

CRRC-Georgia

FRAMING POLITICAL PARADOX ON FACEBOOK

Locating the Window of Public Support
for Both Georgia's EU Accession and
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BLOG

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Framing Political Paradox on Facebook:

Locating the Window of Public Support for Both Georgia's EU Accession and the Georgian Dream Party

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FRAMING POLITICAL PARADOX ON FACEBOOK: LOCATING THE WINDOW OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR BOTH GEORGIA'S EU ACCESSION AND THE GEORGIAN DREAM PARTY

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2022 the European Commission announced its historic decision to begin Georgia's EU accession talks, a long-held goal of the country; even enshrined in its constitution.¹ As a result of the decision, the streets of Tbilisi erupted in celebration. Tens of thousands of citizens flooded Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi's primary thoroughfare and location of the country's Parliament, demonstrating their resounding support of the decision.² This starkly contrasts with the public's reaction to Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze's announcement only two years later on November 28, 2024, declaring the Georgian Dream government's decision to freeze EU accession talks until 2028. Shocked and outraged, again tens of thousands of citizens rushed to Rustaveli Avenue in protest.³ Over a year later, protests persist against a backdrop of government crackdowns on dissent and mass imprisonment.

A majority (70%) of the Georgian public supports EU integration.⁴ Curiously, nearly two-thirds (73%) of self-identified Georgian Dream supporters also want the country to join the EU.⁵ Pro-EU Georgian voters' support for a party that engages in promoting anti-Western discourse while self-sabotaging its EU accession process is puzzling, to say the least. This blog will demonstrate the dissemination of anti-Western content shared on Facebook in Georgia from November 28, 2024 to May 31, 2025 captured by CRRC-Georgia and SIDA's social media monitor. By analyzing posts containing anti-Western content, the cognitive dissonance employed by simultaneous Georgian Dream and EU integration supporters may be revealed.

¹ Constitutional Court of Georgia. "Constitution of Georgia."

² Civil.ge. "In Photos: Massive Pro-EU Rally in Tbilisi."

³ Civil.ge. "Photo Story: Protest Against GD's Decision to Abort EU Accession."

⁴ The Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2024 Georgia."

⁵ The Caucasus Research Resource Centers. "Caucasus Barometer 2024 Georgia."

METHODOLOGY

The social media monitor's data consists of posts collected from a combination of 16 public pages/groups on Facebook, characterized by anti-Western content. It includes information on mentioned actors categorized by the positive, neutral, or negative tone toward its subject. Among the 16 selected public pages, two feature content addressing the country's ethnic Azerbaijani community, while two target Georgia's ethnic Armenian community, and another two specifically focus on content from Adjara. The remainder are Georgian language groups and pages without a particular regional focus. Data collection began on the content from November 29, 2024, the day after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced Georgia would pause its EU accession process until at least 2028. A total of 2,261 posts were analyzed from the selected Facebook groups/pages. A full breakdown of the observed groups' and pages' languages, categories, titles, hyperlinks, and follower counts are displayed in the table below:

#	Language	Category	Group/Page Name	Follower Count
1	Georgian	Open support of Georgian Dream	ლიდერი 41	42,000
2	Georgian	Open support of Georgian Dream	ანტი-მაიდან⁶	6,600
2.1	Georgian	Indirect/anonymous support of Georgian Dream	არ აგარევენებთ	20,000
3	Georgian	Open support of Georgian Dream	ბიძინა ივანიშვილი და მომავალი თაობა#oficial	20,100
4	Georgian	Indirect/anonymous support of Georgian Dream	სირცხვილის კორიდორი⁷	56,000

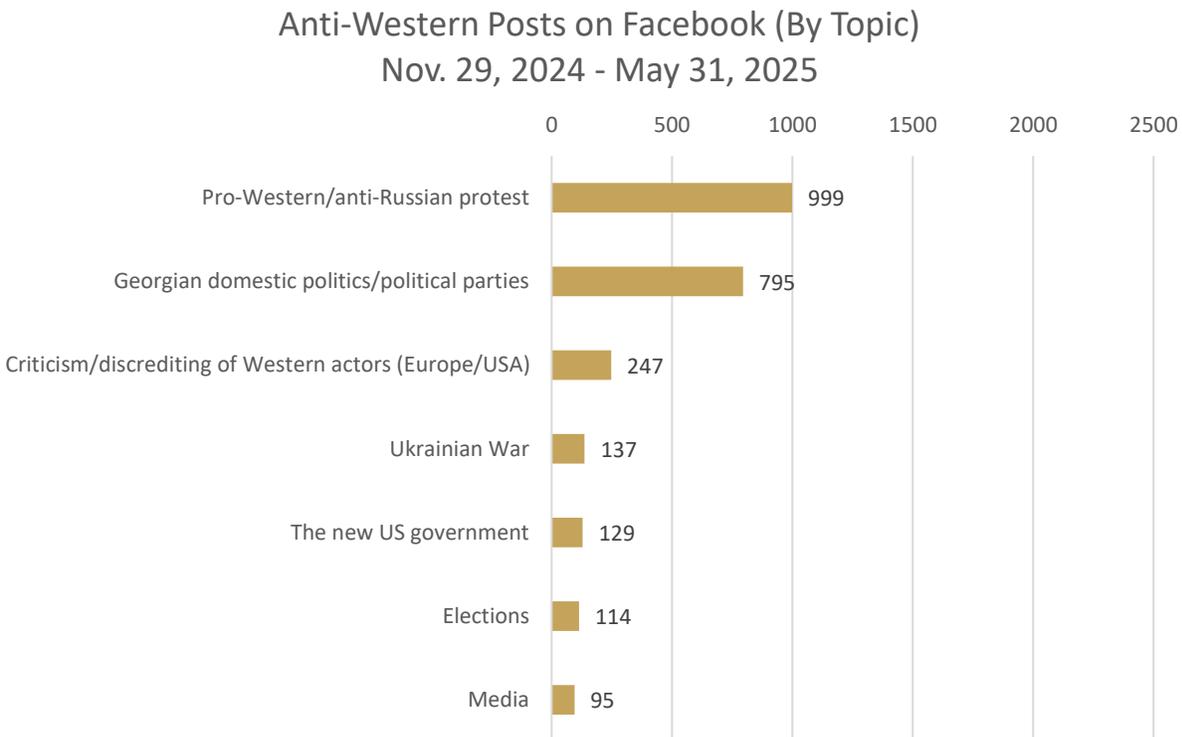
⁶ “ანტი-მაიდან” page was taken down in late February 2025, accordingly it was replaced in the observation with the page “არ აგარევენებთ” from February 22, 2025.

⁷ “სირცხვილის კორიდორი” stopped posting in February 2025 and it was replaced in the observation with the page “მიგ ევროპაში” from February 22, 2025.

#	Language	Category	Group/Page Name	Follower Count
4.1	Georgian	Indirect/anonymous support of Georgian Dream	შიგ ევროპაში	7,500
5	Georgian	Indirect/anonymous support of Georgian Dream	Gogaggg	602,000
6	Georgian	Indirect/anonymous support of Georgian Dream	პოლიტიკოსები 1 ლარიდან	26,000
7	Georgian	Right-wing extremist content	წმინდა მამები და მათი გამონათქვამები	36,000
8	Georgian	Right-wing extremist content	პატრიოტული გვერდი	46,000
9	Georgian	Mainstream news media	POSTV - ანალიტიკა	274,000
10	Georgian	Independent news media	News.mcvane.ge	152,000
11	Armenian	Local news media	Ասդրադարձ Լուսովակսակ	12,000
12	Armenian and Russian	Public diaspora page	Джавахкская диаспора России	1,700
13	Azerbaijani	News media page	24News.ge	16,800
14	Azerbaijani	News media page	Aktual.ge	34,000
15	Georgian (Adjara)	Open support of Georgian Dream	ბიძინა ივანიშვილის მხარდამჭერი ჯგუფი აჭარაში	2,000
16	Georgian (Adjara)	News media page	გაზეთი აჭარა	5,800

WHAT ARE PAGES POSTING?

Between November 29, 2024, and May 31, 2025, the media monitor organized posts into categories according to the themes they addressed. The most common themes addressed included: pro-Western/anti-Russian protests, Georgian domestic politics/political parties, criticism /discrediting of Western actors (Europe/USA), Russia-Ukraine War, the new US government, elections, and media.

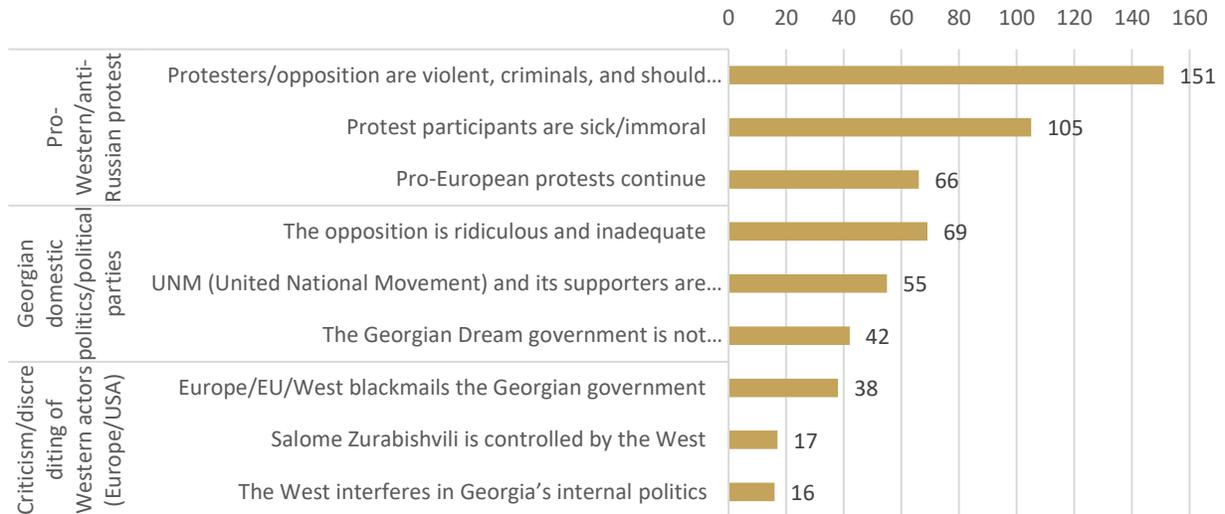


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On the selected Georgian Facebook groups and pages the pro-Western/anti-Russian protests are most addressed during this period, at 999 posts. This is followed by posts about Georgian domestic politics/political parties with 795 entries. Interestingly, despite the pages' anti-Western association, criticism/discrediting of Western actors (Europe/EU) is third in frequency, at 247 posts. Themes such as the war in Ukraine (137 posts), the new US administration (129 posts), elections (114 posts), and media (95 posts) were discussed less.

⁸ In total 2,261 posts were analyzed. As some posts contain information referring to more than one identified topic, the total number of posts organized by topic adds to 2,516.

Top 3 Most Frequent Messages Among Most Commonly Shared Themes on Anti-Western Facebook Pages/Groups Nov. 29, 2024 - May 31, 2025



Among posts directed at the pro-Western/anti-Russian protests, they most commonly aimed to delegitimizing protest participants and opposition parties through accusations of violence and criminality (151 posts) or even questioning their sanity and morality (105 posts). When discussing Georgian domestic politics, posts most commonly dismissed opposition parties, characterizing them as ridiculous (69 posts). This was followed by content suggesting the United National Movement (UNM) and its supporters are criminals (55 posts). Notably, the third most common topic among anti-Western pages and groups, when addressing domestic politics, questioned the Georgian Dream government's conservatism (42 posts).

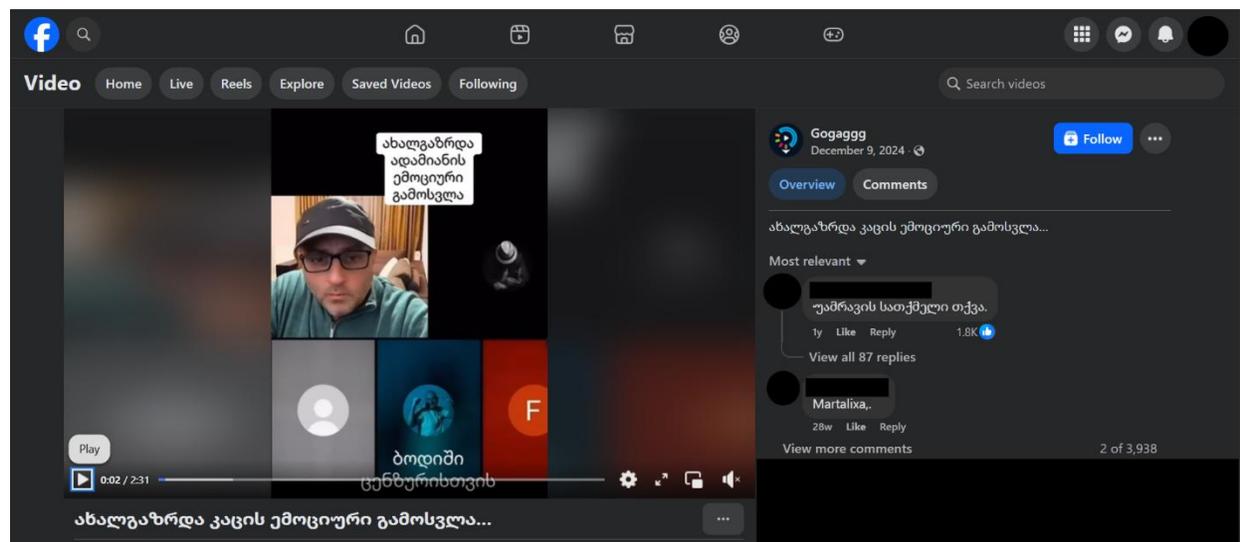
Although our media monitor gathered posts from pages and groups all categorized prior to the beginning of the analysis as "anti-Western", posts that criticized Western states and actors were more thematically scattered than those directed at the ongoing protests and domestic politics. Of the 247 posts specifically critical of the West, 38 posts accused Europe and the EU of blackmailing the Georgian government. This was followed by posts alleging former president Salome Zourabichvili to be controlled by the West (17 posts). And the third most common topic in this category broadly accused the West of interfering in Georgia's politics (16 posts).

Despite these Facebook pages and groups promoting anti-Western tropes by affiliation, it appears that more frequent topics of discussion concern domestic politics and actors. Protestors and

opposition members may aptly describe the Georgian Dream government and its policy agenda as pro-Russian or anti-Western; however apparent from the monitor’s data, regime supporters’ content does not always frame their content according to this binary. Instead, they aim to discredit opposition members and protestors with content that questions their intelligence, motivations, and willingness to use violence, while establishing the Georgian Dream government as the only legitimate and feasible political actor in the country. Pro-government posters largely avoid addressing the government’s anti-EU rhetoric and policies, demonstrating a window in which Georgian Dream supporters can side with the ruling party on polarized, domestic, issues while simultaneously supporting Georgia’s EU integration.

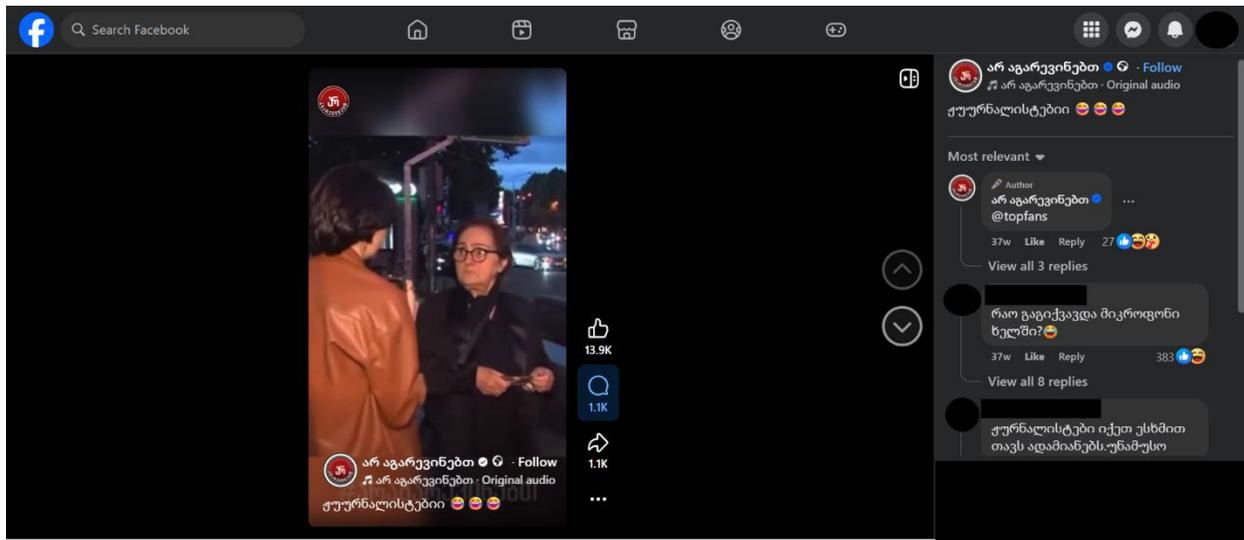
POPULAR POSTS

Posts critical of Pro-EU and anti-Russia protestors were most numerous among the monitor’s categories. Such posts also received the most engagement. Engagement for the purpose of this analysis includes “like” or other “reactions”, comments, and shares. Notably, the most interacted with posts were videos, whereas text posts and images lagged far behind in user interaction. The content of videos most engaged with during the monitoring period promoted hateful content, especially homophobia, and supported violence towards figures associated with the country’s political opposition, such as independent journalists.

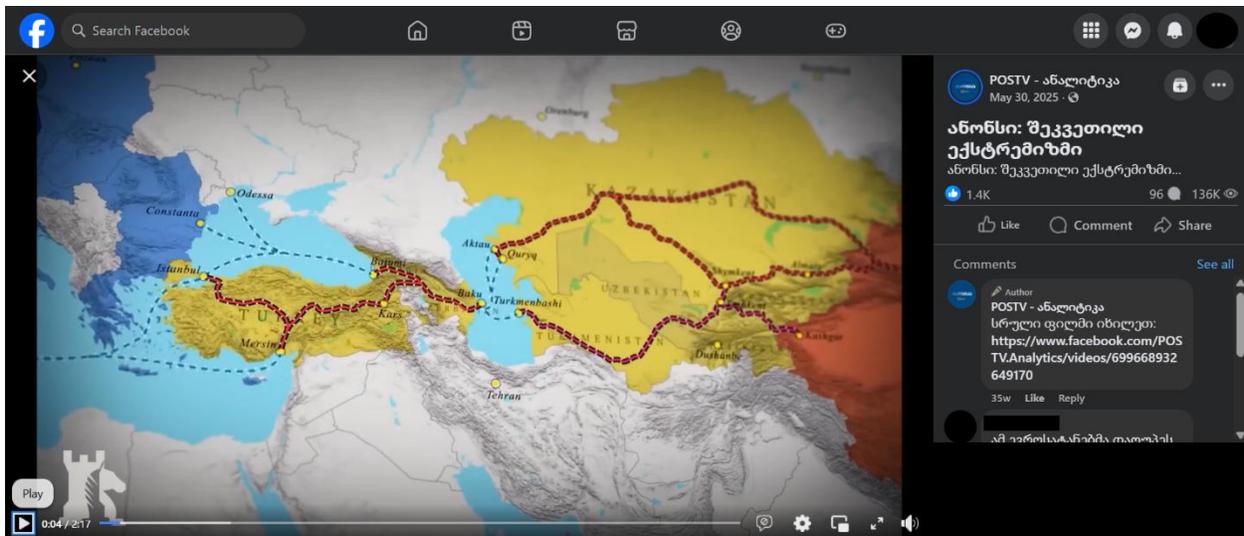


The video above received the most engagement during the monitoring period. Posted on the “Gogaggg” page on December 9, 2024, it features a conversation held on a virtual meeting

platform in which an off-screen voice angrily and argumentatively claims that homosexuality is not natural, is a man-made concept, and a virus while using homophobic slurs. The monitor recorded the post on February 22, 2025, when it had amassed a collection of 17,482 likes, reactions, comments, and shares; while growing its reach to the present. The most liked comment remarks, “უამრავის სათქმელი თქვა” or, “He said what most people want to say”. The post’s message, although aligning with anti-Western narratives that promote homophobia and decry “LGBT propaganda”.



The second most engaged with post during the monitoring period was published on May 21, 2025 by “არ აგარევინებთ”. The post, a video, depicts a noted independent journalist, Vika Bukia, asking a pedestrian what she thinks about reports of journalists being attacked by police while reporting on the ongoing anti-government protests. The woman responds by voicing approval for the attacks and suggests that the victims of violence are not journalists at all. The video concludes with a clip of pro-government figure, Davit Khurtsilava “Japana” mocking opposition aligned journalists. The post, by July 4, 2025 when analyzed by the monitor, had garnered 12,199 reactions, 942 of which were comments, and 1,080 shares. Similar to the previous post, the video does not have an overtly anti-Western message, rather it intends to delegitimize independent journalists while promoting state violence against them.



The most engaged with posts promote homophobic messaging, target domestic political figures and journalists, or utilize talking points addressing domestic politically polarized topics familiar to the Georgian public. Posts that slander western actors, such as the EU and US are far less engaged with by users. On May 30, 2025 POSTV - ანალიტიკა published a video alleging that a European and American “deep state” is plotting a violent overthrow of the Georgian government in order to take advantage of economic and geopolitical interests in the Caucasus. Among overtly anti-Western posts in the monitor, in which the EU and US are framed as enemies of Georgia, this post received the most engagement. At the time of the monitor’s analysis, July 7, 2025, the video was engaged with 906 times, far from the 17,748 likes, comments, and shares received by the most engaged with post in the monitoring analysis.

Overall, videos featuring homophobic messaging and slander toward political figures and journalists were engaged with most on the Facebook pages and groups analyzed during the monitoring period. Although the messaging aligns with narratives commonly promoted among anti-Western actors, the most engaged with content did not overtly criticize Western states or institutions such as the EU. Instead, users gravitated toward posts featuring social commentary or content addressing domestic and politically polarized topics, especially when insulting or questioning the legitimacy of opposition figures and journalists.

CONCLUSION

The Georgian Dream government, despite enforcing an anti-Western policy agenda, is supported by a considerable portion of the public, which simultaneously desires Georgia's EU integration. The social media monitor revealed that supporters of Georgian Dream do not view the country's politics through a pro-Europe and pro-Russia binary. According to the monitor, posts addressing ongoing protests were most frequent, 999 posts, while domestic politics followed at 795. Posts overtly critical of the EU and US trailed in number at 247. Additionally, the most frequently engaged with posts from anti-Western pages did not overtly criticize the EU or US; instead, they featured homophobic rhetoric and messaging critical of opposition figures and journalists. This data demonstrates that on Facebook, content is curated to primarily feature criticism of those who oppose the government and its promoted values, while eschewing coverage of legislation enforced by Georgian Dream that acts against the public's interests.

Overall, the media monitor helps explain how support for Georgian Dream can coexist with broad public backing for EU integration. Pro-government and Anti-Western Facebook pages rarely ask audiences to reject the West outright. Instead, they concentrate attention on protests, opposition figures, journalists, and socially polarized issues, while largely avoiding sustained discussion of the government's own EU-related decisions. This content environment enables supporters to interpret politics primarily through domestic, moral, and partisan lenses. As a result, EU integration remains a generally supported goal, abstracted from the government's actions that undermine it, allowing cognitive dissonance among pro-Georgian Dream voters to persist without direct confrontation.

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