Candidate: 103988

Media bias in post-Soviet Georgia

The effects of trusting biased media on political dissatisfaction in Georgia, 2014-19

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of
MPhil Russian and East European Politics

Department of Area Studies
University of Oxford
05.07.2021

Word count: 30,206

Table of contents

i. Abstract

This thesis investigates the effects of biased news consumption on political dissatisfaction in Georgia, following a mixed methods approach of survey data and expert interview analysis. The study finds that the consumption of partisan news has a significant effect on political satisfaction levels with the performance of the government, parliament and courts, independent of party affiliation, political sophistication, and socio-economic controls. Georgians trusting pro-government TV showed higher odds for political satisfaction; and, conversely, those trusting pro-opposition TV showed higher political dissatisfaction. Concerning the underlying mechanism, it is argued that trusting partisan news strengthens already held views, ultimately leading to political polarisation. The increasingly partisan manner of news coverage on the examined main TV stations exacerbated this trend. The overall growing dissatisfaction is further explained by a growing group of Georgians who are frustrated by the media bias, as well as the increased government pressure on the media and the judiciary.

Chapter I: Introduction

Although Georgia has been classified a "Transitional or Hybrid Regime" (Freedom House 2021a), and remains the only non-authoritarian state in the South Caucasus and Central Asia according to Freedom House Democracy Scores, the growing public political distrust and dissatisfaction could lead to an increased estrangement of citizens from politics (Torcal and Montero 2006). The latter trend is reflected in representative public opinion surveys of the Caucasus Resource Research Center (CRRC) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI): between 2012 and 2019, distrust towards the government increased from 7% to 40%; distrust towards the parliament from 8% to 46% and distrust towards political parties from 21% to 50% in Georgia (CRRC 2012, 2019). Moreover, between 2014 and 2019, the belief that Georgia is going in the wrong direction has increased from 19% to 54%; and individual dissatisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament and courts increased from 14%, 14% and 15% respectively in 2014, to 65%, 57% and 45% in 2019 (CRRC and NDI 2014, 2019).[1] In the same time frame, an increasingly politically biased media coverage has been observed (EU and UNDP 2018). The ruling party Georgian Dream (GD), which came to power in 2012, has been accused by think tanks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and International Organisations (IOs) of exerting growing political pressure on media broadcasters in Georgia and of disseminating biased information and disinformation (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021; EU and UNDP 2018; ISFED 2019; Reporters Without Borders 2020; Transparency International Georgia 2018, 2019). This might point to a possible link between growing political dissatisfaction and increased partisan media bias. Against this background, this thesis seeks to answer the research question:

> *To what extent has the trust in government-leaning media as opposed to opposition-leaning media affected the level of individual political dissatisfaction under the Georgian Dream ruling party and what are the underlying mechanisms?*

To answer the research question, the second chapter lays out the scholarly literature and derives theoretical expectations regarding the possible link between media consumption and political dissatisfaction. The third chapter details the research methods used for the survey data analysis, as well as for the expert interviews, and explains the choice of variables included in the survey data analysis. In the fourth chapter, semi-structured expert interviews

[1] The slight recovery of these figures in 2020 might be interpreted as a public reaction to the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, or to the 2020 electoral reform (CRRC 2020; Civil.ge 2020). The year 2020 is not included in the analysis, as Covid-19 is expected to be too much of a confounding variable.

and secondary literature are used to provide further background information on the Georgian media landscape and especially the level of media bias. The fifth chapter then proceeds to a survey data analysis to establish to what extent trusting certain politically biased television channels has an effect on political satisfaction with the government, parliament and courts in Georgia. The results are discussed based on expert interviews and secondary literature and linked back to theoretical expectations in chapter six. The expert interviews are used to discover mechanisms in which media might influence public dissatisfaction that do not directly show in the data or are underexposed in the secondary literature. Georgian media analysts of research institutes NGOs and IOs have been interviewed for this endeavour. The concluding chapter summarises the main research findings and its implications, presents the limitations of this study and offers avenues of future research.

Georgia poses a relevant case to study the possible impact of media consumption on political dissatisfaction, due to a lack of in-depth media effect studies. Accordingly, Kostadinova (2015) underlines that scholarly research regarding post-communist countries has concentrated on legal aspects of media freedom and the development of media systems, whereas it has not paid enough attention to the impact of news stories' content and bias on citizens. Considering Georgia, two notable in-depth English-language studies of the Georgian media landscape are available, one focusing on the impact of media consumption on democratic attitudes before the GD came to power (Japaridze 2011); and the other broadly assessing Georgia's 'information ecosystem' (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 2021c, 2021b). However, more recent systematic media effect studies, especially with view to media effects on political satisfaction, are lacking. This thesis therefore contributes to filling the research gap concerning Georgia; but also to the wider debate of media effects on political dissatisfaction in transitional democracies (Voltmer 2007, 2013), and especially to the research on the effects of media socialisation and media manipulation in post-communist societies (Kostadinova 2015; Loveless 2010; Rollberg and Laruelle 2018; Wilson 2005), including the literature on distinct forms of state capture by powerful elites (Ryabinska 2014).

According to studies in the field of political and cognitive psychology, exposure to partisan news might lead to attitude polarization. In particular, according to the *Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model* of Zaller (1992, 1996), people with low political sophistication and a lack of knowledge of the message source change their attitudes when being exposed to

counter-attitudinal messages. However, *theories of motivated reasoning* do allow for attitudes to change in the direction opposite to the partisan message as well (Druckman, Fein, and Leeper 2012; Lodge and Taber 2000; Redlawsk 2002; Taber and Lodge 2006). The studies on effects of partisan media exposure do not fully comply with either of the approaches (Arceneaux and Johnson 2010; Levendusky 2013), which lends further importance to testing whether these theories hold in a Georgian context.

Furthermore, this research is also situated in the broader literature on the effects of disinformation. The term disinformation is used to describe deliberate inaccurate news coverage, for instance considering biased messages from state-owned media (Khaldarova and Pantti 2016) or from partisan alternative media (Bakir and Mcstay 2018). The exposure to disinformation can lead to misperceptions; and effect studies of fake news in the U.S. and Western Europe have shown that many citizens face difficulties in distinguishing true and false news (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019). The increasing spread of disinformation has been linked to decreasing trust in journalism and increasing political polarization (McNair 2017). However, TV news content in Georgia is more accurately characterised as being politically biased, while disinformation plays a minor role on TV and a bigger role on social media (see chapter IV). The increasing social media use in Georgia (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a) makes the spread of online disinformation a research area of increasing importance; which is, however, only touched upon tangentially in this study. Instead, the focus lies on the effects of biased television news consumption as TV still represents the most widely used source of information in Georgia (ibid.).

The media effects literature suggests that ruling parties which are involved in the dissemination of biased news or disinformation, aim to thereby mobilise supporters, and try to affect attitude change in favour of their own policies (Prior 2013). In the context of Georgia, the seemingly growing control of public and private media outlets by the governing party could be seen as an indication of this trend. To test whether pro-government news dissemination leads to the intended effect, and to what extent the same holds true for opposition-leaning TV, the main hypotheses read: H1. *People trusting information of pro-government TV channels show higher levels of political satisfaction.* H2. *People trusting information of pro-opposition TV channels show lower levels of political satisfaction.* These hypotheses are further specified in chapter two.

The nationally representative 'Public attitudes in Georgia' survey of the National Democratic Institute, conducted in cooperation with the renowned Caucasus Research Resource Center, has been chosen as the core primary material for analysis of the research question. It contains more detailed media consumption variables than the 'Caucasus Barometer', as well as political (dis)satisfaction variables on the perception of the 'direction in which Georgia is going' and variables asking to rate the performance of the government, the parliament and the courts (NDI n.d.). The timeframe of the 'Public attitudes' survey, 2014-2019, fits the research question longitudinally. The survey data forms the basis for an ordinal logit regression, building two sets of models. In the first set of models, a general measure of satisfaction is included as a dependent variable (DV), considering the perception of the 'direction Georgia is going'. In a second set of models, political dissatisfaction is measured by the perceptions of the performance of the government, parliament and courts as the DVs. Using both sets of questions adds more texture to measuring political dissatisfaction, as it allows to distinguish specifically political dissatisfaction from overall dissatisfaction (see chapter three for a further discussion of measurement choices). Unfortunately not all questions were asked in each survey wave, which leads to a loss of data points. Moreover, the change of measurement scale for one of the DVs (performance of the government) compromises comparability and has impeded the construction of a political dissatisfaction index with all three performance DVs. Beside the two independent variables (IVs) of either trusting the main government-leaning TV, or the main opposition-leaning TV; the controls comprise other possibly confounding variables like socio-economic variables and party affiliation. Importantly, partisanship is controlled for, as consumption of pro-government television could be highly linked to political support for the ruling party.

A limitation of the survey analysis is that Georgian citizens who are more dissatisfied with politics might also be less likely to consume political news altogether. Thus, a problem of selection bias might exist. Also, due to language barriers, television news content could not be investigated as such; instead, the findings are mainly based on survey data; and experts have been consulted to further explore the findings. Moreover, Facebook is becoming the primary news source for an increasing percent of Georgians and is thus of growing importance of growing importance (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). However, Facebook is stringent in its data access for researchers and the author therefore decided that tracking only a few stories or sources would lead to inconclusive results. Still, the analysis of the effects

of Facebook disinformation is an important area for future analysis and has been pursued elsewhere (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021; Kintsurashvili and Gelava 2019).

Overall, this thesis finds that the Georgian media landscape is characterised by a high degree of polarisation. Media outlets concentrate in two parts of a bi-polar spectrum, divided between pro-governmental reporting and pro-oppositional reporting (see chapter three). The survey data analysis shows that respondents trusting the main government-leaning TV station 'Imedi' have significantly higher odds of rating the overall direction the country is going more favourably, as well as the performance of the government, the parliament and the courts, which is interpreted as higher political satisfaction. Inversely, the respondents trusting the main opposition-leaning TV stations show lower political satisfaction. The interviewed experts explain this finding with the mechanism of biased news consumption: while people might be more inclined to watch the side of the story they want to hear and occasionally switch TV channels to verify news, still, trusting partisan news exacerbates already held views. This tendency is further linked to the manner of news coverage of the three examined stations, which, especially in pre-election periods, have been described to wage a 'full scale war' against 'adversarial' political candidates, using harsh rhetoric, discrediting private insights and, at times, disinformation. As the population reflects upon this biased coverage, as well as on the overall growing state control of the media and the judiciary, trust in the media and political satisfaction overall decreased and people 'in the middle' – who trust neither side of the media coverage, nor politicians – have increased.

It is argued that the higher political dissatisfaction of Georgians trusting the main opposition-leaning TV; combined with the more positive outlook of those Georgians trusting the government-leaning TV together form a picture of an increasingly divided society. These findings are generalisable, as they are based on representative survey data. Possible solutions cannot only focus on heightened ethical journalistic standards, as the media are embedded in political ties and dependencies. The polarised media environment arguably is not the heart of the problem, as it only reflects and exacerbates broader societal and political polarisation. As partisan media coverage is used as a tool by political actors, a change in this form of media capture can only be initiated by the political actors themselves, which would run counter to their power-seeking interests, but would greatly benefit the overall societal cohesion. More pressure from civil society and international donors like the EU is needed to affect such a change and limit the partial state capture of the media.

Chapter II: Literature review and theoretical framework. The link between media consumption and political dissatisfaction

This chapter situates the research question in the scholarly literature on the impact of biased media content on political dissatisfaction; and seeks to derive theoretical expectations/ research hypotheses from previous studies. Thus, the link between media content and dissatisfaction is more closely regarded from a theoretical perspective. First, political dissatisfaction and the role of media in democratic theory will be discussed, including the distinction between different media environments (horizontal versus vertical diversity) and types of media (McQuail 1986; Voltmer 2007). Then, the expected effects of media consumption will be discussed, considering the specific effects of biased news and of fake news. Lastly, the research hypotheses for this thesis will be formulated.

II.1 Underlying reasons for political dissatisfaction

A widely used conceptualisation assumes that the main underlying dimension of political dissatisfaction is Easton's distinction between *diffuse and specific political support*; where diffuse support denotes support for the political system as a whole, while specific support means support for the authorities and specific policies (Dalton 2004; Easton 1965; Norris 2011). This study focuses on *specific* political support, and, accordingly, understands political dissatisfaction as "the issue of declining public confidence in the core institutions of representative democracy, including parliaments, political parties and governments" (Norris 2011, 86). To understand the potential underlying reasons for increasing political dissatisfaction[2] in the new democracy of Georgia; prior studies can be regarded that have discussed this issue with regard to long-standing liberal democracies (Dalton 2004; Hay 2007; Norris 1999; Torcal and Montero 2006), as well as in new democracies (Norris 2011; Torcal and Montero 2006). To single out levels of specific political support, citizens' perceptions of the performance of the core state institutions such as the government, parliament and courts are considered in this thesis, inspired by Norris (1999, 2011). While the supposedly declining confidence in state institutions "has attracted widespread concern in Western Europe and the United States" (Norris 2011, 86), the issue is less researched with specific focus on post-communist countries – even though the 2005-07 World Values Survey indicates overall lower levels of confidence in political institutions in the new democracies

[2] The terms political dissatisfaction, political discontent and political disenchantment are used interchangeably in this study.

of CEE and the Former Soviet Union (FSU), compared to long-standing liberal democracies (Norris 2011). The possible causes of political dissatisfaction are manifold and will be more closely reviewed in the research design chapter (see III).

Regarding the meaning of political dissatisfaction in a parliamentary democracy like Georgia, some scholars have interpreted critical attitudes of citizens vis-à-vis the actions of elected representatives as positive signs of political engagement, beneficial for democracy, as this helps to keep the authorities accountable (Inglehart 1997; Norris 1999; Rosanvallon 2008). In contrast, political discontent has also been understood as signalling political alienation, apathy, confusion or resignation (Hay 2007; Hay and Stoker 2009; Mair 2006); potentially leading to eroding democratic support and regime instability (Norris 2011). Depending on whether political dissatisfaction rather reflects a "healthy scepticism towards the political elites" (Christensen 2016, 3), or an "unhealthy political disenchantment" (ibid.), the implications for democratic legitimacy differ. While it would be thus interesting to separate these two kinds of political dissatisfaction, it is not done in the context of this study due to a lack of such fine-grained public opinion data on Georgia. As other scholars have already focused on the institutional context as the main explanatory variable, this study seeks to explore the possible impact of trust in certain (partisan) media on political dissatisfaction.

II.2 The role of media in democratic theory

The role of media is regarded with view to democratic societies, as Georgia has established a parliamentary democracy. Still, the clear elements of a "patrimonial or informal channel [of power] ensured by clientelism" (Timm 2012, 169) in Georgia besides the 'channel' of law and formal regulations will be reflected upon. In democratic societies, the media has been widely understood as offering a 'marketplace of ideas', which goes back to John Milton (1644) and John Stuart Mill (1946), and has been prominently discussed by Ingber (1984). From this perspective, the media creates or supports a public sphere free from government control, where citizens can exchange their ideas or opinions and generate new solutions for societal problems. This is, in turn, expected to "help citizens make informed political decisions, enhancing the quality of governance" (Japaridze 2011, 36). Similarly, while the media does not play an important role in theories of procedural or competitive democracy, it does so in participatory and deliberative democratic theory, which focus on citizen participation in democratic processes rather than on their outcomes. Following participatory democratic theory, Almond and Verba (1963, 14) have argued that the media is an essential

part of the political process and takes the role of facilitating political participation by informing citizens about current events and the actions of the government. Deliberative democratic theory on the other hand emphasizes the importance of communication in enabling a socially coordinated discourse among citizens (Habermas 1981, 397, 1990, 159). Thus, these latter two theories take two different perspectives on the main function of media in a democracy: media either functions as a platform that facilitates the mere monitoring of government actions; or it goes beyond that by providing a platform that enables citizens to engage in social discourse.[3] In addition, ideas and actions are not only displayed on media channels, but also reflected upon and thereby actively shaped by those creating the content.

However, especially in democracies in transition the extent to which the media actually represents a space free from government control has been questioned (Voltmer 2013). Here, according to Voltmer's (2007) 'interactionist' model, the role that media plays in society has been understood as an ongoing process of negotiation between the state, the media and societal groups. The higher level of government interference into media affairs in democracies in transition is partly an expression of the dependence of political actors on media to secure votes; which can, in turn, be understood as a legacy of heavy reliance on state propaganda in Soviet times (Voltmer 2013). Consequently, the reaction of citizens to (biased) media might differ as well (see below). The function of news media, according to participatory democratic theory, to serve as the eyes and ears of the public by surveying, reporting and interpreting ongoing events, for instance political decision-making processes; and thereby scrutinizing government performance (Graber 2014; Pjesivac 2017) might therefore be constrained by government pressure. Similarly, Wilson (2005) has argued that media coverage is more likely to create a space for public discussion and thus to function as a 'marketplace of ideas' in an open media environment with minimal state control, diverse media ownership and a political culture that expects the media to function independently of partisan influence (Wilson 2005). In contrast, this function is less likely to develop in environments of heavily state-controlled media with monopolised ownership and a political culture which does not expect media to function independently of partisan influence (ibid.).

[3] In opposition to the assumptions of participatory as well as deliberative democratic theory, the supposedly rising complexity of modern society has led some scholars to propose that only experts can make sense of modern societal developments (Lippmann 1997), which would render the contribution of media meaningless. However, while not all developments might be comprehensible for all citizens, this does not preclude the potential of media to increase public understanding and discussion of political issues – and to thereby activate political participation of citizens (Fallows 1997).

II.3 The expected effects of biased media on individual political satisfaction

When considering the possible mechanisms by which media might be linked to political dissatisfaction, the regular consumption of certain media is expected to lead to sustained effects on individual attitudes more broadly (Prior 2007). Concerning TV consumption, among the theories that focus on the *type* of media, the unidirectional *video-malaise theory* holds that TV consumption overall "fosters public mistrust of government and dissatisfaction with regime institutions" (Norris 2011, 169). Accordingly, Habermas held that television consumption enhances passivity which hinders participatory democracy, especially entertainment as opposed to news content (Habermas 1990). A similarly widespread argument has focused on the *tone* of media coverage, claiming that regularly consuming negative news leads to rising political dissatisfaction (Norris 2011). However, both perspectives lack empirical evidence (ibid.). The alternative *virtuous circle theory* considers pre-held attitudes and expects positive reinforcement of these attitudes from regular TV news consumption (ibid.). This latter theory holds that prior political knowledge and interest lead to higher TV news exposure; which in turn reinforces political knowledge, trust and engagement, ultimately leading to "more positive attitudes toward politics and government" (ibid.: 172). All three theoretical perspectives are arguably simplistic, as they assume unidirectional strengthening of either positive political attitudes (virtuous circle theory) or negative attitudes (video-malaise theory; negative news argument); and don't allow for a more complex process of reflection of media content by the media user.

Approaches of political and cognitive psychology suggest more nuanced mechanisms by which consumption of biased media might effect attitude polarisation or increase partisan behaviour (Prior 2013, 108). Media bias refers to "distortions of reality, favoritism or one-sidedness in presenting controversies, and closed-minded or partisan attitudes" (Lichter 2017, 404). In the *Receive-Accept-Sample model* (RAS) of Zaller (1992, 1996), individual predispositions are understood as mediating how a received message influences the political preferences of an individual. Overall, recipients who are less politically sophisticated, meaning having less 'stored' prior information on political issues and processes, and have "little access to alternative communication flows" (Zaller 1992, 267), are more likely to change their attitudes in the direction of the partisan messages they receive, even if these contradict their pre-held values or partisanship. Moreover, the least politically sophisticated persons are expected to be most open to 'persuasion' when "the information flow is very intense" (ibid.), e.g., during presidential elections. Conversely, the more politically

sophisticated a person, the more likely he/she can "resist information that is inconsistent with her basic values or partisanship" (Zaller 1992, 266), because he/she possesses the necessary contextual information to identify and reflect on partisan cues. Concerning the underlying mechanism, attitude change "results from change in the mix of ideas to which individuals are exposed" (ibid.). Besides the influence of political sophistication, the theory finds only limited influence of "individual's internal resources" (ibid.), linked to factors like socio-economic status and childhood socialisation. To test whether this theory helps explain the possible link between media consumption and political (dis)satisfaction in Georgia, variables of partisanship and political sophistication are included in the survey data analysis; alongside socio-economic variables (see chapter III). Moreover, the possibility for respondents to access alternative information and their socialisation will be reflected.

In contrast, while the overall predictions of *theories of motivated reasoning* (MR) are similar, they do not only allow for *resistance* to counter-attitudinal messages (as a function of political sophistication) like the RAS model; but even for the *strengthening* of attitudes in the direction opposite of the received message (Druckman, Fein, and Leeper 2012; Lodge and Taber 2000; Redlawsk 2002; Taber and Lodge 2006). More specifically, this strand of research builds on the assumption that "all reasoning is motivated" (Taber and Lodge 2006, 186); and people thus build their reasoning on underlying preconceptions, albeit at times unconsciously. Citizens are torn between 'accuracy goals', seeking correct/ objective reasoning; and 'partisan goals', defending their prior position. Taber and Lodge find that those respondents with high political sophistication and strong prior attitudes become attitudinally increasingly extreme due to a disconfirmation bias: "they assimilate congruent evidence uncritically but vigorously counterargue incongruent evidence" (Taber and Lodge 2006, 756); while this effect is weaker for the least sophisticated and those with weak prior attitudes. A confirmation bias is also visible, as all respondents and especially the 'sophisticates', when given the chance to choose which information to consult, selected more arguments supporting their prior attitudes than opposing arguments. The effects of prior attitudes, disconfirmation bias and confirmation bias lead to attitude polarization; especially "for sophisticated participants, those with strong priors, and (most importantly) those who were biased in their information processing" (2006, 265). Attitude polarization is understood as the strengthening of prior (partisan) attitudes. The 'sophisticates' with positive priors develop more positive standpoints over time, and vice versa for those with negative preconceptions of a certain issue. Importantly, "unsophisticates and those with weak priors

did not polarize" (2006, 265). The lower bias of unsophisticated respondents is explained by their "lack of motivation and ability to engage in attitude defense" (ibid.).

The MR theories thus give importance to similar intervening variables of political sophistication and prior attitudes as the RAS model, which can be reflected in a political sophistication index and by controlling for partisanship in this thesis (see chapter III). In addition, Taber and Lodge's MR theory should be extended, to not only regard 'internal' psychological factors of people seeking to back-up their beliefs and attitudes with supporting evidence. Instead, to integrate 'external' factors, the possible impact of the extent and nature of political news coverage by the main television channels will be incorporated based on follow-up expert interviews and media monitoring reports. This extension builds on Zaller's reflection on the intensity of information flow (high intensity might accelerate the attitude change of less politically sophisticated persons) and accessibility of alternative information; as well as the distinction between various levels of media diversity. Concerning the latter, while high *vertical diversity* of media denotes "a situation where the full range of relevant views is represented within a particular media outlet" (Voltmer 2007, 3); high *horizontal diversity* "emerges as the aggregate of a variety of biased media" (ibid.), denoting the possibility to obtain a diversity of views by consuming a number of biased media outlets (McQuail 1986). It has been proposed that sustained media effect on individual attitudes can especially be observed in horizontally diverse media environments, in which several media outlets provide biased content (Japaridze 2011; Prior 2007). Accessibility of information, in turn, can be impeded by heavy state control or monopolised ownership, which has been a frequent phenomenon in post-Soviet states (Rollberg and Laruelle 2018).

Overall, the difficulty to establish "a causal link between more partisan messages and changing attitudes or behaviors" (Prior 2013, 101) should be acknowledged. Media use does not only influence attitudes and behaviour, but attitudes and behaviour themselves can lead to the use of certain media over others. Hence, it is hard to entirely separate cause and effect (Newton 2006, 215). It seems misleading to take a side on whether media "mirror or mold society" (Jakubowicz 2002). While in the context of post-Soviet states it has been argued that the media mirrors less society as a whole than governmental preferences and business interests in particular (Japaridze 2011, 43; Kostadinova 2015); still, no matter their influence on the actual content, citizens are likely to choose certain media outlets depending on the content they want to consume. This does not preclude that citizens who base their media

choice on their preferences are not in turn influenced by these media. However, the direction of influence can possibly be predetermined by the media user. Importantly, the average citizen in post-Soviet societies has been found to be more prone to media effects because of lower levels of political information/ democratic socialization (Loveless 2010; Voltmer 2007).

Thus far, the studies of effects of partisan media exposure do not fully comply with neither the RAS nor the MR approaches (Arceneaux and Johnson 2010; Levendusky 2013). Thus, both theoretical approaches carry some albeit no conclusive explanatory power. Testing these adds theoretical value to the case study of media effects in Georgia, as the question remains to be answered conclusively to what extent and under which circumstances partisan media exposure or the exposure to disinformation might lead to political dissatisfaction or even political apathy. Among the studies of media effect in post-communist countries, an interesting example to consider is Peisakhin and Rozena's (2018) study of Russian television consumption in Ukraine, who find that consumption of biased media can exacerbate societal polarisation. Building on the research of Ryabinska (2014) on media capture in post-communist Ukraine, this thesis also touches upon the question in which way media capture by powerful elites affects political attitudes and leads to a distinct form of state capture. In addition, the importance of media socialisation and political efficacy in a post-communist context is considered, following Loveless (2010).

II.4 The effect of fake news on political dissatisfaction

This research is also linked to the broader literature on the effects of fake news consumption; a research field which has been especially expanding since the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019; Nelson and Taneja 2018). The term 'fake news' is used to describe deliberate inaccurate news coverage, for instance considering biased messages from state-owned media (Khaldarova and Pantti 2016); partisan alternative media (Bakir and Mcstay 2018); and fabricated news from short-lived websites (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). The fake news 'genre' can be situated in political communication/ disinformation literature, and "represents a highly visible symptom of the longstanding increase in disinformation" (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019, 101). While misinformation describes simply wrong information, disinformation denotes deliberate spread of wrong information, and fake news describes disinformation in a journalistic format (ibid.). It has become increasingly easy and cheap to broaden the reach of disinformation via online news

dissemination (ibid.). Still, the spread of fake news is not limited to online content but is also prevalent in 'traditional' media outlets (television, newspapers, radio). For instance, the study of Khaldarova and Pantti (2016) of 'strategic narratives' by the Russian government-owned TV Channel *One* serves as an example on how fake news on television can be used for propagandistic purposes. This understanding of fake news as a form of propaganda is widespread (Neudert 2017; Waisbord 2018). Considering the effect of fake news, prior effect studies show that many citizens worldwide face difficulties in distinguishing true from false news (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019). The exposure to fake news has been found to lead to misperceptions. In addition, the increasing spread of fake news has been linked to decreasing trust in journalism and increasing political polarization (McNair 2017). Research on trust in media in post-communist societies, e.g. in Serbia, has shown that perceived dishonesty of media can lead to misinformed citizens who question the monitoring capacity of the media (Melgar, Rossi, and Smith 2010).

II.5 Research gap: why Georgia, why the impact of biased news on dissatisfaction?

As the depiction of the Georgian media landscape shows, the news coverage on the most important Georgian television channels can be characterised as biased or partisan; while fake news dissemination plays a minor role (see chapter IV). Thus, the focus of this study on the impact of Georgian television consumption on political dissatisfaction needs to be examined from the perspective of the possible effects of biased news. There is a lack of media effect studies with view to Georgia. Accordingly, Kostadinova underlines that scholarly research regarding post-communist countries has concentrated on legal aspects of media freedom and the development of media systems, whereas it has not paid enough attention to the impact of news stories' content and bias on voters:

> "Do ownership of the media, insufficient detailed content of news, lack of contextualization, etc. have an impact on political behaviour and outcomes? Normatively, it seems that these factors should have an impact, but systematic studies are lacking, which is especially troubling given the political drive to control media outlets in a number of countries" (Kostadinova 2015, 463).

This research therefore aims to fill the research gap considering recent effects of biased media consumption in Georgia, but also considering the wider debate of media effects on political dissatisfaction, and especially the scholarly research of the effects of media manipulation in post-communist societies (Kostadinova 2015; Loveless 2010; Ryabinska 2014; Wilson 2005). Georgia's media landscape and the manner of coverage of political news is observed using expert interviews and secondary literature; in a second step, it is determined by means of survey data analysis whether an effect of trust in the main television

channels on political dissatisfaction can be established. Considering fake news, overall, most studies have focused on the content and reach of fake news and less studies have concentrated on its effects. While it is thus important to study "how misperceptions stemming from fake news might affect political behaviour in the long run" (Egelhofer and Lecheler 2019, 109; Lazer et al. 2018), this endeavour will only be perceived to a minor extent due to the research focus on Georgian television, and the prevalence of biased news coverage on Georgian TV (instead of fake news dissemination).

II.6 Research hypotheses

Overall, as laid out in this section, consumption of biased TV news might either mostly strengthen negative political attitudes (*video malaise theory*), or positive political attitudes (*virtuous circle theory*). Both theories are regarded as too simplistic. Instead, consumption of biased TV news is expected to lead to attitude change in the direction of the received message concerning those citizens with low political sophistication (*Receive-Accept-Sample model* and *theories of Motivated Reasoning*). When exposed to counter-attitudinal messages, the political 'sophisticates' are expected to either resist these (*Receive-Accept-Sample model*); or to even strengthen their attitudes in the direction opposite of the received message (*theories of Motivated Reasoning*). Political sophistication can be measured by political knowledge and partisanship. Based on these possibilities, governing parties involved in the effort of biased news dissemination might especially follow a RAS model consideration, intending to mobilise its supporters, while trying to change the opinion of its non-supporters in its favour and not effecting a strong counter-reaction by the opponents. This thesis will thus test whether the trust in pro-government biased media outlets correlates with the strengthening of political satisfaction, independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and other socio-economic controls – to ultimately test whether the RAS model best captures the emerging picture in Georgia. It will be further considered whether, conversely, the trust in the main opposition television might have the opposite effect. In an effort to distinguish the media effects on diffuse and specific political satisfaction, and adapted to the available survey data items, the following hypotheses are to be tested:

Hypotheses concerning diffuse political support:

H.1.a (pro-government TV): People trusting information of the main pro-government TV are more positive about the direction Georgia is going; independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.

H.2.a (pro-opposition TV): People trusting information of the main pro-opposition TV are more negative about the direction Georgia is going; independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.

Hypotheses concerning specific political support:

H.1.b (pro-government TV): People trusting information of the main pro-government TV show higher levels of political satisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament and courts; independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.

H.2.b (pro-opposition TV): People trusting information of the main pro-opposition TV show lower levels of political satisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament and courts; independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.

As overall growing political dissatisfaction can be observed from 2014 to 2019, either the GD was not successful in its strategy of using government-leaning media to induce political satisfaction (or followed a different strategy); or the main opposition party and its affiliated media were more successful in evoking a negative outlook on political satisfaction. Alternatively, discontent might have been even higher without the media control/ sponsorship of government of friendly media outlets. As will be tested with controls, other variables like the socio-economic situation might have yielded a more important negative effect on satisfaction levels than media consumption.

Chapter III: Research Design

In the following subsections, the research methods for the survey data analysis, as well as for the expert interviews are presented. Regarding the underlying assumptions, this thesis posits that individual political dissatisfaction is shaped by the interaction of individual characteristics and the macro environment, including especially the consumption of certain news media. It is further assumed that respondents who indicate to trust a certain TV channel not only consume it, but are also more prone to be influenced by it. This is because even after reflecting on its content, they still trust the channel. The level of trust in certain media is expected to affect the influence these media have on the perceptions of an individual (Strömbäck et al. 2020). Following the research question, the research focus lies on the effect of partisan media:

> *To what extent has the trust in government-friendly media as opposed to opposition-friendly media affected the level of individual political dissatisfaction under the Georgian Dream ruling party?*

The study examines associations between trust in the main Georgian television stations, and political dissatisfaction, while controlling for the effects of individual socio-economic characteristics, partisanship, and political sophistication. Controlling for these variables allows to single out the true effect of trust in certain partisan television channels on levels of political dissatisfaction. More specifically, the study seeks to explore the different impacts of trusting the main pro-government (Imedi TV) versus the main pro-opposition television channels (Rustavi two until mid-2019; from then on Mtavari Arkhi; see chapter IV). The Georgian television landscape can be described as offering low *vertical diversity*, and high *horizontal diversity*, with concentration of the main media outlets at two opposed political sides of the spectrum (see chapter IV). Following the *virtuous circle theory* as well as the *Receive-Accept-Sample model*, trusting the politically biased coverage of news or current affairs on a certain biased channel can be expected to strengthen partisan views and thus, increase attitude polarisation

III.1 Research methods: Survey data analysis

This research follows a mixed-methods approach. It is based on the NDI 'Public attitudes in Georgia' survey (NDI n.d.) as the core primary material, which is a nationally representative survey conducted by the CRRC. The different survey waves form the basis for a regression analysis. The timeframe of the survey data, 2014-19, fits the research question

longitudinally. The year 2020 is disregarded, as Covid-19 is believed to present too much of a confounding variable that renders the 2020 survey less comparable with previous years. Two sets of regression models are built. One in which media effects on specific political support are measured, where the political dissatisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament and the courts constitute the DVs. And a second where diffuse political support is measured, using the more general perception of the 'direction Georgia is going' as the DV. Trust in the main pro-government television channel will be considered as the main IV; alongside other control variables like party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic variables. The unit of analysis is the individual. Follow-up interviews are conducted to discover additional mechanisms in which media might influence public dissatisfaction that do not directly show in the data, as well as to clarify certain characteristics of the Georgian media landscape. In the following subsections, the DVs and IVs are specified. The choice of these variables is explained building on theoretical considerations.

III.1.1 Dependent variables

The DVs reflect different measures of political dissatisfaction. The NDI surveys do not include a direct question regarding dissatisfaction, instead there are items on the direction in which Georgia is going and questions regarding the performance of the government, the parliament and the courts. Using these variables as the main dependent variables is discussed with respect to measurement choices in the comparative literature on political dissatisfaction.

Measurement of global satisfaction: the direction Georgia is going

As discussed in the theory chapter (II), specific political support or satisfaction, which is the focus of this study, needs to be distinguished from diffuse support. Diffuse support signals more general satisfaction with the political system, while specific support reflects support for state authorities and specific policies, understood as political satisfaction in this study (Dalton 2004; Easton 1965; Norris 2011). To be able to draw this distinction, a general measure of satisfaction is included alongside measures on political satisfaction more specifically. The measurement of the perception of the 'direction Georgia is going' thus serves the purpose to distinguish system satisfaction from political satisfaction (with the government, parliament and courts).

Measurement of political (dis)satisfaction: satisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament and courts

Political dissatisfaction has been measured in a variety of ways in the scholarly literature, for example by asking respondents to 'rate political life' or to indicate their 'trust in government' or their satisfaction with 'the way democracy is functioning in your country' (Inglehart 1977). Alternatively, respondents have been asked how well the government is handling certain issues and problems, entitled 'governmental performance' (Inglehart and Siemienska 1988, 448). This study is inspired by Norris (1999, 2011), further based on Easton (1975) and the 'new institutionalism' school, which "emphasizes the importance of understanding political attitudes within their structural context" (Norris 1999, 220). To stress the interest of this study in specific political support, as opposed to diffuse support with the political system or global individual satisfaction, items on the satisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament and courts are included, as specifications of different core state institutions. It is important to underline that, using performance questions, this study measures "attitudes towards the way democracy works in practise in a particular country at a given point in time" (Linde and Ekman 2003, 393), which has to be distinguished from "support for 'democracy' as a principle or ideal (i.e., as the best form of government)" (ibid.). Courts are considered part of the performance of the political system in a post-communist context due to danger of politicisation and partisan control (Beliaev 2006; Hale 2011; Lebanidze and Kakachia 2017).

III.1.2. Independent variables and controls

Following Inglehart, it is important to acknowledge that "political discontent can result from an almost unlimited variety of causes, ranging from a nation's economic condition or foreign policy to the personalities and private lives of the nation's leaders" (Inglehart 1977, 456). Political dissatisfaction can thus result from different factors. In addition to the key independent variable of interest on trust in television channels; control variables for party affiliation, political sophistication, education, age, gender, income, unemployment and settlement type are included, as well as a year variable. While negative attitudes towards politics might form and reproduce themselves partly due to individual socialisation (Neudert 2017; Waisbord 2018); socialisation accounts for overall long-term (dis)satisfaction levels rather than short-term changes (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999; Torcal and Montero 2006). Although this study is interested in the impact of trust in media on short-term changes of political dissatisfaction levels, socialisation concerning political attitudes and media use

arguably play a role. The possible socialisation effect of living under Communism; versus growing up in the post-communist transition period is arguably reflected in age effects, as detailed below.

Trust in main pro-government versus main pro-opposition television channels

Earlier studies have found that mere 'exposure to' certain media does not have a significant effect on personal attitudes, while 'reliance on' certain media does (Becker and Whitney 1980; A. H. Miller, Goldenberg, and Erbring 1979; M. M. Miller and Reese 1982; Zaller 1996). Namely, pure exposure does not indicate how much communisation is actually received, which is problematic as a considerable gap between exposure and reception has been observed (Zaller 1996, 22). Therefore, instead of measuring mere exposure to or consumption of TV stations, the survey item measuring trust in news or current affairs of certain Georgian TV channels is considered as the main IV. Hence, it is assumed that trusting the news coverage of a TV channels means relying on its content, which clearly indicates the reception of its content; and preferring its content over that of other stations might possibly also indicate a higher influence of this channel on personal views. To investigate the influence of trust in biased/partisan news, trust in the main pro-government TV station Imedi is compared to trust in the main pro-opposition TV stations Rustavi 2 (2014 up until mid-2019) and Mtavari Arkhi (from mid-2019). See chapter IV for a further discussion of the Georgian media landscape.

Partisanship

Partisanship constitutes a widely documented influence on political attitudes and behaviour (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart and Siemienska 1988). More specifically, supporters of the ruling party are assumed to assess the political performance of the government more positively, but also the overall development of the country, as "the political system is a friendlier place for people who identify with the governing party" (Anderson and Guillory 1997, 68). This could be especially true for post-communist societies with high levels of political patronage (Beliaev 2006; Hale 2011; Lebanidze and Kakachia 2017). Thus, partisanship needs to be controlled for, as the consumption of pro-government television could be highly linked to political support for the ruling party.

Political sophistication

As discussed in chapter II, political sophistication needs to be controlled for, as people with low political sophistication might more easily change their attitudes when presented with counter-attitudinal messages. Political sophistication can be measured by questions on political knowledge (Zaller 1992, 1996). To this end, an index is created (see chapter V).

Social background variables: age, education, gender, income, settlement type

Moreover, according to prior research, socioeconomic indicators can have a confounding effect on political attitudes and behaviour, especially due to their close association with feelings of efficacy. More specifically, high efficacy – understood as feeling "autonomous control over personal conditions" (Loveless 2010, 458) – has been found to positively affect support for democratic institutions and participation. Thus, it will be examined whether the hypothesised relationship between political dissatisfaction and trust in television channels hold when controlling for the possibly confounding effects of socio-economic variables. These "usual social background variables (age, income, education, and gender) […] have often been found to be associated with variations in political attitudes" (Norris 1999, 226). In addition, settlement type will be included, denoting weather a respondent lives in an urban or rural area, populated mainly by ethnic Georgians, or in one of the 'minority settlements', populated by ethnic minorities. This item allows to control for the possible confounding influence of an urban-rural divide in post-communist societies, as well as of ethnic divisions (Whitefield 2002).

Age

In a post-communist context, older age groups have shown to be affected by prior communist exposure. For instance, Pop-Eleches and Tucker have controlled for years of exposure to communism and hold that "an additional year of exposure should be correlated with additional support for the pro-regime attitude" (2017, 6). The authors posit that political socialisation takes place mainly through school education, and different varieties of communism should be accounted for (ibid.: 51): Stalinism (1928-1952), 'neo-Stalinist hardline'[4] (1953-55 and 1965-69), post-totalitarian (1970-84), reformist communism (1956-64, 1985-91). People having been educated under the years of Stalinism or in the 'neo-

[4] 'Neo-Stalinist hardline' refers to "regimes that moved beyond Stalinism, but essentially still pursued hardline policies (e.g., low dissent tolerance, an active repressive state apparatus but without widespread terror, active security services, etc.)" (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017: 52).

Stalinist hardline' period can be expected to still show high levels of pro-regime attitudes due to the "unprecedented degree of state control over daily lives (and thoughts) of individuals [via] surveillance and indoctrination efforts [and] exacerbated by the simultaneous repression and cooptation of civil society organizations" (Pop-Eleches 2017, 39). This control eased down during post-totalitarian and reformist communism. While the age groups of the NDI surveys do not neatly fit in with these periods, the age group 18-35, born between 1979 and 2001 (depending on the survey wave), were educated throughout reformist communism as well as during the transition and can thus be expected to hold on average less pro-regime attitudes. Whereas the age group 56+, born before 1963, can be expected to hold on average stronger pro-regime attitudes, linked to a big part of this age group being educated in Stalinist or neo-Stalinist years. The years of education of the age group 36-55 rank somewhere between neo-Stalinist, post-totalitarian and reformist communism, thus no clear expectations of effects can be derived for this group. Still, older adults may have been put at a disadvantage by the political upheaval and the years of economic turmoil after the collapse of the Soviet Union and could therefore be more dissatisfied on average than younger generations, depending on their ability to adapt to the new circumstances (Japaridze 2011; Kitschelt 1992). This could tie in with older people becoming melancholic of communist times, when they had a stable income to cover their basic needs, which might increase dissatisfaction levels (Japaridze 2011). While conversely this would lead to the expectation that younger generations should be more satisfied with the general development of Georgia, as well as specifically the political situation; the overall problematic economic and labour market situation of the time analysed might tone down these effects (see 'income and unemployment'). Thus, while age effects of communist and post-communist legacies might cancel each other out; still, age needs to be controlled for.

Education

The level of education has been commonly included as a control variable in studies of political dissatisfaction (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart and Siemienska 1988). Moreover, in Almond and Verba's 'The Civic Culture' (1963) and in following research, education has been found to have a noteworthy influence on the level of political participation; but also on media use (O'Neil 1998). According to Japaridze, formal education "serves as a proxy for a whole range of factors, like cognitive capabilities, social status, and again differing socialization experiences" (Japaridze 2011, 59; Voltmer and Schmitt-Beck 2007, 22). The level of education has also been used as a proxy for political knowledge and political

sophistication (Deutsch 1961; Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969). Overall, it is expected that respondents with higher levels of education, or those who are still being educated (which is more likely the case for younger respondents), have higher satisfaction levels compared to respondents with lower levels of education (Dalton 2004; Martini and Quaranta 2015; Norris 1999).

Gender

Including gender as an IV allows controlling for possible differences of the way trust in media affects the political dissatisfaction of men compared to women. The comparative literature suggests that satisfaction levels should not be significantly different for women compared to men (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999).

Income and Unemployment

While Inglehart (1977) underlines that the overall economic situation of a country cannot be understood as the main driver of political discontent, individual financial well-being can still have an effect on political dissatisfaction. In this study, individual financial well-being is approximated with an item on the average monthly household income. Following Inglehart (1997; 1988), an increase of political dissatisfaction could either be linked to a worsening financial situation of those respondents with materialist values, who mainly have economic concerns; or is linked to an increase of respondents with post-materialist values, if their needs of 'higher goods' concerning the quality of life are not met. Post-materialist respondents are expected to originate "disproportionately from the economically more secure social strata" (1977, 468) and vice versa. Overall, according to Chaisty and Whitefield (2015), materialist values continue to dominate in the post-communist space, possibly signalling a communist legacy, as Communism itself has been understood as a materialist ideology primarily focused on economic progress. Income should thus be controlled for. As unemployment in and of itself can have a distressing effect on people's self-esteem and feelings of efficacy, it can lead to higher levels of dissatisfaction, independent of household income (Dalton 2004; Martini and Quaranta 2015; Norris 1999). Thus, unemployment is included as a control alongside income, given the variables are not highly correlated.

Settlement type

Earlier studies have demonstrated the existence of an urban-rural divide in post-communist societies (Japaridze 2011; Whitefield 2002). Concerning media consumption, urban

residents have been found to be on average better informed about current affairs, as they have a bigger variety of news sources at their disposal (Japaridze 2011; Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). Georgians living in rural areas, in turn, have less access to alternative critical media sources, inter alia critical TV channels (ibid.), which might lead to a more favourable perception of the performance of state institutions, as well as of the general direction Georgia is going. In addition, important differences have also been observed between settlements mainly populated by ethnic Georgians and those populated mainly by ethnic minorities. These settlements are located mainly along the Azerbaijani and Armenian borders, and populated by ethnic Azeris and Armenians (Broers 2008; Matsaberidze n.d.). The residents of minority settlements have tended to show pro-regime attitudes across different regimes, i.e. independent of the party in power (see chapter IV). Thus, it is expected that the evaluation of state institutions as well as of the general direction of the country's development will be rather favourable in minority settlements. It is thus important to control for the effects of settlement type.

III.1.3 Justification of regression choice: Ordinal logistic regression

Before spelling out the methods for conducting and analysing expert interviews, the regression choice for survey data analysis shall be justified. A standard Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression would not be appropriate, as all DVs are ordinal scaled, and it therefore cannot be assumed that the space between all categories of the DVs is equal (Agresti 2018; Powers and Xie 2008). Dichotomising the DVs and running binary logistic regression would result in losing valuable information about people's attitudes. Instead, as "the primary interest lies in understanding of how explanatory variables affect the conceptual dimension represented by the ordinal variable" (Powers and Xie 2008, 221), ordinal logistic regression is appropriate, which is an extension of logistic regression and adequately reflects the ordinal nature of DVs (see chapter V for a detailed description of the survey data).

III.2 Research methods: Expert interview analysis

The interview data description and manner of analysis is detailed here, and the interview material is used to further explore recent developments of the Georgian media landscape in chapter IV. Moreover, it is used to further interpret the findings of the survey data analysis in chapter VI and to discover mechanisms in which media might influence public dissatisfaction that do not directly show in the data or are underexposed in the secondary literature. To this end, seven renowned Georgian media analysts of research institutes, NGOs and IOs have been interviewed.

III.2.1 Justification of interview method: semi-structured expert interviews

The method of semi-structured in-depth expert interviews has been chosen to allow for some flexibility on the side of the interviewer to follow the interviewees' thoughts and create a more natural flow of the conversation; while also ensuring that the most important questions are addressed, to obtain comparability between interviews (Lindlof and Taylor 2011; Silverman 2010). Interviewing experts is appropriate for the purpose of this study, as the issue at hand is complex and requires familiarity with the Georgian media landscape and the ability to analyse the developments within it, as well as their effects. Experts are understood as "'crystallization points' for practical insider knowledge" (Christmann 2009, 2) and are interviewed on behalf of a wider range of actors. Expert interviews thus offer the opportunity to quickly gain reliable results (ibid.). Still, while the 'experts' are expected to yield valuable insights, the exigency to critically reflect these insights is recognised, as experts are not understood as the ultimate 'agents of truth', but as representatives of specialised knowledge (Collins 2007). The interviews can be characterised as a melange of systematizing and theory-generating expert interviews (Bogner and Menz 2009); as, on the one hand, the retrieval of systematic information on the Georgian media landscape is sought, while, on the other hand, a deeper understanding of the manner in which partisan news consumption influences political dissatisfaction in Georgia is envisaged.

III.2.2 Description of interview data

Seven semi-structured in-depth expert interviews have been conducted in English via Microsoft Teams videoconference between the 11th and 28th of March 2021.[5] While face-to-

[5] I received research ethics approval for conducting these online interviews on 4th January, 2021 (Ref No: SSH_OSGA_REES_C1_20_066). All experts received the participant information sheet, in compliance with CUREC guidelines. All respondents gave permission to record and produce transcripts of the interviews.

face interviews are preferable to telephone interviews, the Covid-19 pandemic has not allowed for fieldwork in Georgia, and videoconferencing is considered to be a good alternative, as interaction is not reduced to a purely linguistic level (Christmann 2009). To single out relevant experts, in a first step, organisations with relevant expertise in media monitoring and research have been identified. Then, staff working in the area of media monitoring has been contacted via their institutional email addresses and/or via LinkedIn. Moreover, snowball sampling has been applied (Littig 2009). The response rate was 7/13. The interview partners are working for the following NGOs and think tanks:

> the Georgian Charter for Journalistic Ethics and their media monitoring outlet 'Media Checker'; the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab); the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA); the Georgian human rights organisations Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA)[6]; the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED); the Media Development Foundation (MDF); Transparency International Georgia (TI Georgia).

For the interviews, an interview guide was developed that outlined topics and questions for discussion, which served as a point of orientation, also for reasons of comparability of interviews, but was not followed strictly concerning phrasing and order of the questions (Meuser and Nagel 2009). The interviews have a length of between 51 to 102 minutes. For a list of all interviews with dates and duration see appendix (12). A copy of the interview guide is provided in the appendix (11). English was the primary language of the interviews. As English is unlikely to be the first language of most participants, it was made sure that the supporting documentation was written in comprehensible English. During the interviews, questions were carefully worded, and experts were encouraged to ask for clarification whenever needed.

III.2.3 Manner of interview data analysis

For analysing the interview material, a qualitative content analysis is employed (Neuendorf 2017). Building on Altheide and Schneider (2013), the main aim of this method is to identify thematic patterns or messages in a text. These themes are developed on the basis of the text (here: interview transcripts), and not according to prior theories (ibid.). More specifically, the six-step process of Meuser and Nagel is followed (2009). First, clean verbatim transcripts

[6] GYLA is a local human rights organisation which, alongside providing legal consultancy, documents and analyses cases of violation of the rule of law, with a focus on media freedom and media monitoring.

are used to identify the central themes. Second, relevant passages are paraphrased. Third, the paraphrased material is coded for each of the chapters (chapters IV and VI) by grouping it thematically. Fourth, “the thematically comparable passages from different interviews are tied together” (Meuser and Nagel 2009, 36) to allow for thematic comparison. To then, fifth, compare and generalise features between the interviews. Where direct quotations are included in the analysis, clean verbatim transcripts are employed.

Chapter IV: The Georgian media landscape and the level of media bias

Mapping the Georgian media landscape [7], with a special focus on television broadcasting between 2014 and 2019, enables the interpretation of the link between political dissatisfaction and trust in media in Georgia in subsequent chapters. This chapter provides thus an overview of the main Georgian TV outlets, as well as their degree of partisanship. It thereby sharpens the expectations of the possible impact of trusting certain TV stations. It also guides broader expectations of media effects in Georgia, as different kinds of media environments also imply different media effects. Namely, media coverage is more likely to create a space for public discussion in an open media environment with minimal state control, diverse media ownership and a political culture that expects impartiality (Wilson 2005). Apart from introducing the main television outlets, this chapter therefore includes a reflection on the level of partisan influence and ownership. Moreover, the level of horizontal and vertical diversity within the media environment is investigated. Focussing on television is sensible as it represents the main source of information for receiving news in Georgia. TV has been the main source of information for receiving news about Georgian politics and current affiars for 85% of respondents in 2014. And TV still remained the main source of information for 69% of respondents in 2019, alongside an increasing importance of the internet/Facebook for news consumption (CRRC and NDI 2014, 2019). As scholarly literature on the Georgian media environment is not extensive, with the notable exception of the research of Japaridze (2011) and Keshelashvili et al. (2021a, 2021c, 2021b), the chapter is mainly based on seven expert online-interviews I conducted in March 2021 with media analysts of NGOs, IOs and think tanks. The interviews had an average duration of 68 minutes, offering a longitudinal but also up-to-date picture of the Georgian media environment.[8] Moreover, media monitoring reports by NGOs and IOs are taken into account.

IV.1 A note on terminology

Before spelling out the Georgian media landscape, the terminology used by media actors in the Georgian context needs to be reflected upon, as most interviewees were careful to draw a distinction between media bias and disinformation.[9] Several experts underline that the GD

[7] The terms 'media environment' and 'media landscape' are used interchangeably and denote the interplay of different media actors and media consumption habits in Georgia.
[8] Please see chapter III for a more detailed description of the interview method, the recruitment of interviewees and of the interview data.
[9] The experts are called experts and interviewees interchangeably.

uses the term ‘disinformation’ or ‘fake news’ to denote and discredit critical, opposition-related media outlets, rather than the intervention of foreign actors (TK 2021).[10] Following LK, when being criticised the GD “would label the media-coverage as ‘fake-news’” (LK 2021). According to TG, opposition-related media also label pro-governmental coverage as disinformation (TG 2021). However, the interviewees voice that Georgian media outlets rather conduct politically *biased reporting* by choosing a specific focus, using harsh language (to different degrees) and disseminating humiliating, private content of political rivals; while *disinformation* is only occasionally spread (LK 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021). Instead, disinformation is mainly spread via social media platforms, especially Facebook, independent of the online content of TV stations (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a; LK 2021; TG 2021; TK 2021). For instance, big public Georgian language Facebook groups have spread disinformation (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 9). All main political parties have been found to be linked to such Facebook groups (ibid.). In addition, many interviewers also point out the influence of foreign, especially Russian, disinformation operations (LK 2021; ND 2021; TG 2021; TK 2021).[11]

IV.3 The Georgian media landscape

The Georgian media sphere has been marked by considerable changes. It was marked by high horizontal and vertical diversity in 2000-03 under president Shevardnadze, with high degrees of investigative journalism (Japaridze 2011). In 2004, following the 2003 Rose Revolution, the Georgian law on Freedom of Speech and Expression was adopted, inter alia protecting editorial independence and media pluralism (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a; MA 2021; SG 2021). Despite this law, Japaridze characterises the media environment under President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004-2013) of the now main opposition party United National Movement (UNM), as a period of growing government control, to the point of “nearly total control of Georgian media” (Japaridze 2011, 114) by 2007. The government-induced closure of the then pro-opposition Imedi TV station in 2007 reflects the high degree of state pressure on media (Japaridze 2011; Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). Pluralism in media sources decreased, and the ratio of entertainment television content, as opposed to news content, increased. The latter was regarded as an attempt by the Georgian government to discourage critical political involvement of the public, with the aim of maintaining the

[10] The initials of the experts are specified when referring to the expert interviews conducted by the author.
[11] The issue of disinformation activities in Georgia is not regarded in depth here, but has been investigated elsewhere (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021; Kintsurashvili and Gelava 2019).

political status quo (Japaridze 2011). Moreover, the few non-government-controlled media sources were hard to access outside of Tbilisi (ibid.).

The period of study of this thesis begins in 2012 when the GD came to power but focuses more closely on the period since 2014 when the GD not only had a majority in parliament but also provided the president (Jones 2020). MA notes that the 2012 elections already took place in a quite politicised and polarised media environment, including instances of violence against journalists (MA 2021). Subsequently, according to most experts and congruent with Keshelashvili (2021a), during the first two years after GD came to power (2012-14), the media environment first became more pluralistic, independent and less politically biased, and, thus, media freedom increased (LK 2021; MA 2021; ND 2021; TK 2021). Corresponding developments comprised the removal of licensing requirements for television broadcasters, as a result of which the number of media outlets increased; and all cable operators were obliged to carry the signals of all TV stations (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a; MA 2021; ND 2021). Still, MA critically notes that the higher number of media outlets did not lead to more diversity of displayed viewpoints. Instead, from 2014, increasing centrifugal media polarisation has resulted in two poles of government- versus opposition-leaning media; while only few, small more balanced media outlets are situated in the middle of this spectrum (MA 2021).

Regarding online media, increased levels of internet access since 2015 led to higher online information consumption, and media actors developed their online presence, especially on Facebook (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). Among these actors, "TV station pages have the largest following across all platforms" (ibid., 9) and share broadcast content online (see also LK 2021).[12] Thus, the distinction between offline and online TV consumption has become increasingly blurred. In addition, an age and geographic gap in online news consumption exists, as "younger more urban people [are] more likely to rely on social media, and increasingly likely to access TV and other traditional media through online channels" (ibid.). Moreover, in 2020, only 74.5% of households in rural areas had internet access, compared to 90.7% of urban households (ibid., 19). As a result of lower internet penetration, (offline) TV is an especially important source of information outside urban areas, including of local TV stations (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 8). Concerning age, while 90% of users between 18 and 35 years, and 80% of users aged 36 to 55 can "easily find information using search

[12] For a closer analysis of television broadcasting on social media see (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 22–25).

engines" (ibid.), only 59% of Georgians aged 56 and above possessed this capability. This demonstrates an age gap in accessing online information.

While media literacy is regarded as being overall low in Georgia, Georgian citizens are still regarded as being "keenly aware of bias and disinformation" (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 5). This is reflected in the fact that 55% of the population thinks media reporting is motivated by partisan considerations. It is common in Georgia to check information by switching TV channels (Keshelashvili et al. 2021b). Still, NI highlights that people lack the skills, time and energy to closely verify information (NI 2021). In this environment of high politicisation and polarisation, trust in media has decreased, "with less than one third of Georgians fully or partially trusting media" (ibid). Information shared by family members, friends, neighbours or co-workers is trusted more than information of media outlets, especially by older Georgians. This tendency can be understood in light of a collectivistic Georgian culture, marked by close social ties extending beyond one's (core) family, but low levels of general trust towards unknown people (Keshelashvili et al. 2021b, 23). Keshelashvili et al. also find that "[m]edia consumers are more likely to trust media with an editorial slant that overlaps with their personal views" (ibid., 8). Alongside media bias, TK further identifies low general standards of ethnical and professional reporting as reasons for low trust in Georgian sources of information. Higher reporting standards would, in turn, contribute to higher trust towards the media (ibid.).

A further distinction between media consumption habits of different groups of Georgian society is warranted, as especially "[e]thnic minority citizens rely on local minority-language media and national media in their kin countries and are frustrated by the lack of minority-oriented content in mainstream media" (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 7).[13] Of the nation-wide TV channels, only the GBP provides programmes in ethnic languages (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 17). Still, the GBP programming in minority languages is criticised for not covering enough information on the respective regions (ibid.). Thus, Georgians of ethnic minorities who depend on broadcasting in minority languages tend to mostly consume regional television, covering local affairs (ibid.). As an effect of fewer available information sources in their native languages, these minority communities have tended to be "particularly prone to misinformation, as well as targeted disinformation" (ibid., 7), which warrants attention.[14]

[13] Of the total Georgian population, 6.3% are ethnic Azerbaijani and 4.5% ethnic Armenians, which are the two largest minority groups (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 14).
[14] More information of language and access can be found in (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 17f.)

IV.2 News content of the main television channels: politically biased?

After having characterised the Georgian media landscape is more broadly, the main television channels and their political leaning are introduced. Overall, the television channels with the biggest share of viewers in 2020 have been Imedi TV (22.7%), Mtavari TV (12.24%) and Rustavi 2 (10.5%) (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 7).[15] All interviewees agree with their assessment that television broadcasting is, and has been, politically biased in Georgia. This is contrary to the Georgian Code of Broadcasters, which demands impartiality of broadcasters (EU and UNDP 2018). Keshelashvili et al. also characterise Georgian television as "highly politicized and polarized"(Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 6). This section serves to outline the main television channels and the degree of their political bias.

On the one hand, Imedi is identified by all interviewees as the main pro-government TV station, alongside the less popular pro-government Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) and POS TV. Amongst these, the GPB is mainly providing entertainment programmes and lacking investigative journalism, giving little substantial information about current affairs and critical topics; and as overall less overtly pro-governmental than Imedi or POS TV (LK 2021; MA 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021). Imedi TV is characterised as closely linked with GD, with instances of the director directly pressing for pro-government reporting (LK 2021; MA 2021). The most visible instance of this occurred in the 2018 presidential elections when Imedi announced a change in the editorial policy "to make sure that the UNM candidate will not win" (LK 2021), exerting pressure on journalists to follow this path, and framed it as an 'emergency situation' on the grounds of prior bad experience with UNM rule (MA 2021; ND 2021). In addition to Imedi's biased editorial policy and individual links to the GD, Imedi is also known for providing a very comfortable environment for GD members by, for instance, asking little critical questions during interviews (SG 2021). Overall, Imedi's news coverage is seen to circumvent inconvenient issues and portray the development of the country and GD officials in a positive light, while criticising the opposition and pointing to the 'tyranny' under the UNM as a ruling party (ND 2021).

On the other hand, Rustavi 2 is identified by all interviewees as the former main pro-opposition TV station, affiliated with UNM, up until its change in ownership in mid-2019.

[15] "TV Pirveli and the Georgian Public Broadcaster follow with a share of 5.72% and 4.8%, respectively" (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 8).

This is congruent with publicly available reports (EU and UNDP 2018; Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 14, 2021c, 7; UNDP Georgia 2020). Accordingly, TK notes that Rustavi 2 "served as [the] alternative channel to balance [the] political interest of the ruling party" (TK 2021), but that the ownership change of Rustavi 2 in mid-2019 was followed by a change in editorial policy (ibid.). All interviewees agree that, since the ownership change, "the level of criticism towards [the] government has decreased drastically" (LK 2021); and Rustavi 2 started to cover the opposition less positively. The manner political discussions are conducted points to a change in editorial policy in favour of GD (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c; ND 2021; SG 2021; UNDP Georgia 2020). While Rustavi 2 has lost a big part of its viewers after mid-2019, the remaining comparatively high share is attributed to viewership habits and attraction of certain TV personalities (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 7; MA 2021).

Since mid-2019, Mtavari TV, affiliated with the UNM, and Formula TV, affiliated with European Georgia, constitute the newly formed pro-opposition TV channels (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c; UNDP Georgia 2020). Mtavari has since become the main pro-opposition TV channel and is known for its critical reporting and use of harsh, aggressive, emotional language towards the GD (LK 2021; SG 2021; TK 2021), including many instances of hate speech. SG also states that, in comparison, Mtavari is more pro-opposition than Rustavi 2 was before 2019 (ND 2021).

In addition, several smaller TV stations exist, including regional channels, which are only shortly noted but not incorporated further, due to their overall low importance. For instance, Keshelashvili et al. and the EU/UNDP media monitoring reports characterise Maestro and GDS as government-leaning channels, which merged management with Imedi since late 2016 and have a small audience (EU and UNDP 2018; Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). Moreover, Obiektivi TV is affiliated with the pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots party (EU and UNDP 2018; TK 2021). Altinfo TV is also known as a pro-Russian channel (TK 2021). TV Pirveli represents a more neutral TV station (LK 2021; ND 2021; TG 2021) with some recent pro-opposition bias (ND 2021; NI 2021). Formula and Adjara TV (the latter until 2019) are also regarded as a comparatively neutral channels with higher quality reporting (LK 2021; ND 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021). Moreover, MA notes the existence of "independent professional online media outlets, mostly funded by donor organisations" (MA 2021). Despite the availability of some more neutral TV stations, several interviewees refer to the need to verify information by also consuming those channels "affiliated with GP" (ND 2021), and those

linked to UNM, “you have to watch Formula, watch Mtavari and then Imedi TV to understand what's going on” (ibid.).

Overall, politically biased editorial guidance as well as self-censorship of journalists in these politically oriented media outlets are widely reported phenomena (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). It will be interesting to observe in this thesis if trusting one of the main television stations has a significant effect on the level of individual political dissatisfaction despite the possibility to get a more balanced picture by switching channels.

IV.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the depiction of the Georgian media landscape has demonstrated that while the media environment regarding TV broadcasting is open in the sense that no license is needed, however, partisan influence by the government, but also by the opposition remains high; and a concentration of ownership can be observed. Based on these characteristics, Georgian media coverage is not likely to create a ‘marketplace of ideas’, meaning a space for public political discussion, free of state interference. Moreover, despite the increase in media outlets, neither vertical nor horizontal diversity seems to have been growing substantially. More precisely, the media outlets with the biggest reach are marked by biased reporting, and thus do not present diverse views (low vertical diversity). Overall, most media outlets concentrate in two opposed political poles, and only a few more balanced outlets are found in the middle (low horizontal diversity). Since TV Imedi, Rustavi 2 and Mtavari (since mid-2019) have been identified as the TV stations with the highest reach, they will be included in further analysis of the impact of biased news consumption on political dissatisfaction.

Chapter V: Survey data analysis: The effects of trust in biased television on political dissatisfaction in Georgia

To identify to what extent trusting the main Georgian television channels affects political satisfaction in the country, the 'Public attitudes in Georgia' (n.d.) survey of the NDI is analysed. This survey offers the possibility to conduct regression analyses. The survey is nationally representative (excluding occupied territories), was conducted in April 2014 and since April 2015 on average trice a year; the average margin of error is +/- 1.9%; and the surveys have been funded by UK aid. The survey fits the research question of this thesis longitudinally (2014-19).

As outlined in the theory chapter (II), the biased news literature leads to the expectation that if the ruling party is involved in efforts of disseminating biased or fake news, it would likely do so to increase the satisfaction of its supporter and to affect attitude change of non-supporters in favour of its own policies. In the context of Georgia, the seemingly growing control of public and private media outlets by the governing party could be seen as a first indication of this trend, which has also been stressed by interview participants (see chapter IV). In a similar manner, based on interviews and secondary literature, the opposition-leaning TVs are also likely to be involved in this effort. To test whether these effects can be observed, and to specify the effects, two sets of models are built, one in which political dissatisfaction is the DV. For this first set of models, three different DVs concerning the perception of a) the performance of the government, b) the performance of the parliament and c) the performance of the courts are used. In the second set of models, 'the direction Georgia is going' is used as the DV, to measure a more global (dis)satisfaction with Georgia's overall development and distinguish that from political (dis)satisfaction. This allows to make a distinction of whether consumption of certain TV stations has an effect specifically on political satisfaction or only on more general, diffuse satisfaction levels. Moreover, within the two sets of models, first, the effect of trusting the main government-leaning TV channel, Imedi TV, is tested, to then consider the effect of trusting the main oppositional TV, Rustavi 2 (2014 until mid-2019) and Mtavari Arkhi (from mid-2019).

As all DVs are ordinal, an ordinal logistic regression is chosen to measure the influence of TV trust on the general perception where the country is going, controlling for party support, political sophistication, age, education, gender, income, settlement type and time effects.

V.1. Descriptive statistics

This section serves to summarize the data before proceeding to the regression and data analysis. Six waves of the NDI survey have been selected, based on the inclusion of the DVs and the main IVs (trust in Georgian TV stations): March/April 2014 (n=3.942), June/July 2016 (n=4.113), November/December 2017 (n=2.298), March/April 2018 (n=2.194), March/April 2019 (n=2.927) and November/December 2019 (n=2.180), which sums up to a total of n=17.654 observations. The response rate was highest in 2014 (66%) and 2016 (62%); and ranked between 48% in 2017, to 35% in November/December 2019 (NDI n.d.). While the 2014 survey is only representative of the Georgian-speaking adult population (18 years and older), all other surveys are representative of the general adult population living in Georgia, excluding those living in the de-facto independent territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. To draw the sample, the NDI has applied a multi-stage cluster sampling with preliminary stratification and the survey was conducted in the form of computer-assisted personal interviews. While in 2014, the interviews were only conducted in Georgian; from 2016 onwards, they were also conducted in Armenian and Azerbaijani (ibid.). To be able to generalise the findings, weighted data is used. As all of the variables included are individual-level variables, except for household income (*MONYTOT*), the provided individual level weights (*WTIND*) were used for data analysis.

The following parts will provide more descriptive statistics. While for continuous variables, "the mean describes the center and the standard deviation describes the variability" (Agresti 2018, 41); for categorical variables, the proportions of categories are the more appropriate descriptive measure as they convey more accurate information and will thus be provided instead (ibid.). In addition, graphic illustrations of the DVs are included; as well as an assessment of the bivariate relations of IVs and DVs.

V.1.1 Definition and description of the dependent variables

The DVs comprise the direction Georgia is going, and the performance of the parliament, government and courts; which all represent ordinal variables. Table 1 provides a summary of their definition, their outcome scales and their relative frequencies by ordered categories.

Direction Georgia is going (POLDIRN)

The 'direction Georgia is going' was measured in all years by the item "There are different opinions regarding the direction in which Georgia is going. Using this card, please rate your answer". Survey participants were asked to rank their perception on a five-point scale from "mainly going in the wrong direction" to "mainly going in the right direction". Overall, 1075 observations of the dependent variable are missing (n=17.654), which are omitted.

Performance of the government (RATEGOV)

The performance of the government was measured by the item "How would you rate the performance of the current government?" in 2017-19, measured on a five-point scale in 2017 and 2018 ("very badly", "badly", "average", "well", "very well") and on a four-point scale in both waves of 2019 ("very badly", "badly", "well", "very well"). The variable has been harmonised to resemble a five-point Likert scale in all years by rescaling the four-point Likert scale to 1; 2.33; 3.67 and 5, following the function "likert_convert" in the R survey package "surveytoolbox" (Martinctc 2020). Overall, 9650 observations are missing for this DV, as it was not measured in the 2014 and 2016 survey waves. Missing observations are omitted.

Performance of the parliament (PERFPARL)

The performance of the parliament was measured in 2014, 2018 and in both waves of 2019 by the item "Using this card, how would you rate the performance of the Parliament?". Respondents could choose on a five-point scale between "very badly", "badly", "neither badly nor well", "well", "very well". Overall, 7709 observations of the dependent variable are missing (n=17.654), as the item was not included in the 2016 and 2017 survey waves, which are omitted.

Performance of the courts (PERFCRTS)

The performance of the courts was also measured in 2014, 2018 and in both waves of 2019 by the item "Using this card, how would you rate the performance of the Courts?". Respondents could choose on a five-point scale between "very badly", "badly", "neither badly nor well", "well", "very well". Overall, 8859 observations of the dependent variable are missing (n=17.654), as the item was not included in the 2016 and 2017 survey waves, which are omitted.

Table 1. Dependent variables. Original number of observations n=17.654. Find the values for data weighted by individual-level weights in brackets.

	Number of observations	**Proportion**	**NA's**	**Survey waves**
Direction Georgia is going (POLDIRN):				
1= definitely going in the wrong direction	2577	0.155 (0.167)	1075	All
2= mainly going in the wrong direction	3660	0.221 (0.238)		
3= not changing at all	5478	0.33 (0.32)		
4= going mainly in the right direction	4270	0.258 (0.241)		
5= definitely going in the right direction	594	0.036 (0.034)		
Performance of the government (RATEGOV)			9650	
	2017, 18:	*2017,18:*		
1= very badly	329	0.10 (0.107)		2017
2= badly	741	0.226 (0.223)		2018
3= average	1738	0.53 (0.538)		2019a
4= well	411	0.125 (0.116)		2019b
5= very well	62	0.19 (0.17)		
	2019a, 2019b:	*2019a, 2019b:*		
1= very badly	716	0.152 (0.178)		
2= badly	2107	0.446 (0.469)		
3= well	1795	0.38 (0.336)		
4= very well	105	0.22 (0.017)		
Performance of the parliament (PERFPARL)			7709	
1= very badly	757	0.076 (0.101)		2014
2= badly	2681	0.27 (0.305)		2018
3= neither badly nor well	5074	0.51 (0.465)		2019a
4= well	1305	0.131 (0.118)		2019b
5= very well	128	0.013 (0.011)		
Performance of the courts (PERFCRTS)			8859	
1= very badly	685	0.078 (0.097)		2014
2= badly	2388	0.272 (0.298)		2018
3= neither badly nor well	4384	0.499 (0.46)		2019a
4= well	1188	0.135 (0.131)		2019b
5= very well	150	0.017 (0.014)		
Total	17.654	1.0 (1.0)		

V.1.2 Definition and description of the independent variables

As the main IVs, the trust in the main pro-government TV channel *Imedi*, and in the main pro-opposition TV channel *Rustavi 2* (2014 until mid-2019) and *Mtavari Arkhi* (from mid-2019) are considered, based on the main hypotheses. As after the 2019 ownership struggle Rustavi 2 the main part of the journalists and the audience switched from Rustavi 2 to Mtavari Arkhi (see chapter IV), this is reflected in the data analysis. Concerning the measurement of these TV trust variables, in 2014 and 2016, respondents could rate a given number of TV channels on a five-point scale ("do not trust at all", "do not trust", "neutral", "trust", "fully trust"). Whereas in 2017-2019, respondents were asked which TV channels they "trust the most for accurate information on politics and current events"; they could name up to three TV channels in 2017, but only one from 2018 onwards. Thus, these changes have

to be carefully considered when interpreting the results. To harmonise the TV trust variable over the years, a dummy variable has been created reflecting trusting/not trusting *Imedi* (1/0), which reflects trust in the main government TV (*maingovtvtrust*); and trusting/not trusting *Rustavi 2* and *Mtavari Arkhi* (1/0), which reflects trusting the main opposition TV (*mainopptvtrust*). Still, the more nuanced ordinal variable in 2014 and 2016 will be closely regarded to test the impact of strongly trusting one of the channels versus only trusting it.

To control for partisanship, support of the ruling party Georgian Dream is included (*GDsup*), as well as the support for the main opposition party UNM (*UNMsup)*; both of which are dummy variables (0/1), based on the question: "Which party is closest to you?". An index to measure Political sophistication (*POLSOPH*) has been created based on knowledge of year-specific political developments (two questions per survey wave), where 0=low, 1=medium and 2=high political sophistication (see questions in the appendix (1)). This variable is an approximation of political sophistication and has been included for theoretical considerations (see chapter II).

Regarding other controls, the age of participants is included by use of a categorical variable capturing three age groups (*AGEGROUP*, 18-35, 36-55, 56+). Education level is also included (*RESPEDU*), distinguishing between "did not obtain a nine-year diploma" (1), "nine-year diploma" (2), "high school diploma" (3), "vocational/technical degree" (4), "Bachelor's degree/ 5 years diploma" (5), "any degree above bachelor's" (6). The respondents' gender is recorded as a dichotomous variable (*RESPSEX*, 1=male, 2=female). Income is controlled for with 8 income levels (*MONYTOT*) and unemployment is controlled for distinguishing three levels (*UNEMPL*, 0= employed, 1= unemployed and not looking for a job, 2= unemployed and seeking a job). To control for a possible urban-rural divide, a variable capturing the settlement type where the survey was taken is included as a categorical variable, distinguishing between Tbilisi, urban, rural, and non-Georgian minority settlements (*SETTYPE*). In all regressions that cover more than one wave of the survey, the variable 'YEAR' was created and included as a factor. All these IVs and controls are summarised in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics (proportions, NAs, min, max) of independent variables.
Original number of observations n=17.654

	Non-weighted		**Weighted data**		
	Prop.	*NA*	*Prop.*	*Min*	*Max*
Trust in main television channels:					
Trust in Imedi TV (maingovtvtrust):	0.425	3597	0.463	0	1
Trust in Rustavi 2/ Mtavari Arkhi (mainopptvtrust):	0.362	2968	0.383	0	1
Partisanship					
Feeling closest to the Georgian Dream (GDsup):	0.319	3257	0.305	0	1
'' to the United National Movement (UNMsup):	0.157	3257	0.142	0	1
Political sophistication (POLSOPH):*		5773		0	2
0= Low political sophistication	0.248		0.244		
1= Medium political sophistication	0.505		0.505		
2= High political sophistication	0.25		0.25		
Age (AGEGROUP):		-		1	3
1= 18-35	0.258		0.34		
2= 35-55	0.314		0.356		
3= 56+	0.429		0.304		
Education (RESPEDU):		91		1	6
1= < 9-year school diploma	0.035		0.024		
2= 9-year school diploma	0.046		0.039		
3= Highschool diploma	0.357		0.39		
4= Vocational/technical degree	0.244		0.228		
5= Bachelor's degree/ 5-year diploma	0.247		0.245		
6= > Bachelor's degree	0.072		0.074		
Gender (RESPSEX):		-		1	2
1= Man	0.477		0.459		
2= Woman	0.523		0.541		
*Household income last month (MONYTOT)**:*		7022		1	8
1= 0 GEL> 1600 GEL	0.085		0.085		
2= 1-180 GEL	0.103		0.103		
3= 181-300 GEL	0.241		0.241		
4= 301-500 GEL	0.23		0.230		
5= 501-800 GEL	0.184		0.184		
6= 801-1200 GEL	0.095		0.095		
7= 1201-1600 GEL	0.034		0.034		
8= > 1600 GEL	0.028		0.028		
*Employment status (UNEMPL)***:*		2316		0	2
0= Employed	0.334		0.381		
1= Unemployed, not looking for job	0.438		0.374		
2= Unemployed, looking for job	0.228		0.245		
Settlement type (SETTYPE):		-		1	4
1= Capital	0.215		0.273		
2= Urban	0.405		0.273		
3= Rural	0.236		0.366		
4= non-Georgian minority	0.143		0.088		
Survey year (YEAR):				2014	2019.2
2014	0.223		0.152		
2016	0.233		0.17		
2017	0.13		0.17		
2018	0.124		0.17		
2019a	0.166		0.17		
2019b	0.123		0.17		

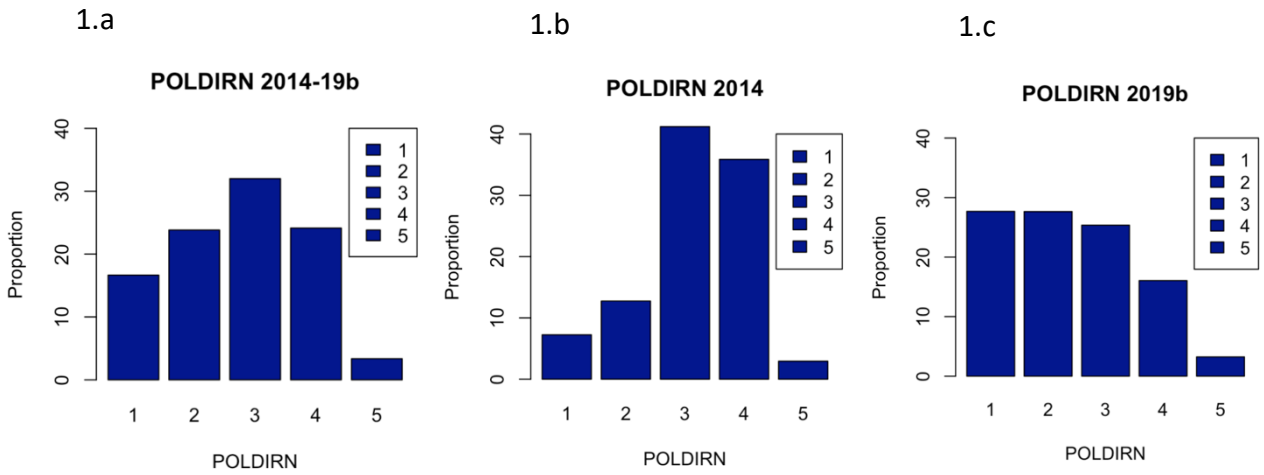
Note: **POLSOPH* is measured in all years except 2016; ***MONYTOT* is a household level variable that was measured in all years except 2019a/b.; the *MONYTOT* proportions of non-weighted and weighted data stay the same, as only individual level weights are included. *** *UNEMPL* was measured in all waves except 2019b.

V.1.3 Graphic illustration of the dependent variables: bar charts, boxplots

As the subsequent regressions will be based on weighted data, only weighted data is used for graphic illustrations. Bar charts are chosen to visualise the distribution of DVs, as the separated bars emphasise the categorical rather than quantitative nature of the variables (Agresti 2018). To explore the relation between the DVs and the main IV 'trust in Imedi TV' *(maingovtvtrust)*, clustered bar charts are included. Thus, not only the distribution of DVs, but also the possible (changing) impact of TV trust is visualised.

Distribution of the DV 'direction Georgia is going' (POLDIRN)

Figure 1. Bar charts. Proportions of each category of the DV 'direction Georgia is going' (POLDIRN) for all years 2014-19, and separately for 2014 and 2019b (1= definitely going in the wrong direction, 5= definitely going in the right direction)



Considering its 2014-19 distribution, the DV 'direction Georgia is going' *(POLDIRN)* is skewed to the right (figure 1.a). Thus, overall, more respondents have a negative perception of the direction Georgia is going. This is also reflected in the relative frequencies of the categories: whereas 16.7% and 23.8% of respondents think that Georgia is, respectively definitely/mainly going in the wrong direction (options 1 and 2); 24.1% and only 3.4% think that the country is, respectively, mainly/definitely going in the right direction (options 4 and 5). While in 2014 the data was more skewed towards the left, it changed to being skewed towards the right in November/December 2019. Hence, overall, a higher proportion of respondents have a more pessimistic view on Georgia's overall direction in 2019 than they had in 2014. This trend is also reflected in the relative frequencies per categories for POLDIRN comparing 2014 and 2019 (see appendix (4)).

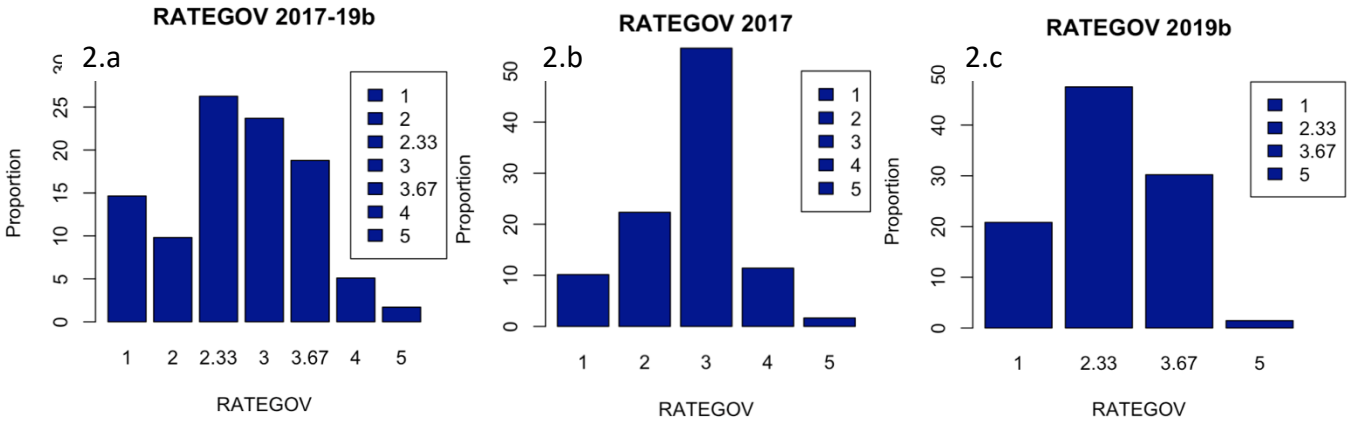
Distribution of the DV 'performance of the government' (RATEGOV)

To harmonise the 'performance of the government' *(RATEGOV)* 2017/18 and 2019a/b variables, the 4-point scale of the 2019 a/b *RATEGOV* DV is stretched to match a 5-point scale (1 stays 1, 2 becomes 2.33, 3 becomes 3.67, and 4 becomes 5). When combining both *RATEGOV* variables together, essentially a 7-point scale forms (see table 2). Considering the 2017-19 distribution of *RATEGOV*, the variable is skewed to the right (figure 3.a). Thus, overall, more respondents have a negative perception of the performance of the government. This is also reflected in the relative frequencies of the categories: whereas overall 50.72% think of its performance as badly (categories 1, 2, 2.33); 25.59% regard its performance as well (categories 3.67, 4, 5) and 23.7% rank in the middle (see figure 2).

Table 3. RATEGOV 2017-19b, 5p.-scale

RATEGOV 2017-19b	Proportion
1	14.65
2	9.81
2.33	26.26
3	23.70
3.67	18.79
4	5.1
5	1.7

Figure 2. Bar charts. Proportions of each category of the DV 'performance of the government' (RATEGOV) for all years 2014-19, and separately for 2014 and 2019b (1=very badly, 5=very well)

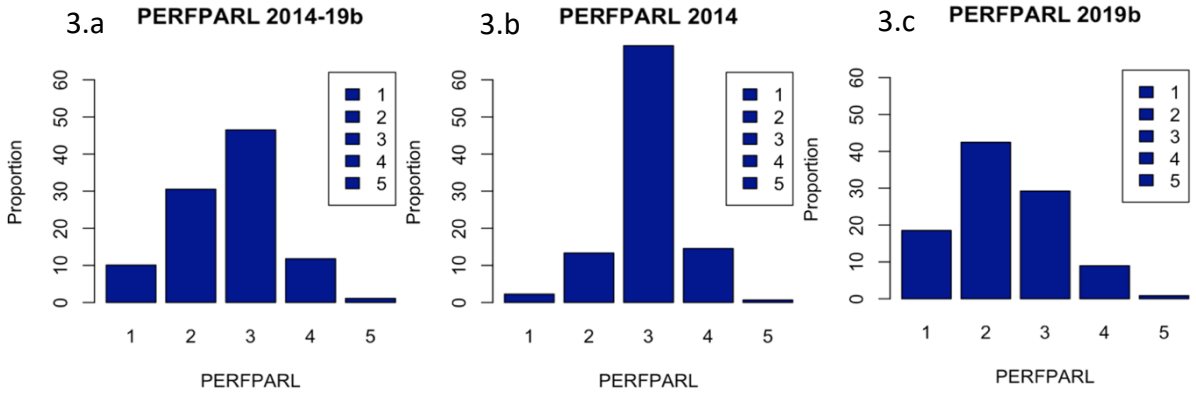


Distribution of the DV 'performance of the parliament' (PERFPARL)

Regarding the 2014-19 distribution of the DV 'performance of the parliament' *(PERFARL)*, the variable is also skewed to the right (figure 3.a). Thus, overall, more respondents had a negative perception of performance of the parliament. This is also reflected in the percentages of the categories: whereas 10.1% and 23.8% of respondents thought that the parliament performs 'very badly' (1) or 'badly' (2); 11.8% thought it performs 'well' (4) and only 1.1% that it performs 'very well' (5). While in 2014 the data was not visibly skewed (figure 3.b), it changed to being skewed towards the right in 2019 (figure 3.c). Hence, a higher proportion of respondents perceived the performance of the parliament negatively in 2019 than in 2014. This tendency is also reflected in the relative frequencies per categories for PERFPARL comparing 2014 and 2019b (see appendix (4)). Still, the change is less drastic compared to what has been observed for the DV *POLDIRN*, i.e. the

general direction of Georgia, especially as the lowest category 1 increased less for *PERFPARL* than for *POLDIRN* in 2019b.

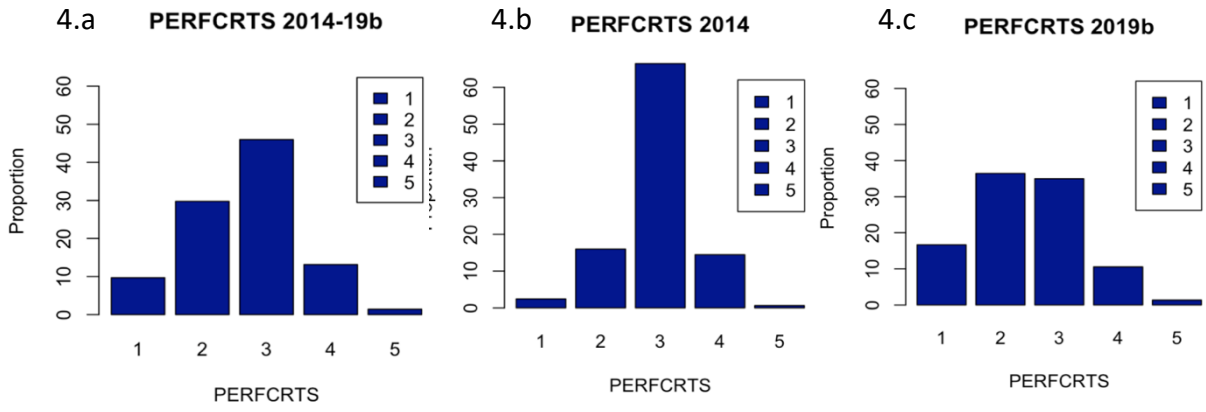
Figure 3. Bar charts. Proportions of each category of the DV 'performance of the parliament' (PERFPARL) for 2014-19, and separately for 2014 and 2019b (1=very badly, 5=very well)



Distribution of the DV 'performance of the courts' (PERFCRTS)

The distribution of the perception of *the performance of the courts (PERFCRTS*) looks very similar to that of the DV *PERFPARL*. In the 2014-19 distribution, the variable is also skewed to the right (figure 4.a). Thus, overall, more respondents have a negative perception of the performance of the courts than a positive one; as also demonstrated by the relative frequencies of the categories. Comparing 2014 and 2019; the distribution the variable *PERFCRTS* changed in a similar fashion to the DV *PERFPARL*. While in 2014 the data was not visibly skewed (4.b), it changed to being skewed towards the right in 2019 (4.c). So a lower proportion of respondents perceived the performance of the courts negatively in 2014 than in 2019. This tendency is also apparent when comparing the relative frequencies per category of PERFCRTS of 2014 and 2019b (see appendix (4).

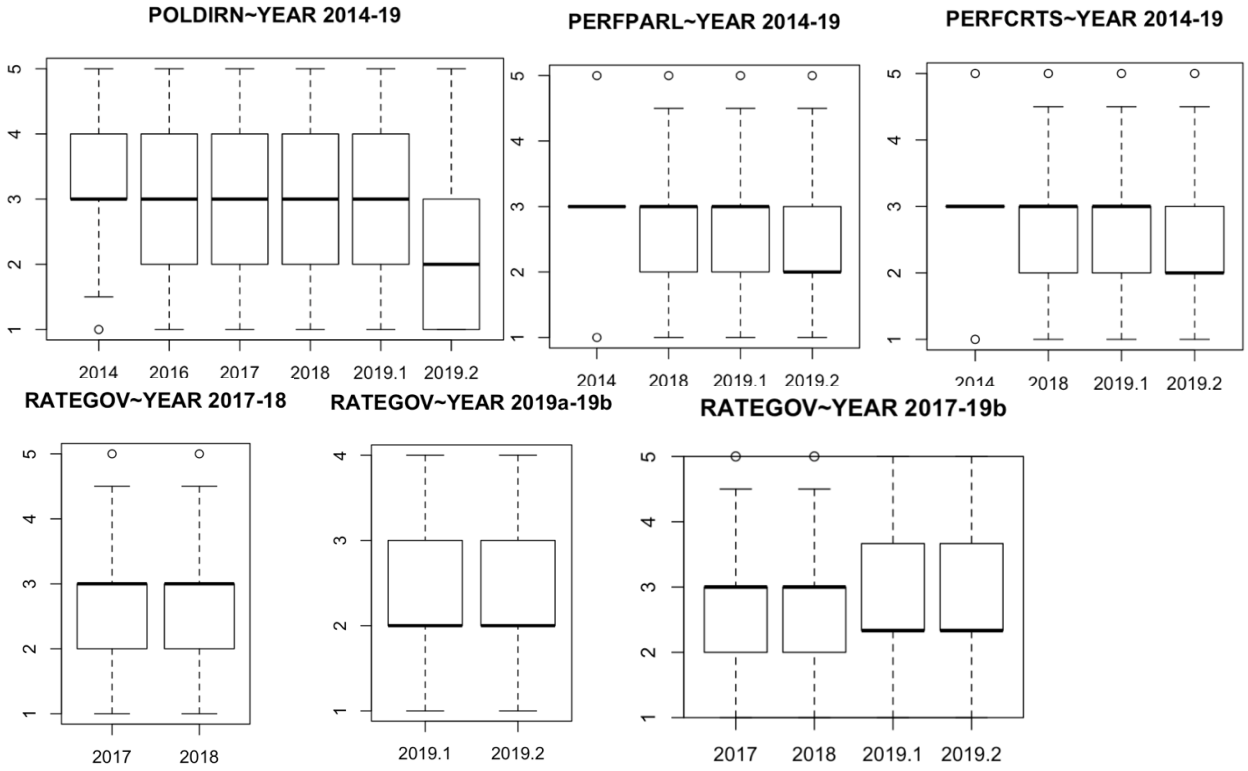
Figure 4. Bar charts. Proportions of each category of the DV 'performance of the courts' (PERFCRTS) for 2014-19, and separately for 2014 and 2019b (1=very badly, 5= very well)



Box plots of DVs

The following box plots of the DVs are displayed, even though the DVs are ordinal variables, as they show the shift of the central distribution over the years. The central 50% of the distribution are contained in the box of the plots, "from the lower quartile to the upper quartile" (Agresti 2018, 60). The thicker black line marks the median and the dashed lines (whiskers) reach the maximum and minimum (ibid.). For POLDIRN, PERFPARL and PERFCRTS, the median response was the middle answer in all years but November/December 2019 (2019b), when 2 became the median ('mainly going in the wrong direction' / performing 'badly'). Thus, the boxplots show that the median, which is "the observation that falls in the middle of the ordered sample" (Agresti 2018, 49), has shifted to the more negative answers, which in this case signals overall growing dissatisfaction.

Figure 5. Boxplots of all DVs, for the years 2014-2019b for POLDIRN, PERFPARL and PERFCRTS, and 2017-19b for RATEGOV (due to missing data for 2014)



1.4 Assessing bivariate relations of the IVs and controls with the DVs

This subsection includes graphic illustrations of the main IVs *maingovtvtrust* and *mainopptvtrust* with the DVs; as well as a discussion of Chi-squared and Spearman's rank correlation tests. Chi-squared tests have been executed to explore if the IVs are statistically independent from the DVs (see appendix (2)). The evidence against H_0: independence is regarded as strong unless $p \leq 0.05$ (Agresti 2018). The output of chi-squared tests provides

strong evidence for almost all IVs against H_0. It seems that they are associated with the DVs in the population. The chi-squared tests do, however, not provide information about the strength of association. To test for correlations between the main IVs and the DVs, and as normality cannot be assumed for categorical data, a Spearman's rank correlation test is performed (table 3). The Spearman's rank correlations confirm that significant positive relations exist between trusting Imedi TV (*maingovtvtrust*) and all DVs, thus, between watching pro-government TV and political satisfaction. Conversely, the correlations signal that watching pro-oppositional TV (*mainopptvtrust*) negatively affects the assessment of the country's development and of the performance of core state institutions. None of the IVs are strongly correlated with one another (find correlation matrix with all variables in the appendix (3)).

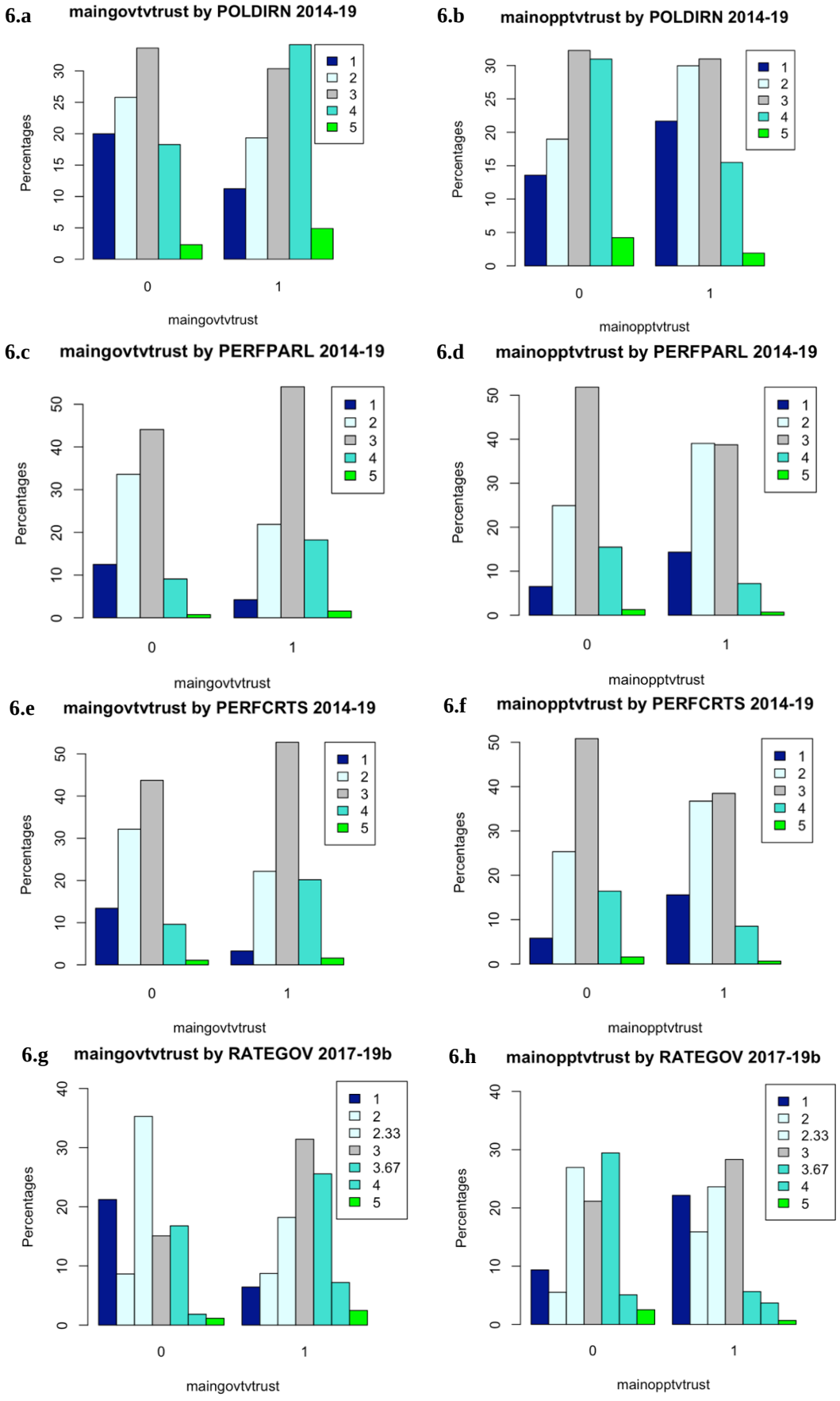
Table 4. Spearman's Rank correlation test of DVs with main IVs.

	POLDIRN	**RATEGOV**	**PERFPARL**	**PERFCRTS**
maingovtvtrust	0.18***	0.20***	0.16***	0.17***
mainopptvtrust	-0.21***	-0.31***	-0.22***	-0.21***

Levels of significance: + p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Further assessing the relations of the DVs with the main IVs, the bar charts in figure 6 show that a higher percentage of those trusting the main pro-government TV (*maingovtvtrust*=1) rate the direction Georgia is going (POLDIRN) and the performance of the parliament (PERFPARL) and courts (PERFCRTS) positively (categories 4 and 5) than those trusting the main pro-opposition tv channel (*mainopptvtrust*=1). The opposite is reflected as well: a higher percentage of those trusting the main pro-opposition channel (*mainopptvtrust*=1) rate the direction Georgia is going and the performance of the parliament and courts negatively, compared to those trusting the main pro-government channel (*maingovtvtrust*=1). More precisely, when regarding the entire period of 2014-19 (figure 7.a), the share of people rating the direction of the country's development negatively (POLDIRN, options 1 and 2) was lower for people trusting the main government TV station Imedi (light blue); whereas the share of people thinking it was going in the right direction (options 4 and 5) was higher for these people trusting Imedi TV. The same tendency can be observed for the performance of the government, parliament and courts: overall (2014-19), the share of people thinking the government/parliament/courts performed badly was lower for people trusting the main government TV station Imedi (light blue); whereas the share of people thinking these institutions performed well was higher for people trusting Imedi TV (figure 8.a, 9.a, 10.a).

Figure 6. Clustered bar charts. Proportions of the categories 1-5 of the DVs 'direction Georgia is going' (POLDIRN) and 'performance of the parliament/courts/government' (PERFPARL, PERFCRTS, RATEGOV) within each category of trusting the main pro-government TV (maingovtvtrust, 0=no trust, 1= trust, 6.a,c,e,g) or trusting the main pro-opposition TV (mainopptvtrust, 0=not trust, 1= trust, 6.b,d,f,h)



This tendency is also reflected in the reported Spearman's Rank correlation coefficients (table 3), which are all positive for trusting the main government TV Imedi (*maingovtvtrust*) and the DVs; and seems to correspond with the hypothesis that political satisfaction might be positively linked to trust in pro-government partisan news.

Concerning figure 7, when comparing 2014 (figure 7.b) and 2019 (figure 7.c), an increasing share of those respondents thinking the Georgia was going in the right direction (options 4 and 5) is trusting Imedi TV. This increase seems to signal that political satisfaction might be *increasingly* positively linked to trust in pro-government partisan news. However, this trend is not that clearly observable for the perception of the performance of the government due to a change in the measurement scale (figures 8.b and 8.c); and the clustered bar charts concerning the performance of the parliament and courts signal a decrease in political satisfaction of those respondents watching Imedi TV: comparing 2014 and 2019, the share of people thinking the parliament performed *very* well (5) was much higher for people trusting Imedi in 2014 (96%); and dropped down to 48.5% in 2019b (9.b and 9.c). Similarly, the share of people thinking the courts performed well was much higher for people trusting Imedi in 2014 (76%); and dropped down to 49.7% in 2019b; while increasing for those trusting other TV stations (10.b and 10.c).

Figure 7. Clustered bar charts. Percent of respondents trusting Imedi TV (maingovtvtrust) within each category of the DV direction Georgia is going (POLDIRN); light blue= trusting Imedi TV

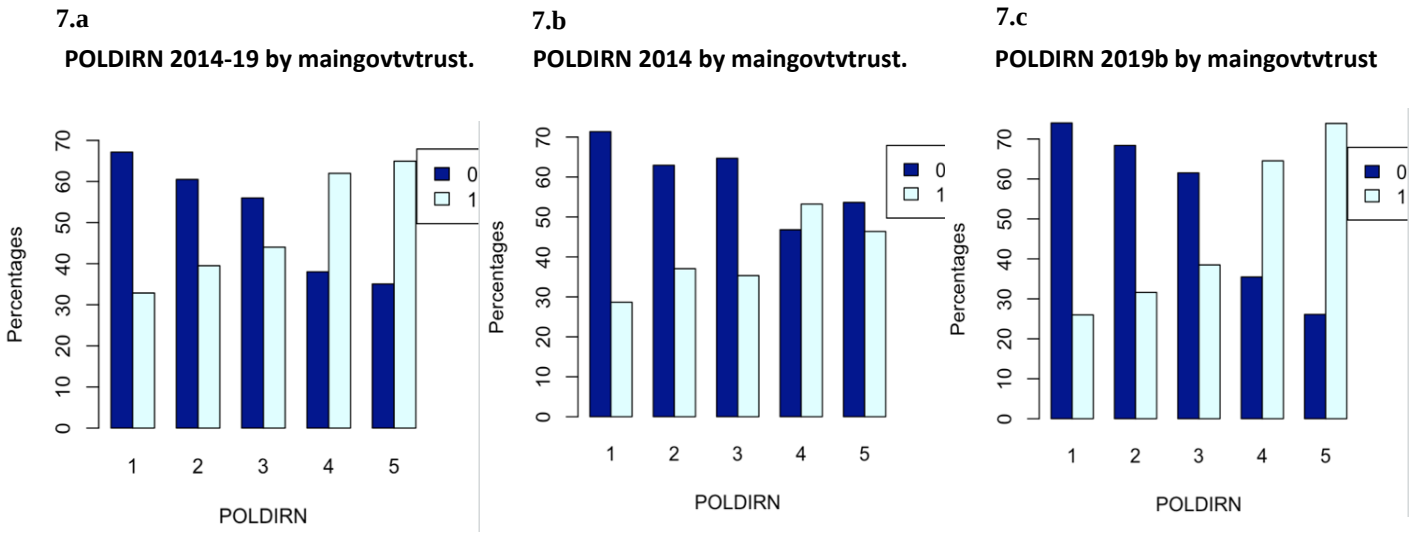
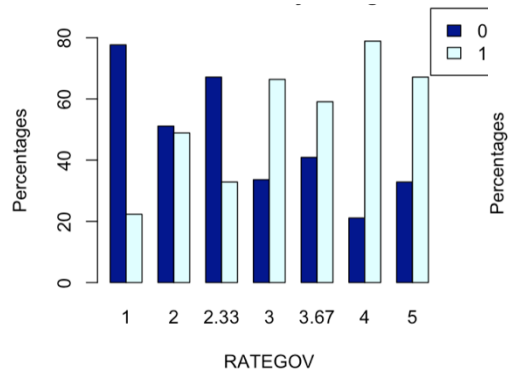
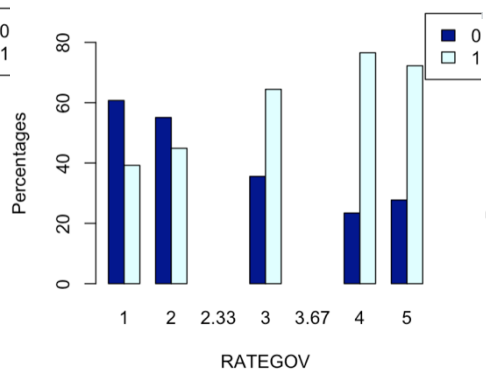


Figure 8-10. Clustered bar charts. Percent of respondents trusting Imedi (maingovtvtrust) within each category of the DV performance of the government (RATEGOV, figure 8), the DV 'performance of the parliament' (PERFPARL); light blue= trusting Imedi TV

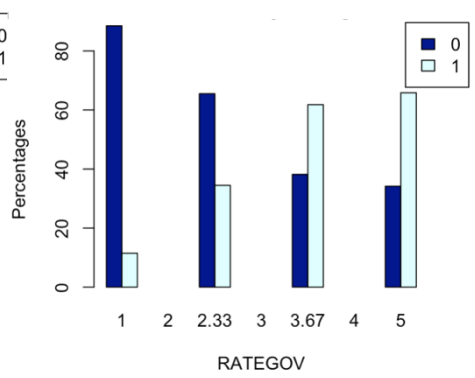
8.a



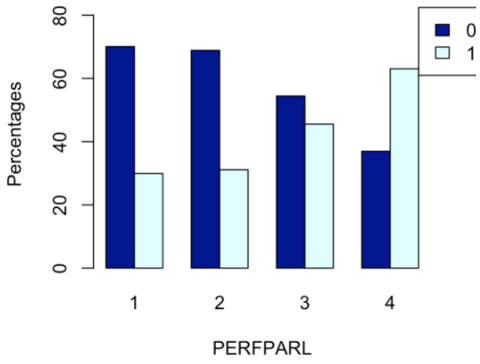
8.b



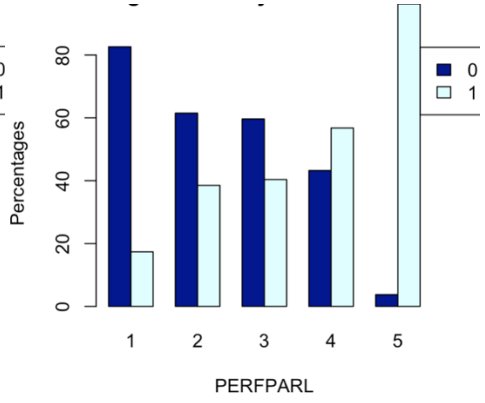
8.c



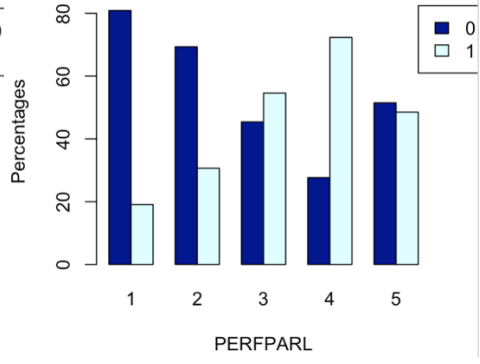
9.a



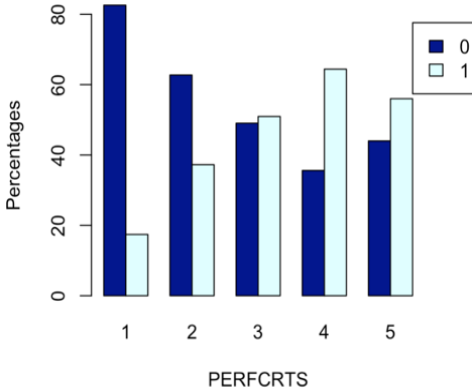
9.b



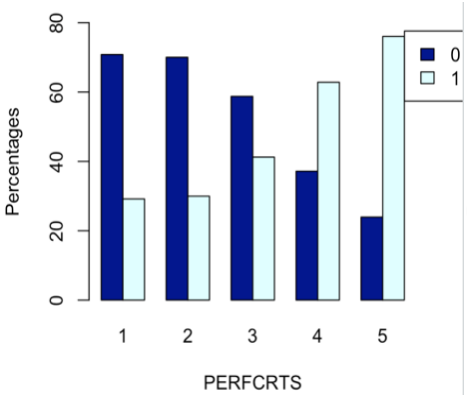
9.c



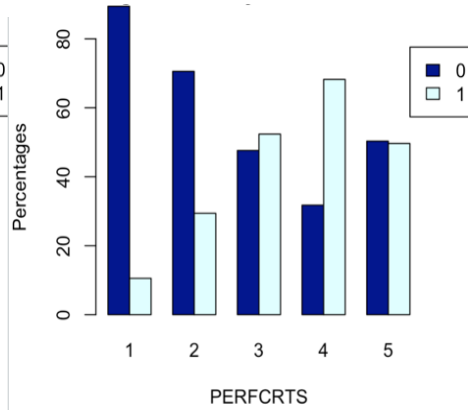
10.a



10.b



10.c



V.2. Presentation of ordinal logistic regression results

In this chapter, the results of the ordinal logistic regression are presented. Ordinal logistic regression models are based on cumulative logits (Powers and Xie 2008, 228). Thereby, the cumulative probabilities /log-odds that y is less than or equal to a particular value of the response variable are calculated (ibid.). An OLS regression would not be appropriate as it cannot be assumed that the space between all categories of the ordered DVs is equal. All categorical variables have been treated as factors in R. Before proceeding to the description of results, the hypotheses are re-stated; the null-hypotheses being that the described effects cannot be observed:

> *H.1.a People trusting information of the main pro-government TV channel are more positive about the direction Georgia is going, independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.*
>
> *H.1.b People trusting information of the main pro-government TV channel show higher levels of political satisfaction with the government, parliament and courts, independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables*.
>
> *H.2.a: People trusting information of the main pro-opposition TV channel are more negative about the direction Georgia is going, independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.*
>
> *H.2.b: People trusting information of the main pro-opposition TV channel show lower levels of political satisfaction with the government, parliament and courts, independent of party affiliation, political sophistication and socio-economic control variables.*

First, the regression results concerning the general/diffuse satisfaction DV 'direction Georgia is going' are presented, to then proceed to the models on specific political satisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament, and courts. Each section includes, first, the models using trust in the main pro-government TV (*maingovtvtrust*) as the main IV, and, second, the models with trust in the main pro-opposition TV (*mainopptvtrust*) as the main IV. The models which are presented in this chapter cover all survey waves under investigation, from April 2014 until November/December 2019. As income (*MONYTOT*) was not measured in 2019a/b, and unemployment was not measured in 2019a, these controls are not included in these main models, to avoid dropping entire survey waves. Adding in these variables does not change the significance, size or sign of the

main IVs and of most controls (see appendix (6)).[16] The parallel slopes assumption is not badly violated in the models as the distance between cutpoints of the DVs is roughly equal for all levels of the IVs (see appendix (5)). The output estimates are given in units of ordered logits or ordered log odds. For instance, in model 1.1a (table 5), for one unit increase in *maingovtvtrust* (i.e. going from 0 to 1), we expect a 0.44 increase in the expected value of *POLDIRN* on the log odds scale, given all other variables in the model are held constant. To ease interpretation, the coefficients are converted into odds ratios (UCLA n.d.).

Overall, the regression results demonstrate that trust in partisan news consumption does have a significant effect both on general satisfaction with the direction Georgia is going (signalling diffuse political support), and on political satisfaction with the performance of the government, parliament, and courts (understood as specific political support). Thus, the possibility that no such effect exists can be rejected. Moreover, as hypothesised, trust in the pro-government TV station Imedi (*maingovtvtrust*) has a significant positive effect on satisfaction levels (H.1.a, H.1.b; see tables 5, 7, 8, 9). Conversely, trust in pro-opposition TV (*mainopptvtrust*) has a significant negative effect on satisfaction levels with the direction Georgia is going (*POLDIRN*), as well as with the performance of the government (*RATEGOV*), parliament (*PERFPARL*) and courts (*PERFCRTS*) (H.2.a, H.2.b, see tables 6, 10, 11, 12). These effects stay significant even when interacting the TV trust variables with partisan support of the ruling party or the main opposition party (*maingovtvtrust*GDsup* or *mainopptvtrust*UNMsup*, respectively), and controlling for political sophistication, age, education, gender, settlement type and year-specific effects. The results are thus in line with all four hypotheses.

V.2.1. General (dis-)satisfaction: ordinal logistic regression with POLDIRN

More specifically, the proportional odds ratios (OR) of **model 1.1a** (table 5) indicate the odds of rating the direction Georgia is going (*POLDIRN*) more positively than 'definitely in the wrong direction' (i.e., in the wrong direction /not changing /mainly in the right direction /definitely in the right direction). The odds of rating Georgia's direction of development more favourably than the lowest category (1) is 1.5 times higher for respondents who trust

[16] When including these controls, all variables that are significant in the main models 1a and 1b stay significant and don't change sign, except the fifth level of RESPEDU (Bachlor's degree) when adding in MONTYOT, which turns insignificant. The size of the effects does not change by more than 0.22 (see appendix (6)). When adding in UNEMPL, the second level of UNEMPL is significant at the 10% level, and at the 5% level in a model with an interaction term between maingovtvtrust and GDsup. MONYTOT is not significant.

the main government TV station Imedi (*maingovtvtrust*=1). Regarding the control variables, the odds of rating *POLDIRN* more positively are 4.32 times higher for respondents who support the ruling party (*GDsup*), 1.89 times lower [i.e., (1/OR)] for respondents who support the main opposition party UNM (*UNMsup*), 1.28 times higher for respondents with high political sophistication (*POLSOPH*=2), 1.29 times higher for respondents living in rural areas (*SETTYPE* =3, with 'capital' being the reference category), and 3.15 times higher for respondents from ethnic minority areas (*SETTYPE* =4). Moreover, all *YEAR* variables have a significant negative effect on the rating of POLDIRN (compared to the reference category of 2014): the odds of rating the 'direction Georgia is going' more positively were 2.04 times lower in 2017, 1.64 times lower in 2018, 2.13 times lower in 2019a and 3.13 times lower in 2019b compared to the reference category of 2014. When adding in an interaction term between trust in the main government TV station and support for the ruling party (*maingovtvtrust*GDsup*), all significant variables of 1.1a remain significant in **model 1.1b**. The direction of the effects remains the same; the size of the effects remains similar.

Table 5. Regression results of ordinal logistic regression 2014-2019b with DV POLDIRN and maingovtvtrust as the main IV

POLDIRN 2014-2019a/b	**Model 1.1 a**					**Model 1.1 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence intervals 2.5%.*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratios***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence intervals 2.5%.*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratios***
maingovtvtrust	0.41 ***	0.07	0.27	0.54	**1.50**	0.35 ***	0.08	0.18	0.51	**1.42**
Maingovtvtrust*GDsup						0.15		-0.12	0.47	**1.19**
GDsup	1.46 ***	0.08	1.29	1.63	**4.32**	1.36 ***	0.12	1.12	1.59	**3.89**
UNMsup	-0.63 ***	0.08	-0.79	-0.47	**0.53**	-0.64 ***	0.08	-0.81	-0.48	**0.53**
POLSOPH1	-0.02	0.09	-0.15	0.19	**1.02**	-0.01	0.09	-0.16	0.18	**1.01**
POLSOPH2	0.21 *	0.1	0.02	0.41	**1.24**	0.21 *	0.1	0.01	0.41	**1.23**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.01	0.08	-0.17	0.15	**0.99**	-0.01	0.08	-0.17	0.15	**0.99**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.06	0.07	-0.21	0.08	**0.94**	-0.06	0.07	-0.21	0.09	**0.94**
RESPEDU 2	0.21	0.25	-0.28	0.70	**1.23**	0.22	0.25	-0.27	0.71	**1.24**
RESPEDU 3	0.2	0.24	-0.27	0.67	**1.22**	0.2	0.24	-0.27	0.67	**1.22**
RESPEDU 4	0.13	0.24	-0.34	0.60	**1.14**	0.13	0.24	-0.34	0.60	**1.13**
RESPEDU 5	0.44 +	0.24	-0.04	0.92	**1.56**	0.44 +	0.25	-0.04	0.92	**1.55**
RESPEDU 6	0.41	0.26	-0.1	0.92	**1.51**	0.41	0.26	-0.10	0.92	**1.51**
RESPSEX 2	-0.09	0.06	-0.22	0.03	**0.91**	-0.09	0.06	-0.21	0.03	**0.91**
SETTYPE 2	0.07	0.09	-0.11	0.25	**1.07**	0.07	0.09	-0.11	0.25	**1.07**
SETTYPE 3	0.24 ***	0.09	0.06	0.43	**1.28**	0.24 *	0.09	0.06	0.43	**1.27**
SETTYPE 4	1.15 ***	0.17	0.82	1.48	**3.15**	1.16 ***	0.17	0.83	1.48	**3.18**
YEAR 2017	-0.71 ***	0.1	-0.90	-0.51	**0.49**	-0.72 ***	0.10	-0.92	-0.52	**0.49**
YEAR 2018	-0.5 ***	0.12	-0.74	-0.26	**0.61**	-0.50 ***	0.12	-0.74	-0.27	**0.60**
YEAR 2019.1	-0.77 ***	0.1	-0.97	-0.56	**0.47**	-0.78 ***	0.10	-0.98	-0.57	**0.46**
YEAR 2019.2	-1.15 ***	0.14	-1.42	-0.87	**0.32**	-1.16 ***	0.14	-1.44	-0.88	**0.31**
1|2	-1.56 ***	0.27	-2.09	-1.03	**0.21**	-1.6 ***	0.27	-2.14	-1.06	**0.20**
2|3	-0.15	0.27	-0.23	-0.08	**0.86**	-0.19	0.27	-0.27	-0.12	**0.82**
3|4	1.48 ***	0.27	1.42	1.55	**4.40**	1.44 ***	0.27	1.38	1.51	**4.24**
4|5	4.35 ***	0.28	4.27	4.42	**77.12**	4.31 ***	0.28	4.24	4.38	**74.50**
Number of obs.: 7768	AIC: 20910.58, BIC: 21085.04, residual deviance: 20860.58					AIC: 20912.09, BIC: 21079.57, residual deviance: 20864.09				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 6. Regression results of ordinal logistic regression 2014-2019b with DV POLDIRN and mainopptvtrust as the main IV

POLDIRN 2014-2019a/b	**Model 1.2 a**					**Model 1.2 b** (mainopptvtrust*UNMsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratios***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratios***
mainopptvtrust	-0.45 ***	0.06	-0.57	-0.32	**0.64**	-0.47 ***	0.07	-0.61	-0.34	**0.62**
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						0.19	0.15	-0.10	0.47	**1.2**
GDsup	1.54 ***	0.08	1.38	1.70	**4.66**	1.53 ***	0.12	-0.90	-0.43	**4.64**
UNMsup	-0.54 ***	0.08	-0.69	-0.38	**0.58**	-0.66 ***	0.08	1.37	1.70	**0.52**
POLSOPH1	-0.04	0.08	-0.13	0.20	**1.04**	-0.03	0.08	-0.13	0.20	**1.03**
POLSOPH2	0.20 *	0.10	0.01	0.40	**1.22**	-0.20 *	0.10	0.001	0.39	**1.22**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.03	0.08	-0.17	0.12	**0.97**	-0.03	0.08	-0.17	0.12	**0.97**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.10	0.07	-0.24	0.04	**0.90**	-0.10	0.07	-0.24	0.03	**0.90**
RESPEDU 2	0.17	0.23	-0.29	0.62	**1.18**	0.15	0.23	-0.30	0.60	**1.16**
RESPEDU 3	0.21	0.21	-0.21	0.63	**1.24**	0.20	0.21	-0.21	0.62	**1.23**
RESPEDU 4	0.13	0.21	-0.28	0.54	**1.14**	0.12	0.21	-0.29	0.53	**1.13**
RESPEDU 5	0.40 +	0.22	-0.02	0.83	**1.50**	0.39 **	0.22	-0.04	0.82	**1.48**
RESPEDU 6	0.40 +	0.23	-0.06	0.86	**1.49**	0.39 **	0.23	-0.07	0.85	**1.48**
RESPSEX 2	-0.10	0.06	-0.21	0.02	**0.91**	-0.10	0.06	-0.21	0.02	**0.91**
SETTYPE 2	0.10	0.09	-0.07	0.28	**1.11**	0.10	0.09	-0.71	0.28	**1.11**
SETTYPE 3	0.32 ***	0.09	0.14	0.50	**1.37**	0.32 ***	0.09	0.14	0.50	**1.38**
SETTYPE 4	0.96 ***	0.16	0.65	1.28	**2.62**	0.98 ***	0.16	0.66	1.3	**2.67**
YEAR 2017	-0.46 ***	0.10	-0.65	-0.26	**0.63**	-0.45 ***	0.10	-0.66	-0.26	**0.63**
YEAR 2018	-0.55 ***	0.11	-0.76	-0.34	**0.57**	-0.56 ***	0.11	-0.77	-0.35	**0.57**
YEAR 2019.1	-0.68 ***	0.10	-0.89	-0.48	**0.51**	-0.69 ***	0.10	-0.89	-0.48	**0.50**
YEAR 2019.2	-1.10 ***	0.14	-1.38	-0.83	**0.33**	-1.10 ***	0.14	-1.38	-0.83	**0.33**
1|2	-1.75 ***	0.24	-2.23	-1.27	**0.17**	-1.78 ***	0.24	-2.26	-1.30	**0.17**
2|3	-0.36	0.24	-0.43	-0.30	**0.70**	-0.39 +	0.24	-0.46	-0.32	**0.68**
3|4	1.25 ***	0.24	1.19	1.31	**3.50**	1.22 ***	0.24	1.16	1.29	**3.40**
4|5	4.11 ***	0.26	4.04	4.18	**61.07**	4.09 ***	0.26	4.02	4.16	**59.52**
Number of obs.: 8325	AIC: 23010.39, BIC: 23180.07, residual deviance: 22962.39					AIC: 23009.98, BIC: 23186.73, residual deviance: 22959.98				

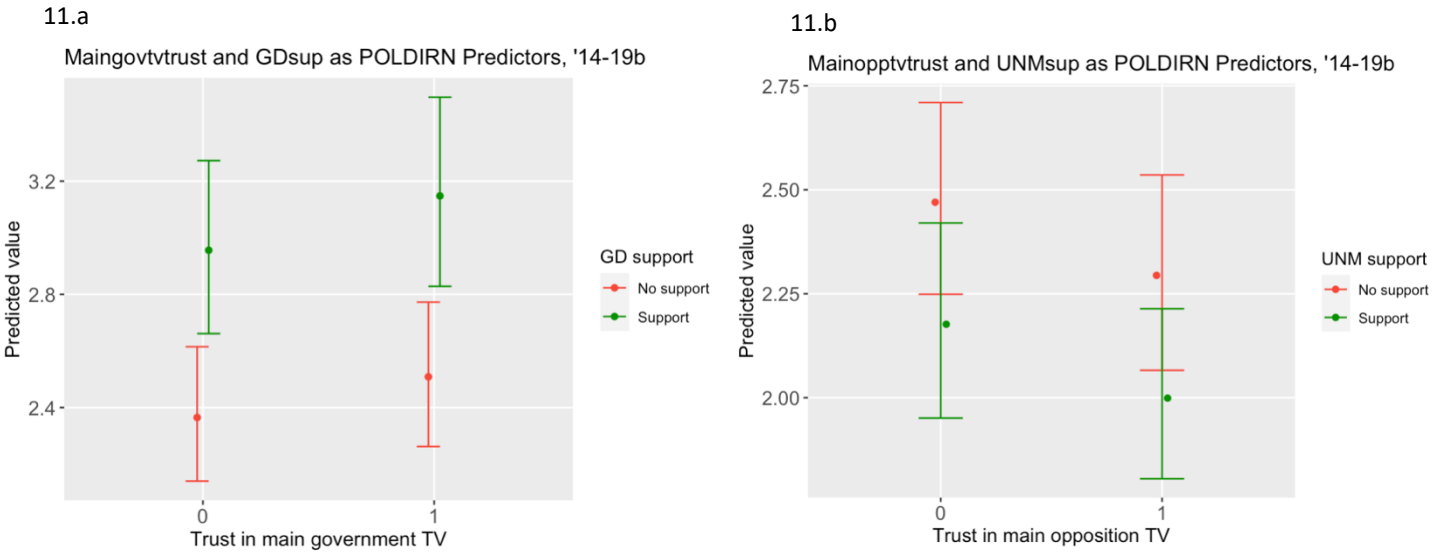
Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

The results in table 6, model **1.2a and 1.2b** (table 6)**,** demonstrate that trusting the main opposition TV channel (*mainopptvtrust*) has the reverse effect on general satisfaction levels. While the effect of trusting the main pro-opposition TV is significant and about as strong as that of trusting the main government TV, it is negative: the odds of rating the direction Georgia is going (*POLDIRN*) more favourably (i.e. wrong direction, not changing, mainly right direction, definitely right direction; versus definitely wrong direction) is 1.56 times lower for respondents who trust the main opposition TV station (*mainopptvtrust*=1) in model 1.2b. The significance and sign of the controls remains the same, and their size stays similar to that observed for models 1.1a and 1.1b (table 5) with the exception of education: After adding in an interaction term between trusting the main opposition TV and support for UNM in model 1.2b (*mainopptvtrust*UNMsup*), a significant positive effect of higher education levels (RESPEDU=5 and 6) can be observed.

The plots of predicted values (figure 11) illustrate the main effect watching partisan television has on the perception of the direction Georgia is going (*POLDIRN*). The left figure

(10a) illustrates that people trusting the main pro-government TV Imedi (*maingovtvtrust*) have higher probabilities of rating the direction of Georgia's development more positively. Moreover, GD supporters have an overall higher probability of rating POLDIRN positively than non-GD supporters. The right figure (10b) demonstrates that people trusting the main opposition-leaning TV (*mainopptvtrust*) are more likely to rate the direction Georgia is going more negatively than those not trusting Rustavi 2 / Mtavari. This effect shows both for UNM supporters, and for non-UNM supporters. Contrary to figure 10a; partisanship of UNM leads to overall lower ratings of Georgia's development.[17]

Figure 11. Plot of predicted probabilities illustrating the main results for POLDIRN, 2014-2019b



V.2.2 Political (dis-)satisfaction: ordinal logistic regression with RATEGOV, PERFPARL and PERFCRTS

This section contains the regression results for all DVs that are used to measure political satisfaction /specific political support, which are the DVs of main interest: the perception of the performance of government (RATEGOV), the parliament (*PERFPARL*), and the courts (*PERFCRTS*). In all models, trust in Imedi TV (*maingovtvtrust*) has a significant positive effect on the perception of the performance of these core state institutions, which stays significant even when interacting trust in Imedi TV and support for the ruling party (*maingovtvtrust*GDsup*, see all 'b' versions of the models). Conversely, trust in the main pro-government TV station (*mainopptvtrust*) has a significant negative effect on the DVs, which also stays significant when interacting trust in the main opposition TV with UNM

[17] To plot predicted values, the DVs were coded as numerical to show the overall effect on the DVs instead of the effect on each category (see figure 11 and figure 12).

support (*mainopptvtrust*UNMsup).* Overall, adding in the interaction terms does not lead to a change in the significance or sign of the effects, and the size of effects remain very similar.

Effects of trusting the main government TV station on political satisfaction

The positive effect of trusting the coverage of news and current affairs by the main pro-government TV station Imedi (*maingovtvtrust*) is weaker for general satisfaction with the direction Georgia is going (*POLDIRN*; OR 1.5, table 5), than for political satisfaction with the performance of the parliament (*PERFPARL*; OR 1.73, table 8), of the courts (*PERFCRTS*; OR 1.92, table 9) and of the government (*RATEGOV*; OR 2.08, table 7). Hence, the effect of partisan news consumption seems to be linked more strongly to specific political support/ satisfaction with the core state institutions; than to general satisfaction levels (diffuse support).

Table 7. Ordinal logistic regression results for the DV 'perception of the government's performance' (RATEGOV), 2017-2019b, with maingovtvtrust as the main IV

RATEGOV 2017-2019a/b	**Model 2.1 a**					**Model 2.1 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratio***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratio***
maingovtvtrust	0.73 ***	0.08	0.57	0.9	**2.08**	0.81 ***	0.1	0.61	1.01	**2.25**
Maingovtvtrust* GDsup					**2.08**	-0.27 +	0.16	-0.58	0.04	**0.76**
GDsup	1.66 ***	0.1	1.47	1.85	**5.24**	1.84 ***	0.14	1.57	2.11	**6.3**
UNMsup	-0.97 ***	0.11	-1.17	-0.76	**0.38**	-0.95 ***	0.11	-1.16	-0.74	**0.39**
POLSOPH1	-0.05	0.1	-0.25	0.15	**0.95**	-0.03	0.1	-0.23	0.17	**0.97**
POLSOPH2	-0.08	0.12	-0.32	0.15	**0.92**	-0.07	0.12	-0.3	0.17	**0.93**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.06	0.1	-0.25	0.14	**0.95**	-0.05	0.1	-0.24	0.14	**0.95**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.21 *	0.09	-0.38	-0.04	**0.81**	-0.21 *	0.09	-0.38	-0.04	**0.81**
RESPEDU 2	-0.3	0.31	-0.9	0.3	**0.74**	-0.29	0.31	-0.9	0.31	**0.75**
RESPEDU 3	-0.25	0.25	-0.74	0.24	**0.78**	-0.24	0.25	-0.73	0.26	**0.79**
RESPEDU 4	-0.29	0.26	-0.81	0.22	**0.75**	-0.28	0.27	-0.8	0.24	**0.76**
RESPEDU 5	-0.08	0.25	-0.57	0.42	**0.93**	-0.06	0.26	-0.57	0.44	**0.94**
RESPEDU 6	-0.11	0.28	-0.66	0.43	**0.89**	-0.11	0.28	-0.66	0.44	**0.9**
RESPSEX 2	-0.19 **	0.07	-0.33	-0.05	**0.83**	-0.19 **	0.07	-0.33	-0.05	**0.83**
SETTYPE 2	-0.06	0.12	-0.29	0.17	**0.94**	-0.06	0.12	-0.29	0.17	**0.94**
SETTYPE 3	0.34 **	0.11	0.11	0.56	**1.4**	0.34 **	0.11	0.11	0.56	**1.4**
SETTYPE 4	1.45 ***	0.18	1.11	1.8	**4.27**	1.43 ***	0.18	1.08	1.77	**4.17**
YEAR 2018	0.34 *	0.15	0.05	0.62	**1.4**	0.32 *	0.15	0.03	0.61	**1.37**
YEAR 2019.1	0.54 ***	0.11	0.32	0.76	**1.7**	0.54 ***	0.11	0.32	0.76	**1.71**
YEAR 2019.2	0.09	0.13	-0.17	0.35	**1.09**	0.09	0.13	-0.17	0.35	**1.1**
1|2	-1.53 ***	0.3	-2.09	-0.98	**0.22**	-1.48 ***	0.31	-2.05	-0.9	**0.23**
2|2.33	-0.69 *	0.3	-0.84	-0.54	**0.5**	-0.64 *	0.31	-0.78	-0.49	**0.53**
2.33|3	0.65 *	0.31	0.54	0.76	**1.91**	0.71 *	0.32	0.59	0.82	**2.03**
3|3.67	2.16 ***	0.31	2.05	2.27	**8.7**	2.22 ***	0.31	2.11	2.33	**9.22**
3.67|4	3.93 ***	0.32	3.8	4.06	**50.71**	3.98 ***	0.33	3.85	4.11	**53.68**
4|5	5.43 ***	0.35	5.25	5.61	**228.15**	5.49 ***	0.36	5.31	5.66	**241.09**
Number of obs.: 4415	AIC: 16545.47, BIC: 16709.77, residual deviance: 16495.47					AIC: 16542.42, BIC: 16713.29, residual deviance: 16490.42				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 8. Ordinal logistic regression results for the DV 'perception of the parliament's performance' (PERFPARL), 2014-2019b, with maingovtvtrust as the main IV

PERFPARL 2014-2019a/b	**Model 3.1 a**	**Model 3.1 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)

	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratios***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratios***
maingovtvtrust	0.55 ***	0.08	0.38	0.71	**1.73**	0.59 ***	0.1	0.39	0.8	**1.81**
Maingovtvtrust *GDsup						-0.13	0.17	-0.47	0.21	**0.88**
GDsup	1.59 ***	0.11	1.38	1.8	**4.91**	1.67 ***	0.13	1.41	1.92	**5.3**
UNMsup	-0.48 ***	0.1	-0.69	-0.28	**0.62**	-0.48 ***	0.1	-0.68	-0.27	**0.62**
POLSOPH1	-0.14	0.13	-0.39	0.11	**0.87**	-0.14	0.13	-0.38	0.11	**0.87**
POLSOPH2	-0.25 +	0.14	-0.52	0.01	**0.78**	-0.25 +	0.14	-0.51	0.02	**0.78**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.24 +	0.11	-0.46	-0.02	**0.79**	-0.24 +	0.11	-0.46	-0.02	**0.79**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.29 *	0.1	-0.48	-0.1	**0.75**	-0.29 *	0.1	-0.48	-0.1	**0.75**
RESPEDU 2	-0.39 *	0.36	-1.1	0.32	**0.68**	-0.4	0.36	-1.11	0.32	**0.67**
RESPEDU 3	-0.14	0.34	-0.79	0.52	**0.87**	-0.13	0.34	-0.79	0.53	**0.88**
RESPEDU 4	-0.19	0.34	-0.86	0.47	**0.82**	-0.19	0.34	-0.86	0.48	**0.83**
RESPEDU 5	-0.12	0.34	-0.78	0.55	**0.89**	-0.11	0.34	-0.78	0.55	**0.89**
RESPEDU 6	-0.04	0.35	-0.74	0.65	**0.96**	-0.04	0.36	-0.74	0.65	**0.96**
RESPSEX 2	-0.07	0.08	-0.22	0.08	**0.93**	-0.07	0.08	-0.23	0.077	**0.93**
SETTYPE 2	0.21 +	0.11	-0.01	0.43	**1.23**	0.21 +	0.11	-0.01	0.43	**1.23**
SETTYPE 3	0.48 ***	0.11	0.26	0.7	**1.61**	0.48 ***	0.11	0.26	0.7	**1.62**
SETTYPE 4	2.22 ***	0.28	1.67	2.78	**9.25**	2.21 ***	0.28	1.65	2.77	**9.11**
YEAR 2018	-0.59 ***	0.14	-0.86	-0.32	**0.55**	-0.58 ***	0.14	-0.86	-0.31	**0.56**
YEAR 2019.1	-0.8 ***	0.11	-1.02	-0.58	**0.45**	-0.79 ***	0.11	-1.02	-0.57	**0.45**
YEAR 2019.2	-1.67 ***	0.15	-1.97	-1.36	**0.19**	-1.66 ***	0.15	-1.96	-1.35	**0.19**
1|2	-3.11 ***	0.37	-3.85	-2.38	**0.04**	-3.09 ***	0.38	-3.83	-2.34	**0.05**
2|3	-0.9 *	0.37	-0.97	-0.83	**0.4**	-0.87 *	0.37	-0.94	-0.8	**0.42**
3|4	2.17 ***	0.36	2.11	2.23	**8.79**	2.2 ***	0.37	2.14	2.26	**9.05**
4|5	5.06 ***	0.4	4.94	5.17	**156.98**	5.08 ***	0.4	4.97	5.2	**161.37**
Number of obs.: 6051	AIC: 12437.45, BIC: 12591.1, residual deviance: 12391.45					AIC: 12438.07, BIC: 12598.4, residual deviance: 12390.07				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 9. Ordinal logistic regression results for the DV 'perception of the courts' performance' (PERFCRTS), 2014-2019b, with maingovtvtrust as the main IV

PERFCRTS 2014-2019a/b	**Model 4.1 a**					**Model 4.1 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratio***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratio***
maingovtvtrust	0.65 ***	0.09	0.48	0.83	**1.92**	0.69 ***	0.11	0.46	0.91	**1.99**
Maingovtvtrust*GDsup						-0.09	0.17	-0.42	0.23	**0.91**
GDsup	1.3 ***	0.1	1.11	1.49	**3.66**	1.35 ***	0.13	1.1	1.6	**3.86**
UNMsup	-0.51 ***	0.12	-0.75	-0.26	**0.6**	-0.5 ***	0.13	-0.74	-0.25	**0.61**
POLSOPH1	-0.07	0.12	-0.31	0.18	**0.93**	-0.07	0.12	-0.3	0.18	**0.93**
POLSOPH2	-0.1	0.14	-0.37	0.16	**0.9**	-0.1	0.14	-0.37	0.16	**0.9**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.35 **	0.11	-0.56	-0.14	**0.7**	-0.35 **	0.11	-0.56	-0.14	**0.7**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.62 ***	0.11	-0.83	-0.41	**0.54**	-0.62 ***	0.11	-0.83	-0.4	**0.54**
RESPEDU 2	-0.1	0.39	-0.86	0.66	**0.9**	-0.11	0.38	-0.87	0.65	**0.9**
RESPEDU 3	-0.35	0.29	-0.92	0.22	**0.71**	-0.35	0.29	-0.91	0.22	**0.701**
RESPEDU 4	-0.34	0.28	-0.9	0.22	**0.71**	-0.35	0.29	-0.9	0.21	**0.71**
RESPEDU 5	-0.31	0.28	-0.86	0.24	**0.73**	-0.31	0.28	-0.86	0.24	**0.73**
RESPEDU 6	-0.04	0.32	-0.67	0.58	**0.96**	-0.04	0.32	-0.67	0.58	**0.96**
RESPSEX 2	-0.19 *	0.08	-0.35	-0.03	**0.83**	-0.19 *	0.08	-0.36	-0.03	**0.83**
SETTYPE 2	0.19	0.12	-0.05	0.42	**1.2**	0.19	0.12	-0.05	0.42	**1.20**
SETTYPE 3	0.39 **	0.13	0.13	0.64	**1.47**	0.39 **	0.13	0.13	0.65	**1.48**
SETTYPE 4	2.39 ***	0.29	1.81	2.97	**10.91**	2.38 ***	0.29	1.8	2.96	**10.80**
YEAR 2018	-0.36 *	0.14	-0.63	-0.08	**0.7**	-0.35 +	0.14	-0.63	-0.08	**0.7**
YEAR 2019.1	-0.79 ***	0.12	-1.03	-0.54	**0.46**	-0.78 ***	0.13	-1.03	-0.53	**0.46**
YEAR 2019.2	-1.07 ***	0.16	-1.39	-0.76	**0.34**	-1.07 ***	0.16	-1.38	-0.75	**0.34**
1|2	-3.14 ***	0.34	-3.8	-2.48	**0.04**	-3.12 ***	0.34	-3.79	-2.45	**0.04**
2|3	-1.06 ***	0.32	-1.14	-0.99	**0.34**	-1.04 **	0.33	-1.12	-0.97	**0.35**
3|4	1.74 ***	0.33	1.68	1.81	**5.72**	1.76 ***	0.34	1.7	1.82	**5.82**
4|5	4.72 ***	0.36	4.61	4.83	**112.53**	4.74 ***	0.36	4.63	4.85	**114.53**
Number of obs.: 5434	AIC: 11939.39, BIC: 12091.04, residual deviance: 11893.39					AIC: 11940.73, BIC: 12098.98, residual deviance: 11892.73				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Effects of trusting the main opposition TV station on political satisfaction

Trusting the coverage of news and current affairs by the main opposition-leaning TV station (*mainopptvtrust*) has a similarly negative effect on the general perception of Georgia's development (*POLDIRN*; OR 0.64) and on the perception of the performance of the courts (*PERFCRTS*; OR 0.66). Namely, people trusting the main opposition TV are 1.54 times and 1.52 times less likely to rate the 'direction Georgia is going' and the 'performance of the courts', respectively, more positively than the lowest category (1) (compared to those not trusting the main oppositional TV). In comparison, the negative effect is stronger for the perception of the performance of the parliament (PERFPARL, OR 0.6) and especially for that of the government (RATEGOV, OR 0.52): Georgians trusting the main opposition-leaning TV are 1.66 times less likely to rate the parliament's performance and 1.92 times less likely to rate the government's higher than 1=very badly.

Table 10. Ordinal logistic regression results for the DV 'perception of the government's performance' (RATEGOV), 2017-2019b, with mainopptvtrust as the main IV

RATEGOV 2017-2019a/b	**Model 2.2 a**					**Model 2.2 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratio***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	***Odds ratio***
mainopptvtrust	-0.66 ***	0.08	-0.82	-0.5	**0.52**	-0.69 ***	0.09	-0.85	-0.52	**0.5**
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						0.18	0.23	-0.26	0.63	**1.2**
GDsup	1.72 ***	0.09	1.54	1.9	**5.59**	1.72 ***	0.09	1.53	1.9	**5.56**
UNMsup	-0.9 ***	0.11	-1.1	-0.69	**0.41**	-1.03 ***	0.2	-1.43	-0.63	**0.36**
POLSOPH1	-0.03	0.1	-0.22	0.17	**0.97**	-0.03	0.1	-0.22	0.16	**0.97**
POLSOPH2	-0.09	0.12	-0.33	0.14	**0.91**	-0.1	0.12	-0.34	0.14	**0.9**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.06	0.1	-0.25	0.14	**0.95**	-0.06	0.1	-0.25	0.14	**0.94**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.19 *	0.09	-0.36	-0.03	**0.82**	-0.2 *	0.09	-0.37	-0.03	**0.82**
RESPEDU 2	-0.26	0.3	-0.84	0.32	**0.77**	-0.28	0.3	-0.86	0.3	**0.76**
RESPEDU 3	-0.2	0.24	-0.67	0.27	**0.82**	-0.21	0.24	-0.68	0.25	**0.81**
RESPEDU 4	-0.28	0.25	-0.77	0.21	**0.76**	-0.29	0.25	-0.77	0.2	**0.75**
RESPEDU 5	-0.09	0.24	-0.57	0.39	**0.92**	-0.1	0.24	-0.58	0.38	**0.9**
RESPEDU 6	-0.17	0.27	-0.7	0.35	**0.84**	-0.19	0.27	-0.71	0.34	**0.83**
RESPSEX 2	-0.11	0.07	-0.25	0.03	**0.9**	-0.11	0.07	-0.25	0.03	**0.9**
SETTYPE 2	0.05	0.11	-0.16	0.26	**1.05**	0.05	0.11	-0.16	0.26	**1.05**
SETTYPE 3	0.45 ***	0.11	0.23	0.66	**1.56**	0.45 ***	0.11	0.23	0.66	**1.56**
SETTYPE 4	1.1 ***	0.18	0.75	1.45	**3.0**	1.12 ***	0.18	0.77	1.46	**3.05**
YEAR 2018	0.07 +	0.15	-0.03	0.5	**1.07**	0.07 +	0.14	-0.03	0.5	**1.07**
YEAR 2019.1	0.27 *	0.11	0.02	0.6	**1.3**	0.26 *	0.11	0.01	0.6	**1.3**
YEAR 2019.2	-0.24 +	0.13	0.25	0.75	**0.79**	-0.23 +	0.14	0.25	0.75	**0.79**
1|2	-2.17 ***	0.28	-2.5	-1.37	**0.11**	-2.2 ***	0.28	-2.54	-1.4	**0.11**
2|2.33	-0.07 ***	0.28	-1.18	-0.91	**0.28**	-1.31 ***	0.28	-1.2	-0.95	**0.27**
2.33|3	1.5	0.28	0.06	0.28	**0.93**	-0.1	0.28	0.02	0.25	**0.91**
3|3.67	3.18 ***	0.31	1.63	1.84	**4.47**	1.47 ***	0.28	1.6	1.81	**4.35**
3.67|4	3.42 ***	0.31	3.28	3.55	**24.01**	3.15 ***	0.31	3.25	3.52	**23.39**
4|5	4.69 ***	0.33	4.76	5.1	**108.96**	4.66 ***	0.33	4.73	5.07	**106.16**
Number of obs.: 4475	AIC: 17847.28, BIC: 18013.26, residual deviance: 17797.28					AIC: 17847.84, BIC: 18020.45, residual deviance: 17795.84				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 11. Ordinal logistic regression results for the DV 'perception of the parliament's performance' (PERFPARL), 2014-2019b, with mainopptvtrust as the main IV

PERFPARL 2014-2019a/b	**Model 3.2 a**					**Model 3.2 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	***Odds ratios***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	***Odds ratios***
mainopptvtrust	-0.51 ***	0.08	-0.67	-0.36	**0.6**	-0.47 ***	0.09	-0.65	-0.3	**0.62**
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.24	0.2	-0.64	0.16	**0.78**
GDsup	1.72 ***	0.1	1.52	1.92	**5.58**	1.73 ***	0.1	1.53	1.93	**5.63**
UNMsup	-0.4 ***	0.1	-0.59	-0.22	**0.67**	-0.24	0.16	-0.56	0.07	**0.78**
POLSOPH1	-0.15	0.12	-0.39	0.09	**0.86**	-0.15	0.12	-0.38	0.09	**0.86**
POLSOPH2	-0.26 +	0.13	-0.52	0.004	**0.77**	-0.25 +	0.13	-0.51	0.02	**0.78**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.27 *	0.1	-0.47	-0.07	**0.76**	-0.27 *	0.1	-0.47	-0.07	**0.76**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.29 ***	0.09	-0.47	-0.12	**0.74**	-0.29 ***	0.09	-0.47	-0.12	**0.75**
RESPEDU 2	-0.12	0.33	-0.76	0.52	**0.89**	-0.12	0.33	-0.76	0.52	**0.89**
RESPEDU 3	0.19	0.3	-0.4	0.79	**1.21**	0.19	0.3	-0.41	0.78	**1.2**
RESPEDU 4	0.1	0.31	-0.5	0.7	**1.1**	0.09	0.31	-0.51	0.7	**1.1**
RESPEDU 5	0.12	0.3	-0.47	0.72	**1.13**	0.12	0.3	-0.47	0.72	**1.13**
RESPEDU 6	0.29	0.32	-0.34	0.92	**1.33**	0.29	0.32	-0.34	0.92	**1.33**
RESPSEX 2	0.02	0.07	-0.12	0.16	**1.02**	0.02	0.07	-0.12	0.17	**1.02**
SETTYPE 2	0.34 *	0.11	0.13	0.55	**1.41**	0.34 *	0.11	0.13	0.55	**1.4**
SETTYPE 3	0.6 ***	0.11	0.39	0.81	**1.83**	0.6 ***	0.11	0.39	0.81	**1.82**
SETTYPE 4	1.98 ***	0.28	1.43	2.52	**7.22**	1.96 ***	0.28	1.41	2.5	**7.09**
YEAR 2018	-0.62 ***	0.12	-0.85	-0.39	**0.54**	-0.62 ***	0.12	-0.84	-0.39	**0.54**
YEAR 2019.1	-0.69 ***	0.11	-0.91	-0.48	**0.5**	-0.68 ***	0.11	-0.9	-0.47	**0.51**
YEAR 2019.2	-1.61 ***	0.15	-1.91	-1.32	**0.2**	-1.61 ***	0.15	-1.91	-1.32	**0.2**
1|2	-2.99 ***	0.34	-3.66	-2.32	**0.05**	-2.97 ***	0.34	-3.64	-2.3	**0.05**
2|3	-0.77 *	0.34	-0.83	-0.7	**0.47**	-0.74 *	0.34	-0.81	-0.67	**0.48**
3|4	2.26 ***	0.34	2.2	2.32	**9.57**	2.28 ***	0.34	2.22	2.34	**9.79**
4|5	5.14 ***	0.38	5.03	5.26	**171.32**	5.16 ***	0.37	5.05	5.28	**174.889**
Number of obs.: 6567	AIC: 14173.81, BIC: 14330.2, residual deviance: 14127.81					AIC: 14173.08, BIC: 14336.27, residual deviance: 14125.08				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 12. Ordinal logistic regression results for the DV 'perception of the courts' performance' (PERFCRTS), 2014-2019b, with mainopptvtrust as the main IV

PERFCRTS 2014-2019a/b	**Model 4.2 a**					**Model 4.2 b** (maingovtvtrust*GDsup)				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	***Odds Ratio***	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	***Odds Ratio***
mainopptvtrust	-0.42 ***	0.09	-0.6	-0.25	**0.66**	-0.32***	0.09	-0.5	-0.14	**0.72**
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.63	0.22	-1.07	-0.19	**0.53**
GDsup	1.4 ***	0.09	1.22	1.58	**4.05**	-1.42 ***	0.09	1.24	1.6	**4.15**
UNMsup	-0.56 ***	0.11	-0.78	-0.33	**0.57**	-0.14	0.18	-0.5	0.22	**0.87**
POLSOPH1	-0.07	0.12	-0.31	0.18	**0.93**	-0.05	0.12	-0.29	0.19	**0.95**
POLSOPH2	-0.15	0.13	-0.41	0.11	**0.86**	-0.13	0.13	-0.39	0.14	**0.88**
AGEGROUP 2	-0.33 ***	0.1	-0.52	-0.14	**0.72**	-0.33 ***	0.1	-0.52	-0.14	**0.72**
AGEGROUP 3	-0.59 ***	0.09	-0.77	-0.41	**0.55**	-0.59 ***	0.09	-0.77	-0.40	**0.56**
RESPEDU 2	-0.14	0.35	-0.82	0.54	**0.87**	-0.12	0.35	-0.8	0.56	**0.88**
RESPEDU 3	-0.2	0.27	-0.73	0.33	**0.82**	-0.21	0.27	-0.73	0.31	**0.81**
RESPEDU 4	-0.2	0.27	-0.73	0.33	**0.82**	-0.21	0.27	-0.74	0.31	**0.81**
RESPEDU 5	-0.26	0.27	-0.78	0.27	**0.77**	-0.26	0.26	-0.78	0.26	**0.77**
RESPEDU 6	-0.0004	0.31	-0.6	0.6	**1.0**	-0.002	0.3	-0.59	0.59	**1.0**
RESPSEX 2	-0.12	0.08	-0.28	0.03	**0.88**	-0.12	0.08	-0.27	0.04	**0.89**
SETTYPE 2	0.27 *	0.11	0.05	0.49	**1.31**	0.27 *	0.11	0.05	0.49	**1.31**
SETTYPE 3	0.51 ***	0.12	0.27	0.75	**1.66**	0.5 ***	0.12	0.26	0.74	**1.65**
SETTYPE 4	2.1 ***	0.29	1.54	2.66	**8.14**	2.05 ***	0.28	1.5	2.61	**7.8**
YEAR 2018	-0.37 **	0.11	-0.6	-0.15	**0.69**	-0.36 **	0.11	-0.58	-0.13	**0.7**
YEAR 2019.1	-0.7 ***	0.12	-0.94	-0.45	**0.5**	-0.67 ***	0.12	-0.91	-0.42	**0.51**
YEAR 2019.2	-1.04 ***	0.16	-1.35	-0.73	**0.35**	-1.03 ***	0.16	-1.34	-0.73	**0.36**

1|2	-3.28 ***	0.31	-3.9	-2.67	**0.04**	-3.23 **	0.31	-3.85	-2.6	**0.04**
2|3	-1.17 ***	0.3	-1.24	-1.1	**0.31**	-1.11 ***	0.3	-1.18	-1.04	**0.33**
3|4	1.56 ***	0.31	1.5	1.62	**4.75**	1.62 ***	0.31	1.56	1.68	**5.05**
4|5	4.48 ***	0.34	4.38	4.59	**88.29**	4.54 ***	0.34	4.43	4.64	**93.58**
Number of obs.: 5889	AIC: 13612.15, BIC: 13766.48, residual deviance: 13566.15					AIC: 13596.93, BIC: 13757.98, residual deviance: 13548.93				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

The influence of control variables

Concerning the influence of the control variables, the strongest effects in all models with 'trust in Imedi TV' (*maingovtvtrust*) as IV (tables 7-9) concern partisan support for the ruling party (*GDsup*), with ORs of between 3.66 (*PERFCRTS*), 4.32 (*POLDIRN*), 4.91 (*PERFPARL*) and 5.24 (*RATEGOV*); and the effect of living in minority settlements, with ORs of 3.15 (*POLDIRN*), 4.27 (*RATEGOV*), 9.25 (*PERFPARL*) and 10.91 (*PERFCRTS*). With view to the models with *mainopptvtrust* as the main IV (tables 10-12), support for the GD and living in a minority settlement also yield the strongest effects. Both, the significant, positive effects of support for the ruling party and of living in minority settlements are in line with expectations. Supporters of the ruling party are more likely to approve of the direction of development of the country and especially the political performance (Anderson and Guillory 1997), inter alia linked to issues of patronage, as they might personally profit from supporting the regime (Beliaev 2006; Hale 2011; Lebanidze and Kakachia 2017). Concerning settlement type, inhabitants of minority settlements have tended to show pro-regime attitudes across different regimes in Georgia (see chapters II and IV).

Regarding the other controls, interestingly, higher age groups (35-55 and 56+) showed lower levels of political satisfaction with the performance of the parliament (table 8) and the courts (table 9); and age group 56+ also showed lower satisfaction with the performance of the government (table 7). This is especially pronounced for respondents aged 56+ (*RESPEDU*=3, table 7), whose odds of rating the performance of the courts more positively is 1.85 times lower (compared to the odds for respondents aged 18-35). These results contradict the hypothesis by Pop-Eleches (2017), that higher age groups who have been educated in the years before reformist communism should hold stronger pro-regime attitudes. Instead, the results might point towards the stress the years of transition have put on older generations, which might have led to higher dissatisfaction with political institutions (Japaridze 2011).

Concerning education, the odds of rating the direction of the country's development (*POLDIRN*) more positively was 1.48 times higher for higher education groups (BA and above) in Model 1.2b (which tested the influence of trusting the main opposition TV as a main IV, interacted with UNM support, table 6); and the odds of rating the performance of

the parliament (*PERFPARL*) more positively was 1.47 times lower for the second lowest education level (table 8). While these effects are in line with theoretical expectations of higher education levels having higher satisfaction levels; however, in the other models, education level did not yield any significant effects.

Following the expectations drawn from the literature that (dis)satisfaction levels should not be significantly different between male and female respondents (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999). Partly in line with this, gender only yielded a significant effect for the perception of the performance of the government (*RATEGOV*) and of the courts (*PERFCRTS*) with main government TV trust as the main IV (tables 7 and 9): female respondents were 1.2 times less likely to rate the government's or courts' performance more positively than the lowest category (compared to male respondents).

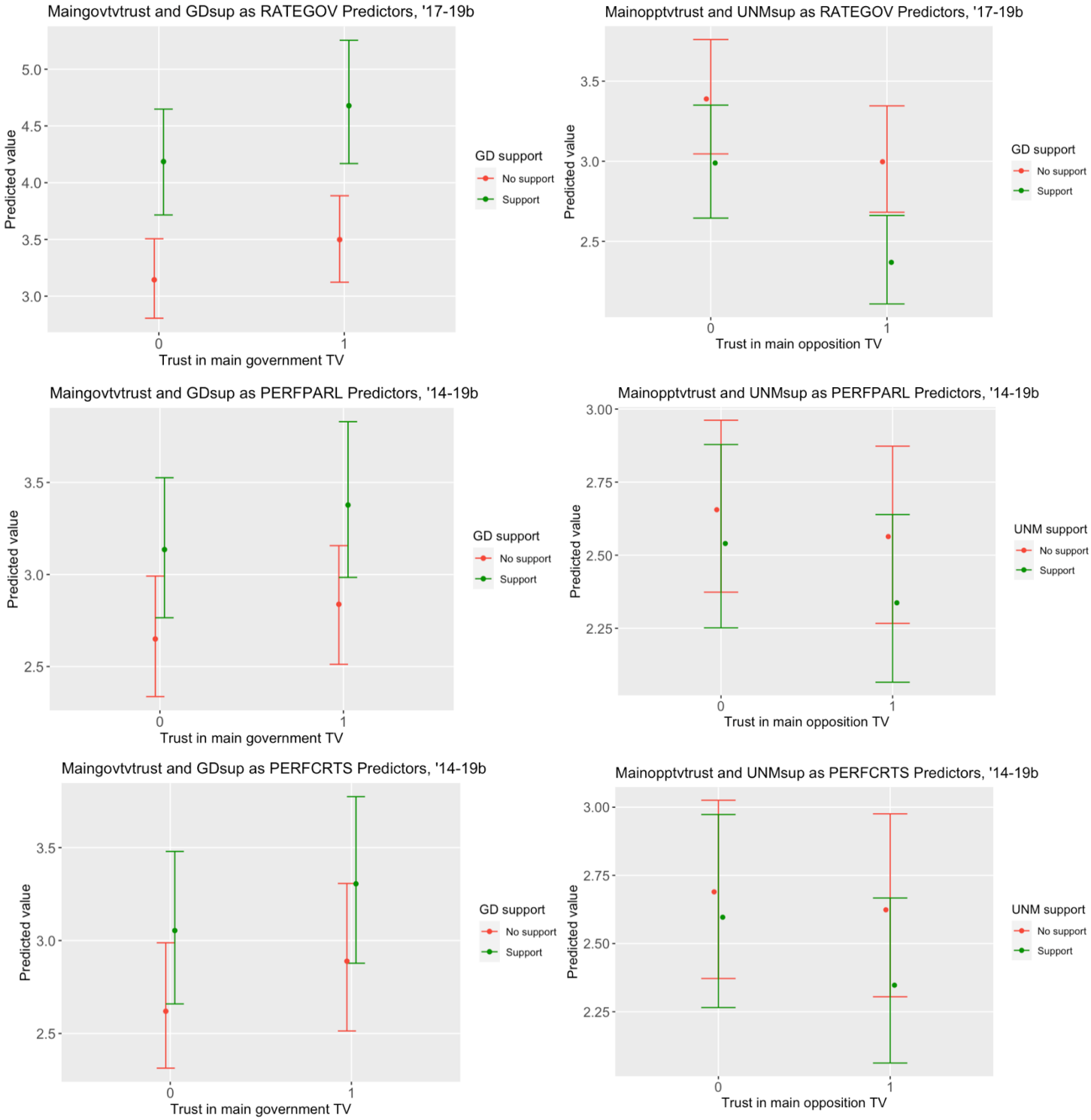
Income and unemployment did not have significant effects in any of the models where they have been included (see appendix (6)); which contradicts the hypothesis that lower income levels or unemployment should lead to lower satisfaction levels (Dalton 2004; Norris 1999). This finding could either indicate a high amount of respondents with post-materialist values (Inglehart 1977), which would be unlikely for post-communist countries (Chaisty and Whitefield 2015); or a weak link between personal financial/employment situation and political satisfaction. Alternatively, the economic situation of the country might have a higher influence on satisfaction levels than individual income.

Regarding the year controls, the negative coefficients and decreasing ORs are in line with expectations of decreasing levels of political satisfaction between 2014 and 2019, but need further explanation.

Predicted probabilities

When plotting predicted values (figure 12), the similar tendency of the main results becomes evident. While trusting the main government TV station Imedi leads to a higher probability of rating the performance of core state institutions positive (see all figures on the left); trusting the main opposition-leaning TV station corresponds with lower probabilities of rating these institutions positive. Overall, the probability of rating the core state institutions positive is much higher for GD supporters than for non-GD supporters. Conversely, those respondents who trust the main opposition-leaning TV are less likely to rate the performance of the core state institutions positively, than those not watching the main pro-oppositional TV. The probability of political satisfaction is overall lower for UNM supporters than non-UNM supporters.

Figure 12. Plots of predicted probabilities illustrating the main results for the DVs RATEGOV (2017-2019b); PERFPARL and PERFCRTS (both 2014-2019b)



Change over time?

When regarding the evolution of effects for the main IVs, comparing 2014 and 2019b, the regressions show a growing satisfaction over time for respondents who trust pro government

TV (see appendix (6)). While in 2014 the odds of rating the direction Georgia is going (*POLDIRN*) more positively were 1.38 times higher for respondents who trust Imedi TV compared to those trusting other TV stations; the odds increased to 1.69 in 2019b. Likewise, the odds of rating the performance of the parliament (*PERFPARL*) or courts (*PERFCRTS*) more positively were 1.47 times and 2.03 times higher respectively for respondents trusting Imedi TV in 2014; while increasing to 2.15 and 2.53 respectively in 2019b. Comparing 2017 and 2019b also shows an increase in the odds for those respondents trusting the main government TV of rating the performance of the government (*RATEGOV*) more positively from an OR of 1.72 in 2017 to an OR of 4.32 in 2019b (no data for 2014 is available for *RATEGOV*).

Almost the reverse can be observed for respondents trusting the coverage of news and current affairs by the main opposition TV stations Rustavi 2 (until mid-2019) and Mtavari Arkhi (from mid-2019). While trusting pro-oppositional TV did not have any significant effect on the perception of the country's direction in 2014; the odds of ratings Georgia's direction more positively were 2.08 times *lower* for respondents who trusted the main pro-opposition TV in 2019b. The change to a significant and markedly negative effect of trusting oppositional TV is thus very pronounced. Likewise, in 2014 the odds of rating the performance of the parliament or courts more positively were, respectively, 1.09 times and 1.57 times *higher* for respondents trusting the main opposition TV; while in 2019b their odds of doing so were 2.17 times and 2.56 times *lower*. The same negative trend shows concerning the odds of rating the performance of the government more positively, which was 1.85 times lower for respondents who trusted the main opposition TV in 2017, and 2.94 times lower in 2019b (with data for 2014 missing).

VI. Discussion of results based on theoretical expectations and follow-up interviews

In this chapter, the results of the survey data analysis will be discussed with view to the overall research question of the extent to which trust in government-friendly media as opposed to opposition-friendly media affected the level of individual political dissatisfaction under the GD between 2014 and 2019; and what the underlying mechanisms are. The results are linked back to the theoretical expectations (chapter II); and expert interview data is used to discuss them and identify those underlying mechanisms and potential directions of causality. While the influence of controls has been already shortly compared to the theoretical expectations at the end of the last chapter, this chapter focuses on the discussion of the effects of the main IVs on the DVs, following the research question.

VI.1 Discussion of findings based on theoretical expectations

The results of the ordinal logistic regressions have demonstrated that the consumption of partisan news has a significant effect on political satisfaction levels, independent of partisanship and other controls – despite the possibility for most Georgians to swich channels to get a more varied picture (e.g. by consuming TV Formula). Concerning the scholarly debate on media effects, two theoretical perspectives have been disproved by these findings. On the one hand, the evidence that political satisfaction gets reinforced by government-leaning media speaks against the prediction of an univariably negative effect of TV consumption on political attitudes by the *video malaise theory.* On the other hand, the reinforcement of political dissatisfaction by trust in opposition-leaning media disproves the *virtuous circle theory* that predicts the reinforcement of "positive attitudes toward politics and government" (Norris 2011, 172) by TV news consumption (alongside reinforcement of trust and political participation).

The *Receive-Accept-Sample model* and *theories of Motivated Reasoning* both propose the influence of prior political views; and expect the least politically aware/ sophisticated to adapt to the messages they receive more easily, with the more politically sophisticated being more stubborn in their attitudes (*RAS model*) or even strengthening their beliefs in the direction contrary of the received message (*theories of MR*). The fact that the effects of partisan media trust on political (dis-)satisfaction are significant independent of partisanship indicates that respondents who do not feel close to the respective political party still align

their attitudes with the partisan view of the TV station they trust. Contrary to the expectations of the RAS model and theories of MR, the political sophistication control did not show any significant effects when regarding the period 2014-19 or 2014-18, except for the DV POLDIRN. This might, however, in part be explained by the varying quality of available questions to be included in the political sophistication index (see appendix (1)), and the higher number of years the POLDIRN variable was measured in. Overall, this calls for a more fine-grained measurement of political sophistication in future studies and for higher consistency in variables of the 'political attitudes in Georgia' NDI survey.

Still, the strength of prior political views seems to matter, in line with theoretical expectations. Independent of partisanship, people trusting pro-government TV showed increasing political satisfaction; and people trusting pro-opposition TV showed increasing political dissatisfaction. If partisanship is understood as signalling more fixed political views, this finding might indicate that people with less defined political views more readily adapted their views to the message they received and over time strengthened their political (dis)satisfaction according to the message of the trusted partisan media. Moreover, the overall seemingly increasing odds for higher political satisfaction of people supporting the GD and watching Imedi; and conversely, the increasing political dissatisfaction of people supporting the UNM and watching Rustavi 2/ Mtavari Arkhi when comparing 2014 and 2019 (see chapter V.2.2 and appendix (7)), might reflect the mechanism described by theories of MR: Their partisan views not only resisted challenges but strengthened over time.

While theories of MR can explain overall growing polarisation by psychological processes of disconfirmation and confirmation bias, which lead to a constant reinforcement of prior views (i.e. the growing political dissatisfaction of people trusting opposition-leaning TV and vice versa); however, they do not offer any explanation why dissatisfaction prevailed. The GD, assuming it perceived a strategy of mobilising its supporters and changing the opinion of its non-supporters through biased pro-governmental media, as suggested by expert interviews, seems to have reached this goal only partly. The overall increasing political dissatisfaction in Georgia indicates that this strategy has not prevented political support from decreasing. This might be partly explained by the parallel strengthening of political dissatisfaction of those trusting pro-oppositional TV, but expert interviews also point to the importance of the level of biased media content; and the increasing number of Georgians who distrust media (and politicians) altogether and are thus missing in my regressions (which are based on either trusting one or the other main TV channel) (see below).

VI.2 Discussion of findings with interview data

Expert interviews help to contextualise the findings and discover the underlying mechanisms. Mainly based on expert interviews conducted by the author, this part seeks to determine the direction of causality: whether the overall growing dissatisfaction in Georgia can be regarded to be (in part) caused by the manner of news coverage, as the expert interviews suggest; or is rather/ also a reflection of more general attitude polarisation of pro-opposition versus pro-governmental camps. Especially as the growing political dissatisfaction of people trusting opposition-leaning TV is independent of partisanship, this suggests that something is going on in addition to mere party camps, and that receiving a certain view of a TV station strengthens political (dis)satisfaction. Nonetheless, ordinal logistic regression cannot make definite claims about the direction of causality. In a second step, the expert interviews are also used to offer a 'deeper' explanation of the observed effects, by contextualising them with view to the accessibility of information and the level of biased content. It is argued that:

1. The seemingly overall growing political dissatisfaction can be explained by the increasing state pressure on media outlets; which led to increasingly negative coverage of the opposition by pro-government media like Imedi, paired with positive coverage of the GD and Georgia' general development. Conversely, arguably as a reaction, the pro-oppositional media like Rustavi 2 increased their negative coverage of the GD and Georgia's development path. The spread of disinformation/ fake news online further increased the societal polarisation. This overall led to a polarised situation in which growing numbers of Georgians are frustrated altogether, especially due to the increased level of state control over the media and judiciary, alongside economic clientelism.
2. Moreover, the high extent of growing political dissatisfaction of those trusting pro-oppositional TV can also be explained by the more aggressive tone of media coverage by Mtavari Arkhi compared to Rustavi 2.
3. And, to pick up an interesting control variable, the higher political satisfaction of people in rural areas can not only be explained by long-standing tendencies to follow the state authority, but also partly by issues to accessibility alternative, critical media outlets.

VI.2.1 Discussing the direction of causality

Concerning the direction of causality, for MA and NI, the polarisation of the media environment is a reflection of the high degree of politicisation and polarisation of the political environment (MA 2021; NI 2021). Still, most experts hold that oppositional TV

further enhances dissatisfaction with the government, or the state of Georgian affairs, while pro-governmental TV leads to the opposite; thus, ultimately reinforcing divisions of the wider society into two camps, i.e. societal polarisation (LK 2021; MA 2021; ND 2021; NI 2021; TG 2021). LK clearly states that TV consumption "makes an impact on how people perceive the world, or how people perceive the political or economic or social situation in Georgia, so it affects quite a lot" (LK 2021). According to NI, this effect is achieved by using emotionalised coverage; "and when emotions are involved, it is difficult to find a rational judgement" (NI 2021). In addition, ND, NI, SG and TG also point to the fact that people tend to "choose their meal to their taste" (TG 2021), i.e. choose a TV channel that reflects what they would like to hear. If longing for a more critical view, Georgians would choose Rustavi 2 or, since mid-2019, Mtavari, if wanting to get the impression that everything is going ok and/or if being pro-GD, they decide for Imedi. The TV consumption of the respective channels in turn is expected to have an impact on individual views, e.g. developing a more positive perception of Georgia's (political) situation when watching the 'good news' of Imedi (ND 2021).

More precisely, MA holds that the government, by way of pro-governmental media, tries to shift attention away from failing to satisfy public demands for higher employment levels and discredits opposition-leaning media as 'propaganda', which in turn leads to increased polarisation. The narrative that the opposition media shows "a reality which is not true" (MA 2021) divides people. A clear direction of causality is apparent, as MA assumes that polarising media coverage strengthens polarisation in society. Similarly, LK notes that Imedi TV is, on the one hand, "very actively trying to discourage people to like [the] opposition" (LK 2021), using the violent past of the UNM to scare people and portraying oppositional politicians very negatively. And, on the other hand, "people who happen to watch Imedi TV they will have [a] much more positive attitude towards the direction of Georgia" (ibid.), as Imedi TV highlights every achievement or positive development in the country while spending little to no time on critical issues.

LK goes more into detail on the effects of oppositional media, noting that "when oppositional media sees the momentum to criticise the government, they are gas-lightening the situation [and have] very methodically tried to increase the dissatisfaction of the people" (LK 2021). This has affected the viewers: "if you mostly watch [a] pro-oppositional TV channel you will not be happy with what [the] government does". He further explains the

image of ‘gas-lightening’ situations by pointing to the practice of oppositional media to exaggerate or entirely make up stories to damage the government. He even notes that, whilst aiming to consume media critically, he finds himself effected by the manner of biased news coverage: “there [are] moments when I cannot control how I feel about [the] government or [discern] what’s [the] objective reality” (ibid.). Apart from showing high interview trust, this citation demonstrates how even media experts, who routinely analyse media coverage, find themselves affected by emotional partisan news coverage.

VI.2.3 Discussing the growing dissatisfaction with view to the intensity of information flow, accessibility, and level of biased TV content over time

To further understand the puzzle of overall growing dissatisfaction over time, the *mechanisms* by which partisan control of the media increased; as well as the *manner* of news coverage by which the media have tried to influence their viewers will be discussed. In a third step, the *events* that were repeatedly pointed out by media experts to have led to heightened dissatisfaction are examined.

Increasing partisan control over media and increasingly biased media coverage

The increasing influence of the GD on TV stations with national reach since 2014 was arguably driven by the aim of power manifestation, using media “as a tool to mobilise society” (Kavtaradze 2019; LK 2021; MA 2021; NI 2021). MA holds that the GD’s strategy had been to first, “control the media” (MA 2021); to then try “to undermine the credibility of who is disseminating the information or try to provide a different version of the news or try to ignore it”, in case of unfavourable coverage (ibid.). Linked to the first strategy, many interviewees underline the rising number of charges against the owners or contributors of critical media channels (MA 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021; TK 2021). More specifically, to increase its influence, the GD pressed for critical journalists to leave Imedi TV; for a change to a more government-leaning management of the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB); as well as an arguably more government-leaning ownership of the then main pro-opposition TV channel, Rustavi 2 (Kavtaradze 2019; LK 2021). Since the mid-2019 change in ownership, a change of the editorial policy to a neutral to slightly government-leaning stance and the replacement of critical journalists has been noted (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). Moreover, in April 2019, the board of the regional Adjara public broadcaster dismissed its director Natia Kapanadze, which led to concerns over government constraints of freedom of expression, as Adjara TV had been recognised for its relatively balanced broadcasting before

(Civil.ge 2019; LK 2021; Qartia.ge 2019). Accordingly, MA notes "fabricated trials and charges against managers, owners or even family members of critical media outlets" (MA 2021) as a recurrent issue. Besides direct party ties of editors, journalists and lawyers, political influence of private owners and ownership concentration also partly explain media bias. Georgian media companies heavily rely on advertising revenues for income, but the market cannot sustain all media outlets. This has pushed some outlets into financially relying on private owners, in exchange for their political influence (Kavtaradze 2019; Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). Moreover, for instance the ownership of all three government-leaning TV channels Imedi TV, Maestro TV and GDS is concentrated in the hands of the Georgian Media Production Group (Keshelashvili et al. 2021c, 7).

Although the government-leaning TV channels subsequently provided a more positive picture of political and general developments in Georgia; the opposition-related media in turn painted a negative picture. Overall, the increased state pressure has arguably led to growing political divisions of pro-government versus pro-opposition camps, which are not only reflected but exacerbated by the media (MA 2021; ND 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021).

Moreover, regarding the *manner* of media coverage, the government-leaning media criticised the opposition more and more fiercely; and vice versa. While during the 2016 parliamentary elections and the 2017 local government elections, partisan bias manifested in overly positive coverage in favour of a desired candidate of the respective channels. In contrast, during the 2018 presidential elections, overly negative and insulting coverage of 'adversaries' was observed as well, combined at times with the spread of disinformation about those candidates (EU and UNDP 2018). This manner of damaging coverage was particularly pronounced on Imedi TV and Rustavi 2. Namely, Rustavi 2 was covering the GD candidate and now president, Salome Zurabishvili, negatively, e.g., calling her a 'traitor' and a pro-Russian actor (ibid.); while devoting much time for positive coverage of the UNM candidate Grigol Vashadze. Conversely, Imedi, GPB and Obiektivi stated that "the violent government should not return" (EU and UNDP 2018, 15), underlining the 'violent' past of the UNM;[18] depicted presidential candidate Grigol Vashadze as cooperating with Russia; and devoted much airtime to presenting the GD and its candidate in a positive light (ibid.). Imedi TV, notably, even moved into a self-proclaimed 'emergency mode' in the second

[18] The 'violent past' of the UNM refers to the repressive actions against civil society and businesses, curtailing fundamental rights, under the UNM government of President Mikheil Saakashvili (Jones 2020).

round of elections 2018, based on bad past experiences with the UNM as a ruling party, to make sure that the UNM would not 'return'. This led to a rise of one-sided reporting (ibid.). Due to the humiliating style of biased reporting, LK recalls the 2018 presidential elections as "one of the dirtiest elections in Georgia" (LK 2021) and describes the coverage of Imedi and of Rustavi 2 as a "full scale war" against the UNM and the GD candidate, respectively.

Accordingly, pre-election television news polarisation was higher in 2018 compared to 2016 and 2017, especially in the second round of the 2018 presidential elections (EU and UNDP 2018). Now, "the majority of large national stations [are] affiliated with political actors" (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a, 6), while the influence of less biased media outlets is comparatively small (Kavtaradze 2019). NI holds that "the gap is widening between these two parts of society" (NI 2021); hence, between those watching pro-government TV, and those watching pro-opposition TV; leading to these 'two extremes' being "more divided than ever" (ibid.). NI further notes that this gap also has a **geographic dimension**, as especially in the rural areas some people have only access to "government-controlled media outlets" (NI 2021) like Imedi or the GPB; while people in Tbilisi can watch pro-oppositional TV like Mtavari and Pirveli (ibid.). Thus, the significant and highly positive effect of living in a non-Georgian minority might not only be explained by traditional obedience to state authority, but also by issues to access more critical, alternative media.

In addition to the demonstrated increase in the intensity of extreme partisan messages, many interviewed experts stress the rising cases of public violence against journalists, which arguably reflect the rising state pressure and overall polarised situation (MA 2021; ND 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021). According to ND, these attacks increased after 2016, for instance at demonstrations (ND 2021). MA further underlines that these "cases of violence against journalists are not always fully investigated" (MA 2021). And most interviewees point to the growing GD influence on the judiciary; which enables the use of law "as a tool to oppress critical opinion" (MA 2021).

Overall, the interviews convey the impression of a highly politicised and polarised Georgian society in reaction to growing state pressure and state connections with the judiciary and business interests. The pronounced increase of political dissatisfaction of those people consuming pro-oppositional TV might partly be explained by the especially critical reporting and use of harsh, aggressive, emotional language of Mtavari towards the GD (LK 2021; SG

2021; TK 2021). Its tone has been assessed as being more aggressive than that of Rustavi 2. In addition, importantly, ND notes that the curtailed judicial and media freedom, and the manner of biased media reporting leads to "frustration and nihilism in the country" (ND 2021). As a result, an increasing share of Georgians "does not like neither one side, nor [the] other side. … People who are in the middle don't believe neither these TV companies nor these politicians" (ibid.). A further consequence of this being – not only disaffected citizens, alienated from political processes, but also – decisions by young professionals to leave Georgia to search for jobs and opportunities elsewhere (ibid.). Due to no substantive improvements when it comes to the biased judiciary, biased media or freedom of expression, education, and due to lacking job perspectives, young, qualified students want to leave the country and stay abroad, their feeling being that "everything is getting worse" (ibid.).

The overall growing political dissatisfaction can thus be understood not only a) as a reaction to the increasingly negative, pessimistic news coverage of Rustavi 2 and especially Mtavari of those Georgians trusting pro-oppositional TV thus – as reflected in my survey data; but also b) as a sign of general dissatisfaction with the growing capture by the GD of the government-leaning media, judiciary and business interests and its growing violence against critics – an effect that my survey analysis only partly shows due to a concentration on those respondents that trust one or the other channel, disregarding those that don't trust any. The latter point will be more closely demonstrated in the following subsection.

Alternative factors leading to growing dissatisfaction

All interviewees agree that consumption of biased media in Georgia, watching either the 'demonisation' of the opposition or of the government, is at least "one of the factors" (TG 2021) leading to growing political dissatisfaction. Still, many interviewees also point to the socio-economic situation as an important (NI 2021; SG 2021; TG 2021) or even the main reason for high political dissatisfaction (MA 2021; ND 2021). GDP levels do not support this claim, with a drop in GDP only between 2014 and 2015 (to 2011 levels), and a steady increase since 2015, reaching the 2014 GDP level again in 2018 (The World Bank 2020b). Still, GDP might just reflect the situation of the elite. The employment to population ratio is overall low and has actually decreased since 2015 from 57.8% to 56.1% in 2018 and 56.2% in 2019 (The World Bank 2020a), in accordance with the claim of the interviewed experts, which could point to a factor partly explaining overall increasing dissatisfaction. While household income and unemployment have been controlled for and did not yield any

significant effects for the period 2014-2018 (see appendix (6)), a macro-level indicator of economic development might lead to different results, which could be further investigated.

Concerning dissatisfaction with the courts, LK notes that many Georgians were content with the "relatively free and unbiased" courts between 2012 and 2014; but the growing partiality of the courts has dampened these feelings. The most mentioned specific event showing government pressure on the judiciary concerns the 2015-19 ownership struggle of Rustavi 2, which according to ND is "one of the factors why people say that they are not happy with our government" and started protesting for independent media (ND 2021). The Rustavi 2 ownership struggle started in 2015, accompanied by protests (BBC 2015). In 2017, leading to large protests, the Georgian Supreme Court ruled that the channel's former owner, who had been forced to give up the station under president Saakashvili in 2006, remains the rightful owner (Antidze 2019; Civil.ge 2017). The European Court of Human Right's (ECHR) 2017 interim ruling had prevented the enforcement of the Georgian Supreme Court ruling, but in 2019 the ECHR lifted this interim measure, after which Rustavi 2 was given back to its former pro-GD owner Khalvashi and the then director, Nika Gvaramia, was fired (ibid.). Protests erupted again, as this decision was seen to be politically motivated, in favour of GD (NI 2021). For ND, the Rustavi 2 case, changing the ownership of the then main opposition channel in favour of the ruling party, showed that the GD "started the abuse of the rule of law" (ND 2021). As a further sign of the growing independence of the judiciary ND points to the non-transparent manner of nomination of Supreme Court judges in 2018 (Freedom House 2021b; ND 2021).

Moreover, concerning the dissatisfaction with the government, many interviewees note the June 2019 instance when the Russian MP Sergei Gavrilov delivered a speech in Russian to the assembly of MPs from Orthodox Christian nations while sitting in the chair of the Georgian parliament (BBC 2015). This incident "caused a lot of political fury" (LK 2021) and was "followed by massive protests" (ibid.). LK especially notes the disproportionately violent manner of the government's reaction to the protests as marking "a moment when the view of the government has changed drastically" (ibid.). Georgians who were neutral towards the government became dissatisfied in reaction to the government's use of force. MA also refers to this protest ('Gavrilov Night'), when "about 40 media employees and journalists got injured and none of the perpetrators was brought to justice" (MA 2021), which fuelled dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, a few interviewees especially point out that the distinction between the parliament, governments and courts cannot be made that sharply in Georgia; instead "all three different levels of power are kind of unified" (LK 2021). The judiciary is not independent, and "you cannot detach parliament and the government from each other" (ibid.) either. NI also voices how the parliament, government and courts are "really interlinked" (NI 2021). ND further notes that while the GD when coming to power first tried to disentangle the business and media from government activity; no change took place in the courts, arguable because "they knew… that they will need this court" (ND 2021). Thus, no explanation for the slight difference of the satisfaction levels with the parliament in comparison with the government and courts can be arrived at. Still, the interdependence of these core state institutions supports the approach to not regard the government alone when investigating reasons for political dissatisfaction (and regarding all three institutions separately instead of constructing one index was decided due to the different scales of measurement and missing data for the 'perception with the government' DV *RATEGOV*).

VI.2.3 The effects of fake news dynamics on social media. An avenue for further research

One more facet of media consumption in Georgia that deserves attention is the increasing spread of disinformation or fake news online, which all interviewees point out. A recently published report by the Atlantic Council denotes Facebook, the most popular social media platform in Georgia, as the "primary online vector for influence operations and inauthentic behavior" (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021). The use of Facebook by political actors not only to discredit political candidates, but also for the active spread of misinformation has first been noted in 2016, and increased throughout the 2018 presidential elections (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021; ISFED 2018). The interviewed experts underline that "the new Georgian Dream government utilised the social media tools against political opponents; and not only [against] political opponents, but [also] against NGOs, critical media outlets" (TK 2021). While some cases have been revealed in which fake information was also produced and spread by UNM-affiliated Facebook pages, the resources the GD spends on inauthentic behaviour are seen as larger compared to the UNM (LK 2021; TK 2021). MA agrees that online media plays an increasingly important role (MA 2021), and characterises the environment on Facebook as "negative" and "toxic" (ibid.). SG describes the discussions of Facebook in a similarly negative manner: "it's not [a] healthy discussion … it's a hell, it's so toxic" (SG 2021). She explicitly points out that "we're talking about a

government institution using inauthentic networks [which] contributes to further polarization of the society" (SG 2021). ND further holds that online disinformation fuels "nihilism, frustration, lack of trust towards institutions" (ND 2021) and underlines that disinformation on Facebook should be regarded separately from the biased news coverage of TV stations (NI 2021). Due to the rising proportion of Georgians consuming news primarily via Facebook, the increased spread of disinformation in a negative, 'toxic' online environment might also add to dissatisfaction levels, which deserves further research.

VII. Conclusion: Summary of main findings and their implications, limitations, and avenues for further research

This thesis has been motivated by the observation of a general trend of growing political dissatisfaction in Georgia between 2012 and 2019, as reflected in public opinion polls (CRRC 2012, 2019; CRRC and NDI 2014, 2019), in combination with recent allegations of growing partisan media bias and disinformation (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021; EU and UNDP 2018; ISFED 2019; Reporters Without Borders 2020; Transparency International Georgia 2018, 2019). It has investigated to what extent the trust in government-leaning media as opposed to opposition-leaning media affected the level of individual political dissatisfaction under the GD ruling party and what the underlying mechanisms are. This study has focused on the effects of TV consumption specifically because Georgians continue to use TV as their main source of information, although online sources are gaining in importance (Keshelashvili et al. 2021a). The time frame of this study comprises the years 2014-19, adapted to the available survey data.

Seven semi-structured interviews with media analysts from Georgian NGOs and think thanks helped to set out the recent developments of the Georgian media landscape. All experts underlined the growing polarisation of the Georgian media landscape between 2014 and 2019, with pro-governmental media forming one pole and pro-oppositional media forming the other. Only a few more balanced TV channels exist that provide high vertical diversity of viewpoints. These outlets (TV Formula, TV Pirveli and Adjara TV until 2019) are, however, small. The main TV channels, in contrast, can be clearly assigned to a partisan camp: throughout the whole period under investigation, Imedi TV was regarded as the main government-leaning channel, while Rustavi 2 represented the main opposition-leaning channel until its ownership was changed in mid-2019, after which its coverage became more

neutral and slightly pro-governmental. Since mid-2019, Mtavari Arkhi developed into the main pro-oppositional channel, characterised by a critical, harsh, and emotionalised tone of biased news coverage. However, both, Imedi and Rustavi 2 also demonstrated increasingly negative coverage of the political 'opponents', visible when for instance comparing the 2016 parliamentary elections, the 2017 local self-government elections and the 2018 presidential elections (EU and UNDP 2018). The Georgian media environment regarding TV broadcasting was thus characterised as providing overall low vertical diversity, as the main channels are politically biased, and low horizontal diversity, as the aggregate of TV channels provides a concentration of views on two opposed sides of the Georgian political spectrum.

Importantly, the reflection on the Georgian media environment helped to identify the main TV channels and their political leaning. This information has been used to analyse the extent to which watching politically biased news might have an influence on political (dis)satisfaction levels. Based on the national representative NDI 'Public attitudes in Georgia' (n.d.) survey, ordinal logistic regression analysis was performed. Political dissatisfaction was distinguished from more general satisfaction by including DVs on the perception of the performance of the government, parliament and courts (specific political support) and on 'the direction Georgia is going' (diffuse support). As main IVs, trust in the main pro-governmental TV Imedi (maingovtvtrust) was included in one set of models; and trusting the main pro-oppositional TV Rustavi (until mid-2019) and Mtavari (from mid-2019) in the other. Party affiliation, political sophistication and other socio-economic variables and a year variable were included as controls (age, education, gender, household income, employment status, settlement type, survey year). The findings are based on weighted data and can thus be generalised to the Georgian population.

The results of ordinal logistic regressions, based on representative NDI survey data, are in line with all four research hypotheses with view to the effect of partisan news on political satisfaction levels in Georgia between 2014 and 2019. People trusting information of the main pro-government TV are more positive about the direction Georgia is going (H.1.a) and of the performance of the government, parliament and courts (H.2.a), independent of party affiliation, political sophistication, and socio-economic control variables. Conversely, those respondents trusting information on the main pro-opposition TV were more negative about Georgia's general direction of development (H.1.b) and the performance of the government, parliament and courts (H.2.b). Trusting partisan news has a stronger effect on specific

political support/ satisfaction with the performance of the named three core state institutions, than on the more diffuse support of Georgia's general direction of development. These findings indicate that the general trend of growing political dissatisfaction, as reflected in public opinion polls is linked to the consumption of politically biased media. The effects of trusting partisan media on political dissatisfaction are most pronounced for the perception of the DV 'performance of the government' (*RATEGOV*) arguably because it is most closely linked to the GD and thus most clearly evokes critical or favourable partisan views; but also due to measurement issues: because the effects increased over time and the effects for the RATEGOV variable were only measured in 2017-19 (compared to 2014-19 for all other DVs).

These findings are only partly in line with the Receive-Accept Sample model and the theories of Motivated Reasoning. Both perspectives predict either a persistence (RAS model) or reinforcement (MR theories) of prior held views, which is in line with and can explain the significant effect of watching partisan news on political satisfaction levels *but only* for those people that trust a TV channel based on their already held views. The seeming increase of the effects over time, when comparing 2014 and 2019, rather confirms the MR theories assuming attitude reinforcement (than the RAS model). However, both theories also expect less politically sophisticated people to change their attitudes more readily according to the (partisan) messages they receive. This nuance was not observed in the regression analysis overall, as the political sophistication variable did *only* yield significant results for the DV regarding the more general support (perception of the 'direction Georgia is going', *POLDIRN*), but *not* for those DVs concerning political satisfaction with the performance of the government (*RATEGOV*), parliament (*PERFPARL*) and courts (*PERFCRTS*). While a more fine-grained political sophistication index might lead to different results, the political sophistication index might also miss the main underlying dimension: the readiness to comply with or resist partisan messages (being more or less critical of core state institutions) might be moderated by the intensity of prior held (partisan) views, and not political sophistication in the sense of political knowledge (meaning factual knowledge of public affairs).

While the MR theories are thus more successful in explaining the increasing polarisation of views over time (due to their constant reinforcement); they do not offer any explanation why, overall, political dissatisfaction levels (reinforced by opposition-leaning TV) have been higher than levels of political satisfaction (reinforced by government-leaning TV). Expert

interviews especially underlined that growing parts of the Georgian population became frustrated with the political polarisation and increasingly biased media coverage, and especially with increasing government control over the media and over the courts (exemplified by the arguably politically motivated Rustavi 2 ownership struggle), as well as recent state violence against critics (for instance during the 2019 'Gavrilov Night' protests). This points to a group that is disregarded in the survey analysis: those Georgians who neither trust politicians nor the media. If this group is increasing, this might explain overall increasing levels of political dissatisfaction over time.

Limitations and further research

While the strength of this thesis lies in its mixed-methods approach, some limitations should be noted and avenues for further research identified. Concerning the limitations of this research, as just briefly mentioned, Georgian citizens who are more dissatisfied with politics might also be less likely to trust political news altogether, which points to a possible selection bias that might need adjustment. In addition, the political sophistication index could be modified to reflect political views instead of factual knowledge of political events. Also, macro-level indicators of economic development could be controlled for to see if the effects change (Martini and Quaranta 2015). Moreover, to further examine whether the MR theory holds over the RAS model, it would be interesting to obtain individual-level panel data to trace over time whether politically sophisticated people strengthen partisan attitudes when being exposed to counter-attitudinal messages; and whether/when a change in consumption of TV stations takes place. Furthermore, due to language barriers, the content of TV news could not be investigated as such; and the findings are instead mainly based on expert interviews and secondary literature, apart from survey data. Future research could thus take a closer look at how the manner of news content changed over the years and is linked to political dissatisfaction, based on the literature of framing effects (Druckman, Fein, and Leeper 2012). Moreover, Facebook is becoming the primary news source for an increasing number of Georgians, and the damaging impact of the spread of disinformation online (especially on Facebook) has been noted by most interviewed experts. Hence, tracking the character, spread and impact of disinformation on Facebook more closely is an important area for future research, building inter alia on the research of the Atlantic Council's DFRLab in Georgia (Buziashvili and Gigitashvili 2021) as well as by the Georgian Media Development Foundation (Kintsurashvili and Gelava 2019).

Comparison of findings to other research and broader implications of this study

The findings of this thesis are similar to Peisakhin and Rozena's (2018) study of Russian television consumption in Ukraine, who also find that consumption of biased media can exacerbate societal polarisation. Moreover, the identified attempt of the Georgian ruling party to use the media as a tool to not only convince Georgians of its political actions, but also to discredit opponents, combined with pressure on critical media outlets and growing ownership concentration of traditional media is a picture that has equally arisen in other post-communist states (Rollberg and Laruelle 2018; Ryabinska 2014) and transitional democracies more broadly (Voltmer 2007, 2013). Media freedom has been found to be constrained to different levels in all post-Soviet states, with an often close interlocking of economic and political power structures (Rollberg and Laruelle 2018). The media has come to be regarded as "patron-guided … promoting the values of the owners, not the common good" (Rollberg and Laruelle 2018, 9). Ryabinska describes this situation as "media capture" (2014, 46) by powerful elites. Due to the partisan influence by both the government and the opposition, as well as its owners, the Georgian media environment is unlikely to function as a 'marketplace of ideas' in the sense of a space for public political discussion free of state interference (and thus as an arena for political participation if following the understanding of participatory democratic theory). While the increasing availability of online media could enable citizens to avoid biased media and state interference, recent research (as well as the expert interviews conducted for this thesis) indicate that even the online space is increasingly influenced by malicious disinformation activities – at times state sponsored (ibid.).

The increasing media bias in Georgia cannot be attenuated by heightened journalistic standards alone. As partisan media coverage is a power-seeking tool of political actors – power understood as "the ability to control information" (Voltmer 2013, 139) – a change in this form of media capture can only be initiated by the political actors themselves. Political learning might indicate a possible solution: parties which find themselves in the opposition might increase media freedom once they gain power (Voltmer 2013). Moreover, if the governing party mostly uses media interference to gain electoral success, a focus on improved government communication could provide an alternative path (ibid.). To increase access to less biased information in the short run, the media outlets that provide more balanced reporting could be further supported by donors. Overall, more pressure from civil society and/or international donors could help affect a change towards less media polarisation in Georgia.

iii. Bibliography

Agresti, Alan. 2018. *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences [Electronic Resource]*. Fifth, Global edition. Harlow, England: Pearson. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=5311592 (April 26, 2021).

Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew Gentzkow. 2017. 'Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election'. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31(2): 211–36.

Almond, Gabriel A., and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton: University Press.

Altheide, David L., and Christopher J. Schneider. 2013. *Qualitative Media Analysis*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, California; London: SAGE Publications.

Anderson, Christopher J., and Christine A. Guillory. 1997. 'Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems'. *The American Political Science Review* 91(1): 66–81.

Antidze, Margarita. 2019. 'Europe's Human Rights Court Rules against Owners of Georgian pro-Opposition TV Channel in Ownership Row'. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-politics-tv-court-idUSKCN1UD1YY (May 23, 2021).

Arceneaux, Kevin, and Martin Johnson. 2010. *Does Media Fragmentation Produce Mass Polarization? Selective Exposure and a New Era of Minimal Effects*. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. SSRN Scholarly Paper. https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1642723 (April 23, 2021).

Bakir, Vian, and Andrew Mcstay. 2018. 'Fake News and The Economy of Emotions: Problems, Causes, Solutions'. *Digital journalism* 6(2): 154–75.

BBC. 2015. 'Protests in Georgia over Government Threat to TV Station'. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34606137 (May 23, 2021).

Becker, Lee B., and D. Charles Whitney. 1980. 'Effects of Media Dependencies: Audience Assessment of Government'. *Communication Research* 7(1): 95–120.

Beliaev, Mikhail V. 2006. 'Presidential Powers and Consolidation of New Postcommunist Democracies'. *Comparative political studies* 39(3): 375–98.

Bogner, Alexander, and W. Menz. 2009. 'The Theory-Generating Expert Interview: Epistemological Interest, Forms of Knowledge, Interaction'. In *Interviewing Experts*, Research methods series, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 43–80.

Broers, Laurence. 2008. 'Filling the Void: Ethnic Politics and Nationalities Policy in Post-Conflict Georgia'. *Nationalities Papers* 36(2): 275–304.

Buziashvili, Eto, and Givi Gigitashvili. 2021. 'Fighting for the Hearts and Minds of Sakartvelo'. : 27.

Chaisty, Paul, and Stephen Whitefield. 2015. 'Attitudes towards the Environment: Are Post-Communist Societies (Still) Different?' *Environmental politics* 24(4): 598–616.

Christensen, Henrik Serup. 2016. 'All the Same? Examining the Link between Three Kinds of Political Dissatisfaction and Protest'. *Comparative European Politics* 14(6): pp781-801.

Christmann, Gabriela B. 2009. 'Expert Interviews on the Telephone: A Difficult Undertaking'. In *Interviewing Experts*, Research methods series, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 157–83.

Civil.ge. 2017. 'Citizens Rally in Support of Rustavi 2'. *Civil.ge*. https://civil.ge/archives/37 (June 26, 2021).

———. 2019. 'Adjara Public TV Board Dismisses Director'. *Civil.ge*. https://civil.ge/archives/302899 (May 24, 2021).

Collins, H. M. 2007. *Rethinking Expertise [Electronic Resource]*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=408441 (May 12, 2021).

CRRC. 2012. 'Caucasus Barometer 2012 Georgia'. *Caucasus Research Resource Center*. https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2012ge/codebook/ (February 25, 2021).

———. 2019. 'Caucasus Barometer 2019 Georgia'. *Caucasus Research Resource Center*. https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2019ge/codebook/ (March 3, 2021).

CRRC, and NDI. 2014. 'NDI: Public Attitudes in Georgia, April 2014'. *Caucasus Research Resource Center*. https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/na2014ge/codebook/ (March 3, 2021).

———. 2019. 'NDI: Public Attitudes in Georgia, November-December 2019'. *Caucasus Research Resource Center*. https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/nn2019ge/codebook/ (March 3, 2021).

Dalton, Russell J. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford University Press.

Deutsch, K. 1961. 'Social Mobilization and Political Development'. *American political science review* 55(3): 493–514.

Druckman, James N., Jordan Fein, and Thomas J. Leeper. 2012. 'A Source of Bias in Public Opinion Stability'. *American Political Science Review* 106(2): 430–54.

Easton, David. 1965. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York; London: Wiley.

———. 1975. 'A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support'. *British Journal of Political Science* 5(4): 435–57.

Egelhofer, Jana Laura, and Sophie Lecheler. 2019. 'Fake News as a Two-Dimensional Phenomenon: A Framework and Research Agenda'. *Annals of the International Communication Association* 43(2): 97–116.

EU, and UNDP. 2018. 'Media Monitoring Reports. Final Reports. 2016-2018 Media Monitorin Report.' *Mediamonitor Ge*. http://mediamonitor.ge/index.php?m=3&lng=eng (March 4, 2021).

Fallows, James M. 1997. *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy*. New York: Vintage Books.

Freedom House. 2021a. 'Countries and Territories: Democracy Scores'. *Freedom House*. https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores (March 3, 2021).

———. 2021b. 'Georgia: Nations in Transit 2021 Country Report'. *Freedom House*. https://freedomhouse.org/country/georgia/nations-transit/2021 (July 4, 2021).

Graber, Doris A. 2014. *Mass Media and American Politics.* Ninth edition / Doris A. Graber, Johanna Dunaway. Los Angeles: Sage CQ Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. *Theorie Des Kommunikativen Handelns. Bd. 1: Handlungsrationalität Und Gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

———. 1990. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. 1. Aufl. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Hale, Henry E. 2011. 'Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics: Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia'. *World Politics* 63(4): 581–617.

Harrell, Frank. 2001. *Regression Modeling Strategies: With Applications to Linear Models, Logistic Regression, and Survival Analysis*. New York: Springer-Verlag. https://www.springer.com/gb/book/9781441929181 (May 4, 2021).

Hay, Colin. 2007. *Why We Hate Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hay, Colin, and Gerry Stoker. 2009. 'Revitalising Politics: Have We Lost the Plot?' *Representation (McDougall Trust)* 45(3): 225–36.

Ingber, Stanley. 1984. 'The Marketplace of Ideas: A Legitimizing Myth'. *Duke Law Journal* 1984(1): 1–91.

Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. 'Political Dissatisfaction and Mass Support for Social Change in Advanced Industrial Society'. *Comparative political studies* 10(3): 455–72.

———. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton, N.J. ; Chichester: Princeton University Press.

Inglehart, Ronald, and Renata Siemienska. 1988. 'Changing Values and Political Dissatisfaction in Poland and the West: A Comparative Analysis'. *Government and Opposition* 23(4): 440–57.

ISFED. 2018. ‘ISFED Social Media Monitoring For Presidential Elections - 2nd Interim Report | Social Media | Popular Culture & Media Studies’. *Scribd*. https://www.scribd.com/document/396072296/ISFED-Social-Media-Monitoring-for-Presidential-Elections-2nd-Interim-Report (July 2, 2021).

———. 2019. ‘Georgian Civil Society Addresses to the International Organizations in Regard to the Recent Developments around Rustavi 2 TV’. *isfed.ge*. http://isfed.ge/eng/gantskhadebebi/samoqalaqo-seqtoris-mimartva-saertashoriso-organizatsiebs-rustavi-2-is-garshemo-ganvitarebul-movlenebtan-dakavshirebit (March 3, 2021).

Jakubowicz, Karol. 2002. ‘Media in Transition: The Case of Poland’. In *Media Reform: Democratizing the Media, Democratizing the State*, Routledge research in cultural and media studies, London: Routledge, 75–93.

Japaridze, Nino. 2011. ‘The Influence of Media on Democratic Attitudes and Behaviour in Post-Soviet Georgia’. Thesis DPhil--University of Oxford.

Jones, Stephen F. 2020. *Georgia: From Autocracy to Democracy [Electronic Resource]*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.degruyter.com/isbn/9781487537081 (July 5, 2021).

Kavtaradze, Lasha. 2019. ‘Media and Polarisation in Georgia’. *Democracy Reporting International*. https://democracy-reporting.org/media-and-polarisation/ (May 14, 2021).

Keshelashvili, Anna et al. 2021a. ‘Part One: Context, Infrastructure, Regulation, and Revenue’. (1): 1–28.

———. 2021b. ‘Part Three: Engagement, Trust and Behaviour’. (3): 1–37.

———. 2021c. ‘Part Two: Production, Distribution, and Consumption of Information’. (2): 1–59.

Khaldarova, Irina, and Mervi Pantti. 2016. ‘Fake News: The Narrative Battle over the Ukrainian Conflict’. *Journalism practice* 10(7): 891–901.

Kintsurashvili, Tamar, and Sopo Gelava. 2019. ‘Anti-Western Propaganda’. : 59.

Kitschelt, Herbert. 1992. ‘The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe’. *Politics & society* 20(1): 7–50.

Kostadinova, Petia. 2015. ‘Media in the New Democracies of Post-Communist Eastern Europe’. *East European politics and societies* 29(2): 453–66.

Lazer, David M. J. et al. 2018. ‘The Science of Fake News’. *Science (New York, N.Y.)* 359(6380): 1094–96.

Lebanidze, Bidzina, and Kornely Kakachia. 2017. ‘Informal Governance and Electorate Perceptions in Hybrid Regimes: The 2016 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia’. *Demokratizatsiya* 25(4): 529–49.

Levendusky, Matthew S. 2013. 'Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?' *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 611–23.

Lichter, S. Robert. 2017. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*, Oxford University Press, 403–16. http://oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199793471 (June 5, 2021).

Linde, Jonas, and Joakim Ekman. 2003. 'Satisfaction with Democracy: A Note on a Frequently Used Indicator in Comparative Politics'. *European Journal of Political Research* 42(3): 391–408.

Lindlof, Thomas R., and Bryan C. Taylor. 2011. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.

Lippmann, Walter. 1997. *Public Opinion*. New York ; London: Free Press Paperbacks.

Littig, Beate. 2009. 'Interviewing the Elite - Interviewing Experts: Is There a Difference?' In *Interviewing Experts*, Research methods series, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 98–116.

LK, Respondent 2. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

Lodge, M, and C. Taber. 2000. 'Three Steps toward a Theory of Motivated Political Reasoning'. In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*, Cambridge studies in political psychology and public opinion, Cambridge: University Press, 183–213.

Loveless, Matthew. 2010. 'Understanding Media Socialization in Democratizing Countries: Mobilization and Malaise in Central and Eastern Europe'. *Comparative Politics* 42(4): 457–74.

MA, Respondent 4. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

Mair, P. 2006. 'Ruling the Void? The Hollowing of Western Democracy'. *New Left Review* (42): 25–51.

Martinctc. 2020. 'Likert_convert: Convert a Likert Scale from One Scale to Another in Martinctc/Surveytools: Useful Support Functions for Survey Analysis'. *Martinctc/surveytools documentation*. https://rdrr.io/github/martinctc/surveytools/man/likert_convert.html (June 8, 2021).

Martini, Sergio, and Mario Quaranta. 2015. 'Finding Out the Hard Way: Uncovering the Structural Foundations of Political Dissatisfaction in Italy, 1973-2013'. *West European politics* 38(1): 28–52.

Matsaberidze, David. 'The Role of Civic Nationalism in Transformation of the Internal Ethnic Politics of Post-Soviet Georgia'. *European Centre for Minority Issues* (83): 16.

McNair, Brian. 2017. *Fake News: Falsehood, Fabrication and Fantasy in Journalism [Electronic Resource]*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.

McQuail, Denis. 1986. 'Diversity in Political Communication: Its Sources, Forms and Future'. In *Communicating Politics :Mass Communications and the Political Process /*, eds. Peter Golding, Graham Murdock, and Philip Schlesinger. [Leicester, Leicestershire] :, 133–49. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015012165067.

Melgar, Natalia, Máximo Rossi, and Tom W. Smith. 2010. 'The Perception of Corruption'. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 22(1): 120–31.

Meuser, Michael, and Ulrike Nagel. 2009. In *Interviewing Experts*, Research methods series, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 17–42.

Mill, John Stuart. 1946. *On Liberty ; and, Considerations on Representative Government*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miller, Arthur H., Edie N. Goldenberg, and Lutz Erbring. 1979. 'Type-Set Politics: Impact of Newspapers on Public Confidence'. *The American Political Science Review* 73(1): 67–84.

Miller, M. Mark, and Stephen D. Reese. 1982. 'Media Dependency as Interaction: Effects of Exposure and Reliance on Political Activity and Efficacy'. *Communication Research* 9(2): 227–48.

Milton, John. 1644. *Areopagitica; a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing, to the Parlament of England.* London: Printed for the author.

ND, Respondent 6. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

NDI. 'NDI: Public Attitudes in Georgia'. https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/datasets/ (April 29, 2021).

Nelson, Jacob L., and Harsh Taneja. 2018. 'The Small, Disloyal Fake News Audience: The Role of Audience Availability in Fake News Consumption'. *New media & society* 20(10): 3720–37.

Neudert, Lisa-Maria N. 2017. 'Computational Propaganda in Germany: A Cautionary Tale'. *Computational Propaganda Research Project* Working Paper No. 2017.7: 30.

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. 2017. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Second. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Newton, Kenneth. 2006. 'May the Weak Force Be with You: The Power of the Mass Media in Modern Politics'. *European Journal of Political Research* 45(2): 209–34.

NI, Respondent 7. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

Nie, N. H., G. B. Powell, and K. Prewitt. 1969. 'Social Structure and Political Participation: Developmental Relationships, Part i'. *American Political Science Review* 63(2): 361–78.

Norris, Pippa. 1999. 'Institutional Explanations for Political Support'. In *Critical Citizens [Electronic Resource]: Global Support for Democratic Government*, Oxford scholarship online, Oxford: University Press, 217–35. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/0198295685.001.0001 (April 22, 2021).

———. 2011. *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge: University Press.

O'Neil, Patrick H. 1998. *Communicating Democracy: The Media and Political Transitions*. Boulder ; London: Lynne Rienner.

Peisakhin, Leonid, and Arturas Rozenas. 2018. 'Electoral Effects of Biased Media: Russian Television in Ukraine'. *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3): 535–50.

Pjesivac, Ivanka. 2017. 'The Effects of Culture and Performance on Trust in News Media in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: The Case of Serbia'. *Journalism & mass communication quarterly* 94(4): 1191–1214.

Pop-Eleches, Grigore. 2017. *Communism's Shadow: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Political Attitudes*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Powers, Daniel A., and Yu Xie. 2008. *Statistical Methods for Categorical Data Analysis*. 2nd ed. Bingley: Emerald.

Prior, Markus. 2007. *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*. New York ; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0619/2006025608.html (June 5, 2021).

———. 2013. 'Media and Political Polarization'. *Annual Review of Political Science* 16(1): 101–27.

Qartia.ge. 2019. 'NGOs Respond to the Impeachment Initiative of Adjara TV and Radio Director'. *The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics*. https://www.qartia.ge/en/news/article/69855-ngos-respond-to-the-impeachment-initiative-of-adjara-tv-and-radio-director (May 24, 2021).

Redlawsk, David P. 2002. 'Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making'. *The Journal of Politics* 64(4): 1021–44.

Reporters Without Borders. 2020. 'Georgian TV Channel's Deputy Director Resigns under Pressure'. *RSF*. https://rsf.org/en/news/georgian-tv-channels-deputy-director-resigns-under-pressure (March 3, 2021).

Rollberg, P., and Marlène Laruelle. 2018. *Mass Media in the Post-Soviet World: Market Forces, State Actors, and Political Manipulation in the Informational Environment after Communism*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag.

Rosanvallon, Pierre. 2008. *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust*. Cambridge: University Press.

Ryabinska, Natalya. 2014. 'Media Capture in Post-Communist Ukraine: Actors, Methods, and Conditions'. *Problems of post-communism* 61(2): 46–60.

SG, Respondent 5. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

Silverman, David. 2010. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. 3rd ed. London: SAGE.

Strömbäck, Jesper et al. 2020. 'News Media Trust and Its Impact on Media Use: Toward a Framework for Future Research'. *Annals of the International Communication Association* 44(2): 139–56.

Taber, Charles S., and Milton Lodge. 2006. 'Motivated Scepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs'. *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 755–69.

TG, Respondent 3. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

The World Bank. 2020a. 'Employment to Population Ratio, 15+, Total (%) (Modelled ILO Estimate) - Georgia | Data 1990-2020'. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.TOTL.SP.ZS?locations=GE (July 2, 2021).

———. 2020b. 'GDP (Current US$) - Georgia | Data 1990-2020'. *The World Bank*. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=GE (July 2, 2021).

Timm, Christian. 2012. 'From Corruption to Rotation: Politics in Georgia before and Aftert the Rose Revolution'. In *Presidents, Oligarchs and Bureaucrats: Forms of Rule in the Post-Soviet Space*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 167–84.

TK, Respondent 1. 2021. 'Research Interview: The Effects of Media Consumption on Political Dissatisfaction in Georgia'. Interviewed by Author. Microsoft Teams.

Torcal, Mariano, and José R. Montero. 2006. *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions and Politics [Electronic Resource]*. London ; New York: Routledge. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780203086186 (April 22, 2021).

Transparency International Georgia. 2018. 'Alarm over Increasing Signs of State Capture and Pressure on Civil Society'. *Transparency.org*. https://www.transparency.org/en/press/alarm-over-increasing-signs-of-state-capture-and-pressure-on-civil-society (March 3, 2021).

———. 2019. ‘Fighting Disinformation in Georgia’. *საერთაშორისო გამჭვირვალობა - საქართველო*. https://www.transparency.ge/en/post/fighting-disinformation-georgia (March 3, 2021).

UCLA. ‘Ordinal Logistic Regression | R Data Analysis Examples’. *Ordinal Logistic Regression | R Data Analysis Examples*. https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/r/dae/ordinal-logistic-regression/ (May 4, 2021).

UNDP Georgia. 2020. ‘Media Monitoring for 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia’. *UNDP*. https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/library/democratic_governance/elections-media-monitoring.html (May 13, 2021).

Voltmer, Katrin. 2007. *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*. London: Routledge.

———. 2013. *The Media in Transitional Democracies [Electronic Resource]*. Cambridge, England ; Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=1315630 (May 9, 2021).

Voltmer, Katrin, and Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck. 2007. ‘New Democracies without Citizens?’ In *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies*, Routledge/ECPR studies in European political science, London: Routledge.

Waisbord, Silvio. 2018. ‘Truth Is What Happens to News: On Journalism, Fake News, and Post-Truth’. *Journalism studies (London, England)* 19(13): 1866–78.

Whitefield, Stephen. 2002. ‘Political Cleavages and Post-Communist Politics’. *Annual Review of Political Science* 5(1): 181–200.

Wilson, Andrew. 2005. *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World*. New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip054/2004029345.html (March 4, 2021).

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: University Press.

———. 1996. ‘The Myth of Massive Media Impact Revived. New Support for a Discredited Idea’. In *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 17–78.

iv. Appendix

(1) Questions used to create the political sophistication index

To measure political sophistication (*POLSOPH*), two questions on factual public affairs knowledge were included per survey wave. This measurement choice is based on Zaller (Agresti 2018). Political sophistication was coded as 0= low political sophistication if a respondent could not answer any of the two questions in a year; 1= medium if a respondent answered one of the questions correctly; 2= high if a respondent answered both correctly/ was aware of a certain development that took place that year. The 2016 survey wave did not include any appropriate questions to measure political sophistication (leaving out 2016 only effects the regression of the DV POLDIRN, as the other DVs were not measured in 2016 either). The following questions form the index:

2014:	○ *MAJNAME*: Who is your majoritarian member in the Parliament of Georgia? ○ *GEOCONRUS:* Are you aware that the Georgian government condemned Russia's actions in Crimea?
2016:	-
2017:	○ *MAJNAME*: Who is your majoritarian member in the Parliament of Georgia? ○ *DRFCNSTP*: Are you aware that the parliament adopted amendments to the constitution on September 26th?

2018:	○ *VISALIB*: Have you heard about the EU visa liberalization for Georgian citizens? ○ *WORKEU*: Is it correct or wrong that visa free regime will allow citizens to work in the EU?
2019a:	○ *AWELSYCH*: Are you aware that in December, 20 opposition parties created a coalition to change the electoral system in 2020? ○ *HEARANAK*: Have you heard about 8 MPs leaving the Georgian Dream in February?
2019b:	○ *AWPOPNES*: Are you aware that the parliament did not support the electoral change in Nov 2019? ○ *INFSUPCO*: Do you have enough information on the process of selecting members of Supreme Courts? – yes/no/ not heard of this process

(2) Chi-squared tests

Chi-squared tests indicate if the IVs are statistically independent from the DVs. Using chi-squared tests is appropriate for large-samples (Agresti 2018, 232). It can hereby be determined "whether a sample value of X^2 is consistent with H_0 or would be unusually large" (Agresti 2018, 232). A value of $X^2=0$ would occur if the observed frequency (fo) in a cell of a crosstabulation equals the expected frequency (fe) if the variable were independent (ibid.). "The larger the X^2 value for a particular df, the stronger the evidence against H_0: independence. The p-value equals the right-tail probability above the observed X^2 value. It measures the probability, presuming H_0 is true, that X^2 is at least as large as the observed value" (Agresti 2018, 232). The evidence against H_0 is regarded as strong unless $p \leq 0.05$. The output of chi-squared tests (see table 4) provides strong evidence for almost all IVs against H0. It seems likely that they are associated with *POLDIRN*, *PERFPARL* and *PERFCRTS*, in the population. However, the high p-value of 0.39 for the chi-squared test of *AGEGROUP* and *PERFPARL* provides only weak evidence against H0. It therefore seems unlikely that *AGEGROUP* and *PERFPARL* are associated, in the population. The same can be observed for the chi-squared tests of *UNEMPL* and *PERFPARL*, with a p-value of 0.2794, and *UNEMPL* and *PERFCRTS*, with a p-value of 0.59.

Table i. P-values of chi-squared tests (p-values > 0.05 are marked red)

	Maingov-tvtrust	Mainopp-tvtrust	GDsup	UNMsup	POL-SOPH	AGE-GROUP	RESP-EDU	RESP-SEX	MONY-TOT	UN-EMPL	SET-TYPE
POLDIRN	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	6.12e-07	1.47e-05	1.68e-07	0.0013	9.9e-06	0.0005	2.19e-05
PERFPARL	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	0.0021	**0.39**	2.84e-05	6.7e-05	0.0012	**0.2794**	4.13e-15
PERFCRTS	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	< 2.2e-16	1.24e-14	0.0171	1.05e-05	0.0052	0.0144	0.0094	**0.59**	< 2.2e-16

(3) Correlation matrix of all variables

	POL-DIRN	RATE-GOV	PERF-PARL	PERF-CRTS	Maingov-tvtrust	Mainopp-tvtrust	GD sup	UNM sup	POL-SOPH	AGE-GROUP	RESP-EDU	RESP-SEX	MONY-TOT	UN-EMPL	SET-TYPE
POLDIRN	1.00														
RATEGOV	0.56	1.00													
PERFPARL	0.46	0.63	1.00												
PERFCRTS	0.42	0.56	0.68	1.00											
maingovtvtrust	0.18	0.20	0.16	0.17	1.00										
mainopptvtrust	-0.21	-0.31	-0.22	-0.21	0.00	1.00									
GDsup	0.40	0.44	0.42	0.37	0.26	-0.22	1.00								
UNMsup	-0.22	-0.24	-0.18	-0.16	-0.15	0.29	-0.30	1.00							
POLSOPH	0.03	-0.12	-0.10	-0.12	0.07	-0.01	0.07	-0.06	1.00						
AGEGROUP	0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.09	0.07	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.06	1.00					
RESPEDU	0.06	-0.06	-0.04	-0.05	0.04	-0.03	0.07	-0.11	0.28	0.01	1.00				
RESPSEX	-0.03	-0.02	0.002	-0.03	0.04	0.04	-0.02	0.04	-0.05	0.05	0.03	1.00			
MONYTOT	-0.01	0.06	-0.06	-0.04	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.06	0.02	-0.14	0.24	-0.08	1.00		
UNEMPL	-0.07	-0.03	0.01	0.001	-0.03	0.04	-0.06	0.08	-0.08	-0.01	-0.18	0.04	-0.36	1.00	
SETTYPE	0.10	0.25	0.02	0.23	-0.04	-0.05	0.07	0.06	-0.25	0.07	-0.32	-0.09	-0.18	0.06	1.00

(4) Relative frequencies per categories for the DVs comparing 2014 and 2019

Relative frequencies of respondents per category for POLDIRN:

2014	1= 7.3%	2=12.8%	3=41.2%	4=35.9%	5=2.9%
2019b	1=27.7%	2=27.7%	3=25.4%	4=16.1%	5=3.2%

Relative frequencies of respondents per category for RATEGOV:

2017	1= 9%	2=22.6%	3=53.8%	4=12.7%	5=1.9%
2019b	1=18.4%	2=47.1%	3=32.4%	4=0.2%	

Relative frequencies of respondents per category for PERFPARL:

2014	1= 2.2%	2=13.3%	3=69.2%	4=14.6%	5=0.7%
2019b	1=18.5%	2=42.5%	3=29.2%	4=9%	5=0.9%

Relative frequencies of respondents per category for PERFCRTS:

2014	1= 2.4%	2=16.0%	3=66.5%	4=14.5%	5=0.6%
2019b	1=16.7%	2=36.5%	3=35.0%	4=10.5%	5=1.3%

(5) Visual test to assess the parallel slopes assumption

A graphical method is used to test whether the proportional odds assumption/ parallel slopes assumption holds. As the built-in tests in R to test the parallel slopes assumption of the ordinal logit model tend to reject the null-hypothesis that the assumption holds (Harrell 2001), a graphical version was entertained (UCLA n.d.). The test could not be computed with the weighted survey data and was instead computed with non-weighted data. For each level of y, the graph shows "predicted logits from individual logistic regressions" of each variable "to model the probability that y is greater than or equal to a given value (for each level of y)" (ibid.).

Assessing the parallel slopes /proportional odds assumption for POLDIRN

Table ii. Preparation of graphic illustration of parallel slopes assumption POLDIRN 2014-19b

as.numeric(POLDIRN) N= 16579 , 1075 Missing

		N	Y>=1	Y>=2	Y>=3	Y>=4	Y>=5
factor(maingovtvtrust)	0	7591	Inf	1.5292349	0.33100959	-1.1699754	-3.712089
	1	5707	Inf	2.1065348	0.88861110	-0.4016700	-2.938369
	Missing	3281	Inf	1.4848247	0.29408551	-1.1685188	-3.220462
factor(mainopptvtrust)	0	8833	Inf	1.9658548	0.81191157	-0.5430190	-3.113161
	1	5093	Inf	1.3043716	0.04673931	-1.5320436	-3.984594
	Missing	2653	Inf	1.7139091	0.44837390	-1.0009618	-3.006870
factor(GDsup)	0	9246	Inf	1.3803564	0.12215036	-1.6258809	-4.146436
	1	4377	Inf	2.9928573	1.63515480	0.3635593	-2.461624
	Missing	2956	Inf	1.5677986	0.40602896	-1.0575351	-3.291635
factor(UNMsup)	0	11436	Inf	1.9201763	0.71883522	-0.6743182	-3.192819
	1	2187	Inf	0.9612167	-0.39746963	-2.0840795	-4.062305
	Missing	2956	Inf	1.5677986	0.40602896	-1.0575351	-3.291635
factor(POLSOPH)	0	3826	Inf	1.8630843	0.59511270	-0.8520319	-3.037970
	1	7264	Inf	1.7936881	0.56941793	-0.9152310	-3.359350
	2	4781	Inf	1.4546240	0.36328234	-0.8267645	-3.443748
	Missing	708	Inf	1.5692987	0.35976295	-1.0173868	-3.227725
factor(AGEGROUP)	1	4306	Inf	1.6737926	0.44959706	-0.9859444	-3.400478
	2	5190	Inf	1.7612957	0.62794399	-0.8833428	-3.337807
	3	7083	Inf	1.6553736	0.45228217	-0.8131744	-3.201542
factor(RESPEDU)	1	498	Inf	1.6534548	0.48307571	-0.8897343	-3.227262
	2	722	Inf	1.7162519	0.41008405	-0.9046852	-3.104153
	3	5871	Inf	1.6523594	0.41285151	-1.0401868	-3.376320
	4	4076	Inf	1.6421789	0.45106759	-1.0584515	-3.412923
	5	4125	Inf	1.7962921	0.69096615	-0.5964709	-3.159277
	6	1213	Inf	1.7603732	0.61378890	-0.5528207	-3.167797
	Missing	74	Inf	1.2098379	0.27193372	-0.9932518	-3.164068
factor(RESPSEX)	1	6045	Inf	1.7162306	0.52275419	-0.7533157	-3.155880
	2	10534	Inf	1.6791713	0.49596786	-0.9541449	-3.379543
factor(SETTYPE)	1	3670	Inf	1.3326622	0.20893111	-1.0633187	-3.344980
	2	6714	Inf	1.7370563	0.57797677	-0.9532853	-3.473134
	3	3957	Inf	1.7698191	0.46245395	-0.8703902	-3.406433
	4	2238	Inf	2.1668152	0.89109108	-0.4226233	-2.707097
Overall		16579	Inf	1.6925742	0.50571398	-0.8790089	-3.292527

Table ii exemplifies the data underlying the graphic parallel assumption tests. For example, the maingovtvtrust distance between Y>=2 and Y>=3 is 1.26 for maingovtvtrust=0 and 1.21 for maingovtvtrust=1. Regarding the cutpoint between Y>=3 and Y>=4, the distance for maingovtvtrust=0 is 1.5; and it is 1.29 for maingovtvtrust=1, etc. This output is then transformed into figure i, which visualises if the probability across cutpoints of POLDIRN is roughly equal. The dot signals the first cutpoint between Y>=1 and Y>=2; the diagonal

cross the cutpoint between X>=2 and Y>=3; the straight cross the one between Y>=3 and Y>=4; and the triangle the cutpoint between Y>=4 and Y>=5. Regarding the main model for POLDIRN, the parallel slopes assumption is not badly violated as the distance between cutpoints of POLDIRN is roughly equal for all levels of the IVs. Note that the proportional odds assumption also holds if the cutpoints are all higher for one category of an IV compared to another category (index shift); but the distance between the cutpoints remains about the same. These violations are not regarded as substantive, thus, the ordinal logit model is used.

Figure i. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption POLDIRN 2014-19b

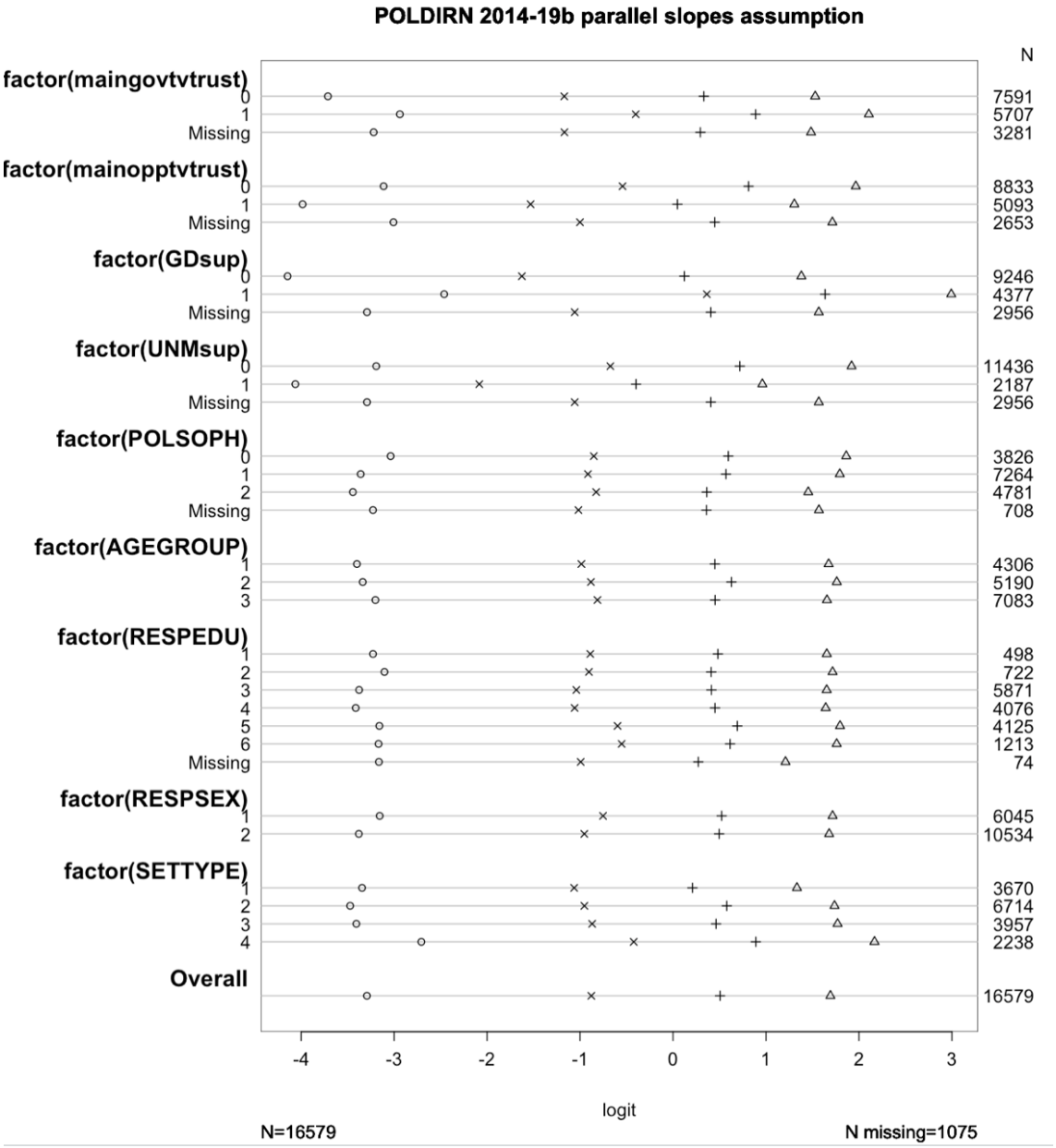
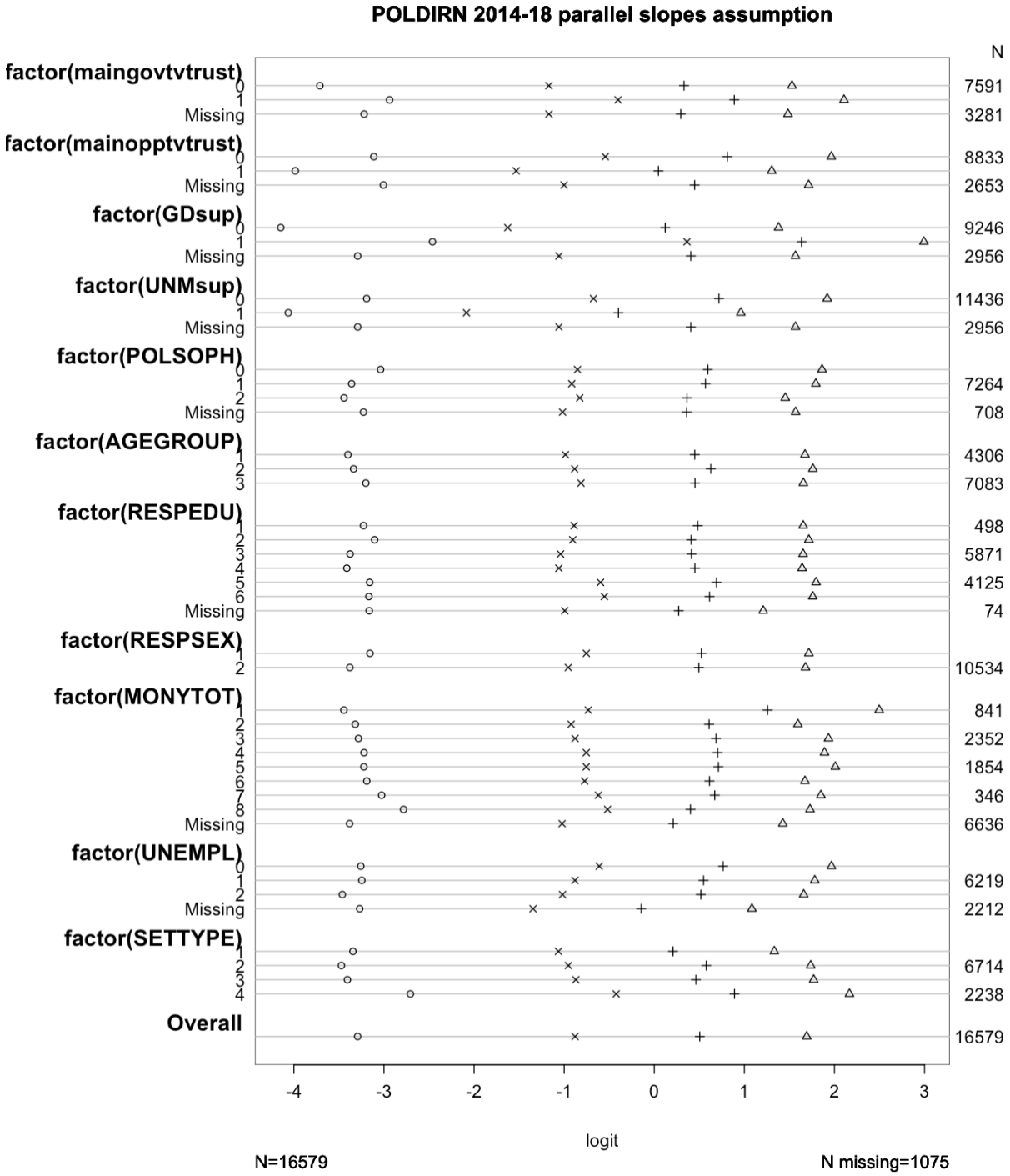


Figure ii. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption


POLDIRN 2014-18 parallel slopes assumption
N
factor(maingovtvtrust)
0 7591
1
Missing 3281
factor(mainopptvtrust)
0 8833
1
Missing 2653
factor(GDsup)
0 9246
1
Missing 2956
factor(UNMsup)
0 11436
1
Missing 2956
factor(POLSOPH)
0
1 7264
2
Missing 708
factor(AGEGROUP)
1 4306
2
3 7083
factor(RESPEDU)
1 498
2
3 5871
4
5 4125
6
Missing 74
factor(RESPSEX)
1
2 10534
factor(MONYTOT)
1 841
2
3 2352
4
5 1854
6
7 346
8
Missing 6636
factor(UNEMPL)
0
1 6219
2
Missing 2212
factor(SETTYPE)
1
2 6714
3
4 2238
Overall 16579
-4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3
logit
N=16579
N missing=1075

Assessing the parallel slopes /proportional odds assumption for PERFPARL

In the main model for PERFPARL, the parallel slopes assumption is not badly violated as the distance between cutpoints of PERFPARL is roughly equal for almost all levels of the IVs. However, the distance between the lowest cutpoints for POLSOPH level 2, is a little bigger than the distance between those cutpoints for levels 0 and 1 of the variable. And a difference in distances between the lower cutpoints across the RESPEDU categories can also be observed, especially for RESPEDU category 5.

Figure iii. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption PERFPARL 2014-19b

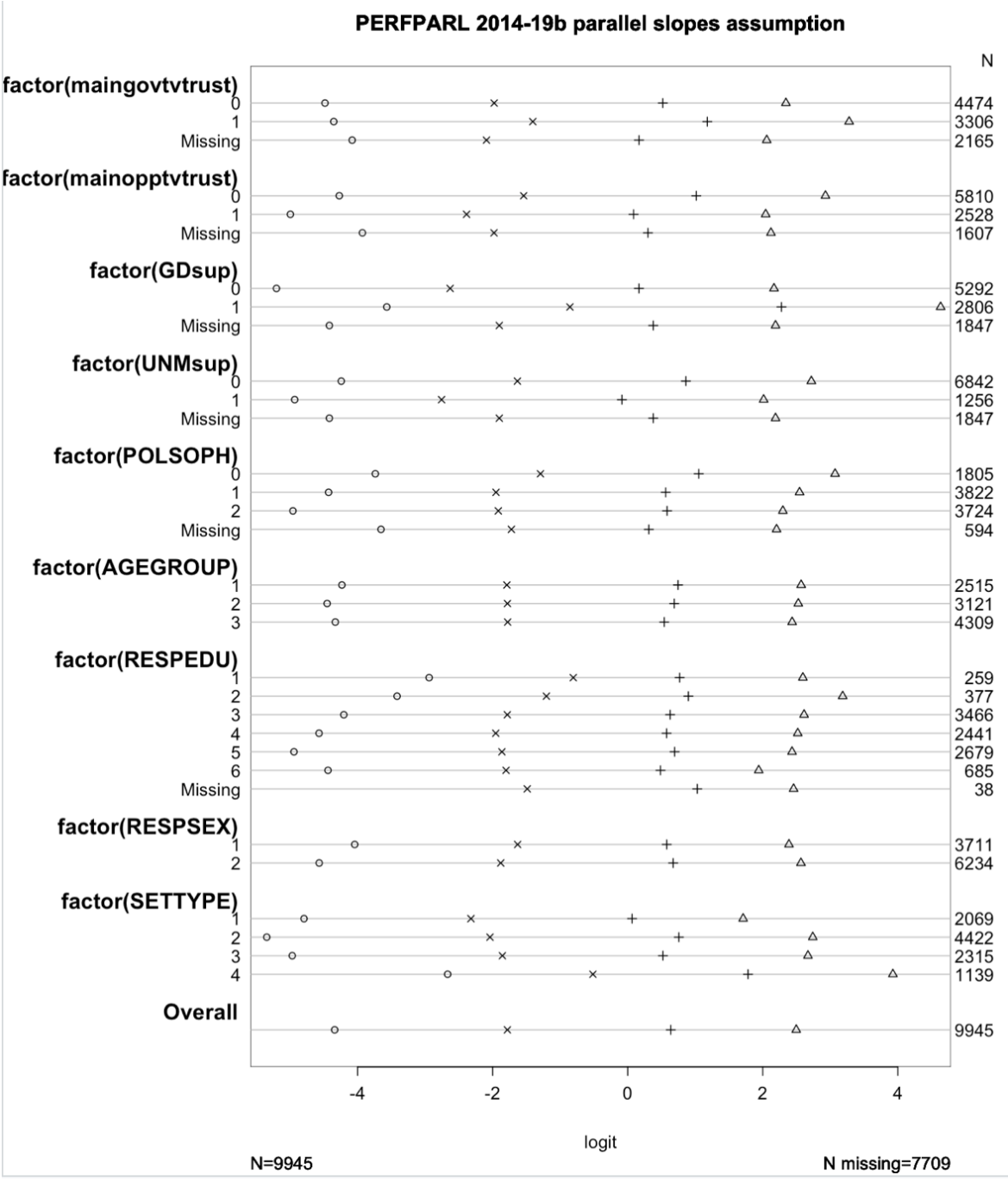
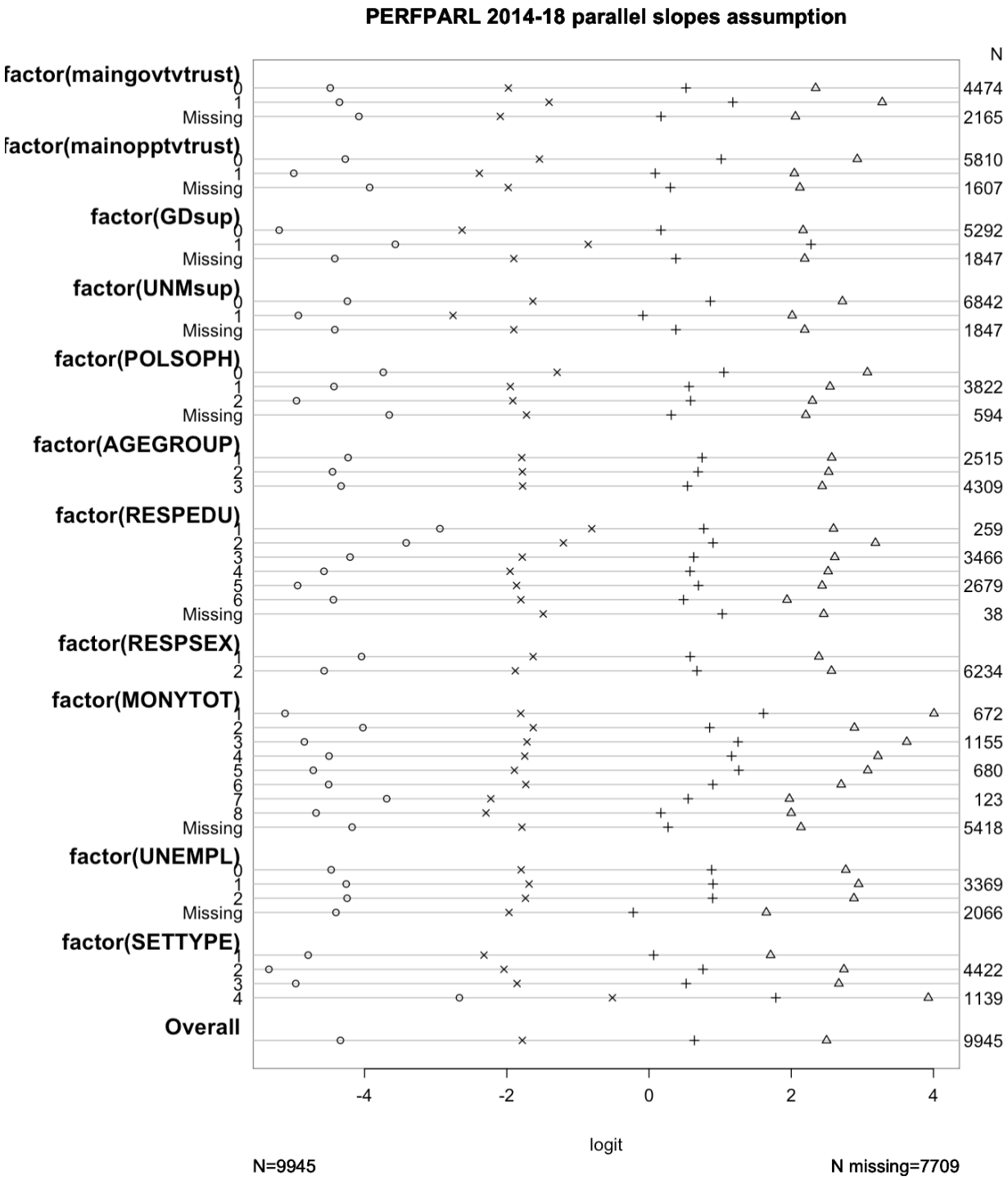


Figure iv. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption PERFPARL 2014-18



Assessing the parallel slopes /proportional odds assumption for PERFCRTS

Regarding the main model for PERFCRTS, the parallel slopes assumption is not badly violated as the distance between cutpoints of PERFCRTS is also roughly equal for almost all levels of the IVs. However, a difference in distances between the cutpoints across the RESPEDU categories can be observed.

Figure v. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption PERFCRTS 2014-19b

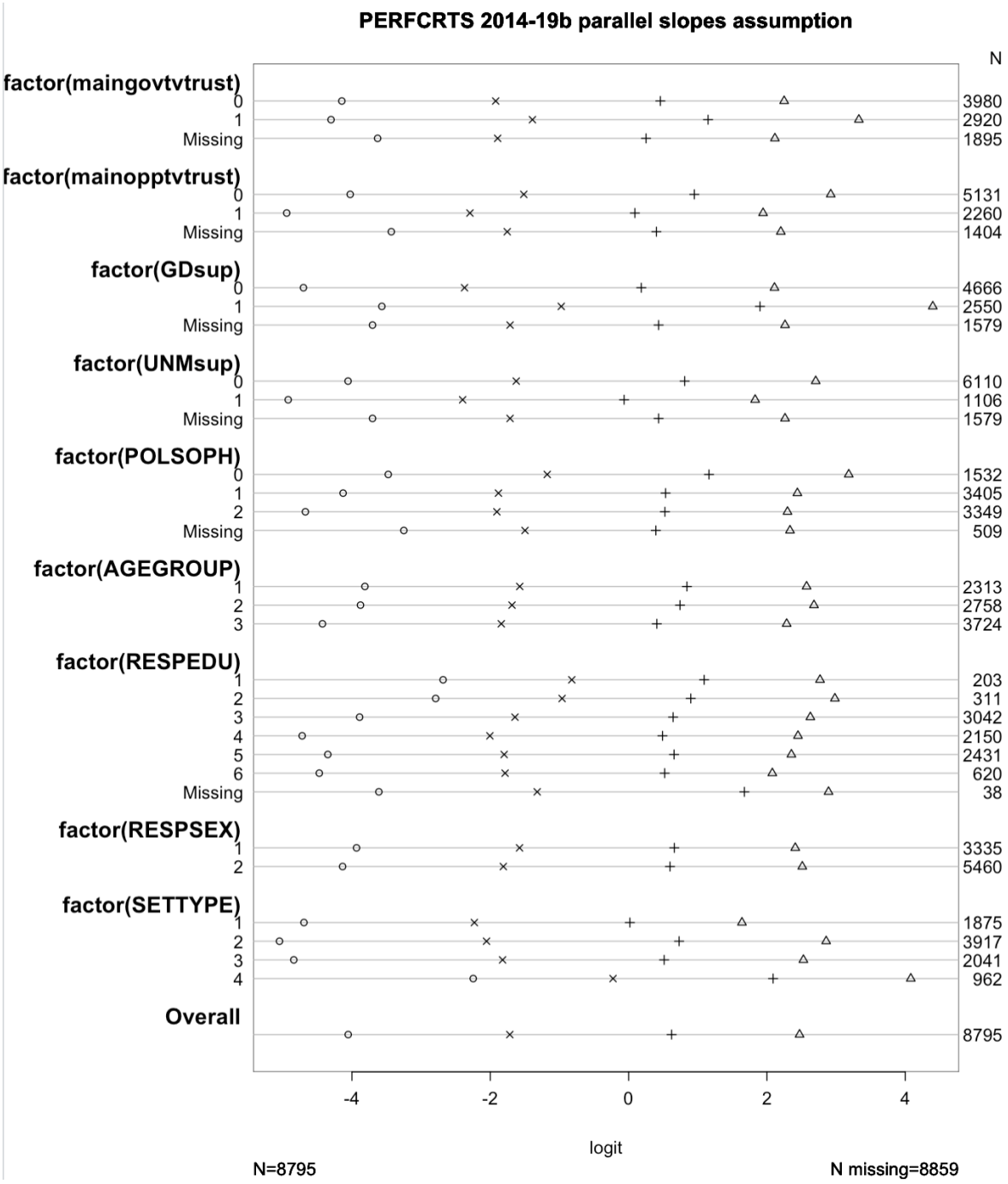
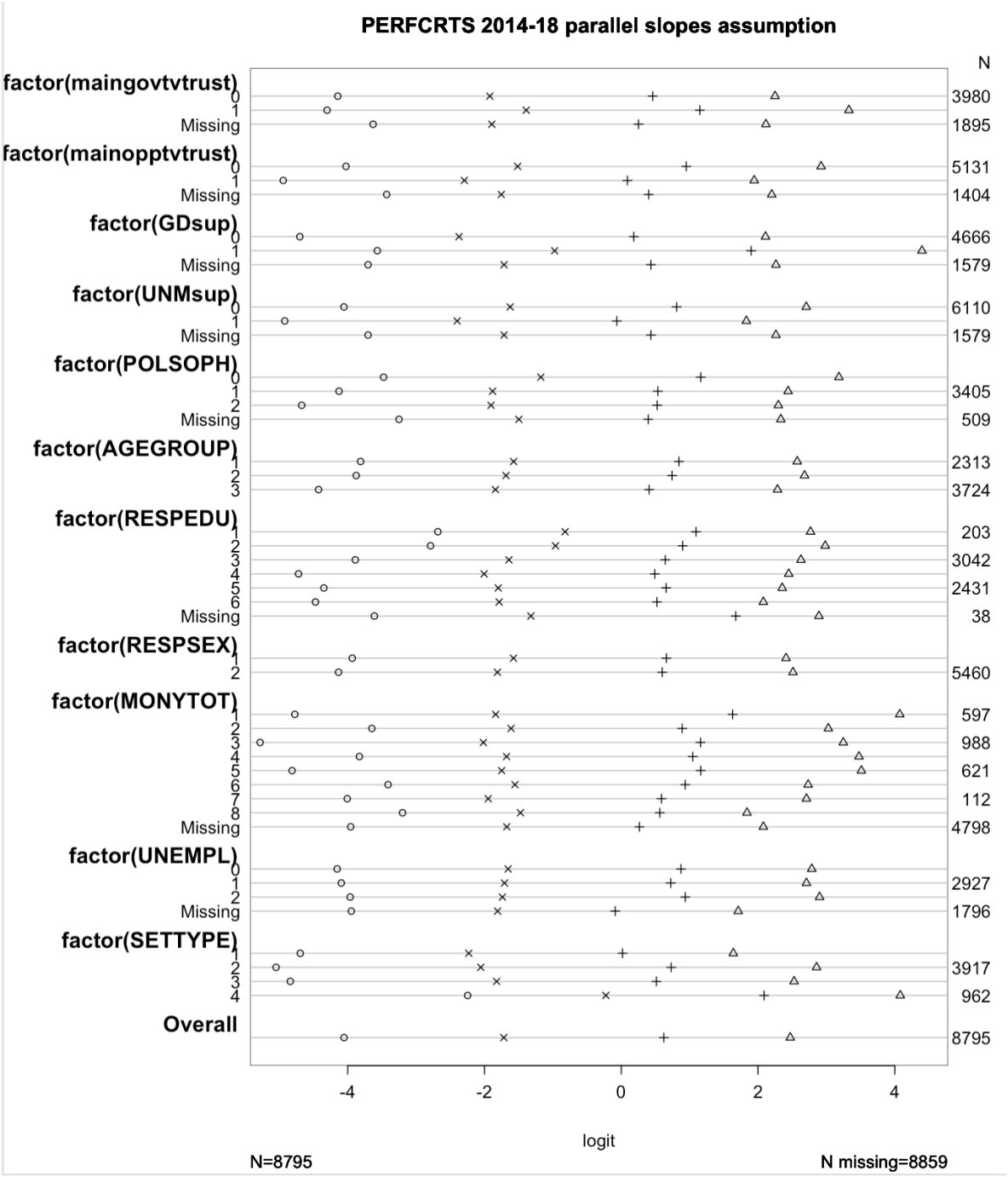


Figure vi. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption PERFCRTS 2014-18



Assessing the parallel slopes /proportional odds assumption for POLDIRN

Considering the main model for RATEGOV, the distance between the cutpoints of RATEGOV across the categories of IVs changes quite a lot compared to the other main models. The parallel slopes assumption is not badly violated as there is still some distance between cutpoints.

Figure vii. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption RATEGOV 2014-19b

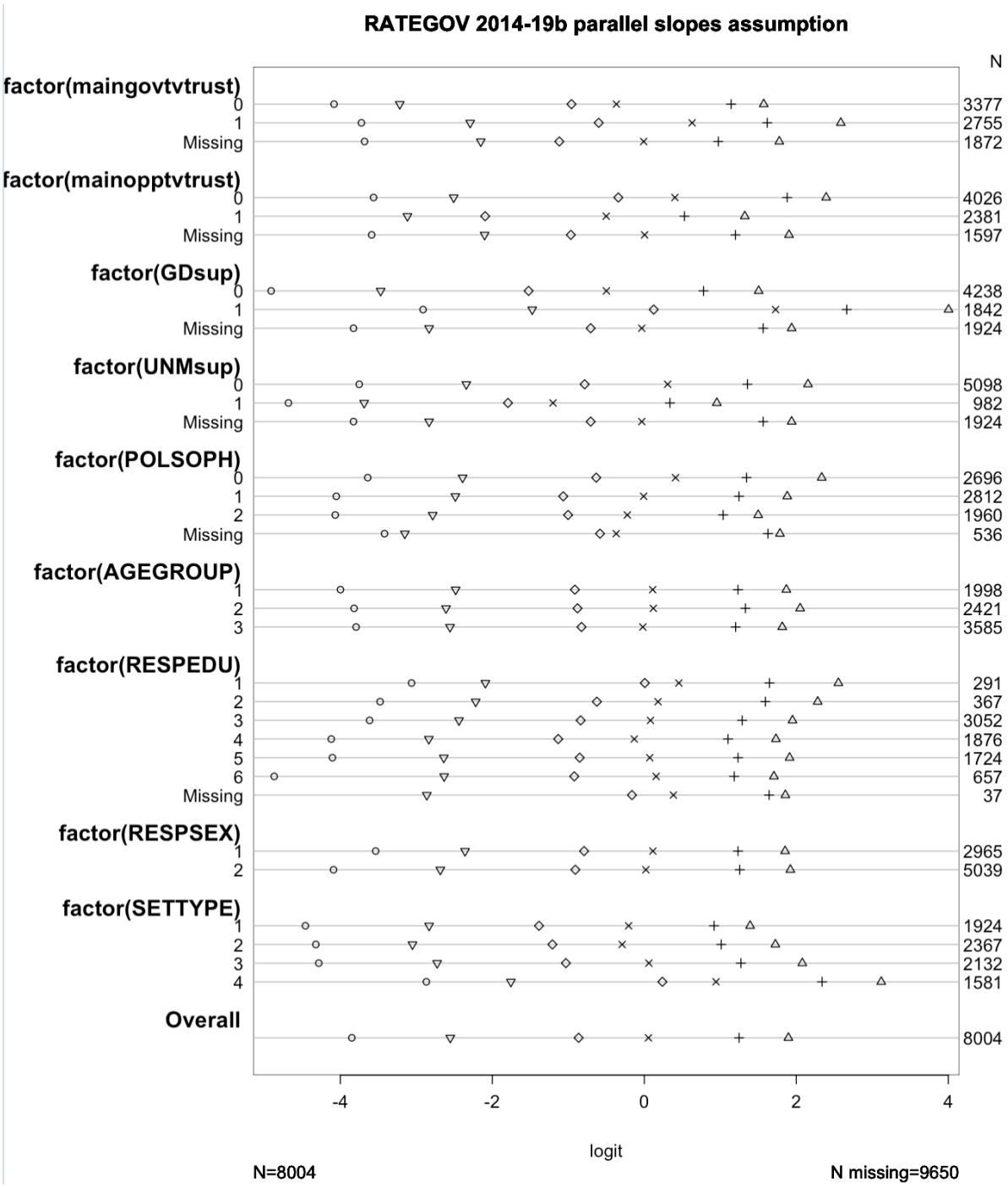
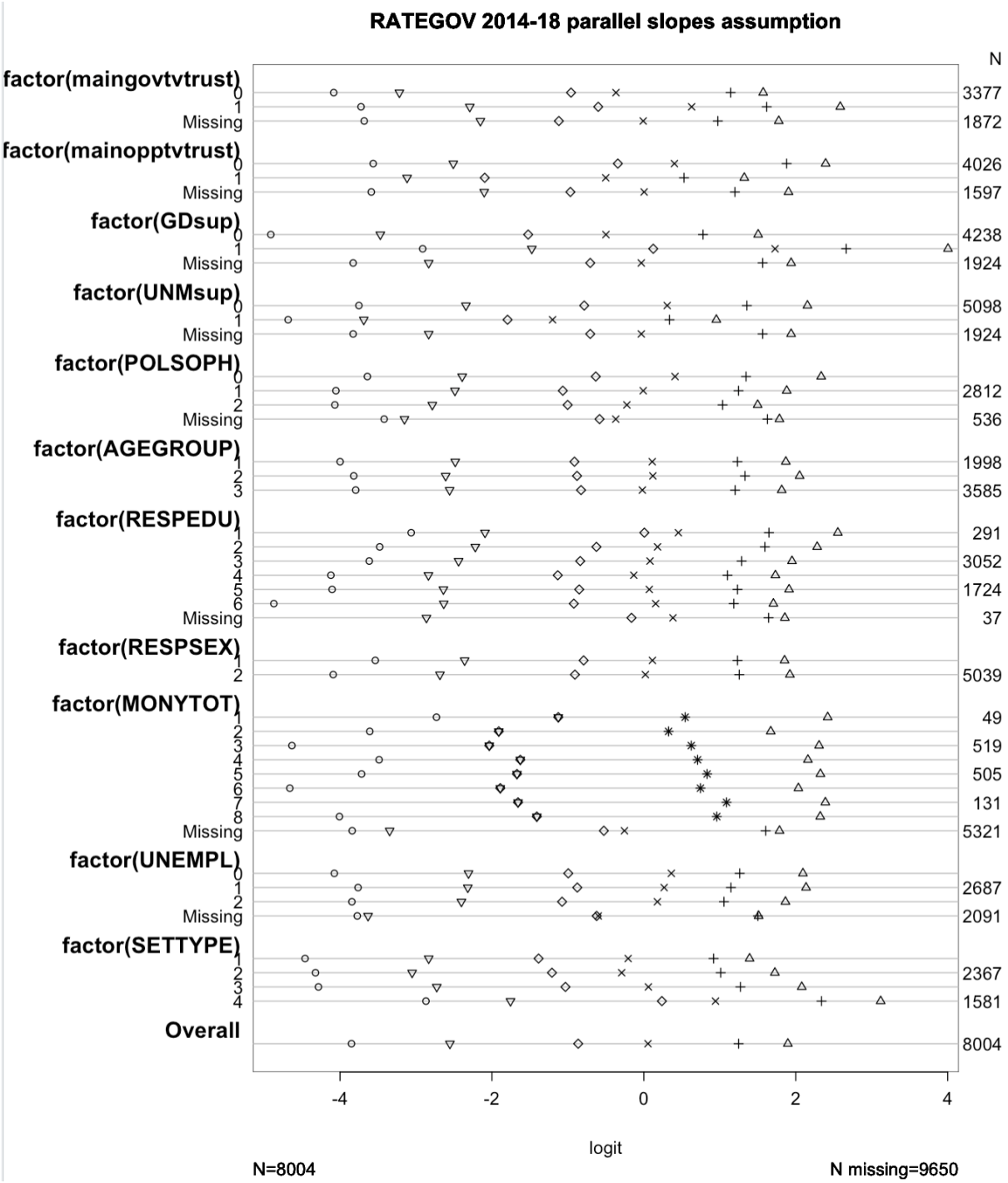


Figure viii. Graphic test of parallel slopes assumption RATEGOV 2014-19b



(6) Ordinal logistic regression output for single years; and including the variables household income (MONYTOT) and unemployment (UNEMPL), 2014-18

Table ii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014-2018 with DV POLDIRN and *maingovtvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

POLDIRN 2014-18	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.34 ***	0.09	0.17	0.52	1.4	0.30 *	0.12	0.06	0.54	1.35
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						0.12	0.20	-0.27	0.50	1.12
GDsup	1.42 ***	0.12	1.21	1.63	4.14	1.35 ***	0.17	1.02	1.68	3.87
UNMsup	-0.67 ***	0.13	-0.92	-0.41	0.51	-0.68 ***	0.13	-0.94	-0.41	0.51
POLSOPH1	0.19	0.12	-0.05	0.42	1.21	0.19	0.12	-0.05	0.42	1.20
POLSOPH2	0.45 **	0.14	0.17	0.73	1.57	0.45 **	0.14	0.17	0.73	1.57
AGEGROUP 2	-0.17	0.11	-0.39	0.05	0.84	-0.17	0.11	-0.39	0.05	0.84
AGEGROUP 3	0.03	0.11	-0.25	0.19	0.97	-0.03	0.11	-0.25	0.19	0.97
RESPEDU 2	0.21	0.38	-0.53	0.96	1.24	0.22	0.38	-0.52	0.96	1.25
RESPEDU 3	0.25	0.37	-0.47	0.98	1.29	0.26	0.37	-0.46	0.98	1.29
RESPEDU 4	0.20	0.37	-0.53	0.94	1.23	0.21	0.37	-0.52	0.94	1.23
RESPEDU 5	0.40	0.37	-0.33	1.14	1.50	0.41	0.37	-0.32	1.14	1.50
RESPEDU 6	0.45	0.41	-0.35	1.24	1.56	0.45	0.41	-0.34	1.25	1.57
RESPSEX 2	-0.06	0.08	-0.22	0.10	0.94	-0.06	0.08	-0.22	0.11	0.94
MONYTOT 2	-0.06	0.17	-0.40	0.28	0.94	-0.06	0.17	-0.40	0.28	0.94
MONYTOT 3	-0.15	0.16	-0.45	0.16	0.86	-0.15	0.16	-0.46	0.16	0.86
MONYTOT 4	-0.16	0.17	-0.49	0.17	0.85	-0.16	0.17	-0.49	0.17	0.85
MONYTOT 5	-0.20	0.16	-0.51	0.12	0.82	-0.19	0.16	-0.51	0.12	0.82
MONYTOT 6	-0.17	0.19	-0.54	0.20	0.84	-0.17	0.19	-0.54	0.19	0.84
MONYTOT 7	0.28	0.28	-0.26	0.83	1.33	0.28	0.28	-0.26	0.82	1.32
MONYTOT 8	0.10	0.32	-0.53	0.72	1.10	0.09	0.31	-0.53	0.72	1.10
UNEMPL 1	-0.14	0.10	-0.34	0.06	0.97	-0.14	0.10	-0.34	0.07	0.87
UNEMPL 2	-0.09	0.12	-0.33	0.15	0.91	-0.09	0.12	-0.33	0.14	0.91
SETTYPE 2	-0.08	0.12	-0.31	0.15	0.92	-0.08	0.12	-0.31	0.15	0.92
SETTYPE 3	0.19	0.13	-0.06	0.44	1.21	0.18	0.13	0.06	0.43	1.20
SETTYPE 4	1.05 ***	0.30	0.46	1.64	2.88	1.06 ***	0.30	0.47	1.65	2.89
YEAR 2017	-0.69***	0.12	-0.94	-0.45	0.50	-0.70***	0.12	-0.94	-0.46	0.50
YEAR 2018	-0.53***	0.14	-0.80	-0.26	0.59	-0.53 ***	0.14	-0.80	-0.26	0.58
1|2	-1.81 ***	0.44	-2.68	-0.95	0.16	-1.83 ***	0.44	-2.70	-0.97	0.16
2|3	-0.42	0.44	-0.52	-0.32	0.66	-0.44	0.44	-0.54	-0.34	0.64
3|4	1.39 **	0.44	1.32	1.46	4.01	1.37 **	0.44	1.30	1.44	3.92
4|5	4.32 ***	0.45	4.24	4.42	75.53	4.31 ***	0.46	4.21	4.40	74.15
Number of obs.: 3731	AIC: 8128.439, BIC: 8256.097, residual deviance: 8086.439					AIC: 8126.281, BIC: 8260.019, residual deviance: 8082.281				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table iii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014-2018 with DV POLDIRN and *mainopptvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

POLDIRN 2014-18	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odd ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.41 ***	0.09	-0.58	-0.25	0.66	-0.41 ***	0.09	-0.59	-0.23	0.66
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.005	0.21	-0.42	0.41	1.00
GDsup	1.53 ***	0.10	1.32	1.73	4.61	-0.59 ***	0.16	-0.91	-0.27	4.61
UNMsup	-0.61 ***	0.12	-0.82	-0.37	0.55	1.53 ***	0.10	1.32	1.73	0.55
POLSOPH1	0.19 +	0.11	-0.03	0.42	1.21	0.19 +	0.11	-0.03	0.42	1.21
POLSOPH2	0.39 **	0.14	0.13	0.66	1.48	0.40 **	0.14	0.13	0.66	1.48
AGEGROUP 2	-0.20 +	0.10	-0.40	0.002	0.82	-0.20 +	0.10	-0.40	0.002	0.82
AGEGROUP 3	-0.11	0.11	-0.32	0.09	0.89	-0.11	0.11	-0.32	0.09	0.89
RESPEDU 2	0.05	0.35	-0.63	0.73	1.05	0.05	0.35	-0.63	0.73	1.05
RESPEDU 3	0.26	0.32	-0.36	0.87	1.29	0.26	0.32	-0.36	0.87	1.29
RESPEDU 4	0.16	0.31	-0.45	0.77	1.17	0.16	0.31	-0.45	0.77	1.17
RESPEDU 5	0.35	0.32	-0.28	0.97	1.41	0.35	0.32	-0.28	0.97	1.41
RESPEDU 6	0.45	0.35	-0.23	1.14	1.57	0.45	0.35	-0.23	1.14	1.57
RESPSEX 2	-0.08	0.08	-0.23	0.07	0.93	-0.08	0.08	-0.23	0.07	0.93
MONYTOT 2	-0.06	0.17	-0.40	0.28	0.94	-0.06	0.17	-0.23	0.07	0.94
MONYTOT 3	-0.12	0.15	-0.41	0.18	0.89	-0.11	0.15	-0.40	0.28	0.89
MONYTOT 4	-0.12	0.16	-0.43	0.19	0.89	-0.12	0.16	-0.41	0.18	0.87
MONYTOT 5	-0.09	0.16	-0.41	0.22	0.91	-0.09	0.16	-0.43	0.19	0.91
MONYTOT 6	-0.18	0.19	-0.55	0.18	0.83	-0.18	0.19	-0.41	0.22	0.83
MONYTOT 7	-0.01	0.28	-0.56	0.54	0.99	-0.01	0.28	-0.55	0.18	0.99
MONYTOT 8	-0.17	0.26	-0.69	0.34	0.84	-0.17	0.26	-0.56	0.54	0.84
UNEMPL 1	-0.14	0.10	-0.34	0.07	0.87	-0.14	0.10	-0.34	0.07	0.87
UNEMPL 2	-0.14	0.11	-0.36	0.08	0.86	-0.14	0.11	-0.36	0.08	0.87
SETTYPE 2	-0.06	0.11	-0.28	0.15	0.94	-0.06	0.11	-0.28	0.15	0.94
SETTYPE 3	0.24 *	0.12	0.004	0.48	1.28	0.24 *	0.12	0.004	0.48	1.28
SETTYPE 4	0.93 ***	0.27	0.41	1.46	2.54	0.93 ***	0.27	0.40	1.46	2.54
YEAR 2017	-0.49 ***	0.12	-0.73	-0.25	0.61	-0.49 ***	0.12	-0.73	-0.25	0.61
YEAR 2018	-0.62 ***	0.12	-0.86	-0.38	0.54	-0.62 ***	0.12	-0.86	-0.38	0.54
1|2	-2.02 ***	0.39	-2.78	-1.26	0.13	-2.02 ***	-2.59	-2.78	-1.25	0.13
2|3	-0.65 +	0.39	-0.75	-0.56	0.52	-0.65 +	-0.68	-0.75	-0.56	0.52
3|4	1.10 **	0.39	1.03	1.17	3.00	1.10 **	1.14	1.03	1.17	3.00
4|5	4.04 ***	0.41	3.95	4.13	56.75	4.04 ***	3.96	3.95	4.13	56.78
Number of obs.: 4263	AIC: 10259.48, BIC: 10391.59, residual deviance: 10217.48					AIC: 10261.48, BIC: 10399.87, residual deviance: 10217.48				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table iv. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014-2018 with DV PERFPARL and *maingovtvtrust* as the main IV(containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

PERFPARL 2014-18	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.41 **	0.14	0.15	0.68	1.51	0.33	0.2	-0.07	0.72	1.39
Maingovtvtrust* GDsup						0.18	0.26			1.2
GDsup	1.56 ***	0.15	1.26	1.86	4.77	1.46 ***	0.21	1.06	1.87	4.32
UNMsup	-0.12	0.21	-0.52	0.29	0.89	-0.12	0.21	-0.53	0.28	0.89
POLSOPH1	0.18	0.22	-0.24	0.6	1.2	0.18	0.21	-0.24	0.61	1.2
POLSOPH2	0.15	0.23	-0.31	0.61	1.16	0.15	0.23	-0.3	0.61	1.16
AGEGROUP 2	-0.36+	0.17	-0.69	-0.03	0.7	-0.36 *	0.17	-0.69	-0.02	0.7
AGEGROUP 3	-0.14	0.18	-0.49	0.22	0.87	-0.13	0.18	-0.48	0.22	0.88
RESPEDU 2	-0.16	0.74	-1.61	1.3	0.85	-0.14	0.74	-1.59	1.32	0.87
RESPEDU 3	-0.2	0.66	-1.5	1.1	0.82	-0.19	0.66	-1.49	1.11	0.83
RESPEDU 4	-0.25	0.67	-1.56	1.07	0.78	-0.24	0.67	-1.55	1.08	0.79
RESPEDU 5	-0.07	0.67	-1.39	1.24	0.93	-0.06	0.67	-1.37	1.25	0.94
RESPEDU 6	0.42	0.69	-0.94	1.78	1.52	0.43	0.69	-0.93	1.78	1.53
RESPSEX 2	0.06	0.13	-0.2	0.32	1.06	0.07	0.13	-0.2	0.33	1.07
MONYTOT 2	-0.12	0.22	-0.56	0.31	0.89	-0.12	0.22	-0.56	0.31	0.88
MONYTOT 3	-0.03	0.23	-0.47	0.42	0.97	-0.02	0.23	-0.47	0.42	0.98
MONYTOT 4	0.1	0.2	-0.3	0.5	1.11	0.1	0.2	-0.29	0.5	1.11
MONYTOT 5	-0.04	0.22	-0.48	0.4	0.96	-0.04	0.22	-0.48	0.4	0.96
MONYTOT 6	0.1	0.26	-0.4	0.6	1.11	0.1	0.26	-0.4	0.6	1.1
MONYTOT 7	-0.74	0.46	-1.65	0.17	0.48	-0.75	0.46	-1.66	0.16	0.47
MONYTOT 8	0.05	0.47	-0.87	0.97	1.05	0.0	0.47	-0.87	0.96	1.04
UNEMPL 1	0.07	0.14	-0.21	0.35	1.07	0.07	0.14	-0.21	0.35	1.07
UNEMPL 2	0.25	0.19	-0.12	0.62	1.28	0.25	0.19	-0.12	0.62	1.29
SETTYPE 2	0.07	0.17	-0.26	0.39	1.07	0.07	0.17	-0.25	0.39	1.07
SETTYPE 3	0.31 +	0.19	-0.05	0.68	1.37	0.31 +	0.19	-0.06	0.68	1.36
SETTYPE 4	2.21	0.76	0.72	3.7	9.09	2.22 *	0.76	0.73	3.71	9.19
YEAR 2018	-0.58 ***	0.18	-0.93	-0.23	0.56	-0.58 **	0.18	-0.93	-0.23	0.56
1|2	-2.87 ***	0.69	-4.23	-1.51	0.06	-2.89 ***	0.69	-4.25	-1.53	0.06
2|3	-0.75	0.69	-0.88	-0.62	0.47	-0.77	0.69	-0.9	-0.64	0.46
3|4	2.69 ***	0.68	2.61	2.77	14.67	2.67 ***	0.68	2.59	2.75	14.39
4|5	5.68 ***	0.74	5.5	5.85	291.93	5.66 ***	0.74	5.49	5.83	287.24
Number of obs.: 3731	AIC: 6123.047, BIC: 6250.142, residual deviance: 6081.047					AIC: 6124.414, BIC: 6257.562, residual deviance: 6080.414				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table v. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014-2018 with DV PERFPARL and *mainopptvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

PERFPARL 2014-18	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.41 ***	0.12	-0.65	-0.17	0.67	-0.36 **	0.14	-0.63	-0.09	0.7
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.33	0.3	-0.91	0.25	0.72
GDsup	1.73 ***	0.13	1.47	1.99	5.62	1.73 ***	0.13	1.48	1.99	0.93
UNMsup	-0.29 +	0.15	-0.59	0.01	0.75	-0.07	0.23	-0.53	0.39	5.66
POLSOPH1	0.15	0.21	-0.26	0.55	1.16	0.15	0.21	-0.26	0.55	1.16
POLSOPH2	0.08	0.23	-0.36	0.53	1.09	0.09	0.23	-0.36	0.53	1.09
AGEGROUP 2	-0.43 **	0.15	-0.72	-0.14	0.65	-0.43 **	0.15	-0.72	-0.14	0.65
AGEGROUP 3	-0.17	0.15	-0.45	0.12	0.85	-0.17	0.15	-0.45	0.12	0.85
RESPEDU 2	0.32	0.58	-0.82	1.47	1.38	0.31	0.58	-0.83	1.46	1.37
RESPEDU 3	0.37	0.51	-0.62	1.37	1.45	0.36	0.51	-0.65	1.36	1.43
RESPEDU 4	0.33	0.52	-0.69	1.35	1.39	0.31	0.52	-0.71	1.34	1.37
RESPEDU 5	0.36	0.51	-0.64	1.36	1.43	0.35	0.51	-0.66	1.35	1.41
RESPEDU 6	0.94 +	0.54	-0.12	2.0	2.56	0.93 +	0.54	-0.13	1.99	2.53
RESPSEX 2	0.15	0.12	-0.08	0.37	1.16	0.15	0.12	-0.08	0.37	1.16
MONYTOT 2	0.08	0.13	-0.17	0.32	1.08	0.07	0.13	-0.17	0.32	1.08
MONYTOT 3	0.22	0.16	-0.1	0.54	1.25	0.22	0.16	-0.1	0.54	1.24
MONYTOT 4	-0.21	0.2	-0.61	0.18	0.81	-0.21	0.2	-0.6	0.19	0.81
MONYTOT 5	-0.08	0.19	-0.45	0.29	0.92	-0.07	0.19	-0.44	0.3	0.93
MONYTOT 6	0.06 +	0.19	-0.31	0.42	1.06	0.06	0.19	-0.31	0.43	1.06
MONYTOT 7	0.05 +	0.2	-0.34	0.44	1.05	0.06 +	0.2	-0.33	0.44	1.06
MONYTOT 8	0.04	0.24	-0.43	0.51	1.04	0.05	0.24	-0.43	0.52	1.05
UNEMPL 1	-0.68	0.37	-1.42	0.05	0.5	-0.68	0.37	-1.42	0.05	0.5
UNEMPL 2	-0.04	0.36	-0.73	0.66	0.96	-0.04	0.36	-0.73	0.66	0.97
SETTYPE 2	0.28 +	0.15	-0.02	0.58	1.32	0.27 +	0.15	-0.03	0.57	1.31
SETTYPE 3	0.56 ***	0.17	0.23	0.88	1.74	0.55 ***	0.17	0.23	0.87	1.73
SETTYPE 4	2.2 **	0.75	0.72	3.67	9.0	2.18 **	0.75	0.72	3.65	8.89
YEAR 2018	-0.75 ***	0.14	-1.03	-0.46	0.47	-0.74 ***	0.14	-1.03	-0.46	0.48
1|2	-2.46 ***	0.57	-3.57	-1.35	0.09	-2.45 ***	0.57	-3.56	-1.35	0.09
2|3	-0.3	0.56	-0.4	-0.19	0.74	-0.29	0.56	-0.4	-0.18	0.75
3|4	3.02 ***	0.57	2.95	3.1	20.55	3.03 ***	0.57	2.95	3.11	20.68
4|5	6.01 ***	0.63	5.85	6.17	407.25	6.02 ***	0.63	5.85	6.18	409.72
Number of obs.: 4081	AIC: 7891.913, BIC: 8023.485, residual deviance: 7849.913					AIC: 7891.721, BIC: 8029.559, residual deviance: 7847.721				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table vi. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014-2018 with DV PERFCRTS and *maingovtvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

PERFCRTS 2014-18	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds Ratio*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds Ratio*
maingovtvtrust	0.6 ***	0.14	0.33	0.86	1.81	0.59 **	0.19	0.21	0.97	1.80
Maingovtvtrust* GDsup						0.01 ***	0.24	-0.47	0.49	1.01
GDsup	1.18 ***	0.13	0.91	1.44	3.24	1.17	0.19	0.8	1.54	3.22
UNMsup	-0.08	0.22	-0.52	0.36	0.92	-0.08	0.22	-0.52	0.36	0.92
POLSOPH1	0.14	0.18	-0.22	0.49	1.15	0.14	0.18	-0.22	0.49	1.15
POLSOPH2	0.19	0.2	-0.2	0.58	1.21	0.19	0.2	-0.2	0.58	1.21
AGEGROUP 2	-0.39 *	0.16	-0.7	-0.08	0.68	-0.39 *	0.16	-0.7	-0.08	0.68
AGEGROUP 3	-0.64 ***	0.17	-0.99	-0.3	0.52	-0.64 ***	0.17	-0.99	-0.3	0.52
RESPEDU 2	-0.04	0.61	-1.23	1.15	0.96	-0.04	0.61	-1.24	1.16	0.96
RESPEDU 3	-0.6	0.43	-1.45	0.25	0.55	-0.6	0.43	-1.45	0.25	0.55
RESPEDU 4	-0.55	0.43	-1.38	0.29	0.58	-0.54	0.43	-1.39	0.3	0.58
RESPEDU 5	-0.42	0.43	-1.26	0.42	0.66	-0.42	0.43	-1.27	0.43	0.66
RESPEDU 6	-0.05	0.5	-1.02	0.93	0.95	-0.05	0.5	-1.02	0.93	0.95
RESPSEX 2	-0.32 *	0.14	-0.59	-0.05	0.73	-0.32 *	0.14	-0.59	-0.05	0.73
MONYTOT 2	-0.17	0.24	-0.64	0.3	0.85	-0.17	0.24	-0.64	0.3	0.85
MONYTOT 3	-0.07	0.2	-0.47	0.33	0.93	-0.07	0.2	-0.47	0.33	0.93
MONYTOT 4	-0.1	0.24	-0.58	0.38	0.9	-0.1	0.24	-0.58	0.38	0.9
MONYTOT 5	-0.25	0.25	-0.74	0.24	0.78	-0.25	0.25	-0.74	0.24	0.78
MONYTOT 6	-0.06	0.3	-0.65	0.52	0.94	-0.06	0.3	-0.65	0.52	0.94
MONYTOT 7	-0.69	0.46	-1.6	0.22	0.5	-0.69	0.46	-1.6	0.21	0.5
MONYTOT 8	0.29	0.52	-0.73	1.31	1.34	0.29	0.52	-0.74	1.32	1.33
UNEMPL 1	0.03	0.14	-0.24	0.31	1.04	0.03	0.14	-0.24	0.31	1.04
UNEMPL 2	0.15	0.19	-0.23	0.53	1.16	0.15	0.19	-0.23	0.53	1.16
SETTYPE 2	0.16	0.18	-0.19	0.51	1.18	0.16	0.18	-0.19	0.51	1.18
SETTYPE 3	0.34 +	0.2	-0.05	0.73	1.4	0.34 +	0.2	-0.05	0.72	1.4
SETTYPE 4	1.89 *	0.84	0.26	3.53	6.64	1.9 *	0.84	0.25	3.54	6.65
YEAR 2018	-0.25	0.17	-0.59	0.09	0.78	-0.25	0.17	-0.59	0.09	0.78
1|2	-3.68 ***	0.57	-4.79	-2.57	0.03	-3.68 ***	0.57	-4.79	-2.57	0.03
2|3	-1.37 **	0.53	-1.55	-1.2	0.25	-1.37 **	0.53	-1.55	-1.2	0.25
3|4	1.78 ***	0.54	1.7	1.86	5.95	1.78 **	0.54	1.7	1.86	5.94
4|5	4.7 ***	0.58	4.54	4.86	109.83	4.7 ***	0.58	4.54	4.86	109.73
Number of obs.: 3199	AIC: 5991.821, BIC: 6117.467, residual deviance: 5949.821					AIC: 5992.766, BIC: 6124.396, residual deviance: 5948.766				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table vii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014-2018 with DV PERFCRTS and *mainopptvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

PERFCRTS 2014-18	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.26 *	0.12	-0.51	-0.02	0.77	-0.36 ***	0.14	-0.63	-0.09	0.7
Mainopptvtrust* UNM sup						-0.33	0.3	-0.91	0.25	0.72
GDsup	1.27 ***	0.12	1.02	1.51	3.55	1.73 ***	0.13	-0.53	0.39	0.93
UNMsup	-0.51 **	0.17	-0.84	-0.18	0.6	-0.07	0.23	1.48	1.99	5.66
POLSOPH1	0.11	0.18	-0.24	0.46	1.12	0.15	0.21	-0.26	0.55	1.16
POLSOPH2	0.09	0.19	-0.27	0.46	1.1	0.09	0.23	-0.36	0.53	1.09
AGEGROUP 2	-0.35 *	0.14	-0.62	-0.08	0.71	-0.43 **	0.15	-0.72	-0.14	0.65
AGEGROUP 3	-0.55 ***	0.148 3330	-0.84	-0.25	0.58	-0.17	0.15	-0.45	0.12	0.85
RESPEDU 2	-0.15	0.55	-1.22	0.93	0.86	0.31	0.58	-0.83	1.46	1.37
RESPEDU 3	-0.34	0.43	-1.18	0.51	0.72	0.36	0.51	-0.65	1.36	1.43
RESPEDU 4	-0.26	0.44	-1.12	0.61	0.77	0.31	0.52	-0.71	1.34	1.37
RESPEDU 5	-0.34	0.43	-1.19	0.51	0.71	0.35	0.51	-0.66	1.35	1.41
RESPEDU 6	0.02	0.48	-0.93	0.97	1.02	0.93 +	0.54	-0.13	1.99	2.53
RESPSEX 2	-0.23 +	0.12	-0.47	0.01	0.79	0.15	0.12	-0.08	0.37	1.16
MONYTOT 2	0.15	0.13	-0.1	0.41	1.16	0.07	0.13	-0.17	0.32	1.08
MONYTOT 3	0.21	0.16	-0.11	0.52	1.23	0.22	0.16	-0.1	0.54	1.24
MONYTOT 4	-0.25	0.21	-0.67	0.17	0.78	-0.21	0.2	-0.6	0.19	0.81
MONYTOT 5	-0.13	0.18	-0.49	0.23	0.88	-0.07	0.19	-0.44	0.3	0.93
MONYTOT 6	-0.03	0.22	-0.46	0.4	0.97	0.06	0.19	-0.31	0.43	1.06
MONYTOT 7	-0.04	0.22	-0.47	0.39	0.96	0.06 +	0.2	-0.33	0.44	1.06
MONYTOT 8	0.12	0.27	-0.42	0.66	1.13	0.05	0.24	-0.43	0.52	1.05
UNEMPL 1	-0.43	0.37	-1.16	0.29	0.65	-0.68	0.37	-1.42	0.05	0.5
UNEMPL 2	0.15	0.45	-0.72	1.03	1.17	-0.04	0.36	-0.73	0.66	0.97
SETTYPE 2	0.31 *	0.16	0.002	0.62	1.36	0.27 +	0.15	-0.03	0.57	1.31
SETTYPE 3	0.55 **	0.17	0.21	0.89	1.74	0.55 ***	0.17	0.23	0.87	1.73
SETTYPE 4	2.03 *	0.81	0.44	3.62	7.62	2.18 **	0.75	0.72	3.65	8.89
YEAR 2018	-0.48 ***	0.14	-0.75	-0.21	0.62	-0.74 ***	0.14	-1.03	-0.46	0.48
1|2	-3.45 ***	0.53	-4.49	-2.42	0.03	-2.45 ***	0.57	-3.56	-1.35	0.09
2|3	-1.17 *	0.51	-1.3	-1.04	0.31	-0.29	0.56	-0.4	-0.18	0.75
3|4	1.79 ***	0.51	1.71	1.86	5.97	3.03 ***	0.57	2.95	3.11	20.68
4|5	4.66 ***	0.55	4.51	4.81	105.36	6.02 ***	0.63	5.85	6.18	409.72
Number of obs.: 3654	AIC: 7716.307, BIC: 7846.258, residual deviance: 7674.307					AIC: 7702.789, BIC: 7838.928, residual deviance: 7658.789				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table viii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2017-2018 with DV RATEGOV and *maingovtvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

RATEGOV 2017-18	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.64 ***	0.14	0.36	0.93	1.91	0.74 ***	0.16	0.42	1.06	2.1
Maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-0.31	0.28	-0.87	0.24	0.73
GDsup	1.92 ***	0.17	1.59	2.25	6.82	2.14 ***	0.27	1.62	2.66	8.53
UNMsup	-1.16 ***	0.21	-1.56	-0.75	0.31	-1.14 ***	0.21	-1.54	-0.73	0.32
POLSOPH1	0.16	0.16	-0.15	0.48	1.18	0.18	0.16	-0.14	0.49	1.2
POLSOPH2	0.06	0.2	-0.32	0.45	1.06	0.07	0.2	-0.31	0.46	1.07
AGEGROUP 2	-0.23 +	0.15	-0.52	0.07	0.8	-0.23	0.15	-0.53	0.07	0.8
AGEGROUP 3	-0.26	0.16	-0.58	0.05	0.77	-0.27 +	0.16	-0.59	0.04	0.76
RESPEDU 2	-0.32	0.62	-1.53	0.89	0.72	-0.32	0.62	-1.54	0.91	0.73
RESPEDU 3	-0.12	0.51	-1.12	0.88	0.89	-0.11	0.52	-1.13	0.91	0.89
RESPEDU 4	-0.14	0.54	-1.2	0.92	0.87	-0.13	0.55	-1.21	0.94	0.88
RESPEDU 5	-0.14	0.53	-1.19	0.91	0.87	-0.14	0.54	-1.2	0.93	0.87
RESPEDU 6	-0.11	0.57	-1.22	1.01	0.9	-0.11	0.58	-1.24	1.02	0.9
RESPSEX 2	-0.25 *	0.13	-0.5	-0.0001	0.78	-0.25 +	0.13	-0.5	0.001	0.78
MONYTOT 2	0.01	0.36	-0.7	0.73	1.01	0.02	0.36	-0.68	0.72	1.02
MONYTOT 3	0.42	0.39	-0.34	1.19	1.53	0.43	0.39	-0.32	1.19	1.54
MONYTOT 4	0.41	0.36	-0.29	1.11	1.51	0.42	0.35	-0.27	1.11	1.52
MONYTOT 5	0.35	0.38	-0.4	1.1	1.42	0.36	0.38	-0.37	1.11	1.44
MONYTOT 6	0.41	0.38	-0.34	1.16	1.51	0.41	0.38	-0.32	1.15	1.51
MONYTOT 7	0.68	0.49	-0.27	1.64	1.98	0.7	0.48	-0.25	1.64	2.01
MONYTOT 8	0.86 +	0.49	-0.09	1.81	2.37	0.87 +	0.48	-0.07	1.81	2.39
UNEMPL 1	0.02	0.15	-0.27	0.31	1.02	0.02	0.15	-0.27	0.3	1.02
UNEMPL 2	-0.16	0.18	-0.51	0.19	0.85	-0.15	0.18	-0.50	0.2	0.86
SETTYPE 2	-0.36 *	0.18	-0.72	-0.01	0.7	-0.37 *	0.18	-0.73	-0.02	0.69
SETTYPE 3	0.28	0.19	-0.1	0.65	1.32	0.27	0.19	-0.1	0.64	1.31
SETTYPE 4	1.25 ***	0.34	0.59	1.91	3.49	1.22 ***	0.33	0.58	1.87	3.4
YEAR 2018	0.29	0.19	-0.08	6.71	1.34	-0.28	0.19	-0.1	0.65	1.32
1|2	-1.64 *	0.67	-2.94	-3.25	0.19	-1.58 *	0.68	-2.91	-0.25	0.21
2|2.33	0.2	0.66	0.06	3.45	1.22	0.27	0.67	0.13	0.4	1.31
2.33|3	0.2	0.66	0.06	3.45	1.22	0.27	0.67	0.12	0.41	1.31
3|3.67	3.62 ***	0.67	3.53	3.7	37.27	3.68 ***	0.68	3.59	3.77	39.6
3.67|4	3.62 ***	0.67	3.44	3.8	37.27	3.68 ***	0.68	3.5	3.87	39.6
4|5	6.0 ***	0.71	5.82	6.18	404.322	6.06 ***	0.72	5.88	6.24	428.34
Number of obs.: 1899	AIC: 5214.708, BIC: 5337.203, residual deviance: 5172.708					AIC: 5214.358, BIC: 5342.686, residual deviance: 5170.358				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table ix. Ordinal logistic regression results 2017-2018 with DV RATEGOV and *mainopptvtrust* as the main IV (containing the controls MONYTOT and UNEMPL)

RATEGOV 2017-18	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	0.63 ***	0.13	-0.88	-0.38	0.53	-0.68 ***	0.13	-0.93	-0.42	0.51
Mainopptvtrust * UNMsup						0.45	0.41	-0.36	1.26	1.57
GDsup	1.94 ***	0.16	1.63	2.25	6.98	1.94 ***	0.16	1.63	2.25	6.95
UNMsup	-1.06 ***	0.18	-1.41	-0.71	0.35	-1.41 ***	0.37	-2.14	-0.68	0.24
POLSOPH1	0.2	0.15	-0.1	0.5	1.22	0.19	0.15	-0.11	0.49	1.21
POLSOPH2	0.14	0.2	-0.26	0.53	1.15	0.12	0.2	-0.27	0.52	1.13
AGEGROUP 2	-0.24	0.15	-0.54	0.05	0.78	-0.25 +	0.15	-0.54	0.04	0.78
AGEGROUP 3	-0.33 *	0.16	-0.63	-0.02	0.72	-0.33 *	0.16	-0.64	-0.03	0.72
RESPEDU 2	-0.25	0.61	-1.45	0.95	0.78	-0.28	0.61	-1.47	0.91	0.75
RESPEDU 3	-0.1	0.51	-1.1	0.9	0.9	-0.13	0.5	-1.11	0.86	0.88
RESPEDU 4	-0.18	0.53	-1.23	0.86	0.83	-0.2	0.53	-1.23	0.83	0.82
RESPEDU 5	-0.15	0.54	-1.21	0.91	0.86	-0.18	0.53	-1.23	0.86	0.83
RESPEDU 6	-0.22	0.57	-1.35	0.9	0.8	-0.24	0.57	-1.35	0.87	0.78
RESPSEX 2	-0.09	0.12	-0.33	0.14	0.91	-0.09	0.12	-0.33	0.14	0.91
MONYTOT 2	-0.01	0.45	-0.89	0.88	0.99	-0.06	0.44	-0.92	0.81	0.94
MONYTOT 3	0.28	0.46	-0.63	1.19	1.33	0.23	0.46	-0.67	1.13	1.26
MONYTOT 4	0.4	0.45	-0.48	1.27	1.49	0.35	0.44	-0.52	1.21	1.41
MONYTOT 5	0.39	0.46	-0.51	1.29	1.48	0.33	0.46	-0.56	1.23	1.4
MONYTOT 6	0.25	0.47	-0.66	1.16	1.28	0.21	0.46	-0.69	1.11	1.23
MONYTOT 7	0.61	0.54	-0.44	1.66	1.85	0.58	0.53	-0.45	1.61	1.79
MONYTOT 8	0.59	0.57	-0.52	1.71	1.81	0.55	0.57	-0.56	1.65	1.73
UNEMPL 1	0.06	0.14	-0.22	0.33	1.06	0.05	0.14	-0.22	0.32	1.05
UNEMPL 2	-0.11	0.18	-0.46	0.24	0.9	-0.11	0.18	-0.46	0.24	0.9
SETTYPE 2	-0.14	0.17	-0.47	0.19	0.87	-0.13	0.17	-0.46	0.2	0.88
SETTYPE 3	0.38 *	0.18	0.02	0.74	1.46	0.39 *	0.18	0.03	0.75	1.48
SETTYPE 4	1.09 **	0.35	0.4	1.78	2.98	1.14 **	0.36	0.44	1.84	3.13
YEAR 2018	-0.01	0.2	-0.4	0.37	0.99	0.01	0.2	-0.39	0.38	0.99
1|2	-2.12 **	0.73	-3.55	-0.69	0.12	-2.22**	0.73	-3.65	-0.8	0.11
2|2.33	-0.41	0.73	-0.52	-0.29	0.67	-0.51	0.73	-0.62	-0.39	0.6
2.33|3	-0.41	0.73	-0.53	-0.28	0.67	-0.51	0.73	-0.64	-0.38	0.6
3|3.67	2.94 ***	0.74	2.86	3.02	18.91	2.85 ***	0.73	2.76	2.93	17.23
3.67|4	2.94 ***	0.74	2.77	3.11	18.91	2.85 ***	0.73	2.68	3.01	17.23
4|5	5.22 ***	0.76	5.05	5.39	185.26	5.13 ***	0.75	4.96	5.3	169.24
Number of obs.: 2159	AIC: 6143.814, BIC: 6101.814, residual deviance: 5172.708					AIC: 6143.441, BIC: 6274.747, residual deviance: 6099.441				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

(7) Ordinal logistic regression output for the DV POLDIRN, 2014 and 2019b

Table x. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014 with DV POLDIRN and *maingovtvtrust* as main IV

POLDIRN 2014	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.32 **	0.12	0.08	0.56	1.38	0.15	0.20	-0.23	0.54	1.16
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						0.36	0.31	-0.26	0.97	1.43
GDsup	1.14 ***	0.16	0.84	1.45	3.14	1.00 ***	0.22	0.56	1.44	2.72
UNMsup	-0.85 ***	0.20	-1.25	-0.46	0.43	-0.85 ***	0.20	-1.24	-0.45	0.43
POLSOPH1	0.24	0.18	-0.12	0.59	1.27	0.25	0.18	-0.11	0.61	1.28
POLSOPH2	0.55 *	0.21	0.15	0.96	1.74	0.57 **	0.21	0.16	0.97	1.76
AGEGROUP 2	0.11	0.17	-0.23	0.45	1.12	0.12 +	0.17	-0.22	0.46	1.12
AGEGROUP 3	0.35 +	0.19	-0.02	0.72	1.42	0.36	0.19	-0.01	0.72	1.43
RESPEDU 2	0.02	0.58	-1.12	1.15	1.02	0.03	0.59	-1.12	1.18	1.03
RESPEDU 3	0.11	0.58	-1.03	1.25	1.12	0.10	0.59	-1.06	1.26	1.10
RESPEDU 4	-0.12	0.57	-1.23	0.99	0.89	-0.12	0.58	-1.26	1.01	0.88
RESPEDU 5	0.20	0.59	-0.96	1.36	1.22	0.19	0.61	-1.00	1.38	1.21
RESPEDU 6	-0.32	0.63	-1.56	0.91	0.72	-0.32	0.64	-1.57	0.93	0.73
RESPSEX 2	0.03	0.13	-0.23	0.28	1.03	0.04	0.13	-0.22	0.29	1.04
SETTYPE 2	-0.05	0.18	-0.41	0.30	0.95	-0.06	0.18	-0.42	0.29	0.94
SETTYPE 3	0.04	0.20	-0.34	0.43	1.05	0.02	0.20	-0.37	0.40	1.02
1|2	-1.84 **	0.61	-3.04	-0.64	0.16	-1.90 **	0.63	-3.13	-0.67	0.15
2|3	-0.55	0.60	-0.74	-0.37	0.57	-0.61	0.62	-0.80	-0.43	0.54
3|4	1.53 **	0.59	1.43	1.64	4.64	1.48 *	0.61	1.37	1.58	4.37
4|5	4.79 ***	0.65	4.68	4.90	120.08	4.74 ***	0.66	4.63	4.85	114.73
Number of obs.: 2888	AIC: 4851.47, BIC: 4958.039, residual deviance: 4813.47					AIC: 4849.405, BIC: 4961.583, residual deviance: 4809.405				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects.

Table xi. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with POLDIRN and *maingovtvtrust* as main IV

POLDIRN 2019b	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.52 *	0.27	0.00	1.05	1.69	0.37	0.31	-0.24	0.97	1.44
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						0.63	0.54	-0.42	1.68	1.88
GDsup	1.94 ***	0.26	1.42	2.45	6.93	1.52 ***	0.40	0.73	2.32	4.59
UNMsup	-0.63 *	0.27	-1.15	-0.10	0.53	-0.67 *	0.28	-1.22	-0.13	0.51
POLSOPH1	0.40	0.29	-0.18	0.98	1.49	0.39	0.29	-0.19	0.97	1.47
POLSOPH2	0.31	0.35	-0.37	0.99	1.37	0.30	0.35	-0.37	0.98	1.35
AGEGROUP 2	0.43	0.28	-0.12	0.98	1.54	0.44	0.27	-0.10	0.97	1.55
AGEGROUP 3	0.20	0.28	-0.34	0.75	1.22	0.20	0.28	-0.34	0.74	1.22
RESPEDU 2	0.58	1.08	-1.53	2.69	1.78	0.55	1.05	-1.51	2.61	1.73
RESPEDU 3	-0.05	1.01	-2.03	1.93	0.95	-0.11	0.99	-2.04	1.83	0.90
RESPEDU 4	0.22	1.03	-1.80	2.25	1.25	0.17	1.01	-1.80	2.15	1.19
RESPEDU 5	0.29	1.04	-1.74	2.32	1.33	0.21	1.01	-1.77	2.20	1.24
RESPEDU 6	0.87	1.03	-1.14	2.89	2.39	0.80	1.01	-1.17	2.77	2.23
RESPSEX 2	-0.32	0.20	-0.71	0.07	0.73	-0.33 +	0.20	-0.72	0.06	0.72
SETTYPE 2	0.72 *	0.31	0.12	1.32	2.05	0.73 *	0.31	0.12	1.33	2.07
SETTYPE 3	0.42	0.32	-0.20	1.05	1.52	0.42	0.32	-0.20	1.04	1.52
1|2	0.81 +	0.47	-0.11	1.74	2.26	0.89 +	0.48	-0.05	1.84	2.44
2|3	0.34	1.09	-1.80	2.48	1.40	0.21	1.07	-1.89	2.32	1.24
3|4	1.78	1.10	1.59	1.97	5.93	1.65	1.09	1.46	1.85	5.23
4|5	3.24 ***	1.15	3.03	3.45	25.43	3.12 **	1.13	2.91	3.33	22.59
Number of obs.: 609	AIC: 2234.424, BIC: 2328.879, residual deviance: 2194.424					AIC: 2232.98, BIC: 2332.158, residual deviance: 2190.98				
AIC: BIC: Log Likelihood, Residual Deviance: Num. obs.:										

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table xii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014 with POLDIRN and *mainopptvtrust* as main IV

POLDIRN 2014	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odd ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	0.08	0.14	-0.19	0.35	1.08	0.16	0.16	-0.15	0.48	1.18
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.42	0.33	-1.08	0.23	0.66
GDsup	1.21 ***	0.15	0.91	1.51	3.35	-0.58 ***	0.24	-1.04	-0.11	0.56
UNMsup	-0.78 ***	0.19	-1.17	-0.40	0.46	1.21 *	0.15	0.91	1.51	3.35
POLSOPH1	0.29	0.19	-0.09	0.66	1.33	0.29	0.19	-0.08	0.66	1.33
POLSOPH2	0.64 **	0.21	0.23	1.05	1.89	0.65 **	0.21	0.24	1.05	1.91
AGEGROUP 2	0.12	0.17	-0.22	0.45	1.12	0.12	0.17	-0.21	0.45	1.13
AGEGROUP 3	0.34 +	0.18	-0.01	0.70	1.41	0.35 *	0.18	0.00	0.71	1.42
RESPEDU 2	-0.44	0.51	-1.44	0.57	0.65	-0.43	0.52	-1.45	0.59	0.65
RESPEDU 3	0.05	0.47	-0.87	0.96	1.05	0.05	0.48	-0.89	0.98	1.05
RESPEDU 4	-0.19	0.45	-1.08	0.70	0.83	-0.18	0.46	-1.09	0.73	0.83
RESPEDU 5	0.10	0.48	-0.84	1.04	1.11	0.11	0.49	-0.85	1.07	1.11
RESPEDU 6	-0.36	0.53	-1.39	0.68	0.70	-0.36	0.53	-1.41	0.69	0.70
RESPSEX 2	-0.04	0.13	-0.31	0.22	0.96	-0.04	0.13	-0.30	0.22	0.96
SETTYPE 2	-0.11	0.19	-0.48	0.27	0.90	-0.12	0.19	-0.49	0.26	0.89
SETTYPE 3	0.09	0.20	-0.30	0.48	1.09	0.08	0.20	-0.31	0.47	1.08
1|2	-1.88 ***	0.52	-2.89	-0.87	0.15	-1.86 ***	0.52	-2.88	-0.83	0.16
2|3	-0.66	0.51	-0.84	-0.48	0.52	-0.63	0.51	-0.82	-0.45	0.53
3|4	1.41 **	0.50	1.30	1.51	4.08	1.43 **	0.50	1.33	1.54	4.20
4|5	4.73 ***	0.56	4.62	4.84	113.07	4.76 ***	0.57	4.65	4.87	116.45
Number of obs.: 2893	AIC: 4914.132, BIC: 5020.878, residual deviance: 4876.132					AIC: 4913.013, BIC: 5025.376, residual deviance: 4873.013				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects

Table xiii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with POLDIRN and *mainopptvtrust* as main IV

POLDIRN 2019b	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odd ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.73 **	0.28	-1.27	-0.19	0.48	-0.77 *	0.32	-1.40	-0.13	0.46
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						0.15	0.51	-0.85	1.15	1.16
GDsup	1.98 ***	0.25	1.49	2.48	7.25	1.97 ***	0.26	1.47	2.47	7.18
UNMsup	-0.54 +	0.28	-1.08	0.01	0.58	-0.61 +	0.37	-1.33	0.11	0.54
POLSOPH1	0.33	0.29	-0.24	0.90	1.39	0.32	0.29	-0.25	0.89	1.38
POLSOPH2	0.29	0.34	-0.39	0.96	1.33	0.28	0.34	-0.39	0.94	1.32
AGEGROUP 2	0.46	0.29	-0.10	1.02	1.59	0.46	0.29	-0.10	1.02	1.58
AGEGROUP 3	0.20	0.28	-0.35	0.75	1.22	0.19	0.28	-0.36	0.75	1.21
RESPEDU 2	0.67	1.11	-1.50	2.84	1.96	0.68	1.11	-1.50	2.85	1.97
RESPEDU 3	-0.01	1.02	-2.01	1.98	0.99	0.00	1.02	-2.00	1.99	1.00
RESPEDU 4	0.20	1.04	-1.84	2.24	1.22	0.21	1.04	-1.83	2.26	1.24
RESPEDU 5	0.35	1.04	-1.69	2.40	1.43	0.36	1.04	-1.69	2.41	1.43
RESPEDU 6	0.87	1.04	-1.16	2.90	2.38	0.88	1.04	-1.16	2.91	2.40
RESPSEX 2	-0.32	0.20	-0.72	0.07	0.73	-0.32	0.20	-0.72	0.07	0.72
SETTYPE 2	0.76 +	0.30	0.18	1.34	2.14	0.76 *	0.30	0.18	1.34	2.14
SETTYPE 3	0.45	0.32	-0.18	1.08	1.57	0.45	0.32	-0.17	1.08	1.57
SETTYPE 4	0.47	0.47	-0.44	1.38	1.60	0.48	0.46	-0.42	1.39	1.62
1|2	-0.06	1.10	-2.23	2.10	0.94	-0.08	1.11	-2.25	2.10	0.93
2|3	1.39	1.11	1.20	1.58	4.02	1.38	1.12	1.19	1.57	3.98
3|4	2.85	1.15	2.64	3.06	17.27	2.84 *	1.16	2.63	3.05	17.09
4|5	4.92 ***	1.17	4.68	5.16	136.94	4.91 ***	1.18	4.67	5.15	135.40
Number of obs.: 609	AIC: 2226.815, BIC: 2321.27, residual deviance: 2186.815					AIC: 2228.647, BIC: 2327.825, residual deviance: 2186.647				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

(8) Ordinal logistic regression output for the DV RATEGOV, 2017 and 2019b

Table xiv. Ordinal logistic regression results 2017 with RATEGOV and *maingovtvtrust* as main IV

RATEGOV 2017	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.54 ***	0.14	0.26	0.82	1.72	0.63 ***	0.16	0.31	0.95	1.88
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-0.31 ***	0.31	-0.92	0.30	0.73
GDsup	1.85 ***	0.19	1.47	2.23	6.33	2.07 ***	0.30	1.48	2.65	7.90
UNMsup	-1.23 ***	0.20	-1.61	-0.85	0.29	-1.21	0.20	-1.59	-0.82	0.30
POLSOPH1	0.14	0.16	-0.16	0.44	1.15	0.15	0.16	-0.15	0.46	1.17
POLSOPH2	0.24	0.19	-0.13	0.62	1.28	0.24	0.19	-0.14	0.62	1.27
AGEGROUP 2	-0.10	0.16	-0.40	0.21	0.91	-0.10	0.16	-0.41	0.21	0.91
AGEGROUP 3	-0.19	0.14	-0.47	0.09	0.83	-0.20	0.15	-0.49	0.09	0.82
RESPEDU 2	0.41	0.65	-0.86	1.68	1.51	0.41	0.65	-0.86	1.68	1.51
RESPEDU 3	0.15	0.49	-0.80	1.11	1.16	0.16	0.49	-0.81	1.12	1.17
RESPEDU 4	0.27	0.53	-0.77	1.30	1.31	0.27	0.54	-0.77	1.32	1.32
RESPEDU 5	0.26	0.52	-0.76	1.29	1.30	0.27	0.53	-0.77	1.31	1.31
RESPEDU 6	0.36	0.57	-0.75	1.48	1.44	0.36	0.57	-0.77	1.48	1.43
RESPSEX 2	-0.31 *	0.14	-0.57	-0.04	0.74	-0.31 *	0.14	-0.58	-0.04	0.74
SETTYPE 2	-0.30	0.19	-0.66	0.07	0.74	-0.30	0.19	-0.66	0.07	0.74
SETTYPE 3	0.27	0.19	-0.10	0.64	1.31	0.27	0.19	-0.10	0.64	1.31
SETTYPE 4	1.33 ***	0.35	0.65	2.00	3.76	1.31 ***	0.34	0.64	1.97	3.70
1|2	-1.73 ***	0.51	-2.73	-0.74	0.18	-1.69 ***	0.52	-2.70	-0.67	0.18
2|3	0.11	0.51	-0.02	0.24	1.12	0.16	0.52	0.03	0.29	1.17
3|4	3.59 ***	0.53	3.50	3.68	36.26	3.63 ***	0.54	3.54	3.72	37.86
4|5	5.96 ***	0.58	5.77	6.16	389.50	6.01 ***	0.59	5.82	6.20	407.25
Number of obs.: 1490	AIC: 3978.627, BIC: 4089.686, residual deviance: 3938.627					AIC: 3978.665, BIC: 2327.825, residual deviance: 4095.277				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects

Table xv. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019 with RATEGOV and *maingovtvtrust* as main IV

RATEGOV 2019b	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	1.46 ***	0.24	0.98	1.94	4.32	1.58 ***	0.27	1.05	2.12	4.87
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-0.45	0.52	-1.46	0.56	0.64
GDsup	2.30 ***	0.35	1.61	2.98	9.96	2.59 ***	0.46	1.67	3.50	13.27
UNMsup	-1.09 ***	0.30	-1.68	-0.50	0.34	-1.07 ***	0.30	-1.65	-0.48	0.34
POLSOPH1	0.58 *	0.29	0.01	1.16	1.79	0.59 *	0.29	0.02	1.16	1.80
POLSOPH2	0.64 *	0.32	0.02	1.26	1.90	0.65 *	0.31	0.04	1.26	1.91
AGEGROUP 2	0.23	0.34	-0.45	0.90	1.26	0.22	0.34	-0.45	0.90	1.25
AGEGROUP 3	-0.06	0.33	-0.70	0.58	0.94	-0.06	0.33	-0.70	0.59	0.94
RESPEDU 2	-1.17	0.92	-2.98	0.64	0.31	-1.15	0.93	-2.98	0.67	0.32
RESPEDU 3	-0.96	0.85	-2.62	0.70	0.38	-0.92	0.85	-2.58	0.74	0.40
RESPEDU 4	-1.01	0.87	-2.71	0.70	0.36	-0.97	0.87	-2.68	0.75	0.38
RESPEDU 5	-0.85	0.86	-2.54	0.84	0.43	-0.79	0.86	-2.49	0.90	0.45
RESPEDU 6	-0.87	0.90	-2.62	0.89	0.42	-0.81	0.90	-2.57	0.95	0.45
RESPSEX 2	-0.34	0.22	-0.77	0.10	0.71	-0.33	0.22	-0.76	0.10	0.72
SETTYPE 2	0.68 +	0.35	-0.02	1.37	1.96	0.68 +	0.35	-0.01	1.37	1.97
SETTYPE 3	0.58 +	0.35	-0.09	1.26	1.79	0.59 +	0.35	-0.09	1.27	1.80
SETTYPE 4	3.07 ***	0.51	2.06	4.08	21.59	3.04 ***	0.52	2.02	4.05	20.85
1|2.33	-0.87	0.95	-2.73	0.98	0.42	-0.79	0.96	-2.67	1.09	0.45
2.33|3	2.11 *	0.97	1.98	2.24	8.26	2.22 *	0.99	2.08	2.35	9.18
3.67|	6.49 ***	1.10	6.29	6.68	656.39	6.56 ***	1.10	6.37	6.75	705.59
Number of obs.: 595	AIC: 1423.079, BIC: 1512.382, residual deviance: 1385.079					AIC: 1423.694, BIC: 1517.697, residual deviance: 1383.694				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table xvi. Ordinal logistic regression results 2017 with DV RATEGOV and *mainopptvtrust* as IV

RATEGOV 2017	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odd ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.61 ***	0.14	-0.89	-0.33	0.54	-0.69 ***	0.14	-0.96	-0.42	0.50
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						0.85 +	0.51	-0.15	1.85	2.34
GDsup	1.87 ***	0.19	1.50	2.23	6.47	1.86 ***	0.19	1.50	2.23	6.45
UNMsup	-1.24 ***	0.20	-1.63	-0.85	0.29	-1.94 ***	0.49	-2.89	-0.99	0.14
POLSOPH1	0.13	0.15	-0.17	0.43	1.14	0.10	0.15	-0.19	0.40	1.11
POLSOPH2	0.23	0.19	-0.15	0.60	1.26	0.19	0.19	-0.18	0.57	1.21
AGEGROUP 2	-0.10	0.16	-0.41	0.21	0.91	-0.09	0.16	-0.40	0.22	0.91
AGEGROUP 3	-0.16	0.15	-0.46	0.13	0.85	-0.18	0.15	-0.47	0.12	0.84
RESPEDU 2	0.34	0.70	-1.02	1.71	1.41	0.27	0.69	-1.09	1.62	1.31
RESPEDU 3	0.09	0.51	-0.91	1.09	1.10	0.05	0.50	-0.94	1.03	1.05
RESPEDU 4	0.18	0.55	-0.89	1.26	1.20	0.15	0.54	-0.91	1.21	1.17
RESPEDU 5	0.13	0.55	-0.95	1.21	1.14	0.08	0.54	-0.98	1.14	1.08
RESPEDU 6	0.20	0.59	-0.96	1.36	1.22	0.17	0.58	-0.97	1.32	1.19
RESPSEX 2	-0.26 +	0.14	-0.52	0.01	0.77	-0.26 +	0.14	-0.53	0.00	0.77
SETTYPE 2	-0.20	0.18	-0.56	0.15	0.82	-0.20	0.18	-0.56	0.16	0.82
SETTYPE 3	0.40 *	0.19	0.02	0.77	1.49	0.42 *	0.19	0.04	0.80	1.52
SETTPYE 4	1.04 **	0.38	0.30	1.78	2.84	1.17 **	0.38	0.42	1.92	3.22
1|2	-2.42 ***	0.56	-3.53	-1.31	-2.51	0.56 ***	-3.60	-1.42	0.08	0.16
2|3	-0.57	0.56	-0.70	-0.44	-0.67	0.55	-0.79	-0.54	0.51	0.53
3|4	2.92 ***	0.58	2.83	3.02	2.85	0.57 ***	2.75	2.94	17.23	4.20
4|5	5.30 ***	0.63	5.11	5.50	5.24	0.62 ***	5.05	5.43	187.97	116.45
Number of obs.: 1490	AIC: 3970.39, BIC: 4081.458, residual deviance: 3930.399					AIC: 3965.927, BIC: 4082.539, r esidual deviance: 3923.927				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects

Table xvii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with RATEGOV and *mainopptvtrust* as IV

RATEGOV 2019b	Model c) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model d) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odd ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Interval 2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-1.07 ***	0.26	-1.58	-0.55	0.34	-1.10 ***	0.28	-1.66	-0.55	0.33
Mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						0.16 *	0.71	-1.23	1.56	1.17
GDsup	2.52 ***	0.34	1.86	3.18	12.41	2.51 ***	0.34	1.84	3.18	12.28
UNMsup	-1.01 **	0.31	-1.62	-0.39	0.36	-1.09	0.54	-2.15	-0.03	0.34
POLSOPH1	0.46	0.29	-0.11	1.03	1.59	0.45 +	0.30	-0.14	1.04	1.57
POLSOPH2	0.54 *	0.31	-0.07	1.14	1.71	0.53	0.32	-0.10	1.15	1.69
AGEGROUP 2	0.23	0.34	-0.44	0.91	1.26	0.23	0.34	-0.44	0.91	1.26
AGEGROUP 3	-0.01	0.31	-0.62	0.59	0.99	-0.02	0.31	-0.62	0.58	0.98
RESPEDU 2	-1.21	1.00	-3.17	0.76	0.30	-1.20	1.00	-3.17	0.76	0.30
RESPEDU 3	-0.97	0.91	-2.75	0.82	0.38	-0.96	0.91	-2.75	0.83	0.38
RESPEDU 4	-1.13	0.95	-2.99	0.72	0.32	-1.12	0.95	-2.98	0.74	0.33
RESPEDU 5	-0.88	0.92	-2.69	0.92	0.41	-0.88	0.92	-2.68	0.92	0.42
RESPEDU 6	-0.96	0.95	-2.83	0.90	0.38	-0.95	0.95	-2.82	0.91	0.39
RESPSEX 2	-0.27	0.22	-0.70	0.16	0.76	-0.27	0.22	-0.70	0.16	0.76
SETTYPE 2	0.81 *	0.35	0.12	1.49	2.24	0.80 *	0.35	0.11	1.49	2.23
SETTYPE 3	0.75 *	0.33	0.11	1.40	2.12	0.75 *	0.33	0.10	1.40	2.12
SETTYPE 4	2.38 ***	0.48	1.44	3.32	10.81	2.40 ***	0.48	1.45	3.34	11.01
1|2.33	-1.64	1.01	-3.62	0.35	0.19	-1.65	1.01	-3.64	0.33	0.19
2.33|3.67	1.22	1.04	1.08	1.36	3.39	1.21	1.04	1.07	1.34	3.34
3.67|5	5.47 ***	1.15	5.27	5.66	236.86	5.45 ***	1.15	5.26	5.65	233.84
Number of obs.: 595	AIC: 1459.321, BIC: 1548.624, residual deviance: 1421.321					AIC: 1461.165, BIC: 1555.168, residual deviance: 1421.165				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

(9) Ordinal logistic regression output for the DV PERFPARL, 2014 and 2019b

Table xviii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014 with PERFPARL and *maingovtvtrust* as main IV

PERFPARL 2014	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.39 *	0.16	0.07	0.70	1.47	0.41	0.30	-0.19	1.00	1.50
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-0.03	0.38	-0.78	0.71	0.97
GDsup	1.19 ***	0.18	0.83	1.55	3.29	1.20 ***	0.23	0.76	1.65	3.33
UNMsup	-0.26	0.24	-0.73	0.20	0.77	-0.27	0.24	-0.73	0.20	0.77
POLSOPH1	0.05	0.21	-0.36	0.47	1.06	0.05	0.21	-0.36	0.46	1.05
POLSOPH2	0.09	0.23	-0.36	0.54	1.09	0.09	0.23	-0.36	0.54	1.09
AGEGROUP 2	-0.34 *	0.19	-0.72	0.04	0.71	-0.34 +	0.19	-0.72	0.04	0.71
AGEGROUP 3	0.02 +	0.18	-0.34	0.38	1.02	0.02	0.18	-0.34	0.38	1.02
RESPEDU 2	1.39	0.86	-0.30	3.07	4.00	1.39	0.86	-0.30	3.07	4.00
RESPEDU 3	0.86	0.76	-0.62	2.35	2.37	0.87	0.76	-0.63	2.36	2.38
RESPEDU 4	0.87	0.77	-0.64	2.39	2.40	0.88	0.78	-0.64	2.40	2.40
RESPEDU 5	1.02	0.76	-0.47	2.51	2.77	1.02	0.76	-0.47	2.51	2.78
RESPEDU 6	0.93	0.80	-0.64	2.50	2.54	0.93	0.80	-0.64	2.50	2.54
RESPSEX 2	0.08	0.16	-0.23	0.38	1.08	0.08	0.16	-0.23	0.38	1.08
SETTYPE 2	0.19	0.19	-0.17	0.56	1.21	0.19	0.19	-0.17	0.56	1.21
SETTYPE 3	0.43 **	0.23	-0.03	0.88	1.53	0.43 +	0.23	-0.03	0.89	1.53
1|2	-2.29 **	0.78	-3.82	-0.76	0.10	-2.28 **	0.80	-3.84	-0.73	0.10
2|3	-0.09	0.78	-0.29	0.12	0.92	-0.08	0.79	-0.28	0.12	0.92
3|4	3.65 ***	0.79	3.55	3.75	38.36	3.65 ***	0.81	3.56	3.75	38.65
4|5	6.94 ***	0.90	6.71	7.16	1027.79	6.94 ***	0.92	6.72	7.16	1035.02
Number of obs.: 2888	AIC: 3439.017, BIC: 3544.905, residual deviance: 3401.017					AIC: 3440.991, BIC: 3552.453, residual deviance: 3400.991				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects.

Table xix. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with PERFPARL and *maingovtvtrust* as main IV

PERFPARL 2019b	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.76 **	0.24	0.30	1.22	2.15	0.85 **	0.27	0.31	1.38	2.33
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-0.28	0.47	-1.21	0.64	0.75
GDsup	1.86 ***	0.32	1.22	2.49	6.40	2.03 ***	0.31	1.42	2.64	7.63
UNMsup	-0.74 *	0.30	-1.33	-0.14	0.48	-0.72 *	0.30	-1.30	-0.13	0.49
POLSOPH1	0.05	0.29	-0.52	0.62	1.05	0.05	0.29	-0.52	0.62	1.05
POLSOPH2	0.01	0.32	-0.61	0.62	1.01	0.01	0.32	-0.61	0.63	1.01
AGEGROUP 2	-0.17	0.32	-0.81	0.46	0.84	-0.18	0.32	-0.81	0.46	0.84
AGEGROUP 3	-0.13	0.30	-0.71	0.45	0.88	-0.12	0.30	-0.71	0.46	0.88
RESPEDU 2	-1.19 +	0.71	-2.58	0.21	0.31	-1.18 +	0.71	-2.58	0.21	0.31
RESPEDU 3	-0.41	0.49	-1.38	0.55	0.66	-0.38	0.49	-1.35	0.59	0.68
RESPEDU 4	-0.42	0.55	-1.50	0.66	0.66	-0.39	0.55	-1.46	0.68	0.68
RESPEDU 5	-0.75	0.56	-1.85	0.34	0.47	-0.71	0.56	-1.81	0.38	0.49
RESPEDU 6	-0.53	0.56	-1.62	0.56	0.59	-0.49	0.56	-1.58	0.61	0.62
RESPSEX 2	-0.07	0.21	-0.48	0.34	0.93	-0.07	0.21	-0.49	0.34	0.93
SETTYPE 2	0.68 *	0.31	0.07	1.29	1.97	0.68 *	0.31	0.07	1.29	1.97
SETTYPE 3	0.87 **	0.28	0.33	1.41	2.38	0.87 **	0.28	0.33	1.41	2.38
SETTYPE 4	2.75 ***	0.52	1.73	3.77	15.65	2.71 ***	0.54	1.66	3.76	15.07
1|2	-1.17 +	0.60	-2.35	0.02	0.31	-1.10 +	0.63	-2.33	0.12	0.33
2|3	1.30 *	0.61	1.15	1.46	3.67	1.37 *	0.63	1.22	1.52	3.94
3|4	3.41 ***	0.62	3.23	3.59	30.20	3.47 ***	0.62	3.29	3.65	32.18
4|5	6.05 ***	0.85	5.69	6.41	424.73	6.11 ***	0.84	5.75	6.47	449.98
Number of obs.: 609	AIC: 1873.047, BIC: 1967.146, residual deviance: 1833.047					AIC: 1874.344, BIC: 1973.148, residual deviance: 1832.344				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table xx. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014 with DV PERFPARL and *mainopptvtrust* as IV

PERFPARL 2014	Model a) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model b) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	0.08	0.18	-0.26	0.43	1.09	0.20	0.21	-0.22	0.61	1.22
mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.62	0.45	-1.50	0.26	0.54
GDsup	1.21 ***	0.18	0.86	1.56	3.36	1.21 ***	0.18	0.86	1.56	3.35
UNMsup	-0.32	0.24	-0.80	0.15	0.72	0.00	0.28	-0.55	0.55	1.00
POLSOPH1	0.05	0.21	-0.37	0.46	1.05	0.06	0.21	-0.35	0.47	1.06
POLSOPH2	0.17	0.23	-0.28	0.63	1.19	0.19	0.23	-0.27	0.64	1.20
AGEGROUP 2	-0.31	0.19	-0.69	0.06	0.73	-0.31	0.19	-0.69	0.07	0.73
AGEGROUP 3	0.00	0.19	-0.37	0.37	1.00	0.01	0.19	-0.35	0.38	1.01
RESPEDU 2	1.53 +	0.78	-0.01	3.06	4.60	1.52 +	0.79	-0.02	3.07	4.58
RESPEDU 3	0.97	0.68	-0.36	2.30	2.64	0.94	0.69	-0.41	2.29	2.56
RESPEDU 4	1.07	0.70	-0.30	2.44	2.91	1.05	0.71	-0.34	2.44	2.86
RESPEDU 5	1.17 +	0.67	-0.15	2.49	3.23	1.15 +	0.68	-0.19	2.49	3.15
RESPEDU 6	1.12	0.72	-0.29	2.53	3.06	1.09	0.73	-0.34	2.53	2.99
RESPSEX 2	0.12	0.15	-0.18	0.41	1.12	0.13	0.15	-0.17	0.42	1.13
SETTYPE 2	0.22	0.19	-0.15	0.59	1.24	0.20	0.19	-0.17	0.57	1.22
SETTYPE 3	0.45 +	0.23	0.00	0.91	1.57	0.44 +	0.23	-0.01	0.90	1.56
1|2	-2.14 **	0.73	-3.58	-0.71	0.12	-2.13 **	0.73	-3.57	-0.70	0.12
2|3	0.05	0.71	-0.16	0.25	1.05	0.06	0.72	-0.15	0.26	1.06
3|4	3.73 ***	0.73	3.64	3.83	41.81	3.75***	0.73	3.65	3.85	42.51
4|5	7.00 ***	0.85	6.77	7.23	1095.76	7.02 ***	0.85	6.79	7.24	1115.94
Number of obs.: 2893	AIC: 3500.85, BIC: 3606.837, residual deviance: 3462.85					AIC: 3498.169, BIC: 3609.734, residual deviance: 3458.169				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects.

Table xxi. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with PERFPARL and *mainopptvtrust* as main IV

PERFPARL 2019b	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.77 **	0.26	-1.28	-0.26	0.46	-0.70 *	0.30	-1.29	-0.10	0.50
mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.31	0.56	-1.41	0.79	0.73
GDsup	1.94 ***	0.33	1.29	2.59	6.97	1.96 ***	0.33	1.32	2.61	7.12
UNMsup	-0.67 *	0.29	-1.24	-0.11	0.51	-0.51	0.37	-1.24	0.21	0.60
POLSOPH1	-0.03	0.28	-0.58	0.53	0.98	-0.01	0.28	-0.56	0.55	0.99
POLSOPH2	-0.05	0.31	-0.66	0.57	0.96	-0.02	0.32	-0.65	0.61	0.98
AGEGROUP 2	-0.14	0.33	-0.77	0.50	0.87	-0.13	0.32	-0.77	0.50	0.88
AGEGROUP 3	-0.10	0.29	-0.67	0.46	0.90	-0.10	0.29	-0.66	0.46	0.91
RESPEDU 2	-1.30 +	0.75	-2.78	0.18	0.27	-1.32 +	0.76	-2.81	0.17	0.27
RESPEDU 3	-0.49	0.51	-1.48	0.50	0.61	-0.52	0.52	-1.54	0.50	0.60
RESPEDU 4	-0.60	0.57	-1.71	0.51	0.55	-0.64	0.58	-1.78	0.50	0.53
RESPEDU 5	-0.81	0.57	-1.93	0.31	0.44	-0.84	0.58	-1.97	0.30	0.43
RESPEDU 6	-0.64	0.56	-1.74	0.47	0.53	-0.67	0.58	-1.80	0.46	0.51
RESPSEX 2	-0.04	0.21	-0.46	0.38	0.96	-0.03	0.22	-0.46	0.40	0.97
SETTYPE 2	0.77 *	0.31	0.15	1.38	2.15	0.77 *	0.32	0.15	1.39	2.17
SETTYPE 3	0.94 ***	0.28	0.40	1.48	2.56	0.94 ***	0.28	0.40	1.48	2.56
SETTYPE 4	2.38 ***	0.56	1.28	3.48	10.77	2.35 ***	0.56	1.25	3.45	10.47
1|2	-1.73 **	0.62	-2.95	-0.52	0.18	-1.71 **	0.63	-2.94	-0.48	0.18
2|3	0.74	0.62	0.59	0.90	2.10	0.77	0.63	0.61	0.92	2.15
3|4	2.82 ***	0.62	2.64	3.00	16.79	2.84 ***	0.63	2.66	3.02	17.15
4|5	5.43 ***	0.82	5.07	5.79	228.16	5.45 ***	0.82	5.09	5.81	232.33
Number of obs.: 609	AIC: 1876.494, BIC: 1970.593, residual deviance: 1836.494					AIC: 1877.858, BIC: 1976.661, residual deviance: 1835.858				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

(10) Ordinal logistic regression output for the DV PERFCRTS, 2014 and 2019b

Table xxii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014 with DV PERFCRTS and *maingovtvtrust* as IV

PERFCRTS 2014	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.71 ***	0.17	0.37	1.04	2.03	0.78 **	0.26	0.27	1.30	2.19
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-0.15	0.33	-0.79	0.50	0.86
GDsup	0.99 ***	0.17	0.65	1.33	2.69	1.05 ***	0.21	0.63	1.47	2.86
UNMsup	-0.12	0.25	-0.61	0.36	0.89	-0.12	0.25	-0.61	0.36	0.88
POLSOPH1	0.12	0.21	-0.30	0.53	1.13	0.11	0.21	-0.30	0.53	1.12
POLSOPH2	0.29	0.23	-0.17	0.75	1.34	0.28	0.23	-0.17	0.74	1.33
AGEGROUP 2	-0.39*	0.17	-0.72	-0.06	0.68	-0.39 *	0.17	-0.72	-0.06	0.68
AGEGROUP 3	-0.53 **	0.19	-0.91	-0.15	0.59	-0.53 **	0.19	-0.91	-0.14	0.59
RESPEDU 2	1.16 *	0.64	-0.10	2.41	3.18	1.15 +	0.65	-0.13	2.42	3.14
RESPEDU 3	0.05	0.36	-0.66	0.76	1.05	0.06	0.36	-0.65	0.76	1.06
RESPEDU 4	0.09	0.34	-0.58	0.77	1.10	0.09	0.34	-0.58	0.76	1.10
RESPEDU 5	-0.06	0.36	-0.76	0.63	0.94	-0.06	0.35	-0.75	0.63	0.94
RESPEDU 6	0.57	0.46	-0.33	1.47	1.76	0.57	0.46	-0.33	1.47	1.76
RESPSEX 2	-0.37 *	0.15	-0.67	-0.07	0.69	-0.37 *	0.15	-0.67	-0.07	0.69
SETTYPE 2	0.09	0.23	-0.35	0.53	1.09	0.09	0.23	-0.35	0.54	1.10
SETTYPE 3	0.30	0.26	-0.20	0.80	1.35	0.31	0.26	-0.19	0.82	1.37
1|2	-3.26 ***	0.51	-4.25	-2.26	0.04	-3.23 ***	0.51	-4.23	-2.23	0.04
2|3	-0.97 *	0.46	-1.23	-0.72	0.38	-0.94	0.46	-1.20	-0.69	0.39
3|4	2.51 ***	0.48	2.41	2.60	12.25	2.54 ***	0.48	2.44	2.63	12.63
4|5	6.35 ***	0.65	6.11	6.60	575.24	6.38 ***	0.66	6.14	6.63	590.83
Number of obs.: 2462	AIC: 3417.534, BIC: 3522.387, residual deviance: 3379.534					AIC: 3419.01, BIC: 3529.382, residual deviance: 3379.01				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects.

Table xxiii. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with PERFCRTS and *maingovtvtrust* as IV

PERFCRTS 2019b	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* 2.5%	97.5%	*Odds ratios*
maingovtvtrust	0.93 ***	0.25	0.44	1.42	2.53	1.24 ***	0.28	0.69	1.79	3.44
maingovtvtrust* GDsup						-1.26 *	0.49	-2.23	-0.30	0.28
GDsup	2.20 ***	0.36	1.48	2.91	8.98	3.04 ***	0.37	2.32	3.76	20.84
UNMsup	-0.87 **	0.33	-1.50	-0.23	0.42	-0.82 *	0.33	-1.46	-0.17	0.44
POLSOPH1	0.01	0.33	-0.65	0.67	1.01	0.01	0.33	-0.65	0.66	1.01
POLSOPH2	0.06	0.36	-0.65	0.77	1.06	0.08	0.35	-0.61	0.77	1.08
AGEGROUP 2	-0.75 *	0.34	-1.42	-0.09	0.47	-0.80 *	0.34	-1.46	-0.13	0.45
AGEGROUP 3	-0.70 *	0.34	-1.37	-0.03	0.50	-0.70 *	0.35	-1.38	-0.02	0.50
RESPEDU 2	0.06	0.95	-1.80	1.93	1.06	0.33	0.94	-1.50	2.17	1.40
RESPEDU 3	0.62	0.88	-1.09	2.34	1.86	0.96	0.85	-0.71	2.63	2.62
RESPEDU 4	0.88	0.89	-0.86	2.62	2.41	1.20	0.86	-0.48	2.87	3.31
RESPEDU 5	0.72	0.91	-1.06	2.50	2.05	1.08	0.89	-0.66	2.82	2.94
RESPEDU 6	1.39	0.92	-0.41	3.19	4.02	1.79 *	0.90	0.02	3.56	5.98
RESPSEX 2	0.18	0.23	-0.27	0.62	1.19	0.17	0.23	-0.27	0.62	1.19
SETTYPE 2	0.82 *	0.34	0.16	1.48	2.26	0.85 *	0.34	0.18	1.52	2.34
SETTYPE 3	0.83 *	0.34	0.17	1.49	2.30	0.87 *	0.34	0.20	1.54	2.38
SETTYPE 4	4.57 ***	0.85	2.91	6.23	96.74	4.37 ***	0.87	2.67	6.08	79.42
1|2	-0.16	1.04	-2.20	1.88	0.85	0.27	1.00	-1.69	2.24	1.31
2|3	1.89 +	1.06	1.72	2.06	6.62	2.36 *	1.03	2.19	2.53	10.58
3|4	4.61 ***	1.08	4.43	4.80	100.80	5.06 ***	1.03	4.88	5.25	158.05
4|5	7.83 ***	1.14	7.50	8.16	2506.06	8.34 ***	1.10	8.00	8.68	4195.00
Number of obs.: 531	AIC: 1697.566, BIC: 1790.158, residual deviance: 1657.566					AIC: 1688.175, BIC: 1785.396, residual deviance: 1646.175				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table xxiv. Ordinal logistic regression results 2014 with PERFCRTS and *mainopptvtrust* as main IV

PERFCRTS 2014	Model a) with mainopptvtrust as main IV					Model b) with mainopptvtrust*UNMsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	0.45 **	0.17	0.12	0.78	1.57	0.70 ***	0.18	0.33	1.06	2.00
mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-1.27 **	0.40	-2.05	-0.49	0.28
GDsup	1.08 ***	0.17	0.75	1.40	2.93	1.08 ***	0.17	0.75	1.41	2.94
UNMsup	-0.27	0.25	-0.76	0.22	0.77	0.38	0.30	-0.20	0.97	1.46
POLSOPH1	0.25	0.22	-0.18	0.67	1.28	0.26	0.21	-0.16	0.67	1.29
POLSOPH2	0.43 +	0.24	-0.03	0.89	1.54	0.46 *	0.24	0.00	0.93	1.59
AGEGROUP 2	-0.36 *	0.17	-0.69	-0.03	0.70	-0.36 *	0.17	-0.69	-0.03	0.70
AGEGROUP 3	-0.52 **	0.20	-0.92	-0.13	0.59	-0.51 *	0.20	-0.90	-0.11	0.60
RESPEDU 2	0.92	0.65	-0.36	2.20	2.51	0.96 *	0.67	-0.35	2.27	2.60
RESPEDU 3	0.21	0.40	-0.58	0.99	1.23	0.18	0.42	-0.64	1.00	1.20
RESPEDU 4	0.18	0.39	-0.59	0.94	1.19	0.17	0.41	-0.64	0.97	1.18
RESPEDU 5	0.14	0.39	-0.64	0.91	1.15	0.12	0.41	-0.68	0.92	1.13
RESPEDU 6	0.79	0.54	-0.26	1.85	2.21	0.79	0.55	-0.29	1.87	2.20
RESPSEX 2	-0.40 *	0.16	-0.72	-0.09	0.67	-0.39 *	0.16	-0.70	-0.07	0.68
SETTYPE 2	0.04	0.23	-0.40	0.48	1.04	0.01	0.23	-0.43	0.45	1.01
SETTYPE 3	0.35	0.26	-0.15	0.86	1.43	0.32	0.26	-0.19	0.82	1.37
1|2	-3.02 ***	0.52	-4.05	-2.00	0.05	-2.99 ***	0.53	-4.03	-1.96	0.05
2|3	-0.83 +	0.49	-1.07	-0.58	0.44	-0.79	0.50	-1.03	-0.54	0.46
3|4	2.61 ***	0.50	2.52	2.71	13.65	2.69 ***	0.51	2.60	2.78	14.71
4|5	6.41 ***	0.66	6.16	6.66	607.79	6.49 ***	0.66	6.25	6.74	660.07
Number of obs.: 2462	AIC: 3455.401, BIC: 3560.252, residual deviance: 3417.401					AIC: 3437.257, BIC: 3547.626, residual deviance: 3397.257				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. MONYTOT and UNEMPL have been left out to enhance comparability with the 2019b models. When adding them in, they don't yield any significant effects.

Table xxv. Ordinal logistic regression results 2019b with PERFCRTS and *mainopptvtrust* as IV

PERFCRTS 2019b	Model a) with maingovtvtrust as main IV					Model b) with maingovtvtrust*GDsup interaction				
	Regression coefficient	*SE*	*Confidence Interval* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*	*Regression coefficient*	*SE*	*Confidence Intervals* *2.5%*	*97.5%*	*Odds ratios*
mainopptvtrust	-0.94 ***	0.28	-1.49	-0.40	0.39	-0.77 *	0.31	-1.38	-0.16	0.46
mainopptvtrust* UNMsup						-0.82	0.66	-2.12	0.48	0.44
GDsup	2.34 ***	0.35	1.65	3.03	10.38	2.40 ***	0.36	1.69	3.11	11.02
UNMsup	-0.74 *	0.32	-1.37	-0.11	0.48	-0.30	0.48	-1.25	0.64	0.74
POLSOPH1	-0.11	0.32	-0.73	0.52	0.90	-0.05	0.32	-0.68	0.57	0.95
POLSOPH2	0.00	0.35	-0.68	0.68	1.00	0.05	0.35	-0.63	0.73	1.05
AGEGROUP 2	-0.72 *	0.33	-1.37	-0.07	0.49	-0.72 *	0.33	-1.35	-0.08	0.49
AGEGROUP 3	-0.71 *	0.33	-1.36	-0.06	0.49	-0.70 *	0.33	-1.34	-0.06	0.50
RESPEDU 2	0.52	1.03	-1.50	2.54	1.68	0.44	0.97	-1.46	2.34	1.55
RESPEDU 3	0.96	0.99	-0.98	2.90	2.61	0.88	0.93	-0.95	2.70	2.40
RESPEDU 4	1.12	1.00	-0.85	3.08	3.05	1.00	0.94	-0.84	2.84	2.72
RESPEDU 5	1.06	1.02	-0.94	3.07	2.89	0.99	0.97	-0.90	2.88	2.70
RESPEDU 6	1.60	1.03	-0.42	3.63	4.97	1.53	0.97	-0.37	3.44	4.63
RESPSEX 2	0.21	0.22	-0.22	0.64	1.23	0.23	0.22	-0.20	0.67	1.26
SETTYPE 2	0.90 **	0.34	0.23	1.58	2.47	0.92 **	0.34	0.24	1.59	2.50
SETTYPE 3	0.88 **	0.32	0.25	1.50	2.40	0.87 **	0.32	0.25	1.50	2.40
SETTYPE 4	4.01 ***	0.78	2.48	5.54	55.31	3.93 ***	0.74	2.47	5.39	50.84
1|2	-0.47	1.14	-2.71	1.77	0.62	-0.44	1.09	-2.57	1.70	0.65
2|3	1.59	1.16	1.42	1.76	4.89	1.63	1.11	1.46	1.80	5.11
3|4	4.27 ***	1.17	4.08	4.46	71.45	4.31 ***	1.12	4.12	4.50	74.49
4|5	7.47 ***	1.20	7.14	7.80	1758.41	7.49 ***	1.14	7.17	7.82	1796.69
Number of obs.: 531	AIC: 1699.754, BIC: 1792.346, residual deviance: 1659.754					AIC: 1697.61, BIC: 1794.831, residual deviance: 1655.61				

Levels of significance: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

(11) Interview guide

Oral consent: Reiteration of information about the interview

- ***Introduction* (*)***:* [*Name of expert*], it is so nice to meet you and thanks for taking the time for this interview. How are you doing? *[response]* Did you receive and take note of the participant information sheet concerning my study? *[Await confirmation]*. Before we start, I need to briefly walk you through the most important information again to get your oral consent of participating.
- ***Project details and aims:*** In my study, I investigate the effects of media consumption on political dissatisfaction in Georgia. I have so far looked at survey data and I'm now interested in the assessment of experts like you.
- ***Interview description:*** The interview will take about 40 minutes and I will ask a range of questions about the factors influencing the increase of political dissatisfaction in Georgia and about the Georgian media environment more generally.
- ***Data sharing/access/confidentiality/publication plans:*** The answers you give will be published in my master's thesis. Me and my supervisor will have access to the data. A copy of my thesis will be deposited in print and online in the archives of the University of Oxford.
- ***Audio/video recording/notes/keeping contact details:*** I would like to make an audio recording of our discussion to get an accurate record of your thoughts. I may also want to re-contact you to clarify information you gave me in your interview.
- ***Data storage:*** I will store the audio recording as an encrypted file. Once I have transcribed the interview, I will delete the audio file and keep the transcription for 3 years. I would like to be able to use your anonymised information in future studies, and to share it with other researchers, if you agree.
- ***Pseudonyms/identifiable data:*** In any publications a fake name will be used **or** you will be named (if you would like to be identified and if it is safe for you).
- ***Risks****:* Concerning possible risks, the interview could cover sensitive issues like your political opinions or affiliations, so I hope you're in a space where you feel comfortable to share sensitive information. To reduce any potential risk of breach of confidentiality, the data will be stored safely.
- ***Rights:*** You don't have to agree to take part; you can ask me any questions you want before or throughout the interview; and you can also withdraw at any stage without giving a reason until the end of April this year.
- ***Complaints/concerns procedure:*** If you have any complaints or concerns please feel free to contact me via email at first instance. If, after contacting me, you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Oxford University ethics committee.
- ***Questions/concerns?*** Do you have any questions?

Oral consent seeking stage

- Do you give your permission for me to interview you, and audio record you?
- Do you give permission for me to re-contact you to clarify information?
- Do you give me permission to quote you directly using your real name / **a fake name**?
- Do you give me permission to use your anonymised information in future studies, and to share it with other researchers?
- Are you happy for me to collect sensitive personal data on your political opinion and affiliation?
- Are you happy to take part?

Perfect, thanks, let's start.

Questionnaire

So, let's start with a short introduction. I know that you have academic training in *[xxx]*. You have worked *[xxx]* as *[xxx]*. So that is quite impressive! What have you been focusing on during your work recently at *[xxx]*?

Now, to get into the topic, let me briefly outline some underlying observations:
I have been looking at the developments **between 2014 and 2019**; and especially at representative NDI survey data on "Political Attitudes in Georgia", which shows that **since 2014**, dissatisfaction with the performance of the parliament, the government and with the courts has substantially increased. So, I identify an overall growing political dissatisfaction.
Concerning the general direction Georgia is going, while in 2014, 19% of respondents thought that Georgia was going in the wrong direction, this figure increased to 54% in 2019, which is quite a drastic change and signals a growing frustration with the overall development of Georgia (although I must say that the figures have recently changed in the Covid year of 2020, but I am looking at the period before, because Covid is too much of a confounding variable).

- What do you think are **the main factors that have fuelled this growing dissatisfaction** between 2014 and 2019?
- And is there a **distinction to be made** concerning the factors leading to dissatisfaction with the general direction Georgia is going, versus dissatisfaction with the government, versus with the parliament, versus with the courts?

At the same time, distrust towards the media seems to have overall slightly increased from 12% in 2012 to 20% in 2019; and an increasingly biased media coverage has been observed by different actors. GD has been accused of exerting growing political pressure on state-owned media; and both the GD and UNM have been accused of disseminating disinformation.

- Would you agree with this observation?

Terms:

- According to NDI's public opinion research from May 2018, the majority of people associate disinformation with national TV, saying that they have politically motivated reporting. But do we have to make a distinction between politically motivated reporting, which we could call biased or partisan news coverage, and disinformation?

The role of media

- *Political affiliation question:* Do you watch much television yourself, which channel would you usually consume, why do you like it?
- Now, let's talk about how the media landscape developed since GD became the ruling party in 2012: Has **political news coverage become more or less biased**, that is to say, **partisan** and which are **the most important TV stations involved**?
    - (To check my data, could you please name the most watched/important pro-gvmt TV stations, and the most watched/important oppositional TV stations; and **any important non-partisan or more balanced TV channels with a high reach**?)
    - What **significance does media ownership have when considering the content and impact of these stations**? (90% of Imedi owned by Georgian Media Holding)
    - When talking about **the three currently most trusted** Georgian TV stations **Imedi, Mtavari Arkhi, Rustavi 2** (according to CRRC 2019 survey): How would you describe **their main content and target audience**? Would you agree that **Rustavi 2 after the 2019 ownership struggle** remains critical of the gvmt, only employing a milder language?

- And do you think **a link exists between political dissatisfaction and consumption of biased media**? WHY – in which way does this work? What is the **mechanism** behind it?
    - **Would you make a link between deepening political cleavages between parties or media outlets; and a polarisation of the broader society?**
        - And how would you characterize polarization in Georgia: is it more about individual politicians or parties; or about ideological content?
    - I have read in a mythdetector article, that disinformation on social media is mainly connected to pro-government trolls publicly discrediting opposition groups, critical media and NGOs. Would you agree and would you say the same about polarized or biased/partisan TV news coverage?
    - And what role does **the atmosphere of political debate** play? Has it changed in the past few years and in what way? And is that likely to have had an impact on political dissatisfaction and on media coverage? *[freedom of the media]*

Switch to this section after approx. minutes

- Now, my data shows that people trusting Imedi TV for accurate information on current affairs more positively assess the direction Georgia is going and also the performance of the government, the parliament and the courts **independent of party affiliation**. Why do you think this might be the case?
    - Focusing again on Imedi-TV. What is the relation of Imedi and the government; and is there a strategy behind the news content of Imedi?
        - Is there **one single strategy**, or does the strategy **depend on the political affiliation of the audience**? Does Imedi target people of the opposition in the same way as pro-gvmt people?
        - Does this work? My data shows that there is an **effect independent of party affiliation** on the people trusting Imedi. So, my data suggests that Imedi has the same effect on the people that are not affiliated with GD as on those affiliated with GD. Do you think this is **related to viewers choosing imedi according to what they like to see/hear or to Imedi's content influencing its viewers**?
    - Is there a **difference between Imedi online and TV content**?
    - And how does the content of news coverage on Imedi TV (online and offline) link in with **disinformation** attempts? Is Imedi also involved in disinformation; or is pro-gvmt disinformation rather to be seen separately?
        - (Which TV stations are the most active online? And which are the most consumed other news outlets online disseminating news and possibly politicized content?)
        - Disinformation: Looking at domestic disinformation for political purposes, where would you say does domestic political disinformation mainly originate from, so which actors are most involved?
        - Getting to **the effects of disinformation**: From your experience, is there any reason to believe that disinformation in general, but especially on Facebook, has impacted the development of political dissatisfaction, and if yes, in which way(s)? (As Fb has turned into the second most important source of news in Geo)

Part on Rustavi 2 and Mtavari Arkhi

- Political dissatisfaction seems to be higher for Rustavi 2 audiences in 2014-18; and in 2019 also for Mtavari Arkhi audiences, independent of affiliation with UNM; and this is especially true for the Mtavari Arkhi audience in 2019. Again, the same question: do you think this is related to **viewers choosing Rustavi2 or Mtavari Arkhi according to what they like to see/hear; or to the content of these stations influencing its viewers?**

- How does the content of news coverage on Rustavi2 and Mtavari Arkhi (online and offline) **link in with disinformation attempts**?

Now, returning to the global picture, would you say that there is a link between growing political dissatisfaction and people being **more aware of state pressure on media**; and **growing media literacy**, so more people identifying polarised news and/or disinformation and **therefore disliking the political debate** as such?

I would like to ask you one more specific question linked to my data.

- My data also shows that **people living in areas that are populated mainly by (non-Georgian) minorities** evaluate the direction Georgia is going more positively in all years, and also the performance of the gvmt/parliament/courts. This is especially visible for people living in non-Georgian settlements evaluating the performance of the courts quite favourably, why?
    - And why would the effect increase over the years between 2014 and 2019?

Thank you so much for your time. Just before we finish, as I found this interview very useful and still need some more participants for my study – **would you know someone I could further contact that might be open to talking with me?** That would help me a lot.
დიდი მადლობა, ნახვამდის!

(12) List of interviews

All interviews were held on Microsoft Teams on the following dates with the following length (initials of interviewees in brackets):

- Respondent 1 (TK): 11.03.2021, 55 min.
- Respondent 2 (LK): 18.03.2021, 87 min.
- Respondent 3 (TG): 18.03.2021, 63 min.
- Respondent 4 (MA): 24.03.2021, 102 min.
- Respondent 5 (SG): 26.03.2021, 60 min.
- Respondent 6 (ND): 27.03.2021, 82 min.
- Respondent 7 (NI): 28.03.2021, 51 min.