program that would secure them a job whether their future profession would correspond with their wishes or not.

Figure # 2.7 – Choice of profession



As believed by the young people participating in qualitative research, attaining higher education is an important factor. Despite the fact that youngsters do not highly evaluate the level of studies in higher education institutions in Georgia, they explain its importance by citing employer demands to submit a certificate that proves higher education. As believed by one part of the FGD participants, if a young person has the proper mental skills, s/he should definitely obtain higher education as, based on their experience, this will positively influence their future career and income. However, based on the personal circle of acquaintances and friends, respondents recalled many cases in which a young person without any

higher education could be more capable and in certain cases even more successful than a holder of a diploma from a prestigious university.

FGD participants report that parents and family members significantly influence the decision to enroll in a higher education institute. As believed by young people participating in the qualitative study, parents and elder members of the family have stereotypical attitudes towards higher education, and holding a diploma is much more important for them compared to representatives from younger generations. A rather large portion of respondents think that this attitude is the reason why students are more oriented to completing studies and receiving a diploma rather than being focused on the studying process and professional development. However, it also needs to be mentioned that part of those respondents who chose their higher education university/institution according to their parents' wishes understand its importance in the future, even if the choice does not correspond with their own wishes.

In most cases, we hear from parents that we should enroll. Both my mother and father tell me that. Of course I feel obliged to enroll in a university, but one should do whatever he loves and makes him happy. For example, I will definitely enroll and play rugby at the same time, but playing rugby makes me happier than diplomacy... But it's not only about parents; even if I'm really good at rugby, I may get such an injury tomorrow that I may have to quit sports. [Tbilisi, male, 14-18 age category]

As believed by young people participating in the qualitative survey, it would be preferable if higher education would be obtained by those persons who have their own goals, desires, and personally want to master a specific profession. Otherwise, an unmotivated workforce that is less focused on development will enter the labor market. Employers are not very interested in hiring such people, and in the end, these potential employees will try to get a job in a field that is totally different from their profession.

Higher education should be obtained by those who have goals. Those who don't have goals graduate from universities, but they don't obtain education. They only have a diploma, and this is how we have taxi drivers with two diplomas and tradesmen with four diplomas. [Tbilisi, female, 19-29 age category]

While discussing the importance of higher education, participants of focus group discussions mentioned factors such as a high quality of education in some private higher education institutions and interest in the professions that can only be mastered in universities (e.g. medicine, jurisprudence, etc.). According to the respondents, there are universities that ensure development and the successful careers of graduates. In these cases, when a young person has skills and intellectual capabilities, s/he should "certainly" obtain higher education.

[Samegrelo/Zemo Svaneti, urban, 14-18 age category]

Mod: how important it is in Georgia to receive higher education?

Male: It's very good but not everyone can afford it.

Mod: what is it good for?

Female: To provide a better future.

Male: An educated person can achieve anything.

Male: I believe that it's not necessary to have a diploma; not everyone can be a minister.

Mod: what opportunities does higher education offer to a youngster?

Male: You will have more opportunities to get a better job.

Female: You have more opportunities.

It should be noted that the majority of youngsters admit the existence of stereotypical attitudes towards higher education – “you must definitely graduate from a higher education institution” – despite personal interests and wishes.

Some of the qualitative study participants deem vocational education as necessary. In response to the question of whether or not vocational education can be considered an alternative to higher education, one part of the respondents declared that a person should make a choice based on his or her interests, and it does not matter whether education is vocational or higher. Another part of respondents believes that the future student should make a decision in compliance with his or her intellectual capacity. As believed by one part of the youngsters participating in focus group discussions, if a pupil is distinguished for a good academic report, s/he should not continue studying at a vocational school. However, it is worth mentioning that these respondents also think that there are exceptions, such as cases in which the student wants to master a profession that cannot be mastered in a higher education institution (e.g. culinary). In this case, respondents believe that it is reasonable to continue studying in a vocational program.

While discussing vocational education as an alternative to higher education, respondents of the qualitative study noted that youngsters qualified in certain specialties get better jobs nowadays than those with popular professions such as lawyer, economist, doctor, etc. As believed by the respondents, this could be caused by a surplus of graduates of these popular faculties on the labor market, while there is a lack of specialists for certain professions.

It's a better alternative. Nowadays, everyone wants to enroll in a university. Ninety percent enroll and only few chooses to study trades. Respectively, there is a lack of good craftsmen in Georgia. They have to appreciate good tradesmen and respectively, such individuals are paid well. [Tbilisi, female, 14-18 age category]

However, it needs to be mentioned that if there is one reason for hesitation and a preference for higher education over vocational education among youngsters, it is the attitude of employers towards a diploma and a less prestigious image of vocational education. As believed by the respondents of the qualitative research, when vocational education is “appreciated” and competes with a Bachelor’s degree on the labor market, then it can be considered as an alternative form of higher education.

Youth participating in focus group discussions believe that in spite of the fact that interest in vocational education has increased within the past several years, there is still a lack of information about specific professions and specialties. The effectiveness of professional orientation in general educational institutions is evaluated differently by younger respondents of the study. Some youngsters are informed about the professional orientation unit at school and believe that the assistance of a professional orientation specialist in the profession selection process and career planning is very important. Other youngsters are often uninformed about the availability of such a service at school.

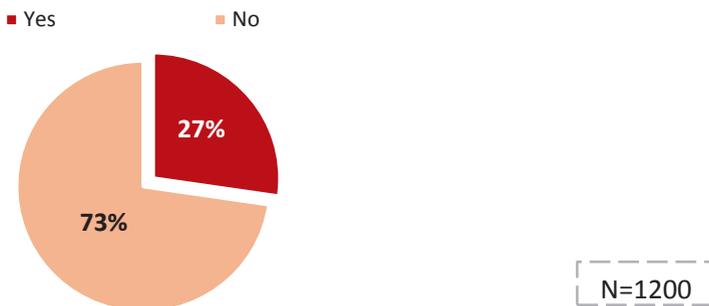
Readiness of Graduates for the Labour Market

Among the topics studied within the scope of this study were issues related to the employment of youth as well as the readiness of graduates for the labour market.

Based on the results of the quantitative study, we can conclude that the majority of Georgian youngsters (85%) believe that the employment situation in the country is alarming, while four out of ten respondents believe that this issue is the most problematic in the country.

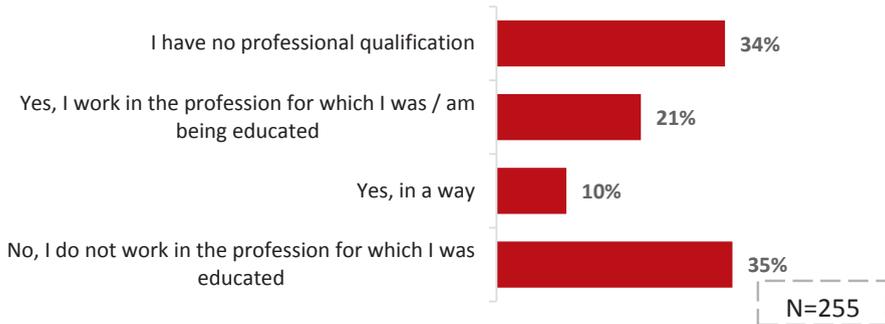
As for the employment rate of young people in general, according to the results of the quantitative survey, it can be concluded that almost one-fourth of Georgian youth is employed.

Figure # 2.8 – Employment status



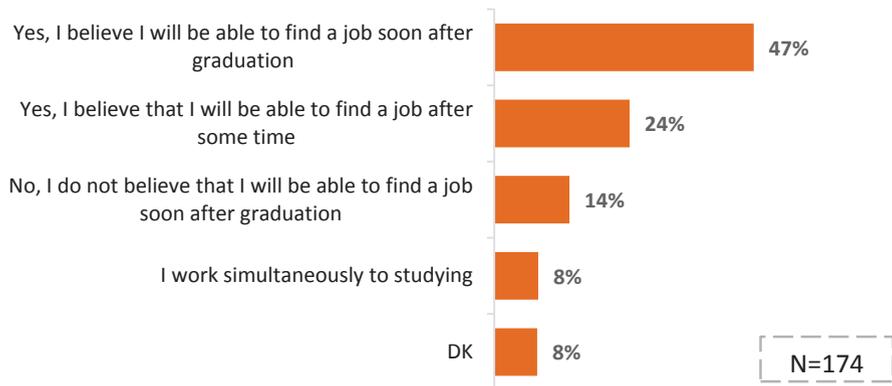
It is also worth mentioning that according to the results of the quantitative survey, only one-third (31%) of employed Georgian youngsters work completely or partially in the profession they were educated for. About the same quantity (34%) works without professional qualification, and one-third (35%) is employed in a different field than the profession in which they were educated.

Figure # 2.9 – Working with profession



The majority of students participating in the survey (71%) feel optimistic about their employment opportunities. Only a minor part of the respondents (14%) doubt their employment opportunities. Eight percent of survey participants declared that s/he manages to work with his/her profession parallel to studying.

Figure # 2.10 – Attitude of students towards finding a job after graduation

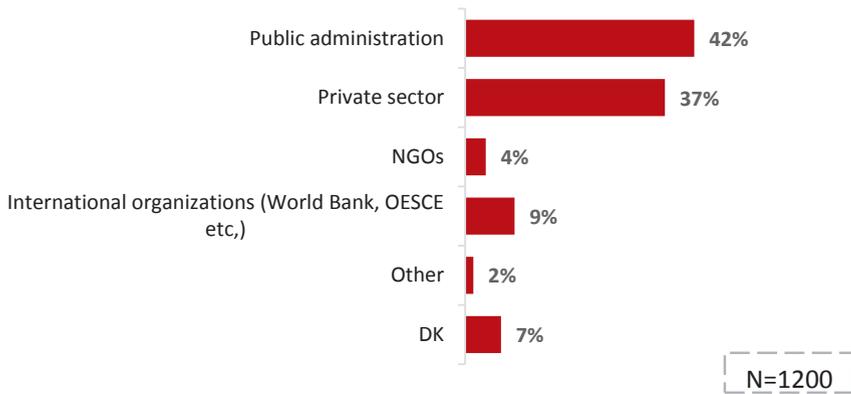


According to the qualitative study, it can be said that a difference in terms of employment opportunities has been revealed by the different age categories. Those young people who have a Bachelor's or Master's degree find it more difficult to get a job and feel much more stressed about problems related to employment in the country. However, according to the National Agency of Statistics, the 20-

24 age category holds a relatively high share of the employed and economically active population (Geostat, 2015).

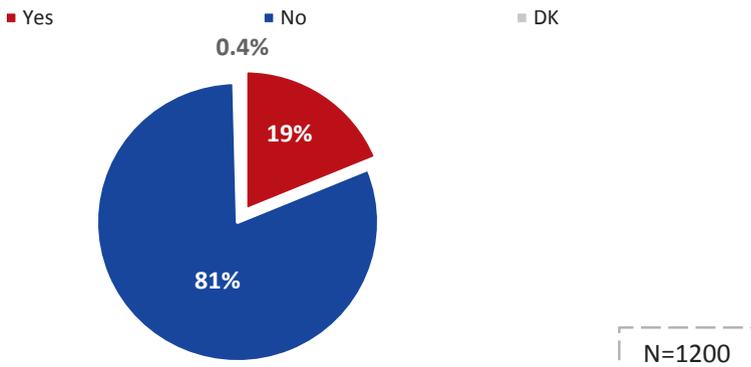
The majority of inquired respondents (42%) is more interested in a public sector job, followed by a private sector job (37%). As for the NGO sector and international organizations, the number of youngsters who would like to work in these sectors is rather small (four percent and nine percent, respectively).

Figure # 2.11- Preferable field of employment



According to the results of the quantitative survey, only one-fifth of the youth living in Georgia (19%) has participated in a practicum or internship.

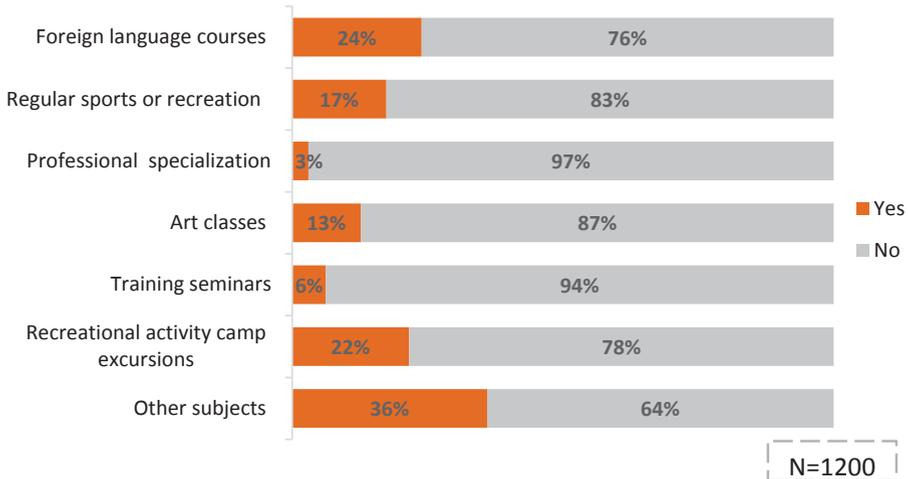
Figure # 2.12 – Experience with internships or practicums



Youth also engaged less in activities that require financial investment. According to survey results, one-fifth (24%) of respondents declare that they have attended foreign language courses, and almost the same number of respondents (22%)

were involved in recreational activities (excursions, camp). A relatively smaller part (17%) was regularly occupied with sporting activities (sports gatherings, sporting activities, etc.) and activities related to the arts (13%). A rather insignificant part of the respondents expressed interest in activities that serve to improve their professional qualification (three percent) and different types of seminars/trainings (six percent).

Figure # 2.13 – Experience attending paid activities



Even though quality of education is assessed as moderately satisfying by young people, the majority of young respondents of the qualitative survey agree that a significant part of higher education institutions operating in Georgia nowadays do not ensure the readiness of graduates for the labour market.

I've already mentioned that the educational system is really bad. You can't move forward with the knowledge obtained in university, because they mostly focus on theory. [Imereti/ Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 16-23 age category]

As believed by qualitative study participants, students' level of readiness for the labour market is defined by the presence of skills such as foreign languages, computer programs, etc. Taking these factors into consideration, it can be concluded that representatives of older generations find it difficult to compete with young people. Employers are more attracted by young people, due to their ability to work hard even in busy schedule where, as perceived by them, they are more productive and useful.

The level of qualification of graduates depends on the academic staff involved in the studying process, as well as the university's educational policy. As believed by

some study participants, some lecturers do not have proper qualifications or the resources to assist students in the development of practical skills. This is often caused by the fact that lecturers do not have practical experience of their own.

I study in the faculty of Energy, and if I graduate and go to “Ergo-Pro” to start an internship, I will pass the three-month internship, and they will teach me totally different things than what I was taught at the university, If I study four years in the Bachelor’s program and six years’ total including the Master’s program, it appears that it was in vain, and just for formality. They [the potential employer organization] will teach me totally different things there and will hire me if I do well...In most cases, it will be a priority only on paper – nothing much. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 16-23 age category]

Almost every respondent of the qualitative study that has had any connection with universities expresses disappointment towards the curriculum. Namely, the majority declares that universities do not often include a practical module in their study programmes, and are not able to provide practical knowledge to their students. As some respondents state, the situation is significantly different in terms of the level of lecturers’ qualifications, the academic performance of students, the practical modules or external practical lessons in some private universities (for example, Free University and Caucasus University were named) which, due to their small number of students and graduates do not make a significant impact on the overall picture.

The competitiveness of young people on the labour market is also defined by the issue of reimbursement, as individuals with little or no experience do not have the ambition to have a high salary at the initial stages of their career. This fact is advantageous for employers, and at the same time explains why lower positions are mostly taken by representatives from the younger generation.

When an employee is young, you demand more, s/he gets less tired, and a lower salary can be attractive for him/her. The fact that you don’t have experience might be advantageous for some companies to take you as an intern and so on. You can’t tell a 40-year old man to work as an intern for 400 GEL as he has a family to take care of. [Tbilisi, female, 14-18 age category]

Study participants also spoke about differences in mentality between the younger and older generations. Respondents of the qualitative study noted that compared to recent years, younger generations are less ashamed to work in positions such as sales consultant, waitress, etc. Respondents believe that this tendency is a positive change.

I like youngsters when they are students and work as sales assistants in shops at the same time. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

It's a really big step made forward that nowadays, a young boy is not ashamed of working anywhere – even as a waiter. [Tbilisi, female, 19-29 age category]

It should be mentioned that for focus group discussion participants, employment is primarily associated with nepotism. As believed by the respondents, among all factors that have an impact on the employment of a young person, the most important and effective one is “necessary acquaintance/contact”. This statement is shared by the respondents of all age categories from every target region.

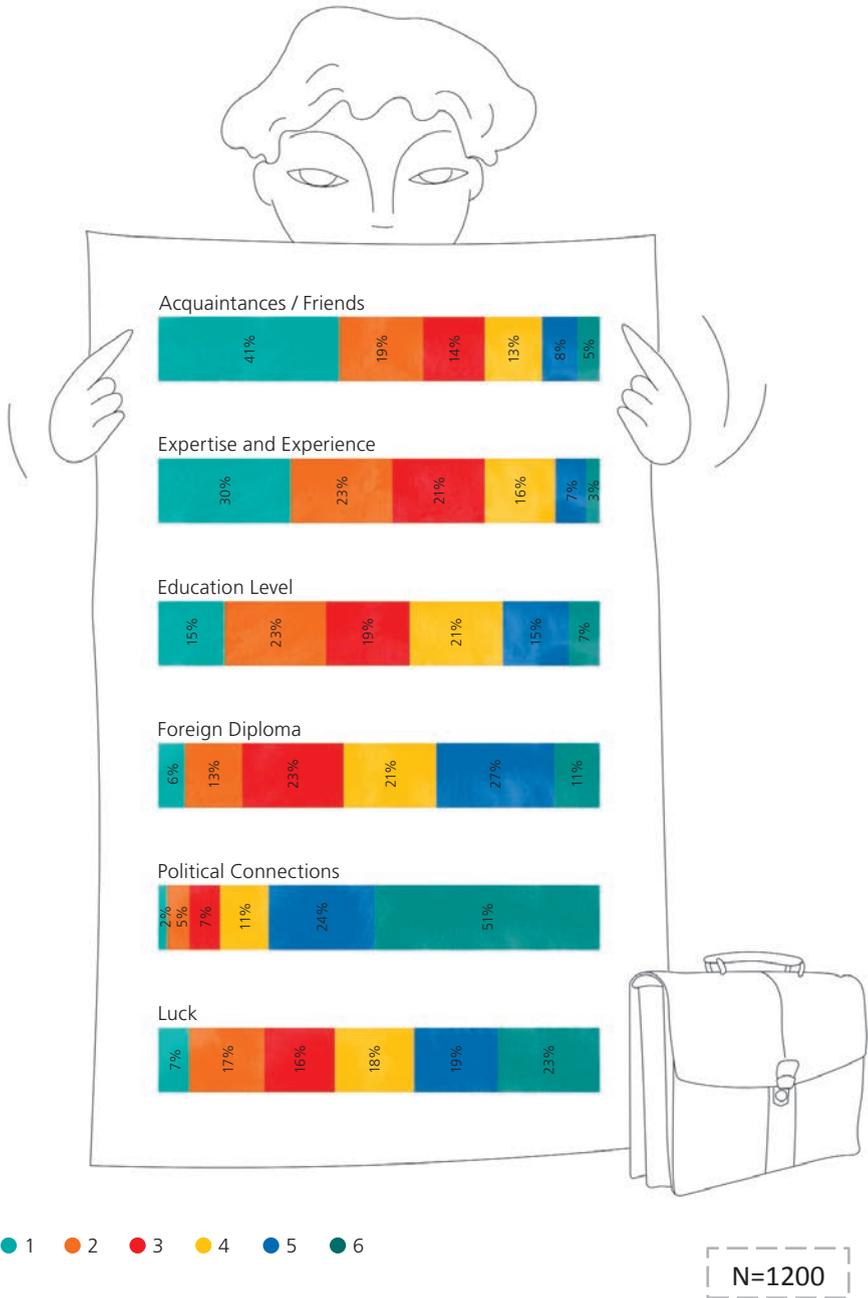
When they announce vacancies, they already have people hired. It's just a formality and nepotism still works. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 16-23 age category]

In the perception of young participants of focus group discussions, there are some professions that are relatively more in demand, and other professions have a surplus of graduates on the labour market, which decreases employment opportunities. Besides, part of the respondents believe that there are professions in Georgia for which the labour market is not yet developed, and despite personal interests, young people with such professions may find it very difficult to get a job and have a successful career.

I know many people. For example, my father graduated from the faculty of mechanical engineering, but he cannot actually work in this profession in Georgia. There are lots of similar faculties such as mining geology and others which are not developed in Georgia. [Tbilisi, male, 14-18 age category]

The majority of young people inquired within the quantitative survey believe that the most important factor for finding a job in Georgia is that of friends/acquaintances (75%), and the majority of respondents rank this factor in the first place (41%). The second most important factor is knowledge and experience (74%). The existence of political connections is the least important factor making an impact on employment, as believed by young people living in Georgia (VI place: 51%, sum of the first three places: 14%).

Figure #2.14– Ranking of important factors in finding a job



However, despite the fact that as a result of the initiative of the Georgian government and the Ministry of Education and Science, there is a list of prioritized professions and specialisations, based on which students have the chance to obtain a free education. Respondents of the qualitative research believe that this initiative did not make any significant influence on the labour market. As perceived by young people, the availability of free faculties assisted the part of students who are only interested in obtaining a certificate of higher education/ diploma, and provoked the weakening of evaluation systems of higher education institutions, which in order to attract and maintain state funded students have simplified their evaluation process.

It did not work in the State University, they enroll students into Akaki Tsereteli State University, but they attract students in order to receive state funding. In reality, the level of studying has decreased. The main thing for them is that they receive funding, so the university tries to attract as many students as possible. You need to have knowledge of the labour market – you can't get a job otherwise. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 16-23 age category]

Attitudes towards Voluntary Work

As survey results suggest, one-fourth of Georgian youngsters have carried out voluntary work at least once during the last year. It is worth mentioning that the results are practically identical by age and region. The majority of youngsters (36%) did social work or were engaged in different charity activities, such as helping people with special needs or assisting the elderly (28%).

As for focus group participants, those who have experience volunteering have mostly participated in environmental clean-up activities, and have carried out different activities in children's' homes.

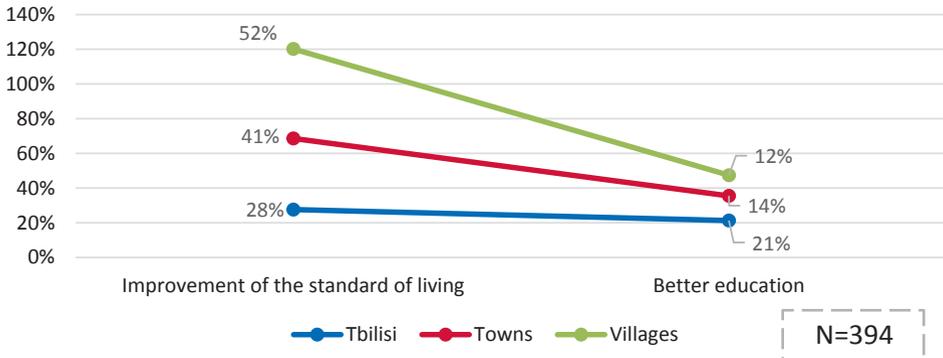
Career Development and Goals

Based on the survey results, the rate of desire for internal migration is high among respondents living in regional cities and rural settlements. While only one percent of respondents inquired in Tbilisi would like to change their place of residence (internal migration) for the purpose of obtaining better education, in the case of youngsters living in regional towns and villages, one-fifth (20%, 18%) are thinking that it would be good for them to change their place of residence. This tendency is the same in terms of employment opportunities. Only eight percent of the respondents inquired in Tbilisi believe that changing their place of residence would have a positive influence on their employment opportunities. The same index is much higher in regional cities and village type settlements (16%, 15%).

According to the survey results, the main motivator for external migration is an

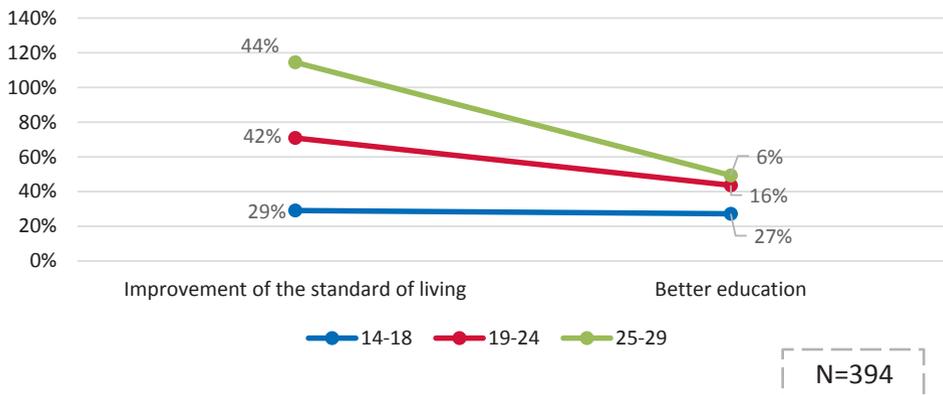
improvement in the standard of living (38%), followed by such motivators as a better education (17%) and better employment opportunities (13%). It is worth noting that after analysing these results by region, it turned out that the desire to leave the country for the purpose of improving living standards is much higher among youngsters living in rural settlements (52%) than in the capital city (28%) or even in other towns (41%). Young people living in Tbilisi are more interested in obtaining better education (21%) than residents obtain in village type settlements (12%) and regional cities (14%).

Figure # 2.15 – Main reason for migration by region



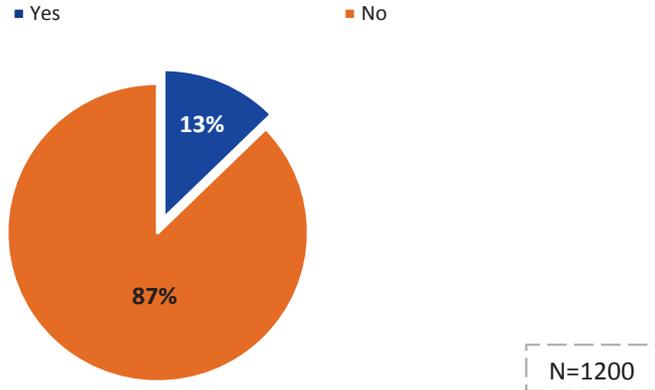
Reasons for moving out of Georgia are different among young people from different age categories. Interestingly, the desire to leave the country in order to improve living standards increases with age, while the share of those who want to move out of the country in order to obtain a better education is relatively higher among respondents who belong to the 14-18 age category (27%).

Figure # 2.16 - Main reason for migration by age category



Survey participants were also inquired about their desire to start a new business. As survey results show, 13% of young people provided a positive answer to the question “are you trying to start a new business alone or with others including self-employment, as well as trade or service sector”.

Figure # 2.17 – Attempt of business start-ups



Goals of the respondents participating in focus group discussions are largely related to the development of their career paths and professional development. Despite the fact that a majority of respondents in the 14-18 age category do not have clear future plans, goals, or interests, they are sure that they ought to obtain a higher education.

Career development, successfully graduating from university, and obtaining their own source of income are main goals for both boys and girls inquired within the qualitative research. It should also be noted that despite the fact that one part of the respondents sees their future abroad, the majority still prefers Georgia as a place to study, work, and live. Reasons for going abroad were mostly related to tourism, however, part of the respondents would like to continue their studies at foreign universities. The number of respondents who clearly declared that they want to go abroad because of employment and better salaries is rather small.

Discussion

Study results reflect tendencies related to a mismatch between the labor market supply and demand spread throughout the population. It is interesting that youth proposed slightly different explanations for the reasons of this mismatch.

On one hand, young people think that parents and family members influence their choice of future education a lot. They also say that the older generation's preferences are defined by stereotypes regarding higher education. The older generation believes that it is a must to obtain a higher education, and also that some professions are considered to be more prestigious than others. Prestigious professions do not include any vocational education. Additionally, the stereotypical attitude towards vocational education is that it is not included in higher education at all. On the other hand, young people believe that a future educational path should be chosen by the youngsters themselves, and should be in compliance with their own goals and desires. If young people follow the instruction of the older generation, the labor market will become saturated with an unmotivated workforce that does not want to develop or explore new opportunities in their professions. An unmotivated person is not appealing for employers, and in the end, unmotivated persons may try to find a job in a field that is more interesting for them, but it may be a job for which they are not qualified. According to young people, this is how the mismatch, as well as the lack of capabilities and expertise, is created.

It should also be mentioned that even though the level of education is evaluated as moderately satisfying in Georgia, young people believe that educational institutions do not equip youth with the relevant skills and knowledge to enter the labor market. This might be partially caused by the curricula of the higher education institutions that does not typically imply practical components in the study process. This gap could be addressed with internships- the transitional step from education to the labor market – although the prevalence of completing internships is very low. If experience is deemed to be an important factor in finding a job, practicums and internships should be a way for youth to gain experience.

Youth also engage less in other extra-curricular activities that could equip them with relevant skills. Not involving in extra-curricular activities can be related to low accessibility, financial difficulties as well as lack of motivation of youth to get involved in such activities for the sake of their personal development. This can be partly explained by the social environment young people encounter during their socialization process and influence of social groups they interact with such as, immediate family, kinship groups as well as social groups in their educational institutions.

Democracy and Governance

Introduction

Pro-western Georgia, unlike other small countries possibly bandwagoning with neighboring strong powers, prefers to choose different values over materialistic benefits that bandwagoning could bring. One of the values that the western world could offer is the idea of democracy. The newly elected government in 2003 tried to incorporate the idea of democracy in the life of the country through reforms, policies, and laws. Recent survey results also prove that democracy is preferable to any other form of government for 47% of the Georgian population, and that the share of those who prefer democracy over other forms is higher among people aged 18-35 (51%) (CRRC, 2015).

Nowadays, 46% of the Georgian population believes that democracy, although with major problems, is present in the country (CRRC, 2015), even though it should be mentioned that citizen participation is the very *raison d'être* of democracy (Print, 2007). Participation in democracy may take different forms, and three major forms of engagement can be identified: (1) Civic indicators – active membership in groups, associations, volunteering; (2) Electoral indicators – regular voting; and (3) Political engagement indicators – contacting officials, writing petitions, etc. (Ibid.). Recent surveys prove that Georgians are not very active in any of the three forms of engagement. According to Caucasus Barometer 2015, 79% of Georgians have not been engaged in volunteering activities, have not used media to express their opinions (have not called/written a letter to TV, newspaper, radio – 95%; have not made a comment on a publication via internet - 87%), have not attended a public meeting (83%), and have not signed a petition (93%). Relevantly higher engagement activities can be observed in the voting behavior of the population. According to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems electoral turnout for parliament elections varies from 52%-64% since 2003, whereas the presidential elections are characterized with lower participation (56%, 47%) with an exception in 2003 right after the 'Rose Revolution' when the election turnout for presidential elections was 88% (IFES election guide, 2016).

Young people make up only part of the society, although behavior that begins in adolescence can critically shape the course of a young person's life as well as the future of the society as a whole (Unicef, 2014). Participation in voluntary organizations in early years of life serves as the best indicator of participation in

adulthood. Hence, the involvement of youth in public life becomes essential for democracy (Sumbadze, 2010).

According to the results of the MYPLACE study, which was conducted in two large regional cities of Georgia, young people are not interested in political processes and consider participation in elections as the maximum level of political involvement. Furthermore, they are not regularly involved in non-election types of political activities (MYPLACE Study, 2013). Low political activism of youth is demonstrated by the results of other studies as well. As the report of the Youth National Study conducted in 2015 by UNICEF reads, 15-29 year-old young people in Georgia live rather inactive public lives. The vast majority (90,4%) believes that they have the right to participate in solving issues related to youth, but based on the results of 2013, only 10,9% of them took part in solving these issues, and the majority was only partially involved in the decision-making process (UNICEF, 2014).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, young people have been participants of political or social processes that took place in Georgia. It is worth noting, though, that the engagement of youth and of society as a whole could be characterized more as a sporadic rather than a regular activity, and activity often coincides with periods of hardship in Georgia. The most recent example of considerably high solidarity and activism was observed in the Tbilisi flood of 2015. According to our study results, 38% of Tbilisi youngsters helped others during the natural disaster. One must note that civil participation is a vital element in building democracy, although the participation should have a regular rather than a sporadic character.

Within the scope of the given study, we studied the attitudes of young people towards political and democratic processes, as well as their levels of political involvement and activism. The study also included the evaluation of development processes the country faces nowadays.

Main Findings

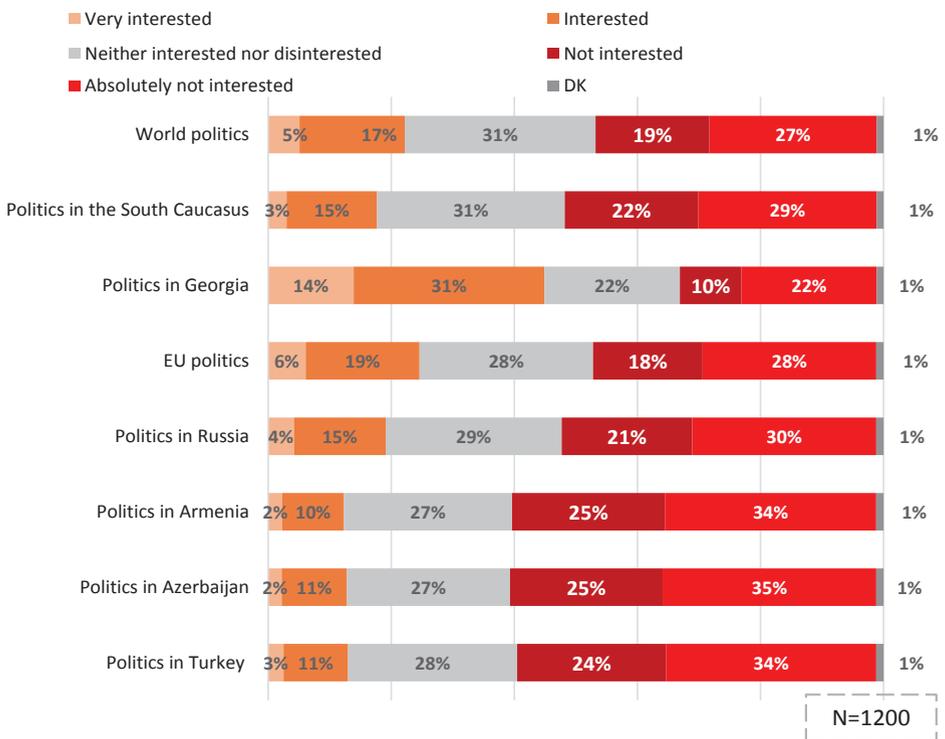
- Georgian youngsters are less interested in regional and global political issues than in domestic issues. Domestic political processes attract the attention of 45%.
- When evaluating the state of democracy in the country, 50% of youth have a neutral attitude. Only 13% of young respondents give positive evaluations (13%), while a negative attitude is expressed by 34% of young people.
- More than half of inquired respondents (53%) never discuss political issues with their parents and only 9% discuss these topics with certain regularity (very often – 2%, often – 7%).
- Sixteen percent of youth declared that their views are not aligned with those of their parents, while 28% could not answer this question.
- Georgian young people trust religious institutions most of all – 81% of young respondents trust the church and religious institutions in general.
- Political parties, Parliament, central and local governments are the least trusted institutions by young people (25%-26%).
- Unemployment stands out as the most important problem that Georgian society has to face (85%), followed by an increase in poverty (84%).
- Youth think that the government should focus on poverty reduction (69%) and on economic growth and development (63%).
- Right-wing and left-wing orientations are equally distributed among Georgian youngsters.
- Twenty-one percent of Georgian youngsters know which party they will vote for in the elections.
- Fifty-six percent of inquired respondents believe that their participation in elections is important.
- Only six percent of youngsters attended a public meeting held over the past 12 months and the same amount expressed their position.

Analysis

Democracy and Politics

The level interest in global, regional, and national politics is not high among young Georgians, however, they are relatively more interested in domestic politics. Forty-five percent of inquired respondents are interested in political issues that take place in Georgia (very interested- 14%; interested – 31%). In terms of youth interest in politics, local political events are followed by EU and world politics (25% and 22% respectively). It is worth mentioning that Georgian youth are not distinguished for being very interested in political events taking place within the region – interest towards politics of the South Caucasus and neighboring countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia varies from 12% to 19%.

Figure # 3.1 – Interest in the politics of different countries

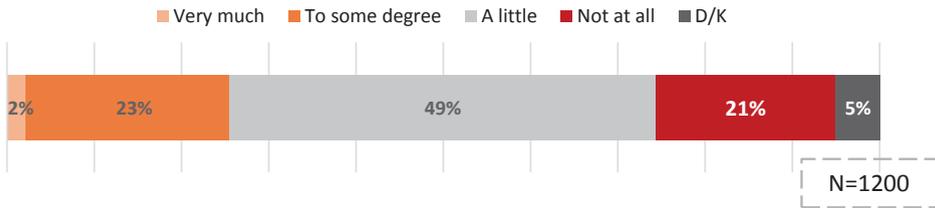


It is quite interesting that interest in political issues increases with the increase in age. Additionally, employed young people are more interested in politics.

A nihilistic attitude towards political issues might be caused by young people thinking that their interests are either under-represented or not represented at

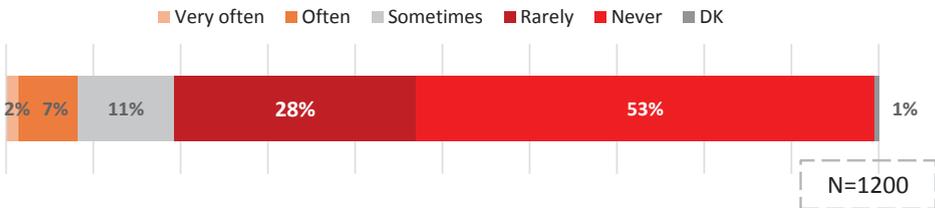
all in today’s politics. Only two percent of inquired respondents noted that the political agenda takes youth interests into account to a significant extent.

Figure # 3.2 – Level of representation of youth issues in Georgian Politics today



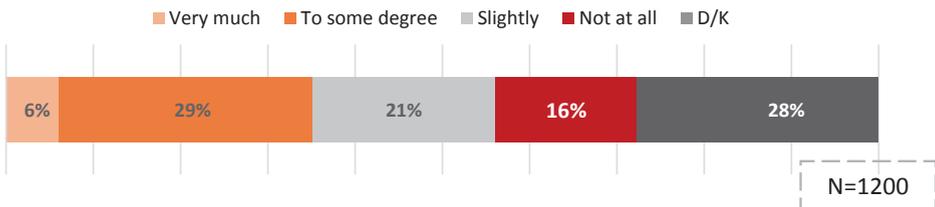
Politics as an uninteresting theme to discuss is also indicated by the fact that young people rarely discuss political processes with their parents. More than half of inquired respondents (53%) never discuss political issues with their parents and only nine percent discuss with certain regularity (very often – 2%, often – 7%).

Figure # 3.3 – Frequency of discussing politics with parents



As for the compatibility of political beliefs between respondents and their parents, 35% of respondents declare that their political views are somewhat aligned with those of their parents (very much – 6%, to some degree – 29%), while 16% declare that their political views are completely different from those of their parents. It is worth mentioning that a large portion of young respondents (28%) said that they do not know how similar or different their political views are compared to those of their parents. It is quite interesting that differing political views of parents were most highlighted by representatives of the 19-24 age category.

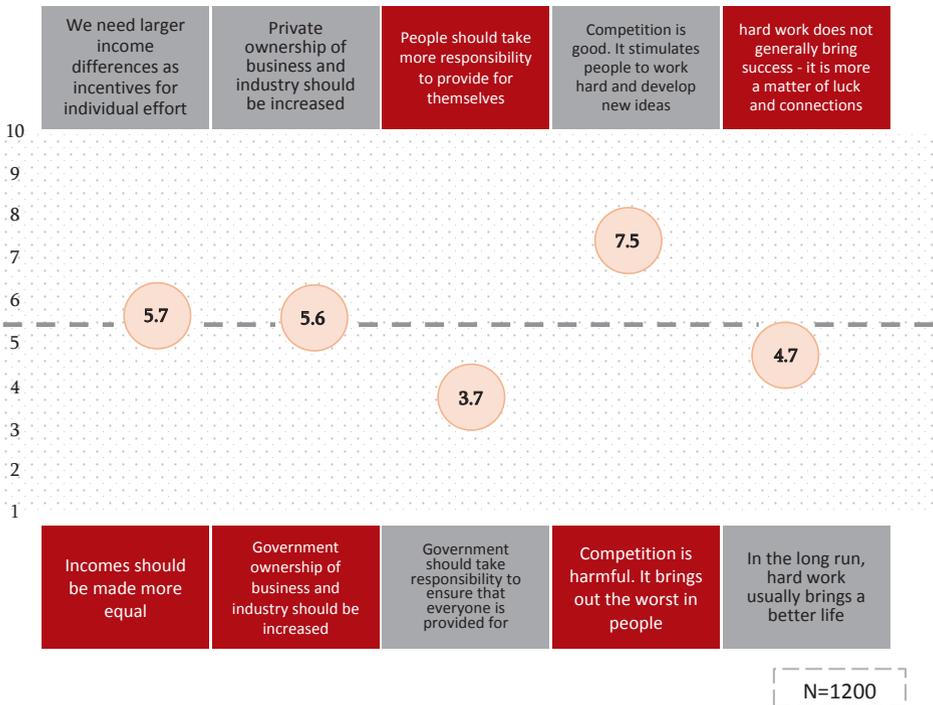
Figure # 3.4- Alignment of political views of youth with those of their parents



In order to evaluate the political-ideological orientation of youth, the research utilized a method of contradictory statements. Based on an analysis of the results, we tried to define young peoples' sympathy to right-wing and left-wing political ideologies. It is worth mentioning that in order to determine the orientation of youth, classic perceptions related to right-wing and left-wing political ideologies were formulated.

As seen in the figure below, the attitudes of young people towards the majority of evaluation parameters is more aligned with a central point, rather than with radical left or right points. However, the picture is different in terms of two issues: there are two statements with which left-wing or right-wing views are dominant. For example, young people think that the government should take responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided with necessities. Young people agree more with the classical right-wing position regarding the business environment, and believe that competition is good, since it stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas. Even though the latter position being left or right can be argued, as nowadays there are more left-wing parties that think of competition as positive within certain legal boundaries.

Figure # 3.5 – Left-Wing VS Right-Wing

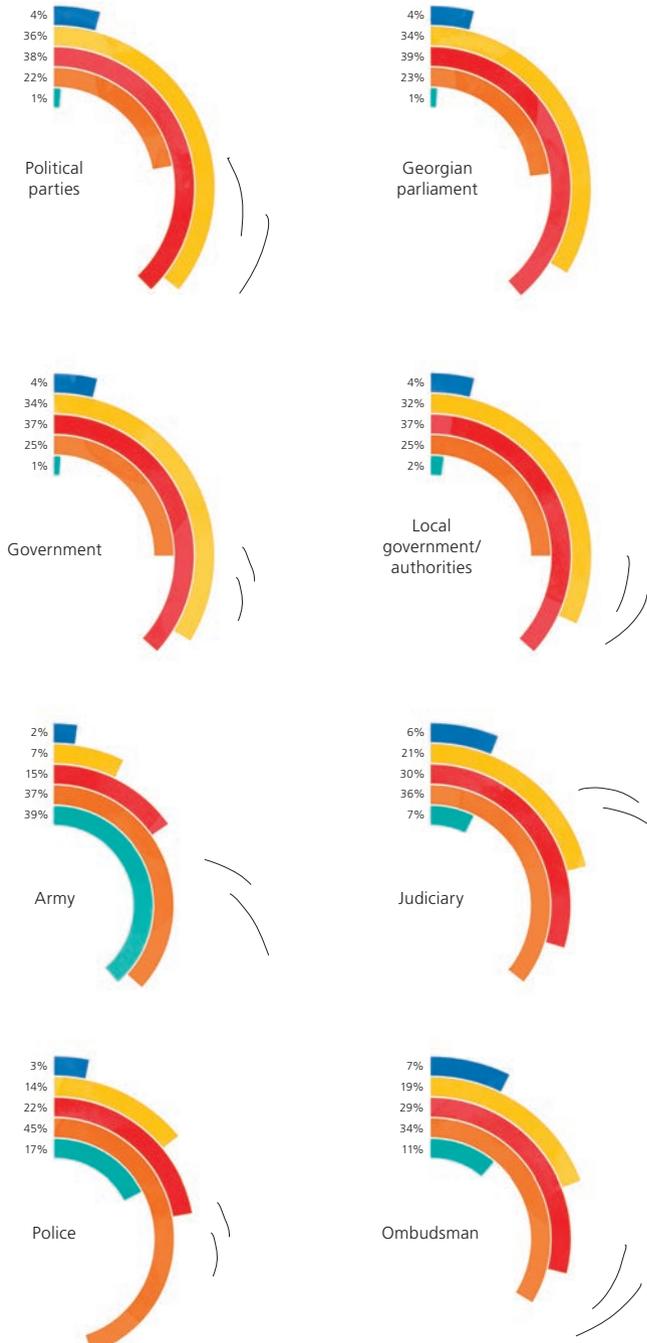


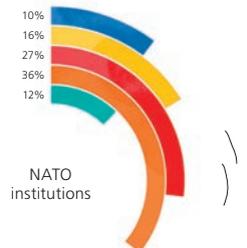
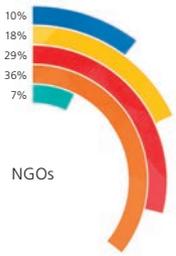
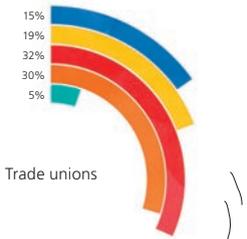
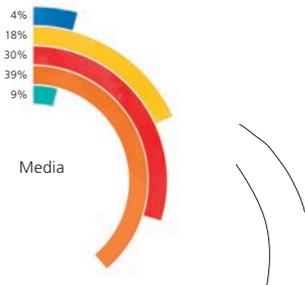
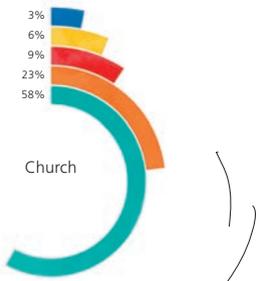
One of the goals of this study was to identify the extent to which youth trust different political and public institutions. The study results verified the tendency of recent years, according to which religious institutions have a high level of trust – 81% of the inquired youngsters trust the church and religious institutions in general (very much – 58%, to some degree – 23%). It is quite interesting that after religious institutions, the army (76%) and police (62%) are leaders in terms of trust.

Negative attitudes towards political activism is verified by how much youth trusts local political institutions – political parties, Parliament, central and local governments are the least trusted by young people (25%-26%). In addition, it is worth mentioning that only one percent of the respondents express clearly distinguished trust (I trust very much) towards local political institutions. It is noteworthy that young people living in Tbilisi feel the most distrustful towards political parties – more than half (51%) of young respondents declared that they do not trust political parties at all, while 29% of youngsters inquired in cities and villages do not trust political parties.

Attitudes towards international and non-governmental organizations turned out to be quite interesting. Trust towards these organizations is lower than the index of trust towards the church, the army and the police, but on the other hand, international and non-governmental organizations are more trusted than local political institutions. In addition, attitudes towards international and non-governmental organizations are different in terms of regional perspective – it is noteworthy that trust towards these organizations is higher among the youngsters who live in villages and other cities than in Tbilisi (trust NGOs very much/to some degree: Tbilisi – 30.7%, cities – 48.6%, villages – 49.4%; trust international organizations very much/to some degree: Tbilisi – 37%, cities – 48.2%, villages – 48.4%).

Figure # 3.6 – How much do you trust various institutions?



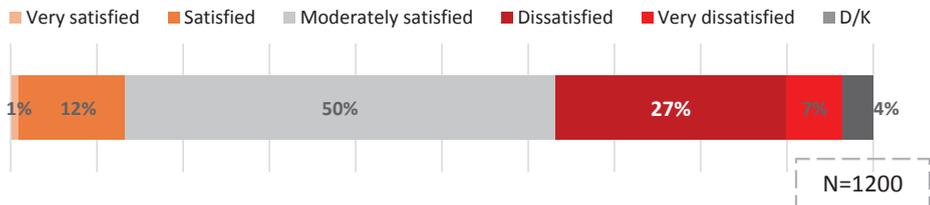


Very much To some degree A Little Not at all D/K

N=1200

Within the scope of the quantitative research, we asked respondents to evaluate the state of democracy in Georgia in general. Every second young person (50%) expressed a neutral position. Positive evaluations were given by only 13% (very satisfied – 1%, satisfied – 12%), while negative attitudes were given by 34% of young people (dissatisfied – 27%, very dissatisfied – 7%).

Figure # 3.7 – Evaluation of the state of democracy in Georgia



Focus group discussions revealed negative attitudes of young people towards political engagement, which makes them feel distrustful of politically active young people. One of the most important factors leading to negative attitudes towards active political and public life is a critical perception of student self-government activities; it should be noted that parallel to group discussions, student self-governments and activists against student self-governments held protest rallies at Tbilisi State University, causing sharply negative feedback from the society. Generally speaking, a majority of youth perceive politics as a dirty business, and people involved in this business mostly act according to their personal, narrow interests and not for the good of the public.

Politics is in everybody's life, I think young people are politically active. Not all youngsters can be active, but with everything going on at TSU – when protest rallies are held asking for abolishment of self-governments and lectures are postponed for months, it is not desirable. [Tbilisi, male, 19-29 age category]

I think that the motivation behind students' political activity is avoiding studies. [Tbilisi, female, 19-29 age category]

It is always the same faces that are politically active. Therefore, a young person has no motivation to show initiative. [Adjara/Guria, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

[Politicians] forget why they are in force, they solely care about their pockets and want to earn as much money as possible, and they don't care about others. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

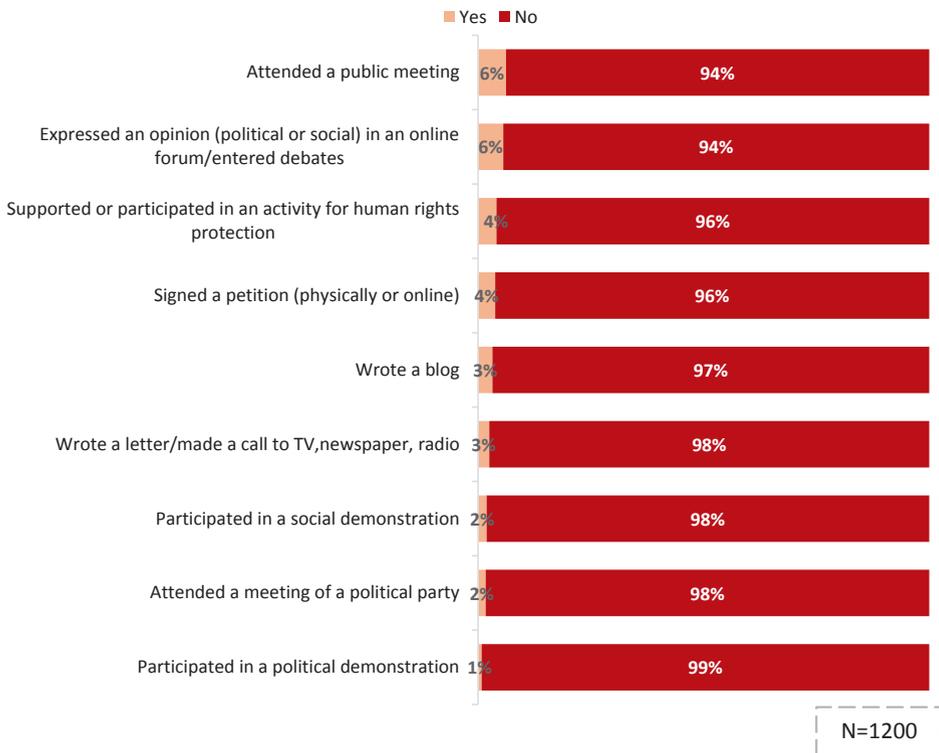
It's terrible. Furthermore, it is pre-election period now and the entire youth is engaged. [Imereti/Racha-Leckhkhumi Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

All political parties try to involve as many young people in their party as possible. I finished meeting with the seventh political party the day before yesterday and I realized that everyone tries for their own sake and no one cares about young people, not to say anything about Georgia. [Shida Kartli, rural, male, 19-29 age category]

Young People and Political Participation

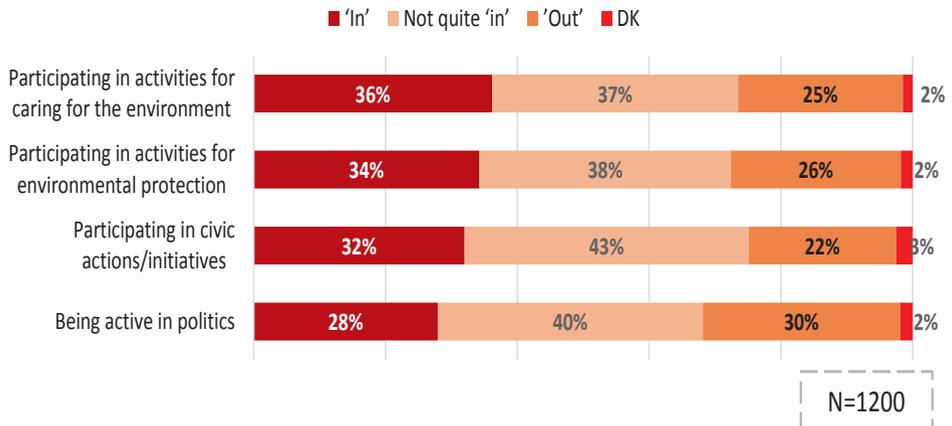
Within the scope of this study, we identified the extent to which Georgian youngsters are active in public and civil life, and whether or not they are engaged in different activities. As the results of the quantitative survey demonstrate, the civil activism of young people is minimal: only six percent have attended a public meeting held regarding any issue within the last 12 months, and the same number has expressed their positions or entered debates in an online forum. Involvement in other civil activities, such as participation in a rally held for the protection of human rights, signing a petition, participation in a political demonstration, etc. is very rare and varies from one to four percent.

Figure # 3.8 – Civic engagement activities



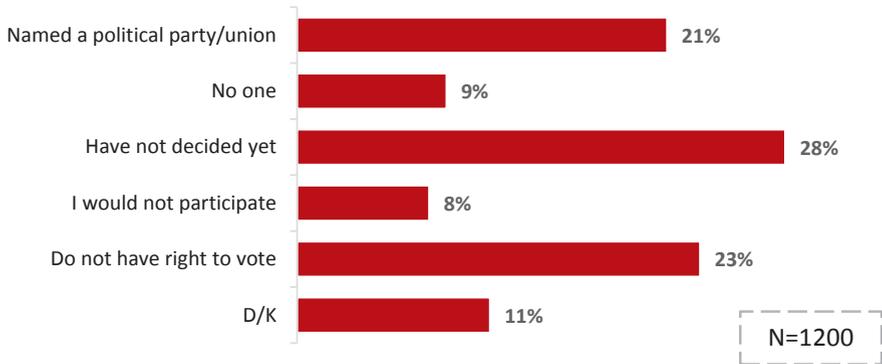
This study explored several activities in order to identify barriers to practicing certain behaviors. For example, in case civic engagement would be out of fashion, low civic involvement could be partially explained by stereotypes spread in youth. Although, as study results show, civic or political engagement is not hindered by the perceptions of youth. On the contrary, participation in civic activities, activities for caring or protection of the environment, and being active in politics can be characterized as more fashionable than not, although neutral attitudes towards these issues is dominant.

Figure # 3.9 – Engagement activities – Fashionable VS unfashionable



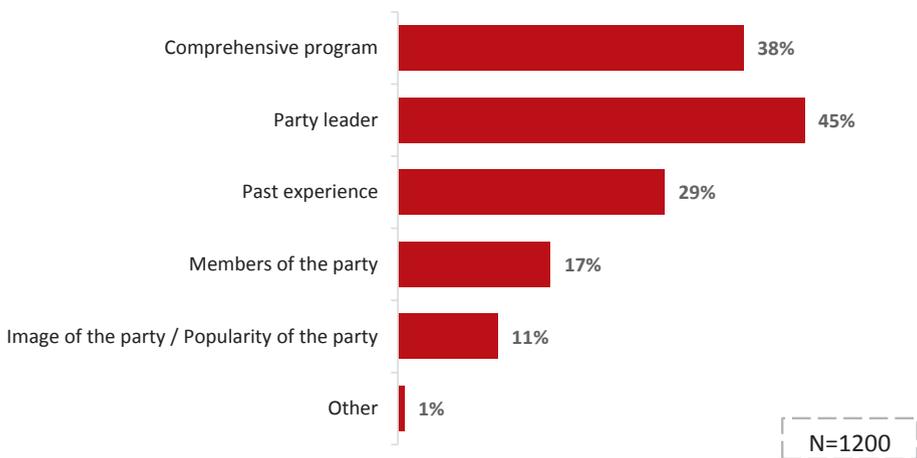
In order to identify the degree to which Georgian young people have political sympathies, we asked respondents of the quantitative survey to name the political party they would vote for. It is quite interesting that every fifth respondent (21%) named the specific political union they would vote for, while every tenth respondent (9%) declared that none of the political parties deserved to be voted for. Twenty-three percent of our respondents represented an age group that is not yet allowed to vote, and the rest of the respondents declared that they would not participate in the elections (8%), have not decided (28%), or did not know/refused to answer (11%). It is worth mentioning that the share of young people who did not express their political sympathies (would not vote / has not decided / does not know) is the highest (62%) among those respondents who live in the capital city.

Figure # 3.10 – Voting preferences



It is interesting that the main factor that defines sympathy towards a political party is the leader for 45% of young people, and other factors such as program (38%), past experience (29%), etc. are named only after the leader.

Figure # 3.11 – Determinant of political party attractiveness



It is quite interesting that young people believe their vote is important in terms of political election results – 56% of youngsters believe that their opinion is either important or very important. Respectively, young people who are eligible to vote mostly participate in elections.

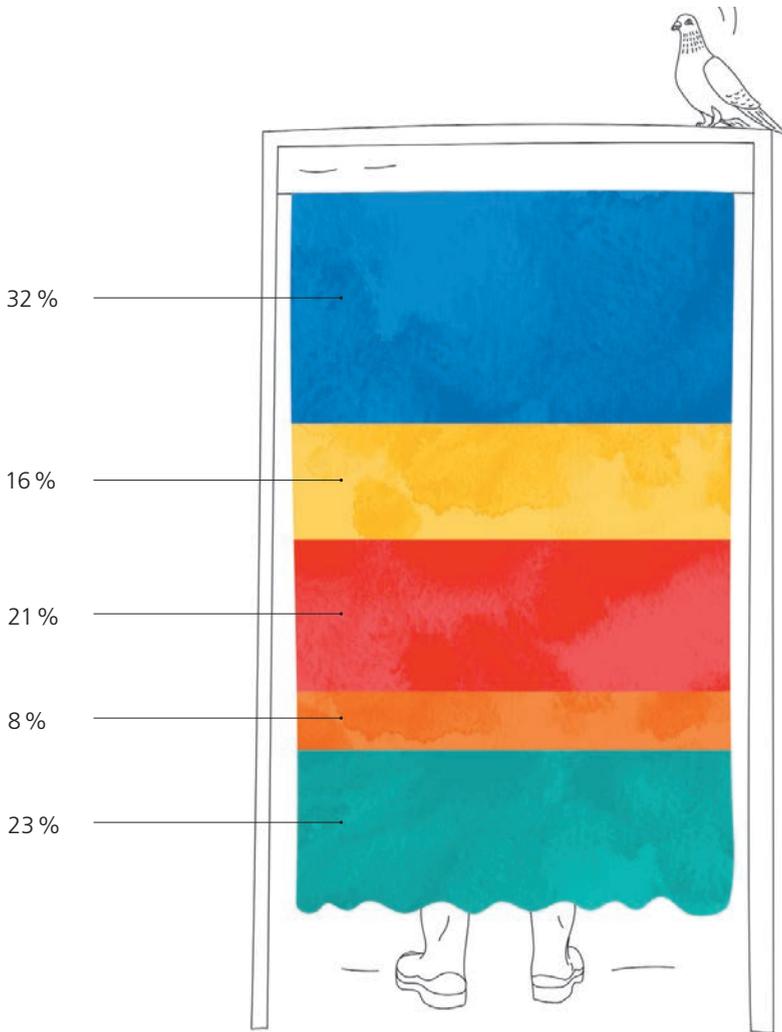
Figure # 3.12 – Importance of opinion in elections



● Very much ● To some extent ● Little ● Has no importance at all ● D/K

N=1200

Figure # 3.13 –Frequency of voting



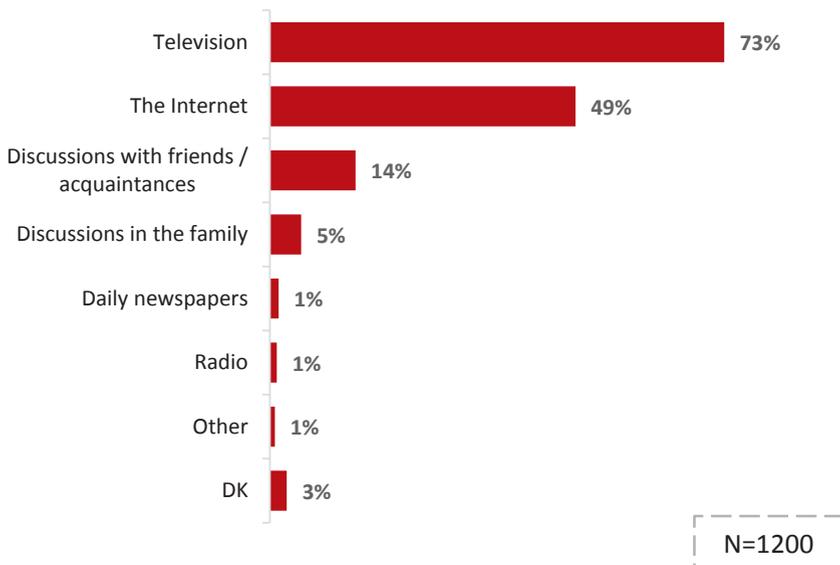
- In all elections
- In most elections
- In a few elections
- Never
- Had not had a right yet

N=1200

Sources of Information on Political Events

When asked about main sources of information on political events, almost half (49%) of the respondents named internet, but television still remains as the most popular source for obtaining information about political processes (73%). It is worth mentioning that the situation in terms of sources of information differs in Tbilisi, other cities, and villages. While internet is the main source of information for 73% of Tbilisi residents, this source of information is named by 53% of young people living in other cities and only one fourth (27%) of youth uses the internet as a source of obtaining information about political issues in villages. Television has no alternative for young people living in villages (83%).

Figure #3.14 – Main sources of current political events



Despite the fact that interest towards politics is not high and attitudes towards politicians and political parties are mostly negative, FG participants named various sources of information related to politics. This indicates that young people do have information about political events, but that they are less interested in and less involved in direct political processes and tend to keep a distance from politics.

Young people know and see what is going on in politics, but they try not to get involved. They do not participate in politics. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi Kvemo Svaneti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

[Young people] have already given up. None of them [politicians] will do anything for us. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

There are so many problems around us that we are too busy for politics. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age group]

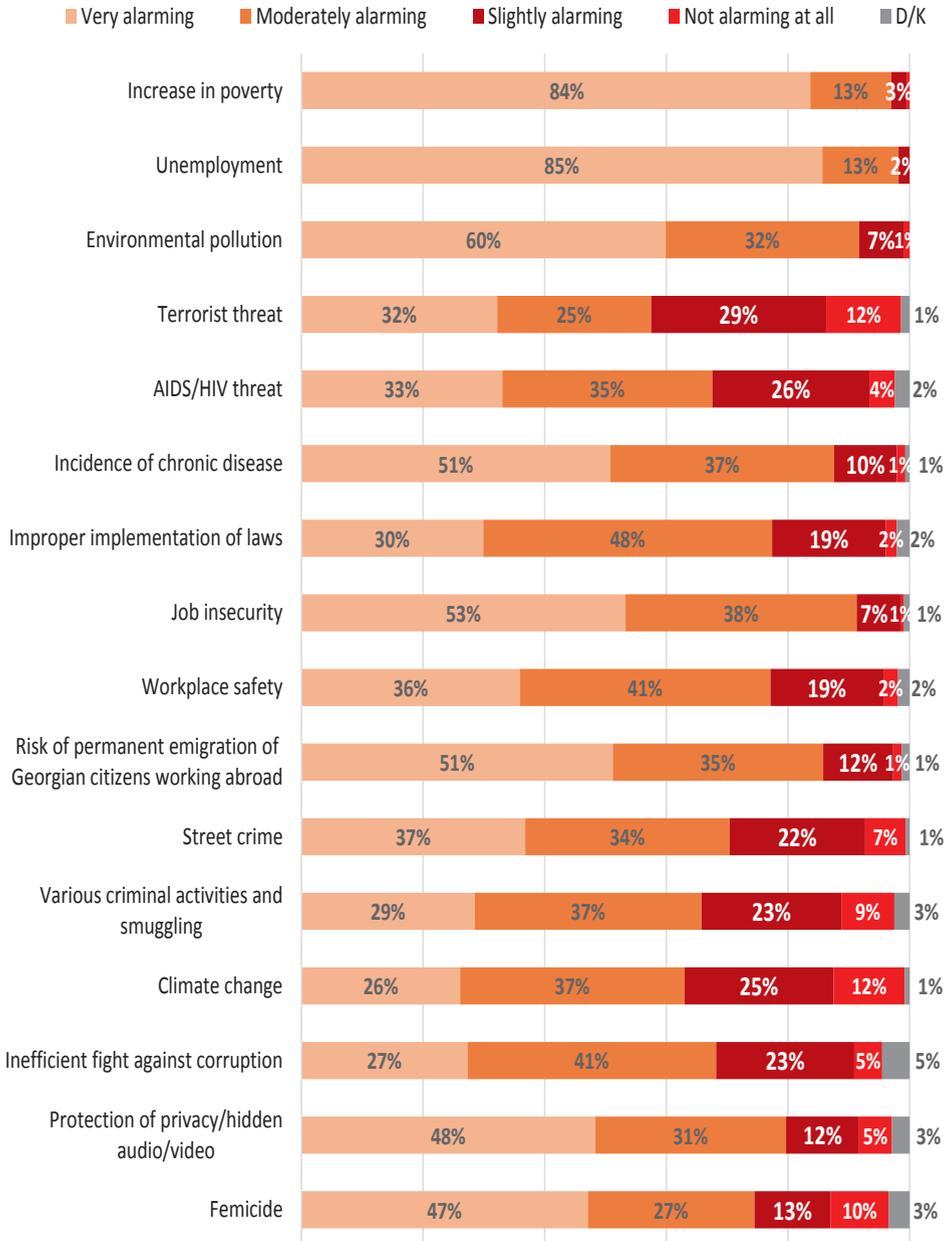
Governance – Development Problems and Challenges

Unemployment is at the top of the list of problems Georgian society has to face, and is named by 85% of young respondents. Unemployment is followed by an increase in poverty with 84% of respondents. Furthermore, these two issues are equally important for all age groups in Tbilisi, other cities, and villages. In general, it needs to be mentioned that factors such as work instability (53%- very alarming) and work safety (threats to life and safety at the workplace) (36%) remain problematic for young Georgians.

It is rather interesting that together with economic and employment issues, alarming issues include environmental pollution, which as believed by 60% of young people, is an important problem for society.

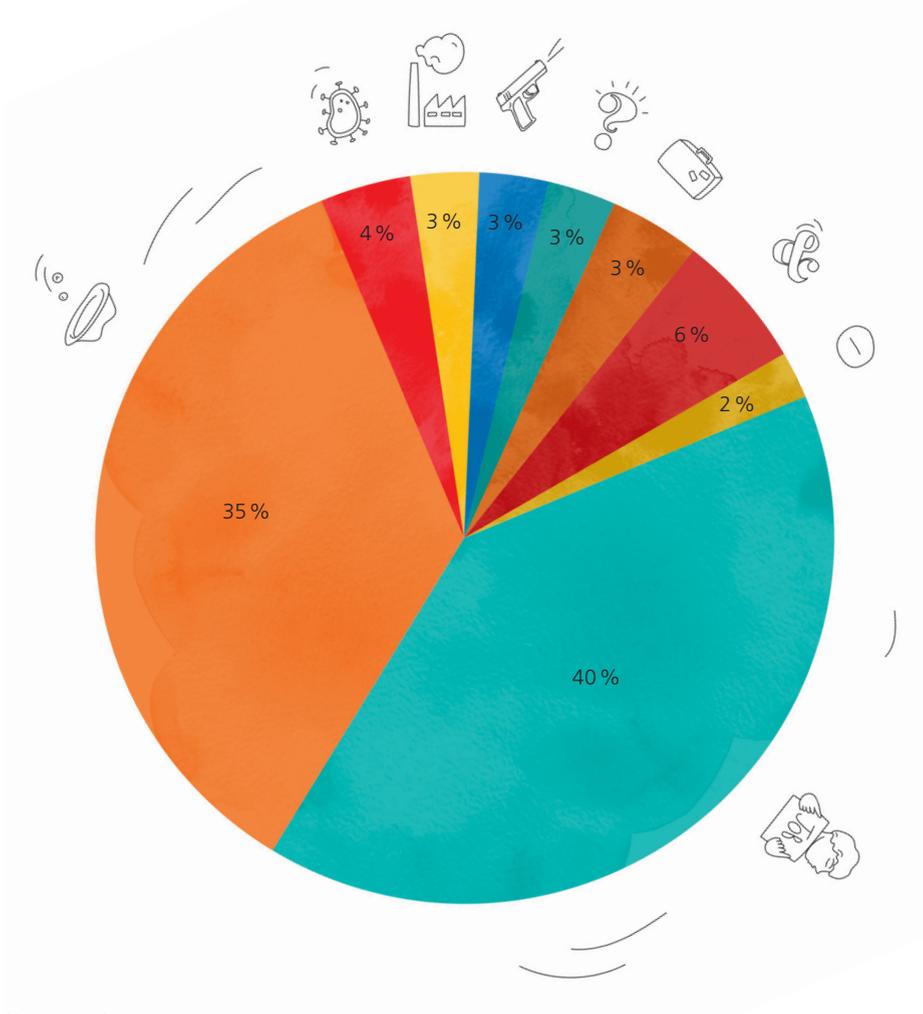
The chart given below presents how alarming each issue is for Georgia. The chart shows that almost every problem asked within the scope of the study is alarming for Georgian youngsters, however, when asked to name the one issue that they believe is most problematic for society, the vast majority of youth focused on two: unemployment (40%) and an increase in poverty (35%). Respectively, when it comes to prioritizing problems, other issues such as environmental protection, work instability and safety, or other problems remain in second place.

Figure # 3.15 – Alarming problems in Georgia



N=1200

Figure # 3.16 – Problem of the greatest significance in Georgia

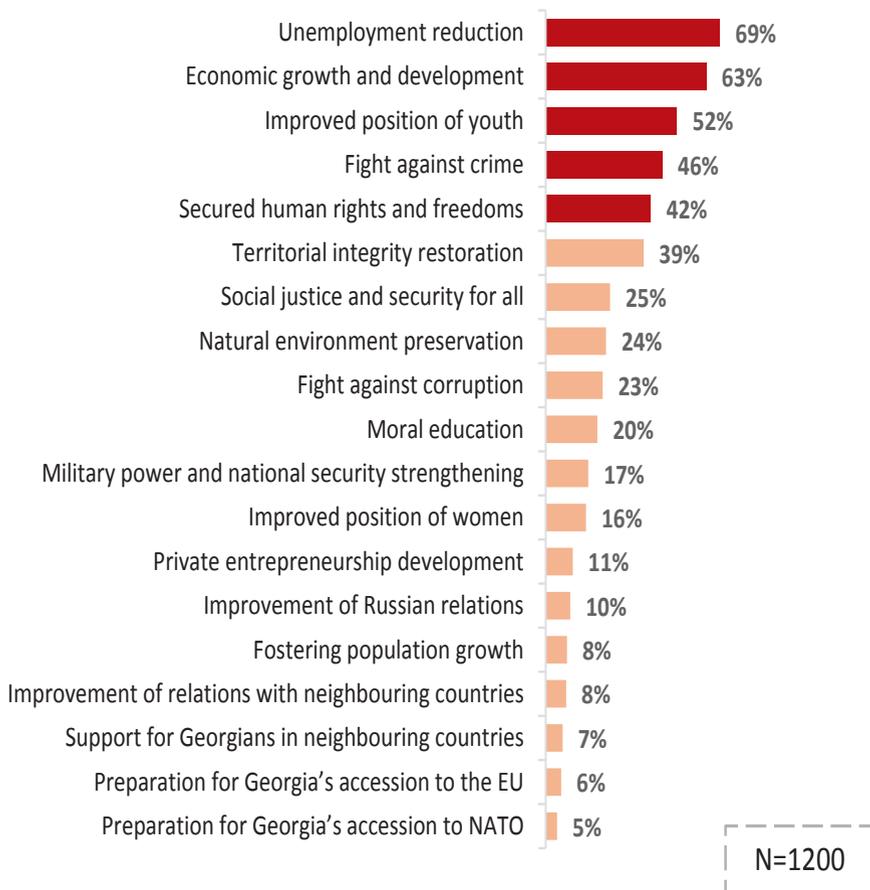


- Unemployment
- Increase in poverty
- Increase in incidence of chronic disease
- Environmental pollution
- Femicide
- Job insecurity
- Risk of out-migration
- Other
- D/K

N=1200

When asked about which problems the Georgian government should focus on, young people include the abovementioned problems. In this case, priorities were the reduction of unemployment (69%) and economic growth and development (63%). The top five issues named by young people as priorities also include the improved condition of youth (52%), the fight against crime (46%), and the protection of human rights and freedoms (42%). It is worth mentioning that the list of alarming issues did not include the criminal situation and human rights, but young people do believe that the government should focus on the fight against crime and the protection of human rights and freedoms.

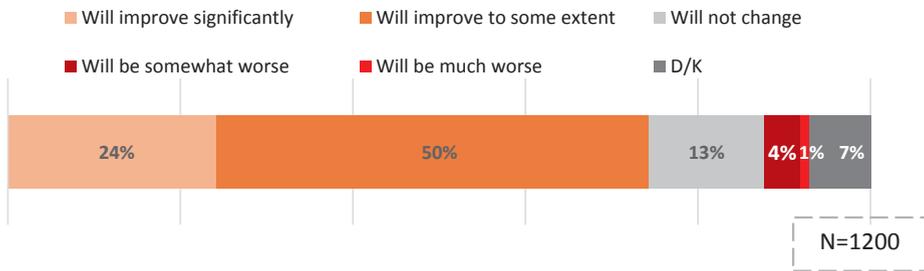
Figure # 3.17 – Top five problems government should solve



As for future expectations, Georgian young people feel rather optimistic – 74% of them think that the economic situation of people in Georgia will improve over the next 10 years (24%- will improve significantly, 50%- will improve to some extent). It is rather interesting that young residents of Tbilisi feel the least optimistic about

the change of future economic welfare: 67% of young people in Tbilisi believe that the economic situation will change for better over the next 10 years, while this opinion is shared by 78% of young respondents in other cities and 77% of young respondents in villages.

Figure # 3.18 – Economic development in 10 years



Discussion

The survey results verify the findings of other recently conducted studies in terms of the political indifference of Georgian youngsters. Georgian youth are not very interested in politics and they are mostly distinguished for their negative attitudes towards politicians and political institutions. They view politics as a dirty business, and believe that people involved in politics as act solely for their personal interests and do not really care about solving the problems their country faces. Apart from low political involvement, the civic engagement of youth is also very insignificant.

In terms of political ideology, in most cases, young people choose neither right nor left orientation, but mostly gravitate toward centrist views. They believe that the government is responsible for providing a socially equal environment and ensuring every citizen with basic necessities. Even though the youth perceives the government as responsible for an equal environment, trust towards local political institutions is very low.

According to Sumbadze, a lack of motivation is one of the major factors leading to a low level of youth participation. Motivation is a complex construct that entails a host of conditions. It is generally recognized that the desire to participate, availability of time, existence of a favorable environment, and invitation to participate are conditions that facilitate participation in general and particularly in politics (Sumbadze, 2010). According to the same study, youth desire to participate is quite high, although the reasons described above resulting in low motivation hinder the participation process. Motivation is also hindered by poverty and a lack of education (Ibid.).

It should be mentioned that until 2012, there was no specific legislative framework

to address youth interests, resulting in young people assuming that their interests were under-represented. Only in 2012 and later in 2014, the Government of Georgia approved a “State’s Youth Policy Document” that aims to encourage the establishment of a relevant environment for comprehensive youth development, to fully realize their potential, and to be actively involved in all spheres of the public life (Government of Georgia, 2014). In particular, the conceptual document focuses on creating: (1) opportunities for involvement in social, economic, cultural, and political life; (2) opportunities for high-quality education and employment; (3) a healthy lifestyle; and (4) awareness among young people on their civil rights and responsibilities. In other words, the policy takes aim to improve all aspects that can be assumed as barriers of youth engagement in political and public life. Although it should be considered that trust issues towards government exist. That is why youth might not be elevated by the idea of having government approving the conceptual document for youth development. On the contrary to low trust levels towards the government, it is worth noting that trust towards local and international organizations appeared to be high among youth. According to the current study, young people trust international organizations, EU institutions and NGOs more than political parties, parliament, government or local government/authorities. Their trust can be explained by the active role of international or local organizations in helping Georgia strive for a pro-western life. For instance, USAID and UN programs assist Georgia in creating strong state systems and transparent institutions that respond to the needs of citizens.

Young People and Foreign Policy Views

Introduction

In discussing the foreign policy strategies of small countries, conventional wisdom is that small countries are more likely to bandwagon with threatening great powers than balance against them (Gvalia, Siroky, Lebanidze, Iashvili, 2013). This is not the case with Georgia. According to Gvalia et al. 2013, 'whereas Azerbaijan and most of the other small post-Soviet states have pursued a cautious bandwagoning policy toward Russia, post-Soviet Georgia has been consistently edging westward since the "Rose Revolution"'. Even though 'European identity' can be considered as a ticket to Euro-Atlantic integration, the approach of small countries bandwagoning with greater ones fails to explain Georgian foreign policy in materialist terms.

'Due to its long-term historical experience and common cultural practices with multiple states and regions, Georgia could potentially identify itself with a range of regions. These include the post-Soviet space, the Caucasus or even the Middle East' (Kakachia, Minesashvili, 2015). Even though the 2003 Rose Revolution is the most vivid time that the country actively began to strive towards Europe through domestic and foreign reforms, there are arguments that Georgia and Europe have shared a European identity long before the Rose Revolution.

According to Kakachia and Minesashvili, Georgia's self-identification as western and the notion of a "return to Europe" emerged in the beginning of the 20th century with the *Tsisperkhantselni*, who were educated in Western Europe. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia lost its image as a source of enlightenment among the Georgian social democratic leadership, who no longer saw Russia as part of Europe and rather sought integration into European political structures.

European Union (EU) and Georgian relations started in 1992, following the recognition of Georgia's independence by the European Union. From September 1, 1997, in compliance with the resolution of the Parliament of Georgia, the country started the harmonization process of national legislation with EU law. EU-Georgian relations intensified after the Rose Revolution in 2003, and since that time the EU has continued to fully support the economic, social, and political reforms taking place in Georgia. In August 2008, the EU (together with U.S. partners) played an important role in the cessation of the Russian-Georgian war, and EU engagement led to the signing of a six-point cease-fire agreement.

By signing the Association Agreement in June 2014, EU-Georgian relations advanced to a completely new level. In December 2015, the EU Commission published a final report on the implementation of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan by Georgia, according to which the technical process of visa liberalization was successfully implemented. Georgia is now awaiting the Visa-Free movement agreement to come into force by the end of 2016/beginning of 2017.

Similar to the relations with EU, cooperation between Georgia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) started in the 1990s, and integration with the Euro-Atlantic space still remains a main priority for Georgian foreign policy. Since 1999, Georgia has been actively engaged in NATO peacekeeping missions. Particular attention should be paid to Georgia's contribution to the mission in Afghanistan, where Georgia is the largest non-NATO troop contributing nation. Georgia and NATO continue to cooperate, and becoming a member of NATO is one of the most important foreign policy priorities for both the Georgian government and for the society of this country.

Despite the state's declared Euro-Atlantic course and systematic work aimed at integrating into Euro-Atlantic institutions, public discussions on the country's political orientation still go on. Attitudes towards the EU, and particularly towards NATO, remain a significant part of political public discussions and play a leading role in the agendas of political parties and other civil organizations.

According to the study conducted within the framework of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation's European Integration program during seven years (2009-2015), the direct support of the Georgian population for EU integration has decreased from 78% to 62% since 2013. The share of those who say that Georgia will never accede to the EU rose by eight percent between 2009 and 2015. The study report suggests several explanations for the decrease in support and for the increase among those who believe that Georgia will never accede to the EU. Among the explanations are the understanding of EU requirements, the difficulties the requirements may cause, and harm to Georgian culture and traditions.

The chapter below discusses the attitudes of Georgian youth towards the EU and NATO, their expectations in terms of these organizations, the disadvantages and advantages they see on the way to closer ties with the EU/NATO, and their overall foreign policy views.

Main Findings

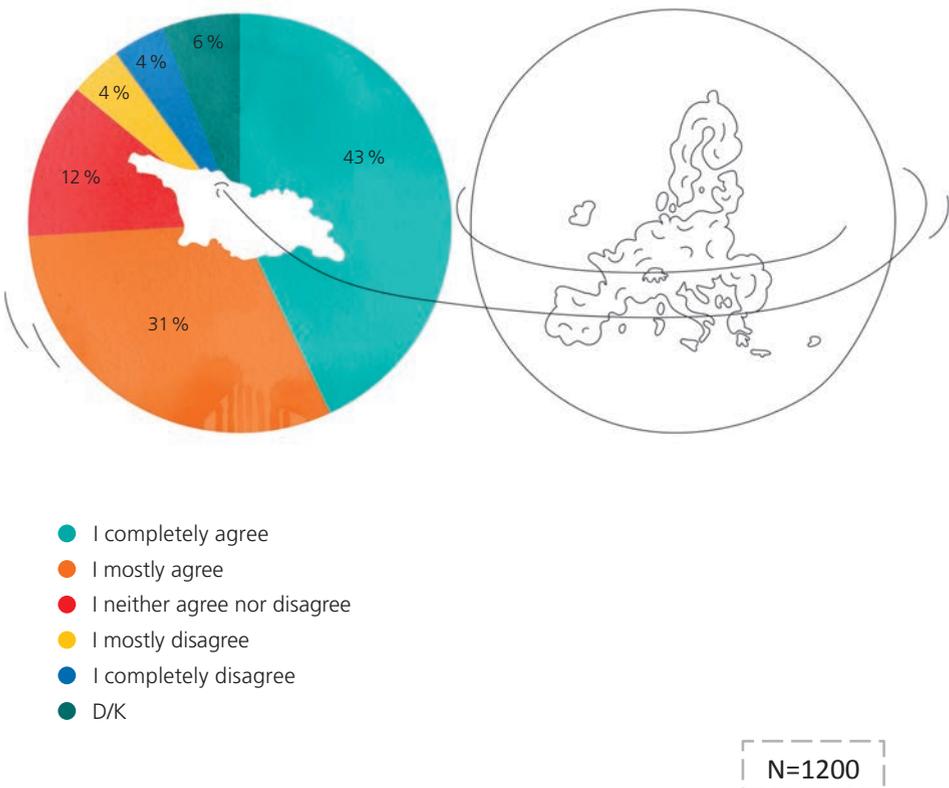
- Seventy-four percent of young people support integration with EU, but young people living in Tbilisi and other cities and villages have different views: 80% of youngsters living in Tbilisi and other cities want Georgia to become an EU member, while 66% of rural youth hold this opinion.
- Young respondents believe that they are not properly informed about the EU. Consequently, this lack of information may enhance the presence of negative attitudes.
- The most important benefits of EU membership include economic strengthening of the country (83%), which is connected to better employment opportunities (80%) and the improvement of the socio-economic situation (81%). Besides, accession to the EU is considered to be a precondition for the availability of better education (84%).
- Fifty-two percent of young people believe that an undesirable consequence of EU integration might be increasing aggression from Russia, which may end with complete loss of conflict territories. Forty-five percent of young people believe that EU integration will cause an outflow of youth, and particularly intellectual resources from the country. Thirty percent of young respondents believe that EU membership contains a hazard for Georgian identity.
- Sixty-eight percent of young people support Georgia's integration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), however, young respondents living in Tbilisi and other cities and rural areas have different views. Forging closer ties with NATO is less desirable (60%) among rural youngsters, while the number of those who support this process is relatively higher in Tbilisi and other cities (73%).
- The biggest danger related to NATO integration is an expected increase of Russian aggression. Ninety-two percent of young people believe that Georgia's integration with NATO will aggravate the conflict with Russia.
- Georgian youth believe that Georgia's integration with NATO will potentially increase the loss of Georgian soldiers involved in NATO military operations (85%).

Analysis

EU / NATO Integration

According to quantitative study results, 74% of youth support Georgia’s accession to the EU (completely agree – 43%, I mostly agree – 31%). Twelve percent have a neutral attitude, and only eight percent disagree with the above-mentioned process (I disagree – 4%, I completely disagree – 4%). Important differences were identified between young people living in urban and rural areas in terms of Georgia’s accession to the EU: while 80% of young people living in Tbilisi and other cities support Georgia’s accession to the EU, 66% of youngsters living in rural areas share the same view. It is also worth mentioning that only 0.8% of young people living in Tbilisi declared that they completely disagree with Georgia’s integration with the EU.

Figure # 4.1 – Attitudes towards Accession to the EU



An analysis of the qualitative part of the study revealed that young people have a lack of information about the EU. As believed by those youngsters who support Georgia's integration with the EU, a low level of awareness assists the increase of incorrect views and negative attitudes towards the EU.

[Information] is not sufficient. On the contrary, information is wrong, for example, if we enter the EU, we will lose our traditions and culture, we will be blended with Europe. [Tbilisi, male, 19-29 age category]

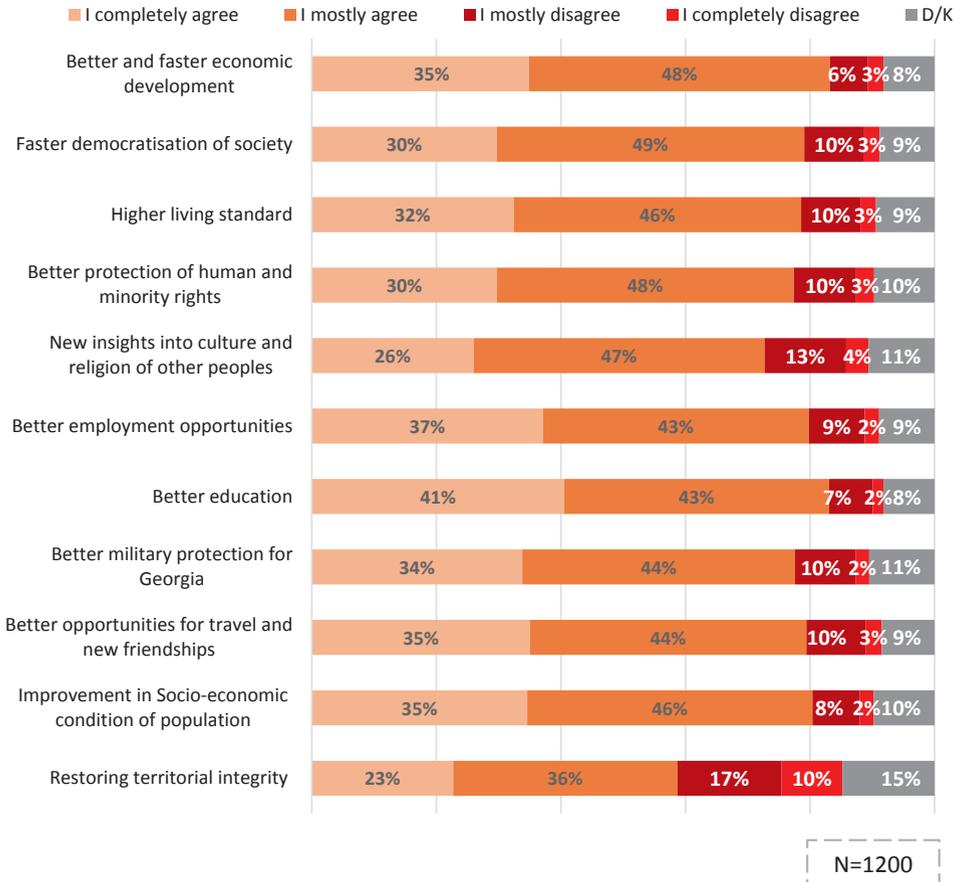
[Young people] are not properly informed. They are not aware of the benefits and they believe that there are only negative consequences. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

Many people think that if we become a member of the EU, it will be necessary to forget our traditions. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

The majority cannot realize what outcomes it [accession in the EU] may have and concerns prevail. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

As for accession to the EU or the expected benefits resulting from getting closer to the EU in general, several important issues have been identified as a result of the quantitative study. Young people believe that the EU will assist the country's economic development (83%), which is connected to better employment opportunities (80%) and the improvement of the socio-economic situation (81%). Accession to the EU is also considered to be a precondition for better education (84%). The importance of affordable education is verified by the fact that among those who dropped out of university (8%), at some point, 27% had to do this because of an inability to pay a fee.

Figure #4.2 – Advantages of Accession to the EU



As demonstrated by the qualitative study, it is important to forge closer ties with the EU in terms of the affordability of education as well as the quality of education. The majority of Georgian young people, whether they support accession to the EU or not, believe that EU countries ensure a higher quality of education.

In the process of focus group discussions, respondents discussed the advantages of EU integration, economic development, and respectively the improvement of the population’s socio-economic situation as among the leading factors. The EU is clearly associated with a strong economy, high living standards, and social welfare. It is also worth mentioning that economic improvement resulting from accession to the EU is significantly related to the issue of free trade and opening the European markets for agricultural products.

Apart from the above-mentioned benefits, young people find visa-free travel

and travel opportunities to European countries very attractive. Other important factors include the creation of a stable/secure environment in Georgia and better protection of the human rights they believe European countries provide. Apart from the fact that forging closer ties with the EU will simplify travel to EU countries for local residents, the expected increase in the number of tourists to Georgia is very important because it assists economic growth.

[EU's] benefits include economic growth and the improvement of living standards. Everything will become more expensive but salaries will be higher too. As I know, there will be social assistance, unemployment allowances. [Tbilisi, female, 19-29 age category]

Economic improvement is expected because we will be able to export and sell our products. [Tbilisi, female, 14-18 age category]

The EU will help us in the way that people won't have to move abroad to have a career. Respectively, smart and talented young people will have a proper salary, and their labor will be respected as it is in an EU country. [Tbilisi, female, 14-18 age category]

It will be very good in terms of travelling for tourism and studying. A free economic trade zone will naturally be very good in every aspect. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, male, rural, 14-29 age category]

Investments will increase and tourism will develop more. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

The EU unites economically strong countries and employment opportunities are better. When the country has proper import-export, employment opportunities are higher. [Samegrelo/Zemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

The EU is a trade space. When we trade in Georgia, we sell our product only inside Georgian markets and Georgian supermarkets. We will have more opportunities to export around the world. [Adjara/Guria, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

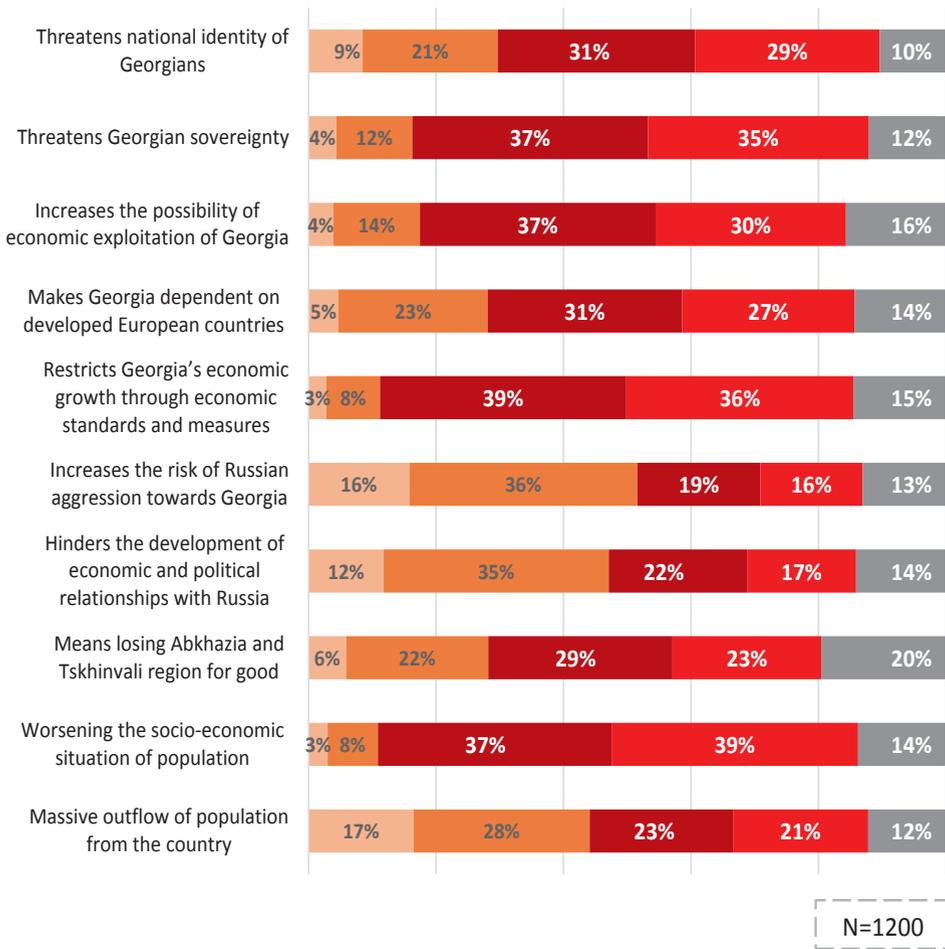
It is worth mentioning that while discussing the expected positive outcomes of EU integration, the restoration of territorial integrity was the least mentioned among different positive expectations. Respectively, 52% of young people believe that an undesirable result of EU integration is the possibility of increased aggression from Russia (I completely agree – 16%, I agree – 36%), and 28% of the respondents believe that by integrating with the EU, Georgia will finally lose its chance to return Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. Slowing down political and economic relations with Russia is related to the second factor – for 47% of young people, this is another expected negative result of EU integration (I completely agree-12%, I agree – 35%).

Expected negative outcomes in terms of territorial integrity are not surprising if we take into account that Georgia's integration with the EU and NATO is perceived

as an irritating factor for Russia. It is believed that if Georgia becomes a member of international structures with its current territorial status, it will completely lose the chance to restore its territorial integrity.

It is worth mentioning that apart from the possible deterioration of relations with Russia and complications in terms of returning conflict territories, 45% of young people disagree with forging closer ties with the EU as it will cause a massive outflow of the population from the country, while 30% of respondents think that the EU threatens Georgian national identity.

Figure # 4.3 - Disadvantages of Accession to the EU



Naming the risk of Russian aggression as the biggest threat Georgia may face on its way to getting closer to the EU is not surprising because of the Russian-

Georgian military conflict in 2008. Besides, respondents mentioned the example of Ukraine, where, as they believe, the EU and NATO practically could not use any mechanism to stop Russia. Besides the threat from Russia, respondents also fear that a visa-free regime will open the doors to spreading the ISIS network.

We have an attractive location, Russia's priority is that we have a corridor and it won't leave us alone. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

It will definitely increase danger because Russia won't give up Georgia – not the Georgian people, but Georgia. [Adjara, Guria, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

As it wanted to be a part of the EU, [Russia] now threatens Ukraine. Can you imagine what it will do to Georgia? [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

We will have a serious conflict with Russia and it may end in war. You know what they say, U.S.A. is far away and can't do anything to help while Russia is just next to you. One click, one bomb, and nothing else. [Tbilisi, female, 19-29 age category]

I am very afraid of ISIS. When I watch it on TV, it makes me so nervous. In case of a visa-free regime, they will easily enter the country. [Kvemo Kartli, mixed settlements, ethnic minorities, male, 14-18 age category]

During focus group discussions, young people actively discussed the outflow of Georgian residents, and especially intellectual resources as a result of getting closer to the EU. As declared by youth, the majority of their peers have thoughts of the country while speaking about the EU. As it appears, they are not informed about the conditions of visa-free movement and they believe that in case Georgia receives visa liberalization, it will be simple for them to move to European countries for study or work. Increasing migration is considered to be an important issue for a small country such as Georgia, moreover when the population has significantly decreased within the past two decades.

A massive outflow will take place because of visa-free travel, and this is a disadvantage. [Tbilisi, male, 14-18 age category]

Part of the youth will leave Georgia and as there is a visa-free regime, they will pretend they are leaving for a month but they will stay there and the Georgian population will decrease. Georgia, as a nation, may shrink and become very small. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

Many Georgians may leave for Europe and no one will stay here. [Samtskhe-Javakheti, mixed settlements, ethnic minorities, male, 14-18 age category]

While focus group members discussed the issue of threatening Georgian national

identity, a certain part of the respondents actively expressed the opinion that in the process of getting closer to the EU, Georgia will be asked to allow same-sex marriage via legislation, which is unacceptable for the inquired young people.

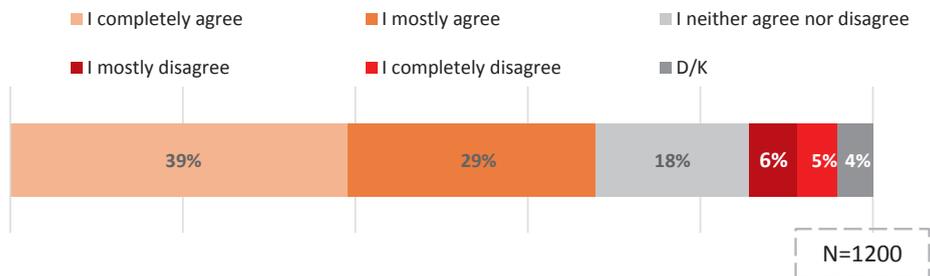
Young people may grow up in a way that they may approve of same-sex marriage or feminism movements or any other thing. [Tbilisi, male, 14-18 age category]

With our mentality, we are very against same-sex marriage. When we become an EU member, we will probably accept such things that happen there and not in our country. [Adjara/Guria, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

We will lose traditions and gay marriage will be allowed. This is allowed in the majority of [EU] countries. [Shida Kartli, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

As for young peoples’ attitudes towards NATO, the number of respondents that agree with Georgia’s accession to NATO is slightly lower than the number of those supporting accession to the EU and equals 68% (39%- completely agree, 29%- mostly agree). Eighteen percent of inquired respondents have a neutral attitude, while 11% disagree with Georgia’s accession to NATO. Forging closer ties with NATO is less desirable for those young people who live in villages (60%), while this number is relatively higher among those respondents who live in Tbilisi and other cities (73%).

Figure # 4.4 - Attitudes towards Accession to NATO



Based on the results of the qualitative study, young people believe that Georgia’s accession to NATO would guarantee stability and safety for the country, but that Georgia’s chances to become a NATO member in near future seem unrealistic. As believed by respondents, Russia will not allow the alliance to place troops within the territory of Georgia or to use this territory to carry out any type of military operation. It’s also not worth it for NATO to enter into conflict with Russia for the sake of Georgia. The presence of conflict territories in Georgia is believed to be a serious barrier, and young people think that it’s impossible to integrate with NATO without solving this problem.

The threat is so serious from Russia – it's such a huge empire that it will definitely cause serious dangers. [Kakheti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

We see the threat almost every day, e.g. barbed wire fences, oppression, threats from Russia...just recall the war in August 2008. [Shida Kartli, rural, male, 1-29 age category]

Accession to NATO will be good if they help us in case of war. Otherwise, it's not good for us. I still think it's just a dream and we won't be accepted. [Kakheti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

This union will be very useful for Georgia because such a small country as Georgia will be protected from aggression from Russia, and we will be able to develop more. [Kakheti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

The benefit will be that we will feel safer and we will have protection. [Tbilisi, female, 19-29 age category]

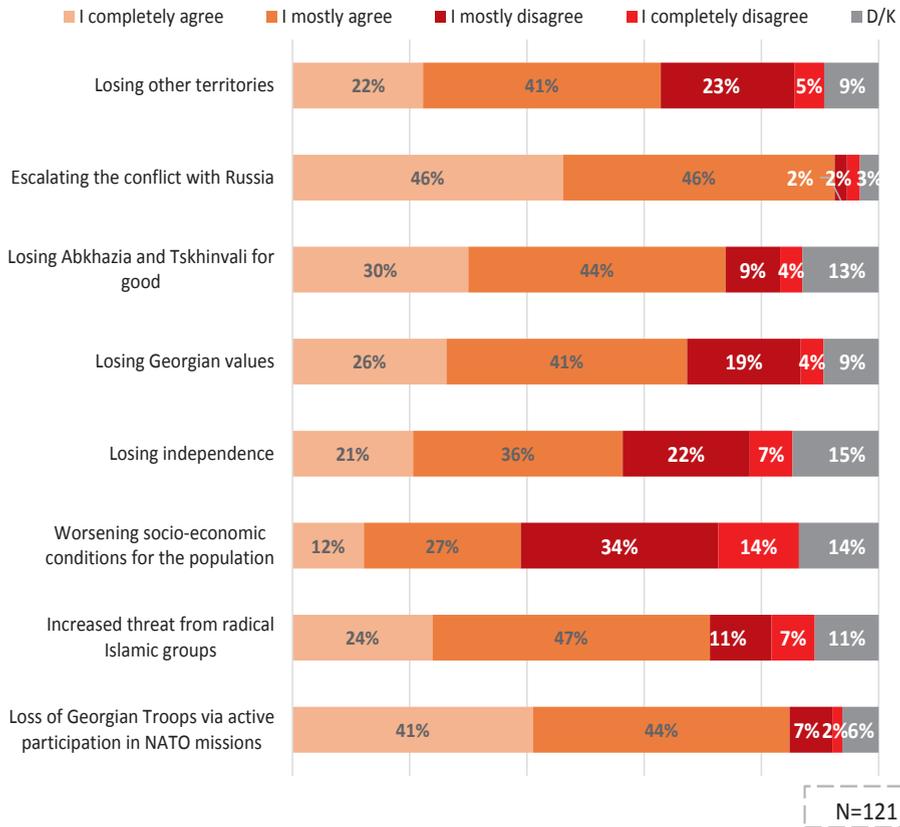
Accession to NATO means that NATO troops will be closer to us. [Tbilisi, male, 19-29 age category]

Respondents believe that becoming a member of NATO would be very helpful for Georgia. They named safety of the country as a primary benefit, and in case of achieving this and decreasing the risk of Russian aggression, Georgia would have more opportunities to develop in every direction. However, it is noteworthy that study respondents expressed nihilistic attitudes towards the military alliance and the accession process. Despite Georgia's clearly distinguished desire and foreign policy course chosen by the country, Georgia has been trying to become a NATO member for years, but seemingly in vain.

I think that they should start discussing this issue when we will really be able to get accepted. There's no point speaking about this now, we won't be accepted for 10, 15 years. [Tbilisi, male, 19-29 age category]

I believe that it will be 99% useful for Georgia, but none of the European countries will cause any problem for their countries to fully protect us, I believe in this 1000%. [Samegrelo/Zemo Svaneti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

Figure # 4.5 – Disadvantages of Accession to NATO



Ninety-two percent of respondents inquired within the scope of the quantitative survey believe that forging closer ties with NATO is not desirable for Georgia, as it will escalate the conflict with Russia. The second most important reason why Georgian young people do not approve of Georgia’s accession to NATO is that the number of Georgian soldiers lost in NATO military missions will potentially increase (85%).

It is worth mentioning that Georgia is still actively engaged in NATO international missions, and as it turned out, young people have a negative attitude towards this. The main reason for disappointment is that the alliance does not take any realistic steps to accept Georgia as a member. Respondents have a feeling that the accession process has been prolonged and promises made by the organization about accepting the country as a member deserve less trust now. Respectively, Georgian soldiers die in NATO missions for no reason and despite this loss, NATO still cannot ensure the safety of Georgia.

When a country risks so much and fights, they should appreciate this and accept it as a member without delay. [Kakheti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

Our population will get even smaller. We are already small, and we will become even smaller if we let more of our troops go to Afghanistan. [Tbilisi, male, 14-18 age category]

Seventy-four percent of inquired young people think that the loss of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions for good is an undesirable result of NATO integration. This part of youth believes that if the county will not recognize the loss of conflict regions for good, NATO will always refuse a country with similar problems and accordingly, this perspective is too vague. Another significant reason named by the respondents was an increased threat from radical Islamic groups (71%).

In addition, as believed by 65% of young people living in different cities of Georgia, Georgia's integration with NATO will cause a loss of independence for the country. Among respondents living in villages, 59% name the same reason, while in Tbilisi, only 32% anticipate the threat of losing independence.

Similar to the discussion of Georgia-EU relations, many respondents believe that the accession to NATO will cause a loss of Georgian values (67%). This threat is the least anticipated by young residents of Tbilisi (50%), while 70% of young people inquired in different cities and villages believe that a loss of Georgian values is an undesirable result of the process.

Discussion

Even though a majority of Georgian youth supports accession to the EU as well as NATO, both are associated with similar threats towards Georgia. Membership/Association with the EU and NATO is directly linked to escalated Russian aggression and lessens the chances of returning the lost Georgian territories. Getting closer to the EU will facilitate the process of outmigration, and membership in NATO will increase the number of Georgian troops in its missions, resulting in larger casualties. Both of the above reasons are connected to demographic conditions in the country. There is a feeling of insecurity among youth as well. The risk of aggression from their neighbor is very real and tangible. The feeling of insecurity is aggravated by the issue of Great Britain leaving the EU. These factors make young people think that the EU has been weakened and in case of possible threats, Western partners will not be able to protect Georgia. In addition, there is a widespread view among young people that the Russian market is the largest and most convenient market for exporting Georgian goods. Strict regulations set by the EU, high standards, and food quality control will complicate the process of selling Georgian products.

All of these reasons are perceived to be negative consequences of accession to the EU and NATO, and are materialist explanations of the country's foreign policy. It should be mentioned, though, that the neorealist approach of small countries appealing to larger ones threatening their wellbeing fails to explain Georgia's case, since the country has been striving for European values neglecting its economic, energy, and other large fields of dependence. The reason for such striving must lie somewhere more deep than materialist reasons. According to Kakachia and Minesashvili, Georgian politicians underline two major "Georgian values" that unite them with democratic western civilization. These values are individualism and a love of freedom. In a certain way, it can be assumed that pro-western vector of Georgia is a path that elite of the country, i.e. people with foreign higher education and politicians chose for themselves, since, part of youth believes that EU accession can be associated with losing values and traditions. Fear of assimilation with EU meaning to accept issues contradictory to Georgian culture can be observed in rural areas more than in urban. The discrepancy between rural and urban areas can be related to higher attachment to culture forbidding to doubt the rightness of it.

Concerns and Aspirations

Introduction

According to Horbal, “well-being” in a wide sense is considered to be a multicomponent construct of cultural, social, psychological, physical, economical, and spiritual factors. Objective indicators of well-being (health, financial state, success etc.), however, only indirectly influence the experience of well-being. It is more importantly defined by a person’s attitudes to oneself, to the world in general, and to the world’s different spheres (Horbal, 2012).

Even though objective indicators indirectly influence well-being, subjective well-being is largely defined by context. According to the ‘Life in Transition’ survey, life satisfaction in most transition countries, including Georgia, remains noticeably lower than in western European countries. Higher levels of life satisfaction are associated with employment, higher education and good health, as well as with income and economic growth (EBRD, 2010).

A critical socio-economic situation and high unemployment rates in Georgia have resulted in high migration rates. The dissolution of the Soviet Union marks the point after which Georgia gradually started to become part of a global migratory system. During the last two decades, the character, amplitude, and directions of emigration from Georgia have changed significantly (State Commission of Migration Issues, 2015). The charts below illustrate the dynamics of emigration from 2012 to 2015, as well as the distribution of the age among emigrants in 2015. The number of the emigrated population has risen from 90584 to 95965 since 2012. Among the emigrated population in 2015, similar to the previous year, the category of people aged 15-29 is the largest group, followed by those in the 30-44 age category (Geostat, 2012-2015).

Figure # 5.1 Emigration in 2012-2015

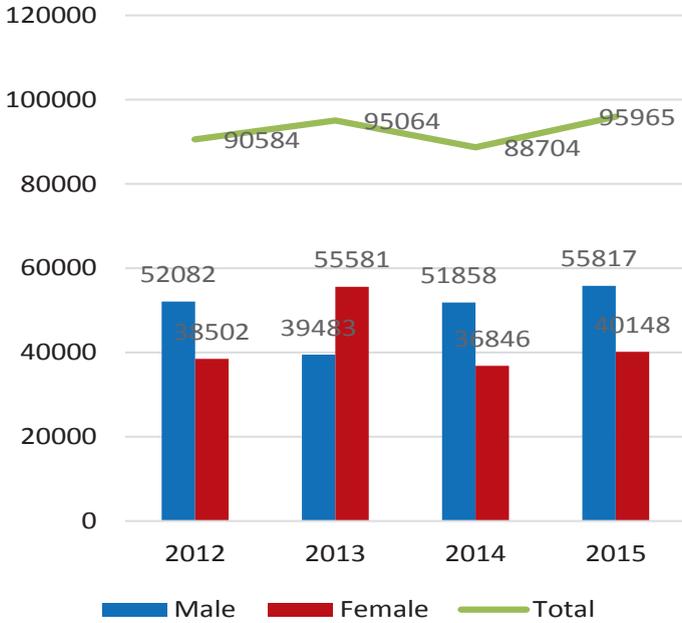
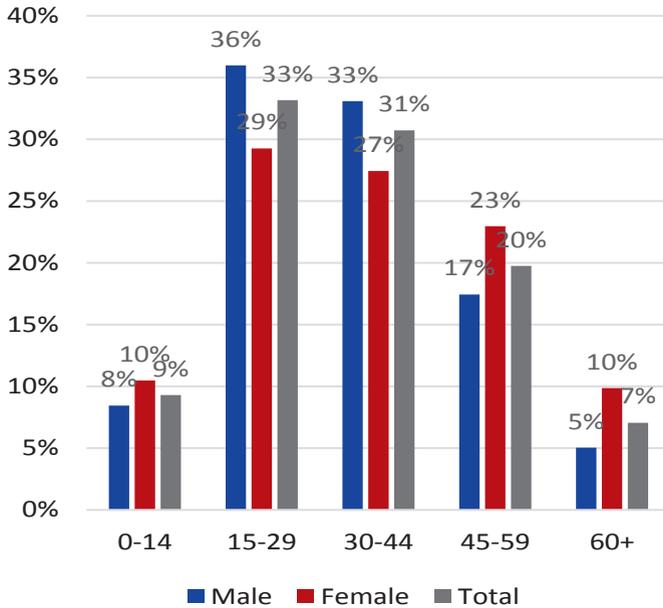


Figure # 5.2 Emigration in 2015 by Age groups



Even though, according to Chelidze, youth labor emigration can be considered to be a positive phenomenon if it is of a short term, returnable nature and takes place in a legal way. It should be considered that in the case of non-returning youth, the country experiences direct economic and demographic losses that results in the fall of labor potential (Chelidze, 2005).

Besides emigration, Georgia is attractive to foreign nationals as well. From 2005 to 2013, about 53,000 foreign nationals were granted Georgian citizenship, and from 2005 to 2013, about 40,000 residence permits – both permanent and temporary – were issued (ICMPD, 2015). These numbers illustrate the share of foreigners in Georgia over the last decade, although it should be mentioned that Georgia historically has been a home for representatives of various ethnicities, religions, and affiliations.

According to the 'Life in Transition' survey, people in transitional countries including Georgia generally claim not to object to having those of a different religion as neighbors, although the results are rather different when it comes to stated attitudes towards people of different races and immigrants. Intolerance towards certain minority groups can be the basis for discrimination allegedly leading to lower subjective well-being and lower life satisfaction.

This study examined several aspects of the lives of youth contributing to subjective well-being and directly linked to satisfaction with life. Migration and emigration plans, as well as discrimination experiences might contribute to general satisfaction with life, i.e. problems of the country might result in migration and emigration, whereas negative or positive discrimination experiences can affect the subjective well-being of a youngster.

Main Findings

- Young people express the highest level of satisfaction with family life (79%);
- Satisfaction with personal/intimate relations and occupation are experienced at a similar rate by about 60% of the young population;
- Fifty-six percent of youth proves to have a strong national belonging;
- Ninety-five percent of young people think that in the next 10 years, the situation will become better in Georgia;
- Fifty-nine percent of youth state that they have no desire to move out of the country;
- Twenty-one percent of youngsters say that they have very strong desire to migrate;
- Motivating factors to migrate include a better standard of life (38%) and better education opportunities (17%);
- Thirty-one percent of young people express a desire to move to another place in Georgia, mostly for educational purposes;
- About nine out of ten young participants claim to have never been discriminated against based on religion, ethnicity, gender, political party affiliation, regional origin, country origin, or membership in a minority group;
- Discrimination on the basis of educational level and economic background has been experienced by 24% and 31% of youth respectively.

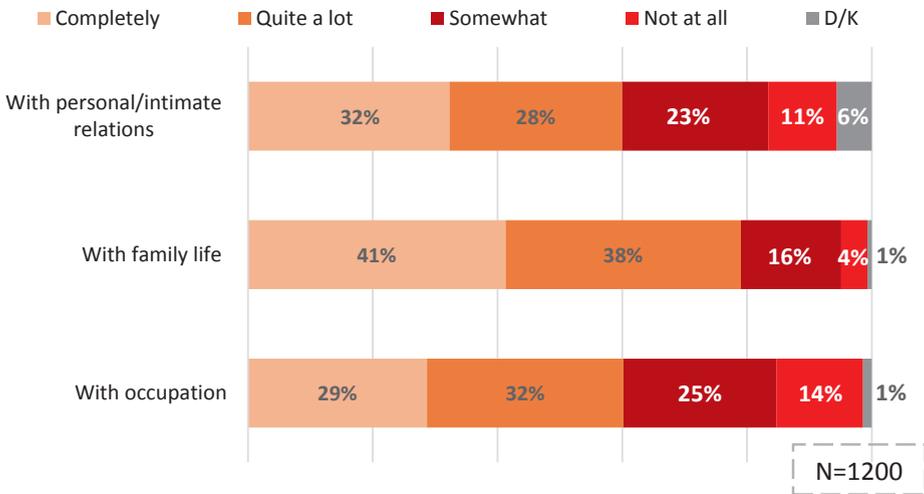
Analysis

Satisfaction with Life

To examine satisfaction with life, Georgian youth were asked to evaluate their satisfaction with three aspects of life: personal/intimate relations, family life, and occupation.

The research determined that young people express the highest level of satisfaction with family life – nearly four fifths of this segment claims to be quite happy or completely happy with their family life. Satisfaction with personal/intimate relations and occupation are experienced at a similar rate by about 60% of the young population.

Figure # 5.3 – Satisfaction with life



The research also shows that young people living in urban areas outside of the capital tend to be more satisfied with all three aspects of life than the residents of Tbilisi and rural settlements. Being from an upper social class also contributes to a higher degree of life satisfaction, as upper class participants claimed higher satisfaction with their family life and current occupation.

Satisfaction with occupation is particularly common among women, youth aged 14-18, people still pursuing education, and employed participants.

Notably, satisfaction with personal/intimate relations is most common in the oldest age group, respondents aged 25-29 years.

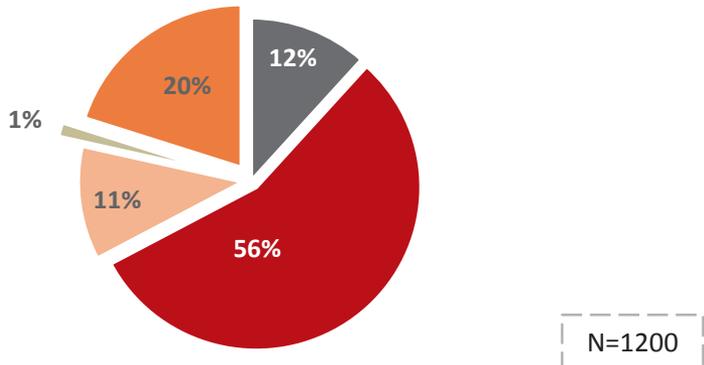
Individual vs. Collective Self-Perception

To understand how the Georgian youth perceive themselves, respondents were asked to pick one statement characterizing their being - do they perceive themselves as an autonomous individual, part of their neighbourhood, part of their town/village, part of the Georgian Nation, or as a world citizen?

National belonging proved to be a critical aspect that attracted more than half of the participant pool. Additionally, every fifth Georgian considers himself an autonomous individual, followed by 12% referring to him/herself as a world citizen and 11% having the strongest identity as a member of their respective town/village.

Figure # 5.4 – Attitudes towards the world

- world citizen
- part of the Georgian Nation
- part of my town/village
- part of my neighbourhood
- an autonomous individual



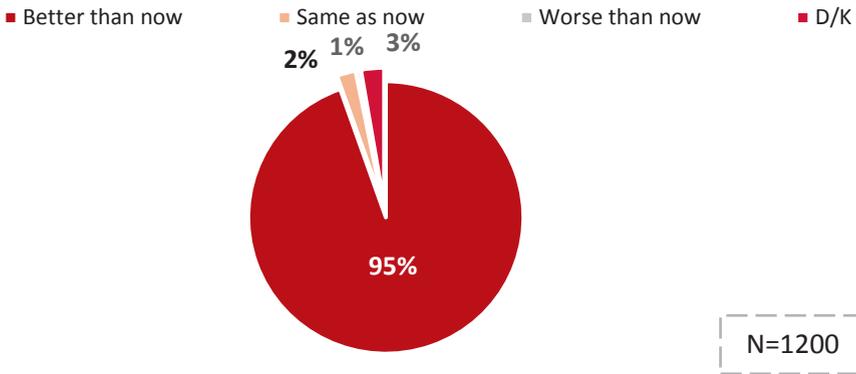
Interestingly, self-perception as an autonomous individual and a world citizen is most common among employed participants and residents of Tbilisi, as well as youngsters from the middle and upper social classes. Additionally, students still pursuing undergraduate degrees are most likely to feel independent and call themselves autonomous individuals.

Stronger identification with their town/village is mostly felt by representatives of lower social classes, those living in rural areas, and currently unemployed participants.

Aspirations to Migrate

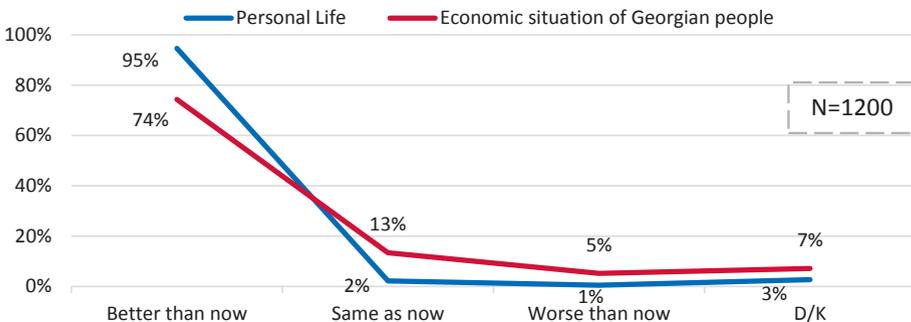
A majority of young people in Georgia express high optimism in terms of future expectations, as 95% of them think that in the next 10 years, the situation in the country will improve. It's noteworthy that no differences are observed by age group, gender, or social status.

Figure # 5.5 – Future in 10 years



A comparison of expectations in terms of personal and social future shows important differences. Although 74% of young people are optimistic in terms of social life, and they expect that the economic situation of Georgian people will improve over the next 10 years, social optimism is still lower when compared to personal life expectations.

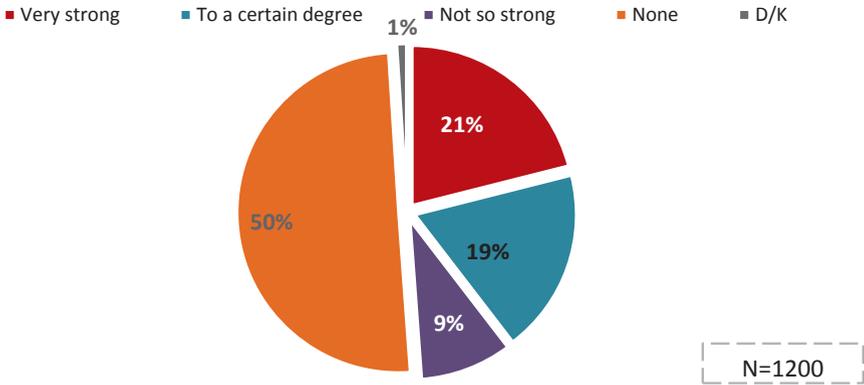
Figure # 5.6 - The comparison of projections of personal and social future



Migration is an important issue in Georgia, and especially the migration of young people. Even though a majority of young people support the integration of the country into the Euro-Atlantic space, open borders and visa free travel

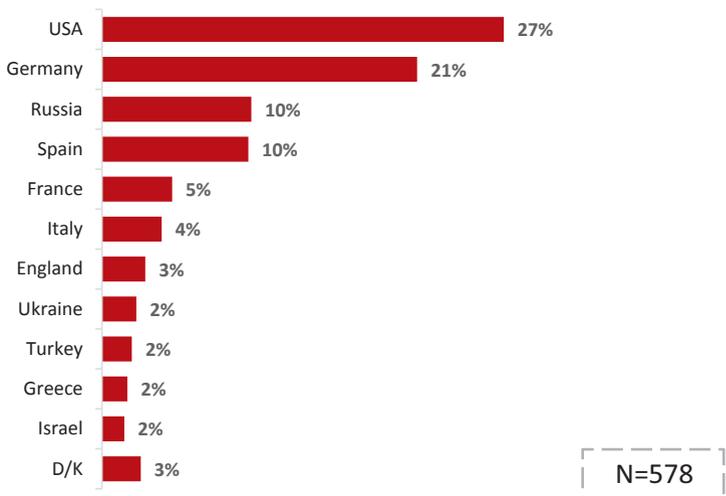
possibilities are considered to be one of the most important threats, as this will increase migration rates. In this light, the results of the study show a significant desire among young people to emigrate. In general, every second respondent (59%) states that they have no desire to move out of the country. Every fifth (21%) respondent says that they have a very strong desire to migrate, and almost the same number (19%) wants to move out of Georgia to certain degree. It is noteworthy that the share of those who don't want to emigrate is higher among older respondents, and especially among villagers.

Figure # 5.7 – Desire to migrate



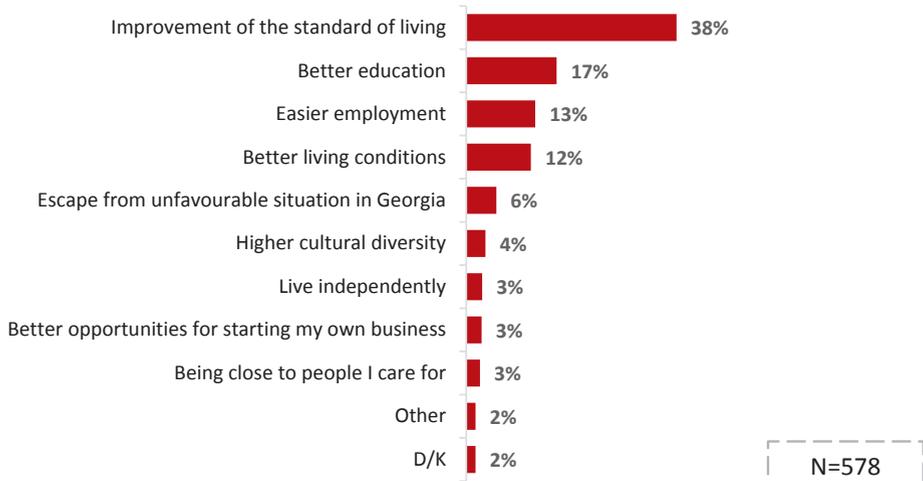
USA and Germany are among the most desired destinations (USA – 27%, Germany – 21%) among those willing to move out of the country.

Figure # 5.8 – Preferred countries for emigration



As for the motivating factors for migration, a better living standard (38%) is a leading factor, followed by better educational opportunities (17%). It is interesting that a large majority (72%) of those who are willing to migrate does literally nothing to make it happen, and just a small part (14%) is learning a foreign language.

Figure # 5.9 – Main reason for emigration



Together with national migration, this study focused on spatial mobility issues within the country. Inner spatial mobility is quite common in Georgia. A majority of young people move to the larger cities, and especially to the capital from small towns and villages, in order to get education. Although official data is not available in this regard, the number of those who return to their small towns and villages is much lower. Together with education, labor migration is also an important factor that attracts more and more of the workforce to Tbilisi. About one-third (31%) of young people expressed a desire to move to another place in Georgia. Considering that one of the main factors in terms of inner mobility is educational opportunity, mostly residents of the regions and especially villagers aged 14-18 expressed a willingness to migrate. In general, a better living standard is the most frequently named reason for young people to relocate.

Figure # 5.10 – Spatial migration intentions

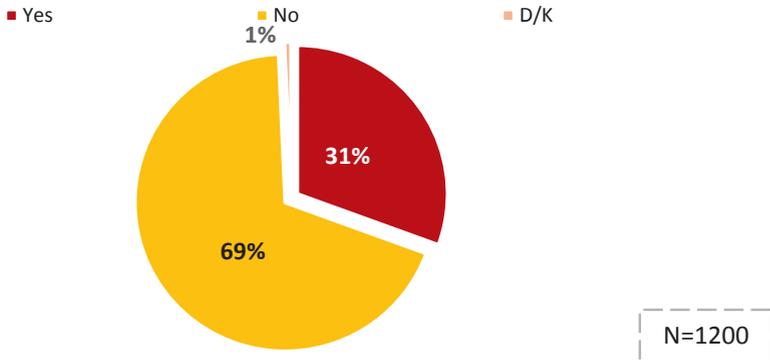
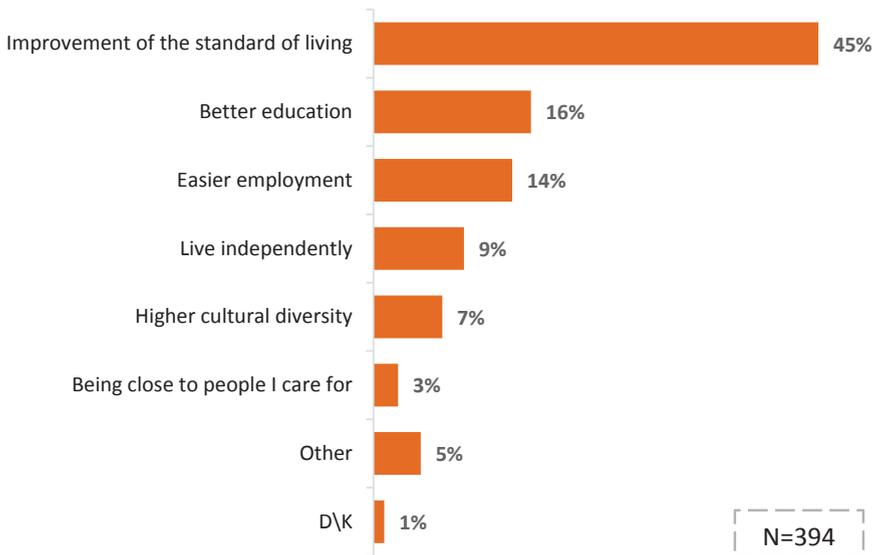


Figure # 5.11 - Main reason for spatial migration



The Experience of Discrimination

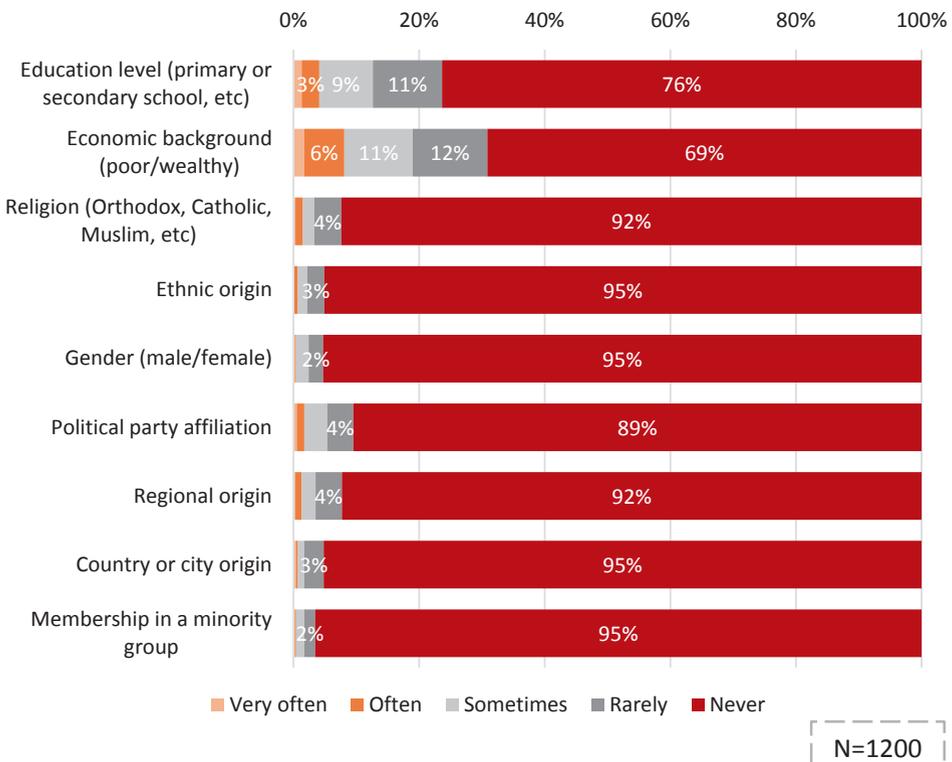
Georgian youth was asked to recall cases and frequency of discrimination on the grounds of certain parameters. Parameters tested in the survey included the following: education level, economic background, religion, ethnic origin, gender, political party affiliation, regional origin, country of origin, and membership in a minority group.

The research revealed that the discrimination level for most parameters is quite

low in the country. About nine out of ten young participants claimed to have never been discriminated against based on religion, ethnicity, gender, political party affiliation, regional origin, country origin, or membership in a minority group. As expected, participants who claimed to have been discriminated against based on their gender were mostly women.

However, discrimination on the basis of education level and economic background has been experienced by a somewhat notable share of the target segment (24% and 31%, respectively). Most notably, about eight percent of participants declared that they have been discriminated against due to their economic background often or very often. It is also noteworthy that compared to their fellows living in Tbilisi and other urban settlements, residents of rural areas are least likely to be discriminated against based on their economic and educational status.

Figure # 5.12 – Discrimination experience



Discussion

According to the 'Transition in Life' survey, there is an interesting link between life satisfaction and optimism; within the transition region, people in happier countries are more likely to believe that their children will do better than their own generation (EBRD, 2010). Georgia's indicator for life satisfaction has raised slightly between 2006 and 2010, however, satisfied people only tend to be one-fourth of the population (Ibid). According to our survey, youth turned out to be largely satisfied with different aspects of life, and an even higher share of youth expressed optimism for the future. It can be arguable, however, whether a better life in future is associated with living in Georgia or not, since one-fifth of respondents have a strong desire to emigrate, largely driven by problems related to living conditions, education and employment. Improving living conditions, have better accessibility to education and employment are also among the main reasons for spatial mobility. It should be mentioned that share of those youngsters who would like to have more freedom and independence is higher when speaking of migration within Georgia, although at the end it can be assumed that emigration and internal migration are both driven by materialistic reasons, rather than other motivations.

Interestingly, economic conditions, more likely being financially unprivileged also turned out to be the basis for discrimination, while almost no cases of discrimination were recorded in terms of other parameters such as religion, ethnicity, gender, etc. It is worth noting that even though discrimination based on gender differences is quite prevalent in Georgia, only small share of young people state that they have experienced gender discrimination. Previous surveys suggest that traditional views on the gender roles are quite strong: as woman's main function is considered to take care of and raise children and take care of the household – in other words household chores; while a man's function is to support the family financially (UNDP, 2013). Prevalence of such gender stereotypes and the low level of awareness of gender discrimination can explain youth survey results – young people might not be aware that circumstances they face in their everyday life is actually gender discrimination.

Alongside to the discrimination on basis on economic conditions, educational level, most likely low educational achievement was named as the basis for discrimination. Remarkably, the same reason, in particular better educational opportunities were named as one of the reasons for migration. It can be assumed that the main problems youth face currently can be narrowed to two main fields – favorable financial conditions and accessibility to better education. These two main fields are interrelated since better education opportunities could possibly result in better employment, whereas employment is associated with financial stability and chances to improve living conditions.

Identity, Values, and Religion

Introduction

Values, attitudes and beliefs are major predicates of human behaviour. On one hand, the worldview and value-orientation of persons determine their behaviour in society. On the other hand, social environment plays an important role in shaping values, attitudes and beliefs of individuals in society. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that values can shift over time in response to changes in the social environment.

The global map of values (Welzel-Inglehart's Cultural Map) divides different societies according to two broad value - dimensions: a first dimension of "*traditional vs. secular-rational values*", and a second dimension of "*survival vs. self-expression values*" (Inglehart, Welzel, 2005). Changes in social and political environment have been proven to cause shifts between these two dimensions over time in different societies.

Regarding the first dimension, traditional values emphasize the importance of religion, national pride, respect for authority, obedience, marriage, parent-child ties, and traditional family values. People who embrace these values reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. Secular-rational values have opposite preferences than traditional values. These societies place less emphasis on religion, traditional family values and authority. Divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are seen as relatively acceptable.

Regarding the second dimension, survival values involve a priority of economic and physical security over liberty, non-acceptance of homosexuality, abstinence from political action, low levels of trust (distrust of outsiders), and tolerance. These values are linked with a relatively ethnocentric outlook. Self-expression values imply the opposite on all of these accounts. Self-expression values give high priority to environmental protection, growing tolerance of foreigners, homosexuals and gender equality, and rising demands for participation in decision-making in economic and political life (Inglehart, Welzel, 2016).

The prevalence of particular values associated with one or the other dimension described above is closely related to such concepts as trust, social capital, solidarity, and social integration.

One of the most popular notions of social capital was identified by Putnam (1993), who defines social capital as the features of social organisation, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate co-ordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. A community or neighbourhood described as being rich in social capital can be described as a socially cohesive and co-operative community in which people's behaviour is directed towards mutual benefit (Boneham and Sixsmith, 2003). As such, social capital has been seen as: ...both a glue that bonds society together and a lubricant that permits the smooth running of society's interactions (both interpersonal and among people, groups, and organisations) (Smith, 1997, page 170 in Boneham and Sixsmith, 2003). A society rich in social capital is characterized with high solidarity, high trust in people and institutions, and a higher predictability of social life. High social capital is associated more with universal values, acceptance of diversity, and equality.

On the contrary, a community poor in social capital might be described as one in which people are more socially isolated, distrustful of others and reluctant to participate in social, economic, and political life (Boneham and Sixsmith, 2003). Low social capital is associated with low solidarity as well as solidarity based on kinship and nepotism, a low level of trust in people and institutions, as well as a low predictability of institutions. Less universal values are prevalent and there is more room for favouritism of particular groups, i.e. particularistic values.

The notion of social capital and interpersonal trust is related to the concept of social distance, which expresses the level of tolerance towards other social groups. Existing studies on intergroup evaluations typically find in-group favouritism: the in-group, towards which social distance is smaller, is evaluated more positively than the out-group, towards which social distance is larger (Verkuyten, Kinket, 2000). A small social distance can be considered as a fertile ground for the development of mutual trust, social cohesion, and cooperation, whereas a large social distance indicates a lower level of tolerance and is connected with distrust and a lack of cooperation in society.

The youth survey explored the values, attitudes and beliefs of young people in Georgia and tried to grasp their worldview and value-orientation by inquiring about such concepts as participation, trust, social distance, religious beliefs, and various other topics that shed light on the values of youth in Georgia. This exploration enabled us to analyse the values of youth based on the value dimensions described above.

Main Findings

- Twenty-seven percent of young people in Georgia have participated in voluntary work over the last 12 months. The majority of Georgian youth (36%) participated in public works in their local communities.
- Georgian youth expressed the highest level of trust towards their immediate families (9.7 on a 10 point-scale), followed by friends (8.9), and relatives (8.4). The top three categories of people, towards which respondents expressed a high level of trust, are followed by religious leaders (7.6).
- A lower level of trust is expressed towards ethnic minorities (5.4), people with different political persuasions (5.2) and people of other religions (5.2).
- The least trust is expressed towards LGBT people (3.4). Interestingly, the average score for trust towards LGBT people is considerably higher among female respondents than among male respondents.
- The absolute majority of young people in Georgia identify themselves as belonging to some religious denomination. The vast majority declares to be Orthodox Christian (85%), followed by Muslim (10%).
- The majority of young people believe in the existence of God (97%) and in the creation of the world by God (91%).
- A large amount of young people in Georgia think that abortion should be completely banned by law (42%).

Twenty-three percent of young people have a negative attitude towards sexual abstinence, while a third of young people consider it to be a certain kind of virtue for both genders (33%) or for females (31%).

- The majority of inquired respondents (46%) express a negative attitude towards homosexuals. Only 16 percent of young people think that homosexuals are either completely or mostly acceptable.
- Among Georgian youth, the value-type Maker/Manager is most prevalent (39.5%). It is followed by Idealist (29.1%) and Materialist (23%). The smallest share of young people in Georgia correspond to the value-type Hesitant.

Analysis

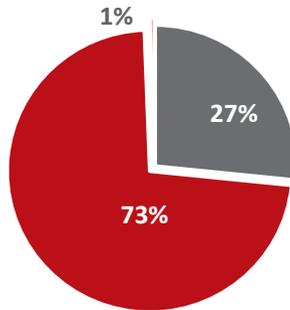
Participation

The role of participation in voluntary work is considered to be crucial for the development of social capital. The notion of volunteering may have strong links to social capital, with its integral emphasis on mutual co-operation, reciprocity, trust, and networking (Boneham and Sixsmith, 2003).

This study explored the degree and reasons for participation in various voluntary activities, i.e. activities performed voluntarily as unpaid work. As evident from the survey data, 27 percent of young people in Georgia have participated in voluntary work over the last 12 months.

Figure # 6.1. Engagement in Voluntary Work over the Last 12 Months

■ Yes ■ No ■ D/K

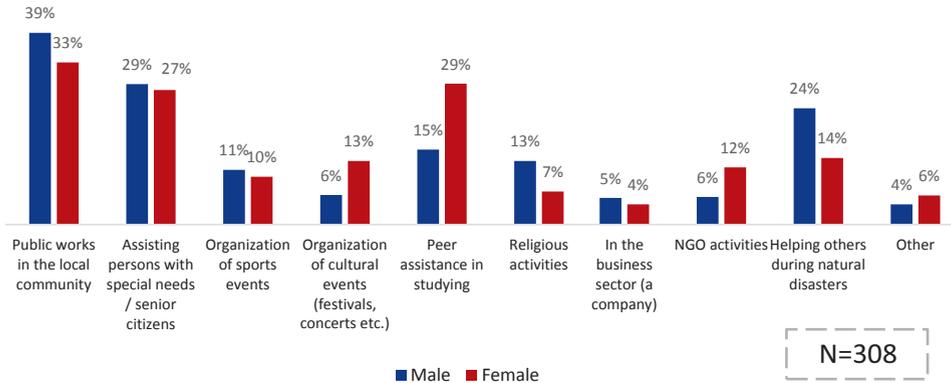


N=1200

A closer look at the types of voluntary activities reveals that the majority of Georgian youth participated in public works in their local communities (36%). Twenty-eight percent of respondents assisted seniors or persons with special needs. Approximately every fifth respondent assisted their peers in studying (21%). Nineteen percent of young people helped others during a natural disaster. The largest share of this latter voluntary activity is reported by residents of Tbilisi (38%). This fact can be explained by a natural disaster occurring in the capital. In particular, flooding of one of the districts of Tbilisi, including Tbilisi Zoo, in 2015, which evoked a considerably high level of solidarity and activism among Georgian youth residing in Tbilisi (the assistance of city government in cleaning flooded areas, fundraising activities for helping flood victims, etc.).

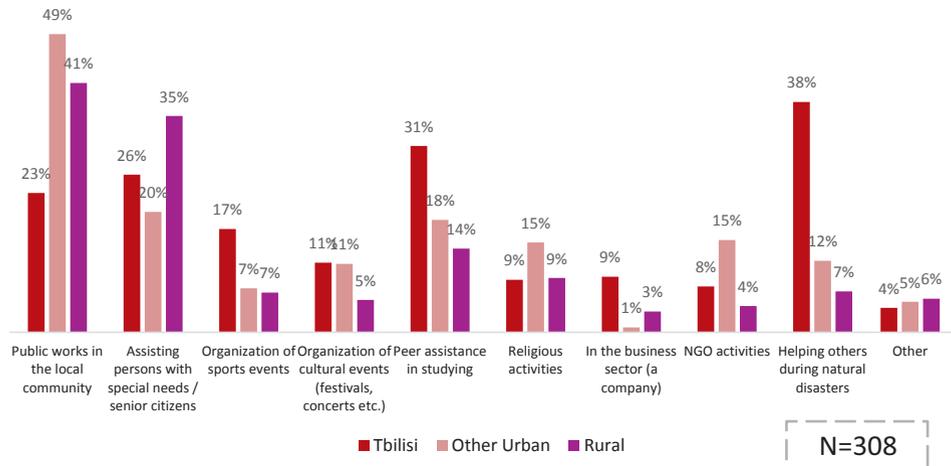
There are some differences in the voluntary activities performed by female and male youth. While a larger share of females report involvement in organizing cultural events (13%) and peer assistance in studying (29%), a larger number of males report involvement in such activities as helping others during natural disasters (24%) or public works in the local community (39%). The involvement of more males in the latter activities might be connected with more physical or manual work, which is considered more appropriate for males.

Figure # 6.2. The level of activity of young people according to gender



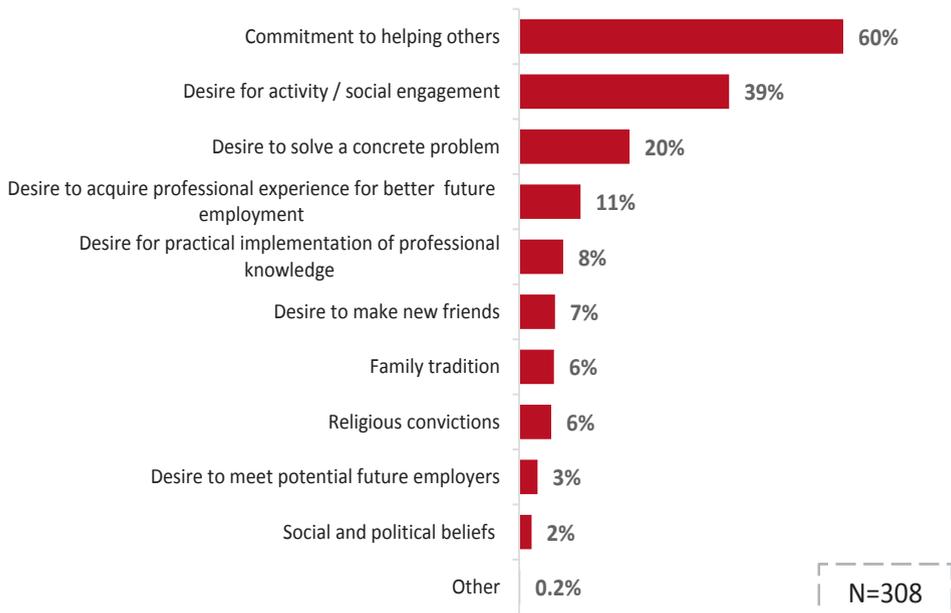
Public works in the local community are quite widespread among young residents of urban settlements of Georgia (49%). Assistance of persons with special needs is mostly reported by youth in rural areas (35%). Young people residing in Tbilisi are mostly assisting peers in studying (31%) and helping others during natural disasters (38%).

Figure # 6.3. Level of activity according to place of residence



This study inquired about the motivation of young people while performing various voluntary activities. The main reported motivator, which stands out among other reasons for volunteering, is a commitment to helping others – 60 percent of young people report this as a main reason for involvement in voluntary activities. Also, a considerable amount of youth state a desire for social engagement (39%) as a reason. The third motivator named by every fifth respondent of the survey (20%) was a desire to solve a concrete problem.

Figure # 6.4. Reasons young people engage in volunteer activities



Trust

Mutual trust, together with widespread solidarity and tolerance, is one of the distinctive features of civic commitment (Putnam 1993 in Bagnasco, 2004). For the purpose of studying the level of trust existing among Georgian youth, this survey inquired about trust towards various social groups.

As survey results suggest, Georgian youth expressed the highest level of trust towards their immediate families. Interestingly, the level of trust towards friends is higher than the average score of trust towards the wider network of relatives.

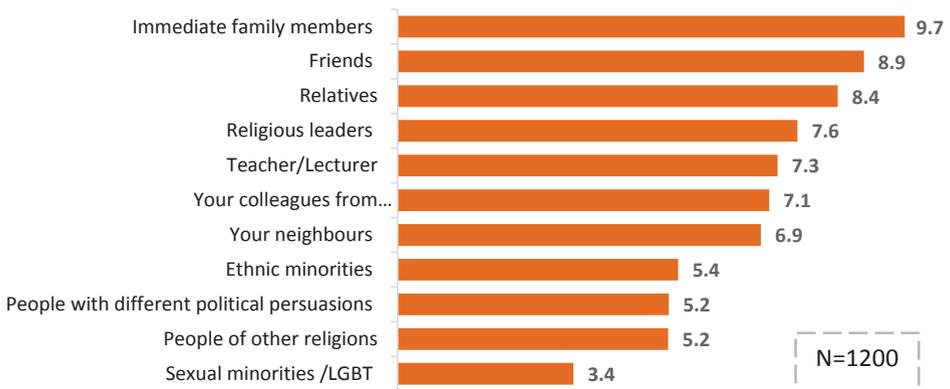
The top three categories of people, towards which respondents expressed a high level of trust, is followed by religious leaders. Naturally, the trust levels of

respondents who identify themselves as religious and go to liturgy regularly or often are higher (average score- 8.3) when compared to respondents that attend church services sometimes or never (average score - 7.3). As evident, however, youth not actively attending religious services still express a high level of trust towards religious leaders.

A lower level of trust is expressed towards groups of people who are considered to differ from the inquired groups by some particular characteristic (ethnicity, religious affiliation or political views). These groups are ethnic minorities, people with different political persuasions and people of other religions.

The least amount of trust is given to LGBT people. This is the only result that is below the level of distrust (a score of five indicates the centre). Interestingly, the average score for trust towards LGBT people is considerably higher among female respondents (average score – 3.8) than among male respondents (average score – 2.9).

Figure # 6.5. The level of trust in various people (average score)



Distrust and Social Distance

The notion of trust discussed above can be related to the concept of social distance, which expresses the level of tolerance towards other social groups. As a measure of social distance, survey respondents answered a question about different social groups or individuals as desired or undesired neighbours.

According to the survey results, the least social distance is felt towards students. Seventy-eight percent of respondents expressed a positive attitude towards groups of Georgian students, while 76 percent are happy to have foreign students as neighbours. This finding complies with the notion of in-group favouritism, since

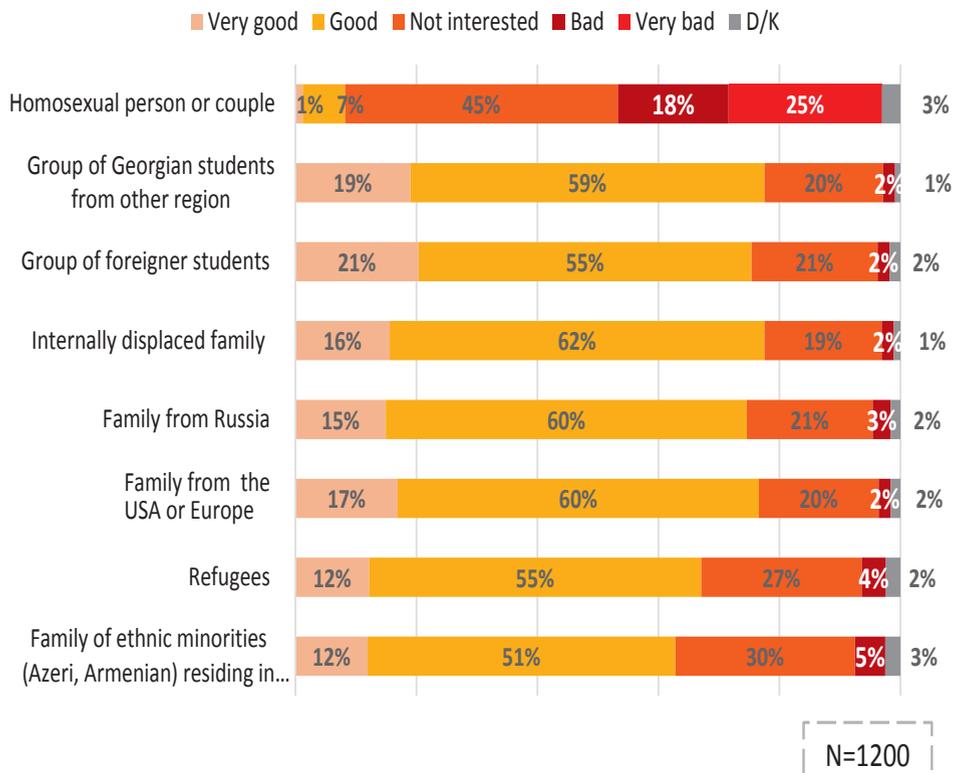
the youth feel less social distance towards groups most similar to them in terms of age and lifestyle.

Attitudes towards a family from Europe or USA (would feel very good- 17%) and a family from Russia (would feel very good – 15%) are only slightly different, and in favour of the European/American family.

Groups such as refugees from other countries and families of ethnic minorities (Azeri, Armenian) are groups towards which some social distance is felt. A comparatively lower number of youngsters express a positive attitude towards these potential neighbours (67% for refugees and 63% for families of ethnic minorities).

A significant amount of social distance is evident in the case of homosexuals – 44 percent of respondents state that they would not be happy if a homosexual person or couple moved into their neighbourhood. However, it is worth mentioning that the share of respondents stating that they would not care is also quite high (45% - not interested).

Figure # 6.6. The level of distance felt toward various groups of people



The social distance felt towards homosexuals differs significantly by socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Interestingly, a negative attitude towards potential homosexual neighbours increases with age. While 39 percent of the respondents in the 14-18 age group state that they would feel either bad or very bad if a homosexual person or couple moved to their neighbourhood, the same attitude is present among 41 percent of respondents in the 19-24 age group, and 51 percent in the 25-29 age group. A considerable difference is also present while looking at differences by the gender of the respondent: while 36 percent of females would not be happy if a homosexual couple moved into their neighbourhood, the share of male respondents with the same attitude is significantly larger (51 percent). A difference is also evident while comparing the capital, other urban, and rural areas. A larger social distance is prevalent in rural areas than in the capital and other urban settlements. While 28 percent of Tbilisi residents express reservations towards homosexuals moving into their neighbourhood, the share of respondents sharing the same opinion is 41 percent in other urban areas and 59 percent in rural settlements. Interestingly, in the capital, the share of respondents with neutral or “not interested” responses is considerably higher (Tbilisi – 61%, Other urban – 45%, Rural – 32%).

Social distance towards LGBT people is higher in the case of respondents who identify themselves as religious and go to liturgy regularly or often, than those who go to church services sometimes or never. Interestingly, the opinions of less religious youth are in all cases more neutral. In every category, a larger share of less religious young people provided the answer “not interested”.

Attitudes towards ethnic minorities do not largely differ by the gender or age of the respondents. Notably, the place of residence turns out to have a slight impact on social distance towards ethnic minorities. While in Tbilisi, the share of young people providing negative answers (“bad” and “very bad”) is three percent, in other urban areas the share is five percent, and in rural areas the share is eight percent.

Figure # 6.7. The level of distance felt towards various groups of people

	RELIGIOUS				LESS RELIGIOUS			
	Very good + Good	Not Interested	Very Bad + Bad	DK	Very good + Good	Not Interested	Very Bad + Bad	DK
Homosexual person or couple	6%	41%	50%	4%	9%	47%	41%	3%
Group of Georgian students from other region	80%	16%	2%	2%	77%	21%	1%	0%
Group of foreigner students	79%	16%	2%	3%	74%	24%	1%	1%
Internally displaced family	83%	13%	2%	3%	75%	23%	2%	0%
Family from Russia	81%	15%	2%	3%	72%	24%	2%	1%
Family from the USA / Europe	82%	13%	2%	2%	74%	23%	2%	1%
Refugees	73%	19%	4%	4%	64%	30%	4%	2%
Family of ethnic minorities residing in Georgia	67%	25%	5%	3%	61%	32%	5%	2%

N=1200

The narratives of young people reveal the existing social distance towards religious, ethnic and sexual minorities. Whereas some focus group discussion (FGD) participants express high levels of tolerance towards various minority groups, there are young people who explicitly state negative attitudes. In addition, despite their own preferences, almost all qualitative study participants agree that the social distance towards the abovementioned groups does exist to some extent among youth in Georgia.

Young people speak about tolerance among Georgian citizens towards various

ethnic minorities, such as Jews, Armenians, Azeris, etc. The coexistence of ethnically Georgian people with various ethnic minorities in Georgia throughout history is named as evidence of this tolerance. However, the narratives of young people reveal the existence of some degree of discrimination of various ethnic minorities, e.g. Armenians. Whereas young people state that acute aggression towards ethnic minorities does not exist, more hidden forms of discrimination, e.g. exclusion, avoidance of friendship, mockery, and other similar forms of unjust treatment are present. In the case of Armenians living in Georgia, young people mention that calling someone “Armenian” has a negative connotation.

Jews live together with us already for a long time, nobody has disturbed them or oppressed them. The same applies to Armenians. [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

I have heard often personal insults, like calling someone “Armenian”. How is this tolerant?! [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

Yes, some Georgians use the word “Armenian” sarcastically: Like, “you Armenian!” [Samtshke-Javakheti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

When it comes to religious minorities, diverse opinions are also reflected in the narratives of FGD participants. In some cases, social distance between youth of different religions is not present, and young people express high levels of tolerance towards religious minorities. Some young people refer to the lifelong tradition of Georgians to coexist peacefully with representatives of other religions.

Young people agree that social distance towards religious minorities exists, and to support this they speak about examples of the humiliation of religious minorities, e.g. Jehovah’s witnesses. The attempts of Jehovah’s witnesses to convert people to their religious views is reported to be met with acute aggression, such as throwing books at them.

In some instances, young people express negative attitudes towards people of different religions, with some young people naming proselytism as a reason for negative attitudes towards religious minorities. For instance, one FGD participant reported about an attempt of one of her peers to convert her to another belief, causing a very negative attitude.

It depends on young people. For instance, I have Muslim classmates and we are very good friends. Religion is not a constraint to our friendship. [...] Everyone has their own opinion and personal freedom, and it is up to him/her which religion to choose. [Kakheti, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

Near my living block there is a building of Jehova's witnesses. And when people go by, they mock them. [Shida Kartli, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

I do not have anything against them [religious minorities], [...] I just get aggressive when they knock on the door and ask me to talk about God. I do not go to them and force them to go to church, right?! [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

All qualitative study participants agree that least tolerant attitude among youth in Georgia is expressed towards LGBT people. FGD participants recall 17 May events in Tbilisi, a day in 2013 when an anti-homophobia demonstration organized by LGBT right activists was violently protested by groups of civilians. This event is recalled as clear evidence of the homophobic attitudes that exist in Georgia.

The attitudes of youngsters towards the LGBT community can be classified in three main categories:

- (1) Neutral attitude
- (2) Reserved attitude
- (3) Aggressive attitude

Young people in the first category (Neutral Attitude) do not have any negative feelings towards LGBT people, and do not mind being neighbours or friends with them. Some youth state that they have gay friends.

For me it is not a problem. I have such friends; Everyone has their own private life and they are as human as we are. [Kakheti, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

As long as s/he does not disturb me and does not come to my home, or is not too loud, I am fine with it. A neighbour is a neighbour and s/he is a human being as we are; for me it does not matter. May be I cannot become his/her friend, but I will have normal relationship and maybe will say to him or her a good hello as a neighbour. [Kakheti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

In my opinion it does not matter if a s/he will live next to you or in your city. If you comprehend that such people exist and they should exist, you should allow them to live as they wish; they might also live next to you, it does not matter. [Mtskheta Mtianeti, rural, male 14-29 age category]

Young people in the second category (Reserved Attitude) are against acute aggression towards LGBT people, however, are not hesitant to express unpleasant feelings towards them. In their opinion, LGBT people have a right to live their lives as they wish, but only in the privacy of their own homes. Any explicit statement of their sexual identity is evaluated very negatively and is considered as propaganda of the LGBT lifestyle. The narratives of young people reveal the main principle underlying low levels of tolerance and existent social distance. They speak about a fear of “other” and a fear of “different”. In most cases, young people are not able to name any particular argument in support of their fear and cannot explain exactly what are they afraid of. The most concrete argument named by some FGD participants is the fear of influence of LGBT propaganda on the young generation, and on their current or future children.

I would not throw him out of the house, but I would not have any communication. [Samegrelo- Zemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

It is bad for kids to see such things. Kids mimic everything that they see. [Kvemo Kartli, mixed settlement, male, 19-29 age category]

A couple of years ago, I took my cousin’s child for a walk, and we saw a gay couple kissing. I was very aggressive because I do not want my relative’s kid or my own kid to grow up in a society where a young kid can witness something like that and think that this is acceptable and not a shame. Maybe I talk very negatively, but... [Shida Kartli, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

If you are a homosexual, but are not showing it, it is fine. They should try to hide their homosexual life; this should not be obvious. I might be friends with a homosexual but he should not show it in public. [Shida Kartli, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

Young people in the third category (Aggressive attitude) explicitly express negative attitudes towards LGBT people. Some of them even tell stories of humiliating LGBT people. The extracts from FGD discussions shed light on opposing opinions existing among youth in Georgia.

FGD in Samtskhe-javakheti, Urban Area, 19-29 aged youth

Male: I can tell you an example. I came to Tbilisi and was in the subway. One guy entered. He was wearing leggings and had braids. There was no place and he stood near me. I told him not to stand near me. He asked why. I was furious. When the door opened, I pushed him out of the train. There was a policeman and he gave me a thumbs up. No one was pleased when he entered. [...] We have such traditions. Thank God he left.

Female: He is also a human.

Male: For me he is not.

Female: In this particular case may be you did not behave as a human, stop talking! May be he thinks you are not a human. I think we completely lost humanity and clear reasoning. [...] We are speaking about a human being, he is different from you, but he has the same right to live. If you do not like this, you can leave.

FGD in Kakheti Urban Area, 19-29 aged youth

Male: The more such people will exist freely, the more that the country has developed in terms of human rights protection. This is a criterion for me.

Female: Here we speak about Georgian mentality and Georgian values. I do not have children, but when I will have children, I would not feel happy if s/he has to watch gay people kiss. [...] For me it is unpleasant when they come out and impose their attitudes and lifestyle on us. They should stay in their frames. [...] Organizing parades is also imposing.

Male: Would it be pleasant to watch girl and boy kiss? Then we should prohibit heterosexualism as well.

Female: People of non-traditional orientations also existed in previous centuries. They exist currently, and will exist in the future. This is a natural thing. One can say that we, people with a traditional orientation, are imposing our orientation on others, because they were born this way.

The study also revealed diverse opinions about homosexuality. In the opinion of some youngsters, homosexuality is a disease or a mental disorder. This perception is sometimes used to “justify” LGBT groups, and other times it is used as a simple expression of a negative attitude.

Compared to previous generations we have changed, however, we still have negative feelings towards people of a different sexual orientation than ours. I do not consider them to be ill. [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, male 14-18 age category]

This is my subjective opinion, but I consider them as having a mental deviation. [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, male 14-18 age category]

Behaving aggressively is not right. In my opinion, they are ill. Excuse me but how can one live together with a person of the same sex?! This is a disease. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, female 19-29 age category]

An interesting trend emerged in the narratives of young people while they discussed various social groups as desired or undesired neighbours. Quite rarely, but still in some cases, FGD participants expressed positive attitudes towards minority groups. Some young people mentioned that it might be advantageous for them to be neighbours with people of other ethnicities because it might provide the possibility for cultural exchange and learning something new from a different culture. However, it is worth mentioning that this advantage is not put forward in the case of LGBT people.

Obviously, I will tend to connect more with people with whom I have more in common, but I like to communicate with different people because I learn a lot from them. [Mtskheta Mtianeti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

It would be interesting to have an ethnically different neighbour. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

I do not want my kids to witness any bad scenes. One can learn something from the Chinese, but what can one learn from them [homosexuals]?! [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

The study revealed some negative as well as positive stereotyping of LGBT groups. Some people associate them with the partying crowd, who will be unpleasant to have in the neighbourhood. Cases of positive stereotyping also exist: some people think that gay people are more reliable, trustworthy, artistic, and open-minded.

It is also worth mentioning that some FGD participants consider tolerance towards LGBT groups as an indicator of the freedom of society and a higher level of protection of human rights in the society.

In many cases sexual minorities are impolite and rude. They are very loud and love to attract attention. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

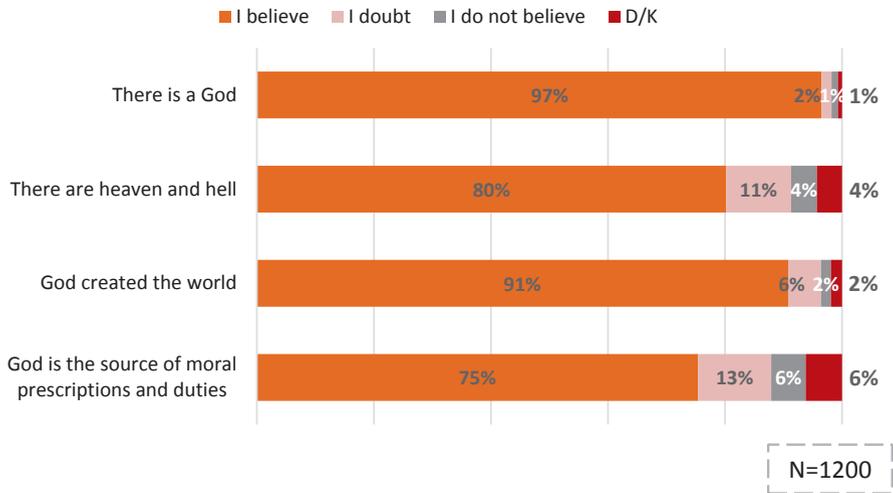
I would just collect signatures in the village and demand to displace them. They will throw parties at 3 am. [Kvemo Kartli, mixed settlement, male, 14-18 age category]

I would get to know him/her and in case s/he will be a nice person, we might become friends I think. Generally, gay people are more trustworthy. [Kakheti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

Young People and Religion

As survey results show, the absolute majority of young people in Georgia identify themselves as belonging to some religious denomination. The vast majority declares to be Orthodox Christian (85%), followed by Muslim (10%). A comparatively smaller share of respondents declare themselves to be Christian Apostolic (2%), Christian Catholic (1%), Atheist (1%) or other denomination (1%).

This study inquired about statements connected with basic religious teachings, such as the existence of God, the existence of heaven and hell, the creation of the world by God, and the perception of God as a source of moral prescriptions and duties. According to survey results, the absolute majority of young people believes in the existence of God (97%) and in the creation of the world by God (91%). Also, 80 percent of respondents believe in the existence of heaven and hell, while a comparatively smaller share believes in God as the source of moral norms and obligations (75%).

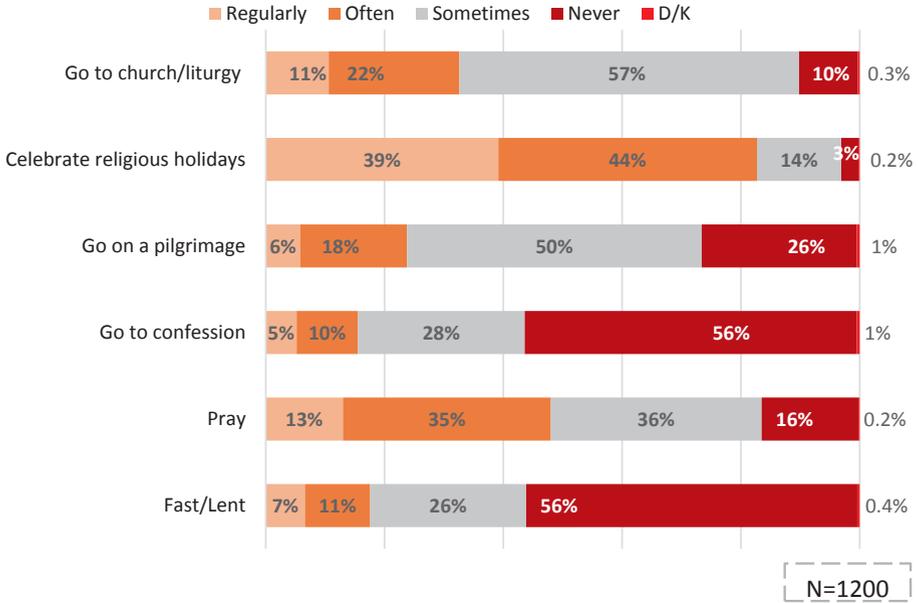
Figure # 6.8. Beliefs in religious truths

A closer look at beliefs in religious teachings by socio-demographic characteristics reveals that a slightly larger share of females tend to express their beliefs than males. While there is no difference between males and females regarding belief in the existence of God, more females than males believe in the existence of heaven and hell (78% males, 83% females). There is also a slight difference in belief related to the creation of the world by God – 92 percent of females state that they believe in this statement, whereas the share of males is 90 percent. As for place of residence, even though no major differences were identified, there is a slightly declining tendency in urban areas. In Tbilisi and other urban areas, more young people state that they do not believe in the existence of heaven and hell (6% and 5% correspondingly), while in rural areas the share is smaller (3%). Additionally, a larger amount of young people in rural areas believe in God as the source of moral prescriptions and duties (81%), when compared to young people in Tbilisi (66%) and other urban areas (80%). There are no major differences by the age categories of respondents.

As for religious practices among young people in Georgia, the celebration of religious holidays is the most common practice (regularly and often – 83%). This latter finding can be explained by the nationwide celebration of religious holidays and official public holidays during these periods. This notion can also be supported by the fact that some respondents who identify themselves as atheists state that they celebrate religious holidays.

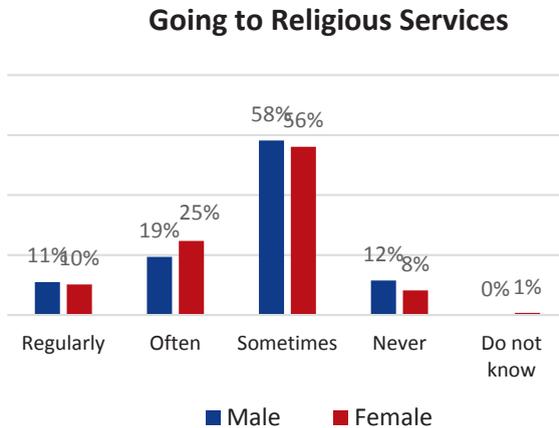
When it comes to other religious rituals, almost every second respondent states that they pray regularly or often (48%), while 33% of young people attend religious services regularly or often (33%). A lower amount of respondents report fasting (18%), while the least widespread religious practice is confession (16%).

Figure # 6.9. The religious practices of young people

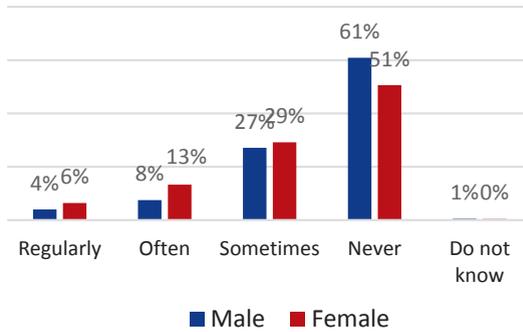


There are considerable differences in maintaining religious practices by gender. While there are no major differences in the case of celebrating religious holidays, when it comes to attending church services, going to confession, praying, or fasting, young females outnumber young males.

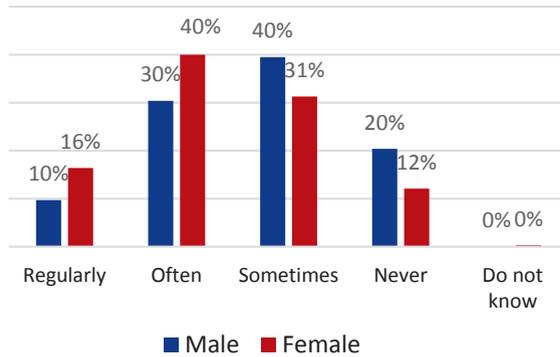
Figure # 6.10. Religious practices according to gender



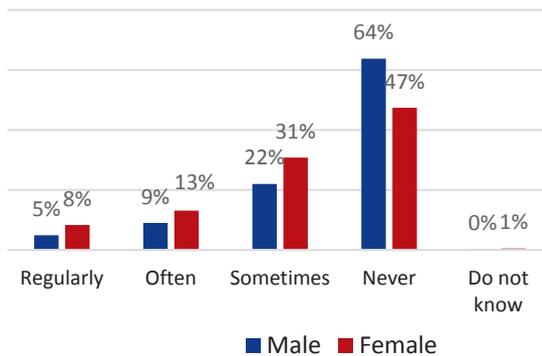
Going to Confession



Praying



Fasting / Lent



N=1200

The results of the qualitative study reveal different opinions regarding the prevalence of religiosity among youth in Georgia. Whereas some FGD participants note that going to church and being religious is trendy, some young people think that this trend was more prevalent five or six years ago, and that at the moment being an atheist is more fashionable. Some respondents connect the spread of atheism with moving to the capital, where in their opinion atheism is more widespread.

Some of my classmates are atheists. Atheism became fashionable. [...] If you start talking about religion, they start teasing you. They are not interested in your opinion or traditions, and it is difficult to communicate with them. They think that they are superior to us. We are considered to be dependent on someone since we are religious, and they feel that they are different. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

In my opinion, since they moved to the big city, there has been an impact. They followed the trend. I know lots of people in Tbilisi are atheists-this is fashionable. [Adjara/Guria, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

Based on the qualitative study results, two different categories of religiosity can be differentiated: Young people distinguish between (1) “believers” and (2) “religious people” / “church goers”. To the first category of people belong the youngsters, who have faith in God but are never or rarely involved in different religious rituals. “Religious people” / “church goers” are those who attend religious services, fast, have a personal priest, go to confession and follow other religious rituals on a more or less regular basis. In the case of Christianity and Islam, the same principle was applied by FGD participants while describing religious persons. Religious people were characterized as young people who follow the rules and norms defined by Islam, such as praying (“namaz”) fasting, going to the mosque, etc.

Religious people are people who goes to church on a regular basis, follow the existing rules, fast, etc. I cannot follow those-I just believe. [Tbilisi, male, 19-29 age category]

As research results suggest, apart from atheists, an additional category of young people called “church critics/opposers” emerged. These young people oppose not the Christian religion, but rather the Georgian Orthodox Church. They question and challenge the religious statements of some priests and express their opposing opinions. This group of youngsters state that some religious teachings are inappropriately understood by “church goers”, and in some cases they blame the Georgian Orthodox church for the prevalence of these inappropriate

interpretations. The narratives of FGD participants, while discussing the dichotomy of “believers” and “religious people” lead to the revelation of critical evaluations of some “church goers”. As some respondents suggest, going to the church and following religious rituals among a large portion of youth is a “meaningless” practice and is driven not by faith or honest religious beliefs, but rather by conformism. It is stated that going to church, fasting, and performing other religious rituals is considered fashionable, and therefore lots of young people are following without putting much meaning into their behaviours.

*One thing is what the bible states and another thing is what we are told to do.
[Tbilisi, male, 19-29 age category]*

I am an Orthodox Christian and I was interested in why smoking tobacco is a sin. I was told that during the crucifixion of Jesus, tobacco was the only plant which did not bow, and I could not understand that. [Tbilisi, male, 14-18 age category]

One has to fast, and some think that it only involves not eating meat. They do not get that religion is mostly about moral purity and moral education. They are very far from what religion is actually about. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

*They go to church, but I guess only two percent have actually read the Bible.
[Akhaltzikhe, mixed settlement, female, 19-29 age category]*

In my opinion, going to church is just trendy. [...] Fasting is also fashionable. I know lots of people who go to church, but they are not following main principles, such as being tolerant or compromising with others. They fast just in terms of not eating certain things, and they are not interested in anything but that. So, I think that only a very small percentage of them are really religious. [Kakheti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

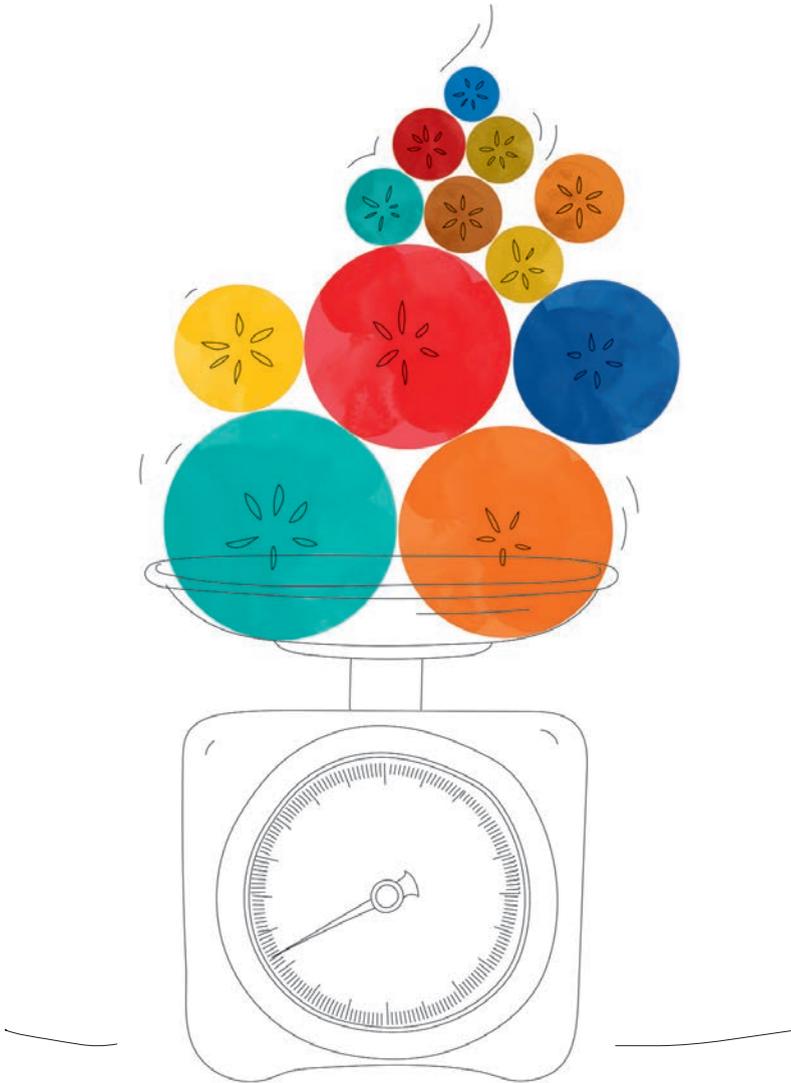
The Values of Young People

The values of young people were studied using various measures. Survey respondents were asked to evaluate (1) importance of different personality traits; (2) their attitudes towards various behaviours connected with sex and sexuality, such as abortion, sexual abstinence and gay people, and (3) various statements associated with different values. The value-typology of young people in Georgia was developed based on these evaluations.

Evaluation of Personality Traits

Young people were asked to evaluate different values based on their importance and value to them personally. As study results show, the choices of respondents present the combination of traditional and secular-rational values. Values such as personal dignity, faithfulness and decency/correctness were named by the majority of interviewed respondents. Values such as material wealth and social prestige were not named by many respondents as important personal traits, however, more secular-rational values, such as altruism, tolerance and innovativeness of spirit were named by a small number of respondents.

Figure # 6.11. Desired Personal Traits



71%	● Personal dignity	8%	● Tolerance
60%	● Faithfulness	8%	● Material wealth
56%	● Correctness / Decency / Integrity	7%	● Social prestige
36%	● Honesty	6%	● Altruism
22%	● Fighting spirit	4%	● Innovativeness of spirit
15%	● Sense of Humor		
8%	● Solidarity / Compassion		

N=1200

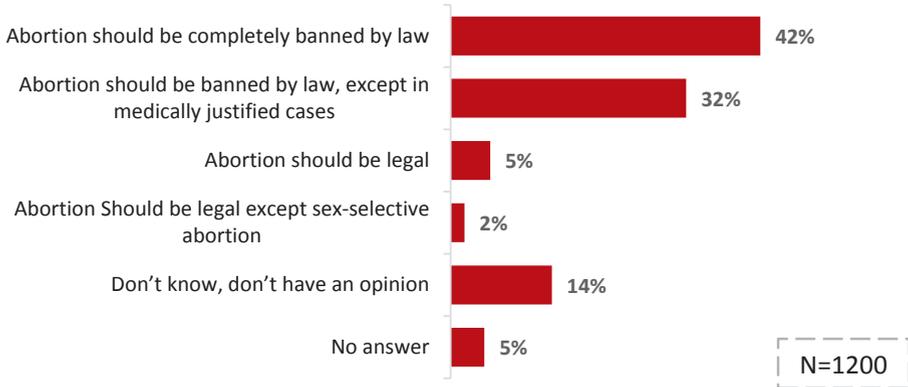
The analysis of data by different socio-demographic characteristics shows differences among young people by gender. Young males consider having a fighting spirit, i.e. fighting to achieve a goal, as more important when compared to females (25% males, 18% females). On the other hand, a larger share of females value such personal traits as tolerance (7% males, 9% females), honesty (32% males, 40% females), faithfulness (59% males, 61% females) and personal dignity (68% males, 73% females).

Some differences are also evident in the religiosity and frequency of religious practices among young people. Respondents who identify themselves as religious, and who regularly or often go to liturgy emphasize the importance of altruism (difference = 4%), honesty (difference=5%) and correctness/decency (difference = 3%) compared to those who attend religious services sometimes or never. Even though the differences are small, however, young people whose religious practices are less frequent (attend religious service sometimes or never) more frequently name innovativeness of spirit (difference = 2%) and social prestige (difference = 2%) as important personality traits.

Attitudes towards Abortion, Sexual Abstinence, and Homosexuals

As mentioned above, the attitudes towards some personal behaviours can be associated either with traditional or secular-rational value dimensions. For instance, while in societies more inclined to traditional values, attitudes towards abortion are negative, and in societies where secular-rational values are prevalent, there is more tolerance of abortion.

As survey results suggest, quite a large amount of young people in Georgia think that abortion should be completely banned by law (42%). Almost a third of respondents consider abortion acceptable in medically justified cases (32%). Only five percent of respondents think that abortion should be legal, while two percent find abortion acceptable except in cases of sex-selective abortion.

Figure # 6.12. Attitudes towards abortion

When it comes to differences by gender, more males think that abortion should be banned by law completely (48%), while more females think that abortion should be banned, except in medically justified cases (40%). The share of male respondents who have not formed an opinion about this subject is larger (18%).

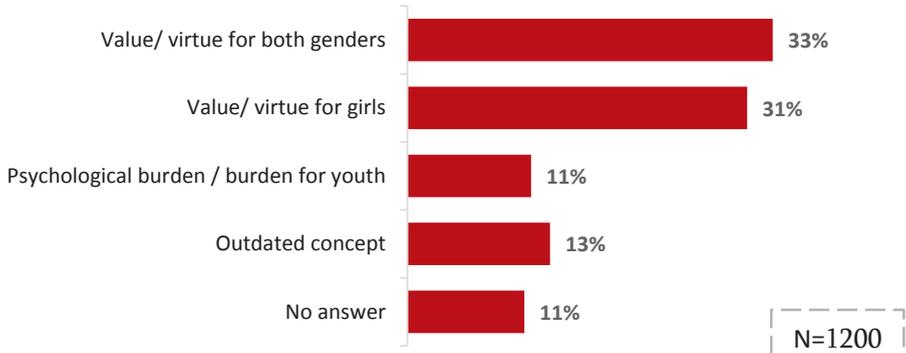
As for age groups, the liberal approach towards the issue slightly increases with age. The share of young people who think that abortion should be completely banned decreases in older age groups. Also, the share of “don’t know” replies is considerably larger in the youngest age group – 14-18.

More liberal attitudes towards abortion are prevalent in the capital – only 33 percent of respondents consider it necessary to completely ban abortion, compared to a higher share of respondents with similar opinions in other urban (47%) and rural areas (46%).

Not surprisingly, traditional attitudes are dominant in more religious youth. Almost one half of respondents who attend religious services regularly or often think that abortion should be banned completely. However, it is also worth mentioning that a considerable amount (41%) of young people, who attend services only sometimes or never, also consider it necessary to ban abortion. This later finding confirms the disposition of youth in Georgia towards traditional values.

As evident from survey data, 23 percent of young people have negative attitudes toward sexual abstinence – 13 percent think that it is an outdated concept, while 11 percent consider it as a psychological burden for youth. One-third of young people consider it to be a certain kind of virtue for both genders, while another one-third consider it to be a virtue for females (31%).

Figure # 6.13. Attitudes toward sexual abstinence among young people

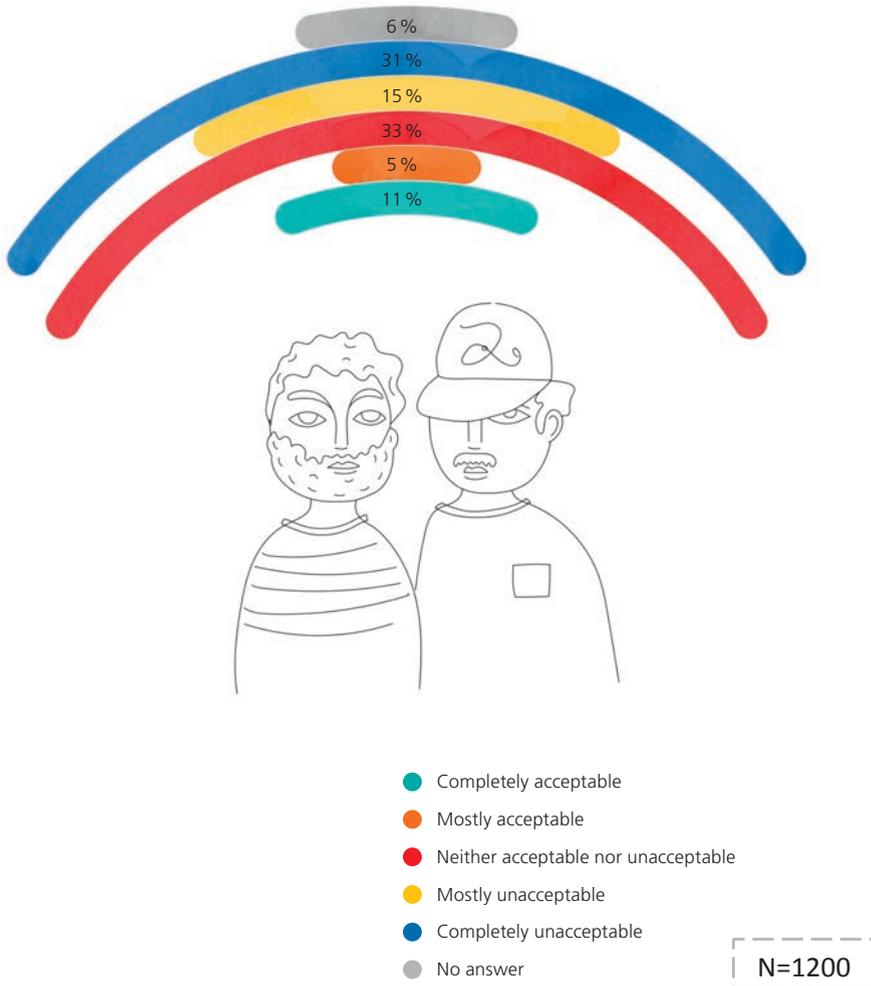


Young people in rural areas have more traditional views. A larger number of respondents in rural areas think that sexual abstinence is a virtue for both genders (41%) or a virtue for girls (31%), while such views are less dominant in urban areas (36% and 33% respectively). In the capital, a larger number of young people consider that sexual abstinence is a psychological burden for youth (17%) or an outdated concept (18%), compared to other urban (9% and 13% respectively) and rural areas (7% and 8% respectively). Apart from place of residence, a difference is revealed among different age groups. Younger people are slightly more inclined to refer to sexual abstinence as an outdated concept (14% for age groups 14-18 and 19-24, and 11% for age group 25-29). Respondents aged 25-29 appear to hold more traditional views, as they state that sexual abstinence is a virtue for girls (36%), while a smaller share of individuals aged 14-18 share this attitude (25%). A difference is also apparent by the intensity of religious practices of youth. A larger share of young people who do not attend services at all or only sometimes think that sexual abstinence is a psychological burden (13%) or an outdated concept (14%), while young people who attend religious services regularly or often are less inclined to agree with this opinion (8% and 10% respectively). Large differences are not apparent by gender. Only a slightly higher number of males think that sexual abstinence is an outdated concept (14% males and 11% females).

Attitudes towards homosexuals was selected as another measure of the values of young people. This measure reveals the tolerance level of young people, and can also be an indicator of where the values of youth lie in the survival – self-expression dimension. As evident in the survey data, homophobic attitudes are prevalent among young people – the majority of inquired respondents (46%) express negative attitudes towards homosexuals. Only 16 percent of young people think that homosexuals are completely or mostly acceptable.¹

¹ A sensitive set of questions were posed to the respondents in the form of a hand-out questionnaire.

Figure # 6.14. Attitudes towards homosexuals



In all categories of young people, the attitude that homosexuals are not acceptable prevails, however, there are some differences by demographic characteristics of inquired youth. Young females express more tolerant attitudes towards homosexuals, whereas a higher number of males find them mostly or completely unacceptable (51%). The older age group (25-29) turned out to be more homophobic, when compared to the youngest age group. In urban areas, especially in the capital, more tolerant attitudes are prevalent.

Attitudes towards homosexuals once again confirms the inclination of young people towards traditional values, as well as their distance from the acceptability of self-expression values.

Evaluation of Value-statements

As mentioned above, survey respondents were asked to evaluate various statements associated with different values. These evaluations shed light on their value-orientation and worldview.

According to the study results, close personal relations are mostly valued by young people. Values such as family and friendship are the most important in the opinion of a majority of respondents. Ninety-five percent of respondents consider it very important to have a partner you can trust, whereas the same share of respondents thinks that is very important to have good friends who recognize and accept you. In addition, the vast majority of young people consider it very important to lead a good family life (91%).

The importance of religiosity and spiritual life is once again confirmed by survey data - among most important values, the majority of youth in Georgia named belief in God (90%).

As research results suggest, more materialistic values are not as important to youngsters in Georgia- not as many young people consider it important to have power and influence (46%). Youth are also less inclined to conformism, at least on the attitude level, – only 21 percent of young people consider it important to do what others do. Among the values that were named as important by the least number of respondents is tolerance towards different opinions – only 37 percent of respondents think that one should tolerate even those opinions that one cannot really agree with. This later finding is in compliance with low tolerance levels and trust towards the various social groups described above.

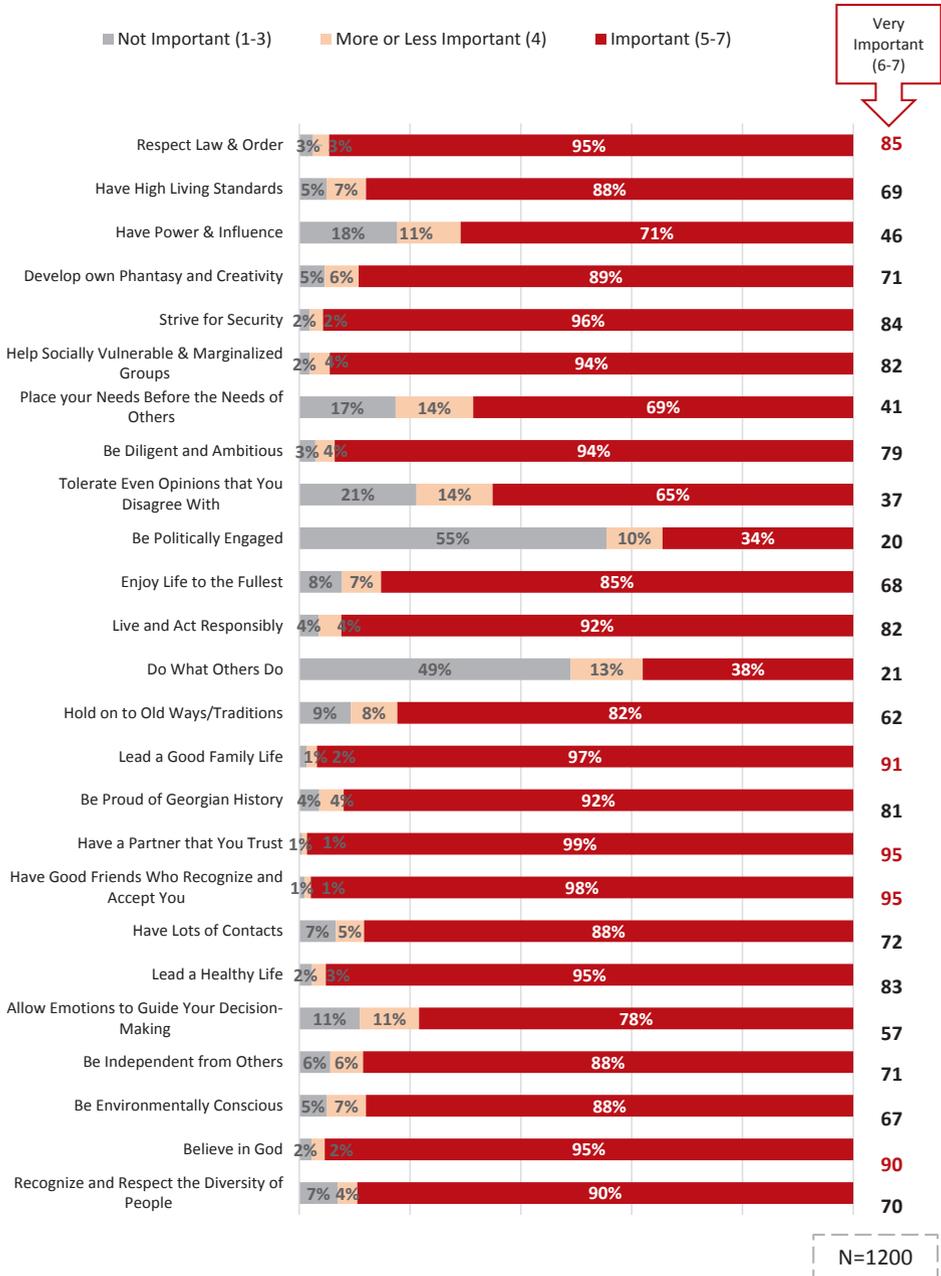
Among the least important values is political engagement – only 20 percent of young people think that it is important to be politically engaged.

Research results clearly show that young people have a strong desire to live in a secure and safe environment. The prevalence of such survival values as striving for security (84%) and respecting law and order (85%) are the values which manifest the longing of youth to create an environment in which they feel safe and protected.

Young people have strong opinions regarding personal values that should guide one's life. They consider it important to live and act responsibly (82%), be diligent and ambitious (79%), and help socially vulnerable and marginalized groups (82%). In support of this notion, fewer young people think that it is important to place their needs before the needs of others (41%). Young people also give high importance to leading a healthy life (83%).

The notion of respecting the past is considered important to Georgian youth. A large share of young people think that it is important to be proud of Georgian history (81%). However, interestingly, not as many young people consider it important to hold on to old ways/traditions (62%). This finding suggests that some young people in Georgia respect the past, but nevertheless see the importance of moving forward with time.

Figure # 6.15. Value Orientation of Youth (%)



Value-Types of Young People in Georgia

The value orientation of youth can be used to produce a classification of young people according to their values.² The typology uses an evaluation of 11 statements that can be thematically grouped into three larger categories: (1) Conventionalism, (2) Idealism and Engagement, and (3) Hedonism and Materialism.

Figure # 6.16. Statements used for Value - Typology

1. Conventionalism	2. Idealism and Engagement	3. Hedonism and Materialism
1. Respect law and order 2. Strive for security 3. Be diligent and ambitious	4. Develop own fantasy and creativity 5. Help socially vulnerable and marginalized groups 6. Be politically engaged 7. Recognize and respect the diversity of people	8. Have high living standards 9. Enjoy life to the fullest 10. Have power and influence 11. Place own needs above the needs of others

As a result of the factor analysis (Varimax Rotated), the two dimensions – Conventionalism and Idealism/Engagement were grouped together (with the exception of political engagement), whereas the statements for Materialism/Hedonism turned out to be loading highly on the second factor. Thus, based on these results, we can differentiate between two dimensions, which can be referred to as “Pragmatic Idealism” (PI) and “Materialism/Hedonism” (M/H). Interestingly, the statement about political engagement, which initially belonged to the Pragmatic Idealism group (in compliance with the German study), turned out to be correlated with the second factor. This finding suggests that in Georgia, political engagement is more associated with Materialism/Hedonism rather than with Pragmatic Idealism. The table below presents factor loadings of all of the abovementioned statements on two different dimensions: Pragmatic Idealism (PI) and Materialism/ Hedonism (M/H).

² Statistical analysis was performed based on the methodology of Thomas Gensicke. *See: Gensicke Thomas, 1995. Pragmatisch und Optimistisch: Ueber die Beweltigung des Umbruchs in den neuen Bndeslaendern. In Bertram Hans ed. Ostdeutschland im Wandel: Lebensverhaeltnisse – politische Einstellungen.* The statistical analysis involved the development of four value-types. For the statistical analysis, the evaluations of various statements by the respondents on a 7-point Likert scale were used, where 1 indicated “not important” and 7 indicated “very important”. The typology is created using 11 statement evaluations.

Figure # 6.17. Rotated Component Matrix^a

Initial Thematic Categories	Statements	Component 1 Pragmatic Idealism (PI)	Component 2 Materialism/Hedonism (M/H)
Conventionalism	Respect law and order	.653	
	Strive for security	.720	
	Be diligent and ambitious	.477	
Idealism and Engagement	Develop own fantasy and creativity	.418	
	Help socially vulnerable and marginalized groups	.600	
	Be politically engaged		.500
	Recognize and respect the diversity of people	.453	
Hedonism and Materialism	Have high living standards		.582
	Enjoy life to the fullest		.510
	Have power and influence		.725
	Place own needs above the needs of others		.690

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

- a. Rotation converged in three iterations.

Based on the two abovementioned factors, a cluster analysis (quick cluster) was performed, which aimed to create a value-typology with four different value-types. The value types would look as follows by the dimensions of Pragmatic Idealism and Materialism/Hedonism:

Figure # 6.18. Statements used for Value - Typology

Value Types	Pragmatic Idealism, PI	Materialism/Hedonism, M/H
Idealist	+	-
Hesitant	-	-
Maker ("Manager")	+	+
Materialist	-	+

A cluster analysis resulted in the following four clusters:

Figure # 6.19. Final Cluster Centres

	Cluster			
	1 Idealist	2 Materialist	3 Maker / Manager	4 Hesitant
REGR factor score 1 for analysis 2	.45973	-.70177	.55858	-2.31503
REGR factor score 2 for analysis 2	-1.12240	.43969	.66245	-.42630

As research results show, the value-type Maker/Manager is most prevalent among Georgian youth(39.5%). This type is followed by Idealist (29.1%) and Materialist (23%). The smallest share of young people in Georgia correspond to the value-type Hesitant.

Figure # 6.20. Distribution of Value-Types

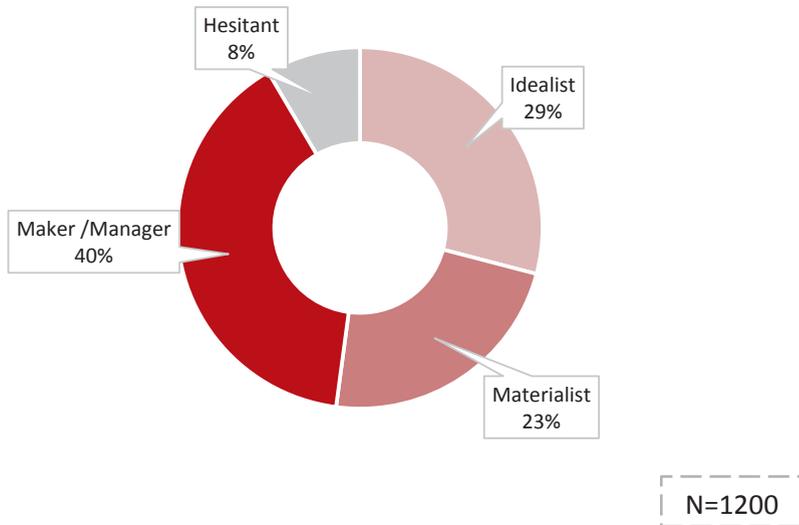
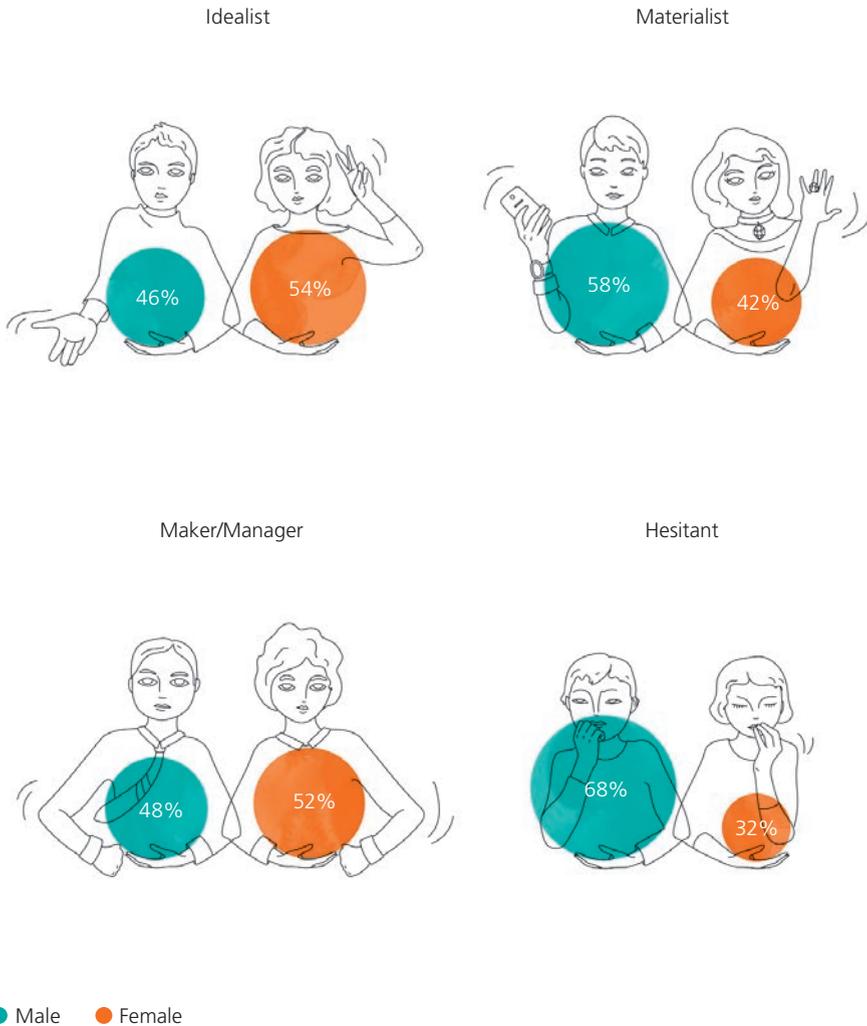
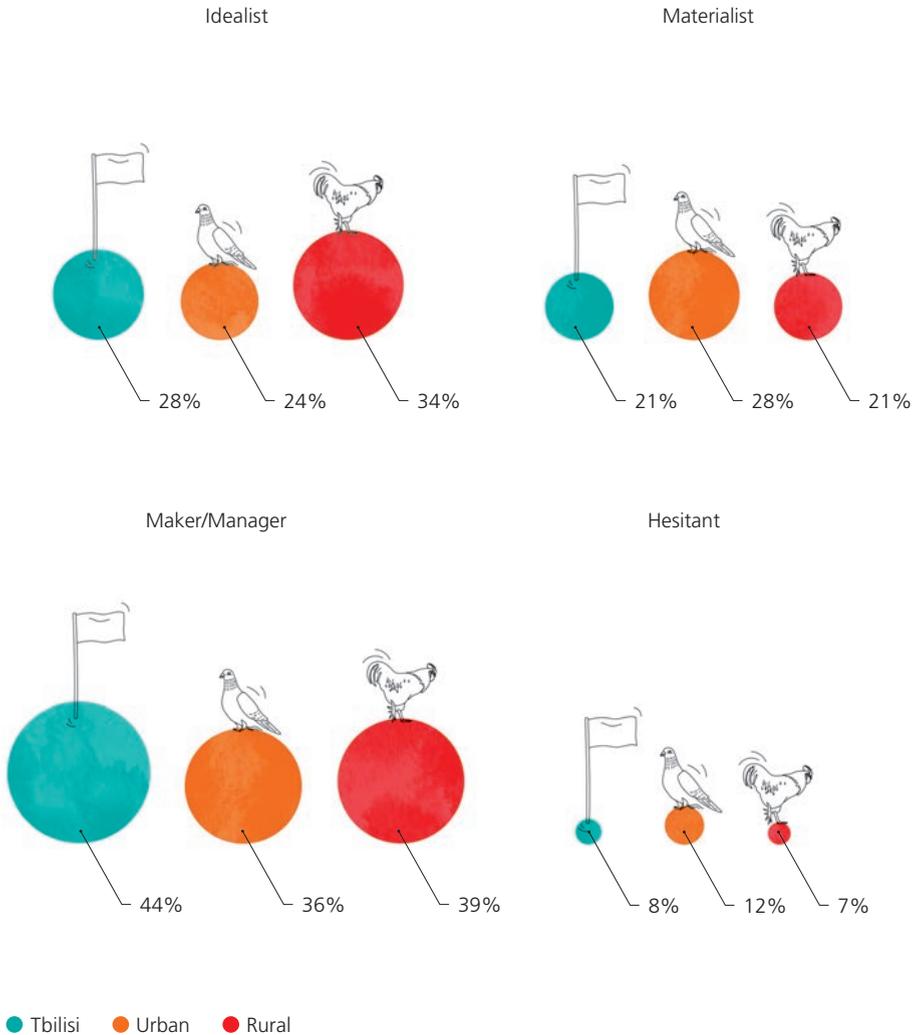


Figure # 6.21. Distribution of Value-Types according to Gender



The gender distribution of the four value-types shows that among the *Hesitant value-type*, the share of males is significantly larger. Also, male youngsters tend to be more *Materialist* value-type than females. In the two other value-types – *Idealist* and *Maker/Manager*, the share of females is larger.

Figure # 6.22. Distribution of Value-Types according to place of residence



A closer look at the representatives of different value-types by their place of residence reveals that a larger share of Idealists live in rural areas (34%), whereas the largest share of makers/managers are concentrated in Tbilisi (44%).

Discussion

On the global map of values,³ Georgia is more inclined towards the traditional values and survival values poles. Based on the study results, it can be concluded that the values of young people in Georgia mirror the attitudes and perceptions of the society at large – youth are more inclined towards traditional values. Also, among values in the survival/self-expression dimension, survival values are more prevalent. However, despite the obvious inclination towards the traditional pole, in some instances, young people take quite liberal and modern stances towards various issues.

Large social distance, i.e. low tolerance towards minority groups, low levels of political engagement, importance attributed to religion, lower acceptability of abortion, etc. puts young people in Georgia closer to the traditional and survival value poles. The dominance of traditional values can be explained by the influence of the traditional social environment in which young people go through the socialization process in their childhood and youth, the social groups with which they interact, and the older generation, which largely influences their worldview.

However, in some instances tendencies are evident that suggest a shift towards secular-rational and self-expression values. For example, sexual abstinence is considered by a substantial share of young people as an outdated concept or psychological burden for youth. Additionally, even though young people in Georgia respect the past, they nevertheless see the importance of moving forward with time. As research results show, not as many young people consider it important to hold on to old ways/traditions. These findings suggest that even though young people consider the values that are dominant in their social environment as important, in some instances they take a critical stance and try to challenge those values. A good example for the shift towards self-expression values might be the reaction of youth to the natural disaster that occurred in the capital in 2015 (flooding of one of the districts of Tbilisi, including Tbilisi Zoo). This event evoked a considerably high level of solidarity and activism among Georgian youth residing in Tbilisi (assisting the city government in cleaning flooded areas, fundraising activities for helping the victims of flooding, etc.). Such facts suggest that young people can show civic activism and unite for a common cause, if an important trigger is in place that fosters their integrity and solidarity.

It can be suggested that the value-orientation of young people differs by their socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender or place of residence. For instance, social distance towards minority groups (e.g. sexual minorities), which is an indicator for a low level of tolerance, low acceptance of diversity and equality, and opposition to self-expression and universal values, is more prevalent in the rural areas. In the capital, however, the share of youth having a more neutral

³ Welzel-Inglehart's Cultural Map

attitude towards minority groups is larger. Participation in voluntary work, which is connected with social capital, and has an integral emphasis on mutual co-operation, reciprocity, trust, and networking, is also more widespread in urban areas than in rural parts of Georgia. Differences in value-orientation are also evident among young males and females. Young females express more tolerant attitudes towards homosexuals, whereas more males find them mostly or completely unacceptable (51%).

Overall, based on the study results, it can be concluded that youth in Georgia are more inclined towards traditional and survival values, however, on some issues a shifting tendency towards self-expression and secular-rational values is evident. This tendency is more vivid in urban areas – especially in the capital.

Family and Friends

Introduction

Family and friends are two important social groups that create the most influential contexts for individuals from early in life. These two social contexts create and transmit the norms, attitudes, and views, thus playing an important role in conveying values from generation to generation and maintaining cultural continuity. 'The family is usually considered the most important mechanism in value socialization. But the influence of age-peers, of age-graded institutions outside the family ... have increasingly been recognized in socialization theory as important and alternative determinants of value orientation (Vern L. Bengtson, 1975).

While parents are given the societal responsibility to modify the behavior of their offspring in order to bring it within consensual norms (Eimer et al., 1981; Mancuso, 1979), interaction with friends appears to be "having a good time" (Parsons, 1942), and the predominant activity of friendship is leisure (Coleman, 1961; Hollingshead, 1949). It should also be mentioned that young people feel closer to and are better understood by friends rather than family members, which mostly might be caused by the free choice of friends and achieving greater symmetry in friendship interactions. Because friendships and romantic relationships serve comparable functions, adolescents could use similar criteria to select friends and romantic partners (Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999).

The family is equally valuable for Georgians, regardless of their age, sex, marital or economic status, although the study of Values and Generations (Sumbadze, 2012) demonstrated a difference between the young and old generations, as young people place more value on leisure, friends, religion, work, and education than the older generation.

While speaking of differences in the values of different generations, context should be taken into consideration. Georgia went through major changes during the past two decades. The disintegration of the Soviet Union followed by civil war, and the loss of territories greatly affected the political, economic, and cultural life of Georgians. 'When a society and a culture undergo a paradigm shift, the new paradigms do not immediately replace the old ones as the dominant patterns of thinking and behavior. Such reconfiguration is an intrinsic part of more general process of social change, especially visible in a transitional setting such

as in Georgia, and it affects in the first place the younger strata of the society, more susceptible to change,- primarily family, gender and generational relations' (Sumbadze, Tarkhan-Mouravi, 2003).

Despite drastic changes, 'the family structure of Georgia could, and to considerable degree still can be described as traditional. The family even in urban setting often consists of three generations, although basic household in cities commonly consist of a nuclear family- parents and children, still quite frequently grandparents would live together with them, sharing responsibility for bringing up the children.'

Generally, independence from the family is gained at a later stage of life in Georgia. Often, the basis for gaining independence from the family means having one's own family with no transitional period in between. Girls, when married, tend to leave their parental families more often than boys, and begin living with their spouse and with the parents of their spouse.

It is also worth mentioning that Georgia is among the countries in Eastern Europe in which marrying young is an issue. According to a United Nations report, 17% of women living in Georgia married before they were 18 (UNFPA, 2012). It should also be mentioned that marrying young is more prevalent among girls. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia, in 2014, among those who got married in their teens (16-19 age category), 84% were females and only 16% were males (Geostat, 2015).

A youth study in Georgia explored various aspects of the family life and friends of Georgian youngsters. The collected data gave valuable insight regarding the family environment, future plans related to family, and social interactions of youth considering various demographic characteristics.

Main Findings

- The majority of young Georgians live with their parents and siblings;
- The vast majority of youth who are single or divorced live in their parents' house with their parents;
- Fifty-five percent of young people get along with their parents very well;
- Youth living in rural areas have better relationships with their parents, compared to those who live in cities, including Tbilisi;
- Mothers and fathers influence important decisions for approximately one-third of young people;
- The influence of the father on important decisions is relatively high in the case of boys (36%) when compared to girls (18%);
- The influence of parents on the decision-making process significantly reduces with the increase in age;
- Financial support from parents is the main source of income for a majority of young people (62%);
- The majority of young people who name their spouse/partner as a source of income are girls (male – 1%, female – 27%);
- Forty-three percent of Georgian youngsters believe that the advantage of marriage over an unmarried relationship is more responsibility among partners;
- More than one-third of inquired respondents believe the ideal age for marriage for both girls and boys is 25;
- Forty-one percent of young people want two children, while every tenth youngster wants to have four children;

Among those who do not have a child yet, 45% plan to have one when they are between 26 and 31 years old;

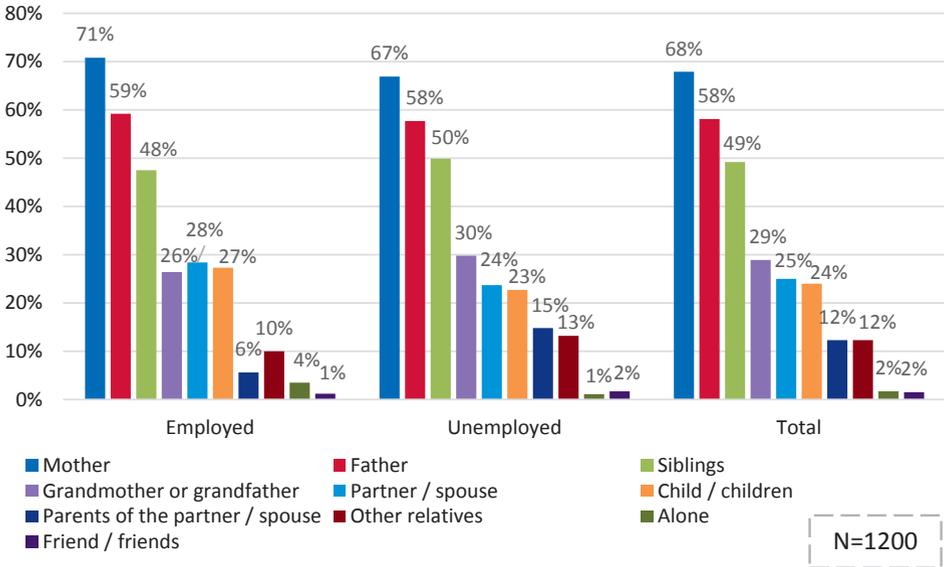
- The majority of young people believe that the most important factors when choosing a future spouse are personality (64%) and common interests (56%).

Analysis

Family Environment

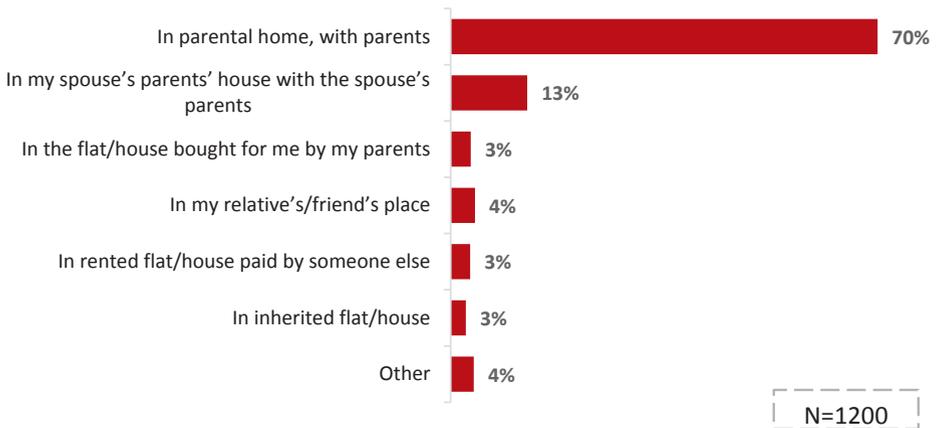
According to the results of the quantitative study, the majority of Georgian young people live with their parents and siblings. As a result of an analysis of the results by age category, we can conclude that with the increase in age, the index of those who live with their parents decreases (Mother: 14-18 age category – 88%; 19-24 age category- 67%; 25-29 age category- 53%). The number of respondents living with a partner/spouse, however, increases along with the increase in age (Partner/spouse: 14-18 age category – 2%; 19-24 age category - 22%; 25-29 age category- 47%). It is worth mentioning that the majority of those who live with their father or mother are boys (Mother: 80%, Father: 70%), while those who live with the parents of a partner or spouse are more frequently female (24%) than male (1%). As for a data analysis in the perspective of employment, it can be concluded that the results do not differ significantly. Seventy-one percent of employed youngsters live with their mothers, and 67% of unemployed young people report living with their mothers as well. Twenty-eight percent of unemployed young people declare that they live with a partner/spouse, while this rate is 24% in the case of unemployed youngsters. The rate of living with a partner/spouse is similar to the index of living with a child or children. While 27% of employed young people speak about living with a child or children, a relatively smaller quantity of unemployed young people report living with a child or children (23%). However, as for the index of cohabiting with a partner's or spouse's parents, based on the survey results we can conclude that if 15% of unemployed young people live with their partner's or spouse's parents, this index is 6% in the case of employed youngsters. It is also worth mentioning that only 1% of unemployed young people and 4% of employed people report that they live alone.

Figure # 7.1 – Living with significant others



It is also worth mentioning that seven out of ten (70%) of young people live in their parents’ house. It is noteworthy that among those who live in their parents’ house, the vast majority are single (85%). The majority of divorced youngsters also live in their parents’ house (82%).

Figure # 7.2 – Sharing living space



The majority of young people participating in the qualitative study believe that nowadays, Georgian youth significantly depend on family members – especially on

parents. Respondents believe that there is an intense desire on the part of parents to control and influence their children. One of the reasons for the dependency on parents could be that young people are less interested in independent life.

You may not be dependent on your family [financially], but still somehow attached. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

They cannot live independently, I've been living alone for five years and I know exactly what I'm doing right now – housework, studies, and everything. I do it myself, independently, without parents. I think that Georgian youngsters should strive for independent life, which is a rare occasion. They are mostly dependent on parents or relatives and cannot live without them. They can't even move around from one place to another unless their parents give them money. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

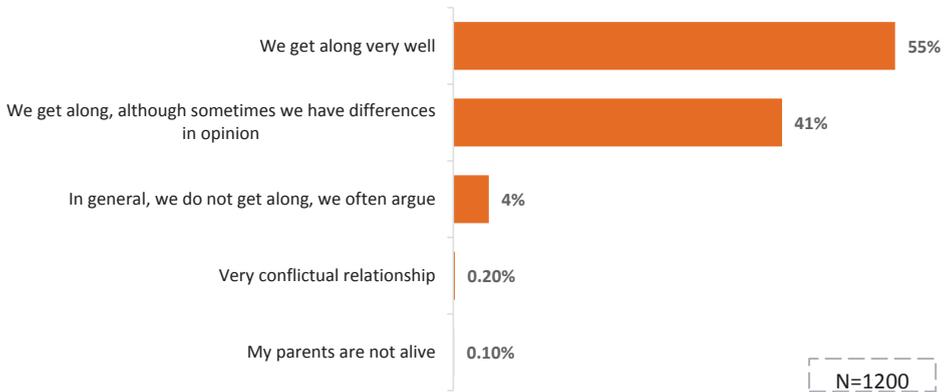
As for youth who are ethnic minorities, traditionally, the head of the household – the father – decides everything, and everyone in the family, has to obey.

I mean that it has been this way for centuries; the father is dominant and everyone obeys his words. This is a tradition. [Samtskhe-Javakheti, mixed settlements, ethnic minorities, female, 14-18 age category]

According to focus group discussion respondents representing ethnic minorities, their independence is so limited that in case they go somewhere for any reason, including to obtain an education or go to a private teacher, they may need to receive their parents' permission.

When we are going to do something, we ask our parents first...especially if we are not 18 years old yet. So, I don't think that we are independent, as we have to ask for permission from our parents even when we go to classes. [Kvemo Kartli, mixed settlements, ethnic minorities, male, 14-18 age category]

More than half of the surveyed youngsters (55%) get along with their parents very well. A relatively smaller share declared that they get along with their parents well, but that they have different views on certain issues (41%). Only a very small part of young people admit that they do not get along with their parents well and often argue about different issues (4%). This index does not differ by age or gender, however, it can be concluded that young people living in villages have better relationships with their parents than to those who live in larger cities, including Tbilisi (We get along very well: Tbilisi- 43%; cities- 56%; villages- 64%.)

Figure # 7.3- Relationship with parents

It is also worth mentioning that as believed by one part of the young people inquired within the qualitative study, their peers are quite aggressive towards their parents.

Yes, when there is something parents want to teach and children do not understand, they start arguing – why do you teach me, I know more than you do. They start arguing with their parents and any other person. They do not know limits, say anything that pops into their mind, do not think clearly, lose control, become aggressive, and have no respect towards older people. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

Approximately one-third of the respondents declare that their mother can have an influence on important decisions (34%). A relatively smaller share declares that mostly their fathers have an influence on their important decisions (27%). An even smaller group of young people declares (15%) that their spouse or partner has an influence on important decisions they have to make.

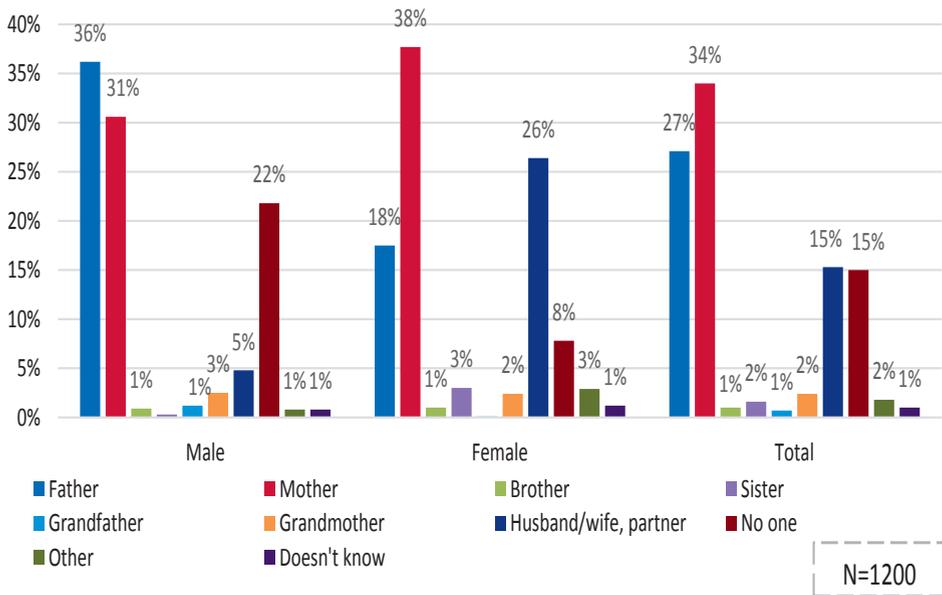
This looks rather interesting in the perspective of gender. If almost one-third of girls (38%) and boys (31%) say that their mother has an influence on their decision-making process, the influence of the father is relatively high in for boys (36%) when compared to girls (18%). It is also worth mentioning that a larger share of female respondents (26%) indicate the influence of a spouse/partner than male youngsters (5%). However, among those who declared that no one influences their decision-making process, the majority are boys (male: 22%, female: 8%).

As for the regional perspective, the influence of the father is relatively low in the case of young people living in Tbilisi when compared to those who live in regional cities and villages (Tbilisi: 18%, city – 22%, villages: 38%). However, the influence of the mother is relatively more pronounced regarding the decision-making process of young people living both in Tbilisi and in regional cities (Tbilisi: 40%, cities: 38%), than those who live in villages (villages: 26%).

It is worth mentioning that among those who declare that no one influences their decision-making process, more are young residents of Tbilisi (20%) than residents of regional cities (14%) and villages (12%).

The influence of parents on the decision-making process significantly reduces with the increase in age (Father: 14-18 age category – 35%; 19-24 age category – 27%, 25-29 age category – 21%; Mother: 14-18 age category – 47%; 19-24 age category – 35%, 25-29 age category – 23%). The influence of a spouse/partner on the decision-making process increases along with age (14-18 age category – 1%; 19-24 age category – 13%, 25-29 age category – 29%), since the prevalence of being married or in a cohabiting arrangement is higher with age.

Figure # 7.4 – Influences on decision-making



As believed by young respondents of the qualitative study, parents play an important role in the decision-making process of their children regarding the choices of a future profession and whether or not to attend a higher education institution. No matter what youngsters want, some parents insist that their children obtain higher education.

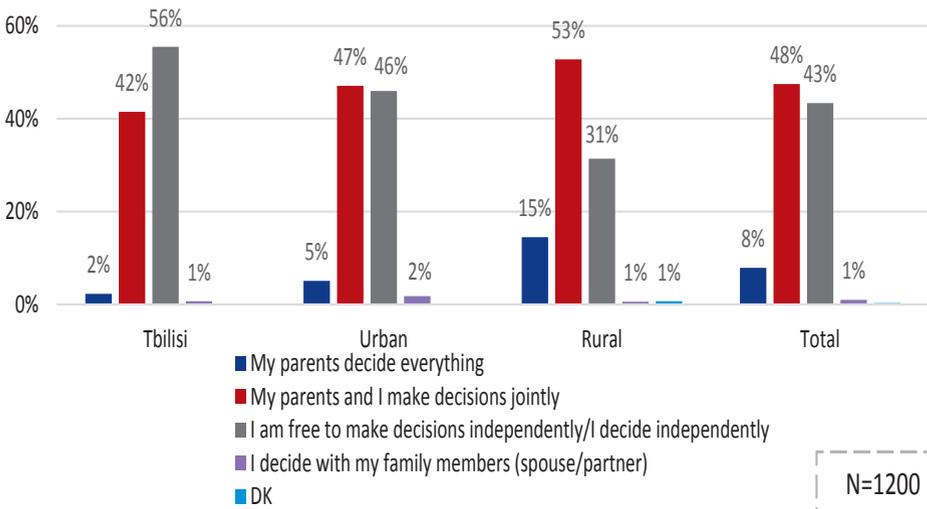
Mostly, there is pressure from parents. As I mentioned, they require a diploma from children. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

It is also worth mentioning that young people living in regional cities and villages believe that unlike them, young people who live in the capital city are relatively more independent and more or less free from the influence of family members. However, no such opinion was expressed during the focus group discussions conducted in Tbilisi.

Our young people living in Kutaisi and Tskaltubo are different from those who live in the capital city. Their mentality is different – young people are more independent there. Here, we have to get consent from parents...For example, there are national entrance exams now, and when they make a decision, young people take their parents' opinions into account. It is the decision of the parents rather than the decision of the youngsters. There is a financial factor as well...they don't have money to make their wishes come true, and it's difficult to ask for money from your parents every time you need something. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

Almost half of young people (48%) make decisions with their parents, however, a significant part of them declares that they are free and independent in the decision-making process (44%). Only a small part (8%) of the respondents think that their parents make important decisions on their behalf. The majority of those young people who declare that important decisions are made by their parents instead of by them are young people living in villages (Tbilisi – 2%, cities – 5%, villages – 15%). As for those who declare that they are free in making decisions, the majority live in Tbilisi (Tbilisi – 56%, cities – 56%, villages-13%).

Figure #7.5 – Process of decision-making



Focus group respondents believe that parents' control over their children's decisions is of the factors that will cause the inability of the younger generations to make a decision independently, and it will define their own present or future.

I know many parents who do not try to teach their children how to be independent - they want their children to depend on them in every way. They want to control them, and in most cases, control does not end well. As a result, the child becomes completely dependent on parents and cannot make a decision on his/her own. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

The influence of parents and the previous generation still prevails and will prevail in the future... Let alone youngsters, our parents are even dependent on their parents. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

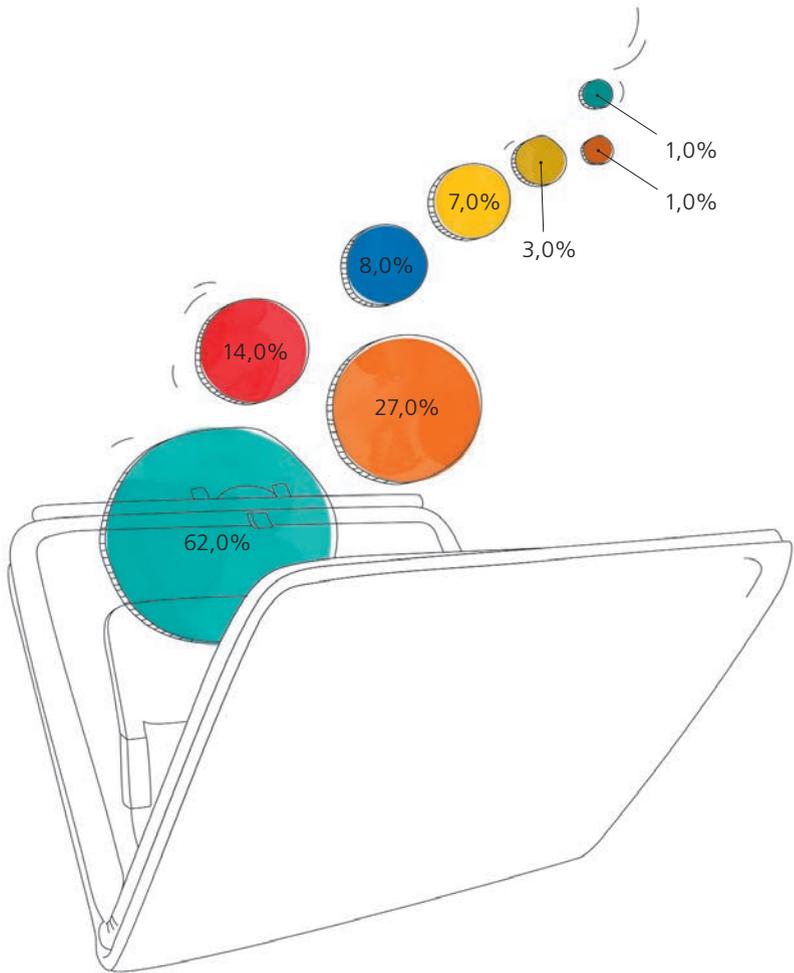
For the majority of young people (62%), parents are the main source of income, while a small part of them are financed by their partners.

While analyzing sources of income by age, it can be concluded that the number of those who are maintained by parents decreases as age increases (14-18 age category 96%; 19-14 age category – 64%; 25-29 age category – 34%). However, a partner/spouse is the main source of income for more young people representing the 25-29 age category (14-18 age category 1%; 19-14 age category – 13%; 25-29 age category – 25%). It is also worth mentioning that a very insignificant part of those in the younger age categories have their own income (14-18 age category 3%; 19-14 age category – 28%; 25-29 age category – 46%).

As for a data analysis in the regional perspective, we can conclude that a relatively large portion of young people living in Tbilisi have their own income, when compared to those who live in regional cities or villages (Tbilisi – 35%, regional cities – 27%, villages – 22%).

It is worth mentioning that among those who named their partner/spouse as a source of income, the majority are married (46%) or in an unmarried relationship (59%). When analyzing the results by gender, we can clearly see that the majority of those young people who name a spouse/partner as a source of income are girls (male – 1%, female – 27%).

Figure # 7.6 – Income sources



- Maintained by parents
- I have personal income (wage, fee, etc.)
- Maintained by partner (boy/girlfriend, spouse)
- Financial help from parents/relatives
- Family pension
- State support
- Other
- D/K

N=1200

As believed by respondents of the qualitative study, dependence on the family is significantly caused by the presence of financial dependence on parents. As one part of the respondents believes, however, even those young people who have their own income still depend on their parents a great deal in the decision-making process. As examples, our respondents named issues related to minor decisions as well as important and personal topics, such as the selection of a future profession. Part of the respondents think that if they had not been so strongly dependent on their parents, their lives might be completely different.

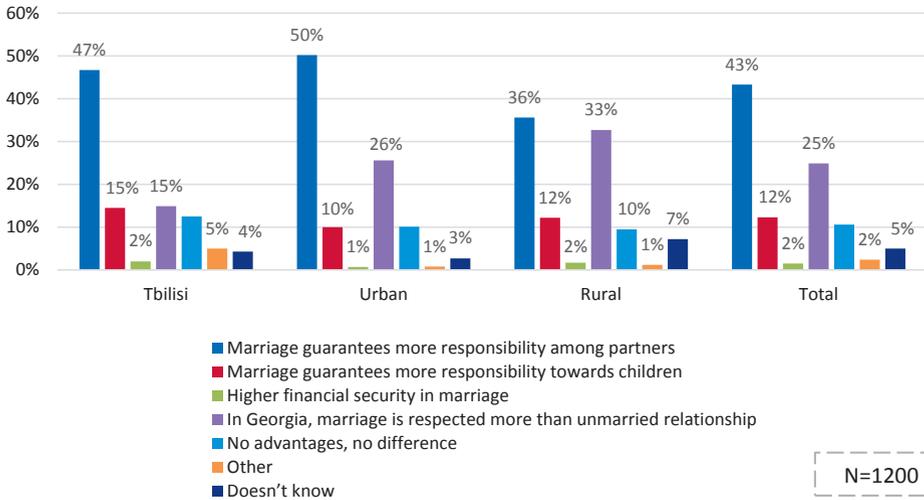
I think – I don't know whether it is the fault of time, parents, or something else, that we don't have much freedom. I mean, parents believe that even if we turn 18 years old, we are not free, and that freedom is perceived above 25 years. If you are 18, they have a different reaction. If we had freedom and if we had been used to freedom, everything would be completely different. [Adjara/Guria, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

Marriage and Cohabitation

A rather significant part (43%) of Georgian youngsters believe that one advantage of marriage over an unmarried relationship is that marriage assigns more responsibility between partners. However, one-fourth (25%) of young respondents think of marriage as a priority because marriage is more respected in Georgia than cohabitation. Only one in ten (11%) respondents think that there is no difference between marriage and cohabitation. There were no important differences in terms of age and gender perspectives.

Based on results from a regional perspective, we can conclude that compared to those youngsters who live in Tbilisi and other cities, young people living in villages agree less with the statement that marriage assigns more responsibility among partners (Tbilisi: 47%, city: 50%, village: 36%). However, a relatively larger portion of youngsters living in villages believes that marriage is more respected in Georgia than cohabitation (Tbilisi: 15%, cities: 26%, villages: 33%).

This index is somewhat different from the overall picture in terms of marital status. The statement that marriage is more respected than cohabitation is approved by more married youngsters than those who are in cohabitation (Single – 25%, Registered marriage – 26%, Living with partner, not married (in cohabitation) – 15%, Divorced – 34%). However, more young people who are unmarried but in a cohabitation arrangement agree with the statement that there is no advantage or difference between marriage and cohabitation than those who are in a registered marriage or divorced (Single – 11%, Registered marriage – 9%, Living with partner, not married (in cohabitation) – 26%, Divorced – 5%).

Figure # 7.7 – Advantage of marriage over cohabitation

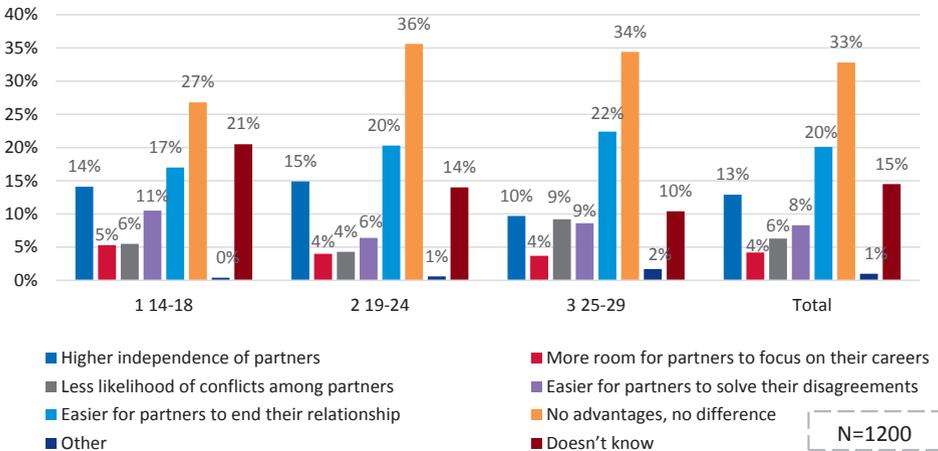
As for the advantages of cohabitation over marriage, one-third (33%) of respondents believe that cohabitation has no advantage over marriage, however, one-fifth (20%) of youngsters believe that it is easier for partners to end a relationship in the case of cohabitation. A certain part of the respondents (13%) think that cohabitation gives more independence to partners.

While analyzing the results by region, it turned out that young residents of Tbilisi and regional cities agree more that cohabitation gives more independence to partners than marriage (Tbilisi: 18%, cities: 14%, villages: 8%). Among those who think that cohabitation has no advantage over marriage, the majority are young residents of villages and regional cities (Tbilisi: 27%, cities: 34%, villages: 37%). A larger share of youth in Tbilisi agrees with the statement that it is easier for partners to end a relationship when they are cohabiting, rather than when they are married (Tbilisi: 26%, cities: 21%, villages: 15%).

Among those who think that cohabitation has no advantage over marriage, the majority are from the 19-24 age category (14-18 age category – 27%; 19-24 age category – 36%, 25-29 age category – 34%). No significant differences have been identified while analyzing the results in the perspective of gender.

While 10% of young people who are in a registered marriage think that cohabitation provides a lower likelihood of conflict between partners than marriage, a relatively smaller share (2%) of young people who live in a cohabitation arrangement agree with this statement. Almost one-third of single (31%) and married (in a registered marriage) (33%) young people think that cohabitation has no advantage and no difference over marriage, and among them, the share of youngsters in unmarried relationships is relatively high (55%).

Figure # 7.8 – Advantage of cohabitation over marriage



More than one-third of inquired respondents believe that the optimal age for getting married is 25 years for both women and men. It is noteworthy, however, that a certain part of respondents (17%) believe that the best age to get married is 20 years for women and 30 years for men (18%).

While analyzing the results in the perspective of gender, it turned out that almost half of the girls (44%) believe that 25 years is the ideal age for women to get married – the share of boys is relatively lower (28%).

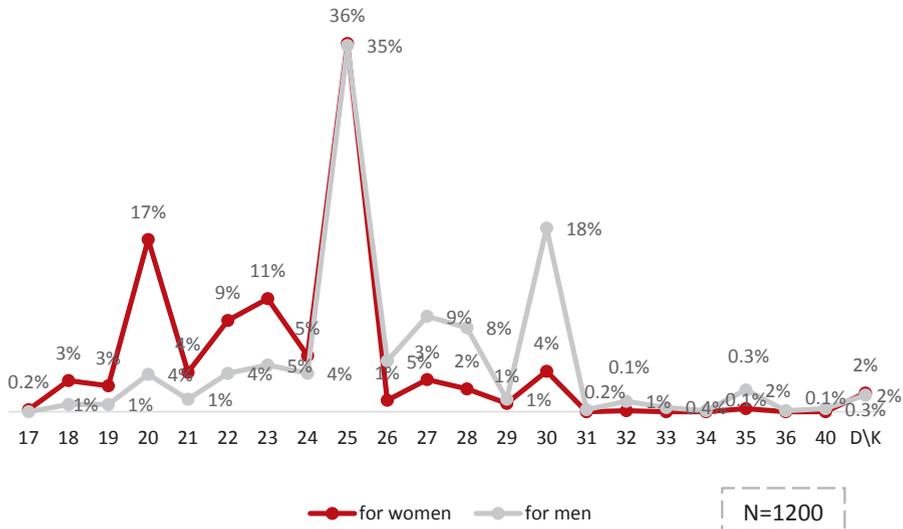
As for the best age of marriage for men, four out of ten (40%) boys think that 25 years is the best age, and about three out of ten (31%) girls agree.

Less than one-third (30%) of young people representing the 14-18 age category thinks that 25 years is the best age for marriage, and the percentage share of representatives of the older age categories is somewhat high (19-24 age category – 38%; 25-29 age category – 38%). As for 30 years being the best marriage age for boys, the percentage of those who agree increases with the increase in age (14-18 age category 9%; 19-14 age category – 18%; 25-29 age category – 25%).

Opinions regarding the best age for marriage differ to some degree in the regional perspective. While 20 years is believed to be the proper age for girls to marry for a very insignificant part of the young people living in Tbilisi (6%), the percentage share is relatively higher in regional cities and villages (17% and 25%, respectively). However, this tendency is contradicted for the case of 25 years being the optimal age for marriage. Almost half of young people (44%) living in Tbilisi believe that this age is the best age to get married, and the percentage share of such youngsters is relatively lower in villages and regional cities (regional cities – 35%, villages – 29%). As for the ideal marriage age for boys, 25 years appeared to

be more acceptable for young people living in villages than those living in regional cities and Tbilisi (Tbilisi – 26%, regional cities – 36%, villages – 43%), but a larger share of young people in Tbilisi believes that 20 years is the best age for men to marry (Tbilisi – 25%, regional cities – 19%, villages – 11%).

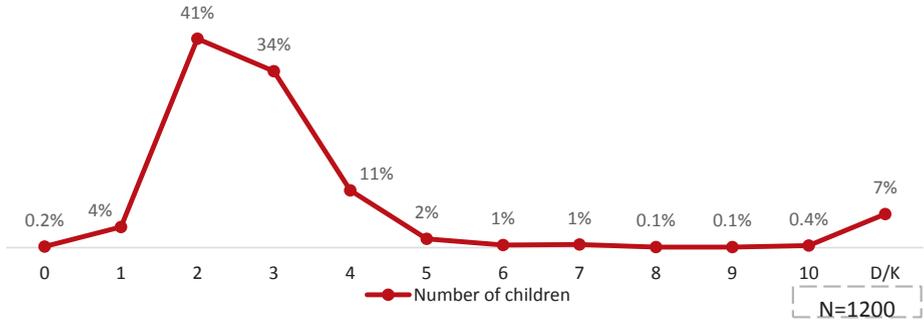
Figure # 7.9 – Best age for marriage



A large portion of young people living in Georgia want two (41%) or three (34%) children, while every tenth youngster (11%) wants four children. About half of the respondents (53%) would like to have one girl and half of the respondents (50%) want to have one boy. Approximately one-fifth of young people want two have two boys or two girls (27%, 24%).

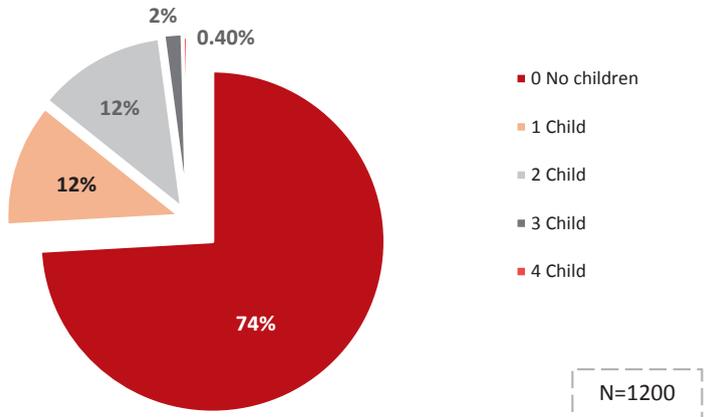
As a result of analyzing these results in the regional perspective, we can conclude that the majority of young residents of Tbilisi (39%) want to have three children, while the majority of youngsters living in regional cities and villages would like to have two children (45%, 42%). It is also worth mentioning that the majority of boys (37%) want to have three children, while a large portion of girls (47%) want to have two children.

Figure # 7.10 – Desired number of children



A majority of young people (74%) do not have a child. Naturally, the majority of young respondents within the 14-18 age category do not have a child (99%), while eight out of ten (80%) respondents within the 19-24 age category also do not have a child. A relatively smaller share of youth aged 19-24 is a parent of one (14%) or two (6%) children. The share of parents is higher in the 25-29 age category. Almost half (48%) of the respondents in this category do not have a child, however almost one-third (29%) of young people have two children, and a smaller part (18%) is a parent of one child. No significant differences have been revealed in the regional perspective.

Figure # 7.11 – Number of children

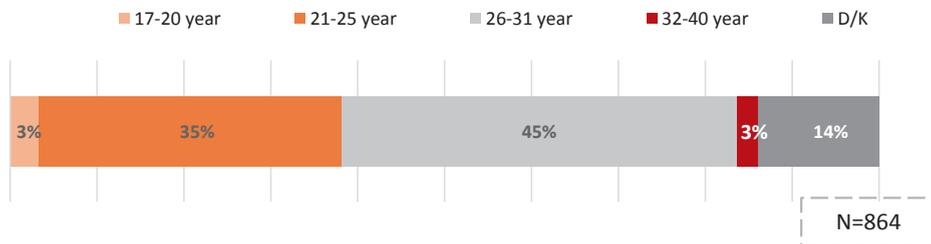


According to the study results, among those who do not have a child yet, the majority (45%) plans to have one when they are between 26 and 31 years old. Approximately one-third (35%) of respondents plan to have a child between 21

and 25 years old. A large portion of young people believe that the best age to have a child is between 26 and 31 years, but the percentage share of those youngsters who live in regional cities and villages is higher than those living in Tbilisi (Tbilisi – 23%, regional cities – 31%, villages – 42%).

It is worth noting that approximately half (51%) of young people in the 14-18 age category believe that the best age to have a baby is between 21 and 25 years. Representatives of the 25-29 age category (80%) think that the ideal age to have a child is between 26 and 31 years.

Figure # 7.12 – Age for the first child



Focus group discussion participants' perceptions related to their futures, future plans, and perspectives are also related to family and parents. A rather large portion of youngsters believe that their life goal is to be able to financially support family members and parents. According to the participants of the qualitative study, they are somewhat accountable to their parents, as they have already spent financial resources and taken care of their children's future. In the perception of focus group participants, if they are able to "pay the debt" to their parents and ensure their financial well-being, they will be satisfied.

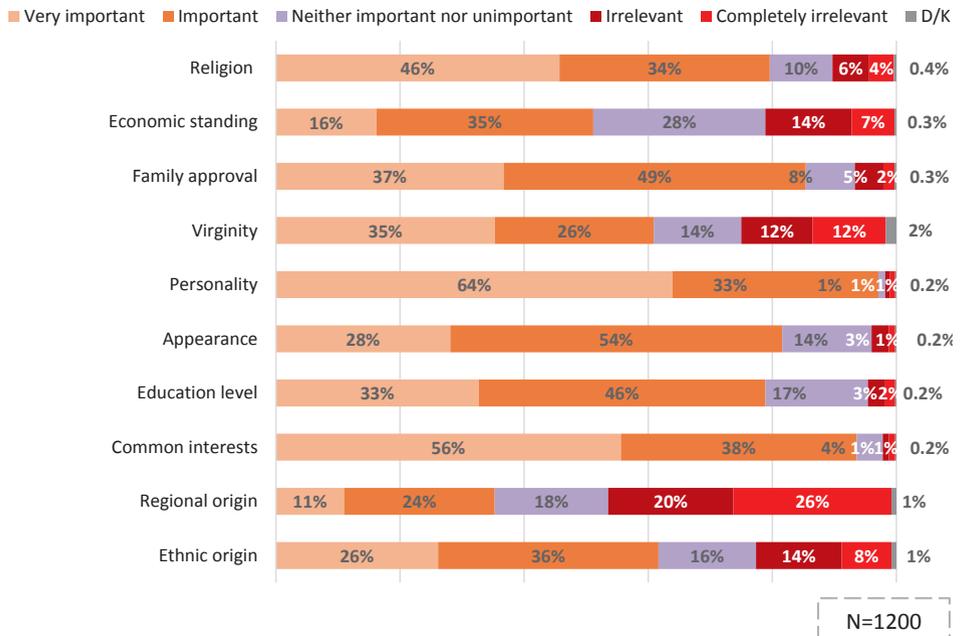
Of course, this is welfare, and the ability to support a family financially. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

It is very important for me to help my family and relatives financially. My parents made an effort and spent their financial resources. If I'm able to pay their debt, that will make me happy. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

In choosing a future spouse, the majority of young people believe that the most important factors are personality (very important – 64%) and common interests (very important – 56%). Religion also appears to be a very important factor (very important + important = 80%), along with family approval (very important + important = 86%). Based on the research results, the least important factor taken into account when choosing a future spouse is regional origin (46%). Overall, six out of ten youngsters declare that they prefer their spouse not to have sexual

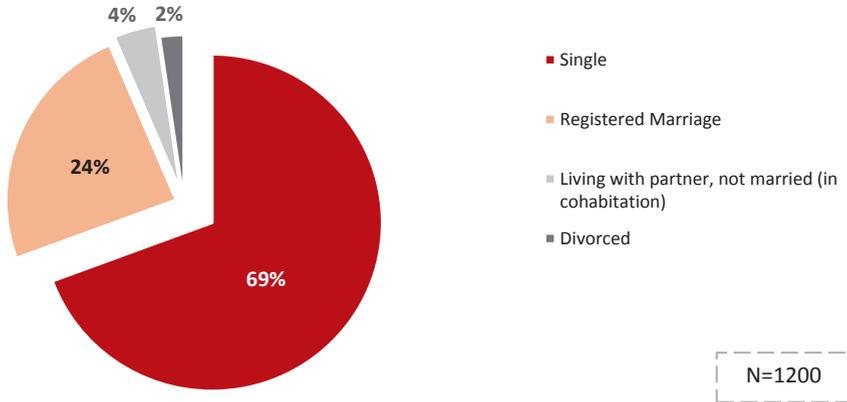
experience, and while analysing these results by gender, it was revealed that the majority of those who think of virginity is an important factor in choosing a spouse are boys (80%). This factor is important for four out of ten females (41%). It is also worth mentioning that economic condition is an important factor in choosing a future spouse. More females than males named economic condition as an important factor (male – 34%, female – 69%). More females than males also named the level of education of a future spouse as an important factor (male – 73%, female – 85%).

Figure # 7.13 – Important factors for the choice of a marriage partner



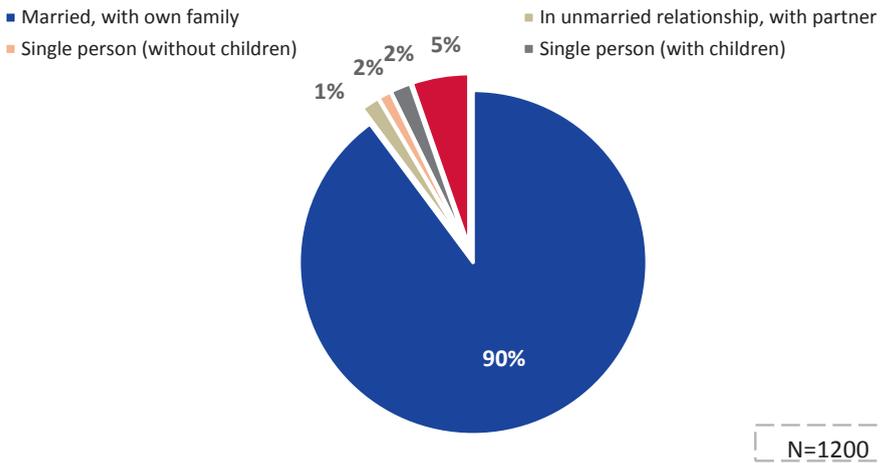
Almost one-fourth (24%) of young people are in a registered marriage, while the majority (69%) are still single. A small part of the respondents declare that they are in an unmarried relationship with a partner (4%), while the number of divorced respondents is even smaller (2%). The majority of young people (45%) are in the 25-29 age category, and the majority of single respondents (96%) are in the 14-18 age category. Among those who are cohabiting with a partner, the majority (7%) are 25-29 years old.

Figure # 7.14 - Marital status



In terms of future plans, the majority of young people (90%) plan to get married. Only a small part of them predicted to be single but with children (2%), or single and without children (2%). Among those who imagine themselves married in the future, the majority are in a registered marriage (95%) or are cohabiting with a partner (97%). As for those who are not in a registered or non-registered marriage, the majority (89%) of such respondents imagine themselves in a marriage, and only a very small part declared that they might have a non-registered relationship with a partner (3%). Results by age and region do not differ to a significant extent.

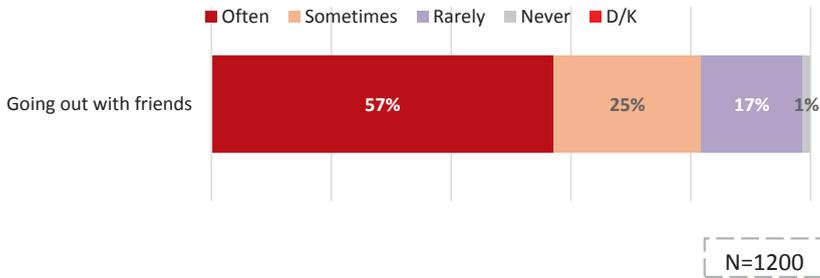
Figure # 7.15 – Future plans in terms of marriage and children



Society and Social Circle

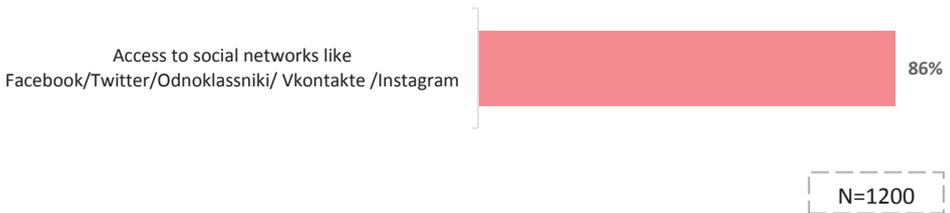
More than half of young people (57%) declared that they often go out with their friends, while one-fourth (25%) of inquired respondents rarely engage in this type of activity.

Figure # 7.16 – Frequency of going out with friends



As it can be seen from the study results, going out with friends is partially replaced by online communication with peers, thus it is natural that the majority of young people (86%) use the internet for the purpose of visiting social networks. According to respondents of the qualitative study, this activity is an actively used source of communication with friends.

Figure # 7.17 – Using the internet to socialize



Most respondents inquired within the focus groups declare that they spend a rather significant amount of their spare time with friends. Some respondents meet their friends outside in cafés or picnics, as well as at each other's places, and try to have fun together by watching movies, listening to music, or chatting.

For example, my friends and I often go out of the city – we often attend concerts. We also gather at each other's places, watch movies, listen to music, chat, and spend a lot of time on the computer. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

I spend my spare time with friends. I rarely have free time, but I do my best to go out and have fun. We go out dancing, arrange picnics in nature, etc. [Tbilisi, rural, female, 19-29 age category]

Focus group participants also declared that face-to-face communications have a very small part in young peoples' lives, and that social networking is the main means of communication with friends. As believed by a certain part of young people participating in the qualitative study, communicating via social networks, sharing information, and discussing different issues are much easier for young people than face-to-face conversation.

As believed by young people participating in the focus group discussions, their circle of friends has a very significant influence on their lives, future goals, and interests. Based on the respondents' observations and perceptions, young people whose friends have a lack of interests spend a significant part of their time in vain.

The majority does not have, but my friends love to have fun. We are very focused on studies and we want to have careers and arrange our lives as we want... Lots of youngsters are lazy and do not care about anything. The majority of boys and girls just hang out and talk about useless things – nothing else. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

As mentioned above, part of the focus group discussion participants believe that young people are aggressive towards their family members. Part of the participants of the qualitative study also believe that the expression of aggression might be connected to family and upbringing. They think that what children witness in the family reflects in their own aggressive behavior. Another part of the young respondents believe that such attitudes are wrong and that a child who witnesses aggression in the family may not carry out the same behavior model. Vice versa, a child may express aggression even if his or her parents try to create a calm and balanced environment at home. In this case, as believed by the respondents, friends may influence the behavior of a child.

It all comes from the family – they do what they witness in the family. Some children are aggressive because they protest and try to express their emotions through aggression. [Adjara/Guria, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

I disagree that aggression originates from the family. I know cases in which a person is very balanced and polite, while the situation in his or her family is not stable. I think that the street has a greater amount of influence. [Adjara/Guria, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

Despite having different opinions, part of the respondents participating in focus group discussions held within the scope of the “Georgian Youth Study” believe that family and friends have a significant influence on a young person’s development and freedom of expression.

Discussion

Family is assumed to be the most important value for Georgians. Unfortunately, there is no scientific evidence proving that the family was the most important value for people living in Georgia two decades ago, before the country encountered major political, social and economic changes. Looking back at Georgian culture and literature, however, it can be assumed that family values were prevalent in Georgia centuries ago. This trend is proved by many current surveys, as well as by the results of the Youth study in Georgia, as the vast majority of young people indicated future plans to marry and start a family. Transmitting the value of family from the older generation to the younger generation can also be associated with life in extended families, as those who are married often live with their parents, who actively share the responsibilities of child rearing. Thus, it can be assumed that the values shared by older generations, i.e. grandparents, even though possibly slightly less shared by the parents of the children themselves, might occur in younger generations as well.

Speaking of the generational gap and getting along with parents and friends, even though a large share of young people get along well with their parents, approximately 40% of youngsters mention having slightly different values than those of their parents. It should be also mentioned that, there are high levels of financial dependency of youth on their parents. Even though, despite this dependency the share of those youngsters who take the decision independently is also high. The freedom of choice seems to be more limited in regional cities and urban areas of Georgia. Rural youth also seems to be more critical towards the interference of parents in the decision of youth, as they think that parents prefer to have control over their children.

As mentioned above, young people feel closer to their friends rather than their family members, and naturally young people get along better with their friends. Friendships and romantic relationships serve comparable functions as well, and it is quite natural that youth assigned common interests and personality to be the most important factors when choosing a romantic partner. Common interests and personality give youth the opportunity to have more symmetric relations with their friends and romantic partners, rather than with their parents.

Leisure and Lifestyle

Introduction

According to John R. Kelly, leisure is commonly considered to be what we choose to do, and it might be expected to be less predictable than other segments of our lives. (Kelly, 1975). Leisure activities are largely responsible for the well-being of people, as apart from work, study, parenting, or other social obligations, leisure activities truly correspond to peoples' wishes and aspirations. Leisure activities can be seen as a source of regeneration and energy.

Even though leisure activities are defined as a free choice, they are still restricted in terms of timing, surroundings, social roles, etc. What people choose to do in their free time largely depends on what their life consists of, and as Kelly suggests, leisure styles change with new opportunities, new associations, and new roles.

According to Kelly, leisure activities can tentatively be divided into three dimensions: (1) unconditional leisure: activities chosen for their own sake, for their intrinsic value, and for satisfaction; (2) coordinated leisure: activities that are like work in form, but that are freely chosen and without penalty for non-participation; and (3) complementary leisure: activities chosen with the expectations of work, family, or community roles central to the decision. These dimensions are not mutually exclusive and there is no fine line between them, although studies found that social roles define whether the leisure activity will be unconditional or complementary. For instance, the leisure activities of couples change from unconditional towards complementary after children are born and family roles become dominant (Kelly, 1975).

Risky behaviors, like smoking and drinking, are also free choice, although as our study proved these activities can be explored through a complementary leisure lens, since there is pressure from peers and surroundings regarding the decision smoke or drink. According to M. Horst and H. Coffe, friendship network characteristics are directly linked to subjective well-being. Although overall, friends have a positive influence through health on subjective well-being, friends can also encourage individuals to start smoking or over eating (Horst, Coffe, 2012).

Leisure activities as well as risky behaviors are part of the lifestyle youth might

lead. This study included a special set of questions regarding the lifestyles of young people. The set of questions intended to determine the way young people spend their free time, explored some of the risky behaviors they might be practicing, and attempted to capture whether the patterns in using leisure time differ with age, gender, and other characteristics.

Main Findings

- Top activities practiced by the youth on a regular basis involve entertainment and relaxation, i.e. listening to music (70%), watching films/TV (61%), and going out with friends (57%);
- Thirty percent of youth reports watching the news via TV, computer, tablet, or smartphone on a daily basis;
- Foreign films seem to be attracting 16% of youngsters every day, and 73% at least once a week;
- Eighty-eight percent of youth has the access to the internet;
- A lack of internet access in the case of 12% of youth mostly falls on those residing in rural settlements;
- Youth spend approximately 3.7 hours per day on the internet;
- A vast majority of youngsters mostly use the internet for social networking, while almost half use the internet for watching films and communicating with other people;
- Thirty-two percent of the youth smokes cigarettes; Thirty-six percent of males appeared to be regular smokers, whereas only seven percent of females smoke on a regular basis;
- Two percent of young people declared that they drink alcohol every day;
- Eighty-eight percent of young people have never smoked marijuana, while eight percent rarely exercise this activity;
- Forty-nine percent of males consider alcohol to be acceptable, and 16% think that it is necessary to be accepted by others;

A vast majority of youngsters state that it is fashionable to look good (85%) and wear name-brand clothes (75%);

A majority of youth declares that they are very or rather satisfied with their appearance (71%);

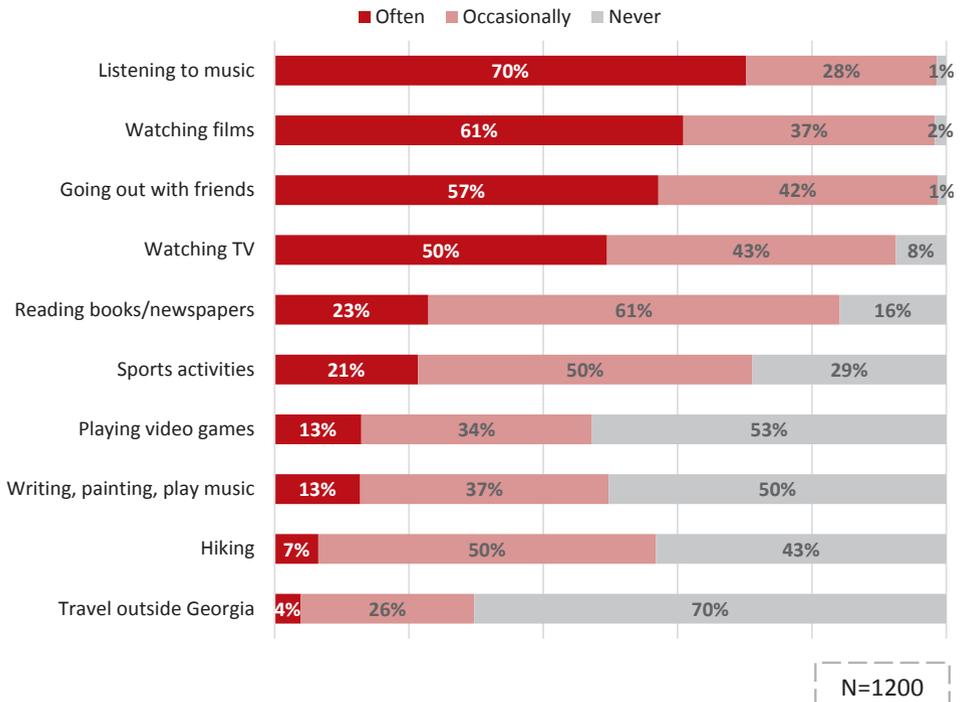
- The share of those never having a sexual partner, or having one or several sexual partners is distributed in approximately the same manner (35%, 30%, 30% respectively);
- The share of youth involved in violent acts is low, although when it happens it is either in their neighborhood or at school/university (15%, 18% respectively).

Analysis

Leisure Activities

According to study results, top activities practiced by the youth on a regular basis involve entertainment and relaxation, i.e. listening to music, watching films/TV, and going out with friends. These activities are practiced often by more than half of young respondents. The activities described above can be characterized as unstructured, as no certain type of organization is required to practice these activities. Most of these activities can be done privately, although going out with friends might cover a large array of activities, including those mentioned above. More structured activities that require a certain type of organization and can be characterized as more educational or creative are less practiced by youth on a regular basis. Almost every fourth youngster reads books or newspapers on a regular basis, although it should be mentioned that 61% of youngsters spend their time reading books and newspapers occasionally. Sports activities and hiking is a top way to spend free time, reported by 50% of youth on an occasional basis.

Figure # 8.1 – Leisure Activities



The table of correlation shows that going out with friends is often combined with listening to music. It is worth mentioning that even though playing video games is mostly deemed to be a private activity, it goes hand in hand with socializing with friends for Georgian youth. It is also worth mentioning that watching TV often excludes activities such as listening to music, reading, and going out with friends or engaging in sports activities.

Figure # 8.2 – The degree of correlation between activities conducted during leisure time

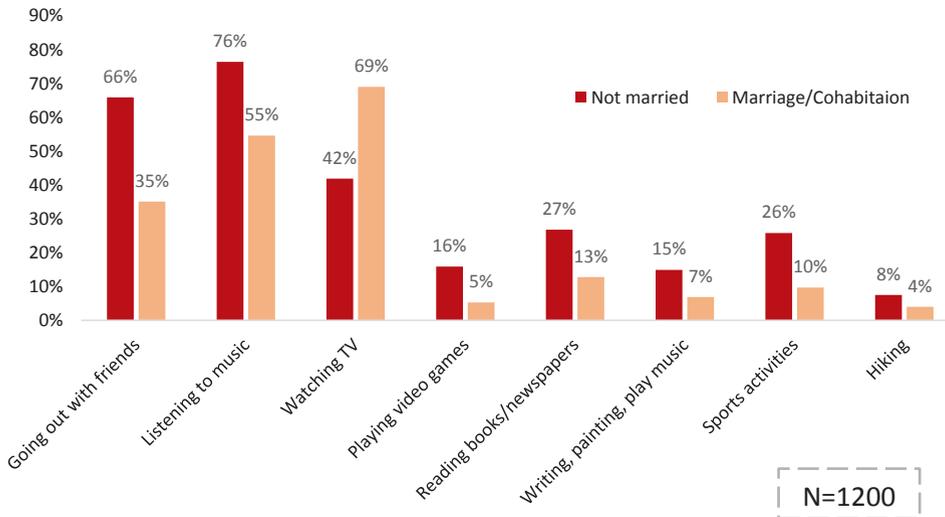
Spearman's rho	Going out with friends	Reading books/newspapers	Sports activities	Watching TV	Watching films	Writing, painting, playing music	Playing video games
Listening to music	.236**	.151**	.177**	-.076**	.135**	.210**	.113**
Going out with friends		.076**	.298**	-.077**	.156**	.064*	.214**
Reading books/newspapers			.162**	-.136**	-.001	.326**	-.024
Sports activities				-.147**	.022	.212**	.349**
Watching TV					.304**	-.152**	.005
Watching films						.039	.118**
Writing, painting, playing music							.089**

The top four activities practiced by Georgian youth are different while looking at the data according to age category. While listening to music is actively practiced by youth aged 14-18 (79%) and 19-24 (71%), only 62% of youth in their mid to late twenties (25-29 age category) listen to music often. The same tendency can be seen among youth spending time with friends. The older the age, the lower the share of youth going out with friends. Youth aged 14-18 and 19-24 are the most active in spending time with friends (65%), whereas 46% of youth aged 25-29 go out with friends often. Watching TV is a part of the lifestyle of Georgian youth that increases with age. Only 40% of youth aged 14-18 actively watch TV during their free time, and the share of youth in their mid to late twenties is higher (58%). The tendency of spending free time in a certain way on a regular basis (listening to music, going out with friends, reading, writing, painting, sporting, playing video games) is the same among all youth groups – the older the age,

the lower the share of youth practicing a certain type of activity, structured or unstructured, on a regular basis.

A decline in socializing or in private activities might also be connected to the new lifestyle that comes with marriage or cohabitation, as well as with having children. Unmarried youngsters seem to go out with friends, listen to music, or engage in sports activities more than those who are married or living with a partner. On the other hand. Married/cohabitating youngsters spend more time watching TV.

Figure # 8.3 – Leisure time activities according to marital status (often, in %)



Young people who already have children spend less time socializing with friends than those who do not have children. A slightly lower share of youth having no children listen to music, while watching TV is quite popular among young parents.

Differences in the use of leisure time can also be observed in different types of settlements. Listening to music is a regular activity for a larger share of youth residing in urban settlements (Tbilisi - 79%, other urban settlements - 74%), whereas 62% of rural youth spend their free time in this way. A larger share of rural youth (64%) report watching TV on a regular basis, when compared to youth residing in Tbilisi (37%) and other urban settlements (45%). Rural young people seem to be a little less outgoing (52%) on a regular basis than young people in Tbilisi (61%) and other urban settlements (60%). It should be mentioned that even though only 21% of young people aged 14-29 practice sports activities, the distribution of physically active youth is approximately the same among different types of settlements (Tbilisi 20%, Other Urban 22%, Rural 22%).

Gender seems to define a certain type of lifestyle as well, as more males seem to spend their free time going out with friends (68%) than females (46%) on a regular basis. Also, males appear to be more physically active (34%) than females (7%).

Parental education levels might also determine the use of free time for young people. The higher the level of education of the parents, the higher the share of youth practicing more educational or creative activities, i.e. actively reading books and newspapers, writing, painting, playing an instrument. The share of young people spending their free time watching TV is lower when parents have university degrees.

Activities practiced by youth during free time vary from youngster to youngster, although it can be assumed that generally, young people prefer to spend their leisure time on entertainment. Activities described by youth participating in focus group discussions are mainly in compliance with the quantitative study results. Young people mostly spend their time on activities that do not require self-organization and are more unstructured, i.e. going out with friends, listening to music, and watching films. To those who have more free time available, hanging out with friends is the most attractive activity, even though it should be mentioned that hanging out with friends means spending time in the street for males and visiting each other at home for females.

I completely agree that boys and girls are different from each other. Boys might go out in the street at 1 AM and drink beer, while it is unacceptable for girls to sit in the park at midnight and drink beer. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, female, 19-29 age category]

Girls usually gather at each other's houses. My friends are almost all married, and so we usually gather at home. We talk; we might go to a cafe. Boys usually go gambling or drink, etc. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

Entertainment for youth residing in rural areas can be described as more conservative.

FGD in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, urban, 19-29 age category

Female: Our youth does not like to have fun that is out of the frame; everything has limits here...

Mod.: Where is the limit?

Female: We have certain limits when having fun. Others in Tbilisi and abroad do not have these limits.

Female: It is the mentality, we have higher standards of culture compared to other cities...

Female: In cities they love night life, clubs, and having fun.

Female: We are more family type of people.

Leisure time is also less affordable to those who are studying or working, and also to those who already have children. Additionally, males seem to have more free time than females, as females tend to accept various types of employment. Males, however, might be ashamed of some types of employment.

FGD in Adjara/Guria, urban, 19-29 age category

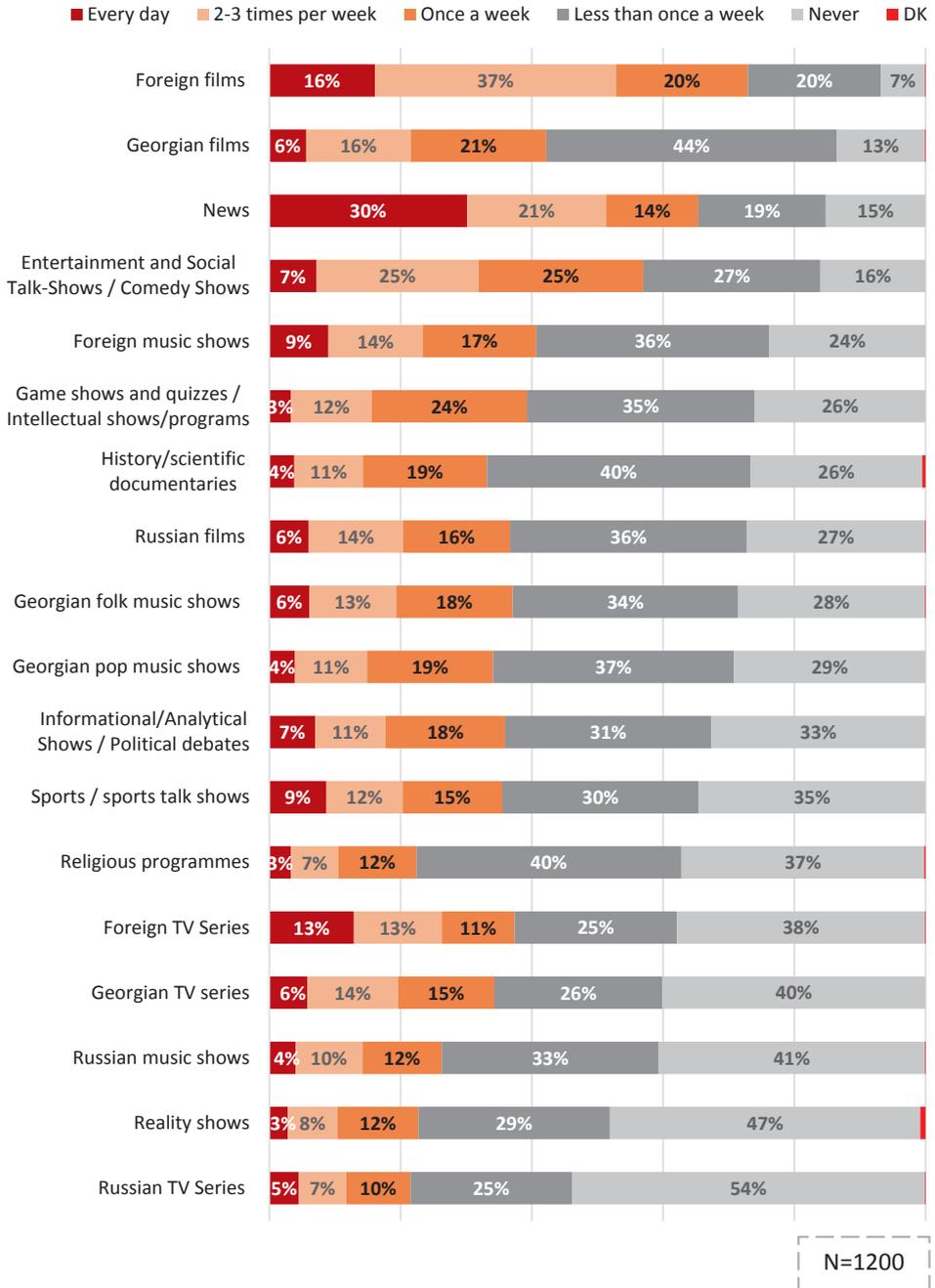
Mod.: Do boys have more free time or girls?

Female: Boys. Girls are not ashamed of working.

Preferences for Media and Internet

The most popular type of media is news, as 30% of Georgian youth report watching the news via TV, computer, tablet, or smartphone on a daily basis. Fifty-one percent of youngsters state that they watch the news at least two or three times a week. Watching films also seems to be very popular among youth. Foreign films seem to attract 16% of youngsters every day and 73% at least once a week. Georgian films and TV series' are watched daily by six percent of young people. It is also worth noting that in total, 43% of youngsters watch films and 35% watch TV series' of Georgian origin at least once a week. Young Georgians seem to be entertained by talk shows and comedy shows as well, as more than half of the youngsters report watching talk shows or comedy shows at least once a week (57%). The media content that is least watched by youth is a Russian TV series, as more than half of the youngsters report never watching this type of show (54%). Reality shows also do not seem to be catching much of the attention of young people, as 47% of respondents' state that they never watch reality shows.

Figure # 8.4 – Frequency of content young people follow via the media

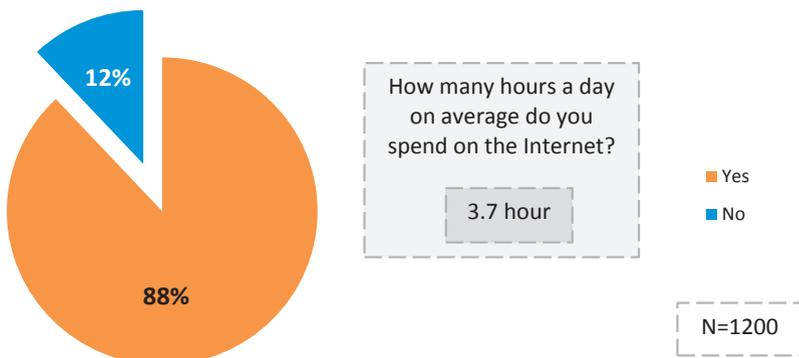


Neither socio-economic characteristics, nor settlement type of youth seem to define the content of media they watch, even though it is worth mentioning that the higher the age, the higher the interest in news, as 41% of youth aged 25-29 report watching the news on a daily basis, whereas the share of teenagers watching the news is lower (youth aged 14-18 watching the news every day- 13%). Also, the least watched media content for females is sports/sports talk shows, as 52% of female youngsters state that they never watch sports or sports talk shows, whereas 53% of males watch this type of content at least once a week.

Eighty-eight percent of youth have the access to the internet, while 12% do not have access. A lack of internet access mostly falls on youth residing in rural settlements, as 24% of youngsters living in villages declare that they do not have access to the internet. It is also worth mentioning that seven percent of youth living in rural settlements except Tbilisi also have limited access to the internet. Surprisingly, even the small share of those youngsters who are employed state that they do not have access to the internet (seven percent). The share of those having limited access to the internet is larger among the unemployed (14%). Accessibility to the internet is highest among those belonging to the upper social class (100%), while the lower social class has the least access to the internet (79%). Accessibility is also highest among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Secondary school students, those who are not studying at the moment, and those who have terminated their studies have relatively lower access to the internet (90% and 85%, respectively).

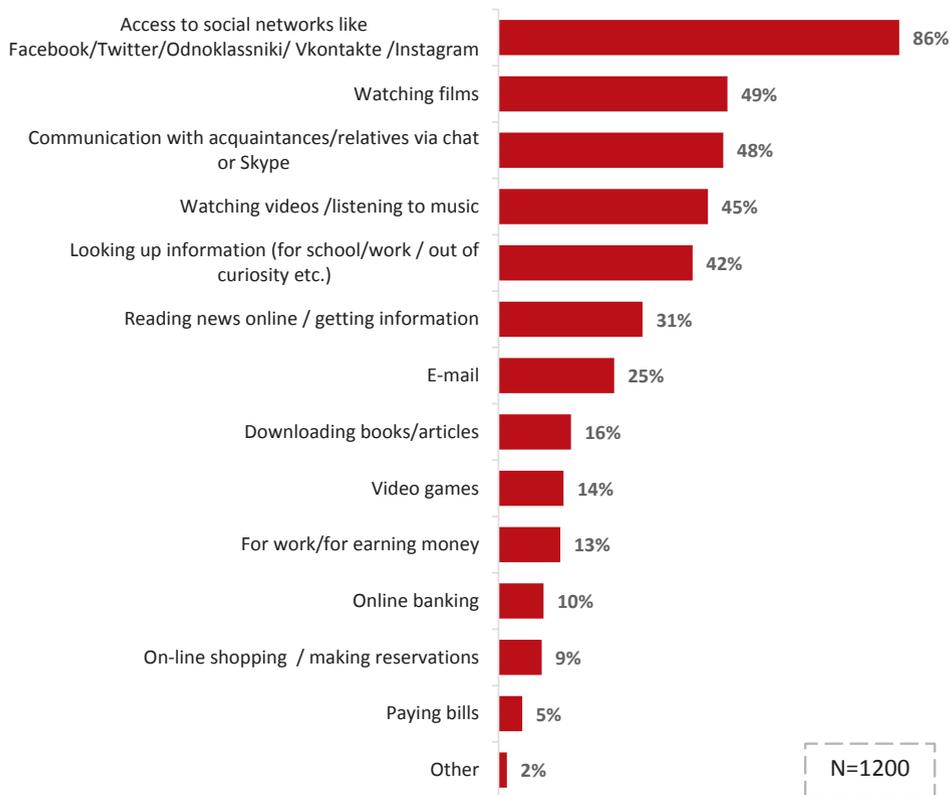
Young people spend 3.7 hours per day on the internet. The share of youth who spend more time is higher among those aged 19-24, as they spend an average of four hours per day on the internet. Males also seem to spend slightly more time on the internet than females (3.94 HH per day, 3.60 HH per day, respectively). Tbilisi youth spend the most time on the internet per day (4.51 HH on average), compared to their peers in other urban and rural settlements (3.96 HH per day on average, 3.04 HH per day on average). Time spent on the internet is also slightly higher among undergraduate and postgraduate students, when compared to other youngsters at different levels of education.

Figure # 8.5 – Accessibility and time spent on the internet



A vast majority of youngsters mostly use the internet for social networking, while almost half of the youth use the internet for watching films and communicating with other people. The least performed activities via the internet are paying bills and online shopping/making reservations.

Figure # 8.6 – Purposes for using the internet



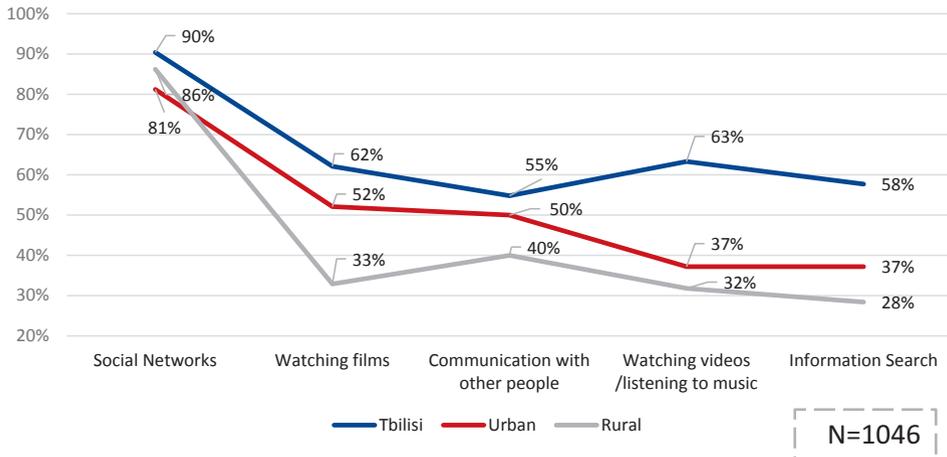
In total, 42% of young people use the internet in order to look up information for school/work, or just out of mere curiosity. It is worth noting, however, that the higher the age, the lower the share of youth spending time on the internet to look for information. Also, the share of those who download books and articles is 16% overall. For this index, there is a difference among youth at different ages. Similar to looking up information, downloading books becomes less popular with an increase in age.

Females also seem to be more interested in looking up information for school/work than males, and a larger share of females use the internet for communicating with other people. Watching films is a reason for using the internet among 52% of

males, while only 46% of females use the internet for the same purpose.

Using the internet for the top three reasons described above is more characteristic of youth residing in Tbilisi. The trend of using the internet for various reasons changes as the settlement type changes from the capital to other urban cities and rural settlements.

Figure # 8.7 – Purposes for using the internet according to settlement type



Participants of focus group discussions think that their generation is dependent on electronic devices and the internet. A large part of the leisure time of youth is spent on the internet, and mostly on social networks. Even though some of them state that the internet is sometimes used for educational purposes and can have a positive impact on youth, it is assumed that social networks have altered the traditional ways of communication among peers.

We prefer to write instead of talk. They (youngsters) cannot even speak normally any more...you cannot feel comfortable, i.e. when I talk to my friends, I may better explain myself in writing. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

They prefer to stay at home on the computer and keep themselves busy with social networks. They have a relationship with social networking at a distance, although I think that if they would meet each other face-to-face they would be different. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, urban, male, 14-29 age category]

I think that they do not value relationships anymore. Social networks became more important...young people are the worst at communicating with each other. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

It should be mentioned that using social networks does not keep young people from having an active lifestyle. For some of them, a social network is just a way to share a certain type of information with a friend. Also, even though the form of communication may have changed over time due to technological advances, the actors in these relationships stayed the same.

You can write to a friend (on a social network) to go to a bar or to the sea and then everyone will come. [Adjara/Guria, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

They (youth) do not get detached from outside world due to Facebook or social networks. They still communicate with actual people via Facebook. We should understand those people who have problems with face-to-face communication... they are addicted to social networks, but they also lead an active lifestyle. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, rural, male, 14-29 age category]

I think that they do not value relationships anymore. Social networks became more important...young people are the worst at communicating with each other. [Shida Kartli, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

Spending time on social networks and generally having access to the internet is also associated with online games.

Before, you could not enter the casino since there is an age restriction, but now you can open an account in your parents' names. No one can see your age, so a 10 year old child can sit at the computer and play. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

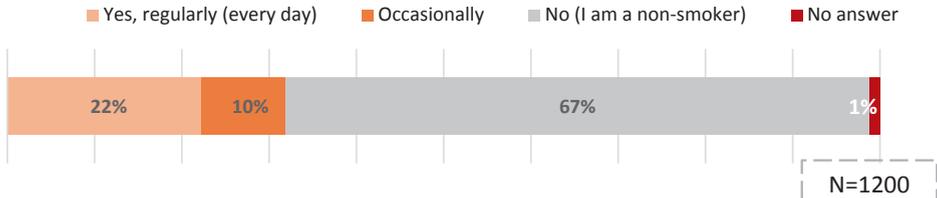
They spend a lot of time (with the computer), some do not even go outside, and they are addicted to computer games. [Imereti/Racha-Lechkhumi/Kvemo Svaneti, urban, female, 14-18 age category]

This is one of the problems of youth. They are addicted to the computer, and they play online games. [Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, rural, female, 14-29 age category]

Risky Behaviour

According to the survey results, 32% of the youth smoke cigarettes. This result reiterates other current study findings, according to which 31% of the population smokes cigarettes (ISSA, 2016).

Figure # 8.8 – Prevalence of smoking cigarettes



Thirty-six percent of males appeared to be regular smokers, whereas only seven percent of females smoke on a regular basis. Smoking on a regular basis is more prevalent among youth aged 25-29, and the share of non-smokers decreases with the increase in age, although, the share of those who only smoke occasionally does not change with age (9-10%). The settlement type does seem to influence the smoking habits of youth, or rather the openness of youth while answering sensitive questions. Tbilisi and urban settlements seem to have larger shares of regular smokers (27% and 22%, respectively) compared to rural settlements (18%). Youth presumably belonging to upper social classes seem to have a larger share of regular smokers (29%) than lower or middle social classes (20% and 24%, respectively). The share of occasional smokers is lower among the upper social classes (four percent). Regular smokers also account for larger shares among those who are employed (34%).

Two percent of young people report drinking alcohol every day. Generally, the consumption of alcohol is prevalent in 70% of youngsters, including both those who drink on a regular basis and very rare drinkers. Two percent of regular drinkers are mostly males (three percent), aged 25-29 (two percent), residing in rural settlements (four percent), and belonging to lower or middle classes (two percent). In terms of drinking weekly, males are dominant (male - 27%, female 5%). Unsurprisingly, the prevalence of drinking alcohol weekly increases with age from 8% to 22%.

Figure # 8.9 – Prevalence of drinking alcohol by gender

■ Yes, regularly (every day) ■ Yes, several times a week ■ Only on week-ends ■ Rarely ■ No, never ■ No answer



Eighty-eight percent of young people have never smoked marijuana, while eight percent rarely exercise this activity. Among these eight percent, males are dominant (14%), and the share of smoking marijuana increases with age from five percent to nine percent. Also, youngsters who smoke marijuana rarely belong to upper social classes (16%) or reside in Tbilisi (15%).

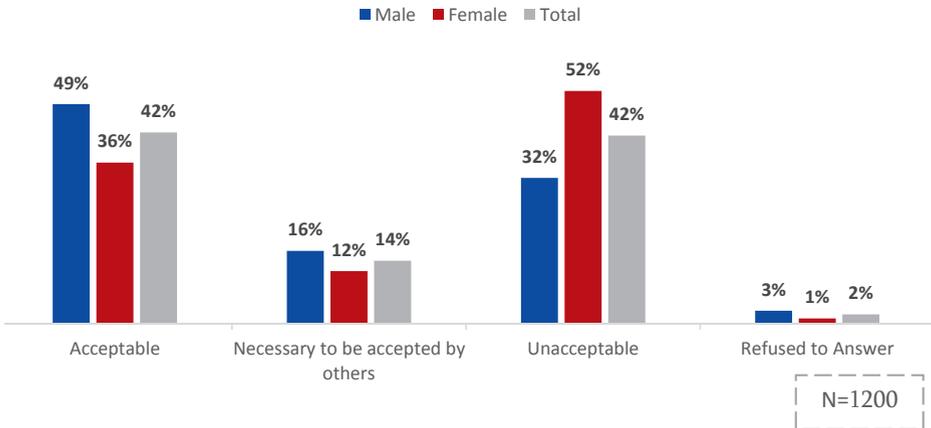
Figure # 8.10 – Prevalence of smoking marijuana by gender

■ Yes, regularly (every day) ■ Yes, several times a week ■ Only on week-ends ■ Rarely ■ No, never ■ No answer



Even though an equal share of youth perceives alcohol to be either acceptable or unacceptable, a larger share of males consider alcohol to be acceptable (49%), and 16% think that it is necessary to be accepted by others. The same idea is shared only by 12% of females.

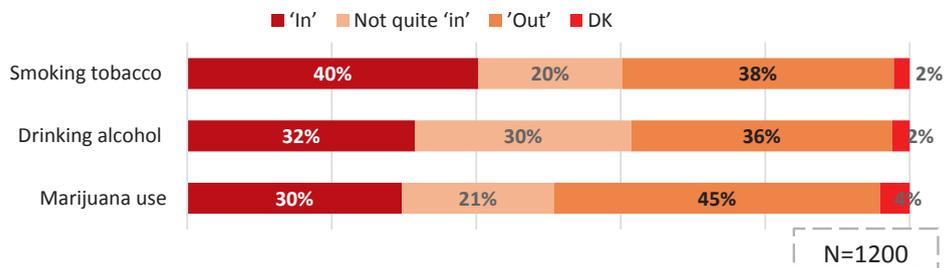
Figure # 8.11 – Acceptance of alcohol by gender



Acceptance levels of alcohol increase with age, although an almost equal share of youth aged 14-18 and 25-29 think that alcohol is necessary to be accepted by others (16% and 15%, respectively), while 11% of youngsters aged 19-24 share the same idea. The necessity of alcohol as a prerequisite for acceptance by peers is higher among youth residing in rural settlements (20%) and those belonging to lower social classes (18%). It should be mentioned, however, that a smaller share of youth in rural settlements consider alcohol as more acceptable than those residing in Tbilisi (26% and 59%, respectively), and alcohol is more acceptable to a larger share of youth from upper classes than to youth in the lower or middle classes (62%, 33%, 50% respectively).

Almost half of the youth stated that it is out of fashion to use marijuana (45%), although the share of those youngsters who think that smoking tobacco is or is not fashionable is almost equal. The same can be assumed regarding drinking alcohol. An almost equal share of youth thinks that drinking alcohol is fashionable, not quite in fashion, or is completely out of fashion.

Figure # 8.12 –Smoking and Drinking - Fashionable VS unfashionable



More males find drinking and smoking fashionable than females, whereas the attitude towards marijuana does not differ by age or gender.

Focus group discussion participants talked about why youth begin to smoke, and how acceptable society thinks it is to smoke. It appeared that according to the majority of FG participants, the largest amount of pressure on smoking behaviours comes from peers and the environment.

A person starts to smoke because of their environment, in which everyone is smoking. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, rural, male, 19-29 age category]

Everybody was smoking, so if I wanted to be a part of the cool society, I had to smoke too. [Samtskhe-Javakheti, ethnic minorities, female, 19-29 age category]

Some smoke only because they went to the city and started studying at University and it was cool to smoke among Tbilisians...somebody might say, you are old-fashioned if you do not smoke in the 21st century. [Samegrelo/Zemo Svaneti, urban, male, 19-29 age category]

According to FG participants, society has different acceptability levels when it comes to female and male smokers. It seems that male smokers are more accepted by society than females, even though young people think that everyone is entitled to act as per their wishes. Older generations find it unacceptable for a female to smoke.

There were not so many women smoking earlier as now – this is new and they (society) consider it to be very bad when women smoke. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

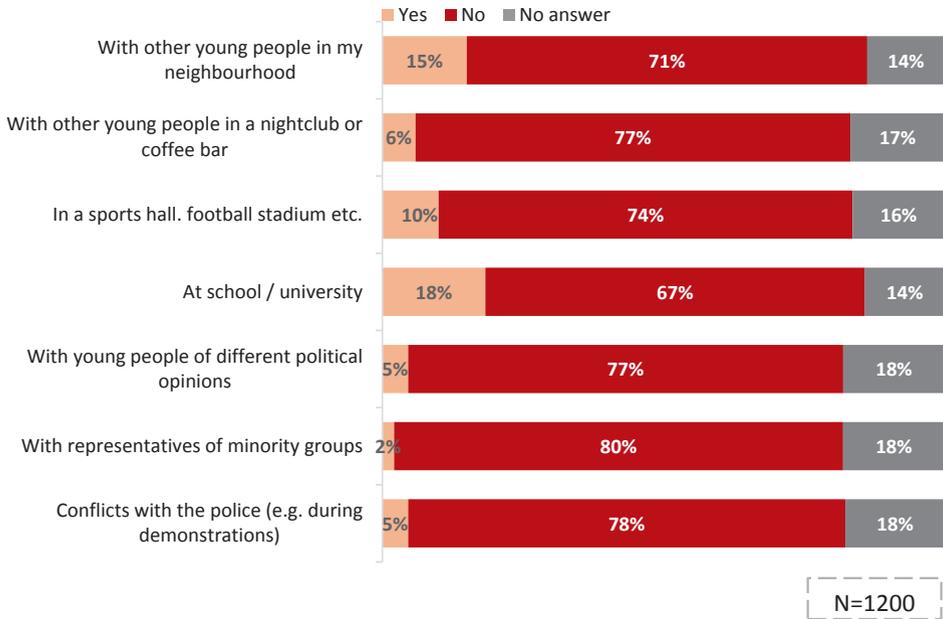
This stereotype is very bad – if an elderly person sees a girl smoking, they will immediately think of her as someone with a bad reputation. [Mtskheta-Mtianeti, urban, male, 14-18 age category]

As FG participants declare, alcohol, similar to smoking, mostly occurs due to peer pressure. Unlike smoking, however, drinking alcohol is considered to be part of Georgian culture, thus the acceptability of female and male drinkers is higher than smokers. Drinking should be defined though, as excessive drinking is considered to be unacceptable for both genders.

One of the aspects the survey explored together with other risky behaviors, like the consumption of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana, was engagement in violent acts in various contexts. Involvement in violent acts is not high, and 18% is the highest share of youth that have participated in any kind of violent act provided in the questionnaire. Even though the prevalence of being engaged in violent acts is

not very high, the survey data gives a clear understanding of the contexts in which violent acts may take place. It appears that young people are involved in violent acts in the neighborhood and at the school/university.

Figure # 8.13 –Engagement in various violent acts

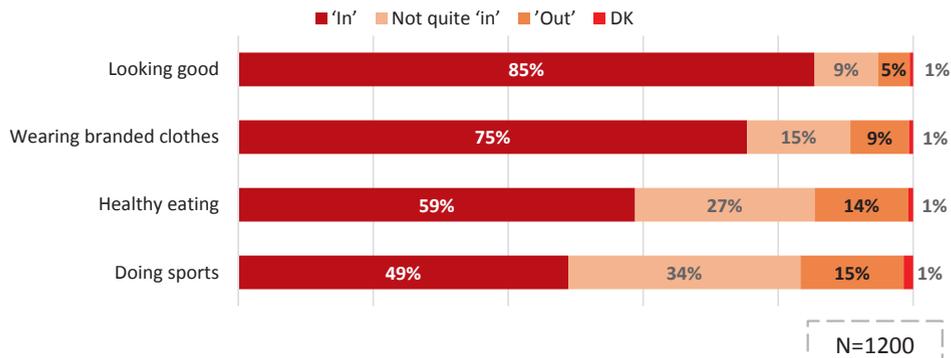


Engaging in violent acts in the neighbourhood is more common for males (25%) than females (five percent). School and university also seem to be a context in which a higher share of males (24%) are involved in conflict situations when compared to females, although it should be mentioned that 13% of women reported being involved in violent acts at school or university. It is interesting that engagement in violent acts decreases with the increase in age. Young people aged 14-18 declared having conflict situations in their neighbourhood (30%), and at school/university (23%), whereas the share of youth facing similar situations at an older age (i.e. 25-29) drops down to 11%.

What is fashionable

A vast majority of youngsters state that it is fashionable to look good (85%) and wear branded clothes (75%). Surprisingly, looking good is not accompanied by healthy eating or doing sports, as a smaller share of youth consider these activities to be fashionable (59% and 49%, respectively).

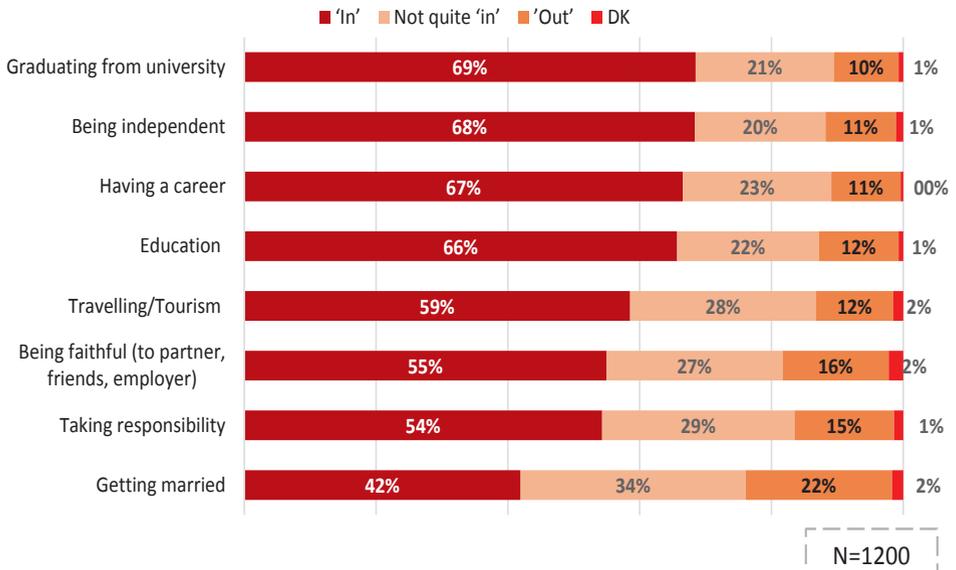
Figure # 8.14 –Appearance - fashionable VS unfashionable



The parameters of the appearance being fashionable or not are not affected by age, gender or settlement type of youth, and the differences, if any, among the various groups are not statistically significant.

While speaking of the concept fashionable versus unfashionable, it is worth noting that these questions captured not only the perceptions of young people regarding general trends; it also shed light about personal measures of subjective well-being. Considering the fact that young people consider the number of appearance indicators to be important for subjective well-being, it is important to identify the level of satisfaction with their appearance. As it appears, a majority of young people have a positive self-image, as 71% of youth declare that they are very or rather satisfied with their appearance. It is interesting that a slightly larger share of males are content with their appearance (75%) than females (67%). Other variables (age, settlement type, employment status, social class) do not seem to define satisfaction with appearance.

An almost equal share of young people think that it is fashionable to graduate from university, be independent, and have a career. Getting married is fashionable only by 42% of respondents. Generally speaking, young people consider personal development to be more fashionable than family goals.

Figure # 8.15 –Education and personal life - fashionable VS unfashionable

These indicators do not change while analysing the data across different socio-economic variables, and there are no statistically significant differences among various groups.

Focus group discussion participants discussed marriage not in terms of a fashionable concept, but rather they focused on age. Young people think that getting married early is not fashionable, and is considered only as an escape option for those who are too lazy to study. It is also worth mentioning that this opinion is only shared by females in Tbilisi, where young people are assumed to be more oriented on career goals and self-development than they are in other settlements.

FG conducted in Tbilisi, 19-29 age group

Female: if you do not get married till you are 25, it is over...

Female: This tendency has declined nowadays.

Mod.: Do young people think that they should get married early?

Female: Yes, of course not only a part, but a majority shares these views.

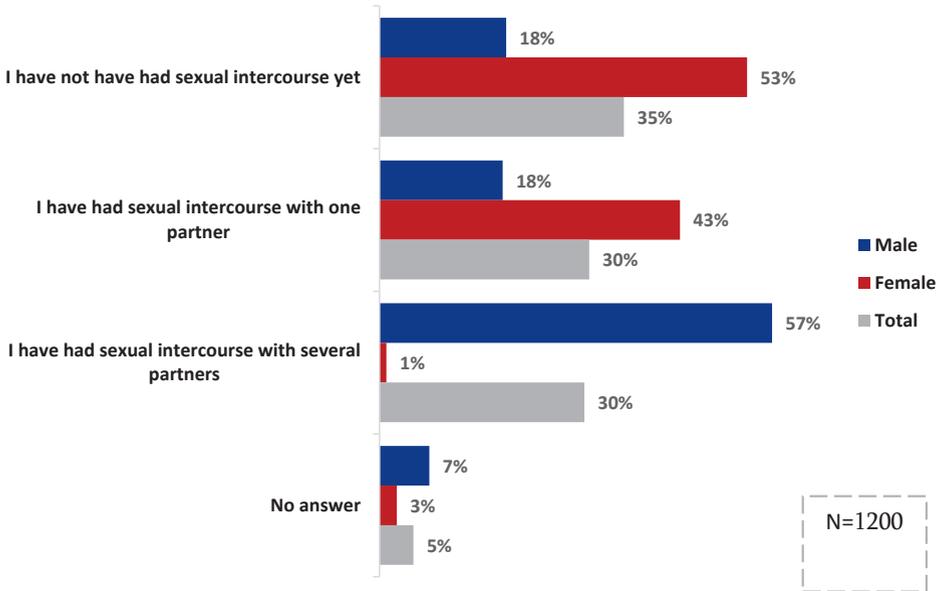
Female: Only those who are too lazy to study.

Female: I had a friend who got married at 20 and this was a great shock for us. We have all expressed our condolences towards her; we were all for studying, and life gets messy with having children.

Sexual Life and Activity

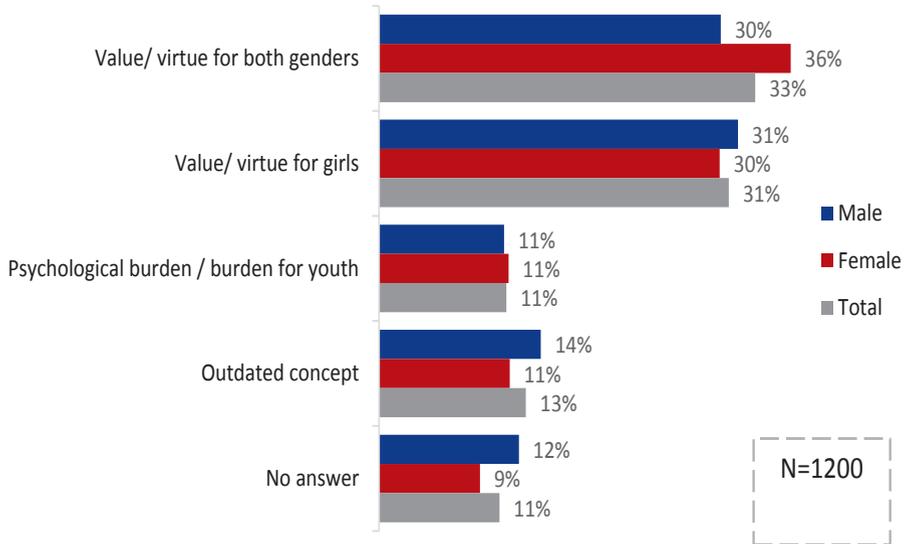
In terms of the sexual activity of youth, the share of those never having a sexual partner, having one sexual partner, or several sexual partners is distributed approximately in the same manner.

Figure # 8.16 –Sexual Experience



Naturally, sexual experience is higher among people aged 25-29, when compared to youth in their teenage years. Sexual experience is also more prevalent among males than females. There is a difference among the number of the partners as well – males have had sexual experience with several partners (57%) while only one percent of females have similar experience. A larger share of upper social class members also seem to have experience with several partners (43%), while only 25% and 33% share similar experience in the lower or middle classes.

While 33% of youth consider sexual abstinence as a virtue for both genders, 31% perceive the same as a virtue for girls only.

Figure # 8.17 –Attitude towards sexual abstinence

There are no differences among males and females while discussing the virginity issue, although a slightly larger share of females think that sexual abstinence can be a value for both genders. Virginity being a value for girls increases with the increase in age. If 25% of youth aged 14-18 thinks of virginity as a virtue for girls, 36% of youngsters in their late 20s share the same opinion. Fifty-four percent of youth belonging to higher social classes also consider virginity as a value for girls.

Discussion

As it can be seen from the study results, youth mostly prefer to engage in activities that are unstructured and unconditional. One of the most practiced leisure activities of youth is going out with friends. This activity can be considered both as unconditional and complementary, as it might be satisfying the intrinsic needs of youth and at the same time correspond to community roles and expectations. These activities done for one's own sake are mostly observed among youth in their teens or their early 20s. The older the age, the lesser the amount of social interactions, and time previously spent with friends or on other activities is mostly substituted by individual activities like watching TV. As mentioned above, leisure activities are free choice, although they are still defined by social roles, surroundings, and new lifestyles. A decline in socializing or private activities might be also connected to the new lifestyle that comes with marriage or cohabitation, as well as with having children. Changes in the activities practiced by youth with the increase of age and new lifestyle, i.e. marriage or having children, can be attributed to having larger amounts of unstructured time while young or single.

With the increase in age, the chances of employment increase, and family life requires more commitment within the family. Thus, youth committed to work or family have to accept that socializing activities require planning that is not always possible, and instead of social activities practice more individual ones, such as watching TV or movies, etc.

Risky behaviors such as smoking or drinking are activities that people usually engage in accordance to their wishes, although if the wish is to be an integral part of a community that accepts drinking or smoking, engaging in these activities becomes a pre-condition of social integration. The importance of social relations being linked to well-being dates back at least to Durkheim's classical study on suicide. He showed that being socially integrated decreases the likelihood of committing suicide. More recently, studies suggest that if one excludes personality and genes as explanatory factors, social relations are among the most important determinants of well-being (Horst, Coffe, 2012). Even though youth, according to our study, acknowledge the risks of these behaviors (i.e. smoking and drinking), being in compliance with the expectations of the community and being socially integrated appeared to be somewhat more important.

Conclusion

Conclusion part of the study summarizes the various aspects of life of youth explored in the survey attempting to draw a contextual picture of the environment Georgia's youth lives in and the challenges youngsters face nowadays.

Vast Majority of survey respondents believe that the level of education in Georgia is moderately satisfying, approximately same share attends the school eagerly, although 51% finds the school/higher education institution environment stressful and hard. It is also worth noting that bribing does not exist in the education system according to 68% of youth. 71% of students feel optimistic about their employment opportunities and believe that they will be able to find a job right after or soon after graduation, although it should be considered that 75% of young people believe that the most important factor for finding a job in Georgia is that of friends/acquaintances. Thus it can be assumed that the optimism related to employment opportunities is not directly related to the knowledge and skills acquired from the educational institutions.

Study results reflect tendencies related to a mismatch between the labor market supply and demand spread throughout the population. On one hand, young people think that parents and family members influence their choice of future education greatly in favor of higher education, whereas on the other hand, young people believe that a future educational path should be chosen by the youngsters themselves, and should be in compliance with their own goals and desires. Youth also believe that if the instructions of the older generation are being followed, the labor market will become saturated with an unmotivated workforce. An unmotivated person is not appealing for employers, and according to young people, this is how the mismatch, as well as the lack of capabilities and expertise, is created. The mismatch may also be caused by the curricula of higher education institutions, which does not typically involve practical components in the study process. Thus, the curricula does not equip students with the relevant skills to enter the labor market.

Speaking of employment and education, it should be mentioned that one-fifth of respondents have a strong desire to emigrate, largely driven by problems related to living conditions, education, and employment. Improving living conditions,

having better accessibility to education and employment are also among the main reasons for spatial mobility. Presumably, living conditions can be improved in a country with higher living standards, better employment opportunities, and gender equality in terms of employment. Generally speaking, young people consider migrating to a country with higher levels of democracy. Even though young people think that the democracy levels in Georgia are perceived to exist to a certain extent, political and civic engagement – two main pillars of democracy, are quite weak in Georgia. The survey results verify the findings of other recently conducted studies in terms of the political indifference of Georgian youngsters. Georgian young people are not very interested in politics. Apart from low political involvement, the civic engagement of youth is also very insignificant.

Despite low political engagement, a majority of Georgian young people support accession to the EU as well as NATO, even though both are associated with similar threats to Georgia. Membership/Association with the EU and NATO is directly linked to escalated Russian aggression, and lessens the chances of returning lost Georgian territories. Getting closer to the EU will facilitate the process of outmigration, while membership in NATO will increase the number of Georgian troops in its missions, resulting in larger casualties. Part of the youth believes that EU accession can be associated with losing values and traditions. Fear of assimilation with the EU can be observed more in rural areas, and is perceived to involve accepting issues contradictory to Georgian culture. The discrepancy between rural and urban areas can be related to higher attachment to culture, forbidding the doubt of its rightness.

Attachment to culture can be explained by the fact that on the global map of values, Georgia is more inclined towards the traditional values and survival values poles. The dominance of traditional values can be explained by the influence of the traditional social environment in which young people go through the socialization process in their childhood and youth, the social groups with which they interact, and the older generation, which largely influences their worldview. The influence is somewhat natural when looking at the survey results and considering the living environment of youth. Seventy percent of young people live with their parents, and 62% of respondents are financially supported by their parents. Almost half of young people make decisions with their parents. At the end it should be mentioned that Georgian youth expressed the highest level of trust towards their immediate families and the vast majority of young people consider it very important to lead a good family life. Family being an important value for youth is also reflected in their future plans. The majority of young people plan to get married in the future and one-fourth of young respondents' think of marriage as a priority, because in Georgia, marriage is more respected than cohabitation.

Speaking of values, it should be mentioned that social distance towards minority groups (e.g. sexual minorities) is prevalent among youth. The least amount of trust is given to LGBT people. A significant amount of social distance is evident

in the case of homosexuals – 44 percent of respondents' state that they would not be happy if a homosexual person or couple moved into their neighborhood. However, it is worth mentioning that the share of respondents stating that they would not care is also quite high (45%- not interested). Social distance which is an indicator for a low level of tolerance, low acceptance of diversity and equality, and opposition to self-expression and universal values, is more prevalent in rural areas.

As it can be seen from the study results, young people residing in Tbilisi or other urban settlements have better conditions for almost every aspect inquired within the survey. Their cultural capital and employment opportunities are relatively better than those in rural settlements. Urban youth also seem to show higher levels of social distance, while rural youngsters display more attachment to traditional values. It is worth mentioning that according to the 2014 National Census, 40% of youth reside in rural settlements of Georgia. If young people are considered to be an integral part of society forming the future of the country, these should be alarming indicators that focus efforts towards improving the environment in which young people reside.

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Like many post-Soviet states, the South Caucasus countries are still in transition. Georgia rates as a lighthouse in the region in terms of many factors. The country has made considerable steps in terms of democratization as well as the transition into a market economy. The anchor for these steps is close cooperation with the European Union. Euro-Atlantic integration is the most important foreign policy nexus, and serves as a balance for the onholding tense relationship with Russia. However, in terms of political culture, Georgia is still influenced by its Soviet legacy.

The study at hand explores the worries, aspirations, values and lifestyles of Georgia's youth. Youngsters that are aged between 14 and 29 years today are the youngsters who grew up after the break-down of the Soviet Union and in an independent Georgia. They are an important indicator for the relationship to the Soviet legacy on one hand, and to the future development of their society on the other.