

CRRC-Georgia

HOW POLARIZED ARE GEORGIANS?

BLOG

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HOW POLARIZED ARE GEORGIANS?

INTRODUCTION

Political polarization is often cited as one of the key [challenges](#) to the democratization in Georgia. The use of polarizing rhetoric by political elites has been both [frequent](#) and consistent, shaping much of the country's political discourse. Empirical evidence on the extent of polarization among the Georgian voters, however, remains mixed. While previous studies indicate that the majority of citizens do not exhibit pronounced [ideological](#) divisions, approximately 30% can be classified as [affectively](#) polarized.

In previous years, political polarization in Georgia primarily stemmed from the intense rivalry between the Georgian Dream and the United National Movement. However, since 2024, amid an intensifying authoritarian turnaround, polarizing rhetoric has become a key instrument of repression, deployed by the Georgian Dream to delegitimize and marginalize its political opponents. Recent policies enacted by the ruling party have been characterized by greater hostility toward the opposition and the calculated use of divisive [narratives](#), particularly regarding salient issues related to foreign policy and national identity.

In this context, it is both timely and necessary to investigate whether these political trends have exacerbated divisions within Georgian society. The survey carried out by CRRC Georgia in February 2025 offers a valuable and up-to-date perspective on the degree of polarization among Georgian voters.

METHODOLOGY

Political polarization in this study was assessed using three distinct pairs of questions, each designed to capture a different aspect of affective polarization, that is, [tendency](#) of supporters of the Georgian Dream and opposition to dislike and distrust each other.

The first pair of questions asked respondents, “How often does the “Georgian Dream”/opposition do what the country needs?” This approach evaluates polarization in performance perceptions, or

the extent to which individuals view the actions of the ruling party versus the opposition as beneficial for the country.

The second pair of questions focused on feelings toward supporters of opposing political parties: “How do you feel about the supporters of the Georgian Dream/opposition?” This set measures intergroup polarization, highlighting affective divisions and the presence of negative emotions and distrust among supporters of different parties.

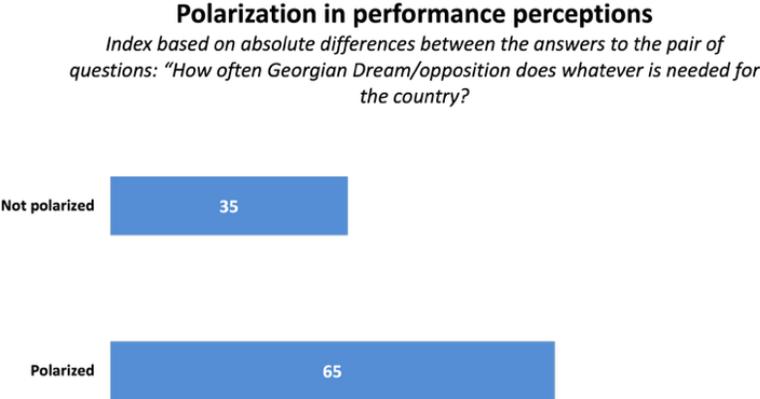
The third pair addressed interpersonal relationships by asking, “How comfortable would you feel if your friend were a supporter of the Georgian Dream/opposition?” This question assesses social distance, indicating the degree of discomfort individuals might experience in personal relationships involving political disagreement.

For each pair of questions, the absolute differences between responses regarding the ruling party and the opposition were calculated. This method provided a measure of real asymmetry in attitudes. Respondents with a score of “0” were categorized as not polarized, whereas those with a score of “1” or higher were coded as polarized.

THE SCALES OF POLARIZATION

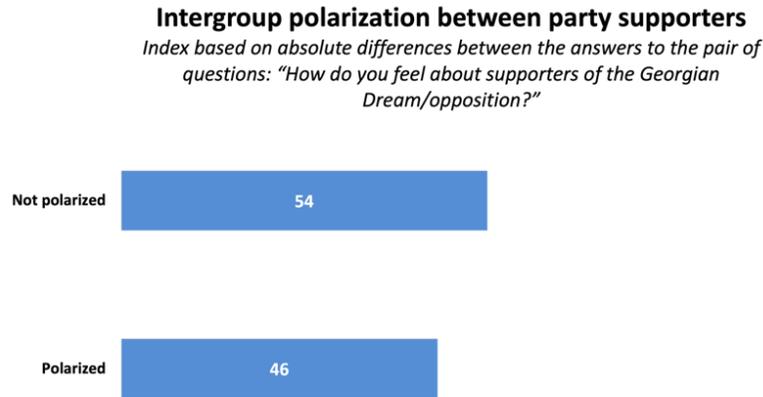
Based on respondents’ answers to the paired question - “How often does the ruling party/opposition do what the country needs?” - 65% exhibited some degree of polarization.

Figure 1



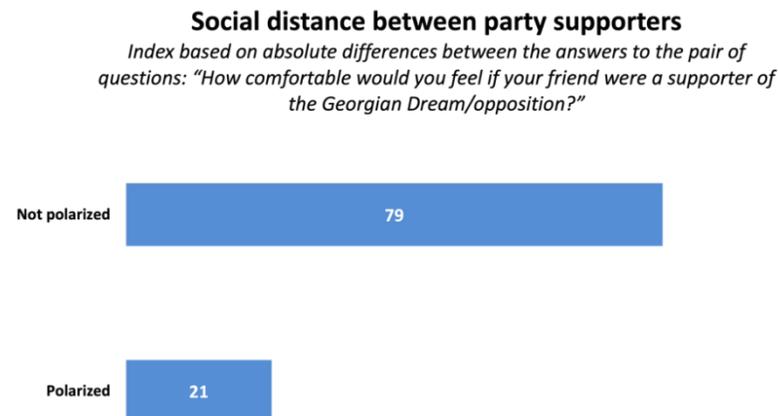
In response to the paired question - "How do you feel about supporters of the Georgian Dream/opposition?" - 46% showed some level of polarization.

Figure 2



Regarding the question - "How comfortable would you feel if your friend were a supporter of the Georgian Dream/opposition?" - only 21% indicated some level of social polarization.

Figure 3



These findings reveal distinct variations in political polarization among Georgian voters, depending on the aspect being measured. The highest level of polarization is observed in how individuals perceive the performance of political actors. Polarization is somewhat less pronounced when

considering attitudes toward supporters of opposing political parties. Social relationships remain the least affected by polarization.

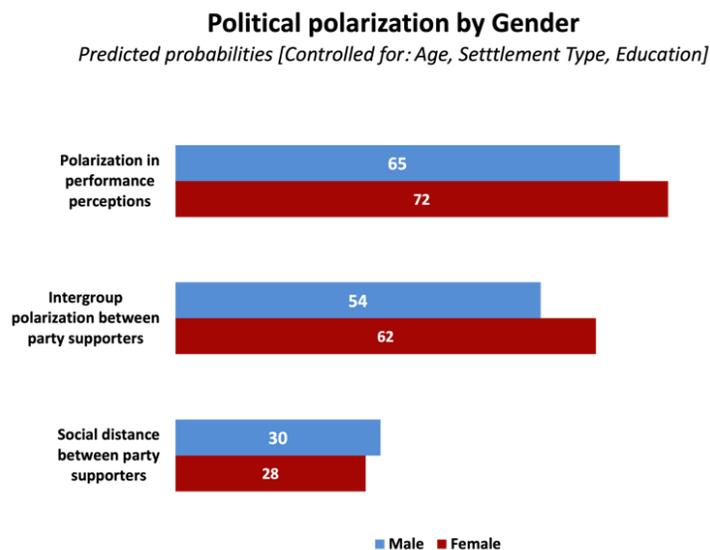
WHO IS MORE POLARIZED?

To better understand which groups within the population are more likely to exhibit political polarization, a binary logistic regression analysis was employed. This analytical approach involved two sequential models to systematically assess the impact of various factors on polarization outcomes.

The initial model focused exclusively on demographic characteristics. It included gender, age group, settlement type, and education as independent variables. The second model expanded upon the initial analysis by introducing additional variables, media consumption habits, specifically TV channel preferences, and partisan affiliation.

The analysis revealed that settlement type and education level have no significant effect on any forms of political polarization among Georgian voters. In contrast, gender does show a modest association with political polarization. Specifically, women are slightly more prone to polarized views compared to men.

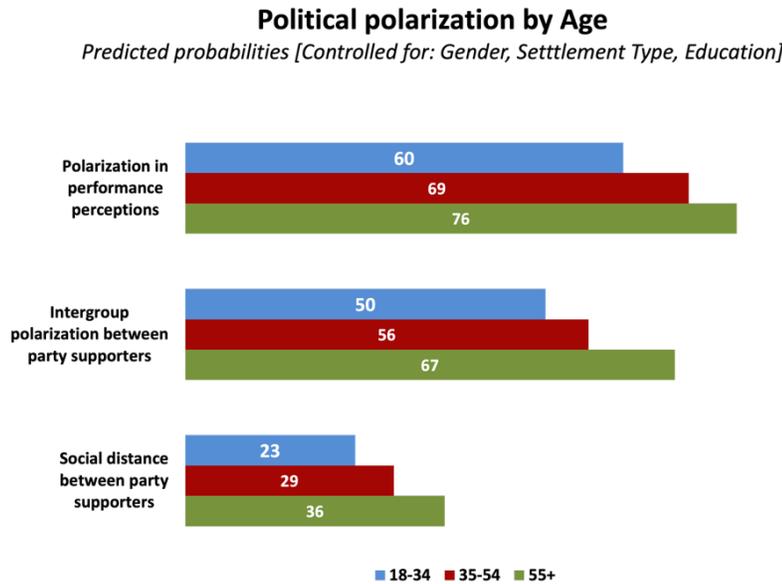
Figure 4



Age is a major demographic factor, with older individuals consistently showing greater polarization across all dimensions. For performance perceptions, polarization rises from 60% in the 18–34 age

group to 76% among those 55 and older. Intergroup polarization and social distance also increase with age, though social distance remains at lower levels overall.

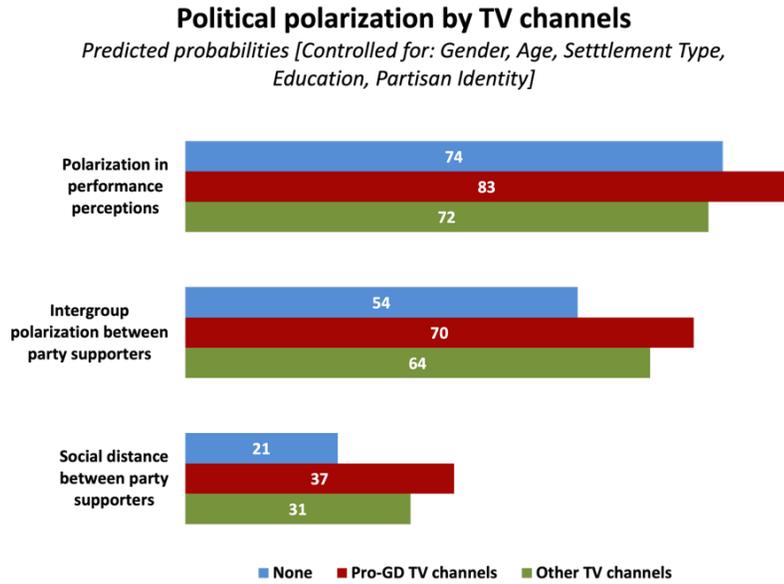
Figure 5



Beyond demographic characteristics, the analysis reveals that television consumption habits and partisan identity are the most powerful predictors of political polarization among Georgian voters. By controlling for demographic variables and partisan affiliation, the findings demonstrate a strong association between the type of media consumed and the likelihood of exhibiting polarized attitudes.

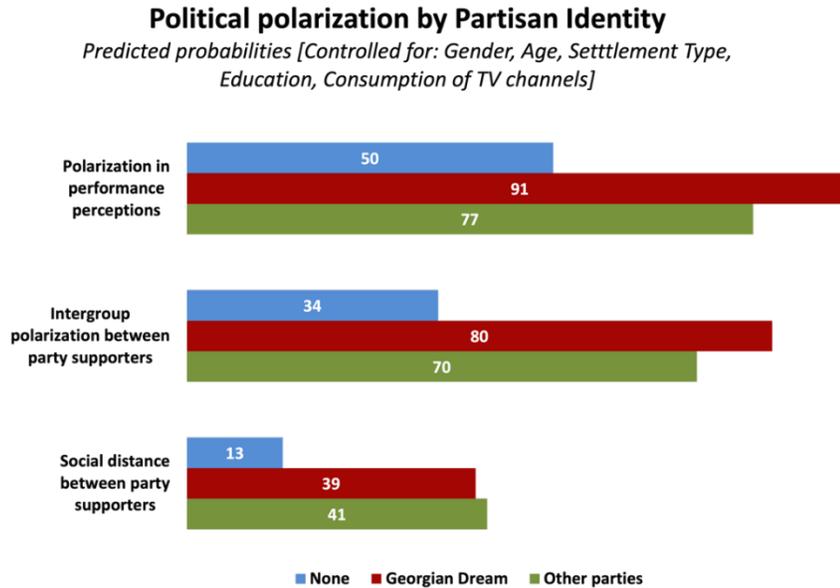
Regular viewers of pro-Georgian Dream TV channels (Imedi, Rustavi 2, and PosTV) are notably more likely to hold polarized views than those who watch other TV channels or no television. The probability of polarization in performance perceptions is highest among these viewers (83%), compared to non-viewers (74%) and viewers of other channels (72%). Similarly, predicted probability of the intergroup polarization of pro-Georgian Dream TV channel consumers stands at 70%, versus 54% for non-viewers and 64% for consumers of other TV channels. Media consumption habits also affect social distance: for consumers of pro-Georgian Dream channels, the predicted probability of feeling uncomfortable due to political differences is 37%, compared to 21% among non-viewers and 31% for viewers of other channels.

Figure 6



Partisan identity is an even stronger predictor across all three dimensions. The predicted probability of exhibiting polarization in performance perceptions is 91% among supporters of Georgian Dream. This is notably higher than the 77% probability observed among opposition party supporters and the 50% probability for respondents without a declared party affiliation. A similar pattern holds for intergroup polarization: The predicted probability reaches 80% for Georgian Dream supporters and 70% for supporters of other parties, compared to just 34% among non-partisans. When it comes to social distance, the model predicts a probability of 39% for Georgian Dream supporters and 41% for opposition party supporters. In contrast, the predicted probability among those with no party affiliation is only 13%. These results indicate that partisan identity, especially affiliation with the ruling party, is a robustly and consistently related to political polarization.

Figure 7



CONCLUSION

The results of this survey demonstrate that political polarization is notably present among a substantial portion of the Georgian population, particularly in perceptions of party performances and attitudes toward supporters of opposing parties, but to a lesser degree in social relations. Approximately two-thirds of respondents exhibit some degree of polarization in their perceptions of party performance, while nearly half express intergroup affective polarization, expressing negative sentiments toward supporters of rival political groups. However, only one-fifth of participants report experiencing social distance as a result of political disagreement. This distribution indicates that political polarization in Georgia is primarily cognitive and affective in nature, rather than deeply affecting personal relationships.

Demographic patterns further reveal that women and older individuals are more likely to display polarized views than men and younger respondents. However, the analysis identifies TV consumption habits and partisan identity as the most influential predictors of polarization. Individuals who regularly watch pro-government television channels, as well as those who identify with the Georgian Dream party, consistently show higher predicted probabilities of polarization across all measured dimensions. These findings imply that polarization in Georgia is likely being reinforced through top-down strategies and communication narratives, particularly those originating from the ruling party and its affiliated media outlets.