

Nana Sumbadze

Georgia Public Opinion Barometer 2006

Tbilisi 2006



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Contact information:

Institute for Policy Studies.

Chavchavadze Av.10, entrance VI.

0179 Tbilisi

Georgia

Tel: (99532)-220060; (99532)-912743. Fax: (99532)-220060.

e-mail: ips@ips.ge

Website: www.ips.ge

Full text of the report can be found at: www.ips.ge

Cover and design: Gio Sumbadze

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Foreword

This report was prepared within the framework of the research project of the Institute of Policy Studies, funded by the Human Rights and Governance Grants Program (HRGGP) of the Open Society Institute. The nationwide survey of the Georgian population aimed to assess public attitudes and the level of satisfaction of the population in relation to public goods and governmental policies - concerning issues on poverty and economy, social protection, health, education and corruption, public participation, human rights, media freedom, and infrastructure development. It assessed public perceptions and expectations with regards to these issues, the degree of popular participation in dealing with the most important problems of Georgian society, the level of trust toward different social institutions and the popularity of authority figures. It also examined public attitudes towards democracy, the political situation and the external orientation of the country as well as examining the value system and preferences of the population.

The last surveys were carried out by IPS in 2002 and 2003 and this report tries to assess changes in public attitudes that have occurred since then. This time has been marked by drastic changes in the political landscape of the country. In November 2003, a peaceful revolt against Parliamentary election fraud occurred. Commonly called the 'Rose Revolution', this brought a young generation of politicians to power. Following this shift there have been many other changes. Georgia is coming closer to NATO membership and making more forceful steps towards European integration. As its relations with the West have improved, marked by the visit of President Bush last year, its relations with Russia have deteriorated. Russia is finally closing its Georgian military bases. Inside the country change has also been rapid. The Autonomous Republic of Ajara has been fully integrated into the country, infrastructure is being rehabilitated and reforms are occurring at society. For example, in education National Exams have been

introduced and steps have been taken towards reforming the university education. At the same time concerns persist. Unrest in prisons has been blamed on the Government and the ministry of the interior has been involved in considerable scandal, including the killing of banker Sandro Girgvliani.

Many people contributed to preparation of the questionnaire, the interview of respondents, and processing, editing and publishing of the results. We would like to acknowledge the particularly valuable contribution of Co-Director of the Institute for Policy Studies, George Tarkhan-Mouravi for the conceptualisation and design of the study. Great support was provided by IPS senior researchers Ana Kitiashvili and Ekaterine Pirtskhalava, to whom we extend our sincere gratitude. We also would like to express our gratitude to our interviewers, too numerous to be listed here, for their hard work and dedication. Our thanks extend to Tinatin Eristavi for her excellent job in entering complicated statistical data and to Dr George Welton, Gio Sumbadze, Vasil Targamadze and Gogi Tarkhan-Mouravi for their valuable assistance in editing, desktop design, technical preparation and printing of this report.

While this report reflects these many contributions, the author takes full responsibility for all its possible drawbacks. We fully acknowledge that many issues dealt with in this survey require more study to achieve deeper understanding of underlying factors. We also realize that presenting the statistical data in detail complicates the perception of overall results, but did so to enable any interested parties to subject the results to deeper analysis.

IPS is happy to take into consideration any suggestions and ideas that could help to improve the quality and the scope of the next survey, which is planned to be carried out in spring 2007. The report can also be found on institute's website.

Major findings

The survey was carried out from 15 to 28 June 2006 in all nine regions of Georgia, Achara and the capital Tbilisi. It included both urban and rural areas. The questionnaire consisted of 120 questions. Interviewers visited respondents at home to take face to face interview. Respondents were selected to represent Georgia's population in terms of gender and age.

Among the surveyed 46.8% were located in urban and 53.2% in rural areas. 53.6% were females and 46.4% were males. 13.9% were 17-24 years old, 21.9% were 25-34, 23.4% were 35-44, 21.1% were 45-54, 13.8% were 55-64 and 5.8% were older than 66. 64.3% of respondents were married, 24.0% were never married, 7.7% were widowed and 4.0% divorced. The size of the households varied from 1 to 12 members, most often households comprised of four members. 13.6% of respondents reported family member working abroad. 38.8% had some kind of regular work.

Democracy building

51.7% of those surveyed did not consider Georgia democratic (Only 24.7% do consider Georgia democratic and 23.5% did not answer). This is higher than 2003 (46.6%), but less than 2002 (56.4%).

Participation in decision making is one of the main features of liberal democracy. 63.8% consider participation as a necessary precondition for solving the acute problems facing the country. This compares to 53.8% in 2002 and 56.6% in 2003. A feeling of helplessness prevails among those surveyed. 77.0% think that a lay person cannot exert any influence on decisions (77.6% in 2002 and 72.2% in 2003). Closely linked to participation is the belief that people in power consider opinion of its citizens. 64.7% of citizens think that they do not.

Equality under the law, is not observed in Georgia according to 70.9% of the population. 17.0% thinks that people are equal and

12.2% has no opinion.

Trust in state institutions is rather low, none of them enjoys the trust of at least half the population. The biggest share (47.3%) trusts the President and Ombudsman (43.7%), the smallest share (17.8%) trusts the government and courts (18.8%).

We grouped the respondents from our survey according to who they said they would vote for in case of Parliamentary elections held today.

1.Supporters of National Movement (NMS)	29.4%
2.Supporters of all opposition parties (OPS)	39.6%
3.Undecided (U)	31.0%

No significant age or gender difference was found between the supporters of different parties.

National Movement supporters more positively evaluate the change of economic condition of their households over the last year (25.0%) than supporters of Opposition Parties (14.9%) or Undecided (15.0%). NMS are less critical of almost any actions undertaken by authorities, reveal more optimism than other groups. They differ much more from OPS and U than these two groups between each other.

Television undoubtedly remains the primary source for information. 94.0% get their information mainly from television, 55.4% from printed media, 8.3% from radio and 6.7% from internet. To 53.6% friends and kin provide information and 19.6% get information from family members.

Channel **Imedi's** information programs have the biggest audience. They are watched by 87.0% of population and trusted also by the biggest part - 80.7%. **Rustavi 2's** information programs are watched by a slightly smaller number (76.9%), but are trusted by far fewer people (59.9%). Public television is watched by 32.5% and is trusted by 21.9%.

Imedi also leads the list of the most popular for political programs. At the top of the list are its two programs –Reactia(Reaction) is watched by 71.1% and Pirvelebi (The Firsts) is watched by 64.5%. **Imedi** is also perceived as independent by a much greater portion of respondents (75.0%) than **Rustavi 2** (56.9%).

Among journals the most popular is **Sarke**. 33.5% reported reading it in the week preceding the survey. Among weeklies **Kviris Palitra** with 28.1% and among dailies **Akhali Taoba** with 6.2% are the most popular.

Generations differ in their preferred sources of information. 35-55 years olds read more newspapers (**Rezonance**, **Kviris palitra** and **Kronika**), while young generation reads more the journals (**Sarke**, **Gza**, **Tbiliseli**, **Tskheli Shokoladi** and **Anabechdi**).

Governance

Five the most chosen by population problems that country faces were: The social insecurity of population and poverty (81.6%), relations with Russia (68.2%), economic crises (60.8%), unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia (60.1%) and population decrease (37.3%).

Repairing roads (82.0%), building the army (80.3%), the stabilization of power supply (75.4%), withdrawal of Russian military bases (72.2%), improvement of international image of Georgia (54.6%) were considered the biggest successes of the government, while overcoming poverty (63.5%), improvement of the economy (50.3%), conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia (44.4%), improvement of healthcare services (40.7%) and defense of Human Rights (40.4%) remained as the biggest failures.

Over the next five years the population feared most an increase of poverty (73.7%), increase of illnesses (69.5%), loss of Georgian

traditions (62.8%). The comparison with previous surveys demonstrates that overall the population is more optimistic in 2006 than in either 2002 or 2003. This can be seen in most issues. The increase in optimism is the most substantial regarding corruption and the readiness of population to revolt against authorities. But the increase in threat of poverty is alarming and, compared to 2003, there is an increase in the perception that the country will lose a substantial part of its traditions.

The decrease in corruption is certainly one of the main successes of the government. Very few provide interviewees cite examples of solicitation or payment of bribes. Only 2.0% indicated such examples in health care and 1.0% in educational institutions.

According to 34.4% the future of the country is mostly dependent on its own actions. According to 31.4% it is dependent upon other countries, particularly Russia and USA. According to 28.6% it depends on both. 5.6% could not answer the question. The share of those who believe that Georgia forges its own fate has decreased since in 2003 44.9% and in 2003 53.5% thought so.

Central to the country's politics remains the choice between a Western orientation that looks towards Europe and US or an orientation towards Russia. Choice in orientation is significantly affected by events and Russian policy towards Georgia. After detaining Russian army officers on charges of espionage in October 2006 (4 months after the survey), and following the xenophobic behavior of Russians towards Georgians in Russia, we may expect that attitudes have changed. Nevertheless, in June when asked to choose the orientation of Georgia, the majority (59.0%) chose Russia over USA (41.01%) Such preference, although is not big, has proven to be stable. In 2002 Russia was chosen by 56.1% and in 2003 by 52.9% of population.

The desire for NATO and EU membership is high and stable, showing a slight increase over time. 62.8% favors NATO membership (62.0% in 2002 and in 56.4% in 2003), 16.6% are

against it and 20.6% has no opinion. Even greater is the support of population for the country aspiration to EU membership. 74.0% is for membership, 9.0% is against and 17.0% has no opinion. The share of supporters increased over time. In 2002 69.5% and in 2003 72.2% were for membership.

Poverty

33.7% considers their family to be poor, 64.9% of medium affluence and only 1.4% as well-off. 45.4% pointed at the worsening economic conditions of their household compared to 3 years ago, a bit less, 40.4% estimated that their situation was worse than one year ago.

On average expenditures per household member amounted to 81.9 GEL, most often named sum being 50 GEL while necessary monthly income was estimated on average as 330.1 GEL, most often named was 100 GEL.

Only 41.9% reported having monthly income and 24.6% occasional income.

Poverty had an adverse effect on the health of respondents. 51.6% pointed to at least one instance in 2006 when they were ill but did not visit doctor. Among them, the main reason for not visiting the doctor (78.8%) was financial.

The self identification of a household as 'poor' is connected to the monthly expenditures in that household per person. However, income is not the sole factor. In total 90.2% of "poor" and 78.6% of "non-poor" households spent less than 100 GEL per person. Affluence is correlated with the share of employed household members, with the number of sources of income as well as the type of income sources. "Poor" people are more reliant on irregular income than "non-poor", while more "non-poor" name salaries and stipend as income source.

"Poor" households have much less possessions than "non-poor". This difference is especially apparent in ownership of mobile phones, water heater, video player and car.

City dwellers not only spend much more per person per month than rural population (107.6 GEL against 59.0 GEL), but consider that far more money is necessary to have a decent life. (493.1 GEL compared to 86.8 GEL per member of the household). The rural population more negatively estimate the changes of economic conditions of their households. A bigger share of them (43.6% compared to 36.7% of urbanites) identify a deterioration of the situation since last year and express less optimism relating to likely improvements in next year (39.2% compared to 47.0% of urbanites). A bigger share of urban (48.0%) than rural (36.3%) respondents have an income.

Country events

There have been three Presidents of Georgia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Saakashvili is the most popular among the three (52.0%), with Gamsakhurdia second (32.9%) and Shevardnadze third (8.8%).

9th April, 1989, the conflict in Abkazia, the declaration of Independence, the “Rose Revolution” and the 1991-1992 civil war were selected from the list of 16 events as five most important in the last two decades.

Attitudes and values

Feeling of having control over own life is decreasing. 68.9% in 2002, 78.6% in 2003 and only 56.5% in 2006 were convinced that what person achieves in life mainly depends on individual.

Low is the satisfaction with different elements of their lives. Out of the eight different ‘aspects’ more than half of those surveyed expressed satisfaction with two elements, with their family relationships (75.6%) and living location (54.1%). Respondents were least satisfied with their family income (75.2%).

Dissatisfaction prevails in the estimation of one’s own achievements. 49.3% do not think that they have found their place in life (42.9% in 2002 and 36.1% in 2003).

Notwithstanding a low level of satisfaction the population expresses optimism about the future and this has grown since 2003. 88.5% looks towards the future with hope (85.6% in 2003, not asked in 2002) and 55.4% thinks that things will go their way (53.4% in 2002 and 52.6% in 2003).

Satisfaction with life is strongly connected to justice and self-determination. Unfortunately only one-third of the surveyed (32.4%) believe that their advancement will be the result of hard-work. However, belief in meritocratic advancement has improved. In 2002/3 very slightly less than a quarter believed that hard work was the main basis for advancement.

Knowledge of foreign language (71.7%), computer skills (66.4%) and useful ties (44.6%) were selected as the most important skills needed for advancement.

The population, therefore, remains discontented with economic conditions, violation of human rights and continues to feel that their opinions are not taken into consideration. In addition there is a clear social division between supporters of the National Movement and the rest of the public. On the other hand, the survey proved the continuing popularity of the President of Georgia and acknowledged achievements of authorities in fighting corruption, infrastructure development and army building.

The population does not show high satisfaction with life in general. The number who think that Georgia is on the rights path has increased over the years but is still low and slightly exceeds one third of population. About one third thinks it impossible to reach normal living standards by the honest work alone, showing a slight decrease since 2003. Only a quarter of those surveyed thinks that there is democracy in Georgia, almost the same num-

ber who thought so in November, 2003. Very few feel that they found their place in life. Notwithstanding such evaluations people look with optimism towards future. Such optimism is unchanging and is persistently demonstrated in opinion surveys of Georgia's population and could be considered as an asset of the country.

Results

The survey of the Georgia population aimed to assess the perceptions of the citizens on issues concerning democracy building, the problems of the country, economic developments and external orientations. It also aimed to assess their political preferences, as well as their prevailing moods on internal politics, the achievements and failures of the government and their general attitudes. Similar studies, carried out by the Institute in 2002₁ and 2003₂ permit us to make some comparisons and to speak about the way in which these perceptions have changed.

The Sample and methodology

The survey was carried out from 15 to 28 June 2006 in all nine regions of Georgia, Achara and the capital Tbilisi. It included both urban and rural areas. The questionnaire consisted of 120 questions. Interviewers visited respondents at home to take face to face interview. Respondents were selected to represent Georgia's population in terms of gender and age

1. Table

Geographic distribution of respondents

Region	Samp- ling	Urban	M	F	Rural	M	F	T
Tbilisi	271.7	272	122	150				272
Ajara	94.6	41	18	23	54	26	28	95
Guria	36.3	13	6	7	37	18	19	50*
Imereti	176	39	18	21	137	67	70	176
Kakheti	102.3	21	9	12	81	40	41	102
Mtskheta- Mtianeti	31.9	14	6	8	36	18	18	50*
Racha- Iechkhumi	13.2	9	4	5	41	20	21	50*
Samegrelo- Zemo svaneti	117.7	47	21	26	71	35	36	118
Samekhe- Javakheti	51.7	17	8	9	35	17	18	52
Kvemo Kartli	125.4	46	21	25	79	39	40	125
Shida Kartli	79.2	28	13	15	51	25	26	80
Total	1100	548	246	301	623	305	318	1170

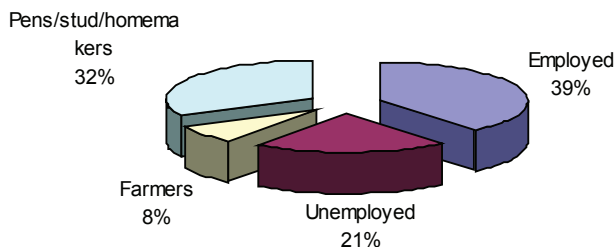
1.Sumbadze, N., & Tarkhan-Mouravi, G. (2003). Panel survey of Georgia's population: October, 2002. IPS: Tbilisi. (In English and in Georgian).

2.Sumbadze, N., & Tarkhan-Mouravi, G. (2004). Public Opinion in Tbilisi: In the Aftermath of the Parliamentary Elections of November 2, 2003. Abridged version in: "NISPAcee News", Bratislava, Volume XI • No.1 • Winter 2004, pp. 1-14

http://www.nispa.sk/files/publications/newsletter/SPAceeNews_winter2004.pdf

42.9% of respondents had university education, 26.2% had high-school degrees, 20.8% had vocational education. 3.3% had 8 years and 0.9% 4 years of schooling. Only 4.2% reported to be a member of a political party. 91.9% of those surveyed were ethnic Georgians, 3.8% were Azeri, 2.4% were Armenian and 1.9% were of other ethnicity.

Among the surveyed 46.8% were located in urban and 53.2% in rural areas. 53.6% were females and 46.4% were males. 13.9% were 17-24 years old, 21.9% were 25-34, 23.4% were 35-44, 21.1% were 45-54, 13.8% were 55-64 and 5.8% were older than 66. 64.3% of respondents were married, 24.0% were never married, 7.7% were widowed and 4.0% divorced. The size of the households varied from 1 to 12 members, most often households comprised of four members 13.6% of respondents reported family member working abroad. 38.8% had some kind of regular income.



Graph 1
Employment status of respondents

Democracy Building

The 2003 “Rose Revolution” was provoked by the falsification of the parliamentary election results and the attack that this represented on democratic principles. The survey questioned the perception of the new administration on issues of democracy.

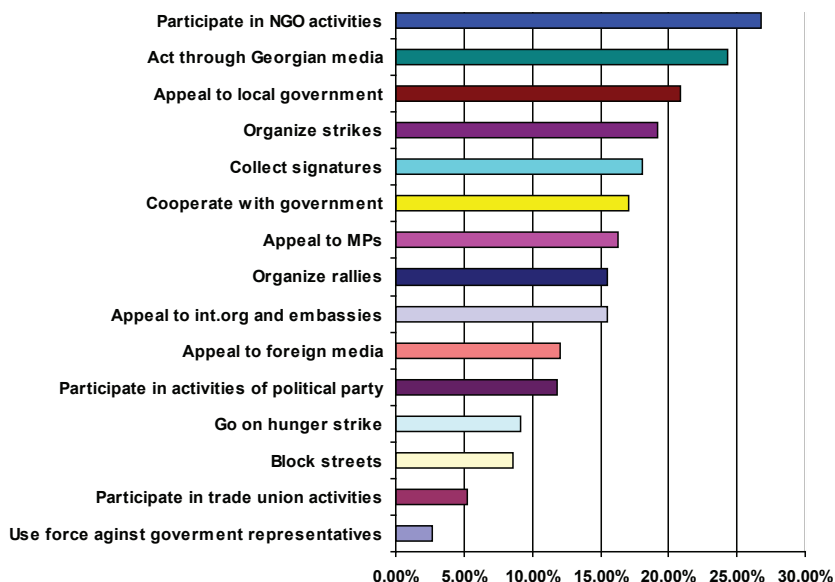
51.7% of those surveyed did not consider Georgia democratic (Only 24.7% do consider Georgia democratic and 23.5% did not answer). This is higher than 2003 (46.6%), but less than 2002 (56.4%).

Participation

Participation in decision making is one of the main features of liberal democracy. 63.8% consider participation as a necessary precondition for solving the acute problems facing the country. This compares to 53.8% in 2002 and 56.6% in 2003. A feeling of helplessness prevails among those surveyed. 77.0% think that a lay person cannot exert any influence on decisions (77.6% in 2002 and 72.2% in 2003). Closely linked to participation is the belief that people in power consider opinion of its citizens. 64.7% of citizens think that they do not.

The actual involvement of the population in public life is quite low. In 2006 only 2.2% appealed to parliament (3.6% in 2002 and 4.6% in 2003), 4.7% to local government (6.8% in 2002 and 8.0% in 2003) and 2.0% participated in any kind of collective action, like a street protest (3.9% in 2002 and 4.1% in 2003).

Very few even know how to become involved politically, as few respondents were able to identify instruments of participation. In response to questions about effective methods of political involvement 26.8% favoured participation in Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), 24.3% selected acting through Georgian Media and only 20.8% thought they could appeal effectively to local authorities.

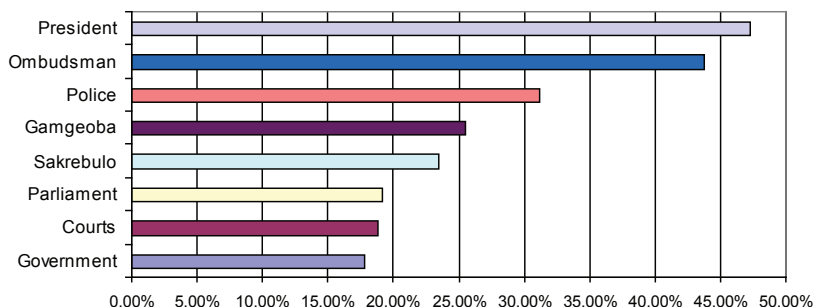


Graph 2
Ways of influencing government

Rule of law, equality and trust

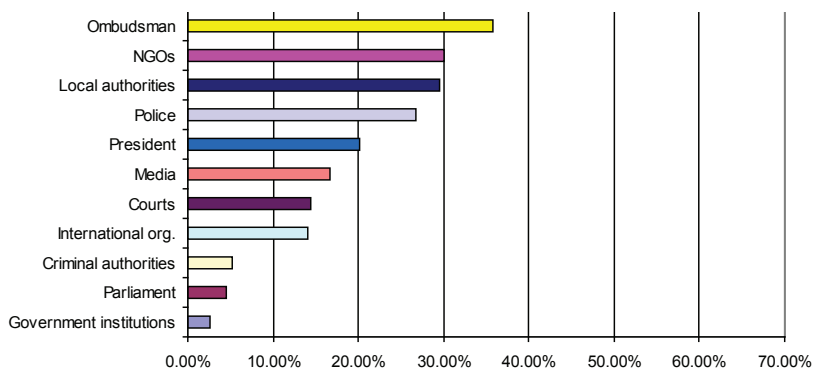
Another pillar of liberal democracy, equality under the law, is not observed in Georgia according to 70.9% of the population. 17.0% thinks that people are equal and 12.2% has no opinion.

After the “Rose Revolution” the feeling of security against unfairness has not changed among 36.1% of surveyed, it has increased among 35.2% and decreased among 22.4% (6.3% could not answer the question). Trust in state institutions is rather low, none of them enjoys the trust of at least half the population. The biggest share (47.3%) trusts the President, the smallest share (17.8%) trusts the government.



Graph 3
Trust in state institutions

In the event of the violation of their rights most people (60.0%) would go to kin and friends, 35.8% to the Ombudsman and 30.1% to NGOs . The choices also reflect deficiency of trust to state institutions.



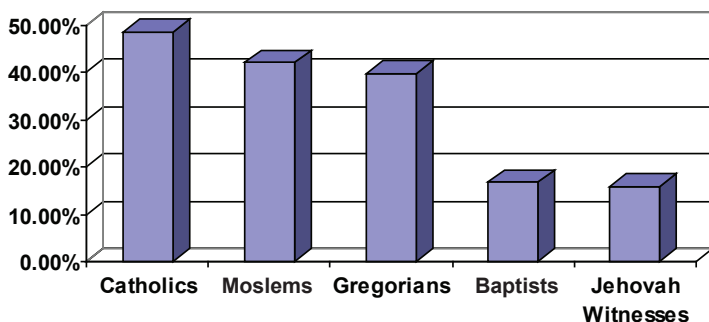
Graph 4
Trust to persons and institutions

Three years ago, in June 2003 the priorities were quite different. As in 2006 kin and friends were named as the most obvious objects of appeal in case of the violation of one's rights, then local authorities, courts, ombudsman and government institutions. Comparing the results of the two surveys shows a reduction of trust in parliament, government, courts, local authorities and the media and an increase in trust towards NGOs and Ombudsman. Mistrust is considerable not only towards the state institutions, but also towards people in general. More than half, (55.5%) believes that majority cannot be trusted (57.1% in 2002 and 53.1% in 2003).

One of the values of Liberal democracy is the defense of the rights of minorities and their equal treatment under the law. The population still distinguishes the rights of ethnic Georgians, although the proportion of those who discriminate decreased. The majority, 56.3% (61.2% in 2002) thinks that ethnic Georgians should be privileged in getting high state positions and 58.4% (67.4% in 2002) think they should be privileged in acquiring land and in privatisation.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (95.3%) think that all citizens of Georgia should know Georgian (94.0% in 2002 and 91.9% in 2003). 7.5% felt at least once during past 6 month oppressed due to their ethnicity (4.2% in 2002 and 4.7% in 2003).

The population is even less egalitarian in its attitude towards different religions. 66.2% think that other religions should not have the same rights in Georgia as the Georgian Orthodox Church. According to the biggest share of respondents (48.6%) Catholics should have the right to carry out religious services but the vast majority do not think that Jehovah Witnesses should have this right.



Graph 5
Granted right to carry religious service

The rights of the Moslem population, deported in 1944 from South Georgia, remains a disputed issue in Georgian society. The obligation to repatriate them was signed by the country as the precondition of becoming the member of Council of Europe. Not much has been done since and the government often points to the negative public attitude to repatriation issue as one of the main obstacles for the beginning the process.

Our survey showed that the number of opponents of repatriation decreased since 2002, as 37.4% (50.4% in 2002) of population thinks that the Moslem population should not be repatriated. According to 11.5% (14.2% in 2002) everyone should be granted the opportunity to repatriate, according to 35.6% (35.4% in 2002) only those who considers themselves Georgian should be allowed to return. 15.5% did not express opinion. 52.8% do not know where repatriated citizens should be resettled. According to 33.1% this could be done anywhere in Georgia. According to 14.2% they could be located anywhere in the country except Meskhethi.

The living standards of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who have been displaced for more than a decade and number 221,597 according to 2005 verification, remains a problem. Especially

acute is housing problem. The previous government adhered to the concept of temporary integration of IDPs to the host society. This precluded the long-term solutions of the problem. The idea was that if provided with adequate housing they would be reluctant to return to Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Over the past two years IDPs have been given an opportunity to purchase apartments. This resulted from the efforts of humanitarian aid and the private sector who wanted to reconstruct the hotels where the majority of the IDPs were living.

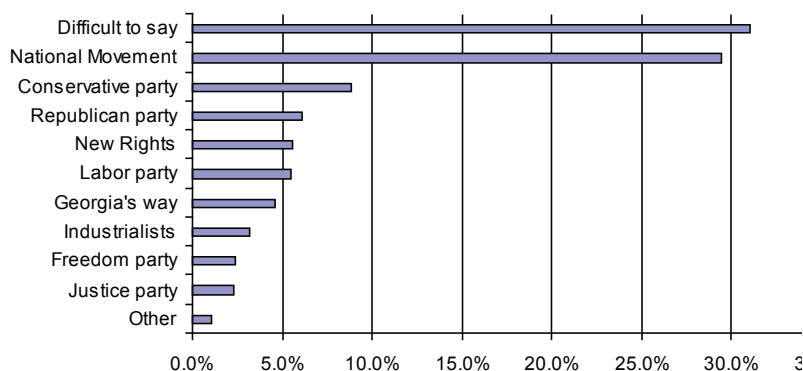
The attitude of population towards housing problem of IDPs supports the new policy. The majority (56.6%) consider that the Government should provide assistance to IDPs in purchasing apartments, 21.0% think the government should not provide assistance and 22.4% have no opinion.

Chechen refugees still remain in Georgia. The attitude towards their stay in the country is equivocal. According to 43.1% Chechens should leave the country, according to 37.8% they could stay and 19.1% had no answer.

Local elections and political preferences

Elections are considered a test of democracy. Several questions of the survey referred to the forthcoming local elections. One of them concerned the belief in fair elections. 38.7% of the population did not believe that local elections would be fair (28.2% expected fairness and 33.0% could not answer the question). Notwithstanding this, 62.9% planned to take part in them while 18.9% did not plan to vote and 18.2% had not decided yet.

The biggest share of the respondents (31.0%) could not give definite answer to question as to which party they would vote for if Parliamentary elections would be hold tomorrow. Among the different parties, the National Movement has the biggest number of supporters (29.4%).



Graph 6
Support of the parties

According to the central election committee³ 47.3% of eligible to vote population took part in local elections, which were held on October, 5. National Movement decisively won the elections (Official results of elections were not published by November, 23).

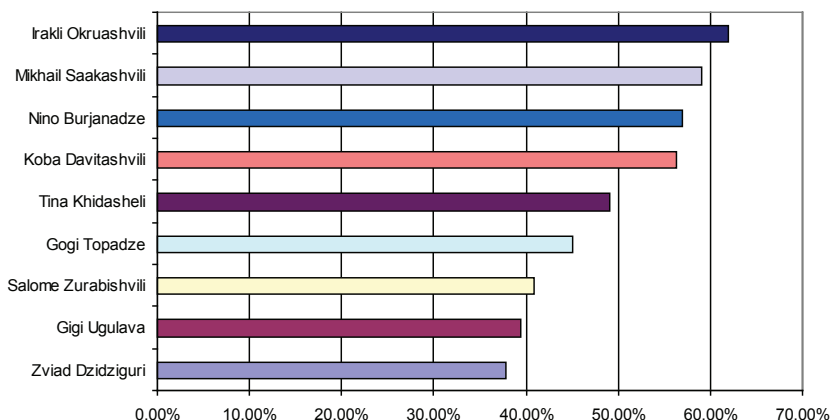
3. www.cec.gov.ge

Respondents were also asked to assess individual politicians. They were presented with a list of 28 individuals. 13 in the list represent opposition parties. Respondents were requested to give one of 4 answers; like, dislike, difficult to say, do not know the person.

Table 2
Estimation of politicians

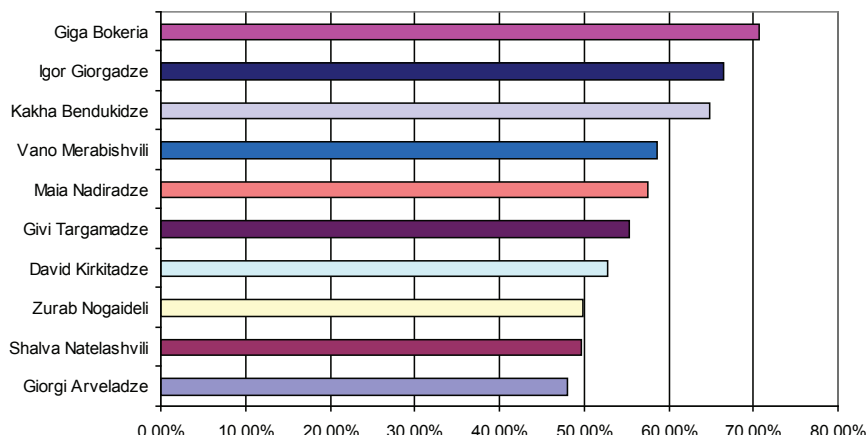
	Politician	Like	Dislike	Neutral	Do not know person
1	Giorgi Arveladze	10.2	48.0	29.8	12.0
2	Kakha Bendukidze	8.8	64.8	21.8	4.7
3	Gela Bejuashvili	14.0	47.2	29.9	8.9
4	Levan Berdzenishvili	56.3	19.9	18.9	4.3
5	Giga Bokeria	9.2	70.6	14.7	5.5
6	Nino Burdjanadze	57.0	20.9	20.8	1.3
7	Konstantine Gamsakhurdia	24.7	36.9	33.9	4.5
8	Davit Gamkrelidze	26.0	37.3	31.0	5.7
9	Igor Giorgadze	10.2	66.5	17.9	5.4
10	Koba Davitashvili	56.1	16.4	22.8	4.7
11	Dato Zurabishvili	18.8	31.0	31.3	18.9
12	Salome Zurabishvili	40.9	28.1	26.2	4.8
13	Givi Targamadze	12.2	55.4	24.6	7.7
14	Gogi Topadze	45.1	24.3	25.4	5.2
15	Davit Kirkitadze	13.1	52.8	23.9	10.2
16	Kakha Lomaia	25.3	47.1	23.3	4.3
17	Mikheil Machavariani	21.4	46.1	26.6	5.9
18	Vano Merabishvili	16.4	58.6	21.1	3.9
19	Maia Nadiadze	17.2	57.6	20.0	5.2
20	Shalva Natelashvili	25.7	49.7	20.8	3.7
21	Zurab Nogaideli	17.2	49.9	28.5	4.3
22	Irakli Okruashvili	62.0	19.4	15.5	3.1
23	Mikheil Saakashvili	59.0	21.3	19.2	0.5
24	Gigi Ugulava	39.5	30.8	24.5	5.3
25	Davit Usupashvili	30.0	27.8	31.3	10.8
26	Pikria Chikhladze	31.3	34.5	27.8	6.4
27	Zviad Dzidziguri	37.8	28.8	25.9	7.5
28	Tinatin Khidasheli	49.1	19.6	23.5	7.8

Most favorably estimated were, Irakli Okruashvili - Minister of Defense (62.0%), President Mikhail Saakashvili (59.0%) and Nino Burjanadze - the Speaker of Parliament (57.0%).



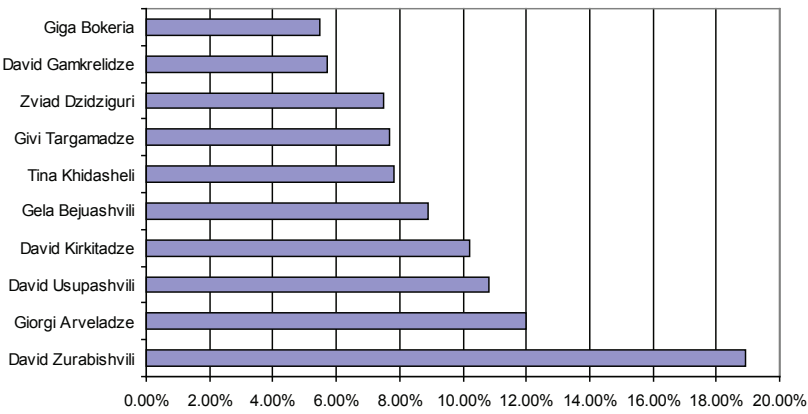
Graph 7
Ten the most popular politicians

The list of most unpopular politicians is headed by Giga Bokeria (disliked by 70.6%), Igor Giorgadze (66.5%) and Kakha Bendukidze (64.8%).



Graph 8
Least popular politicians

As is demonstrated in the Graph, the least well-known to the public are David Zurabishvili, Giorgi Arveladze and David Usupashvili.



Graph 9
Ranking of unknown politicians

Media

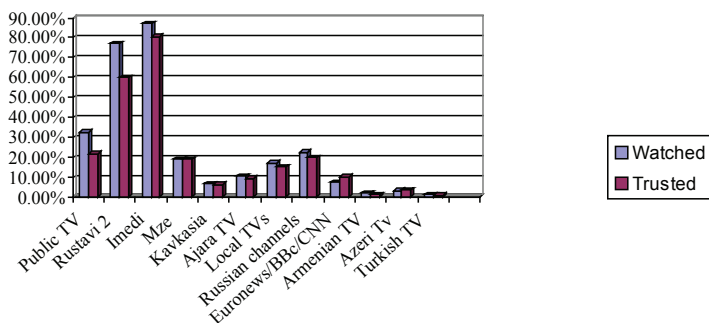
Media freedom is considered as one of the main prerequisites of democracy. 34.3% think that after the “Rose Revolution” the freedom of television increased. According to 30.5% freedom of newspapers increased, and 22.0% thought freedom of the radio increased.

Table 3
Estimation of changes in the freedom of media

Media	Increase	Decrease	No change	Uncertain	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Television	34.3	16.5	27.7	21.5	100
Radio	22.0	9.9	25.8	42.3	100
Newspapers	30.5%	10.8%	27.3%	31.4	100

Television undoubtedly remains the primary source for information. 94.0% get their information mainly from television, 55.4% from printed media, 8.3% from radio and 6.7% from internet. To 53.6% friends and kin provide information and 19.6% get information from family members.

Channel *Imedi*'s information programs have the biggest audience. They are watched by 87.0% of population and trusted also by the biggest part - 80.7%. *Rustavi 2*'s information programs are watched by a slightly smaller number (76.9%), but are trusted by far fewer people (59.9%). Public television is watched by 32.5% and is trusted by 21.9%.

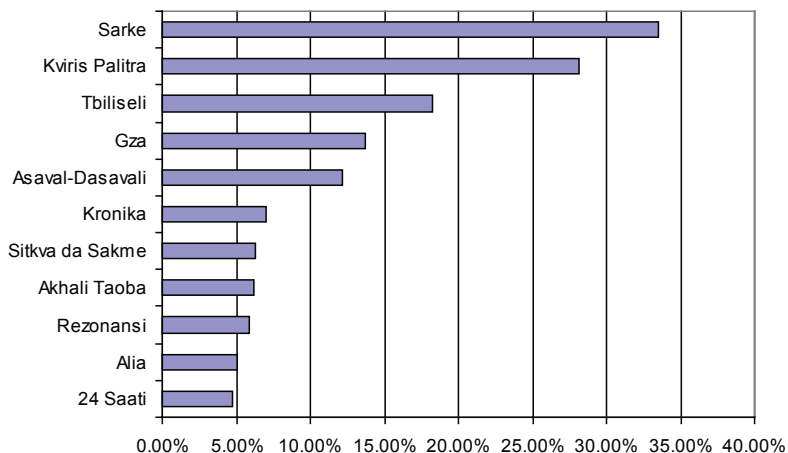


Graph 10

TV channel, watched and trusted

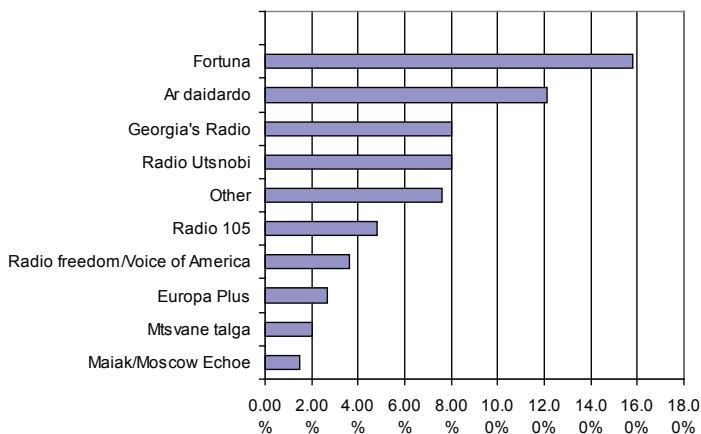
Imedi also leads the list of the most popular political programs. At the top of the list are its two programs –Reactia (Reaction) watched by 71.1% and Pirvelebi (The Firsts) watched by 64.5%. *Imedi* is also perceived as independent by a much greater portion of respondents (75.0%) than *Rustavi 2* (56.9%).

Among journals the most popular is *Sarke*. 33.5% reported reading it in the week preceding the survey. Among weeklies *Kviris Palitra* with 28.1% and among dailies *Akhali Taoba* with 6.2% are the most popular.



Graph 11
Readership of printed media

As mentioned above very few listen to the radio. Radio *Fortuna*, radio *Ar Daidardo*, *Georgia's Radio* and radio *Utsnobi* are listened by the biggest share of respondents



Graph 12
Audience for radio channels

Governance

The effectiveness of Governance is the main reason for the popularity and support of the authorities. The Government needs considerable trust and public confidence for carrying out drastic reforms to change the existing balance of society and the patterns of life of the population. Effectiveness of governing is linked to how the most important problems of the country or locality faces are dealt with. The disappearance of some problems identified in 2002 and 2003 surveys can be seen as indicators of good governance.

39.7% is convinced that Georgia is on the right path of development (31.1% thinks it is not and 29.2% cannot answer the question) . In 2002 so thought only 14.0% and in 2003 18.8%.

Respondents were asked to choose five from a list of 25 problems. The social insecurity of population and poverty were chosen as a priority by the overwhelming majority (81.6%). It was followed by the relations with Russia (68.2%), economic crises (60.8%), unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia (60.1%) and population decrease (37.3%).

Table 4

Rank order of problems facing Georgia by their importance

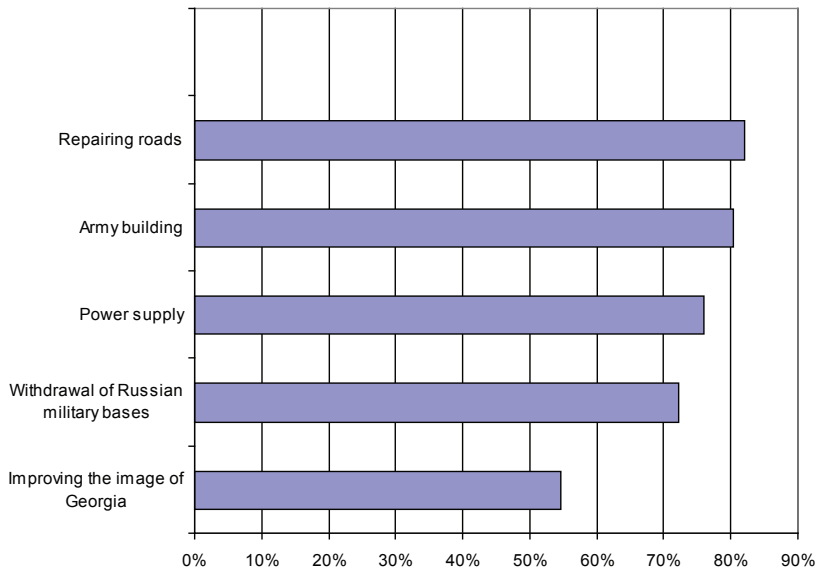
Rank	Problem	%
1	Social insecurity of population and poverty	81.6
2	Relations with Russia	68.2
3	Economic crises	60.8
4	Unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia	60.1
5	Decrease of population due to emigration and decrease in birth rate	37.3
6	Inaccessibility of quality health care	29.0
7	Drug addiction	26.7
8	Difficult condition of IDPs from Abkhazia and Ossetia	18.5
9	Citizen's insecurity against representatives of the law enforcement agencies	17.4
10	Problems in the business development	14.2
11	Corruption	14.0
12	Condition of education system	12.3
13	Degradation of the environment	8.8
14	Criminality	8.2
15	Weakness of political opposition	6.7
16	Power supply	6.3
17.5	Hindrance in the development of democracy	5.6
17.5	Military weakness	5.6
19	Decrease of possibilities for the development of science	3.8
20	Relations with ethnic minorities	2.5

To assess the success of the government after the “Rose Revolution” respondents were requested to classify the actions in one of four ways: successful, unsuccessful, nothing has changed, or difficult to answer.

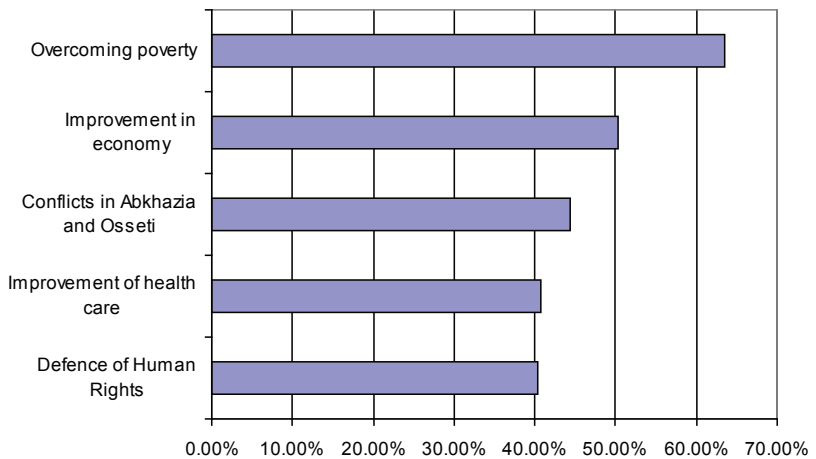
Table 5
Assessment of the activities of the government after the “Rose Revolution”

	Activity	Success %	Failure %	No change %	Difficult to answer %
1	Stabilization of the country	51.1	17.9	21.1	10.0
2	Withdrawal of Russian military bases	72.2	12.5	4.9	10.3
3	Improvement of economy	26.9	50.3	17.8	5.0
4	Education reform	46.2	30.5	6.3	17.0
5	Freedom of press	33.9	19.0	28.9	18.1
6	Defense of Human Rights	21.4	40.4	25.0	13.1
7	Overcoming poverty	12.9	63.5	19.6	4.1
8	Privatization of state enterprises	27.3	29.9	15.6	27.2
9	Repairing roads	82.0	9.5	3.8	4.7
10	Improvement of power supply	75.4	14.9	4.0	5.7
11	Reform of the law enforcement agencies	33.3	31.2	16.0	19.5
12	Overcoming corruption in state bodies	31.8	25.5	21.3	21.3
13	Improvement of healthcare services	31.2	40.7	19.7	8.4
14	Solving the conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia	8.9	44.4	32.4	14.4
15	Fight with drug addiction	23.2	39.0	22.8	15.0
16	Improvements in social protection	45.1	31.0	15.4	8.5
17	Fight with criminality	43.2	25.2	14.9	16.7
18	Establishment of democratic principles and responsiveness to public needs	17.4	37.8	23.4	21.4
19	Protection of the environment	30.2	29.7	22.8	17.3
20	Improvement of international image of Georgia	54.6	10.4	17.5	17.4
21	Fair court decisions	19.1	39.0	20.2	21.7
22	Building of the army	80.3	4.1	5.7	10.0
23	Improvement of Patriotic feeling	60.6	17.8	9.8	11.7
24	Support of a small business	24.9	44.1	15.9	15.1
25	Empowerment of local governance	27.7	25.1	25.6	21.6
26	Relations with ethnic minorities	29.5	15.7	29.7	25.0
27	Other	15.6	9.4	12.5	62.5

Repairing roads, building the army and the stabilization of power supply, withdrawal of Russian military bases, improvement of international image of Georgia were considered the biggest successes of the government, while overcoming poverty, improvement of the economy, conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia, Improvement of healthcare services, defense of Human Rights remained as the biggest failures.



Graph 13
Success of the government after the “Rose Revolution”



Graph 14
Failures of Government

Besides evaluating the activities of the government over the past two and a half years, respondents were requested to assess 12 listed recent activities. Only two activities - organizing patriotic youth camps (69.3%) and introduction of a new system of social assistance (59.0%) were evaluated by more than half of the respondents as successful. Unsuccessful in the opinion of more than half of the respondents were five activities - investigation of Girgvliani case (64.2%), resolving unrest in the prisons (61.0%), the issue of leasing forests for 50 years (58.2%), attempts to introduce cash machines in market places (54.6%) and actions against rally participants (53.5%).

Table 6
Estimations of the recent government actions

No	Issue	Right %	Wrong %	Difficult to say %
1	Actions in Ossetia	22.3	29.5	48.2
2	Improving the conditions of Internally Displaced persons	16.7	39.6	43.7
3	Arresting suspects of criminal activities	21.2	48.1	30.7
4	Investigating Girgvliani case	5.8	64.2	30.0
5	Resolving unrest in the prison	13.5	61.0	25.5
6	Acting against participants of rallies	11.5	53.5	35.0
7	Trying to introduce cash machines in the market places	20.1	54.6	25.3
8	Organizing patriotic camps for youth	69.3	8.3	22.4
9	Reforming Universities and research institutes	33.6	31.8	34.6
10	Leasing of forests for 50 years	9.3	58.2	32.5
11	Introducing a new system of social assistance	59.0	15.4	25.6
12	Stripping of Gelashvili's of his status as a member of Parliament	12.3	38.9	48.8

As for the country as a whole economic concerns are central for all localities as well. 82.4% chose unemployment as one of the main local problems. The other most frequently chosen problems were drug addiction (41.8%), access to quality education (40.6%), the condition of roads (36.0%) and emigration (34.1%).

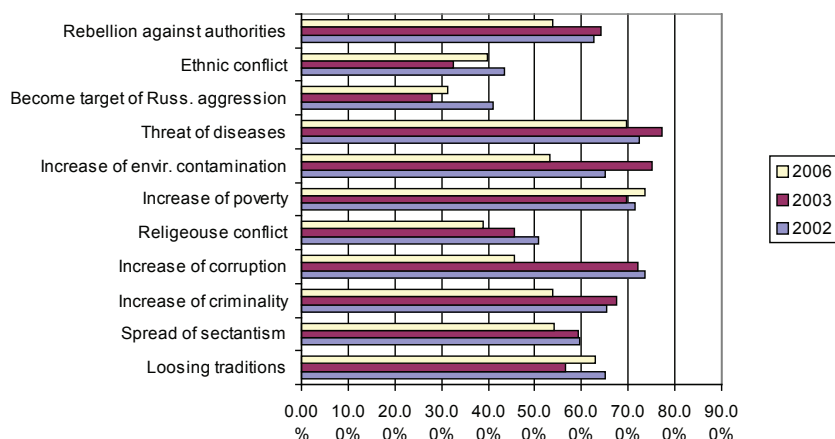
Table 7
Rank order of local problems

Rank	Problems	%
1	Unemployment	82.4
2	Drug addiction	41.8
3	Getting quality education	40.6
4	Condition of roads	36.0
5	Emigration	34.1
6	Contamination of the environment	32.8
7	Health care	30.4
8	Criminality	29.1
9	Lack/quality of potable water	25.7
10	Lack of amusement possibilities	22.3
11	Illegal logging	18.3
12	Irrigation problems	15.1
13	Insecurity of citizens before representatives of law enforcement agencies	14.7
14	Corruption	14.2
15	Disruption in power supply	11.8
16	Small size of plots	10.1
17	Lack of information	8.7
18	Lack of plots	6.3
19	Ethnic tensions	2.6

We had quite a similar situation in previous surveys, where economic concerns, especially unemployment were the highest priority. In November 2002 we asked respondents to select from a list the three most important local problems. Unemployment, poverty and the small size of salaries were chosen by the majority. In 2003, the three most often chosen local problems were unemployment, power shortage and criminality.

Besides the evaluation of existing problems we were interested in finding out what the population feared most over the next five years. The biggest share of the respondents expected an increase of poverty (73.7%), increase of illnesses (69.5%), loss of Georgian traditions (62.8%), spread of religious sectantism (54.2%), increase of violence and crime (53.7%), increase of contamination of nature (53.2%), increase of corruption (45.6%), conflict on ethnic grounds (39.7%) and conflict on religious grounds (39.0%).

The comparison with previous surveys demonstrates that overall the population is more optimistic in 2006 than in either 2002 or 2003. This can be seen in most issues. The increase in optimism is the most substantial regarding corruption and the readiness of population to revolt against authorities. But the increase in threat of poverty is alarming and, compared to 2003, there is an increase in the perception that the country will lose a substantial part of its traditions. There is also an increased perception that Georgia will become the target of Russian military aggression and that there will be conflict on ethnic grounds.



Graph 15

Possible threats facing the country in next 5 years (2002, 2003 and 2006).

The views of the population were studied not only on existing and possible problems but also on possible ways of improving the situation. The respondents were offered 14 possible policies and requested to select the three policies that were, in their opinion, the most effective. Increase of salaries and pensions (74.6%), improvement of the relations with Russia (55.3%) and change of the government were selected by the greatest share.

Table 8

Rank order of effective ways for improving the situation

Rank	Items	%
1	Increase salaries and pensions	74.6
2	Improve relations with Russia	55.3
3	Change of the government	33.4
4	New parliamentary elections	23.0
5	Demand withdrawal of Russian peace-keepers from Georgia	19.3
6	Improve relations with opposition	18.7
7	New presidential elections	13.1
8	Use force for integration of Abkhazia and Ossetia	13.0
9	Stop the privatisation of strategic resources	11.6
10	Renationalise incorrectly privatised state resources	7.1
11	Federalization the country	6.8
12	Increase taxation on large-scale enterprises	5.8
13	Other	3.8
14	Publish list of KGB agents	1.5

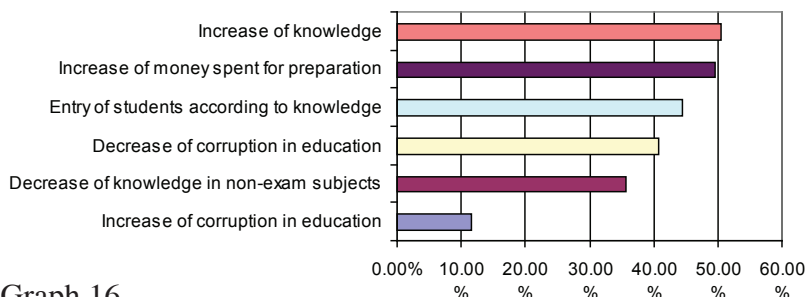
Respondents were also asked to assess the effectiveness of the possible future actions of the government by indicating whether the policy would be right or wrong. The demand for the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from conflict zones, direct election of local administration and the restoration of autonomy for Ossetia were the most popular actions. Most often chosen as the wrong policy were the creation of an autonomous region in Javakheti, the use of force in the resolution of conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia and the sale of central gas pipe-line to Russia.

Table 9

Assessment of possible future actions of the government

No	Action	Right %	Wrong %	Difficult to say %
1	Restoration of autonomy to South Ossetia	34.1	42.5	23.4
2	Use of force in resolving the conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia	15.7	71.1	13.2
3	Selling the central gas pipe-line to Russia	8.2	67.8	24.0
4	Creating autonomy in Javakheti	3.7	76.6	19.7
5	Abolition of military conscription.	17.9	64.5	17.6
6	Repatriation of Moslem population deported in 1944 from South Georgia	20.6	53.6	25.8
7	Demand of withdrawal from conflict zones of Russian peacekeepers	70.5	13.1	16.4
8	Direct election of local administration	61.1	18.3	20.6

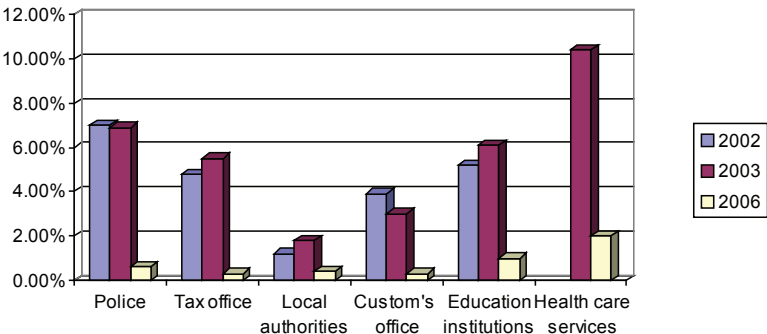
Education is one of the main indicators of the country's development. Since coming to power the government targeted to carry out educational reform. The reform plan includes the whole educational cycle, beginning with the kindergartens and ending with doctoral studies. So far reforms have affected the school and University education. The most drastic change was the introduction of National Exams for the entry to university. Preceding the reform discussions concentrated on the issue of corruption and the amount of money spent by the household for exam preparation. National Exams were portrayed as the means of overcoming these two problems. The survey suggested that the reforms have been successful in fighting corruption, but did not suggest that there has been a decrease in the money spent by household for exam preparation.



Graph 16

Effects of education reform

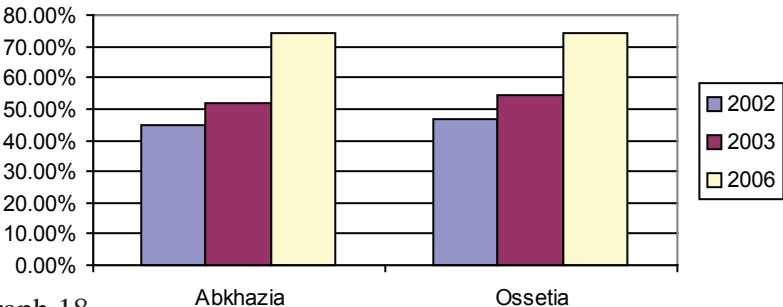
The decrease in corruption is certainly one of the main successes of the government. Very few provide interviewees cite examples of solicitation or payment of bribes. Only 2.0% indicated such examples in health care and 1.0% in educational institutions.



Graph 17

Solicitation of bribes (relating to health care services this question was not included in the 2002 survey).

Regaining control over Abkhazia and Ossetia and return of the IDPs to their native homes is undoubtedly the biggest problem that the Georgian state faces There are suggestions that the state may use force to resolve this problem. As in the previous years, this survey demonstrated the reluctance of population to use force. 74% are against using force in either Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Moreover the number of persons who oppose the use of force has steadily increased over years.



Graph 18

Number of persons who are against using force for solving problems in Abkhazia and Ossetia

External orientations

The support of the population for the Government's foreign policy choices is also crucial for pursuing the goals set by the country. The perceived importance of foreign policy orientation is linked to the country's perceived future dependence on other countries. According to 34.4% the future of the country is mostly dependent on its own actions. According to 31.4% it is dependent upon other countries, particularly Russia and USA. According to 28.6% it depends on both. 5.6% could not answer the question. The share of those who believe that Georgia forges its own fate has decreased since in 2003 44.9% and in 2003 53.5% thought so.

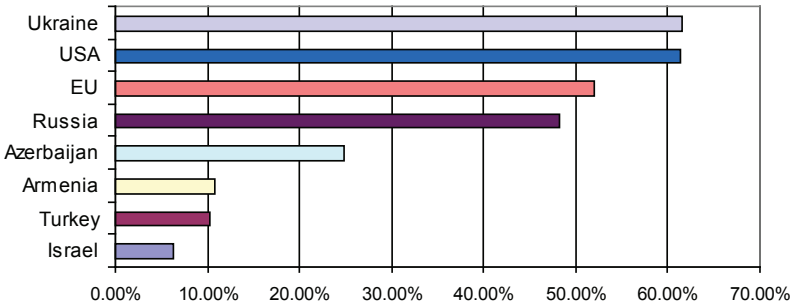
Central to the country's politics remains the choice between a Western orientation that looks towards Europe and US or an orientation towards Russia. Choice in orientation is significantly affected by events and Russian policy towards Georgia. After detaining Russian army officers on charges of espionage in October 2006 (4 months after the survey), and following the xenophobic behavior of Russians towards Georgians in Russia, we may expect that attitudes have changed. Nevertheless, in June when asked to choose the orientation of Georgia, the majority (59.0%) chose Russia over USA (41.01%) Such preference, although is not big, has proven to be stable. In 2002 Russia was chosen by 56.1% and in 2003 by 52.9% of population.

In contrast to demonstrated preference of Russia the share of those favouring membership of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) declined. 32.1% of respondents consider that Georgia should continue membership. In 2002 39.0% were in favour of membership and in 2003 44.9% .

On the other hand the desire for NATO and EU membership is high and stable, showing a slight increase over time. 62.8% favours NATO membership (62.0% in 2002 and 56.4% in 2003), 16.6% are against it and 20.6% has no opinion. Even greater is

the support of population for the country aspiration to EU membership. 74.0% is for membership, 9.0% is against and 17.0% has no opinion. The share of supporters increased over time. In 2002 69.5% and in 2003 72.2% were for membership.

Also linked to foreign policy is the perception of foreign friendliness towards Georgia. Respondents were requested to choose from the listed eight countries, three on whom Georgia could rely in case of emergence.

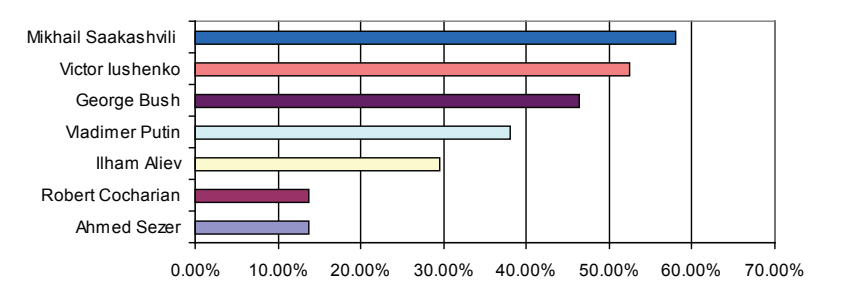


Graph 19
Countries on which Georgia could rely in case of emergency

The three most friendly foreign powers in 2006 were Ukraine, the USA and the EU. In 2002 these were USA, countries of EU and Russia. In 2003, the USA, Russia and Ukraine. It should be noted that EU was not listed as a separate entity in the 2003 survey.

The fact that the population of the country seems to maintain a strong pro-Russia orientation while at the same time declaring a policy of pro-Western development is clearly an issue requiring deeper study and analysis.

The attitude towards a country is also reflected in the popularity of its leaders. Respondents were asked to give their attitude towards seven presidents by choosing one of three options: like, dislike or difficult to say. Mikhail Saakashvili, Victor Iushchenko and George Bush were the most popular presidents, least popular were Robert Kocharian, Vladimir Putin and Ahmed Sezer.

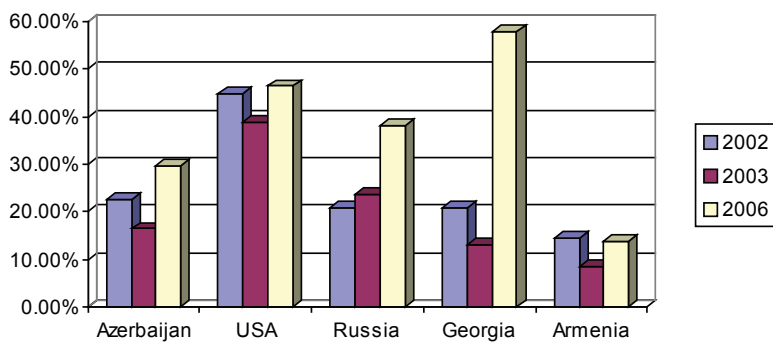


Graph 20
Popularity of presidents

Table 10
Attitudes Towards the Presidents

President	Like %	Dislike %	Dif. to say %
Ilham Aliev	29.6	20.3	50.1
George Bush	46.4	21.7	31.9
Victor Iushchenko	52.5	14.7	32.8
Robert Kocharian	13.8	34.3	52.0
Vladimir Putin	38.0	33.4	28.5
Mikhail Saakashvili	58.0	18.4	23.8
Ahmed Sezer	13.7	22.5	63.8

From the 2006 survey, the presidents of five countries were also represented in 2002 and 2003 surveys, though in Georgia and Azerbaijan the actual leaders differed (Georgia was led by Edward Shevardnadze and Azerbaijan by Geidar Aliev). This allows a comparison.



Graph 21

Popularity of the national leaders in five countries over the years

Poverty

Estimation of economic condition of the household

Poverty undoubtedly remains the most pressing problem that the country faces. 33.7% considers their family to be poor, 64.9% of medium affluence and only 1.4% as well-off. 45.4% pointed at the worsening economic conditions of their household compared to 3 years ago. According to 21.3% it improved and according to 33.4% it did not change. A bit less, 40.4% estimated that their situation was worse than one year ago. According to 17.9% it improved and according to 41.7% it did not change.

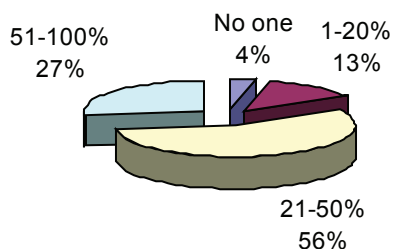
Comparing these estimations with the answers in 2002 and 2003 it can be said that there are no drastic changes in perception of affluence, though compared to 2002 more people feel that their economic situation worsened during past three years (32.2% felt worse in 2002 and 45.4% in 2006). There is no change in economic optimism. As in earlier surveys respondents demonstrate strong faith in improving economic conditions. 42.8% are convinced that it will improve in one, and 56.8% in three years.

Incomes and expenditures

Unemployment is the main reason for the poor economic condition of households. In 3.6% of surveyed households no one had any kind of income for at least for three months in an year. In 9.3% of households all their members had income. Most often half of family members generate income.

Respondents reported spending by their households in May from 10 to 8000 GEL⁴. Most often they estimated around 200 GEL. On average expenditures per household member amounted to 81.9 GEL, most often named sum being 50 GEL while necessary monthly income was estimated on average as 330.1 GEL, most often named was 100 GEL. Expenditures are less than official subsistence minimum of average consumer determined as 94GEL by June, 2006.

4. 1 GEL=0.57USD

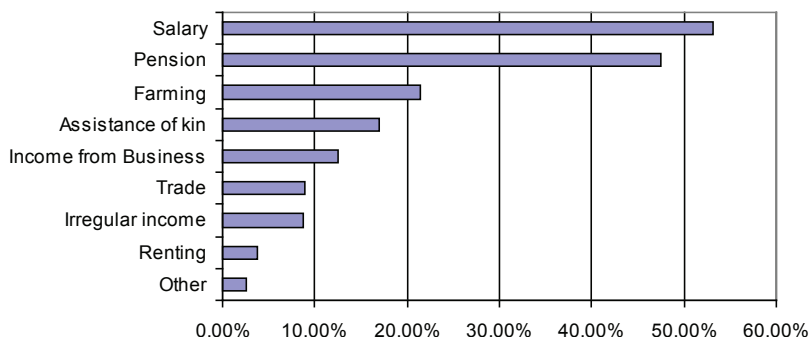


Graph 22

Share of household members with regular income

As for the respondents themselves, only 41.9% reported having monthly income and 24.6% occasional income.

Respondents were requested to identify monetary income sources from a list provided. The most common sources were salary (52.3%), pension and state allowance (47.5%), and income from realization of agriculture produce (21.4%).

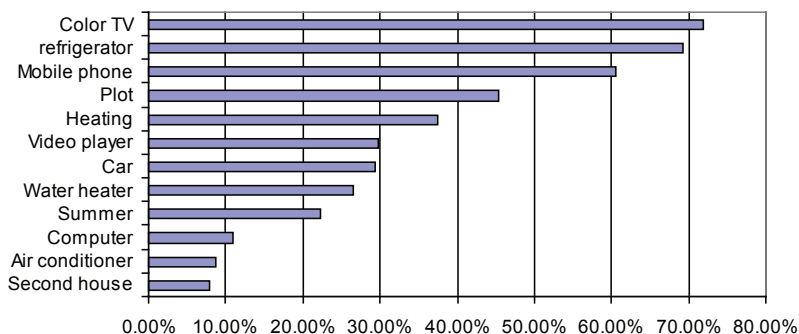


Graph 23

Income sources of household members

Property

93.5% own the flat/house where the household lives. 3.9% do not own the flat but did not pay for it and 2.6% rents it. After apartments, the most common possessions are TV, refrigerator and mobile phone.



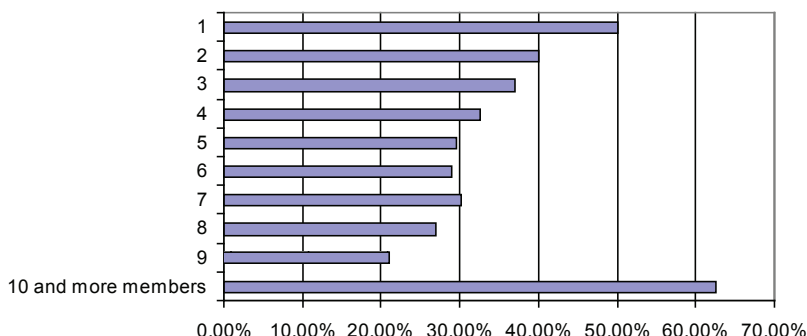
Graph 24
Household possessions

Not many respondents had any possessions for income generation. 8.8% reported having commercial space, 7.5% had some kind of appliance which the household used for income generation, 4.5% had car and 2.1% had a plot of land which household use for commercial ends.

Poverty had an adverse effect on the health of respondents. 51.6% pointed to at least one instance in 2006 when they were ill but did not visit doctor. Among them, the main reason for not visiting the doctor was financial (78.8%) , 16.2% did not consider illness to be serious, 2.8% did not trust doctors and 2.2% named other reasons.

Poverty profile

If we rule out extremely large households (with 10 and more members) we can see that the poverty is associated with smaller households.



Graph 25

Household size its relationship to poverty

The self identification of a household as ‘poor’ is connected to the monthly expenditures in that household per person. However, income is not the sole factor. 74.8% of “poor” households spent less than 50 GEL per person per month and 15.4% from 51 to 100 GEL. However the share of those who do not consider themselves poor but who spent less than 50 GEL is also quite high (49.5%) and of those spending between 51-100 GEL is 29.1%. In total 90.2% of “poor” and 78.6% of “non-poor” households spent less than 100 GEL per person.

The Difference between families that classify themselves poor and those who consider themselves not-poor is also linked with estimation of the money needed per person per month (Chi-square 10.4; df 2, $p < 0.05$). 34.7% of “poor” and 27.9% of “non-poor” families estimated the need less than to 100 GEL.

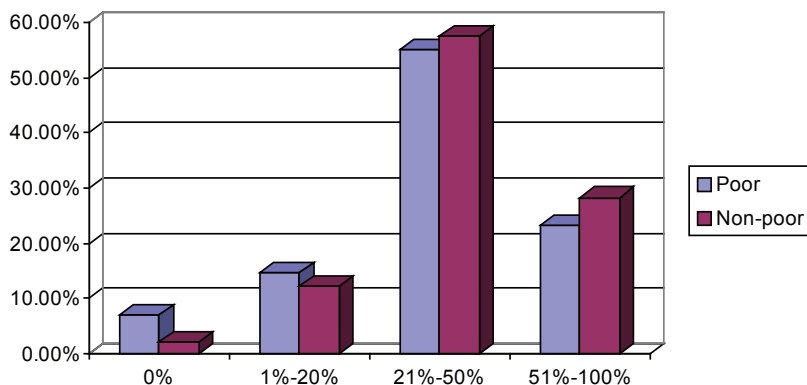
From 1171 respondents only 1138 provided information on income and 1112 on expenditures.

Table 11

Number of respondents reporting on household income and expenditures.

Amount in GEL	Poor		Non-poor	
	Income No	Expenditure No	Income No	Expenditure No
<100	211	193	162	156
110-300	140	141	333	367
310>	26	35	266	266
	377	369	761	743

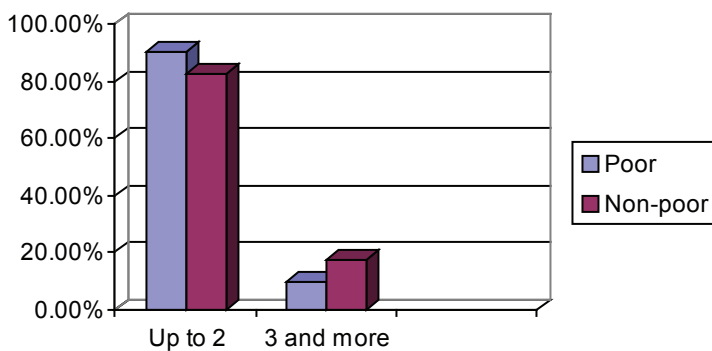
Affluence is correlated with the share of employed household members (Chi-square 18.6; df 3, $p<001$), the bigger share of employed is observed among “non-poor” households.



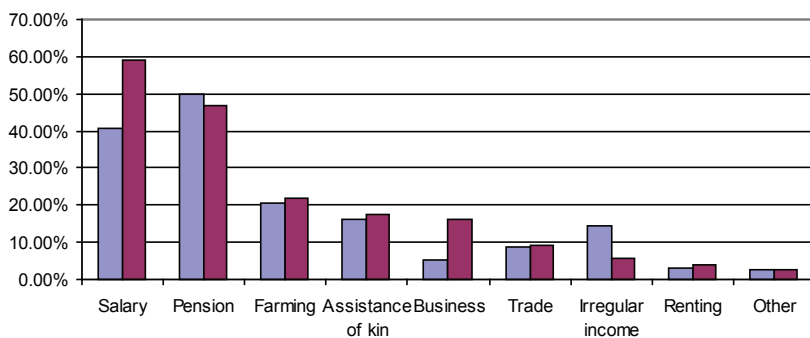
Graph 26

Share of household members with regular income in households that classify themselves “poor” and “non-poor”.

Affluence is also correlated to the number of sources of income (Chi-square 20.6; df 6, $p<005$) as well as the type of income sources. “Poor” people are more reliant on irregular income than “non-poor” (Chi-square 24.6; df 1, $p<001$), while more “non-poor” name salaries and stipend (Chi-square 34.5; df 1, $p<001$) and business (Chi-square 29.9; df 1, $p<001$) as income source.



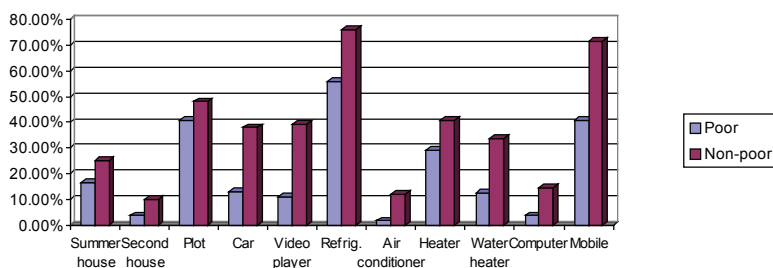
Graph 27
Number of income sources of “poor” and “non-poor” households



Graph 28
Income sources of “poor” and “non-poor” households

“Poor” and “non-poor” differ in their evaluation of the changes that have taken place over the last 1 year/3 years as well as over their expectations of future economic change in their households. A much higher proportion of “poor” (68.5%), than of “non-poor” (33.3%) experienced deterioration of their economic condition compared to three years ago (Chi-square 132.8; df 2, $p<001$). Similar is the situation in regard of the change compared to one year ago (Chi-square 147.9; df 2, $p<001$), where 63.5% of “poor” and 28.4% of “non-poor” reported a deterioration in their conditions. “Non-poor” also look with more optimism to the future than the “poor”. 24.3% of “poor”, compared to 52.6% of “non-poor” expect improvements of their economic condition in one years time (Chi-square 105.6; df 2, $p<001$) and 35.8% of “poor” and 68.0% of “non-poor” in three years time (Chi-square 120.0; df 2, $p<001$) .

Statistical difference between “poor” and “non-poor” in all kinds of possessions is significant. “Poor” households have much less possessions than “non-poor”. This difference is especially apparent in ownership of mobile phones, water heater, video player and car.



Graph 29
Possessions of “poor” and “non-poor” households

Likewise, more “non-poor” have the means and facilities for business, although ownership of that kind of facilities is quite low among both groups.

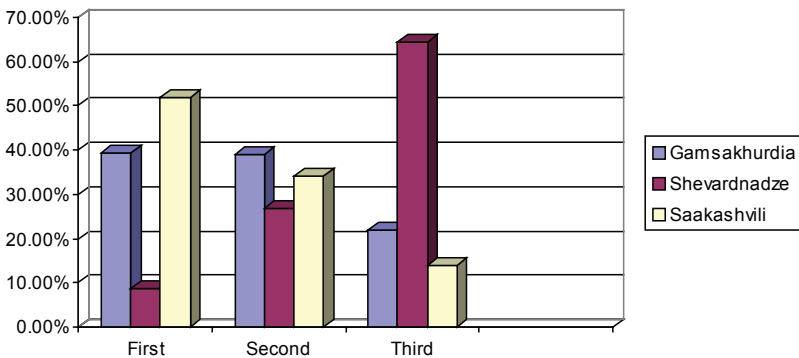
As indicated above, poverty deters person from visiting the doctor. 277 of “poor” respondents were ill during the year, but did not visit the doctor. Among them 251 or 90.6% did not do so for financial reasons. 318 persons from “non-poor” families were ill, but much smaller proportion 73.2% did not visit the doctor for financial reasons.

Appraisal of the economic condition does not differ significantly between rural and urban population although there are considerable differences in spending patterns. City dwellers not only spend much more per person per month than rural population (107.6 GEL against 59.0 GEL), but consider that far more money is necessary to have a decent life. (493.1 GEL compared to 86.8 GEL per member of the household). The urban population also claims to need a higher income relative to their current expenditure. The rural population claims to need 3 times more they spend, while urbanites say they need, on average, 4 ½ times more amount than they spend.

The rural population more negatively estimate the changes of economic conditions of their households. . A bigger share of them (43.6% compared to 36.7% of urbanites) identify a deterioration of the situation since last year and express less optimism relating to likely improvements in next year (39.2% compared to 47.0% of urbanites). A bigger share of urban (48.0%) than rural (36.3%) respondents have an income.

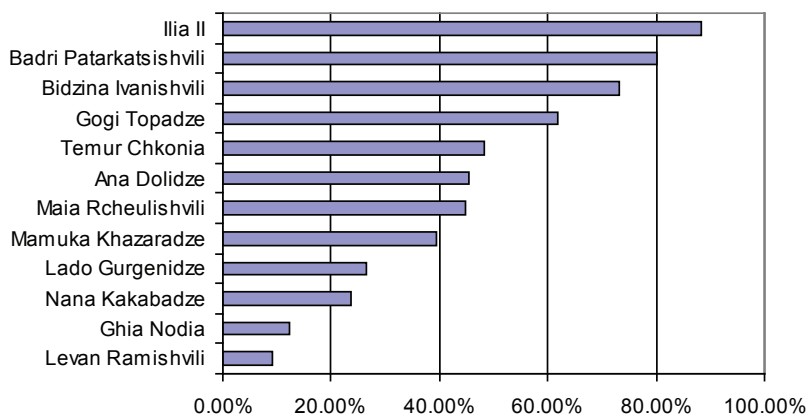
Country events

There have been three Presidents of Georgia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1990-1992), Eduard Shevardnadze (1992-2003) and Mikhail Saakashvili (2004-present day). Respondents were asked to rank all three. Saakashvili is the most popular among the three, with Gamsakhurdia second and Shevardnadze third.



Graph 30
Ratings of the presidents of Georgia

Respondents were also asked to rate the impact on the country of some prominent members of Georgian society. Out of the 12 persons offered, Ilia II, Patriarch of Georgia was considered to have had the most positive impact while Levan Ramishvili, head of NGO “Liberty Institute” had the highest negative impact.

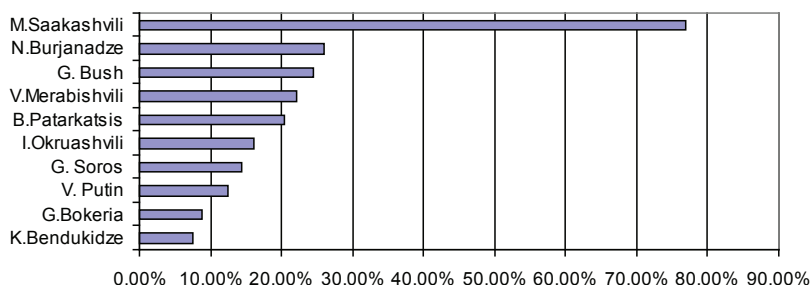


Graph 31
Rank order of persons by positive impact

Table 12
Estimation of impact of persons

Name	Status	Positive impact %	Negative impact %	Difficult to say %	Do not know her/him %
Ilia II	Patriarch	88.2	1.8	7.4	2.6
Badri Patarkacishvili	Businessman	80.1	1.9	14.9	3.1
Bidzina Ivanishvili	Businessman	73.2	1.3	14.0	11.5
Gogi Topadze	Businessman	61.9	4.9	27.6	5.6
Temur Chkonია	Businessman	48.3	8.7	34.4	8.6
Ana Dolidze	Head of NGO	45.5	3.4	35.1	16.0
Maia Rcheulishvili	Businesswoman	44.9	7.1	38.0	10.0
Mamuka Khasaradze	Businessman	39.3	4.8	35.9	20.0
Lado Gurgენიdze	Banker	26.6	5.4	33.2	34.8
Nana Kakabadze	Head of NGO	23.8	6.7	38.4	31.1
Gia Nodia	Head of NGO	12.2	8.5	38.8	40.5
Levan Ramishvili	Head of NGO	9.1	25.3	43.5	22.1

Respondents were also asked to name the three most influential people in Georgia. In answering the question some named organizations (e.g. EU, Liberty Institute) rather than people. The majority restricted themselves to citizen's of Georgia, while some listed people of other nationalities (e.g. President George W. Bush, President Vladimir Putin and George Soros). President Saakashvili was named most often with 76.9%, Parliament speaker Nino Burjanadze had 26.0% and President Bush, 24.5%.



Graph 32

Persons that have the biggest influence on the events in Georgia

Respondents were asked to choose the 5 most important events in the last two decades. They were provided a list of 16 choices. The 5 most often chosen events were 9th of April 1989 the conflict in Abkhazia, the declaration of Independence, the “Rose Revolution” and the 1991-1992 civil war.

Table 13

Rank order of the most important events

Rank	Event	%
1	Apri, 9 1989	81.2
2	Conflict in Abkhazia	53.0
3	Declaration of Independence, 1991	50.2
4	“Rose Revolution” of 2003 and election of Saakashvili as President	44.4
5	1991-1992 civil war	39.5
6	Conflict in Ossetia	37.1
7	Death of Prime-Minister Z. Zvania	29.3
8	Election of Z. Gamsakhurdia as a President	25.6
9	Agreement on closure of Russian military bases	25.4
10	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipe-line	24.2
11	Visit of George Bush in Georgia	20.1
12	Membership of Georgia in Council of Europe	16.6
13	Death of president Z. Gamsakhurdia	15.9
14	Adoption of Constitution in 1995	9.6
15	Return of Eduard Shevardnadze to Georgia	7.7
16	Membership of Georgia in CIS	6.7

Attitudes and Values

Value orientations were measured by a materialist/post-materialist value scale (Inglehart, 1977). This is a 4-item instrument designed for measuring whether individuals subscribe to 'materialist' values, that focus on the maintenance of order in the nation and price stability or 'post-materialist' values that focus on giving people more say in government decisions protecting their freedom of speech. The respondents were requested to choose the most important two values from four options. Respondents were grouped as 'materialist' if they chose the two materialist values, 'post-materialist' if they chose those two values, and 'mixed' if they chose one of each. The majority 52.8% chose materialistic values (43.0% in 2002 and 41.0 % in 2003), 44.9% chose mixed values (54.0% in 2002 and 56.4%% in 2003) and only 2.3% (3.0% in 2002 and 2.6% in 2003) choose post-materialistic values.

Three questions also evaluated the attitude towards domestic violence. 97.6% said that it was unacceptable to physically abuse elder family members (0.4% thinks it proper, 2% are uncertain). 91.2% think is unacceptable to abuse a 10-15 years old child (8.8% think it proper). 66.0% think that abusing your wife is unacceptable, even in the case of adultery (22.8% think it is justified in this context and 11.2% are uncertain). The population is also against the display of force in television news. 56.7% think that they should not show the arrest of suspects (33.5% think it is OK and 9.8% has no opinion).

The majority express pride in being citizens of Georgia. 77.3% (78.4% in 2002, 70.8% in 2003) associate positive feelings with it, no feelings are evoked in 21.3% (19.4% in 2002 and 26.6% in 2003) and negative feelings are evoked in 1.4% (2.2% in 2002, 2.6% in 2003).

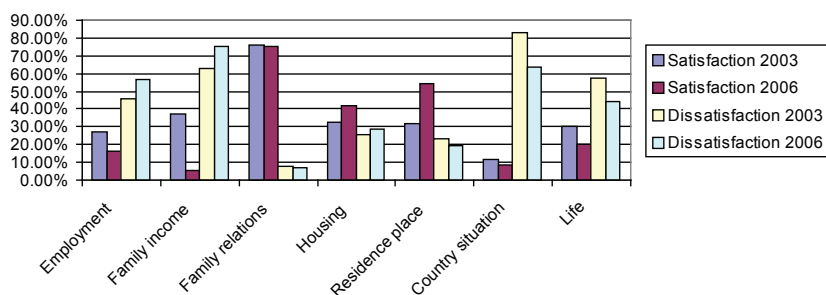
Feeling of having control over own life is decreasing. 68.9% in 2002, 78.6% in 2003 and only 56.5% in 2006 were convinced that what person achieves in life mainly depends on individual. According to the remaining 43.5% (30.2% in 2002, 21.4% in 2003) it is more dependent on others or situation.

Respondents were also asked whether they were satisfied with different elements of their lives. Out of the eight different ‘aspects’ more than half of those surveyed expressed satisfaction with two elements. People were generally satisfied with their family relationships and living location and were least satisfied with their family income.

Table 14
Satisfaction with different aspects of life

No	Aspect	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Difficult to say
1	Employment/studies	16.7	57.0	26.3
2	Family income	5.8	75.2	18.9
3	Own health	37.9	36.5	25.6
4	Family relationship	75.6	7.0	17.3
5	House/flat	41.6	28.7	29.7
6	Living in a given town/village	54.1	19.6	26.3
7	Situation in the country	8.6	63.9	27.6
8	Generally by life	20.2	44.6	35.2

In 2003 the same question was asked (though health was not considered). A comparison of 2003 and 2006 suggests that people are more satisfied with their living location, but they are less satisfied with employment and family income. There is no change in attitude to family relationships. There is an increased polarisation on issues of housing (with an increase in both, satisfaction and dissatisfaction), and increased uncertainty in regard to situation in the country and general satisfaction with life (with higher percentages answering that it is ‘difficult to say’). Satisfaction was not assessed in the survey of 2002



Graph 33

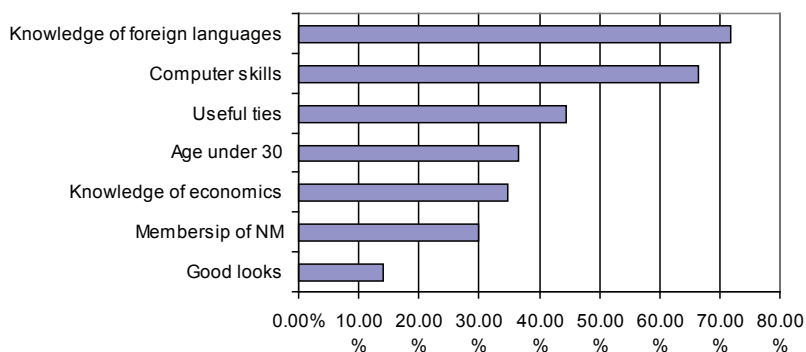
Satisfaction with different aspects of life

Dissatisfaction prevails in the estimation of one's own achievements. 49.3% do not think that they have found their place in life (42.9% in 2002 and 36.1% in 2003), 33.0% thinks that they have found it (35.9% in 2002 and 32.3% in 2003) and 17.7% is uncertain (21.2% in 2002 and 31.6% in 2003).

Notwithstanding a low level of satisfaction the population expresses optimism about the future and this has grown since 2003. 88.5% looks towards the future with hope (85.6% in 2003, not asked in 2002) and 55.4% thinks that things will go their way (53.4% in 2002 and 52.6% in 2003).

Satisfaction with life is strongly connected to justice and self-determination. Unfortunately only one-third of the surveyed (32.4%) believe that their advancement will be the result of hard-work (55.1% does not think so and 12.5% is uncertain). However, belief in meritocratic advancement has improved. In 2002/3 very slightly less than a quarter believed that hard work was the main basis for advancement.

When asked to select three different skills needed for advancement, out of 7 choices respondents picked knowledge of foreign language (71.7%), computer skills (66.4%) and useful ties (44.6%) as the most important.



Graph 34

Skills/characteristics that will determine advancement

Respondents were also asked to choose from the listed 12 features needed for getting high position in state institution. Professional knowledge, moral strength, patriotism, intelligence and level of foreign education were most frequently chosen features.

Table 15

Needed features for getting high position in state institution

Rank	Feature	%
1	Professional knowledge	88.2
2	Moral strength	56.5
3	Patriotism	55.2
4	Intelligence	51.8
5	Foreign Education	38.9
6	Youth	37.9
7	Principled	37.7
8	Deserve before people in power	30.5
9	Personal contacts	29.9
10	Flexibility	27.5
11	Loyalty to boss	19.3
12	Belonging to leading party s	9.4

A Different Perspective

Below is presented an attempt to look at the answers to the key issues of the survey from the perspective of political orientation/ party support and age.

Party support

Before the local elections we tried to analyze the survey data regarding party support. We grouped the respondents from our survey according to who they said they would vote for in case of Parliamentary elections held today.

1.Supporters of National Movement	29.4%
2.Supporters of all opposition parties	39.6%
3.Undecided	31.0%

No significant age or gender difference was found between the supporters of different parties.

National Movement supporters (NMS) more positively evaluate the change of economic condition of their households over the last year (25.0%) than supporters of Opposition Parties (OPS) (14.9%) or Undecided (U) (15.0%) (Chi-square 17.2, df=4, p<.005). The same holds for the prospective dynamics of economic condition in next year. 54.9% of NMS, 36.5% of OPS and 39.6% of U (Chi-square 30.5, df=4, p<.001) expect improvements.

Undecided are the least interested in reading newspapers. 37.5% of them declared that had not read any newspaper or journal during the last week. The corresponding number of NMS was 27.9% and OPS 23.9% (Chi-square 18.5, df=2, p<.001).

After the rose revolution NMS supporters feel themselves more secure from injustice (53.4%), than OPS (27.2%) and U (28.3%).

Also far fewer NMS (57.0%) think citizens of Georgia are not equal under the law. 79.7% of OPS and 72.9% of U do not believe in legal equality (Chi-square 58.0, $df=4$, $p<.001$). In line with this, 20.5% of OPS and 14.0% of U, compared to only 7.6% of NMS consider personal insecurity before representatives of law enforcement agencies as a local problem (Chi-square 26.5, $df=2$, $p<.001$).

NMS are more content with the development of the country than both other groups. 66.3% of NMS think the country is on the right path and only 29.0% of OPS and 28.6% of U (Chi-square 34.4, $df=4$, $p<.001$) think so.

Although the supporters of different parties do not differ in estimation of the need of popular participation and self-efficacy to influence the government, they differ in the perception of how much the government considers public opinion (Chi-square 88.1, $df=4$, $p<.001$). 36.2% of NMS, 13.6% of OPS and 12.4% of U believe that the Government takes account of public opinion. Also much more NMS (42.9%), than OPS (17,5%0 or U (16.9%) think that there is democracy in Georgia (Chi-square 134.6, $df=4$, $p<.001$).

Statistically significant differences were found between the three groups in their estimation of the threats. Nine threats to Georgia were mentioned in the survey(increase in illnesses amongst the population, corruption, environmental contamination, poverty, violent crime, the spread of religious sextantism, loosing big part of Georgian traditions, conflicts on national and religious grounds) that could face Georgia in next 5 years. The pattern in regard of all the nine issues is the same so that concerns are highest amongst OPS, followed by U. NMS are least concerned about the threats to Georgia.

Supporters differently evaluate the importance of some spheres for Georgia. National Movement Supporters are bigger support-

ers of military growth (with 25.3% in favour) than the other two groups. OPS have 18.5% support for military growth and undecideds 14.3%. (Chi-square 13.9, df=4, $p<.001$). Also, support for NATO and EU membership is higher with NMS at 23.3%, 16.2% of OPS and 18.5% of U; Chi-square 6.5, df=2, $p<.05$). For OPS the defense of Human Rights is a priority (76.9% of OPS, 73.0% of U and 67.4% of NMS; Chi-square 9.0, df=2, $p<.05$) as is reform of the legal system (23.9% of OPS, 18.5% of U and 12.2% of NMS; Chi-square 17.8, df=2, $p<.001$).

Poverty, relations with Russia, Abkhazian and Ossetian conflicts and decrease of the population, as noted above, are estimated as the main problems facing the country. All three groups of respondents prioritise these five problems, although they rank them differently. While poverty is named as the number one problem by all three groups, the second by priority for National Movement supporters are the conflicts while supporters of the opposition and Undecided identify relations with Russia.

More NMS (32.7%) than OPS (24.2%) or U (21.9%) (Chi-square 11.9, df=2, $p<.005$) consider it possible return Abkhazia and Ossetia by using force (31.8% of NMS, 24.6% of OPS and 20.8% of U (Chi-square 11.4, df=2, $p<.005$). NMS are also less concerned with arrests being shown on TV news (49.8% of NMS, 63.0% of OPS and 55.1% of U are against showing them, Chi-square 16.2, df=4, $p<.005$).

Party supporters differ in many issues concerning external orientation of the country. The central theme remains the orientation to Russia or the US. More OPS choose Russia over US (63.8%), than U (59.5%) or NMS (52.1%) (Chi-square 10.7, df=2, $p<.005$). More NMS (56.1%) than OPS (49.6%) or U (44.6%) opt for Georgia leaving CIS (Chi-square 25.8, df=6, $p<.001$); Again more NMS (78.7%), than OPS (77.4%) or U (65.1%) think that Georgia should strive for EU (Chi-square 24.7, df=4, $p<.001$) and

NATO membership 71.7% of NMS, 62.2% of OPS and 55.0% of U (Chi-square 27.7, df=4, p<.001).

Overall, as mentioned above belief in the ability to provide oneself a decent life by honest work is rather low but is higher among National Movement supporters (45.3%) than among the opposition party supporters (25.9%) and undecided (28.6%) (Chi-square 44.4, df=4, p<.001).

People feel more positive about being citizens of Georgia if they are NMS (86.8%) than OPS (74.8%) or U (71.5%) (Chi-square 25.8, df=4, p<.001).

Not surprisingly, the ranking of politicians by three groups of party supporters differs. National Movement supporters like: Saakashvili, Okruashvili, Burjanadze, Ugulava, Davitashvili, Levan Berdzenishvili, Topadze, Lomaia, Khidasheli and Salome Zurabishvili. Supporters of opposition preference list is as follows: Davitashvili, Levan Berdzenishvili, Khidasheli, Okruashvili, Salome Zurabishvili, Dzidziguri, Topadze, Chikradze, Natelashvili and Usupashvili. Undecided like Saakashvili, Okruashvili, Levan Berdzenishvili, Burjanadze, Davitashvili, Khidasheli, Topadze, Salome Zurabishvili, Dzidziguri and Ugulava.

Politicians were most popular with National Movement Supporters and least popular with Undecideds. It is interesting to note that in the lists of ten the most popular politicians all three groups include representatives of opposition - in the group of Undecided seven, in the group of National Movement supporters 5 and 9 among supporters of opposition parties.

The supporters of National Movement most of all dislike: Giorgadze, Natelashvili, Bokeria, Bendukidze, Gamkrelidze, Chikradze, Gamsakhurdia, Kirkitadze, Nadiradze and Merabishvili. Supporters of opposition dislike: Bokeria, Bendukidze, Merabishvili, Targamadze, Nadiradze, Giorgadze, Nogaideli, Kirkita-

dze, Arveladze and Lomaia. The least liked by Undecided are: Bokeria, Giorgadze, Bendukidze, Nadiradze, Targamadze, Kirkitadze, Nogaideli, Natelashvili, Arveladze and Lomaia. In this case also support does not unequivocally determine the popularity. Members of National Movement prevail in the list of ten least liked politicians of OPS (9) and U (8) but are also present in the list of NMS (5).

The information programs of Public television and Rustavi 2 are more trusted by the supporters of National Movement than members of the other two groups. Public television is trusted by 35.2% of NMS, 15.3% of OPS and 18.2% of U. Rustavi 2 is trusted by 75.3% of NMS, 53.0% of OPS and 53.8% of U.

More OPS than either NMS or U chose as important events april,9 1989 (86.9% of OPS, 81.4% of NMS and 73.8% of U Chi-square 22.6, df=2, p<.001) election of Zviad Gamsakhurdia as the president (32.3% of OPS, 20.1% of NMS and 22.3% of U Chi-square 18.6, df=2, p<.001) and death of Zviad Gamsakhurdia (22.8% of OPS, 11.3% of NMS and 11.3% of U Chi-square 27.9, df=2, p<.001) . More NMS considered the visit of George Bush (26.7% of NMS, 15.3% of OPS and 19.8% of U, Chi-square 16.1, df=2, p<.001) and 2003 “Rose Revolution” as important events (56.4% of NMS, 32.1% of OPS and 48.8% of U, Chi-square 51.2, df=2, p<.001).

NMS appear to have the most egalitarian attitude towards ethnic minorities. When asked if they would consider it appropriate to grant priority in land privatization to ethnic Georgians 51.5% of NMS agreed, compared to 62.9% of OPS and 59.3% of U (Chi-square 10.8, df=4, p<.05)

More NMS (68.6%) than OPS (54.35) and U (48.0%) consider that what one achieves in life depends more on the person, than others and situation (Chi-square 30.8, df=2, p<.001) . NMs also

express more generalized trust towards mankind as 54.2% compared to 39.3% of OPS and 42.1% of U considered that majority can be trusted (Chi-square 18.6, $df=2$, $p<.001$). NMS are more satisfied than OPS or U with different aspects of life, i.e. work/studies, apartment, location, situation in the country and life in general. More NMS than the other two groups also think that they have found their place in life (40.3% of NMS compared to 29.6% of OPS and 30.4% of U, Chi-square 12.2, $df=4$, $p<.05$).

NMS are more optimistic generally. NMS are more hopeful about the future (NMS, 95.1% compared to 86.0% of OPS and 85.3% of U, Chi-square 20.9, $df=2$, $p<.001$) and more of them think that most things will happen in life as one wishes (68.0% compared to 51.1% of OPS and 49.3% of U, Chi-square 30.4, $df=2$, $p<.001$).

There are also differences between the the groups in terms of their assessment of useful attributes for career development in Government. NMS puts more value on youth and moral strength, while OPS focus on intelligence, and being principled personal ties and patriotism. The difference was also revealed in regard to the perception of the qualities and skills needed for carrier advancement generally. NMS prioritise knowledge of accounting and computer literacy, while OPS suggest that nepotism is still important (through association with the National Movement and others).

The difference between party supporters was also found in adherence to materialistic/post-materialistic values (Chi-square 25.8, $df=4$, $p<.001$). More NMS (61.0%) than OPS (44.8%) and U (55.1%) choose two materialistic values, while OPS revealed more adherence to mixed values, choosing one materialistic and the other post-materialistic value.

Age

The revolution brought to power a younger generation of leaders. The parliament and government became much younger. There is a general feeling of impotence and pessimism amongst those over 40. The values of a young generation and their norms and rules of behavior prevail in media. These values contrast considerably with more traditional content. The situation creates a contradiction and intergenerational conflict in society.

In order to look at the key issues of the survey from the perspective of age, respondents were placed into three age groups: 17-34 years olds (the first), 35-54 years olds (the second) and 55 and older (the third).

Persons of different age estimate economic condition of their households differently (Chi-square 56.0, $df=4$, $p<.001$). Discontent increases linearly with the age. 20.3% of the first, 39.3% of the second, 45.6% of the third age group estimated their household as “poor”. 29.8% of the first, 43.7% of the second and 52.2% of the third group believed that economic condition had deteriorated over the last year (Chi-square 45.4, $df=4$, $p<.001$). Pessimism concerning the future also grows with the age as 10.4% of the first, 19.4% of the second and 26.1% of the third age group expect deterioration of economic condition in an year’s time (Chi-square 35.9, $df=4$, $p<.001$).

Generations differ in their preferred sources of information. 35-55 years olds read more newspapers (*Rezonance*, *Kviris palitra* and *Kronika*), while young generation reads more the journals (*Sarke*, *Gza*, *Tbiliseli*, *Tskheli Shokoladi* and *Anabechdi*).

73.5% of the older generation is concerned with the relations with Russia, compared 70.6% in the middle age group and 62.5% young (Chi-square 10.6, $df=2$, $p<.005$). The second age group is more concerned with the reduced possibilities of scientific

research and hindrances in democratic development of the country (58.5% compared to 30.8% in the first and 10.8% in the third group; Chi-square 6.2, $df=2$, $p<.005$).

It's not surprising that younger generation is more concerned with the lack of entertainment possibilities where they live (56.7% of first group compared to 34.9% of the second and 8.4% of the third group; Chi-square 69.5, $df=2$, $p<.001$), while the middle aged are more concerned with power shortages (43.5% of the second, 29.0% of the first and 27.5% of the third; Chi-square 7.0, $df=2$, $p<.05$) and deficiency in watering plots (53.7% of the second group compared to 26.6% of the first and 19.8% of the third; Chi-square 8.9, $df=2$, $p<.05$).

Generations differ in the level of satisfaction with life in general. 26.6% of the first group are satisfied with life compared to 18.1% of the second and 13.2% of the third groups (Chi-square 20.9, $df=4$, $p<.001$). In each of the different aspects the young are also more satisfied; work/studies (21.2% of the first, 13.8% of the second, and 14.8% of third group Chi-square (11.6, $df=4$, $p<.05$); household income (7.9% of the first, 4.8% of the second, and 4.4% of third group (Chi-square 18.7, $df=4$, $p<.005$), the assessment of their own health (55.9% of the first, 33.7% of the second, and 14.8% of third group Chi-square (147.2, $df=4$, $p<.001$).

Greater optimism of younger generation is an expected outcome. 93.3% of the young look at the future with hope compared to 87.5% of the older respondents (81.7%; Chi-square (20.3, $df=2$, $p<.001$). More of the young also expect that, for the most part, everything will happen as they wish (66.3% of first, 51.8% of the second and 44.1% of third groups Chi-square 34.4, $df=2$, $p<.001$). Young people are also more convinced than older ones that it's possible to achieve advancement by honest work (34.1% of the first, 33.2% of the second and 27.5% of the third group. Chi-square 11.5, $df=4$, $p<.05$).

Older persons are more convinced than younger ones that being younger than 30 is a necessary precondition for career achievement (44.3% of the third, compared to 37.0% of the second and 31.7% of the first age group Chi-square 10.3, $df=2$, $p<.05$). A similar belief exists about the usefulness of membership in the National Movement (32.6% of the third, compared to 32.2% of the second and 25.3% of the first age group Chi-square 6.4, $df=2$, $p<.05$). On the other hand young people are more convinced that for advancement the knowledge of foreign languages is needed (77.1% of the first, compared to 71.0% of the second and 63.9% of the third age group Chi-square 13.0, $df=2$, $p<.005$).

Conclusions

This survey of Georgia's population reflected the hopes and concerns of the citizens, their aspirations, beliefs and attitudes towards different aspects of life and traced the changes of perceptions since 2002.

The results of the survey suggest that the generation of liberal Democracy is still in its initial stage. The citizens at large do not consider Georgia to be democratic. Many essential aspects of democracy, such as equality before the law, participation in decision making, protection of human rights and justice in judiciary system are not realized. At the same time political culture is underdeveloped. Support to parties is determined not so much by parties' ideology as the popularity of their leaders and prominent members. The personality of the leader and especially of the President of the country is a focal point around which preferences are organized.

Trust towards both, people in general and state entities is not high. The courts and parliament enjoy alarmingly low trust. The violation of human rights is one of the main concerns of population. For example, the Girgvliani case where officials of the Ministry of the interior were implicated in the murder of a young banker, produced an unequivocally negative reaction amongst the population and perpetuated perceptions that the Government is unconcerned with the rule of law. There are, however, positive trends. Trust towards police, in particular, has significantly increased and the extent of corruption decreased since 2003.

The survey once more proved power of TV in media, but reflected the shift of popularity of channels. Popular in 2002 and in 2003 *Rustavi 2*, lost its leading role to *Imedi*. As one of the pillars of "Rose Revolution" *Rustavi 2* is now perceived to be the voice of state authorities. The debate on state policy, once hosted by *Rustavi 2* entirely shifted to *Imedi* and increased its audience.

Civic participation remains very low, while the need of participation is high and has increased over the years. The population thinks that the authorities disregard their opinion and as a result they feel helpless to influence decisions. The government should be wary of ignoring these concerns since exactly these feelings provided the basis for discontent which ultimately fuelled the “Rose Revolution”. It’s worth noting that our 2003 survey asked respondents about the possible actions that could be taken by population and very many suggested that a revolt against the existing government was possible.

Supporters of the leading party, the National Movement, opposition parties and those not having political preferences do not differ in age composition, but do differ in their evaluation of the economic condition of their households. National Movement supporters differently and much more benevolently evaluate actions of authorities than supporters of the opposition parties and those with no distinct preference. These groups ascribe different weight to problems and have different values and attitudes. Although the positions of the opposition supporters and of undecided are much more similar, than of National Movement supporters. National Movement supporters are less critical and more optimistic. Unification of opposition forces and hence their strengthening remains public demand.

The Georgian Government has chosen a Western orientation in its policy. The population backs the aspiration for Georgia to become a member of European Union and NATO. However, relations with Russia remain one of their central concerns. In addition, at least prior to recent events, this opinion survey suggests that society is split in its strategic orientation with no overwhelming support for either US or Russia, but with a slight increase in Russian orientation since 2003. This may result from Russia’s economic and social leverage, as a reaction to the proclaimed Western course of Georgia and to the US’s ambivalence to the democratic infractions of the current Government.

Comparison of 2002, 2003 and 2006 data shows an increase in the role of civil society. NGOs became more salient and more trusted than before and more people think it is appropriate to appeal to them in case of violation of their rights.

Improvement of infrastructure is perceived by many to be one of the main successes of the new government. Resolution of the frozen conflicts with Abkhazia and Osseti are declared prerogatives of the government. Conflicts are considered by population as one of the main problems of the country, but more and more people consider military settlement of these disputes completely unacceptable.

Poverty remains the plague of the country. It is identified by population as the major problem of the country. One third of the respondents estimate their households as poor. This is in line with the official statistics. According to the department of statistics⁵ for the first quarter of 2006 the spending of 33.6% of population was below the consumption minimum. Unemployment is closely linked with poverty. Families who are better off are more often those where half of their members have some kind of employment. Diversification of income sources, as well as some specific sources are still features enabling household to avoid poverty. Those who classify themselves “non-poor” usually have some income from business, while the “poor” have to rely on irregular work. There are many consequences of poverty, traditional and just emerging for society. e.g. Poverty is a contributing factor in health issues since the Georgian poor have significantly diminished access to good diet and health-care. In Georgia’s recently established privately financed University system educational access is also limited.

The survey results once more also demonstrated the partially subjective nature of poverty. Besides monetary income self classification of ‘poor’ is closely linked with a person’s general mood, in-kind income and frame of comparison. Young respondents, for example, perceive their household as more affluent than older ones.

5. www.statistics.ge

The population also supports the idea that urban society is developing faster than rural society. More rural than urban respondents believe their conditions have deteriorated during the past year and a smaller portion of rural population has a regular income source, and hence spend less, than urbanites.

The population, therefore, remains discontented with economic conditions, violation of human rights and continues to feel that their opinions are not taken into consideration. In addition there is a clear social division between supporters of the National Movement and the rest of the public. On the other hand, the survey proved the continuing popularity of the President of Georgia and acknowledged achievements of authorities in fighting corruption, infrastructure development and army building.

The population does not show high satisfaction with life in general. The number who think that Georgia is on the rights path has increased over the years but is still low and slightly exceeds one third of population. About one third thinks it impossible to reach normal living standards by the honest work alone, showing a slight decrease since 2003. Only a quarter of those surveyed thinks that there is democracy in Georgia, almost the same number who thought so in November, 2003. Very few feel that they found their place in life. Notwithstanding such evaluations people look with optimism towards future. Such optimism is unchanging and is persistently demonstrated in opinion surveys of Georgia's population and could be considered as an asset of the country.

