Democratic Value Orientations and Political Culture in Georgia

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1 Summary

This work is devoted to the study of the hierarchical organisation of values as they change, and as part of the broader context of changing political culture. This changing culture is recognised as an important factor in the political behaviour of both the general population and the political elites. It can be interpreted as complex variable, including—in addition to the value system—the set of societal traditions, skills and attitudes. An attempt is made to link social values to political preferences, and to describe, based on a sociological approach, some elements of existing political culture and political attitudes as factors and preconditions of democratic change in Georgia. In particular, voting behaviour is studied as an area in which public participation in political processes takes place, and where political elites compete among one another for influence and domination.

We have analysed communication by political leaders and parties during pre-election campaigns and the assumed effect on people’s attitudes, interpretations, and behaviours. A week before the presidential elections in April of 2000, a survey was carried out in order to identify the most conspicuous problems as perceived by the respondents. The survey also studied their attitudes towards various personal qualities of the national leader and different external orientations of international politics. Earlier, surveys were conducted during the parliamentary elections of October 31, 1999, and November 5, 1995, in order to assess the political preferences of the electorate. Electoral programs of the leading parties in the 1999 elections have been compared with similar results from the 1995 elections in order to obtain indications on the dynamics of political thinking.

The study has mainly concentrated on the capital of Georgia and its population. The process of state-building and democratic reform is most visible in Tbilisi, while in many provinces the pace of change is still very slow. The research goal of the study was to develop a set of value items that reflected the way in which the adult population saw their world from the perspective of politics. Again, elections were at the focus of the study, as they have special features that make them especially important in studying political preferences, particularly the notion that voting is a form of action with high social desirability.

Despite the demands of the changing political and economic structure and environment, cultural and political legacies hinder both elite and ordinary citizens in reorienting themselves towards the values of personal or corporate responsibility, transparency and accountability. The study has demonstrated that current conditions and needs have a decisive effect on value orientations; people do not largely adhere to post-materialist, libertarian, democratic values until more basic, materialist values of safety, stability and livelihood are satisfied. Respondents were most unanimous in choosing order over personal freedom. Another alarming tendency is the great gap between the political elites actively involved in government or opposition politics, and the population at large, which is emotionally concerned but lacks skills and levers for more political participation. Results of the study pointed to the democratic immaturity of the electorate, to a high reliance on the personal features of the leader and indifference to party ideologies and agendas.

However, certain positive trends were observed as well. One was the support for the opposition in recent votes, which points to the strengthening of the democratic environment. Preferences indicate

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that the electorate has an increased expectation of positive political goals instead of overall criticism. They have a craving for stability and positive outcomes. The study also pointed to different standards used by different groups in their evaluations of political issues, with younger people showing stronger adherence to post-materialist values. While there are many obstacles to rapid positive change in a democratic direction, the process is nevertheless on the move, with the younger generation showing a more active and pro-democracy stance. Orientations toward western models and values, support for market oriented reform and civic values are all good reasons for moderate optimism with regard to the immediate future, and for much brighter hopes in the long run.
2 Introduction

Following the disintegration of the USSR, the disruption of the totalitarian communist system and subsequent independence brought the dynamics of transition to Georgia. This turned out to be a complex and extremely painful process for the country. Independence and a new political reality were unexpectedly imposed over people who appeared unprepared for a new way of life. Democracy, an ideology that together with the market economy was cherished by the new political leadership, proved difficult to exercise in reality. Both those who ruled and those who were ruled were burdened with the experience of living in totalitarian regime. The ideology of those times was found to be more deeply rooted than had been presumed. Even now, the real need for reform has not yet matured sufficiently to enable a social discourse to take place that could help to structure public opinion and interest groups. Nor does there yet exist any social group or stratum that has clear understanding of the preferred model of development of the country. Even the most sensitive issues are dealt with by both the governments and the common people on the basis of irrational emotions and myths, rather than what is needed: a pragmatic approach, conceptual thinking and verifiable facts.

This situation was particularly evident during recent pre-election campaigns. At that time it appeared that practically no political leader or party have any clear ideology, program or models, other than rather embryonic schemes based mostly on intuitive social-democratic or nationalist patterns. The same can be said of political elites in general. This makes the process of reform dependent on the personality of the leaders, external pressures, popular attitudes and other random factors, rather than on a solid social basis and explicit group interests. Indeed, post-communist countries like Georgia provide an opportunity to examine patterns of and attitudes toward representation in a society in which the electoral institutions and preferences are newly emerging. This makes the study of these processes good for acquiring general scientific and practical significance.

For many years the Georgian society resisted both deliberate and spontaneous pressures from Russia, substantiated by absolute political dominance of the 'big brother'. Under such conditions Western culture, which was hardly differentiated into European and American, was considered by national elites as a potential and favourable counterbalance to the policies of Russification. With the independence brought by the disintegration of the USSR, this process gained strength. Now, the western way of life and globalisation are both considered as purely positive phenomena. There are few alarmist voices talking of the threats of homogenisation, which may wipe out national distinctiveness and, ultimately, endanger the national culture. These views are paid little attention. The western political value system, together with traditional culture, is considered to be an alternative to the legacy of Soviet despotism, the totalitarian ideologisation of life and cynical doubletalk.

Nowadays, ruling political elites never get tired of stressing their devotion to western democratic values and goals. However, practice may differ greatly what is preached. At the same time, there are some specific features, such as extreme political pragmatism and opportunism, that make it impossible to make judgements about the political ideology of an actor on the basis of his party affiliation or statements. This was demonstrated during the last series of parliamentary elections. Still, one of the signs of political immaturity of the Georgian state and society is the way in which Russia is permanently referred to both as the main source of problems and at the same time the solution. Even among those who have hostile attitudes towards, the Russian factor serves the same role: it diminishes their own responsibility for the political processes. It is only too natural to blame omnipresent Moscow for all failures and inadequacies.

Political conditions under Soviet rule were specific, a characteristic of the pseudo-sovereign status of Soviet republics. No important decision was made without control from Moscow, though local governments had to play a special subordinate role in pan-Soviet doublethink, doubletalk and
double-economy. Defensive, theatrical cynicism and moral relativism, which served so well in resisting the dominance of communist ideology, today ruins the capacity of Georgians to build their own state.

One more obstacle to designing Georgia’s future is that political elites are unable to formulate political strategies or explicit and clear concept of developments. It is rare to find an explicitly formulated vision of the future or any concept of solutions. Instead there is a mere battle of words, slogans and symbols. Also, Georgia’s political establishment has no explicitly conceptualised and formulated hierarchy of political values. Similarly, the often-stressed importance of territorial integrity and the vague leaning towards the west are understood as something different from the Soviet and developing worlds. These ideas are associated with wealth and a high quality of life. Anti-meritocracy in personnel appointment policies and a technocratic, or egocentric, system of preferences are characteristic of the political elite in Georgia. The widespread culture of clientelism and a mentality of dependence are not easy to shake off. There is a lack of interest for institutional success; management is by directives rather than by negotiation; there is a lack of co-operation; and there is both direct and indirect corruption. The new bureaucrats combine their official and private business activities, thus creating permanent conflicts of interest. Another legacy of the old system is the above-mentioned unwillingness of the state bureaucracy to take responsibility and the initiative. Therefore, there is a lack of independent and creative thinking. There is also no established system of professional ethics. All these factors contribute to inertia and low levels of progress in terms of managing and implementing the transition.

Nevertheless, Georgia is slowly but steadily progressing towards a more democratic civic society. At the moment, it is true, the concept and the structures of civil society are weakly rooted in people’s lives. Most the political institutions, including the government and leading political parties, explicitly acknowledge and support democratic values and rights. They defend pluralism and respect minorities, doing their best to advance an open and democratic society. However, the process of setting up democratic freedom is still in its beginning. The problem is not that the political parties or the political elite lack the will to establish a genuine democratic society. Rather, the necessary changes in the mentality of the population are slow to come about. Democratisation is also impeded by inertia, outdated ideological stereotypes and the vague status of democratic values in current modes of thought.

The present political system in Georgia has indeed many of the formal attributes of democracy. Nevertheless, most of its structures and institutions are underdeveloped or at least not quite what is expected of them from the western democratic perspective, which is the declared predominant model. For example, there are next to no organisational structures uniting the labour force, or defending its rights. Traditional soviet trade unions have lost whatever public respect they had and have simply become property-holders for their leadership, while no new trade unions have emerged that have any influence or organisational capacity. This fact has direct political connotations as well. In those countries ‘where workers have been able to form strong unions and obtain representation in politics the disintegrative forms of political cleavage are least likely to be found’ (Lipset 1960, p. 2). There are necessary prerequisites for both pluralism and a civic society, such as: the development and implementation of legal guarantees for democratic freedoms; democratic institutions and self-governance structures; labour movement/trade unions; and especially the development of civic education, the disseminating of knowledge and awareness of a person or a group’s democratic rights.

However, there are certain dangers in the democratisation process itself. By bringing the state authority itself under question, it involves the removal of state constraints on individual behaviour, a loosening of social inhibitions, and uncertainty and confusion about standards of morality. A corrupt judge may be much better protected by democratic procedures, as demonstrated by recent difficulties with judiciary reform. Political leaders in new circumstances tend to resort to populism
and appeal to indigenous ethnic and confessional loyalties, interpreting democracy in the most anachronistic way as the tyranny of the majority. Democratic elections may under certain conditions give power to a political force apparently committed to an essentially anti-democratic ideology. Only a robust civil society, with the capacity to generate political alternatives and to monitor the government and state, can resist democratic reversals. It is also a remedy against such tendencies. Even much the desired economic development will enhance the viability of democracy only insofar as it brings appropriate changes in social structure and political culture.

Our study mainly concentrates on the capital of Georgia and its population, for certain reasons. The process of state-building and democratic reform is most visible way in the city of Tbilisi, while in many provinces the pace of change is still very slow. Today Tbilisi is the capital of Georgia in all senses: economic, cultural, and political. (This may not be the case for parts of the population of Georgia, in particular those living in the secessionist quasi-states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and partly for ethnic Armenians and Azeris. These latter culturally attracted by—respectively—Yerevan and Baku. This reflects the transitional situation in Georgia, in which the state and its symbolic realisation—the capital—are not projecting their influence and attraction over all parts of the country.) The role of Tbilisi today is thus rooted in and influenced by many aspects and factors.

Tbilisi is definitely the political centre, where most of decisions are made. The headquarters of all state agencies, banks and financial agencies, scientific, educational and information sources and institutions are there. At the same time, Tbilisi is a marketplace, which attracts people from all regions in order to buy and sell. Most rural areas and smaller towns experienced a lack of services, information, and finances, and are isolated and impoverished. Tbilisi, however, continues to attract people from other places due to the incomparably bigger opportunities for business, work, communication or leisure. The informational isolation of the rest of the country, together with this over-concentration of finance and trade, adds to the importance of the capital, but also adds pressure to its infrastructure. During the last century the population in Tbilisi has been totally reshuffled. Most traditional urbanites in Tbilisi at the beginning of the last century were Armenians, Persians and Russians. Georgians traditionally were mostly involved in agriculture and lived in rural areas.

As a result of emigration (deportation) of ethnic minorities, and the rapid attraction to the city of rural migrants (today Tbilisi has more than 1.5 million inhabitants), the current inhabitants of Tbilisi are first or second generation urban dwellers. This fact expresses itself in many aspects of behavioural culture. For many foreigners an unexpected surprise is the shocking difference between the clean, cosy interiors of apartments and dirty, totally uncared for ‘secondary’ territories—entrances, staircases, neighbouring space. This is a specific cultural behavioural stereotype for newcomers with different sense of responsibility and territory (Newman, 1972). Often new migrants, not only have a different urban or environmental culture, but also speak a different language, like the IDPs from the conflict zone of Abkhazi, who speak Megrelian. This can cause significant irritation for those who consider themselves ‘old’ urbanites, and the newcomers as thought of as invaders. Considering oneself to be an old ‘Tbiliseli’ (resident of Tbilisi) is a matter of prestige and sometimes a political slogan. Even during the anti-Gamsakhurdia coup d’etat of 1991, the confrontation line often followed the distinction between Tbiliseli’s and provincials, supporters of the ousted president.

At the same time, the process of state building and recovering from political economic crisis, continues to strengthen the central authorities in Tbilisi. The democratic decentralisation of power and the much-discussed federalisation arrangement of the country are at their early stage. It is sufficient to say that a great majority of Georgian territorial units, apart from three (former) autonomies, are actually administered by governors appointed from Tbilisi. Additionally, the symbolic meaning of Tbilisi as the capital of Georgia is only increasing, as population, power and finance continue to centralize. Furthermore, Tbilisi continues to be the centre of education and cultural life. Even civic society is much more developed here than in any other part of Georgia.
An important characteristic of the current political disposition is the mutual suspicion between the political elites and masses, the centre and the periphery. Those in power demand social responsibility from citizens and are mute to their own or the state’s responsibility towards the citizens. (For example, as a rule service contracts reflect only the obligations of the customers and detail the actions in case of their violations, saying nothing of service provider’s obligations). Citizens, on the other hand, demand responsibility from the state while largely ignoring their own responsibility or at times even expressing pride in their irresponsible behaviour. Ordinary citizens suspect material or ‘mafia’ interest behind every political action. They carry the same cynical attitude toward political statements or promises as in old Soviet times. Elites have no confidence in the masses. They try to avoid democratic structures and procedures of decision making wherever possible, under the pretext of the democratic immaturity of the population and its lack of political knowledge and skills. Similar attitudes can be observed in regional authorities. This is especially true in regard to ethnic or religious minorities, which are perceived as instruments for manipulation by external actors rather than independent political actors on their own. This leads to the popularity of conspiracy theories, a lack of flexibility, the inability to understand one’s opponents’ viewpoint and, paradoxically enough, a lack of consistency in negotiations or relations in general.

During the last few years, state control has become tighter. This has happened within the varied set of conditions and amid the impatience, mistrust and fear that seem to accompany leadership whose authority is relatively new and unsupported by tradition. At the same time, democratic reform, illustrated in particular by last parliamentary and presidential elections, is not moving forward. The need for rigid control and continuous watchfulness enjoined upon the leadership makes them—while they still rely officially upon the strength, enthusiasm, and energy provided by the masses—fearful that unless the most rigid, minute, continuous, protective and directive control is maintained, chaos will result.

Ruling political elites always advertise their dedication to democratic values and goals. Practices, however, often differ greatly from these values. More attentive analysis can also reveal a certain stratification, depending upon their political roots and legacy, that significantly defines behavioural or ideological stereotypes and patterns. There are also some unifying features, such as extreme political pragmatism and opportunism. This last makes it impossible to judge the political ideology of an actor on the basis of his party affiliation, as demonstrated during the last parliamentary elections. Indeed, instead of parties and electoral blocks united around certain political programs, goals and strategies, we observed that the dominant motif for membership was the maximisation electionability. In order to better understand the political processes and their cultural antecedents in Georgia, it is necessary to analyse two groups: the political elites, competing for power and influence over the population; and the population itself, the object and the subject of the political process. The interaction of these two main actors are best visible during and before elections, when elites demonstrate their election strategies, approaches and proposed policy agenda in competition for votes, while the population, through voting, unequivocally shows its opinions on the various features characterising each party.

Georgia held a number of major elections during the last several years: the parliamentary and presidential elections of 1995, the local elections of 1998, the relatively recent parliamentary elections of October 1999 and the presidential elections of April 2000. The political environment has significantly changed during these few years, and the country has made certain steps towards more democracy. However, it is difficult to say that the last elections have been a step forward in this respect, at least from the viewpoint of violations of electoral law and rigging the vote. In fact, the elections of 1999 were marred by allegations of vote fraud. ‘These elections can be called multi-party, but they weren’t democratic’, Nugzar Ivanidze, the director of the independent Fair Elections Society, assessed. The chief OSCE monitor, Nikolai Vuchanov, in his turn stated that election standards were ‘unsatisfactory’ in Ajara and at least two other regions of Georgia (Antadze 1999). At many polling stations, observers were barred from seeing ballot boxes. At one polling station in
Tbilisi, 15,000 ballots went missing a few hours before the vote. Observers have also criticised the election law passed this summer as giving too much advantage to pro-government parties and allowing them to field more candidates, due to the seven percent threshold—raised from the five percent set for the 1995 elections. The result was that support concentrated for the two main party blocks, the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the Georgian Union of Revival, identified by the voters as Shevardnadze’s party and Abashidze’s party. The presidential elections of April 2000 were hardly a democratic breakthrough. Although there was no strong alternative to acting president Eduard Shevardnadze, both the pre-election campaigns and the voting were marred by violations and demonstrated a slowdown in the democratic transition.

Nevertheless, elections were the major political events that gave citizens a chance to express their preferences and make a choice. For many Georgians, the last two elections indeed marked a choice between two perceptions of the country's future and foreign policy orientations as presented by two major rival blocks. To the supporters of the Georgian Revival (and its leader Aslan Abashidze and year 2000 presidential candidate Jumber Patiashvili) Shevardnadze and his Citizens’ Union of Georgia (CUG) were 'cosmopolitans’“out to destroy the country and the cause of separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia, and 'slaves to Euro-Americanism'. In contrast, the Georgian Revival claimed to care about its homeland and promised the timely payment of pensions and salaries. The Citizens’ Union pointed out that the Revival was chaotic conglomerate united solely by electoral pragmatism and will break up once in parliament, as it is pro-Russian, corrupt and Mafia-dominated at its core. Its leader, Abashidze, was commonly accused by Citizens' spokesmen of fraud and corruption. On the other hand, Citizens' Union claimed to be taking Georgia closer to Europe and further away from Russia. Defining party ideology is hard, as there is not much of a conceptual nature behind these general lines and overall orientations. The economic reforms brought in by the CUG were politically centre-right, while the party retained its membership of the Socialist International and spent a high proportion of the state budget on the social sectors. The Revival, in its turn, combined an eclectic grouping of traditional left and reformist right. Ajara, where election observers were driven out of polling stations by force, is the home base of Aslan Abashidze, Shevardnadze's main opposition. Abashidze was undeterred by allegations of vote rigging in the October 1999 poll, and vowed to challenge Shevardnadze for the presidency in 2000 (when April 2000 came, he withdrew his candidacy just before the actual elections). The undisputed facts working against the ruling CUG included the worsening economic situation in Georgia, widespread corruption, unpaid state sector salaries and pensions, and the gradual lowering of living standards after an initial improvement. Yet, while only 23% voted for the Citizens' Union in 1995, as much as 42% expressed support for them in 1999.

All in all, 20 political parties and 13 coalitions were registered for the 1999 parliamentary elections. Only three—Shevardnadze's Citizens’ Union of Georgia, Aslan Abashidze's Georgian Revival Union, and the Industry Will Save Georgia bloc—garnered the minimum seven percent of the vote required to get into the 235-seat parliament. With all but a few disputed results in, a majority of 42% have voted for Shevardnadze's bloc and 26% for Abashidze's Revival, with slightly more than 7% obtained by the Industrialists. The Labour Party, the surprise favourite in the local elections of the previous year, and the National Democratic Alliance, the second best in 1995 elections, came close to the 7% barrier. (These parties ardently supported this barrier but appeared unable to cross it.) Overall, almost 80% voted for the three parties that crossed the seven percent barrier. The other approximately 20% wasted their votes on the parties that failed to cross the threshold. About two thirds of this group voted for Labour and two other parties. The rest of the votes were scattered between the minor parties. In contrast, in 1995 only 38% of the voters voted for the three parties that scored the minimum; a staggering 62% voted for parties that failed to beat the threshold and were

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* Dictionaries typically define cosmopolitanism as ‘being free of local/national interests or prejudices’. However, in the Soviet tradition it is a derogatory term, indicating a readiness to betray national interests.
thus left out of the parliament. At the very least, during the elections of 1999 the number of wasted votes has been substantially cut. Les people voted for parties that did not make it into the parliament.

3 Political Culture and Values

The overwhelming dominance in mass consciousness of beliefs, myths and symbols in transitional periods of history is nothing new. Symbols, metaphors and myths played an equally large role in traditional Soviet doublethink and doubletalk. However, the post-Soviet reality gave new life to symbolic ways of thinking. It created a new, fertile environment for irrationality and the symbolisation of political attitudes and values. This is especially true in the former Soviet periphery, as in Georgia, where Communist ideologies were never deeply rooted, but rather were considered the rules of the game imposed by an external power (a situation all to common in Georgian history). In Soviet times, individual rights were had next to no importance compared to the interests of the state. Nor did ordinary citizens participate in government and decision-making. This resulted in the lack of civil society in the form of community self-organising groups or NGOs. In addition, there was a lack of understanding of the values relating to democracy and community and civic responsibility. Furthermore, and even more importantly, nobody expected these values to be present.

The political conditions immediately after independence were hardly conducive to civic society. Civil wars, ethnic strife and economic crises interacted in a mutually reinforcing cycle. The absence of efficient government and legislation, as well as disintegrating law and order, led to a further decline in civic morale and devaluation of respect for the individual, for the rights of groups, and for democratic liberties in general. Back in the 1980s, the wind of perestroika and the end of the traditional doublethink environment created an ideological vacuum. Confusion caused what could be called, using the psychoanalytical term, national regression. There was massive resignation to the magic and chimerical world of symbols, myths, and slogans.

The unique political disposition of the early 1990s brought unprecedented crises and turmoil to life. As Luc Reyckler wrote some time ago: ‘Political surprises normally contain a double stimulus, namely to study the origins of the changes and the origins of our unawareness of them. There have been many post-facto explanations of the revolutionary transformations in Eastern Europe, but few explanations of the lack of foresight’ (Bawens and Reyckler 1994). This deep observation fits to the recent history of post-soviet Georgia well. The underestimation of the psychological and axiological factors dominating transitional societies is one of the reasons for the failure of science to predict and understand the dramatic processes taking place. These factors find their overt expression in what political philosophers call political culture, understood as ‘socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, and habits of mind’ (Gray 1999, p.51), or ‘broadly shared set of ways of thinking about politics and government, a pattern of orientations to political objects’ (Ranney 1990, p. 65).

Indeed, democracy defined as ‘a government of the people, by the people and for the people’ is probably nowhere fully realised, but its shape and extent is largely determined by a nation’s political culture. However, even if political culture is recognised as an important factor in the political behaviour of the population or political elites, there is much disagreement on what exactly is defined by this term on operational level. Another question is how, methodologically, political culture can be observed and measured. Additionally, special caution is needed to avoid the fashionable tendency to explain everything—especially the deficiencies of a democratic transition—solely by a vaguely defined value system and political culture.

Among scholars of democratisation, as Samuel Huntington puts it, there is a major debate concerning the issue of crafting versus preconditions. Is democratisation primarily the product of political leaders who have the will and skill to bring it about, or does the movement towards democracy depend on particular social, economic or cultural preconditions existing in society? Having no ambition to find any final and general solution to this debate, we hope to describe some elements of the existing political culture and political attitudes as factors and preconditions of
democratic change in Georgia. Our description will be based on social-psychological approach. One should also keep in mind that some of the trends explicitly present in the development of other countries but not yet observable in Georgia may reveal themselves later. In this sense one can indeed speak of different stages of development when discussing such factors as democratic governance or the internationalisation of the labour market.

Value is conceptualised as a belief concerning a desired mode of behaviour. This transcends a situation and is ranked by importance to other values; it serves as a guiding principle for selection and evaluation of behaviour, people or events (Schwartz 1994). Values constitute a high hierarchical order and to a considerable extent form the bases for attitudes. In their turn, attitudes are often responsible for behaviour (Kristiansen and Zanna 1994). Values, on both individual and situation levels, serve as a bridge between the personality and the society (Rokeach 1973; Grube, Mayton and Ball-Rokeach 1994). As cognitive representations of biological and societal needs, values shape individual needs into socially acceptable forms. As such they are sensitive to both individual needs and societal demands. Values can be personal—centred on the self and guiding the achievement of individual goals. They can also be social—centred on society, forming believes about for what society should be striving. Values form constellations, or value orientations. One is the difference between materialistic (‘maintain order in the nation’ and ‘fight rising prices’) and non-materialistic (‘give people more say in the decisions of the government’ and ‘protect freedom of speech’) goals (Inglehart 1977). Another constellation formed by social values is ‘national strength and order’ and ‘international harmony and security’ (Braithwaite 1994).

Values are universal, but their relative importance varies across cultures, individuals and time. Even relatively stable, culturally-based values are still prone to change. Change can be stimulated by changes in inner demands, changes in the environment, or the interaction of the two. Value orientations change through a slow and a gradual process. It is assumed that changes are more likely to occur quickly in changing environments and with strong contacts with other societies (Nolan and Lenski 1995). The transition to a new political and economical system is a normative, history-graded event (Baltes 1983). It stimulates change the whole cohorts and demands a change of value preferences. Surveys made in Europe indicate that a cohort is more important a lifecycle in terms of changing value orientations (Scarborough 1995). Most often old values do not disappear immediately. Rather, some parts of them disappear while others become incorporated into new values (Van Deth and Scarborough 1995).

Culture influences the way in which humans select, interpret, process and use information. To a great extent it determines the pace at which a value system may change. In a broad sense, Georgia can be regarded as a traditional orthodox culture with a strong collectivist component. The collectivism element consists of the way in which the self is defined in terms of belonging to a group or a community rather than using individual characteristics for definition. It is a tight culture in many respects, in family rituals or public behaviour. Although families in urban areas are much smaller than in rural areas, kinship networks and mutual support continue to play a significant role.

Kinship helps in periods of hardship (it is interesting to observe the sharp reductions in divorce during economic crises or among internally displaced persons/refugees). However, it also encourages clientelism and corruption. In general, communication in the community is much more emotional and personal. There is less alienation. This is probably characteristic for the whole Mediterranean world, to which Georgia certainly belongs from the viewpoint of its kinship structure and extravert behavioural (‘pride and honour’) culture. It is interesting to note that the extended kinship system partly cushions not only the effects of an economic crisis, but somehow softens the confrontation between the capital and the remoter and poorer parts of the country. Every Georgian family in Tbilisi has a well-rooted and well-functioning extended family in the countryside and other regions, operating often as barter or insurance system. These general cultural factors influence a wide range of social and political behaviours.
Values suggest whether individuals will actively seek out or avoid new ways of doing things. It is true that current social changes are bringing more individualism and loose social control. However, these also bring more discipline in economic activities and a disruption of old collectivist values, ideologies and patterns of economic organisation. Nevertheless, inertia and cultural lag slow the tempo of change. For many people, the need to behave the way they have always behaved is central to their values. Traditionalism and respect for authority are still highly valued in such a culture. These, along with other cultural characteristics, define the direction and the pace of the transition process. Tradition-focussed groups value security and sustenance. By nature, they are static communities that change with difficulty. Economic change stresses the importance of value characteristic to individualistic cultures.

Qualities linked to different value orientations find their explicit expression in political institutions and behaviour, as well. Examples include political parties and partisanship. The prevailing principles of party building form around personal networks and trust in leaders rather than around ideology or interest groups, which are not yet structured in Georgia. This hinders the establishment of traditional democratic values to a certain degree. Political reality continues to be dominated by a tradition of respecting authority coupled with the long totalitarian tradition of obedience. Another factor is the long exposure to double standards: a difference between what was said and what was done, or to put it differently, the low accountability of authorities to their words. Such practices put more emphasis on personal trust in a leader and not on his or her ideology or commitments. This personality aspect recycled and perpetuated by the political elite, who thereby knowingly or unknowingly hinder the development of democracy.

As Ronald Ingelhart has stated, ‘different societies are characterised to very different degrees by specific syndromes of political cultural attitudes; ... these cultural differences are relatively enduring but not immutable; and they have major political consequences, being closely linked to the viability of democratic institutions.... The study of political culture is based on the assumption that autonomous and reasonably enduring cross-cultural differences exist and that they can have important political consequences’ (Ingelhart 1988, pp. 1203-1205). Values form an integral part of political culture. This in turn is an essential part of the general culture. Political cultural attitudes are superimposed on the system of traditional values shared by society. Although slow to change, this is the system through which a society adapts to its environment. Changes in the conditions in which human beings find themselves, especially radical shifts in institutions and policies, eventually will cause corresponding changes in their outlook, attitudes, preferences and behaviour. During transition, aspects of values that are more deeply rooted probably take longer to change, despite the new needs created in the society and/or in the individual.

Values are critically re-appraised in a period of transition. That is why a large number of people in Georgia are currently in the midst of profound changes in their basic values. Long-held beliefs are being re-examined and appraised: beliefs about the meaning of the state in one’s life, relations between former member-states of the same giant empire, expectations for the future—indeed, about many aspects of daily living and important relationships among people. The majority is hovering between older faiths in expanding horizons and a new sense of lowered expectations, apprehension about the future, mistrust of institutions, and a growing sense of limits. People are in search of new rules because the old rules don’t work any more. They are in the midst of a fundamental reordering of the way they see the world around them.

Today the analytic primacy of values in explanations of political change is widely recognised (Van Deth and Scarbrough 1995). At the simplest, most direct level, shifts in value orientations induce change in modes and levels of political involvement. However, the study of values is associated with certain difficulties. Values are not directly observable. They often operate as high order norms and stay beyond the scope of rationality (Moscovici and Doise 1994). Values are often presumed to be underlying, declared goals. The smooth functioning of a society is considerably determined by the
extent to which its members share values (Seliktar 1986). To obtain popular support, parties and their leaders should appeal to the prevalent society values or else foster new values based on the needs of society. That kind of appeal is crystallised during elections. Electorate programs reflect parties’ goals and provide a possibility to discern their values. That is why electoral programs provide good a possibility for the study of values.

As a new democracy, which emerged from a long period of totalitarian regime, Georgia provides a good opportunity to study the process of transformation and to trace changes in value orientations and political and economic perceptions. Besides purely cognitive functions, knowledge of the process can contribute to an effective policy for encouraging democracy and acknowledging the supremacy of democratic values. There are many contradictory perceptions among Georgians regarding their political preferences, orientations and identity, not to mention their country and its role in the world. This makes it difficult to determine which values are the more influential. However, a number of dichotomies can be revealed. Recently, S. F. Jones questioned some Georgian self-perceptions and external orientations. ‘Is it Georgia as modern and Western or Georgia as traditional and Eastern? Both views are often expressed by Georgians. Similarly, is it Georgia as imperial victim or as former great imperial power; Georgia as innately democratic, or Georgia in need of a strong hand; Georgia as a tolerant multiethnic state, or Georgia for ethnic Georgians; Georgia as an independent state or Georgia as a state in need of protection. Which one is authentic and “operational” is hard to decide’ (Jones 1999).

Georgia is slowly progressing on its way to development and democracy. However, following the civil unrest and economic catastrophe of the early 1990s, various groups show different levels of political involvement and activity. There is a great gap between the populations of the three bigger cities, Tbilisi, Batumi and Kutaisi, on one hand, and the population of remote rural and mountainous areas and inhabitants of smaller provincial towns on the other. Equally, ethnic minorities living in the quasi-state formations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and in the southern provinces of Georgia, either are isolated—deliberately or unwillingly—from the political mainstream of the capital. However, there is also a gap between political elites, actively involved in governance or directing opposition politics, and the population at large, which emotionally concerned but lacks skills and levers for more political participation.

As mentioned above, voting is where the public participates in a political process and where political elites compete amongst each another for influence and domination. ‘Voting is the key mechanism of consensus in democratic society. Students of elections are concerned with the relationships between one type of cleavage—political parties—and such other types as class, occupation, religion, ethnic group, and region, and the role these factors play as the social basis of political strife…. It is important for the stability of political system, that all major political parties include supporters from many segments of the population, as if their public support corresponds too closely to basic social, ethnic or regional divisions, as this happened in the past, this may undermine the democratic basis of the society due to intensification of conflict that rules out compromise. It may even happen, that too high political participation, commonly welcomed by students of democratic transition, may indicate towards increased cleavage, decline of social cohesion and hence the breakdown of normal democratic process’ (Lipset, 1960, p. 12). Successful and enduring democratic practices depend on whether the people in power and the general public esteem democratic values. Below we discuss the findings regarding value orientations of the political elite and ordinary citizens. The analysis is based on existing sociological data and our five studies/surveys of the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections, content analyses of electorate programs of parties in 1995 and 1999, and a survey of the year 2000 presidential elections.

4 Political elites and parties during elections
There are a multitude of viewpoints on the role of elites and the masses in political processes. This debate will never be solved. However, there is no doubt that political elites do play an important role. As Converse and Pierce note, comparing the structure of elite and mass preferences is ‘absolutely central to the study of political representation, since this process obliges a representative to perceive and understand the policy sentiments of his constituents and somehow to take them into account, along with his own judgements of policy options’ (1986, p.226). Accordingly, the content of the electorate programs of leading political parties have been analysed in order to reveal value orientations: towards security, building a strong state integrated in the world, enhancing democratic values through striving towards personal freedom and equality, broadening relationships with Caucasian countries, etc.

It is assumed that finding an ideological and conceptual alternative to communism still continues to be an organising principle for most political parties. This dominant concept is supplemented by attitudes towards external orientations and the personal characteristics of the leadership. On the issue of collective decision-making procedures and participation, leaders often put little faith in pluralism and democratic approaches in their internal policies, revealing strong authoritarian inclinations. Whatever their deficiencies, these political movements will continue to play a role in the evolution of public attitudes. They shift the political spectrum one way or another and influencing the makeup of the ruling coalitions. To get popular support, political parties allude to the values that citizens hold. This is reflected in their platforms. The main thesis is that political orientations can be mapped onto types of value orientations through a values content analysis of the writings of advocates of different political orientations (Rokeach 1973). Social values have been successfully used to predict support for different political parties, political leaders and social policies.

Communication messages (and their effect on people’s attitudes, interpretations, beliefs and behaviours) stimulate emotions and present moral standards. However, the effects—powerful or limited—of the representation of this or that political ideology or thesis through the mass media are contingent on a variety of factors and conditions (Braithwaite 1994). We compare the results of 1995 with a similar analysis of the platforms of leading parties in the 1999 elections in order to obtain indications on the dynamics of political thinking. A quantitative content analysis describes the typical patterns or characteristics of self-presentation of leading political parties. We also identify important relationships among the variables. Analysis is restricted to value orientations as expressed in program documents of political blocks before elections. Hence they reflect not only the value orientations of party leadership, but also their electoral strategies and their own ideas of mass expectations, which they use in an attempt to maximise support.

5 Parliamentary elections of 1995: Party Programs

According to the results of the parliamentary elections of November 5, 1995, by party lists, three parties got seats in the 235 seat parliament: The Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG) received 91 seats; the National Democratic Party (NDP) received 31 seats; and the Georgian Union of Revival received 25 seats. Thus, 62.5% of party seats went to three parties: 38.7% to the Citizens' Union of Georgia, 13.2% to the National Democratic Party and 10.6% to the Georgian Union of Revival (SWB 1995).

The electoral programs of the Citizens’ Union of Georgia (Shevardnadze1995) and the National Democratic Party (National Democratic Party 1995) have been content analysed. The program of the Georgian Union of Revival was not studied at that time as public support for the party was restricted to only one region—the party got almost all of its votes in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara. Content analyses of the electoral programs demonstrate the differences between the two parties in two major spheres: social values and orientation towards the outer world.

a) Social values
Different value orientations are reflected in the programs. They can be labelled as ‘National security and order’ versus ‘Freedom and equality’. The program of the Citizens' Union of Georgia conveyed the image of a strong state. It emphasises the importance of order and such instruments of state as ‘constitution’ and ‘ruling’. Emphasis is put on economic strength, reforms, investments, and support for business and the creation of a middle class. Persons are mainly referred to as collective entities and the words ‘people’, ‘population’, and ‘electorate’ are mostly used. The program of the National Democrats stressed the party’s orientation to the person, mostly by using the words ‘person’, ‘individual’ and ‘citizen’. In the program there are frequent references to freedom, the rights and responsibilities of individuals, equality and solidarity. The importance of social security is emphasised. While referring to Georgia, the word ‘republic’ rather than ‘state’ is used. Words reflecting the main value orientations of the parties are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Predominant value orientations of the Citizens' Union of Georgia

Figure 2: Predominant value orientations of the National Democratic Party

b) Orientation towards the outer world
The two parties differed greatly in their orientation toward other countries, country alliances and international organisations. The Citizen’s Union stressed ties with international organisations, with the world in general and especially developed countries, CIS countries, and Russia. The National Democrats focused more on the Caucasus.

Figure 3: Orientation towards the outer world
It can be concluded that back in 1995 the two major parliamentary parties (the Georgian Union of Revival was at that time actually a party with only regional support in Ajara) reflected two views. The Citizens' Union of Georgia, the majority party, adhered to the idea of a strong state integrated into the rest of the world. The National Democrats promoted the idea of personal freedom, equality and consolidation with immediate neighbouring countries. The program of the Citizens' Union of Georgia seemed to find answers to the current problems and meet the needs of two different segments of the population: a) those, probably mostly representing the older generation, who were encountering difficulties in finding a place in the new economic system and who had nostalgic feelings for the minimal security provided by communist rule; and b) the younger generation, which sees more possibilities in the future for self-realisation and achievement. Frequent allusions to order on the one hand and entrepreneurship, the abandonment of equality principles, and world economic integration on the other served the purpose of security for both groups. The program of the National Democrats seemed to be more abstract, less based to the situation. It put more emphasis on ideology, in the framework of basic socialism values with an emphasis on individual freedom, patriotism and equality.

6 Parliamentary elections of 1999: Party Programs

On October 31, 1999, three parties got seats in the Parliament as a result of elections by party lists. The Citizens' Union of Georgia received 42% of the vote. The electoral block Union of Georgian Revival received 26% of the vote and the electorate block Industry Will Save Georgia (ISG) received 7% of the vote. None of them published an electoral program as such. The Citizens' Union of Georgia published a manifesto and Industry Will Save Georgia issued a document in which it discussed the main objectives of the block. To our knowledge, the member parties of the Revival block have not published any joint document reflecting the policy aims of the block. The founding party of the block—the Georgian Union of Revival—has issued a booklet describing the achievements of the party and its aspirations. The manifesto of the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the party document of Industry Will Save Georgia were content analysed. Although the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) failed to get any seats in the parliament, their electorate brochure was also analysed, mainly for the comparison with the 1995 program of the founders of the block, i.e., the National Democratic Party.

A list of key words consisting of 78 units was compiled. The frequencies of key words were counted in all the documents. The frequencies then were normalised according to the length of the texts. The differences in the usage of words by different parties and a comparison between the 1995 and 1999 programs of the same parties were calculated.

In the manifesto of the Citizens' Union of Georgia the close association of the President of Georgia with the party is continuously stressed. The manifesto consists of four parts. A general section, a
description of the current situation, the achievements of the party during the four-year period, and their vision of the future. Self-criticism and an acknowledgement of the problems facing Georgia occupies 3.3% of the document.

**Figure 4: Structure of the CUG Manifesto, 1999**

![Diagram showing the structure of the CUG Manifesto, 1999]

Among the most acute problems named are: territorial disintegration; problems connected to the displaced population; taxation; unemployment and small salaries; healthcare provision. The manifesto points to the achievement of the party in building the state; the fact that Georgia has become a member of the European Council; the introduction and stability of the national currency; establishing control over the borders; the adoption of a significant number of good laws; effective land privatisation; a revival of industry and agriculture; achievements in technology; the formation of a civic society; and judicial reform. The document stresses the continuity of democratic governance under its rule and the ability of the CUG to bring Georgia to prosperity through economic development. The link is drawn between economic progress and an orientation towards Europe as the main issue of foreign policy. The manifesto contains 2,229 words. The most frequently used words are presented on Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Most frequently used words in the CUG manifesto, 1999**

![Bar chart showing the most frequently used words in the CUG manifesto, 1999]

* The word ‘Georgia’ was not counted when it was part of the name of the party

Compared to the 1995 electorate program, there is an evident shift of emphasis from international politics to internal affairs. The word frequency demonstrates that the party is mostly concerned with economic issues and the world at large rather than specific countries or international organisations, although these were mentioned in abundance in the 1995 program.

**Figure 6: Difference in frequencies of word usage in CUG programs of 1995 and 1999**
The right half represents increases in frequency and the left half represents any decreases.

The program document of the Industry Will Save Georgia block lists the parties of the block: Industry Will Save Georgia, The Movement for a Georgian State, The Union of Reformers and Agrarians, Georgia First of All, Sporting Georgia, New Georgia. The document contains three parts. In the first part the general orientation of the block is presented along with critiques of the politics of the ruling party. It is stressed that in this block there are people with work experience in production, who are able to achieve success even in difficult situations. Success and the ability to achieve goals are underlined throughout the document. The major goals of the block include reviving the economy, reducing unemployment, overcoming corruption and carrying out effective politics that could ensure the reestablishment of territorial integrity. Criticism toward the ruling party is not lengthy: only 4.5% of the document. It mostly refers to the ruling party’s inability to combat poverty and corruption, and to the loss of territories due to deficient policies. The second part of the document lists the actions that the block intends to carry out if in power. They mostly concern the economy, social security and regaining territories. The last part contains a list of the expected positive outcomes. It emphasises that the block’s members will achieve the stated goals and bring prosperity.

Figure 7: Structure of the ISG document, 1999

The ISG document contains 1,470 words. The most frequently used words are presented in Figure 8.
There were differences in how often words were used by the Citizens' Union of Georgia and Industry Will Save Georgia. The difference was most obvious in the use of the words ‘Georgia’, ‘world’ and ‘national’, which were used more often by CUG. The words ‘economics’, ‘politics’ and ‘social’ were used more frequently by ISG.

The right part of the diagram shows when words are more frequently used by CUG, while the left shows ISG.

The electoral program of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) lists the parties in it: the National-Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the Union of Industrialists. The document points out that the block offers society a third way, different from those proposed by their two powerful rivals, the CUG and the Georgian Revival. This third was is the way that will bring better life to the nation. The block sees itself as the only power that can cushion the clash between the CUG and Revival supporters. In addition to a general section, the document has separate sections describing proposed political arrangements, territorial arrangements, developments in army building, the economy, energy sector, land ownership, employment, pensions, health and culture.
Each part begins with a criticism of the politics of CUG and ends with the NDA view. Therefore the critical part occupies almost one third of the whole text. The document contains 1,546 words. The most frequent words are presented in the following figure.

**Figure 11: Most frequently used words in the NDA document, 1999**

Differences between how often words were used by the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the National Democratic Alliance was revealed in the use of the words ‘state’, ‘enterprise’ and ‘law’, used more by NDA. The words ‘Georgia’, ‘economics’ and ‘world’ were used more frequently by the CUG.

**Figure 12: Differences in the frequency of words used by CUG and NDA**
The right part of the diagram shows when words are more frequently used by CUG, while the left shows NDA.

NDA also differs in its orientation from ISG. NDA, as is evident from Table 1, refers more often than ISG to ‘Georgia’ and ‘state’, while ISG puts more emphasis on ‘economy’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Difference in frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ISG uses the word more often.

A comparison of the NDP election documents of 1995 and 1999 reveals the change in accents. If earlier the National Democratic Party urged a quasi-theocracy in which the church would ‘play a leading role in moral questions concerning the nation’s life’, its current rules declare the party simply ‘loyal to the Orthodox values of the Mother Church’ (National Democratic Party Rules, 1996). As with the CUG program, the difference is first of all evident in the shift from outer to inner problems. In the 1999 program other countries and international organisations are not mentioned. Furthermore, in 1999 NDA put much more emphasis on economic issues and state-building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Difference in frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CIS countries</td>
<td>15.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>All countries except CIS countries</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>8.50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>7.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NDA uses the word more often in 1999.

In general, the CUG program was the most optimistic and detailed, and the least offensive against political opponents. It stressed the ideas of continuity, building prosperity, responsibility for its members and its positive experience of governance. It declared economic issues a priority. There were no references in the program to Russia or any other CIS country. References to the outer world were mainly restricted to less-differentiated allusions to the world and Europe, the World Trade Organisation and the European Council.

Like the CUG document, the ISG document also conveys optimism and determination. It is more businesslike and precise than the CUG manifesto or the NDA document. NDA built its election campaign on criticism, on the fact that the current situation was unbearable and that CUG was unable to solve the country’s problems. It is a rather pessimistic document in which no methods for implementation of any constructive, positive vision of Georgia are well articulated.

**Figure 13: Proportion of criticism in party documents, 1999**

7 Social and political value orientations

Studying the hierarchy of a population’s political values is another important aspect of studying political culture. Values shared by the population are by no means of less importance than the values of the political elite. The research goal of the study was to develop a set of value items that reflected the way in which the adult population saw their world in a political perspective. Values represent only one component of a person’s ideology. There is no reason to assume that values share the organisational complexity found among more specific beliefs and attitudes, but nevertheless they dominate in defining political behaviour.

As we know, the social and political attitudes of the population of a transitional society may lack coherence and stability. This was confirmed by the empirical data we obtained. Social values tend to be based on the same highly valued goal, commonly labelled as ‘a world at peace’. However, some see this goal as being something that should be achieved through international harmony and equality. Others see it as something to be accomplished through national strength and order. Others focus on value orientations. Independent and complex value orientations may map into a single left-right political dimension comprising social attitudes, voting behaviour, and political activism. This is due to the distinction between the way individuals think about their world and the way dominant political institutions allow them to express their ideas in the world of action.

Again, elections were at the focus of our study. Elections have special features that make them especially important in studying political preferences. Institutional and legal settings within the time...
span between the two main parliamentary elections of 1995 and 1999 varied significantly. However, the relative political stability during this period, as well as the general ubiquity and normative status of elections as a political event, separates these voting experiences from other forms of political participation.

This is especially true in the aftermath of a temporary rise in unconventional types of political action. This dominated the scene during the first years immediately after the declaration of independence. Participation can be defined as an ‘activity that has an intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies’ (Verba, Schlozman and Brady; 1995. p.38). Thus participation can be considered as a part of political culture and a main mechanism of democracy. The truly elementary and least demanding procedure of participation is voting, and even here the degree of citizen participation dramatically declines. The decline is observed rather than statistically supported. However, the growing criticism, from election to election, by local and international observers mainly concerns vote rigging and over-reporting turnout. The official rate was a nearly 70% turnout for the 2000 presidential elections—our 45% that expressed a readiness to vote looks characteristic.

At the same time, in attempting to describe that particular version of human behaviour considered characteristic for contemporary Georgia, it is important to take some things into account. In showing how political behaviour such as voting may be referred to respective characteristics, there must be an understanding that the behavioural patterns of the Georgian (Tbilisi) population are not solely self-generated. They are responsive to and influenced by political events in the outside world. Bearing this in mind, it may be useful to recall some general sociological data from previous studies.

In 1995 and 1996, population samples from twenty Central and Eastern European countries were interviewed in the framework of the European Union’s annual EUROBAROMETER public opinion survey. Public attitudes towards the EU and the political and economic climate in the region were assessed. Six CIS states were involved in the survey: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The Georgian population demonstrated reasonable but comparatively high optimism and orientation towards democracy and free market development compared to other CIS countries. There was a small decline in some of these indicators in 1998, the year the survey was carried out in Georgia. Among the six CIS countries, Georgia expressed a more positive view on the development of household finances. In 1996, 27% believed that the situation has improved, 28% said it stayed the same and 44% stated that their household finances got worse. The situation seems to have improved since then, however, with 39% reporting ‘better’ and only 23% ‘worse’. Market economy had its greatest support in Georgia—in other CIS countries there were more people opposed to a market economy than there were in favour. This model seemed more acceptable to the Georgian mentality because the influence of Communist ideology was traditionally lower in Georgia.

**Figure 14: Support for market economy**

[Diagram showing support for market economy across different countries]
In 1996, Georgians expressed the highest level of satisfaction with democracy among CIS countries. In these countries in general the average level of satisfaction was low. There were 40% satisfied against 56% dissatisfied (compare 8% against 80% in Russia). As mentioned above, there was a small fall in satisfaction from 43% in 1995, but the trend was not supported by later data. There was also greater optimism regarding respect for human rights in the country, in comparison with other CIS countries. Although 59% thought in 1996 that human rights were not respected, there was a certain trend towards improvement (62% against 34% respectively in 1995). Russia, on the other hand, had the highest level of dissatisfaction in terms of human rights (82% felt they were not respected). At the same time, opinions about the direction of how things were going in the country changed in Georgia. ‘Better’ went from 45% in 1995 to 39% in 1996 and ‘worse’ from 32% to 54%. This shift is partly explained by unfulfilled high expectations after the 1995 elections and the invisibility of positive changes to the common people.

Figure 15: Satisfaction with the development of democracy

An important political event in the period between the two parliamentary elections of 1995 and 1999 was the local elections held on November 15th, 1998. One of the greatest surprises in these elections was the success of two parties that campaigned against Western economic models: the Labour and Socialist parties. This was accompanied by the growth of strong industrial lobbies opposed to IMF policies, the resistance of the Orthodox Church to Western faiths and its withdrawal from the World Council of Churches, and some parliamentarians’ protests against Western cultural imperialism. There are many possible explanations for this success, which was followed by total failure in the 1999 parliamentary elections of both parties. One thing, however, is clear: there is significant potential for anti-western and anti-democratic choices. This reflects a strand of ‘indigenism’ that cannot be ignored. Still, the success of the populist rhetoric used by both Labour and Socialists in promising social security, free education and state protection and patronage, shows the readiness of the population to believe in political forces that offer pseudo-constructive ideas that are close to deeply rooted political preferences from the ideological legacy of Georgia’s Soviet past. Important material for comparison was provided by our surveys, which were carried out close to the parliamentary elections of 1995 and 1999 (the comparison is below).

8 The surveys of 1995 and 1999

The 1995 survey was held a week before parliamentary elections and the 1999 survey one week after. They comprised several identical blocks and taped respondents’ value orientations, participation in the elections, political preferences, and reasons for voting (or in the case of non-participation the reasons for abstaining).

The 1995 survey had 335 respondents (210 male and 145 female) and the 1999 survey 416 respondents (208 male and 208 female). There were four age groups in the age range of 15-75. The majority of respondents in both studies had some university-level education, finished or unfinished.
Social values were studied by the Social Goals Inventory scale (Braithwaite 1994). This contains fourteen items forming two seven-point sub-scales: ‘International harmony and equality’ and ‘National strength and order’. ‘National strength and order’ was evaluated by respondents much higher (M=6.67 in 1995 and M=6.77 in 1999) than ‘International harmony and equality’ (M=5.43 in 1995 and M=5.75 in 1999). Three of four items in the ‘National strength’ scale occupy the first three ranks according to the estimations given by respondents. These are ‘National greatness’, ‘National security’ and ‘rule of law’. Comparing the data with the results of the 1995 survey reveals an essentially similar ordering of different social goals in accordance to their importance.

### Table 3: Evaluations of Social Goals Inventory in 1995 and in 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National strength and order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National greatness</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>The rule of law</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
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<td>National security</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
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<td>National economic development</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International harmony and equality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A world at peace</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserving the natural environment</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>.80</td>
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<td>Human dignity</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A world of beauty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social progress and social reform</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good life for others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunity for all</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International cooperation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater economic equality</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule by the people</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Comparison of terms between 1995 and 1995
9 Evaluations of social goals inventory in 1995 and in 1999

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant difference on both ‘International harmony’ (F=25.6, p<.01) and ‘National security’ (F=33.4, p<.01) scales between 1995 and 1999. In 1995, ANOVA revealed the influence of age on the estimation of the importance of ‘National security and order’ (F=2.67; p<.05). The oldest (M=6.43) and youngest (M=6.41) respondents estimated ‘National strength and order’ the highest. The 18-26 age groups valued ‘National strength’ the least (M=6.19). New data do not differentiate age groups in regard to these value orientations. This points to a decrease in age-related polarisation as well as an increase in the importance of social goals.

9.1 Value orientations

Value orientations were measured by Materialist/Post-materialist values scale (Inglehart 1977). A 4-item instrument of a forced-choice format measuring adherence to materialist or post-materialist values was used. This scale was administered only in the 1999 survey. Respondents were requested to indicate their first and second priorities from a scale comprising four items of materialist/post-materialist values (Inglehart 1977). Two items of the scale corresponded to materialist values (‘maintain order in the nation’ and ‘fight rising prices’), and the other two to a post-materialist orientation (‘give people more say in government decisions’ and ‘protect freedom of speech’). Respondents can be grouped by materialist, post-materialist or mixed orientation (one materialist and one post-materialist item). Figure 17 demonstrates the high levels of materialist orientation.

Figure 17: Frequencies of materialist/post-materialist orientations

Here, respondents with mixed value orientations form the biggest group, followed by persons with materialist orientations. The group with a post-materialist orientation is very small, comprising only 4.9% of the sample.
Persons with a mixed type of value orientation are the most numerous in all age groups. Age does exert an influence on value orientation \((\text{chi-square} = 19.2, p<0.01)\). There is a prevalence of persons within the ages of 41-76 among the materialist orientation type (30.6% of all materialists). There is also a prevalence of persons in the age group 26-40 among post materialists (50% of all post-materialists). The youngest respondents, 15-17 year-olds, were prone to be of mixed orientation (29.8%).

Materialists are the most common type in the supporters of CUG and the Union of Georgian Revival, comprising 50.8% and 55% of the party supporters correspondingly. Among those who did not cast their vote, supporters of Industry Will Save Georgia and all other parties usually have mixed value orientations (62.1%, 54.5% and 52.2% correspondingly).

9.2 Attitudes towards democracy and democratic values

The attitude towards democracy scale was originally developed for the study of attitudes toward main democratic principles in Russia (Whitefield and Evans 1966). The instruments measure abstract values: the normative orientation of a person. In the survey, five out of seven original Whitefield and Evans questions and a seven-point measuring scale were used. The authors of the scale do not make a composite measure of the scale by summing up the answers of its items. The instrument was only used in the 1999 study. As is evident from Table 4, democratic values are not valued very highly. Only the statement ‘It is not conceivable to have a viable democracy without political opposition’ stands out from other items with much lower estimations. Taken altogether, the attitude of the population surveyed is rather traditionalist, honoring authority and valuing problem-solving the problems.

Table 4: Estimation of attitudes towards democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is not conceivable to have a viable democracy without political opposition</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should be allowed to organise public meetings to protest against government</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties that wish to overthrow democracy should be allowed to stand in general elections</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* It would be worthwhile to support a leader who could solve the main problems facing the country today even if he overthrew democracy</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Political opposition should not only criticise the government, but support it as well</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Disagreement to this item is a measure of a democratic attitude.

ANOVA revealed that the age groups differ significantly only in regard to one item, namely ‘Political opposition should not only criticise the government, but support it as well’ \((F=2.8, p<0.05)\). The youngest group of respondents showed the least compliance to this statement, therefore expressing a more democratic attitude \((M=4.25, SD=1.52)\). The 40-75 year-old age group showed the most compliance \((M=4.82, SD=1.56)\). ANOVA also revealed differences among supporters of different parties in regard to democratic values. Significant differences were found in regard to two statements. Supporters of parties not in the parliament estimated the item ‘People should be allowed to organise public meetings to protest against the government’ the highest \((F=4.4, p<.01; M=4.12, SD=1.76)\). The democratic attitude was expressed by the CUG electorate \((M=2.93, SD=1.53)\). The second statement on which significant difference was found \((F=3.5, p<.01)\) is ‘The political
opposition should not only criticise the government, but support it as well’. Here the most
democratic attitude was expressed by those who did not cast their vote (M=4.15, SD=1.55), while
the least democratic by supporters of CUG (M=5.05, SD=1.38).

The population seems to be ready to sacrifice democratic achievements in exchange for security and
guaranteed minimum life-standards. The attitude is also defined by representation in the parliament.
The supporters of the parliamentary majority do not want to give the opposition possibilities of
expression and action.

9.3 Democratic preferences
Democratic preferences were again studied only in 1999, on the basis of seven pairs of alternative
items. Questions were designed specially for the given survey in a forced-choice format to tap
democratic values, such as personal freedom, equality, and rule of law. Respondents were asked to
choose the important value from each pair.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>%, N=416</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Order in the country</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Personal freedom</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>* Participation of population in decision making</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trusting leadership in making decisions</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Defence of territorial integrity at any price</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Avoidance of bloodshed, even at the price of territorial integrity</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>* Support of private entrepreneurship</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social security of population</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Preferable conditions for Georgians in Georgia</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Equality for the representatives of all nations in Georgia</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>* Equality in regard to law</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granting privileges for special services</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>* Civic responsibilities</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Granting privileges to relatives and friends in business and civic life</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* items expressing democratic preference

As is demonstrated in Table 5, out of seven pairs of items a democratic preference was expressed by
the majority only in three areas, one regarding participation (item 2) and two directed against
corruption and nepotism (items 6 and 7). For the cases of corruption and nepotism, there was a
significant difference between age groups (Chi-square = 8.
In regard to both, equality before the law and civic responsibility showed a more democratic trend in the 41-70 year-old age group and less in the 14-17 year-olds. For item 6, 25.9% of the choices were made by 41-70 year-olds and 24.1% by 15-17 year-olds. For item 7, 26.4% of choices were made by 41-70 year-olds and 23.8% by 15-17 year-olds.

After items 6 and 7, respondents were most unanimous in choosing order in the country (77.1%) over personal freedom (item 1). Social security was preferred over the support of private entrepreneurship (70.4%, item 4). Here the age difference was significant (Chi-square = 15.4, \( p < .05 \)). Social security was advocated by 15-17 year-olds much more (29%) than by other age groups. The least preference was demonstrated by 41-75 year-olds. Their choice constituted only 20% of all choices for this issue.

National sentiment was less pronounced (items 3 and 5). Significant differences among the age groups was found in choosing ‘the defence of territorial integrity at any price’ over ‘avoidance of bloodshed even at the expense of territorial integrity’. Territorial integrity was most valued by 26-40 year-olds (79.6%).

In general, the demonstrated trends within the sample were: the scarcity of democratic preferences, the high need for equality in regard to law and in occupational opportunities, the low need for participation, and valuing order.

9.4 Motives for voting and not voting
From the surveyed group, persons under 18 years of age were excluded from the analyses, as they were not entitled to take part in elections due to their age. Regarding voting, the biggest group was formed of those who either did not take part in elections, did not cast their vote for any party, or did not reveal their choice. We call this group the ‘no-preference’ group. They constituted (from the eligible sample) 38.9% in 1995 and 33.8% in 1999. In all age groups the proportion the ‘no-preference’ group is the largest. Next to it, the most widespread answer varies across age groups. In 1999, 22.4% of 18-25 year-olds and 23.5% of 41-76 year-olds expressed preference for the Citizens’ Union of Georgia (CUG). For 26-40 year-olds, 29.4% expressed support for parties that did not make it into parliament.

From the perspective of party preferences in 1999, the CUG supporters in our sample are mostly formed 18-25 and 41-76 year-olds (39.3% each). The Georgian Union of Revival (GUR) is represented by persons in the age range of 18-25 (45%). The most numerous amongst the supporters of Industry Will Wave Georgia (ISG) are 41-76 year-olds (41.1%). As is demonstrated in Figure 18, the three motives of ‘trust in the party leader’, ‘others [other parties] were even worse’ and ‘ideas conveyed in the party program’ were named as the leading reasons for voting.

![Figure 18: Reasons for making voting choice](image-url)
Both the supporters of CUG (45.9%) and GUR (40%) name ‘trust in the leader’ as the main reason for making their choice. The second most widespread motive for the supporters of both parties is the fact that ‘other parties were even worse’ (26.2% of CUG supporters and 25% of GUR supporters). Different reasons were prevalent for the supporters of ISG. ‘The ideas conveyed in the program’ were the leading motive for 35.7% of the ISG electorate. Those whose voting was determined by the perception that ‘others were worse’ formed the second-largest group in this voting block. This is similar to the cases of CUG and GUR. These two motives (i.e., ‘ideas expressed in the program’ and ‘others were worse’) were the main reasons (26.1% for each motive) among the supporters of the parties that failed to enter parliament. All in all, 68 respondents—16.3% of the sample—out of those eligible to take part in elections did not vote. The leading motives for not voting were either unspecified or labelled ‘mistrust of the parties’. More than a quarter were discouraged from voting by the feeling that they could not influence events.

Figure 19: Reasons for not voting

Trust seems to be the leading factor in voting and not voting; trust in the leader was named as the main reason for making a choice of what party to vote for just as mistrust was the main motive for not voting. A general, not very stimulating psychological background for elections is indicated by the fact that the second most widely accepted motive for voting for a party was ‘choosing the least evil’. This is supported by the feeling of helplessness seen as a reason for not voting.

9.5 General orientations

Three questions in the 1999 survey were aimed at studying general orientation. One of them referred to the influence that an ordinary citizen could exert on the government to change policy. Respondents were rather pessimistic in regard to the influence that ordinary citizens and hence themselves can have on the government. There was a significant age difference in the evaluation of possibilities of exerting influence (Chi-square =27.5, p<.001). The most optimistic was 15-17 year-olds (31.8%) and the least optimistic was (22.7%) 18-25 year-olds.

Figure 20: Perceptions of influence
The second general orientation question concerned the issue of trust in others. Respondents did not consider that most other people could be trusted. (M = 3.35 on a seven-step scale ranging from 1 = absolutely disagree to 7 = absolutely agree SD = 1.57). ANOVA revealed the influence of age on trust (F = 2.96, p < .05). The age group of 41-76 (M = 3.73, SD = 1.53) show the most and the 18-25 year-old (M = 3.13, SD = 1.59) have the least trust in people.

Respondents also do not express high satisfaction with their life (M = 3.27, SD = 1.75 on a seven-step scale ranging from 1 = absolutely dissatisfied, to 7 = absolutely satisfied). Among those who were eligible to vote, a difference in satisfaction level was found between the supporters of different parties (F = 3.67, p = .006 < .05). The most satisfied were the supporters of CUG (M = 3.82, SD = 1.72) and the supporters of those parties that were left outside the parliament were the least satisfied (M = 2.70, SD = 1.38).

The trend was towards perceptions of little control over government decisions, low trust in others and low satisfaction with their own lives.

9.6 Attitudes towards economic equality and estimations of present and future possibilities

Other areas of interest include attitudes towards economic equality and trust in reaching affluence through honest work. Attitudes towards economic equality and estimations of the possibilities of economic activities at present and in the future were studied by questions with provided-answer options. Ideas of economic equality were not prevalent. A comparison with 1995 data shows a shift towards the attitude of economic inequality. In 1999 more than half the respondents thought that there should be rich and poor (Chi-square = 103.1, p < .001). That is a contrast with 1995 data, when only 46.5% favored the existence of rich and poor, 31.6% advocated equality and 21.9% could not give a definite answer.

The majority of respondents label their families as neither affluent nor poor. Most of the others consider themselves to be poor. There is a significant difference in the labelling of the economic
situation of the families (Chi-square = 75, p<0.001). The proportion of those who call their families poor increases with the age. Of those who call their families poor, 13.8% are 15-18 years old, 16.1% 18-25 years old, 29.3% 26-40 years old and 40.8% 41-75 years old.

**Figure 22: Perception of economic status in 1999**

The proportion of those who call their families poor increases with the age. Of those who call their families poor, 13.8% are 15-18 years old, 16.1% 18-25 years old, 29.3% 26-40 years old and 40.8% 41-75 years old.

According to 1999 data, over the past five years there has been a change: the economic position of 46.1% of families has worsened, 29.8% have not changed and 24.1% have improved. Back in 1995, according to as much as 69% of the respondents, the economic condition deteriorated, according to 21.1% it has not changed, and according to 10.4% it has improved. Here again respondents differ according to age (Chi-square = 38.9, p < .001).

The proportion of those who think the situation is improving is also tied to age. Of all those who point to an improvement, 15-17 year-olds constitute 37%, 18-25 year-olds are 31%, 26-40 year-olds are 18% and 41-76 year-olds are 14%. There are also significant differences in the evaluation of changes in 1995 and in 1999 (Chi-square = 53, p < .001). In 1995, 10.4% of the sample pointed to an improvement, while in 1999 24% sees a positive change.

**Figure 23: Perception of improvements**

It is worth mentioning a relatively recent World Bank Poverty and Income Distribution study (World Bank 1999). This indicates that, notwithstanding the financial crisis of last year, there is a tendency towards a slight improvement in the perception of well-being. This can be compared to the results of a relatively recent study, which indicates figures for the perception of well-being that are similar to our study.

**Table 6: Perceptions of changes in economic conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in economic conditions of a family, as compared to last year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general, the outlook is rather optimistic. A large segment of 67.5% of the respondents expect improvements in the economic conditions of their families in the coming five years. A smaller group of 26.6% thinks nothing will change, and according to 5.9% things will become worse. Age plays a considerable part in this evaluation (Chi-square =57, p<.001). Again, younger respondents look at the future with much more hope. Of those who hope for a more affluent life, 30.1% fell into the age group of 15-17 years old, 31.2% were between 18-25, 23% were between 26-40 and 15.7% were 41-76 years old.

The majority of respondents (68.1%) considered it impossible to earn enough for a decent life by honest work. Only 10.9% think it possible and 21% cannot give a definite answer. Age groups differ significantly in their evaluations of the present possibilities of achieving affluence through honest work (Chi-square =19.4, p<.01). The oldest respondents are the least convinced of such possibility (29.1% of negative answers). The most convinced are 18-25 year-olds (21.35% of negative answers). There are no differences in the evaluations of the present possibilities made in 1995 and in 1999. However, there are considerable differences in evaluations of future prospects of earning enough by honest work (Chi-square =18.5, p<.05). As can be seen in Figure 21, a bigger proportion of the 1999 sample sees such an opportunity in a five-year perspective. A group of 22.2% of respondents think that in five years it will be possible to earn enough for a normal life through honest work. This is not considered a possibility by 21.2%. The largest number of respondents (56.6%) could not give a definite answer. Age does not make any difference in this area. No difference was revealed while comparing 1995 and 1999 evaluations of future or present possibilities to make a living through honest work. There is, however, a significant increase in optimism regarding future possibilities for an honest life. There is a certain improvement trend in the perception of family economic conditions and future expectations. Different age groups also label economic conditions differently, with a more optimistic outlook in the younger sample.

This can be compared to the results of a study of corruption that indicates that more than half of the population accepts bribery and corruption as part of everyday life.

Table 7: Attitudes concerning corruption
Respondent’s opinion with regards to paying extra charges to personnel of state institutions in order to settle a problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is necessary</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is our home regime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is inadmissible</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is possible in the present circumstances</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it is required</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Investigation of Corruption Problems in Georgia, 1998)

The results of the 1995 and 1999 surveys were supplemented by our latest survey, which was focused on the population of the capital city of Tbilisi. The survey was carried out a week before the presidential elections in Georgia, which occurred on April 9th, 2001. The questionnaire contained several blocks. In addition to the standard instruments described below, it tapped Georgia’s priority problems as perceived by the population; attitude toward different external orientations of Georgia; attitude toward the presidential elections; characteristics of the elected president E. Shevardnadze as seen by the public eye.

10 April 2000 survey

10.1 Sample characteristics
Altogether, 579 respondents (297 males and 282 females) took part in the survey. Respondents were placed in one of three age groups: 18-25 years, 210 respondents (105 male and 105 female); 26-45 years, 190 respondents (97 male and 93 female); and 46-75 years, 179 respondents (95 male and 84 female).

The majority of respondents had some kind of university education (86.6%) and 13.4% had only high or special education. In terms of occupation, 36.9% were state employees, 27.5% were students, 12.8% were unemployed, 11.5% worked in private enterprises, 5.3% were homemakers, 2% were pensioners, 4% worked in other types of organisations. The overwhelming majority of respondents did not belong to any political party; only 16.9% declared support for a party.

The survey assessed the degree of optimism of the respondents by a Life Orientation Scale (Shreier and Carver, 1987). This is a ten-item instrument with ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ answer options. Examples of items include: ‘I always look on the bright side’ and ‘I hardly expect things to go my way’.

All in all, respondents demonstrated rather high optimism (M = .83, SD = .14 with a maximum possible positive score of 1). No age or gender-related difference was found.

The survey also assessed the locus of control of respondents. They were asked to choose what best reflected their attitudes from a list of five statements. The statements ranged from ‘What a person achieves in life almost entirely depends on her/him’ to ‘[It] almost entirely depends on others and the situation’. Respondents displayed a rather high internal locus control (M = 2.09, SD = .77, score 2 corresponding to the statement ‘Mostly depending on oneself’). Significant age-related differences were found (F = 3.54, p < .05), young respondents subscribing to much greater internal locus.
About one third of the respondents considered they belonged to poor families. Concerning the economic status of their families, the majority (59.8%) described it as of medium wealth, 25.8% called it poor and 4.9% extremely poor, while 7.5% considered their families as well-to-do and 1.6% felt rich. Economic status was related to the locus of control (Pearson’s $r = .12$ $p < .01$). The well-to-do tended to be more internal and the poor more external. But respective causal association is not deducible, as both the perception of economic status and internality rate correlate with age. Although the most widely accepted definition is medium wealth, the proportion of persons describing their families this way decreases with age (67%, 60.2% and 52.5% in the first, second and third age groups correspondingly). This was the case according to our 1999 survey, as well, with a tendency of shifting towards poor and extremely poor. One possible explanation is that there are different cohorts using different frames of reference. The young are comparing themselves to other families and the older respondents to their past economic situations.

10.2 Country’s problems and external orientations

Respondents were asked to choose the three most urgent problems from the nine listed. Three problems that majority chose as needing urgent resolution were economic development (78.5%), restoration of territorial integrity (57.5%), and combating corruption (52.6%).

[Figure 25: How problems are ranked]

Age groups did not differ in their perceptions here.

A question asked who determines the future of Georgia. In answer, 38.6% stated that it mostly depended on other countries, 32.4% said it on Georgia itself, and 29.9% pointed that it equally depended on Georgia and other countries. Against a background of a low level of perceived national self-reliance, it becomes important in which direction Georgia’s international politics should be oriented. It should also be noted that orienting Georgia either towards Russia or the west is one of the central issues on the political parties’ agendas. It remained an issue in the presidential elections. President Shevardnadze stressed his orientation towards the west during his pre-election campaign, while the alternative candidate J. Patiazhvili was assumed to be oriented towards Russia. Shevardnadze underlined the importance of oil and gas pipelines in his electorate campaign (from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea ports, as an alternative to the Russian route to the port of Novorossiisk), making the most salient feature where his achievements were the biggest. This was an important point, as the majority of the population considers this issue to be important for the future development of the country.

The majority of respondents (55.1%) considered that Georgia should look mainly to the west. A Russian orientation was preferred by 17.2% and 27.7% could not choose. There is a significant
difference (Chi-square = 16.6; p < .005) between age groups here. The younger generation chooses the west, the older generation looks to Russia. From those who prefer Russia only 23.2% were 18-25 years, while 35.4% were 26-45 years and 41.4% were 46-71 years. At the same time, respondents revealed a high level of scepticism with regards to the country’s current development direction. Only 18.2% considered Georgia to be on the right development path, while 45.5% think it is on the wrong path and 36.9% could not decide.

Figure 26: Attitudes towards Georgia’s orientation in the three age groups

Foreign policy orientation is indeed an important variable. For the general population, foreign orientation may have important everyday connotations. One of the many changes brought by independence was the radical reorientation from Russian to English. Most new shops, offices or state institutions will have now Georgian and English labels, with English replacing the Russian signs characteristic of the Soviet period. It is also rare to hear Russian in the street, although a significant portion of the population still watches Russian TV and understands the language fairly well. There is also less Armenian, which was commonly spoken in some districts of Tbilisi (Havlabar).

An interesting trend was revealed by the 1996 Eurobarometer with regards to the role of the mass media. One question concerned the principal source of information on the EU in Georgia (in comparison with other CIS countries). National television was named more frequently than Russian TV (72% and 48% respectively), although the latter was a more popular source for other CIS countries (except Ukraine). The role of national television in Georgia rose significantly since last year, as did Russian television (compare 39% for national TV and 16% for Russian TV in 1995). It seems that tolerance towards Russia as a source of information and future partnership grew among Georgian citizens as the political pressure of Russia softened. Russia has a weaker enemy image than in 1995, when Russia was considered to be involved in major political plots against Georgia’s interests. According to the Eurobarometer, in 1996 Russia was more often seen as a future partner in Georgia (51%) with a rise of 17 points from 1995. The EU was seen as a future partner by 11% of the people, USA by 13%, Germany by 8% and other countries by 21%. However, now the trend seems to be changing direction with the opening of the Russian border with Abkhazia, the war in Chechnya, the anti-Georgian campaign in the Russian media and last year’s unprecedented bombing of the Georgian villages of Omalo and Shatili by Russian planes. The most recent event was the unilateral introduction of the visa regime in December 2000.

The attitudes of Georgians toward Russia have always been characterised by a deeply rooted ambivalence. Russia was and still is seen as both patron and protector, on one hand, and as repressive imperial power, on the other. Policies toward Russia are at the heart of polemics among both Georgian elites and the population at large. Arguments vacillate between naïve, profiteering
pragmatism and attitudes marked by fear and aggressive hostility. While Georgians are deeply resentful of Russia’s imperial behaviour in the Caucasus and a Russian military presence in Georgia, a poll in 1997 suggested 24% of Georgians (it was 25% for Germany and 23% for the US) considered Russia important to Georgia’s future (USIA Opinion Analysis 1997). In 1998, 43% of those polled believed Georgia should ally itself either with Russia and the CIS, or with Russia and Western countries jointly. This figure is interesting, considering as little as 29% had a favourable view of Russia (USIA Opinion Analysis 1998). At the same time, Georgian views of Russia are not only characterised by fear and suspicion, but also by long-standing cultural connections and the recognition of Russia’s future importance after its recovery from the current crisis.

**Figure 27: Eurobarometer, 1996**

In September 1998, when asked where Georgia’s place should be in the world, 68% answered that it should be with Europe, 19% with the CIS and 3% with the Near East (USIA Opinion Analysis 1998). Germany and the United States were looked upon ‘favourably’ by Georgians (87% and 85% of those polled, respectively) compared to Turkey and Russia (32% and 29%) (USIA Opinion Analysis 1998). In a 1998 USIA poll, 49% of Georgian respondents felt the main purpose of western assistance to Georgia was to make it dependent on the west. In 1996, only 31% believed this (USIA Opinion Analysis 1998).

Since the elections of 1995, Georgia has steadily followed the free market precepts of the Bretton-Woods institutions. Its legislation incorporates western values and achievements such as European and human rights conventions, the division of powers, and free market legislative norms and mechanisms. Still, Georgian foreign policy and its gradual re-orientation toward Europe cannot be explained without an understanding of the Georgian elite’s perceptions of their cultural identity and place in the world. It is these values or paradigms that may make up the framework of a Georgian ‘national project’, although Georgia’s foreign policy is still in the process of being formulated (Jones 1999). These paradigms are relevant to the role of national identity in foreign policy and will be the reference points for any foreign policy ideology that may emerge in the future.

Georgians are in general satisfied with their country’s membership in international and European organisations such as the Council of Europe (Georgia was approved in February 1999). They are also happy with increased collaboration with the European Union and integration with the European market. There is a widespread belief that Georgia’s future lies in the development of the Eurasian transport corridor (TRACECA, or Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia). Importance is also placed on transporting oil and exploiting its central position by serving as a strategic bridge between east and west, although the east plays a somewhat secondary role in such considerations. Georgia’s connection with Europe will draw Georgia firmly into the western sphere. It will provide both security and prosperity as well as a safeguard against waning Russian influence.
Polls in 1996-1998 showed such policies were congruent with public opinion. At the same time, while countries of Central Europe have already gone far towards integration into European structures, Georgia is weakly integrated into Europe, apart from recent membership in the Council of Europe and the OSCE. Regional organisations of which Georgia is a member develop either in the direction of further weakening ties like CIS, or had no vital energy from the very beginning, due to essential conflicts of interest between its leading members, like with BSEC. Still, the Georgian government openly expresses its intention to integrate further into European and North-Atlantic structures, and this is approved by the majority of the population.

There are also cultural and historical biases that define popular attitudes and preferences. Despite Georgia’s alliance with Azerbaijan and Turkey (in particular regarding the oil and gas pipelines issue) popular anti-Muslim sentiments are still observable. In 1997, Georgians protested the proposed establishment of a Turkish university in Georgia and publicly resisted the resettlement of Muslim Meskhetians in Southern Georgia, the border region from which they were expelled in 1944 (USIA Opinion Analysis 1998). Opinion polls suggest that most Georgians still have an unfavourable opinion of Turkey (56% in 1998). Turkey was second to Russia in being seen as a potential threat to Georgia (but with only 16% compared to 50% for Russia).

At the same time, religion is not the only consideration. Azerbaijan was given the second highest rating after the US (61% compared to 62%) as a country capable of dealing responsibly with problems in the Caucasus. Additionally, although 66% looked favourably on Azerbaijan, only 42% did so for Christian Armenia (USIA Opinion Analysis 1998). Distrust of Turkey does not extend to Azerbaijan, and popular protests against Turkish influence in Georgia have had little impact on Georgian foreign policy. Shevardnadze continues to forge an economic and strategic alliance with both Azerbaijan and Turkey (Jones 1999).

It is worth considering, using available sociological data, other related aspects of the value system other than what was covered by our surveys. One of these is the religious aspect of self-perception, which is closely linked to one of the dominant variables in Georgian identity: Orthodox Christianity, or Sunni Islam, for a minority of Ajarans, in addition to Shiya Azeris and Gregorian Armenians in Southern Georgia. How deep is this allegiance and how important is it in shaping people’s political values? For most Georgians, including the political elites who use religious symbols to gain legitimacy, the church is a national rather than religious emblem. It represents politics, not metaphysics (Jones 1999). A United States Information Agency poll taken in 1997 suggested that only 8% of the population went to church at least once a week (USIA Opinion Analysis 1997). In fact, Georgians in general, despite their public testament of religious faith, remain ambivalent toward the church. The same USIA poll recorded that 73% of Georgians considered themselves religious, but many see the church as corrupt and the priesthood low in prestige and poorly educated.

Alongside public loyalty to the Orthodox Church, Georgians have cultivated a myth of religious tolerance. They proudly stress the absence of a tradition of religious persecution in Georgia. At the same time, the church has lost its symbolic function of preserving national identity. Lately it has declined in status, respect and relevance. It is becoming more and more politically marginal and reactive to the increased influence of rival religions, campaigns against other religious groups or organisations such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, or even the more acceptable Catholics, as demonstrated during the recent visit to Georgia of Pope John-Paul II in December 1999.

11 Electing the president in 2000

Although a number of candidates (eventually six) for the year 2000 presidential elections were registered, acting president Shevardnadze stood out unequivocally. There was practically no alternative. Shevardnadze’s long-term rival, Jumber Patiashvili, was Shevardnadze’s former
successor as the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party (1985-1989). He was considered to be the only candidate who could compete in some way with Shevardnadze, but even he appeared to be no real match.

Among the main issues during the 2000 survey were the motivations behind participation and voting choices. In addition, the personality characteristics of the elected president as perceived by the population were also studied.

Age had a significant effect on the readiness to participate (Chi-square = 17.39; p < .05). The older respondents expressed more willingness to vote. Among those who decided to vote only 29.9% were 18-25 years old, 33% were 26-45 and 37.1% were older than 45. The majority of the respondents (52.2%) considered that the well-being of the population greatly depended on who would be the president of Georgia. More than 36.8% thought it was important, 6% were not sure, and for 5% it was not important. However, not everyone who considered the personality of the president to be important was going to take part in elections. In fact, nearly half of those who acknowledged the importance of the personality of a president were not planning to vote. Only 45.3% of the surveyed expressed readiness to participate. A week before the elections, 21.1% were undecided, 25% were sure not to participate and 8.6% refused to answer the question.

Among those who were going to vote, 92.8% considered the president’s personality to be important, but the proportion of those who were not going to vote who agreed with this was also quite high (85.4%). This points to limited choices or the inability to influence outcomes. Respondents felt the decision was important but nevertheless did not consider it reasonable to go and vote. The reasons named by those who were going to vote were ranked the following way: 41.6% named civic responsibility as the motive for participation; 35.3% took part so that their vote would not be misused; 15.3% stated their support for the candidate. A further 7.8% had different motives, for example the situation that they had friends or knew honourable people among a candidate’s supporters. The most common motive for not participating in elections among non-voters was their belief that Shevardnadze would win anyway (34%). A group of 27.8% was discouraged by the feeling that elections would not be fair. A smaller group of 12.1% distrusted the candidates, 11.1% did not feel that their participation was important, 3.9% thought it was not important who won, and 11.1% named other motives.

Respondents were asked to evaluate their confidence in candidates’ success in solving problems pertinent to Georgia (ranked previously in Figure 25) on a scale ranging from strongly convinced that he will solve this or that problem (1) to absolutely non-confident in this (5). Overall, on nine ‘problematic for Georgia’ spheres, Shevardnadze’s ability was estimated lower (M = 3.03; SD = 1.11) than Patiashvili’s (M = 2.79; SD = 1.18). An analysis of the variance showed age (F = 4.06; p < .05) and gender (F = 8.12; p < .05) differences in the evaluation of Patiashvili’s prospective performance. Men and respondents aged 26-45 were significantly more positive towards him than were women and older respondents. At the same time, in the case of Shevardnadze there was a difference only between age groups (F = 5.18, p < 0.5). Younger respondents assessed him more positively. The table below illustrates popular attitudes towards Shevardnadze’s capacity or will to solve the most pressing national problems.

**Table 8: Evaluation of E. Shevardnadze’s ability to solve problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Shevardnadze M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Effective foreign policy</td>
<td>2.06 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lowering crime</td>
<td>2.96 (1.2)* #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Improvement of relationships with regions of</td>
<td>2.97 (1.2)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As is evident from Table 8, foreign policy stands out as Shevardnadze’s most effective field. It is followed by lowering crime and carrying out effective regional politics. Gender has a small influence in the evaluations of Shevardnadze’s future performance. There is a difference only in one case; men express more trust in Shevardnadze than women do in terms of combating crime. Age has a more decisive effect. It is evident in six spheres out of nine, mostly contrasting youngest and oldest groups. Respondents under 26 evaluate him much more favourably.

Paradoxically enough, respondents expressed more trust in Patiashvili than in Shevardnadze (M=3.35; SD=1.2 and M=3.57; SD=1.3, respectively on a 5-step scale ranging from 1=complete trust to 5=distrust). Patiashvili was also better evaluated in regard to the fervently debated issue of the tragedy of April 9th, 1989 (when Soviet army troops violently dissolved a nationalist manifestation in Tbilisi, leaving 20 dead). Respondents are more inclined to believe that Shevardnadze (who was then Soviet Foreign Minister) was more able than Patiashvili (then First Secretary of Georgia’s Communist Party) to avoid the tragedy. Notably, there is a significant gender difference in the case of Shevardnadze. Women are more convinced that he could have avoided the tragedy. Similarly, Patiashvili was evaluated more favourably than Shevardnadze in terms of future imagined successes. In both cases the motive chosen by the most respondents was Georgia’s interests. However, although 42.5% believed that Patiashvili would act according to this motivation, only 25.5% thought Shevardnadze would. Party interests were named as the second leading motive for Shevardnadze (24.5%). A group of 21% thought that Shevardnadze will act in the interests of another country or international organisation. There are significant differences among age groups evaluating Shevardnadze’s motivation (Chi-square = 15.68; p < .05). The highest proportion of 18-25 year-olds (27%) believes that Shevardnadze will mostly serve his party’s interests. In the range 25-46 the most widely spread belief is that he would act in the interests of Georgia (31.5%), while the relative majority of the oldest respondents think that Shevardnadze would serve other countries’ interests (26.4%).

Figure 28: Actors whose interest Shevardnadze serves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Supporting democratic values</td>
<td>2.99 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>3.20 (1.2)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Electricity on a 24-hour basis</td>
<td>3.20 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Social security of population</td>
<td>3.31 (1.2)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Restoration of territorial integrity</td>
<td>3.54 (1.2)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Combating corruption</td>
<td>3.68 (1.2)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant difference among age groups. # Significant difference among gender groups.
Respondents were then asked to go through a list of personality characteristics to check if they applied to each candidate. The list comprised both positively and negatively worded characteristics needed for successful holding of the office. Examples included as being principled, forceful, fair, future-oriented, having good reasoning ability, etc. Taken together, Shevardnadze’s personality was evaluated slightly more positively (M = .78, SD = .15) than Patiashvili’s (M = .76, SD = .16), although the difference is not statistically significant. Significant differences were found among age groups in the evaluation of Shevardnadze (F = 4.85, p < .01); older respondents gave the most negative assessment of him.

![Figure 29: Shevardnadze’s characteristic features](chart)

The findings indicate, that the population makes their decision based on such specific facts as lack of alternatives, fatalism, personal affiliations and orientation in international politics. These have surmounted the importance of factors such as the ability to solve the most pertinent problems, trust in the leader, his good intentions and sound judgement, belief in serving one’s own nation, or a candidates past record of serving his/her nation. At the same time, people have lost illusions concerning quick resolutions of such painful problems as territorial integrity, corruption, economic levels and living conditions. Stability and centralisation of power are believed to be the most realistically desirable, notwithstanding the lack of trust in the ability of a leader to cope with urgent tasks or his human qualities.

12 Conclusions

A large number of people in Georgia are in the midst of profound changes in basic values. Long-held beliefs about the meaning of work in one’s life, relations between men and women, expectations for the future—indeed, about many aspects of daily living and important relationships—are undergoing re-examination and re-appraisal. The majority is hovering between older faiths in expanding horizons, and a new sense of lowered expectations, apprehension about the future, mistrust of institutions, and a growing sense of limits. People are in search of new rules, because the old rules no longer. They are in the midst of a fundamental reordering of the way they see the world around them.

We have mentioned the analytic primacy of values in explanations of political change. At the simplest, most direct level, shifts in value orientations induce changes in modes and levels of
political involvement. By examining these changing values, we try to understand how individuals react to change and how people’s values lead them to accept or reject change in their lives. Now we can return to questions asked at the beginning of the study. How can the political culture of today’s Georgia be characterised? What tendencies can be traced in regard to the development of democracy? What values guide the behaviour of the electorate? What orientations are conveyed by the political elite?

When a culture undergoes a paradigm shift, the new paradigm does not immediately replace the old. Indeed, the processes of changing value orientations are not characterised by straightforward replacement. Rather, elements in traditional value orientations gradually lose their authority or relevance, while other elements retain their force. The reconfiguration of values in new constellations is an intrinsic part of more general processes of social change. Political interest, grassroots activity, electoral turnout, and party choice are all influenced by changes in value orientations.

The process of value changes will affect belief in government in two closely related ways. On one hand, as rising cognitive mobilisation—in line with ongoing modernisation—goes along with the emergence of new value orientations, the general consequence will be increasing levels of political self-confidence. Citizens will develop greater political efficacy and civic competence. On the other hand, new value orientations imply more critical attitudes towards traditional values and political authorities. This has direct consequences for levels of political trust and civic activity.

One may expect the population to be increasingly intent on pursuing non-material and emancipatory goals, as happens in societies with longer democratic traditions. In place of an emphasis on material well-being and respect for authority, one expects to find a flowering of orientations which might be classed as expressions of self-fulfilment, independence or emancipation. These are described by such terms as ‘individualisation’, ‘post-conventional norms’, ‘de-traditionalisation’, or the spread of ‘postmaterialism’, and arrival of the ‘postmodern society’. In general, secularised orientations, left materialism, postmaterialism, sexual permissiveness, ecologism, feminism, postmodernism, and libertarianism are more evident among young people and the highly educated. These are who are exposed most intensively to new social arrangements and who show the greatest willingness to accept new ideas. The value orientations of postmodernism (based on the notions of self-expression, pluralism and humanism) and postmaterialism (based on ideas of self-realisation, authenticity, and freedom) are important antecedents of civic competence and efficacy. They promote more self-confidence among grassroots activists and political actors. A decline in religious orientations undermines deference and the habits of political obedience. Government tends to find support among electorates that are much more diverse in orientations, which make it more difficult to put together the kind of broad consensus necessary to mount major political initiatives, but makes democracy stable and viable.

Our study was an attempt to reveal some trends in the change of values as linked to the transformation of society. Designing such a study raises questions about sample size and technique, about measurement and reliability, and about data analysis that needs resolving. Therefore, we consider our results as preliminary findings that need further elaboration and crosschecking.

The results of our study pointed to an alarming inertia in society at large; those changes in the mentality of the population that are required by societal transformation are slow to come about. Democratisation is also impeded by outdated ideological stereotypes and the vague status of democratic values in current modes of thought. Even if democratic principles are supported in abstract form, often citizens are reluctant to put these principles into practice. Also, as was described for a more general post-Soviet setting, the public is committed much more strongly to ‘majoritarian’ democratic principles, such as popular sovereignty and competitive elections, than to ‘minoritarian’ principles, such as civil liberties and the right of dissent (Gibson and Duch 1993). Reshaping of political culture is a long and slow process even when the environment is conducive to change. Hence in the environment governed by the mutual distrust of political elite and citizens, where elite
in practice does not want and citizens do not feel the need to change, the process of reorientation is at its best very slow.

Despite the demands posed by changes in the political and economic structure and environment, cultural and political legacies hinder both the elite and ordinary citizens in reorienting toward values of personal or corporate responsibility, transparency and accountability. Deeply rooted clientelism and corruption do not stimulate the people in power to encourage public participation. Disillusioned ordinary citizens show apathy and accept the authority of those in power. An important corollary of our main findings is that there is a widespread perception of low control over decisions of government, low trust in others and low satisfaction with one’s own life. The way out of this closed, self-reinforcing circle can be seen in the activation of a politically conscious and active population and in the will of the ruling party to involve the population in policy making. In the long run, the political survival of today’s elites depends on this. Further economic hardships, a high rate of inequality and consequent popular discontent may swing the pendulum of public support. Poor economic performance and continuous insecurity and humiliation may easily undermine the still embryonic democratic political culture.

Our results have demonstrated the decisive effect of current conditions and needs on value orientations. Comparisons with data from other countries allow us to predict development in this regard. As conceptualised by A. Maslow, needs form a hierarchy with basic safety needs at the bottom and non-material needs, like self-actualisation, at the top. It is likely that the two value orientations which were studied, i.e. materialist and post-materialist, are advocated in response to a situation. People do not largely adhere to post-materialist, libertarian, democratic values until more basic, materialist values of safety, stability and livelihood are satisfied. This means that the process of democratisation cannot easily develop from scratch in an environment of economic hardship and threat.

Indeed, today the trend is to sacrifice democratic achievements to security, stability and minimum living standards. That is why our respondents were most unanimous in choosing order over personal freedom. This is seemingly a natural reaction to years of post-independence civil war, ethnic strife and crime, as well as to current threats to social and political stability. This is an alarming trend, as “unless the bulk of the society is committed to a high valuation of these ideals [liberty and equality] it can hardly be expected that institutions predicated upon them will work successfully or long endure” (Pennock 1956). While in general the younger urbanites show more democratic orientations and a more active attitude in general (this is substantiated by empiric data), it is also true that under certain conditions they may be easier mobilised by populist rhetoric and radical nationalism.

Another alarming tendency is the great gap between political elites actively involved in the government or opposition and the population at large, emotionally concerned but lacking skills and levers for more political participation. The unwillingness of elites to take responsibility and action for successful democratic transformation and their lack of independent and creative thinking are further aggravated by the—mutual—suspicion and mistrust between political elites and the masses: the centre and the periphery. Elites have no confidence in the masses. They try to avoid democratic structures and procedures of decision making wherever possible. This is done under the pretext that the population is politically immature and lacks political knowledge and skills, or is attributed to economic hardship or external security threats.

A similar attitude can be observed in relation to regional authorities, especially to ethnic or religious minorities. Only a robust civil society, with the capacity to generate political alternatives and to monitor the government and state, can resist and solve democratic reversals. New value orientations should lead to more institutional openness, where citizens have more direct input to government decision-making but no emerging value orientations reject the power of the national state as such. There is an urgent need for the development of a participatory approach at all levels of government. Individuals and communities must be empowered to self-organise on to protect their interests, to create effective trade unions, consumer societies or other non-governmental structures. A clear
understanding on the part of Georgian citizens of their rights and responsibilities cannot fully develop until there are strong and adequate instruments for protecting the rights, laws and norms on which a free society is built. Furthermore, increasing the identification of citizens with their own state (especially by having representation of ethnic or religious minorities) is the path to securing effective participation, trust and the rule of law.

As mentioned above, voting is the major democratic area where public participation in the political process takes place and where political elites compete among one another for influence and domination. The results of our study pointed to the democratic immaturity of the electorate, to high reliance on the personal features of the leader, and to an indifference to party ideologies and agendas. However, certain positive trends were observed as well. One was the gains made by the political opposition, which points to a strengthening of the democratic environment. Preferences indicate that the electorate has higher expectations for positive political goals. This takes the place of overall criticism and a craving for stability and positive outcomes. The failure of the populist political groupings that achieved success in the 1998 local elections also reflects growing experience and electoral maturity. The population became less susceptible to populist slogans and cheap promises.

Our study also pointed to different standards used by different cohorts in their evaluations of political issues. Younger people showed a stronger adherence to post-materialist values. All in all the outlook of the generation of the 1980s is much more optimistic than older age groups. Younger people not only see their and their families’ affairs more positively, but also have better general expectations for the future.

In summary, we can say that while there are many obstacles to rapid positive, democratic changes in the political culture, the process is nevertheless happening. The younger generation is showing a more active and pro-democracy stance. There is reason for moderate optimism when looking at orientations toward western models and values, support for market-oriented reform and civic values. This leads to hopes for the immediate future, and even brighter dreams in the long run.
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