

Georgian National Identity: Conflict and Integration

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INTRODUCTION

National identity, as one of the collective identities, has long been the subject of special attention and research, notably in the West, as well as in Eastern Europe. The academic community and the political elite in Georgia have been discussing national identity for many years; nevertheless, an empirical study covering the popular discourses has not yet been conducted relating to contemporary Georgia. The present work is one of the first steps in discerning the Georgian reality. In order to study the factors defining national identity and the basic values of society, this work has utilized data from the 2013 population representative “National Identity” survey from ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) as well as interviews with the Georgian population and public opinion makers.

The research objective is to define markers of Georgian national identity, also to reveal both the values that unite Georgian society and the distinctions that cause conflicts. The aim of this research is to reveal the appearance of modern Georgian society based around the key aspects of Georgian national identity.

Certain features of Georgian national identity are closely related to previous historical and political events. Georgian nationalism emerged in the 19th century when the Emperor of Russia abolished Georgian statehood and Georgia became part of the Russian Empire within two provinces. Hence, natural Georgian nationalism and national identity were based on ethno-cultural factors. At the beginning of the 20th century, a short period of Georgian independence (1918-1921) was followed by Georgia’s occupation by Soviet Russia. Thus, as the result of Soviet annexation, Georgian statehood was abolished until 1991. Accordingly, during the Soviet period, Georgian nationalism could not develop in a civil-political sense, and mostly ethno-cultural features, essentially language, culture and religion, remained the defining characteristics of Georgian identity (Zedania, 2010).

When it comes to Georgian national identity and its core values, the recent past also needs to be taken into account. Georgia passed the declaration for the restoration of independence on April 9th, 1991. At the end of the 1980s,

during the Soviet Union's disintegration, repressed "national sentiments" broke out and acquired a particular political meaning, with the notion of national freedom. By that time, the restoration of independence became a crucial societal demand, for example the tragedy of April 9th, 1989, and the referendum for independence, March 31st, 1991. In those critical years, the main value unifying society was Georgia's independence. Representatives of all nationalities, ethnic groups or religions who supported Georgia's independence were perceived as "us", while opponents of independence were seen as "enemies." After the Soviet Union collapsed and Georgia became a member of the United Nations as an independent state in 1992, the rethinking of national identity and "nationality" gradually became an issue within Georgian society. In the international arena, it is no longer necessary for ethno-cultural Georgians to prove their national identity as Georgian and not Russian or Soviet, as it was during Soviet times. Moreover, Georgia's independence is a widely recognized fact, and no longer a subject for discussion as it was during those critical, transitional periods. Contemporary Georgian society faces certain issues, namely, whether to complete or replace the ethno-cultural model of national identity with civic and political values; further whether the current socio-economic or political reality provides the opportunity to replace survival values with values of self-expression. The aim of this study is to attempt to answer these questions and to discuss various interconnected problems.

The main part of the publication includes three chapters and a final conclusion:

The first chapter, a theoretical review, consists of three parts. This includes several topics that provide certain a theoretical basis for the study of national identity in Georgia. The first part examines modernization, globalization, Europeanization, and the general trends identified that are currently relevant in relation to modernization, to globalization and, particularly, to Europeanization. The second part of the theoretical review focuses on the nation and nationalism, and includes the existing theories, alongside the other aspects, terms and various interpretations connected to national identity. The third part discusses and attempts to define the concepts of identity and national identity.

The second chapter, on methodology, describes how the data was collected and analyzed. In brief, the study was carried out in three stages: the secondary analysis of the quantitative data (descriptive, factor analysis,

etc.) as well as the focus groups and the in-depth interviews, and their qualitative content analysis.

The most extensive, the third chapter of the publication, includes a discussion of the research findings, and is divided into three basic parts: forms of expression of national identity, modern Georgian society, and finally the dichotomy of “we” and “other”, conflict and integration in modern Georgian society.

1. THEORETICAL REVIEW

1.1. Processes in the Modern World: Modernization, Europeanization, Globalization

Georgia has made significant progress towards getting closer to Europe by signing the Association Agreement with the European Union on June 27th, 2014. Georgia has already been involved in integration process with European society. The theoretical part of this work aims to highlight the processes underway in Europe and their importance in relation to national identity.

One should start with defining the notion of Europe. Does the notion denote the European Union and its member states, or should one perceive Europe as one whole geographical and political entity? According to a number of theorists, for example Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande (Beck and Grande, 2004), there is no Europe as such, there is only Europeanization perceived and understood as the institutional process of sustainable development. According to Beck, Europe cannot be viewed merely as a fixed and conserved factor but rather a combination of the following variables: national interests, national affiliation, internal and foreign relations, statehood and identity (Beck and Grande, 2004). The authors also use the above variables to describe Europeanization. In their view, the European Union is the outcome of the modern institutional process of Europeanization; it is focused on the development of the national state and on internal and external transformation among member states.

According to the aforementioned authors, the European Union and Europe itself is a unity of national communities. When discussing the processes taking place within the national states, Beck puts a special emphasis on modernity. He makes a distinction between the two forms of modernity. Beck asserts that the first case of modernity, dating back to the 18th century, is focused on the “either-or” logic, where there are either us or the others, either nature or society, either an organization or the

market, either war or peace, either many or a single national state. In light of the processes currently underway within the contemporary world, Beck highlights the second form of modernity, which he refers to as “Reflexive Modernity”, and he connects it with a novel understanding of modernization. The latter is based on the “both-and” logic and can be explained as, both us and the others, both peace and war, both Europeanization and national states. In order to define Europe and its community, Beck defines several characteristics of the the European Community: as the horizontal unity of national societies; as the mobility between countries; as the civilization of multiple modernities; as the space for transnational consciousness; as the game of Meta-power; as the regional world risk community and as the dynamics of transnational equality. Beck further associates the notion of modernization with the notion of civilization (Beck and Grande, 2004) and agrees with Gerard Delanty that this concept is experiencing “Renaissance” in social sciences (Delanty, 1998).

The notion of civilization is also linked with the notion of modernization in the works of the following authors: Benjamin Nelson, Shmuel Eisenstadt and Norbert Elias. According to Eisenstadt, the major characteristic of modernity is that it is not the convergence of various societies but rather there are number of institutional varieties of the modern: the economy, politics, education and the family, which have developed in different ways within different societies and at different times. Hence, in his opinion, an empirical reality today is found in the multiple modern societies. According to Eisenstadt, modernity is “an original civilization with specific institutional and cultural peculiarities” (Eisenstadt, 2000). This is the civilization born in the West, modernization, which has spread particularly widely throughout the world after World War II. The author believes the Western project of modernization is not unique. He views different societies as having different approaches towards the implementation and organization of modernity, which results in the creation of various institutional and ideological paradigms. In this case, the history of modernity is perceived as a continuous construction and demolition of various cultural programs. Many political, social and intellectual actors creating part of each society, as well as participating in the social movements of the above processes (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Eisenstadt also highlights cultural and political programs of modernity. The cultural aspect of modernity implies that a person may acquire autonomy

and can free oneself from cultural and political authority, further reflected on the one hand through the activation of the so called “conscious human agency”, and on the other hand, through the legitimate recognition of aims and interests of various groups of people. As for the political sphere of modernity, one can single out three central aspects: as the difference between the center and peripheries lessens, their relationships are reconstructed accordingly; various sectors of society politicize their requirements, and the following topics related to human emancipation become apparent: equality, freedom, justice, autonomy, solidarity and identity (Eisenstadt, 2000).

According to Eisenstadt, one major attributes of modernity is the confrontation between “more modern” and “more traditional” sectors of society. Eisenstadt also highlights the confrontations between the modernity formed at a specific time and place during the Enlightenment era and those modernities formed based on cultural traditions of various societies. For instance, American modernity was formed within contradictory discourse to European modernity. The same can apply to the rest of the world. According to Eisenstadt, modernity was spread from the West to Asian societies and later to the Middle East and Africa. In all of these societies, the model of territorial state, and later, of the nation-state, were formed in accordance with the basic symbols and institutions of Western modernity. However, the symbols and institutions of modernity have also been transformed due to the impact of local societies, who had more or less ambivalent attitudes towards the West (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Eisenstadt also explains the constitutional, symbolic and ideological changes of modern states along with the intensification of the process of globalization. In his view, as social problems become international, the control exercised by states over economic and political levers lessen, and their monopoly over power is also constrained. As for cultural dimensions, according to Eisenstadt, the Western, especially the American approach has taken on the leading role due to the influence of the media. Hence, the significance of the nation-state as the centre of modernity and collective identity has diminished, and a new type of collective identities are being formed as a result of various social movements. Along similar lines, Eisenstadt differentiates between three types of movements: a) the so-called “multi-cultural” and “post-modern” movements (eg. Women’s and ecology movements), which instead of reconstructing the state focuses on global issues and creates autonomous political, social and cultural spheres;

b) fundamentalist religious movements and finally c) ethnic movements (mainly, in post-soviet countries, Africa and Yugoslavia). These new types of collective identities attain a place within their societies or in the international arena, where they are able to collaborate with transnational organizations. Likewise, according to Eisenstadt, instead of entailing the end of modernity, globalization caused reinterpretation of modernity's cultural programs and gave birth to multiple modernities. (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Professor at California University and researcher of globalization, agrees with the theory concerning the existence of multiple modernities and speaks about the multi-polarization of the 21st century (Pieterse, 2009). According to him this happens because of the weakening of the hegemony of the USA, and the emergence of novel societies. In his view, novel societies do not fit into the realm of "developing societies", since many have become rather strong actors on an international level, for instance Brazil, Mexico or Indonesia. Pieterse dislikes the theory of a "singular modernity" as it focuses solely on the West and Europe, also acknowledges only time dimension, such as an early or late postmodernism. As for the geography, he differentiates between a "more modern center" and a "less modern periphery". In contrary, Pieterse introduces the notion of "hybrid modernity" and believes that unlike the abstract types of ideal modernity, modernities existing in reality are mixed, complex forms and include pre-modern features, which are specific to concrete societies (Pieterse, 2009).

Gerard Delanty, a British sociologist, also views modernity in light of multiple modernities. He believes that there is no such thing as one modernity including one European modernity. Delanty divides Europe into six historic regions (North-Western, Mediterranean, Central, East-Central, South-Eastern, and North-Eastern) based on the proposition that each region has had different ways of moving towards modernity. He also refers to broader, interrelated civilizations such as, Greek-Roman, Western-Christian, Byzantine-Russian and Ottoman-Islamic. In his opinion, modernity has thoroughly changed both the moral and political dimensions of Europe. For instance, Delanty considers a robust civil society as one of the most important aspects of European modernity. However, considering the concrete historic contexts previously mentioned, different interpretations of modernity were formed in different parts of Europe, and thus, it has also been crystallized differently. At the same time, European modernity was not formed in isolation from the rest of world, and consequently it should not be

analyzed solely in the light of the North-Western region either. This makes the understanding of modernity less Eurocentric (Delanty, 2012).

According to Delanty, one can discuss three competing models of the European Project. He refers to the controversy between competing views concerning Europe, “what is Europe and where does it go?” The three models are as: 1) Europe as a transnational super-state, 2) Europe as a post-national political unity built on human rights, and 3) Europe based on the basic values of nationhood reflected in national and European traditions (Delanty, 2008).

Delanty explains that the second and the third models were formed as alternatives to the first one. At this point in time the dominant viewpoint regarding Europe is the official ideology of the European Union, priorly based on the political dimension of the state. In accordance with the dominant discourses on Europe, Europe can be considered as something being formed as a result of the trans-nationalization of nation-states by post-sovereign supranational unity. The main legitimization of ‘Europe’ is linked with solving the issues that bind the nation-state in epoch of globalization; i.e. the European Union can integrate the economies of its member states and in return offer security and protection from global challenges. Delanty believes that the legitimization is basically functional if not technocratic, and as long as it exists at the cost of its effectiveness, the public will favor it. However, once other issues come forth it will lose all grounds for legitimization (Delanty, 2008). According to Delanty, the second model is the leftist viewpoint that perceives Europe from the standpoint of civil governance- a political union based on rights. The European Project has certain characteristics of a post-national democracy that is predicated upon the rights of the individual and a republican-constitutional order (Habermas 1998, 2001). This model puts forth the civic concept of Europe as an ideal, while it pays less attention to Europeanization as the trans-nationalization of the national state towards supra-national state (Delanty, 2008). Delanty thinks voters are more in favor of the third model, since instead of civil rights it is built around the basic values of nationality represented in national traditions, which also embody the idea of European political heritage. In this regard (often expressed in anti-European sentiments), the European Project has lost its ability to connect with the basic values of nationhood, which encompasses human rights as well as the broader sphere of values, such as solidarity and social justice (Delanty, 2008). The above viewpoint often takes on a national and populist

form, and thus takes a defensive position in relation to Europeanization; however it can also claim to be one of the most significant traditions of European political inheritance. Delanty concludes that the three models mentioned above, those that put emphasis on efficiency, rights and values, often overlap one another (Delanty, 2008).

Rogers Brubaker, a modern American Sociologist and Researcher of nationalism partially agrees with the critique of the classical theories of modernization, i.e. he believes these theories are focused on the West and do not take the variety of institutional paradigms in political, religious, economic, or other spheres, into consideration. As such, they do not value the importance of ethnicity and pay very little attention to the role of public religion. The old theories focus on civil nationalism and exaggerate the significance of the state in relation to the formation of social relations models. However, Brubaker believes that the above critique is inflated and that in reality there are more sound arguments that demonstrate the existence of one modernity rather than proving multiple modernities (Brubaker, 2011).

According to Brubaker, two major issues confront the theories of multiple modernities: a) Are modern societies crossing one another around a single institutional model/ single cultural and political program, or are institutional models/cultural and political programs fundamentally different? b) Are there many different levels of modernity (the more modern and less modern), or are there equal but different modernities? Brubaker makes use of two types of arguments in order to prove the existence of a singular modernity: logical and sociological. The logical argument implies that some common criteria should be applied in order to describe the various institutional models/the cultural-political programs the theorists of multiple modernities rely on. The existence of a common criteria means that there is a universal understanding of modernity, even in an abstract, basic form (Brubaker, 2011).

The criticism of Eisenstadt by Brubaker is predicated upon the above paradox: Eisenstadt himself utilizes the notion of a singular modernity for the purpose of proving the existence of multiple modernities (Brubaker, 2011). Brubaker also makes use of the sociological arguments to prove the superiority of the singular modernity theory when explaining nationalism and ethnicity. In his view, the notion of a singular modernity emphasizes the global nature of social-economic, political and cultural processes that in turn creates nationalism and “politicized ethnicity” and makes them the basic principles for the division of the social world. The theory of a singular

modernity further implies the existence of certain organizational and political-cultural models, and their diffusion within the specific local context. As a result, there multiple nationalizations and “politicized ethnicities” are formed although not in a simple teleological form, as the classical theorists of modernity would believe. According to Brubaker, theories of “multiple modernities” look appealing when compared to the outdated, narrow and Eurocentric theories of “a singular modernity”, although if one analyzes modernity in a more complex way, the theories of “multiple modernities” lose their meaning (Brubaker, 2011).

Chronologically, the pace of progress of Europeanization and globalization, in general, was accelerated after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, when Eastern countries were given the opportunity to engage in the process of forming united European structures. At the beginning of the 1990s, there was the illusion that “history has ended”, that the market economy and Western democracy alongside the Western model of modernization was the final stage of human civilization, and it was to spread through the world in the near future (Fukuyama, 1999). This straightforward approach was later altered and replaced by the aforementioned “reflexive modernism” (Modernity). In the concept developed by Anthony Giddens, “reflexive modernism” is understood as the continuous rethinking, reevaluation and transformation of modern institutions. The reflexive quality of modern life can be explained by the social practice of being regularly tested and changed in the light of the new information stream (ГидденсЭ, 1999). As noted above, Ulrich Beck believes modern society is a “risk society” that is forced to gauge its deeds by the level of the expected risk. Hence, European and non-European societies and states should develop approaches towards global economic processes after careful evaluation (Beck, 2007).

In his article *The cosmopolitan Society and its enemies*, Beck describes the state of modern society as “cosmopolitization” (Beck, 2005). Using this term, he denotes a new form of globalization, one that is being formed within the bounds of national societies and results in the transformation of everyday perception and identity. For Beck “dialogic imagination” creates the basis for the cosmopolitan perspective, while the “monologist imagination” contributes to the national perspective. Beck defines the “dialogic imagination” as the coexistence of various ways of living within the experience of a single individual. This incorporates comparison, criticism, understanding and the rethinking of different cultures, i.e. “the

internalization of the other". Along similar lines, Beck refers to Nietzsche's term "the Epoch of Comparison" and he explains that in the contemporary world, an individual is free not only to choose from many available competing traditions and heritages, furthermore he also refers to the process of interpenetration of various cultures throughout the world. This in itself entails discussion, links, and contradictions of various cultural ideas, one by one or in many different combinations, endlessly and everywhere. Hence, in Beck's opinion, a cosmopolitan perspective and the dialogic imagination is the compatibility and combination of alternative ways of living, with the acceptance of "the otherness of the other". The national perspective, on the other hand, is based on the monologist imagination and does not accept "the otherness of the other". Beck names nationalism, globalism and democratic authoritarianism as the main enemies of the cosmopolite society. (Beck, 2005)

In 2008 Gerard Delanty noted that lately one major challenge for Europe was linked to social issues and collective identities, and he discussed "the crisis of the European solidarity" (Delanty, 2008). According to Delanty, the emergence of European political unity weakened national sovereignty while global powers were also contributing to the decline of national states. Europe and migration became interconnected as the sources of this instability. Anxiety about Europe and migration is linked to fears about the clash of civilizations and social security. Fears towards others, as well as the anxiety about the future, have sprouted as potential social forces in contemporary society. This has brought about the crisis of European solidarity alongside the broader crisis of collective purpose (Delanty, 2008).

Delanty agrees with the opinion that one major feature of this century is widely spread anxiety. This is an existential state, psychological in the first place, although it also has broader social and political consequences for modern society. It has emerged due to increasing levels of insecurity along with further risk and confusion sparked by globalization. September 11th became the symbol of "dangerous times" and anxiety spread beyond the realities of terrorist attacks (Delanty, 2008).

Delanty clarifies that one should draw a line between anxiety and fears. However, the distinction between the two will not be clear-cut, as anxiety can be perceived as one form of fear. Fear is caused by a tangible threat, while anxiety is generated by uncertainty. One of the most significant dimensions of anxiety is the lack of knowledge about any plausible threat (Delanty,

2008). Bauman (2006) describes anxiety as the state of “liquid fear” that is generated because of social “liquidity” when the solid foundation of social institutions and identities disappear in the light of individualized situations with a plethora of uncertainties. According to Delanty, there is a difference between anxiety as a psychological state, experienced by an individual, and anxiety as a socio-cultural state, being an expression of social problems (Delanty, 2008).

Delanty emphasizes the fact that the class and the nation, as the foundations of European solidarity, are being weakened in whole Europe. Furthermore, anxiety caused by such processes can easily turn into xenophobia and racism (Delanty, 2008). He observes that in contemporary Europe the feature of racism is expressed in the shift of attention towards social and cultural issues, e.g. protection of work places, benefits associated with welfare, cultural differences or incompatibilities. Within political discourse, this is reflected in normalization of xenophobia, while at the public level – in perception of one as „the other“. In September 2005, the publication of caricatures insulting the Prophet Mohamed in Danish and Norwegian newspapers was the expression of this tendency to normalize xenophobia. These two countries were not an exception, as the same caricatures were also published in other European countries. The liberal value such as freedom of expression has been used to in order to justify this deed (Delanty, 2008).

Delanty reveals that many European countries associated with progressive multiculturalism have now started to ask questions in the same vein. In Great Britain, this was reflected in worries over traditional British values while a similar tendency has also become stronger in the Netherlands. This change began not as the negation of the liberal values, rather as an attempt to protect these values from certain threats caused by multiculturalism and trans-nationalism. Multiculturalism is now often perceived as undermining integration. Such anxieties are closely linked to fears that European national identities might not be able to deal with more robust and strong migrant and ethnic identities. The rise of Ultra-rightists throughout Europe, with some exceptional countries, is due to existing social fears. This is connected to the widespread anxiety, expressed through fear towards ‘others’. Immigrants are utter targets for those political parties that have managed to link fear to incoming immigrants, with further anxieties concerning employment and welfare (Delanty, 2008).

As Delanty observes, political discontent is being raised among middle class citizens, since their social conditions are unstable and thus they are alarmed that their salaries and status may decrease. Modern economy has brought new threats for the middle class, as they are left with no guarantee to either attain or retain adequate salaries or status, despite their professional positions and achievements.

According to Delanty, anxiety has been caused in the middle class, as their jobs are now the source of disappointment. Merit-based rewards and reimbursement for their labor is no longer a guarantee of a bright future. Success has become somewhat a lottery and little seems to be stable or clear, though the possibility of failure is always a reality. This is the situation where class-based forms of competence and solidarity have been undermined by growing fragmentation of collective experience. In terms of upwards mobility, the middle class is experiencing a crisis. The deficit of security is also negatively affecting the middle class, for the most part. The middle class has become revanchist and rejects political programs focused on inclusion that are no longer beneficial to either them or the working class. In short, the middle class stood for inclusive politics only when it was the major receiver of the profit. (Delanty, 2008). The negative image of Islam in France and the popular viewpoint within the middle class that ghettos of French Muslims were gathering place of Islamist fighters, has contributed to the politicization of the Muslim youth and they begin to rebel against their social and cultural marginalization. In Delanty's opinion, these rebellions can be viewed as symptomatic characteristic of social deficiency in Western European countries, where a new type of poverty and social marginalization has taken place. It may be exaggerated to claim that the traditional conflict between the classes has been replaced by the conflict between migrants and citizens, but there is certain truth in this, as it concerns a tangible split, the so-called broken bridge within society (Delanty, 2008). Hence, the rise of nationalism and xenophobia may be explained with the transformation of work, family, and status, rather than by the sympathy towards Ultra-rightists. In this case, anxiety for the future is the driving force.

The cultural crisis of forming European identity, in its broader sense, is the crisis of solidarity and unity. The sense of anxiety and threat has been caused by Europeanization and globalization failing the two pillars of identity: the class and the nation (Delanty, 2008). Delanty states that by 2008, the project of Europeanization was already in a defensive state and

multi-nationalism was questioned. Euro-scepticism is not limited to the small minority defending the nation-state, but it has a broad resonance within the populations of various states. Renationalization of the collective identity is already underway in many countries, although, from Delanty's perspective, one should not overestimate this process. The European Union has not succeeded in the formation of the European identity, which is an alternative to the national identity and all that could be achieved is the creation of an identity compatible with a national identity, one that in many terms is already determined by national identity. There is a tangible resistance towards the process of Europeanization and the association of Europeanization with globalization is substantial. In this case, multiculturalism is the first loss. (Delanty, 2008)

Thus, one can state that to some extent the predictions Delanty made in 1995 have come true: "there are multiple "Europes" and the one that has gained dominance today is exclusive rather than inclusive. The prevailing understanding of "Europe" is the Europe of nation-states. Hence, Europe is not an alternative to nationalism, rather the confirmation of the hegemony of nation state. If the idea of Europe is not linked with multiculturalism and post-national citizenship, then as a political term it will be more associated with scepticism" (Delanty, 1995).

Delanty concludes that the solution from the current crisis is unclear. One might recommend the rebirth of the collective aim that is being lost. In this case, it is vitally important that the European Project pays full attention to inclusive forms of social justice and social solidarity (Delanty, 2008).

As previously mentioned, the assessments of Delanty were published in 2008. The World economic crisis started in that same year, after which it became apparent that international integration processes, including Euro-integration, had slowed down. In this context the forces against integration, and the existing form of integration, became more robust, which consequently resulted in the increase of Euro-sceptics in many European elections. These processes were also reflected in the findings of many studies. According to one of those studies in 2015, conducted by the Economic Intelligence Unit EIU in collaboration with the BBC, Europe was already facing a "political earthquake". The research talked about "the crisis of Europe", the separation of the elite from the voters and issues linked with immigration¹. This tendency became more evident still on June 23rd, 2016

1 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30864088>

when the results of the Britain's Referendum were made public- 51.9% of the British voting population backed the separation of the Great Britain from the European Union².

Attention towards the alienation of the elite and voters, as well as the immigration process in also paid in the USA where discontent with the political elite has much increased. Lawrence Summers, a famous economist and President Emeritus of Harvard University (2001-2006) and the Secretary of Treasury of the United States during the presidency of Bill Clinton, draws the parallel between European and American realities. According to Summers, it is evident that the electorate is rebellious towards the relatively open economic policy that became the norm after World War II. A critical question ought to be posed, as to what kind of principles should lead international economic policy? In Summers' opinion, the beginning of the new approach should be that the Government must be responsible for securing the welfare of its citizens instead of caring about the abstract concept of the global good. The public also wants to feel that they create the very contours of society in which they live. Summers believes that "responsible nationalism" is necessary for America. Using this term, he denotes an approach where countries are expected to pursue citizens' economic welfare as a primary objective, however where their ability to harm the interests of citizens elsewhere is circumscribed. According to Summers, international agreements should be judged not by how much they are harmonized or by how many barriers are torn down, but whether they contribute to empowerment of the citizens. However, Summers emphasizes that this does not mean limiting international co-operation. According to his conclusion "reflexive nationalism" should be replaced by "responsible nationalism". Otherwise, one can expect more miserable referendums and the battle of populist demagogies for the highest positions.³

One should further mention an approach Delanty expressed in 2008: "nationalism has taken on a different form and returned. It is less the state project, it is more associated with the Ultra-rightist parties" (Delanty, 1995). However, according to Delanty's additional observations, European states do participate in this process to a certain extent since "emigration laws are the axis of the European identity" (Delanty, 1995). Delanty explains that

2 <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>

3 <http://www.brettonwoods.org/publication/lawrence-h-summers-voters-deserve-responsible-nationalism-not-reflex-globalism>

the constitutions of modern states do not clearly differentiate between citizenship and nationality. As long as the citizenship is linked to nationality the following view will persist, that the laws of citizenship exist to protect community and the vigour of dominant culture from other cultures. Citizenship should not be used by Europe to determine its identity exclusively as the nationalism of the white bourgeois. The connection between national identity and citizenship is being strengthened in line with the threat of mass immigration. Instead of citizenship being the means to protect minorities, IDPs, ethnic minorities, shelter-seekers, or stateless persons, it has turned into the manner in which the majority are protected from others, typically foreigners. Delanty claims that citizenship has been narrowed to nationality, and within this model there is no clear line between citizenship and national patriotism: a citizen is transformed into a patriot. The major criterion for citizenship is nationality, which in initial revolutionary concept had a secondary, accidental role. According to Delanty, state membership does not automatically mean membership of the national community. Post-national citizenship is an alternative to the restraining concept of nationality. The essence of post-national citizenship is that it cannot be determined by either birth or nationality, but by living and residing in a certain place. Unlike nationality, citizenship should not be developed within a state's national culture. Citizenship is international and stands apart from the particularistic arrogance of any culture and nationality. Thus, there is an essential need to break the association between citizenship and nationality, both intellectually and constitutionally. After the collapse of traditional political identities, there is great need to have an alternative collective identity. To attain this goal it is important to separate citizenship from European ethno-cultural idea. This separation is based on the differences between universal norms and cultural values that are relativist. Citizenship is a normative concept and Europe is a cultural idea (Delanty, 1995).

As one can see, the processes of modernization, Europeanization and globalization that are first and foremost associated with economic and political issues, are also closely linked with cultural factors, values and notions such as the national state, nationality, citizenship, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, nation, etc. These concepts are closely connected to the main topic of this research- national identity. Hence, it is important to think thoroughly about their definitions and content. To begin with, the concept of the nation, which has a pivotal meaning within this work.

1.2. The Concept of Nation and Nationalism

The Nation

Dozens of definitions can be found in scientific literature trying to comprehend the concept of the “nation”, however, none of them are considered to be universally accepted. Moreover, approximately half a century ago, based on analysis, it was noted that defining the term “nation” scientifically is entirely impossible (Seton-Watson, 1977). The formation and existence of various nations differ in terms of their conditions, factors and contexts to such an extent that comprehending everything under a single definition becomes pointless.

Currently, two common meanings for the concept of the “nation” are identified in scientific literature: the general (political) and the ethnic (ethno-cultural). The general (political) understanding of the nation essentially links it to the state and implies the unity of citizens of a certain state, regardless of their ethnic origin. Based on this view, the concepts of nationality and citizenship coincide with one another, where “national” stands for something that operates throughout the state, for instance, national interest, national government, national currency, etc. Whereas, the ethnic (ethno-national) definition of the nation sharply distinguishes between citizenship and nationality, and it links ethnic and cultural factors to the nation, instead of the state. This concept sees the nation as “one of the forms of ethnos, certain social organization of it” (დავითაშვილი, 2003). In order to avoid confusion between the two definitions of nation, Georgian scientists use the term “nation” by its general, political meaning, while the other term “ethno-nation” is reserved for ethno-cultural connotations (დავითაშვილი, 2003).

Generally, separation of these terms is particularly important, especially if one considers that “nationality” and “citizenship” are used interchangeably in the USA and in most parts of North-Western Europe, i.e. “nation” and “state” often have the same connotations. On the other hand, in Central and Eastern Europe, “nation” and “nationality” is essentially not associated with the state and “invoke an ethno-cultural frame of reference independent of— and often cutting across the boundaries of— statehood and citizenship” (Brubaker, 2002).

There is a reason behind such different approaches: the nations of USA and North-Western Europe, foremost, English and French nations, were each formed after the creation of these states. Whereas, Central European

nations,(namely, the German nation), initially formed as ethno-cultural communities and later created their own states. Based on this difference, nations were divided into “state-nations” (*Staatsnation*) and “cultural-nations” (*Kulturnation*) by Friedrich Meinecke, as early as the 20th century (Brubaker, 1999).

Views concerning the nation are grouped into three major theoretical movements: primordialism, modernism and ethno-symbolism. Of these, modernism has the most followers, primordialism - the least.

Primordialism does not see any real difference between nation and ethnos. In fact, this approach equates national self-consciousness with ethnic self-consciousness and considers the nation as a “political expression of ethnic identity” (დავითაშვილი, 2003). Accordingly, nations have existed since ancient times, and nationality is a natural, human phenomenon.

Modernism distinctly separates the concept of the nation from the ethnos, while connecting the origin of the nation with the new era and its accompanying concrete political, economic and socio-cultural processes. Hence, according to modernism one can only refer to the existence of nations after the French revolution. This refers to the period of capitalism, industrialization, secularization, urbanization, and the processes connected with the development of the modern state system, including the common national market and communications, universal suffrage, a printed press, a common literary language and an educational system. According to modernists, these exact processes create certain conditions in which a community, (in some cases, an ethno-cultural community), can become a nation; and first of all, this implies the shaping of a common national, state-related consciousness among its members (გელნერი, 2003; ანდერსონი, 2003).

Among modernists the constructivist approach of Ernest Gellner and reductionist approach of Benedict Anderson are particularly singled out, the major works of both authors *Nations and Nationalism* and *Imagined Communities* were published around the same time, in 1983.

Gellner, in *Nations and Nationalism*, explains that in essence, the existence of nations, as well as states, is accidental, not a universal inevitability. Neither nations nor states have always existed in all environments. Moreover, they are not identical incidents (გელნერი, 2003). Gellner distinguishes three “fundamental stages” in the human development of history: pre-agrarian, agrarian and industrial, and notes that the origin of the nation is connected

to the transitional period between the agrarian and the industrial stage. According to Gellner, industrial society is the first society that invented and idealized the concept of progress and continuous improvement (გელნერი, 2003). Unlike in previous societies, due to economic factors there are no fixed boundaries between social classes in industrial societies, thus individuals have the opportunity to move from one social class to another. Gellner emphasizes that industrial society is mobile because it is egalitarian and equally it is egalitarian because it is mobile. Furthermore, society has to be mobile in order to put into practice its desire of unprecedented economic growth. According to Gellner, political, economic and socio-cultural processes towards equality, mobility, systematization, standardization and homogenization caused the formation of the nations of the new era (გელნერი, 2003).

In general, Anderson holds a similar position; however, instead of political and economic factors, he emphasizes socio-cultural issues (ანდერსონი, 2003). According to Anderson, the formation of a nation is based on national consciousness, which emerged due to print language. In Anderson's opinion, capitalism that created "mechanically reproduced print languages" had a key role in merging various dialects and turning them into literary languages (ანდერსონი, 2003). Print language formed the basis for the development of a national consciousness, as "fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of nationally imagined communities" (ანდერსონი, 2003). It should also be noted, that in the new era state governance also relied on print languages and because of the permanent nature of the printed book, capitalist publishing businesses gave stable and even eternal features to their language (ანდერსონი, 2003). Anderson concludes, the "convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern state" (ანდერსონი, 2003).

Anderson believes that when it comes to a nation's origin, together with the factor of print language, the 18th century should be considered as not only representing the beginning of the era of nationalism, but with it the decline of religious modes of thought (ანდერსონი, 2003). Alongside this weakening of religious influences, the perception of the world was also significantly changed (ანდერსონი, 2003). Anderson in particular emphasizes the changes in attitudes towards time and the monarchy. According to the

medieval mode of thought, history was not seen as a causal chain of events, neither the present nor the past were radically separated. This medieval “simultaneousness” was replaced by “homogenous, empty time,” where “simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar” (ანდერსონი, 2003).

Additionally, for medieval societies it was natural for the populace to be subordinate to certain rulers, who in turn enjoyed the privileges of being superior, ruling the people and country by some divine right (ანდერსონი, 2003). Such a point of view was changed in the new era: along with the decline of religion and the monarchy, the nation established itself as a new object of loyalty, a new basis of political legitimacy and new highest value.

As Anderson points out, historical factors seriously contributed to the possibility of “imagining the nation”. In the new era, medieval presumptions had lost their impact on the human mind. According Anderson’s definition the nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion... In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (ანდერსონი, 2003).

Ethno-symbolism tries to balance the “extremes” of primordialism and modernism. Ethno-symbolism shares the modernist position that the origin of nations is caused by the new era, and thus it opposes the primordialist view regarding the existence of nations in the middle ages and earlier. However, ethno-symbolism also recognizes the vast contribution of ethnic groups and ethno-cultural communities in the extensive process of forming nations; thus, it rejects both modernism and primordialism, more precisely it is inclined towards the less radical primordialistic approach- perennialism. Ethno-symbolists do not neglect the political and economic impacts on the formation of nations; they are however focused chiefly on cultural and historical factors (Smith, 2009).

Anthony Smith is considered the most famous representative of ethno-symbolism. In his view, “Nations for both modernists and ethno-symbolists are conceived of as historical communities, embedded in specific historical and geo-cultural contexts” (Smith, 2009). However, as Smith observes,

when discussing the origin of nations, modernists “for the most part, [they] marginalize ethnicity”, while for ethno-symbolists “ethnic ties play a major role in the formation of nations, and that, in some cases, and those historically important ones, nations have been formed on the basis of prior ethnic communities, or *ethnies*. But not in all cases. There is no one-to-one correspondence of nations with anterior *ethnies*” (Smith, 2009). Smith suggests that the formation of nations depends on ethnic communities, “common values, memories, myths and symbols”, where these communities become the basis for public culture, symbolic codes and systems, laws and the customs of the nation within the forming national state (Smith, 2009).

In ethno-symbolists terms, “although nations may be partly forged by political institutions, over the long term they require ethno-cultural resources to create a solidary community, mainly because of the critical importance for a sense of national identity of subjective dimensions” (Smith, 2009). Smith notes that for certain reasons, theorists should focus on cultural elements while analyzing the various aspects of a nation or ethnic group: symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions. Smith also specifies why cultural elements principally should be emphasized. In his opinion, various combinations of cultural elements have played, and are still playing, a vital role in forming social structures and cultures, defining and legitimizing relations between different sectors and institutions. Although, the same cultural elements provide each community with a distinctive symbolical repertoire, language, religion, customs and institutions that help them distinguish themselves from the other similar communities, as perceived by in-group as well as out-group members. These elements therefore make the social boundaries that distinguish “us” from “others” clearer, and finally shared values, memories and traditions help communities maintain their sense of continuity with previous generations. Collective symbols such as flags, anthems or national holidays “are particularly important in the rites and ceremonies of public culture, which help to create and sustain communal bonds, and a sense of national identity” (Smith, 2009).

One of the crucial issues for ethno-symbolism is how to distinguish ethnic groups from the nation. According to Smith, the nation “may be regarded as named and self-defining communities whose members cultivate shared symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions, inhabit and are attached to a historic territory or homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standard laws” (Smith,

2009). On the other hand, ethnic groups, *ethnie*, can be defined as a “human community whose members possess a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of common culture, including a link with a territory, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the upper strata” (Smith, 2009). Smith emphasizes that unlike *ethnie*, the definition of nation stresses legal, territorial and, in a broad sense, political dimensions. This includes the following aspects: populated territory, public culture and standardized customs and laws. *Ethnie* can also hold any one of these aspects, however, for *ethnie* there is no necessity of them (Smith, 2009).

A review of modern definitions of the nation should undoubtedly include Rogers Brubaker’s concept. Brubaker distinguishes the “cognitive dimension” of the nation and emphasizes that ethnicity, nation and race exists “only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations and identifications. They are not things in the world, but perspectives on the world” (Brubaker, 2002).

When discussing the nation, similarly with ethnicity or race, Brubaker finds it crucial to free ourselves from “groupism.” Groupism denotes “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis” (Brubaker, 2002). Brubaker further notes that groupism refers to “the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed” (Brubaker, 2002).

Brubaker views it as crucial to differentiate between a “group” and a “category”, where unclear distinctions among the two often lead to confusion. Brubaker argues that if one uses the term “group” for “a mutually interacting, mutually recognizing, mutually oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity and capacity for concerted action, or even if we adopt a less exigent understanding of ‘group’, it should be clear that a category is not a group” (Brubaker, 2002). Therefore, Brubaker recommends a distinct differentiation, for instance, between “Hungarian” as a category and “Hungarians” as a group; and one should focus on category (Brubaker, 2002).

Brubaker presents his concept in the light of “ethno-conflicts” and defines them as “ethnicized” or “ethnically framed” conflicts (Brubaker, 2002). In his opinion, this is an expression of “politicized ethnicity” and although ethnic groups are often considered the driving force in such conflicts, in reality the

protagonists of ethnic violence are typically various organizations rather than ethnic groups. Brubaker emphasizes that it is unjustified to equalize the separate organizations from the whole ethnic group. Although various organizations often talk and act on behalf of different ethnic groups, an analyst has to distinguish them from one another (Brubaker, 2002).

“Groupness” is one of Brubaker’s basic concepts. Brubaker suggests that while studying the nation, alongside ethnicity and race, instead of the “group” as a substance, a subject, and an organism, “main analytical category” should be “groupness” as a “context-related conceptual variable” (Brubaker, 2002). Brubaker believes that referring the nation (ethnicity), “groupness” as something changeable, which should come first rather than the “group.” This allows the opportunity to explain the periods of strengthening “collective solidarity” and culminating phases of feeling unity. Based on this approach, “groupness” can be seen as an event that typically happens but that sometimes simply may not occur. A high degree of “groupness” is neither permanent nor stable, so its “crystallization” may not take place, despite the efforts of interested parties or favorable conditions (Brubaker, 2002).

Thus, moving the emphasis from the concept of the “group” to the nation is a certain dynamic process that illustrates the “changeable intensity” of “groupness”. Increasing the level of groupness in certain periods, due to specific factors, may lead to the forming of a united group, this though is not a constant group, nor an inevitable result of this process. Brubaker cites Pierre Bourdieu’s famous work *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1991) and explains that if “we treat groupness as a variable and distinguish between groups and categories, we can attend to the dynamics of *group-making* as a social, cultural and political project, aimed at transforming categories into groups or increasing levels of groupness” (Brubaker, 2002).

Based on the aforementioned approaches, one can say that modernists view the nation as a community of people bonded with each other by a national consciousness, having a more or less standardized and homogenized culture (first of all, the “print language”). According to modernists, a community of people can be defined as a nation when such bonds include the majority of its members. The formation of such a community became possible only during the “modernization” process, with the development of industrial capitalism and the modern state-system.

This approach is alien to primordialism, which considers it unessential

to examine whether national consciousness is held by the majority of the community, or held only by elites or other larger group. Primordialists mainly focus on ethnic ties and their continuity, i.e. the continuous link of a certain community with previous generations. Ethno-symbolists share a modernist position; however they also emphasize the special importance of pre-existing ethno-cultural “material” for building a national consciousness and culture. The origin of national consciousness and the extent of its distribution are invariably connected with the key issues of nationalism.

Nationalism

At present, a great deal has been written about nationalism. Based on various principles, several types of nationalism have been distinguished with the provided relevant classifications (დავითაშვილი, 2003). Nevertheless, this phenomenon has yet to be fully explored and its key questions answered. According to Brubaker, the study of nationalism “has been marked by deep ambivalence and intractable ambiguity. On the one side, nationalism has been associated with militarism, war, irrationalism, chauvinism, intolerance, homogenization, forced assimilation, authoritarianism, parochialism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide; it has been characterized as the “starkest political shame of the twentieth century.” On the other side, nationhood and nationalism have been linked to democracy, self-determination, political legitimacy, social integration, civil religion, solidarity, dignity, identity, cultural survival, citizenship, patriotism and liberation from alien rule” (Brubaker, 1999). Brubaker explains that such ambivalence mostly comes from ambiguity, and how people evaluate nationalism depends on how they understand this phenomenon (Brubaker, 1999).

Michael Hatcher believes that nationalism is often the source of artistic, intellectual and political inspiration, although sometimes it also causes civic war and violence (პეტიტერი, 2007).

In the 19th century, nationalism was typically thought to be the ideology of freedom and modernization; however, the attitude later shifted due to the shocks of two world wars and the terrors of the Holocaust (Smith, 2009). In his famous book, *Imaginary Societies* published in 1983, Anderson notes that during that era it was “common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other and its

affinities with racism” (ანდერსონი, 2003). Nationalism was not a one-dimensional phenomenon for Anderson. He believed that the ideology had a long time ahead, although predicted otherwise; Anderson saw that the end of nationalism was not nearby, as nationality was to become a legitimate value in modern political life (ანდერსონი, 2003).

Hatcher notes that by the end of the 20th century, class politics had become less important and “ethnicity politics” appeared on the world stage. According to Hatcher, ethnicity began to become involved in spheres such as popular culture and world politics. This is also demonstrated by the fact that Hollywood stars used to hide their own ethnic origins, and typically used Anglo-Saxon names, whereas nowadays ethnically distinct names have become fashionable. Pop-culture took the lead from political trends, as nationalism and ethnicity had become some of the strongest forces in the world (პეტრერი, 2007). Due to such popular demand, interest in nationalism increased. There are number of articles and books about nationalism, nevertheless there is still a general lack of knowledge about the phenomenon (პეტრერი, 2007).

In order to define and understand nationalism one has to return to the three major theoretical movements, primordialism, modernism and ethno-symbolism, and briefly review the key positions of their representatives regarding nationalism.

According to **primordialism**, nationalism is a characteristic phenomenon for the entirety of human history. This opinion is based on the view that nationalism is the ideology of nations and nations have existed since ancient times (დავითაშვილი, 2009).

Modernism views nationalism as an ideology and political movement that was born during the modernization process and on which “nation-building” is based. According to the general approach of modernism, both, nationalism and the nation are a product of “modernization”, i.e. the global movement of societies towards the state of “modernity” (Smith, 2009).

According to Ernest Gellner, nationalism is a political principle that points to coinciding political and national communities. Nationalism as an affect or as a movement can be best defined by this principle (გელნერი, 2003). Gellner also argues that the nationalistic affect is either a feeling of satisfaction caused by the breaking of this principle or satisfaction resulted by fulfilling this principle, i.e. nationalist movements are given rise due to these affects. Gellner concludes that nationalism is a theory of political

legitimacy, according to which ethnic boundaries should not exceed political ones (გელნერი, 2003). Thus, Gellner considers nationalism, an ideology as well as a movement, to be part of the political sphere. In his view, the place and aim of nationalism is connected firstly to the creation of the nation and the modern state. As Gellner notes, only nationalism gives birth to nations, not vice versa. He argues that according to nationalism, the state and the nation belong to each other and one is incomplete and without the other leads to tragedy. Nevertheless, they originated independently and by chance (გელნერი, 2003).

Much like Gellner, a number of researchers considers nationalism primarily as a political issue. For instance, John Bruelly suggests nationalism “is best understood as an especially appropriate form of political behaviour in the context of the modern state and the modern state system... nationalism primarily as a form of politics... nationalism is about politics and politics is about power. Power in the modern world is principally about control of the state” (Bruelly, 1993).

Anderson views nationalism in a broader context where research on nationalism should be focused not only on political ideology, but also on the “cultural roots of nationalism” (ანდერსონი, 2003). Anderson further notes that nationalism should be understood “by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came to being” (ანდერსონი, 2003). Anderson thus defines nation as an “imagined political society.” On the other hand, he thinks that the nation has always been considered as a horizontal “brotherhood”, calling for people to sacrifice themselves for the last two centuries (ანდერსონი, 2003). Anderson believes the broader cultural context is connected to the basic question raised by nationalism: how is the “shrunkened imaginings” of recent history able to produce so much self-sacrifice? Anderson thinks that the answer is found in the cultural roots of nationalism (Anderson, 2006). Nationalism, put in the broader cultural context, can be defined by a mixture of secularization, human diversity, capitalism and the development of print technology (თევზაძე, 2009).

“The cultural roots of nationalism” is further explored by Liah Greenfeld, who shares the general view of Ernest Gellner, but fundamentally disagrees with certain issues (Greenfeld, 2005). While Gellner, along with other structuralist sociologists and materialists in philosophy, looks at society and history through an essentialist perspective, as a continuation of

biological evolution, Greenfeld mostly bases her discussion on “empirical generalization.” According to Greenfeld, humans are unlike other animals, which pass their way of life from one generation to another through genetics, in a material way, whereas humans pass it in a symbolic, nonmaterial form. This peculiarity is revealed in human society and history, which unlike with other species is regulated firstly by culture and then by biological evolution. Greenfeld concludes that while studying historical and social processes, culture and cultural (symbolic) factors should be treated as both *explanans* and *explananda* (Greenfeld, 2005). Greenfeld’s approach reflects an attempt to explain culture in general, as well as a link between nationalism and modern culture.

Greenfeld states, “on the most general level, culture is the process of transmission of historical ways of life and forms of human association across generations and distances... Humans are the only biological species, the continuation of whose existence is dependent on symbolic transmission” (Greenfeld, 2005). Greenfeld considers it most important that “culture creates the human mind” (Greenfeld, 2005). The mind to her is symbolic and a mental process that is directly connected with culture as an “individualized culture process, or culture in the brain... These uniquely human mental processes include identity, will, and symbolic imagination. Symbolic imagination is the central faculty of the human mind, on which every one of the mind’s functions and its very formation (and thus the cultural process in general) depend. Symbolic imagination is an ability to create new information within the brain and, therefore, the creative mental ability *par excellence*. The most intricate symbolic system which lies at the very core of cultural reality is language. But because we are symbolic creatures, everything around us becomes a symbol” (Greenfeld, 2005).

Greenfeld further considers that modern culture fundamentally differs from its earlier incarnations. The essence of the difference lies in the basic principles of nationalism. In her opinion, “Nationalism, in short, is modern culture. It is the symbolic blueprint of modern reality, the way we see, and thereby construct, the world around us, the specifically modern consciousness” (Greenfeld, 2005). This conclusion can be drawn from the position that the nationalist (modern) understanding of the term “nation” laid the foundation for a society of equals. Greenfeld views nationalism as new vision of reality that began in 16th century England and later fundamentally changed European life and European reality. To Greenfeld,

nationalism is a “unique form of social consciousness”, the cognitive and moral method for organizing reality (Greenfeld, 2003). She also notes that nationalism serves as a fundament of modern society’s moral order and a source of its values (Greenfeld, 2003).

Greenfeld defines nationalism as a “fundamentally secular and humanistic consciousness based on the principles of popular sovereignty and egalitarianism” (Greenfeld 2005). In her opinion equating nationalism with “modern culture” means that nationalism creates the “cultural foundation of modern social structure, economics, politics, international relations, education, art, science, family relations, and so on and so forth” (Greenfeld, 2005).

It is notable that Greenfeld considers nationalism, i.e. “new form of collective consciousness”, as a basic factor for the emergence of the modern economy and a source of “the spirit of capitalism” (Greenfeld, 2003). She also emphasizes that the modern state, the basic political institution of the modern era, is also a product of nationalism (Greenfeld, 2005). The nationalist pattern of society, based on egalitarian principles implies “an open and fluid system of social stratification, i.e. the class system, characterized by social mobility”. In such a society, the individual becomes a historical agent whose social position and status depends on wealth and education, i.e. goods that can be acquired (Greenfeld, 2005). Hence, in a cultural context of nationalism, the status of the individual is not defined by birth and social status cannot be equated with identity. In modern society, individuals are expected to create their own fate. They will create themselves as well as their own environments; however, in order to do this, they firstly have to be able to “find themselves”. Greenfeld emphasizes that defining one’s own self, i.e. self-identification becomes “a matter of choice and responsibility. Instead of being a product of simple learning and commitment to memory of symbolic information from the outside, the construction of identity is turned into a task for creative symbolic imagination, the mental faculty dependent on identity for its routine operation. In this way, nationalism, it may be said, in fact creates a new breed of men: it modifies the way the mind is formed and functions. Nationalism demands from the individual mind to do the work which other cultures take on themselves” (Greenfeld, 2005).

Greenfeld perceives nationalism and democracy as linked concepts, which place sovereignty among the people and recognizes the fundamental equality of different social classes, which are able to serve as the basic

pillars for nationalism and democracy simultaneously. Greenfeld argues, “democracy was born with the sense of nationality. The two are inherently linked, and neither can be fully understood apart from this connection. Nationalism was the form in which democracy appeared in the world, contained in the idea of the nation as a butterfly in a cocoon. Originally, nationalism developed as democracy... but as nationalism spread in different conditions and the emphasis in the idea of the nation moved from sovereign character to the uniqueness of the people, the original equivalence between it and democratic principles was lost” (Greenfeld, 1992).

The link between **ethno-symbolism** and nationalism is fundamentally, similar to modernism. However, there is a significant difference between their relationships and to attitudes towards ethnic factors. Anthony Smith notes, for ethno-symbolism, the presence of ethnic phenomena everywhere “makes it imperative to place them at the centre of an historical sociology of nations and nationalism.” Smith argues, “to omit all reference to ethnic elements in the past and present is to make the task of explaining the contents and appeal of nations and nationalism infinitely more difficult” (Smith, 2009).

Smith focuses on the tight link between modernization on the one hand and strengthening nationalism and nation-formation on the other hand. He concludes that nation building was an inseparable process from social and political modernization, and nationalism was “the ideology of dynamic collective effort and sacrifice on behalf of the nation” (Smith, 2009). Smith also emphasizes the difference between modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches towards nationalism and the role of nationalists. In his opinion, many modernists consider nationalists as “nation-builders” and regard nations as their creations, while ethno-symbolists think that although the role of nationalists is important in forming nations, it is still quite limited. As Smith notes, nationalists aim to rediscover, choose and rethink the past of a community, viewing a present community’s current situation in a new light. Nationalism can thusly be viewed as a form of “political archeology” and nationalists as political archeologists who try to locate communities in the contexts of time and space (Smith, 2009).

Smith further states, nationalism is more than just a political ideology. Many people consider it a specific kind of culture and a form of secular religion. However, the aims of nationalists are as much cultural as they are political (Smith, 2009).

Like modernists, Smith believes that nationalism can be viewed as a “secular and political form of religion.” He believes that, although nationalism differs from and contradicts traditional religions, they can coexist and even be allies. This notion is “inner-worldly,” where people’s religions worship “sacred communion,” connecting the dead, the living and those yet to be born with one another. Smith suggests that nationalism is presented as a secular and political form of religion, which is “new and modern” as it “elevates the people and citizens as the chief object of worship and ties them to the land of their ancestors and the shrines and landscapes of their saints and heroes” (Smiths, 2009). Equally, nationalism uses the motives, beliefs and rituals of traditional religions, not only for the sake of form, but for also for many of its contents. Myths of ethnic destiny, the purity of the homeland and the messianic role of their leader can all serve as examples of the theory (Smith, 2009).

Smith regards nationalism as not just a “shared sentiment or consciousness,” nor as the “rise of nations.” He believes that it is important not to forget that nationalism is “an active movement inspired by an ideology and symbolism of the nation”. Several features can be distinguished within this ideological movement. The most important one is the “core doctrine” that unites theoretical views about mankind and politics, creating the relevant positions for further action. Smith believes the “core doctrine” is based around the following six statements:

- “1. Humanity is divided into nations, each with its own character, history and destiny;
2. The nation is the sole source of political power;
3. Loyalty to the nation takes precedence over other loyalties;
4. To be free, human beings must belong to a nation;
5. Nations require maximum autonomy and self-expression;
6. Global peace and justice can only be built on the basis of a plurality of free nations” (Smith, 2009)

Unlike modernists, Smith is sure that “Nationalism is a doctrine about the nation, not the state.” However, he also notes that the free nation often needs the state to protect and develop its own culture (Smith, 2009). Although there are different types of nationalism, Smith believes that they

each share certain key themes, reflecting the major struggles, beliefs and aims of nationalists. Smith distinguishes eight such themes: 1. **Autonomy** implies the aspirations of national community members to live according to their own laws and rhythms, independent from outside interference. 2. **Unity** is the aspiration of territorial integrity and unlimited mobility, as well as social solidarity. 3. **Identity or distinctiveness** is the recovery of innate individuality of a national community by its members and a visual representation, via ritual and artistic forms. 4. **Authenticity** implies the rediscovery of the “true nature” of a nation by its members and the sense that theirs is a national community with unique origins, history and culture. 5. **Homeland**, the sense of belonging to a community, with memory and attachments to ancestors and a historical territory, considered uniquely their own. 6. **Dignity** exists as the belief of a community, where the prestige and status of their community should be in accord with their true “inner values”. 7. **Continuity** is the belief of community members that they are linked to their ancestors and the former, connected cultures of their homeland. 8. **Destiny** implies the belief of a community that their national community has a special, pre-conditioned and often glorious path (Smith, 2009).

There are vast numbers of positive and negative opinions expressed in foreign and Georgian scientific literature regarding these discussed theoretical movements. As there are too many opinions to focus on, this work will analyze views expressed in specific Georgian literature. For instance, “ethno-symbolism explains certain key issues better than other theories; ethno-symbolism explains why and how nationalism manages to gain mass support” (დავითაშვილი, 2003). There are also critical approaches, such as, the theories of Gellner, Anderson and Smith, all of which are criticized because of one significant weakness, that none of these theories are able to explain why people kill each other for sake of a nation or the national idea (თევზაძე, 2009).

There is an opinion regarding the link between ethno-symbolism and the “psychology of masses.” It has been suggested that by the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, it became necessary to assume that there was something common and irrational among people. Something that passes from generation to generation and causes people to act as a single organism. Hence, there is an assumption that conscious, as well as the unconscious, exists among people, i.e. nation, the single “organism”. Smith’s theory “sees the roots of understanding nationality and nation in solidarity

is based on this explanatory recipe, invented in 19th-20th centuries. Solidarity is the name Freud and Jung called the “psychology of masses” in the second half of the 20th century. More precisely, the assumption that nation and national consciousness is based on solidarity means that there is something in everybody causing solidarity and affiliation towards communities. Solidarity is an important social construct; however it is completely intelligible, based on the conscious decisions; and conscious decisions can never be the reason for mass revolts and self-sacrifice” (တဲဒဲးပိာ်, 2009).

As this work has discussed, there are different classifications of nationalism. After the 1940s-1950s, the most common model was Hans Kohn’s division between “Western”, primarily, British, French and American, and “non-Western”, mainly, German, nationalisms (Kohn, 1955). Since then, the term “civic nationalism” has become prominent instead of “Western nationalism”, and similarly, “ethnic nationalism” used for “Eastern” world, instead of the broader term “non-Western”. Ethnic, as well as civic nationalism, are both regarded as the result of “social categorization and the social comparison processes; also a precondition for developing a complex belief system. In a psychological point of view, national identity can be considered as a precondition for ethnic and civic nationalist approaches” (Keil, 2006). In order to emphasize the difference between these two forms of nationalism, often “civic nationalism” is linked to “patriotism” and “ethnic nationalism” to “nationalism” itself (Keil, 2006).

Such differentiation is based around the perspective that ethnic nationalism is a system of beliefs and feelings, defining the nation as a homogenous ethnic community, one that expels and does not allow immigration. On the other hand, civic nationalism, patriotism, is a system of beliefs and feelings, implying that the nation is based on democratic principles such as cultural tolerance and equality (Keil, 2006).

The basic distinctive features of “civic” and “ethnic” nationalisms are distinguished based on research results. Sylvia Keil (2006) summarizes **civic nationalism** in her dissertation in the following manner:

1. One’s Positive feeling of connectivity toward the nation, its fundamental principles and institutions (de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Viroli, 1995).
2. Having a critical mind, improving society according to democratic values (Adorno et al., 1950; Staub et al., 1997).

3. The main values of freedom, equality, brotherhood and individualism. These values include the protection of civic rights and cultural diversity (Habermas, 1990; Staub, 1997; Sternberger, 1990).
4. Ethnic diversity is acceptable for society.
5. Other nations and ethnic minorities are considered as equal (Adorno et al., 1950; Viroli, 1995).

Whereas, Kyle suggests that **ethnic nationalism** involves:

1. The idealization of the nation, which also idealizes history (Adorno et al., 1950; Blank and Schmidt, 2003; Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Tajfel, 1969).
2. The belief in national superiority and dominance (Adorno et al., 1950; de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Schatz and Staub, 1997).
3. Overstating the importance of love towards one's nation when it comes to an individual's self-conception (Adorno et al., 1950).
4. Emphasizing the social comparison processes against out-groups (Simon and Mummendey, 1997; Schatz et al., 1999). Those who are prone to ethnic nationalism tend to define their own national group as culturally homogenous and unique (Blank and Schmidt, 2003; Viroli, 1995).

Liah Greenfeld offers a slightly different classification of nationalism, although she does also use the terms "civic" and "ethnic." Her classification is focused mainly on the relationship between nationalism and democracy. Greenfeld considers nationalism as a form of social consciousness and collective solidarity (Greenfeld, 2003). She notes that on one hand, national consciousness is inherently democratic, because egalitarianism serves as a vital principle for its social organizations, and public sovereignty remains as a vital political principle. While on the other hand, these principles can be interpreted in a radically different way. According to Greenfeld, "the interpretation depends on whether the nation is seen as a composite entity or in unitary terms, and on whether the criteria of national membership, that is, nationality, are civic or ethnic" (Greenfeld, 2003).

Based on these different interpretations Greenfeld distinguishes three types of nationalism, and thus three types of nation and national identity.

1. **Individualistic-civic:** for Greenfeld, individualistic-civic nationalism is an original form of nationalism. She notes that although all nationalisms imply democracy, individualistic-civic nationalism indicates individualistic, liberal democracy. A composite definition of the nation is characteristic for this type of nationalism: the notion of society as an association of free and equal individuals is combined with the civic concept of nationality. Members of a nation are free individuals, and a nation is therefore seen as a sovereign community that reflects the features of its members. The individualistic-civic nation's will is the will of the majority. Civic nationality equates to citizenship, implying a conscious agreement over certain rights and duties. In this instance, membership of a nation depends on the desire of the individual to participate. Just like belief of a religion, nationality can be acquired or lost (Greenfeld, 2003).
2. **Collectivist-ethnic:** Greenfeld considers collectivist-ethnic nationalism as the most common type of nationalism, which combines the definition of a nation to something unified to the ethnic concept. Nationality becomes inherent, genetic, and character-related, that is passed on by blood and does not depend on personal will. Nationality cannot be acquired unless by birth; and if born with certain a nationality, it cannot be lost. This "quasi-biological idea" of nationality supports the individual as a biological member; the cell of the ideal larger organism, hence there are limitations to individual freedom. In this context, freedom and sovereignty of a nation also indicate independence from foreign forces (Greenfeld, 2003).
3. **Collectivist-civic:** Greenfeld's third notion, collectivist-civic nationalism, is somewhat a "cognitively problematic type". While elements of individualistic-civic and collectivist-ethnic nationalisms reinforce one another, the collectivist-civic type displays ambivalent, double vision. Greenfeld notes that collectivist-civic nationalism construes a nation as a collective individual with its own will, needs and interests. This collective individual is given priority over the needs, will and interests of the members of its nation. The will, needs and interests of a nation are additionally defined by the specifically appointed elite, and not by the majority. Greenfeld considers modern dictatorships to have resulted from collectivistic-civic nationalism, and

in such cases democracy is typically socialist or popular (Greenfeld, 2003).

After distinguishing and characterizing the three types of nationalism, Greenfeld emphasizes that “the experiences of individuals in individualistic and collectivistic, civic and ethnic nations may differ dramatically.” Nevertheless, they are similar when it comes to certain key issues: “the inclusive nature of nationalism and its core principles of fundamental equality of membership and popular sovereignty (however interpreted and implemented) give people with a national identity a sense of dignity, which was unknown to most people in earlier periods. It is this sense of dignity that lies at the basis of national patriotism and commitment to national causes, which often strike outside observers as irrational” (Greenfeld, 2003). Such definition, present national dignity as a crucial factor of national identity, but can moreover be viewed as an answer to the previous question put forward by Benedict Anderson- how are the “shrunk imaginings” of the recent history able to produce so much self-sacrifice? (Anderson, 2006).

The dichotomy of nationalism, i.e. its division into “civic” and “ethnic” nationalisms (the notion that began with the work of Hans Kohn), has been criticized by many authors. They frequently consider it unjustified to ascribe different kinds of nationalisms to particular geographic zones. It is possible to discover historical as well as modern examples of Western, both civic and political, nationalism in the non-Western world, and equally, examples of non-Western nationalism, ethnic and cultural, in the Western world (Jaskułowski, 2010). Other authors (Kymlicka, 2001; Kloskowska, 1996) believe that Kohn’s division erroneously concludes that pure civic nationalism does not imply any cultural orientation (Jaskułowski, 2010).

Rogers Brubaker raises the fundamental problems while criticizing the dichotomy of nationalism. He views both the terms “civic” and “ethnic” as very ambiguous, hence defining the difference between these two forms of nationalism is both analytically and normatively problematic (Брубейкер, 2012). Brubaker notes that when comparing “civic” and “ethnic” nationalisms, the first is often used to “praise” while the other is considered to be “offensive”. Civic nationalism is characterized as liberal, voluntarist, universalist and inclusive, while ethnic is viewed as non-liberal, ascriptive, particularist and exclusive (Брубейкер, 2012). Brubaker observes that this dichotomy is often used by politicians, from differing countries and ideologies, for their own favors and in order to separate their “good legitimate, civic

nationalism” from others’ “bad, illegitimate, ethnic nationalism”. Brubaker thinks that the ambivalence of these two terms can be clarified if only one asks how can culture be located in a “civic-ethnic” scheme?

While discussing the relationship between culture and the term “ethnic”, Brubaker notes that ethnic nationalism can be understood as something based around origin and finally biology. Due to limited understanding of ethnicity, nationalist rhetoric often focuses on common culture rather than common origin, which should be coded as a type of civic nationalism. However, in such cases, the category of civic nationalism becomes too diverse and therefore useless, while the category of ethnic nationalism becomes represented in a limited way. Thus, perception is changed if “ethnicity” is defined only by the factor of origin. There is however another approach, by assigning a “broader meaning” to “ethnicity” and considering it as “ethno-cultural”. Nevertheless, in this case we face the opposite obstacle, as all kinds of nationalisms will be coded as ethnic (Брубейкер, 2012).

Brubaker additionally suggests that “civic” is as vague a term as “ethnic”. This ambiguity can be avoided if civic nationalism is viewed in clear frames as a cultural, historical, universalist, voluntarist and rationalist understanding of nationalism. Where the “nation” is presented as a voluntary association of culturally undifferentiated individuals, and affiliation to the nation is chosen rather than given. However, such an interpretation of civic nationalism is dangerous, as it may refer to fictional phenomenon. Such a model of nationality exists only as an ideal type, without a real world example. Even when it comes to the cases of France and the USA, which often referred to as paradigmatic examples of civic nationalism, there are key cultural components, or the conscience of being separate people (Брубейкер, 2012).

In his conclusion, Brubaker suggests that according to the analytical perspective, the dichotomy of nationalism and its efficiency should be viewed sceptically. Brubaker notes that the “narrow” understanding of ethnicity seriously limits the sphere of ethnic nationalism, and this therefore leaves the civic category to appear extremely broad, diverse and thus technically useless. In contrary, the “narrow” understanding of the civic, limits the sphere of civic-nationalism and consequently the ethnic category is left to appear extremely wide, diverse and equally inadequate. If one combines the narrow definitions of civic and ethnic nationalisms, one finds only few examples for each and the huge gap in the middle, belonging to neither of them. The crucial difference between civic and ethnic cannot be

considered as a comprehensive classification method for either form or any type of nationalism.

Nevertheless, if one combines the broader understandings of civic and ethnic nationalism, one finds a vast gap that can be classified as both “civic” as well as “ethnic.” Therefore, in this instance, considering the differences between civic and ethnic as contradictory is impossible. Brubaker notes that the obstacle is not the difficulty in classifying certain examples, rather it is the ambiguity of terms “civic” and “ethnic”, more precisely, the vague location of culture in the civic-ethnic scheme challenges the usefulness of this differentiation (Брубейкер, 2012). In order to justify such a conclusion, the author raises the following question: “How should the policy that intends promoting certain language at state or at province level be classified?” Based on relevant factual arguments, Brubaker convincingly argues that this kind of politics can be classified as a manifestation of both “civic” and “ethnic” nationalism (Брубейкер, 2012). Brubaker further criticizes the dichotomy of nationalism by noting that the basic classification, of civic and ethnic, is useful neither in analytical nor in normative sense. Instead, he turns to the issue of inclusivity and exclusivity as an example. Brubaker notes that all forms and interpretations of nationalism are in fact simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. The difference is based not on the fact, or even the degree, of inclusivity and exclusivity but on their foundation and criteria (Брубейкер, 2012).

As previously noted, the civic concept of nation and nationality is based on citizenship and it is inclusive in the sense that it protects all citizens, regardless of their peculiarities, including their ethnic origin. Brubaker proposes that although civic nationalism is inclusive, citizenship itself naturally has both inclusive and exclusive statuses. On global scale, citizenship appears to be a powerful tool as a social “lock”. It safeguards prosperous and peaceful states from the majority outside who without borders would try to avoid wars, famine, unemployment, or seek emigration in order to find better opportunities for their children (Брубейкер, 2012). Gerard Delanty also shares Brubaker’s position on this issue, suggesting that citizenship became a synonym of nationality and the means for legitimizing nationalist xenophobia (Delanty, 1995).

Brubaker emphasizes that the acquisition of citizenship is limited everywhere and although ethnic origin is not an obstacle in this sense, this civic exclusion is quite effective (Брубейкер, 2012). Furthermore, in a global

sense, „when it comes to providing vital means and maintaining morally indiscriminate inequality, it appears to be much more important than any exclusion based on alleged ethnicity. However, this method commonly goes unnoticed because it is often believed that that is how it ought to be.“ Considering these factors, Brubaker argues that the citizenship-based understanding of nationality cannot be considered as more inclusive than those forms emphasizing common culture or origin (Брубейкер, 2012).

Brubaker in his conclusion states that nationalism cannot be the subject of clear divisions into types, sharp empirical and moral profiles. Although difference during analytical or normative research is inevitable, one should not expect significant variations within any of these distinctions. The difference between ethnic and civic is simply overloaded (Брубейкер, 2012). Instead of the dichotomy of nationalism, Brubaker offers an alternative. He argues that because the state, not citizenship, should be considered an essential starting point. Thus, one can distinguish two types of nationalism: state-framed, the equivalent of Maneke’s “nation-state” and the counter-state, which stands as a broader concept over Maneke’s “culture-state” (Брубейкер, 2012).

This brief review covering the prevalent theories of nation and nationalism naturally cannot serve as a comprehensive theoretical basis for studying Georgian national identity. In discussing the aforementioned approaches and concepts, this work has attempted to reveal the “area” and scope of nationalism, as seen from a contemporary perspective; it has also highlighted the general, modern tendencies and its theorists within the sphere. Thus, such a relatively solid theoretical background plays a significant role in determining the direction of further stages of the research.

1.3. Concepts of Identity and National Identity

The theoretical part of this work aims at discussing existing concepts of identity and defining national identity within this framework.

Firstly, it should be noted that it far from easy to have an accurate definition of the concept of “identity”. According to Rogers Brubaker, the term “identity” is utterly (and for an analytical concept – hopelessly) ambiguous. In his opinion, the term “identity” has multivalent, often contradictory meanings and, hence, the author poses the following question: “Do we really

need this heavily burdened, deeply ambiguous term?” Brubaker answers his question in the same article, stating, “the overwhelming weight of scholarly opinion suggests that we do” (Brubaker, 2000).

According to Liah Greenfield, the term “identity”, with its semiotic meaning, refers to a “symbolic self-definition”. On the one hand, there is the image of a person’s condition in their own social-cultural “space”, but on the other hand, identity is a picture of that same social-cultural environ. Greenfield suggests that the “identity of a person is an individualized micro-cosmos of the culture in which this person is immersed in”. She believes that identity is the main mental process of a human mind, since it links the natural biological abilities of an individual, like memory and adaptation, to their functioning as a person. According to Greenfield, “identity is the central “organ” of consciousness, while consciousness itself is “a tiny functioning unit of culture”. Greenfield concludes that identity can be defined as an essential element of a healthy functioning mind, where emotional reactions are occurring, alongside cognitive processes and a social behaviour. (Greenfield, 2005).

According to the sociologist Max Haller, an identity is “a socially constructed certainty by an individual” that is always connected with “the given cultural model and the rules of interaction” (Haller, 1996).

Anthony Giddens pays close attention to the transformation of identity in modern society. In his opinion, in the modern world the process of forming human identities is never-ending, as the process of self-reflection by an individual goes on endlessly. This is connected with decisions concerning how one should behave and who one ought to be. Hence, in Giddens’ view, identity is fluid and variable (Buckingham, 2008).

According to Richard Jenkins, the major difference between individual and collective identities is that individual identity is generally focused on “differences”, while collective identity concentrates on highlighting similarities. He perceives the similarities and differences as functions of a certain viewpoint, where ones similarities also refer to their differences and vice versa. Hence, similarities and differences encompass one another, along with the notion of a “shared boundary”, and at this very boundary where people discover on what their identity is based (Jenkins, 1996).

Social identity is inexorably linked with dissociating an individual or a group from other individuals or groups. The definition of social identity is based on similarities and differences, and this gives one the possibility to

compare (Bornemann and Wakenhut, 1999). Richard Jenkins underlines that social identity is our fundamental understanding about who we are and who other people are. On the other hand, it is also other people's perceptions about who they are and who others are (including us) (Jenkins, 1996). Hence, in order to create social identity, it is important that one identifies oneself with the "we"-group, that is separate from a group of "others" or "strangers". Identification with the "we" group is determined by degree of affiliation, how close individuals feel associated with this or that group (Cohrs, 2005).

Thomas Scheff, an American researcher of the emotional system, talks about the necessity of feeling close with a certain social group and the strong emotions associated with it, for example shame and pride. (Scheff, 1994).

It should be further noted that the unity of individual identities is different from that of collective identity, since the latter is primarily defined in the light of declarations, manifests and programs. It is also important to discern how the perception of "self" and of "others" occurs, i.e. does the person perceives themselves primarily as an individual or as a member of a certain group? According to Simon and Mummendey, if an affiliation to a group is dominant in the individual's perceptions of "self" and the "other", the significance of individual characteristics lessens and the typical traits of their group are put forth. The features of the "we" group are also sharply differentiated from characteristics of other groups (Simon and Mummendey, 1997).

According to the theory of the social identity by Henry Tajfel and John Turner, the development of an individual identity is possible only in the light of a social environment, where social identity is "a cognitive mechanism" that contributes to group action. When a person perceives themselves as a member of a certain group, the latter is "in-group" while all other groups are "out-groups". Hence, within this framework, a certain mentality is created: in-group and out-group, i.e. "we" and "others". Tajfel and Turner differentiate between the three processes that contribute to the formation of such a mentality: social categorization, social identification and social comparison. In their view, humans are characterized by social categorization; which can be defined as the perception a person forms in relation with their and their associates' affiliation with different social categories, like age, religion and politics. Social categorization has two functions: it enables an

individual to organize and divide their social environment into segments in their imagination, and secondly it allows a person to identify their place and define their “self” within their social environment. In the theory of social identity, the concept of “I” consists of individual and social identities. The latter denotes one’s affiliation or unity with a certain group of individuals. Therefore, social identification helps answer the following human question: “who am I?” (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

Tajfel and Turner underline the fact that the definition of oneself and of others within a certain category is relative and primarily based on comparison. For instance, the category “a young person” only has meaning in relation to the category of “an elderly person”. Social identification denotes the adoption of a group identity. There is the perception of a bond to that group and it takes into account group norms, alongside an understanding of group sentiment both in times of trouble and in success. Uniqueness and distinctiveness are additional factors that intensify social identification and the prestige of group values. According to the theory of social identity, a person tends to identify with the similar group, the community of individuals who are similar and feels comfortable with (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

After the categorization and identification of the “group”, an individual tends to compare their in-group with out-group(s). During this process, the individual seeks ways to raise their self-esteem and enhance their self-image, and typically, they will prefer the in-group, will emphasize the differences to the out-group and will notice fewer differences among members of the in-group. They will therefore be more likely to remember the positive information concerning the in-group and the negative aspects of the out-group (Tajfel, Turner, 1986).

According to Heinz Bonfadelli, taking account of civic processes and changes is important for the creation of a collective identity. In his view, one should highlight several processes characteristic of modernity, more specifically, a simplified mobility, an altered education system, a professional world, an expanded labor market, modified gender relations, family forms and general trends against traditionalism. These processes in today’s world require that the meaning of identity be defined in an entirely new way. If religion was an important instrument for identification in the past, today its significance has diminished and the state and the nation has taken on the function of social identification. According to Bonfadelli, the question is how the state and the national identity remain the major markers of social

identification in the epoch of globalization, while the significance of national borders is being lessened (Bonfadelli, 2008).

National identity is one form of social identity. Its essential object is the nation. It is a collective identity, linked with membership of a certain national group, i.e. an individual has a national consciousness and can identify with the nation. The term “national identity” primarily denotes positive and a subjectively important emotional connection to the nation. According to Anderson (2003), national identity as a general concept should be regarded basically as a psychological concept.

When defining national identity, Anthony Smith remarks that this term is “fundamentally multi-dimensional” (Smith, 1992). Smith discusses the popular concept of “the national identity” that can be formed in the following way: national identity is “a continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions of the system that creates a distinctive heritage of the nation and an individual’s identification with this heritage and its cultural elements”. Smith believes one should pay close attention to the cultural factors in this definition and in the concept of national identity, generally (Smith, 2009).

The major function of national identity is believed to be “the homogenization of individuals, their consolidation around the nationality, and putting less emphasis upon the conflicts within the nation” (Zedania, 2009).

National identity as the category of the collective identity has long been the subject of attention and research. To a certain extent, it can be called “the prototype” of collective identity. In various research studies and in many different contexts national identity has been analyzed in relation to regional, ethnic and cultural collective identities. Andreas Reckwitz explains various distinctions among identities with changed political and cultural realities. Reckwitz states that the debates around collective identity were enhanced as a result of emigrational, post-colonial and feminist movements in the 20th century. He believes discussions centred on collective identities have been strengthened in national states that have cultures of various origins (Reckwitz, 2001)

In order to study the general concepts of national identity and its formation in various conditions, two major theoretical movements need to be differentiated: essentialism and constructivism. When discussing the concepts of nation and nationalism the topics of modernism and ethno-

symbolism have already been touched on. In essence, constructivism is modernism placed within the context of national identity, while essentialism is predicated on ethno-symbolism.

National identity as one form of collective identity is closely linked to the category of the nation. How is this collective identity formed and how is this process connected to the creation of the nation? The answer from the standpoint of modernism, and thus constructivism, can be formulated as follows: according to the modernist (constructivist) approach, the nation consists of two elements- the notion itself, the construction of an idea alongside the unity of people who perceive themselves as part of a concrete nation. Historically, the formation of a nation as an ideology precedes the formation of the nation as an identity; i.e. in order for an ideology to take its identity, it should have already fully developed as an ideology. Along similar lines, "in order to define national and ethnic identities and for them to be shared by large groups, complex systems both institutional and technological are needed. Anderson and Gellner describe the two common methods used to spread identities: the education system and Mass Media. Through these, it is possible to turn national and ethnic ideologies into identities, i.e. for the greater population they are the instruments that help them define themselves and differentiate themselves from others." (თევზაძე, 2009).

According to the essentialist perspective, during the formation of the nation as a collective identity, cultural characteristics such as language and history are emphasized. Political and cultural actors, in the creation of a national identity, can play the role of mediators between a concrete cultural heritage and modern realities; though the area of their influence is restrained by this concrete cultural heritage. The essentialist approach suggest that before the formation of national identities, a certain cultural "primitive community" should already exist as an ethnic hub and it is the task of the nationalist statesmen to "rediscover" and transform this cultural entity into identities that can be utilized within the political dimension (Mickler, 2005).

As Lars Eric Cedermann notes, according to essentialist views, a national collective identity is characterized by continuity. The constructivists, on the other hand, believe that national identity is contingent. (Cedermann, 2001).

Unlike essentialists, constructivists examine in detail the importance of political processes and believe that political actors and the elite play the most significant role in the creation of national identity (Cedermann,

2001). Within the framework of constructivism, Cedermann notes two distinct logics: “the logic of consequence”, instrumental and rational logic based on analysis and thus on foreseeing potential consequences, and “the logic of appropriateness”, logic which is predicated on adherence to rules. Cedermann finds that when national identities are being formed, “instrumental-constructivists” believe culture is not the starting point rather it is a side effect. They place more emphasis upon the importance of political factors. The second constructivist group is “instrumental logic”, where the institutional factor further strengthens the ties between culture and national identity (Cedermann, 2001). According to the members of that group, discourse about the origin of national identity should not be limited to political manipulations or the formation of the state. It is important to acknowledge an independent cultural dimension, since the development and dissemination of the nationalist discourse is not determined wholly by the project of state-building (Calhoun, 1997).

If one summarizes the theoretical information within this chapter, one can conclude that it gives some understanding of the concepts of identity in general and to national identities in particular.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in several stages. After reviewing the essential literature, the empirical data was collected and processed. The table below offers a full plan of the study:

Method:	Data:	Method for Analysis:
Stage I		
Secondary analysis of the quantitative data	- ISSP survey „National Identity“, 3-rd wave, Georgia, 2013	- Descriptive analysis - Exploratory factor analysis - Comparison of means (t-test) - Multiple linear regression
Stage II		
Qualitative study	- Focus groups from the Georgian population	- Qualitative content analysis
Stage III		
Qualitative study	- In-depth interviews with experts and opinion-makers: politicians, representatives of media, education, religion and the NGO sector.	- Qualitative content analysis

Table #1: The plan of empirical study

Stage I

The secondary analysis of the quantitative data was carried out at the first stage of the research. The population representative survey data from ISSP (International Social Survey Programme), - namely, National identity study in Georgia, 2013, conducted by the Center for Social Sciences, - was processed. The aforementioned survey provides information on issues such as feeling close to one's own community, being a "true Georgian", values defining national identity, attitudes towards one's own country and its national institutions, assessing the international relations of the country and

attitudes towards ethnic minorities and immigrants residing in Georgia.

In the national identity survey, 1,498 people were interviewed in Georgia. The sample was based around a household list from the population census of 2002. 45,4% of respondents are men and 54,6% women. 21,6% of participants belong to the 18-30 age group, 23,2% to the 31-45 age group, 18,2% to the 46-55 age group, and 37% to the 55+ upper age group. The majority of the respondents, 87,6%, are ethnic Georgians, 6,4% are ethnic Azerbaijanis, 3,6% are Armenian, and 2,4% belong to other ethnic groups. In religious affiliation, 83% consider themselves as Orthodox Christians, 11% are Muslim, 4,2% belong to other religions, while 1,5% do not believe in any religion. 25,4% of respondents have 11-12 years of secondary education, 29,9% have a technical education, while 27,3% hold a BA or 5-year diploma. A relatively small number of participants have Master's (3,9%) or higher degrees (1,4%), as well those with just 8-9 years of school education (8,6%) or a few who do not have any education (3,2%). 28,5% of the respondents have a paid job: they are employed, self-employed or involved in a family business. It should also be noted that 59,4% of these respondents are employed in the public sector, while 40,6% work in the private sector. Whereas, 41,3% of respondents are unemployed and seeking employment, and 3,7% are studying as pupils or students, 24,1% are retired, and 2,5% are listed as "other". Most participants, 71,3%, consider themselves as middle class, 17,6% as lower class, 8,6% as upper class, and only 2,5% at the highest social class.

The data from the ISSP National identity 2013 survey was analyzed using the following methods: descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, comparison of means among groups and multiple linear regression. The descriptive method revealed certain social tendencies and sentiments. Using the factor analysis, the items were grouped thematically and among them structural ties were determined. Based on the comparison of means, it was revealed whether the means of responses differ from various groups, according to gender, age, educational level etc. Multiple linear regression was used to explain the variance of the dependent variable and any particular relationships between variables was identified (Durglishvili, 2006).

Stage II

In order to explain the quantitative data and to obtain more detailed information, eight focus groups of the population were conducted. In total

there were 64 participants, 32 women and 32 men, with 8 participants in each group. The samples were selected by age (18-24; 25-30; 31-45; 46-55; 55+), gender (female/male), employment (employed/unemployed) and residence (Tbilisi: center/periphery). In the first and third focus groups the participants were selected only based on their student status, age and gender. The table below shows a detailed plan of the conducted focus groups:

Focus group No.1	Focus group No.2
Date: 21.03.2015	Date: 21.03.2015
Time: 12 PM	Time: 16 PM
Number of participants: 8 participants (4 female and 4 male)	Number of participants: 8 participants (4 female and 4 male)
Age group: 18-24	Age group: 31-45
Employment status: all participants were <u>Bachelor's</u> students	Employment status: 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were unemployed and 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were employed
Note: Heterogeneous group- students from various faculties	Place of residence: Tbilisi periphery

Focus group No.3	Focus group No.4
Date: 22.03.2015	Date: 22.03.2015
Time: 12 PM	Time: 16 PM
Number of participants: 8 participants (4 female and 4 male)	Number of participants: 8 participants (4 female and 4 male)
Age group: 25-30	Age group: 31-45
Employment status: all participants were <u>Master's</u> students	Employment status: 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were unemployed and 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were employed
Note: Heterogeneous group- students from various faculties	Place of residence: Tbilisi center

Focus group No.5	Focus group No.6
Date: 28.03.2015	Date: 28.03.2015
Time: 12 PM	Time: 16 PM
Number of participants: 8 participants (4 female and 4 male)	Number of participants: 8 participants (4 female and 4 male)
Age group: 46-55	Age group: 46-55
Employment status: 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were unemployed and 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were employed	Employment status: 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were unemployed and 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were employed
Place of residence: Tbilisi periphery	Place of residence: Tbilisi center

Focus group No.7	Focus group No.8
Date: 29.03.2015	Date: 29.03.2015
Time: 12 PM	Time: 16 PM
Number of participants: 8 participants [4 female and 4 male]	Number of participants: 8 participants [4 female and 4 male]
Age group: 56+	Age group: 56+
Employment status: 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were unemployed and 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were employed	Employment status: 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were unemployed and 4 participants (2 female and 2 male) were employed
Place of residence: Tbilisi periphery	Place of residence: Tbilisi center
<u>Note:</u> participants with retirement status are treated as “unemployed”	<u>Note:</u> participants with retirement status are treated as “unemployed”

Table#2

After a detailed study of the research topic and the descriptive analysis of the quantitative data, a discussion plan was elaborated for the focus groups. The following topics were selected for discussion: the unifying and dividing values in Georgian society; value conflicts among the generations; the pride and shame of Georgian society; the institutionalization of nationality and

ethnicity; civic responsibilities; Georgian closeness towards other nations; current international threats to Georgian society; Georgian attitudes towards ethnic minorities; problems concerning ethnic minorities and the state's role for minorities; as well as Georgian attitudes towards emigration. With prior consent, each focus group discussion was recorded, while ensuring confidentiality. Finally, each discussion was transcribed and processed via a qualitative content-analysis method.

Stage III

In order to confirm and then explain the results obtained in the first and second stages of the research, the third stage was dedicated to in-depth interviews with experts and various opinion-makers (politicians alongside members of the media, the church, the education system and NGOs). The experts identified that these opinion-makers can influence the population and can shape and change their values. It is noteworthy that this stage of the research was the most difficult, as a number of potential respondents refused to participate. Recruiting Church representatives and politicians was particularly hard. In total, 26 in-depth interviews were conducted: 12 interviews with experts, 6 interviews with politicians, 3 interviews with media representatives, 1 interview with a church representative, 2 interviews with representatives in education and 2 interviews with NGO sector representatives. It should be further mentioned that experts were selected based on their field of expertise and on the discussion topics.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Forms of expression of Georgian National Identity

According to assessments made by the experts interviewed within the framework of the research at hand, Georgian Nationalism is currently characterized by two major trends: the progressive, Western-oriented approach and a limited vision predicated upon ethnicity and a concrete religion. Both perspectives have a crucial impact upon the shaping of the Georgian national identity.

Some experts, who have been interviewed for this work, mention that in Georgia nationality is often confused with specific ethnic group - ethnic Georgians, while ethnic Georgians are typically perceived and defined as Orthodox Christians. According to the experts as the current Georgian political course is focused on integration into Western structures, so the civil component should be a defining factor for national identity, thus Georgian national identity is not held only by ethnic Georgians and Orthodox Christian Georgians:

“According to our mentality an identity is perceived to be ethnic. This is not sufficient anymore; if we strive to become a genuine state and nation, we should not be a mere ethnic unity but the unity of citizens i.e. the nation state in which each and every citizen is the representative of one nation despite their ethnic origin. This type of identity has not yet been developed in Georgia and will probably not take place for a long time” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Experts in the field, show that the challenges with the creation of civil identity are closely associated with the specifics of Georgian national identity. They believe that, Georgian national identity is more closely associated to Georgian culture than to the state. Both focus groups and the experts agree that the key characteristics of Georgian cultural identity are the language, the history, the religion and traditions. It should also be noted that according

to the experts, in contemporary Georgia, cultural identity, to a certain extent, is being distorted - cultural identity is given an ethnic interpretation even though cultural identity is formed by the complex mechanisms of socialization. The process of socialization, the experts suggest, is naturally linked to the existence of a common historical memory.

The interviewed experts view the formation of national identity as defined by events within the human reserve of a common collective memory, recalled either with pain or with pride. Shaping national identity is connected with certain process of development bringing novelties. According to the respondents, democratic and liberal values coming from the West could be considered as such novelties. The experts believe that this process of development faces certain challenges in Georgia, since to the Georgian people, Georgian culture is a culture focused on survival, and thus the population is fearful towards certain novelties - they fear that everything that is historically established might disappear or be degraded. Such a fear of change is believed to hinder the process of development, which would eventually contribute to the Georgian nation embracing civil identity.

The focus group respondents and the experts show that the key actors affecting the formation of Georgian national identity are the political elite, the church, the media, the education system and non-governmental organizations. According to the experts, the visions of these actors are contradictory, for instance in the political discourses, political parties view are often divergent, and this has subsequent effect on society. Similarly, many experts have remarked on the opposition between the church and non-governmental organizations:

“The church retains on the basis of the nationalism, according to which Georgians are only Orthodox Georgians. Hence, this hinders not only the formation of the civil nation but also the formation of the ethnic Georgian nation. It is difficult to say anything at all when you hear the priest questioning whether the Muslim Georgian is the Georgian indeed. In my view, the church is a hindrance and this is obvious” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One of the experts names the intelligentsia as the creator of discourse within Georgian society. When referencing the intelligentsia, he mainly refers to representatives within the sphere of the arts (famous writers, actors, musicians, and film directors). He gives a negative assessment to civic

awareness and the level of education of them and notes that *“the creation of the civic nation can happen through efforts made by the civic sector, some non-governmental organizations and the youth including university students”* (an in-depth interview, an expert). Some experts suggest that the understanding of nationalism by certain NGOs bears a similarity to liberal nationalism which believes all people are equal and free, and everybody has civil rights. According to one of the experts, today in Georgia, these liberal groups are opponents of the church and they actively protect the rights of various minorities.

Some of the interviewed politicians propose that intertwined ethnic and civic factors can be regarded as the foundation for the Georgian national identity. The majority of politicians connect the ethnic aspect of national identity with the love of homeland, the language, faith, traditions and the shared history. The civic aspect of national identity is linked with citizenship of a concrete state, with law, human rights and internationally recognized boundaries. One of the interviewed politicians draws a distinct line between the nation and ethnicity:

“National identity is the citizens of the state standing together in the face of future tasks; this is the most important thing. The nation consists of people who perceive themselves standing side by side when being exposed to danger and in the future. In this case, in my opinion, an ethnic origin is of some importance but it is not the major factor, the nation and ethnicity are two different terms” (an in-depth interview, a politician). “

As previously noted, to the many politicians interviewed as part of the research, ethnic and civic markers defining the national identity critically overlap. The majority of politicians view Georgian national identity, and other national identities, as formed by the history of the country, its past and its uniqueness. One such view states that *“our national identity is those values that form the basis for our uniqueness, the same language, the homeland, religion that we have managed to preserve despite many difficulties”* (an in-depth interview, a politician). The same politicians name tolerance and humanity as key markers of national identity. At the same time, they place great emphasis upon religion, preserved customs, sovereignty and freedom.

After the restoration of the independent state of Georgia in 1991, there were legislative reforms linked with national identity or nationalism.

According to the interviewed politicians reforms such as removing the ethnicity section from the Georgian passport and the adoption of anti-discrimination laws, created the most tension within society. One politician thinks that Georgians, to an extent, have a unified attitude towards the Western, European orientation, however, there is less awareness regarding the concrete steps, necessary for further progress.

“We have adopted liberal laws not because this was our inner calling but because this was the requirement coming from our partners in the West. At the same time, Georgians agree that we would like to become part of the West. But the West is worth something and we need to pay money for that, but we would like to get it for free, without waiting in the queue... the money needs to be spent, the time should be spent, but here we encounter a problem. This does not refer to everybody, of course” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Furthermore, one politician links the existence of such sentiments in the population to the fear of losing traditional Georgian national identity:

“The anti-discrimination law, that I do not very fond of, sparked tensions within the society since people thought that if we adopted the above law, LGBT community would engulf us and our children would become either lesbians or gay” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Whereas, another politician believes that the adoption of an anti-discrimination law is an expression of tolerant attitudes within Georgian society and explains that this law has defined an anti-discriminatory attitude not only towards sexual minorities and to other minorities as well. In his view, the adoption of the above law underlines the fact that *“we are indeed Europeans - we may have emotional reactions that we will not act on and that we will not chase people in the streets for having a different viewpoint or a sexual orientation”* (an in-depth interview, a politician). The majority of interviewed politicians suggest a number of Georgian people, as well as the social elite, have a contradictory perception to this law, particularly since there are different attitudes to this issue based on different values.

Experts and politicians define national identity not as a formed category but as a process, which is linked to concurrent events and to the actors that create those events and their surrounding discourses. It should further be

noted that national identity changes with time; it is affected by time - by the changing political, economic, social and cultural environment. As a tangible example, one may name the change of markers and characteristics that define national identity and their impact. These markers vary according to different groups of the population, since the process of their socialization is altered by time; hence the constructs of national identity have been accordingly changed, contributing to the formation of various shapes of national identity.

3.1.1. Markers of Georgian National Identity

National identity as a “prototype” of collective identity is defined through the level of affiliation to a certain group (Kecmanovic, 1996). Some theorists believe that the sense and nature of national identity changes along with time, and this process is impacted by ongoing political economic, social, cultural and other factors (de Cillia, 1999; Hobsbawm, 2005; Staub, 1997). When studying national identity one will certainly face the following questions: what makes a national identity? What factors affect one’s personal perception of being Georgian? According to Heyder and Schmidt, these are emotions connected to specific aspects of national identity which unite a nation as a whole. Heyder and Schmidt note the following crucial aspects, history, culture, economy, and the sense of being part of a certain community (Heyder and Schmidt, 2001). The other defining aspects of national identity are language, religion and national symbols, like a flag, an anthem, national heroes, or myths (Poole, 1999).

According to the interviewed experts, the great majority of Georgians cherish “being Georgian”. However, they find it difficult to define what it means to be Georgian, i.e. they find it difficult discern the formula of “being Georgian”. The experts, however, have created two groups of characterizing traits for “a good Georgian”: the first group includes features such as being ethnic Georgian, Orthodox Christian, heterosexual, being adherent to traditions (e.g. Supra traditions, “Chokhosani”, etc.), while the other group consists of law-abiding citizens who are tolerant towards others. In this context, the experts stress the fact that Georgian society is divided into the majority and the minority, namely Georgians and non-Georgians, and this hampers the formation of a common view to define Georgian national identity. According to the experts, this is caused by the lack of the civic consciousness. They note that an emotional attitude towards certain events

is different among ethnic Georgians and non-Georgians. The common civic idea that would further consolidate the nation has not yet been fully developed in Georgian society. The experts note that one foremost problem is the attitude of the majority (ethnic Georgians) believing “being a good Georgian” is closely related to being an Orthodox Christian. The experts further argue that this prevalent attitude is determined by poorly developed state institutions and a lack of trust towards them:

“After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the church as an institution strengthened its moral authority and plus it [the church] did not have to take on responsibilities. One of the most important reasons why many state institutions did not have authority is that they could not perform their functions. Many state institutions were unable to carry out their functions. The church, on the contrary, was the institution that took on many functions often those one that are not within its competencies as well. This was the main reason why the church became one of those institutions that offered this simplified definition of identity to many Georgians” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

When defining “being Georgian” the interviewed experts believe it to be precarious to define “Georgianness” on the basis of the characteristics included in the first group (ethnic, religious and cultural characteristics), since it may contribute to the divisions within society. In this case, ethnic Georgians who are simultaneously Orthodox Christian appear to be on one side while “the others” - ethnic non-Georgians and non-Orthodox Christians - are on the other. Hence, according to the experts if one utilizes such formula of “Georgianness”, “the others” will be excluded from Georgian national identity. However, if one selects the second group of characteristics - the civic elements, and refuse to exclude the “others” based on ethnicity or faith when it comes to constructing national identity, one will surely contribute to the unification of society instead of its division. Thus, the experts believe that the perception of “Georgianness” and national identity as based upon civic consciousness is the vision unifying the country.

It should also be noted that to some experts, one’s feeling Georgian and the traditional understanding of “Georgianness”, and one’s feeling towards being Georgian, is currently in the process of transformation. Respondents emphasize the differences in perceptions of “Georgianness” among different generations. Such differences are surely connected with the socialization

process and the value systems characteristic to various generations.

“Being a true Georgian” and the intensity of experiencing „Georgianness”

In scope of ISSP representative survey on “national identity” conducted by the Center for Social Sciences in Georgia in 2013, respondents were to define their attitude towards the values considered to be the main characteristics of the “true Georgian”. The findings reveal that the respondents thought the most critical aspect was to feel Georgian (80,5%), and subsequently to speak the Georgian language (77,9%), to have Georgian ancestry (67,5%), to be an Orthodox Christian (65,4%), and to respect Georgian political institutions and laws (59,3%); the last three characteristics were ranged in a following way: having the Georgian citizenship (56,8%); to be born in Georgia (49,9%), and having spent most of their time in the country (54,7%).

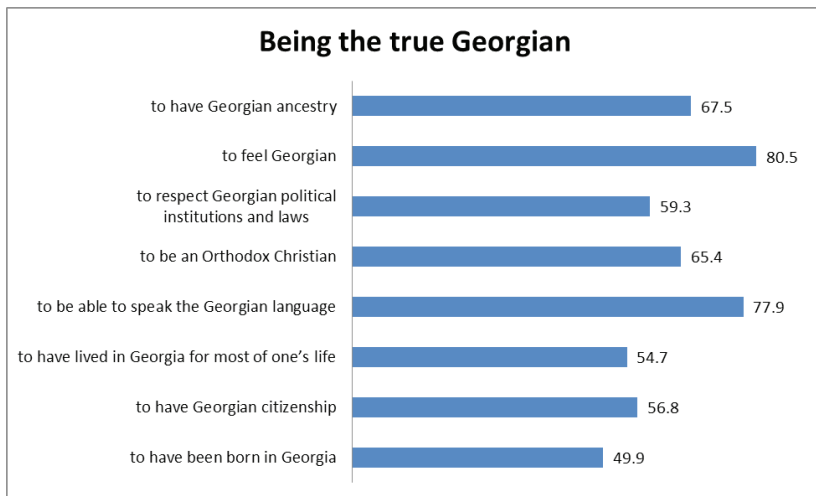


Diagram #1: the values that define a true Georgian (General Characteristics %)

The percentages in the diagram#1 reflect the responses (“very important”) chosen by the participants of the survey. It becomes clear that the majority of respondents believe that in order to be perceived as a “true Georgian”, the most significant element is feeling oneself as Georgian (80.5%). This is followed by the ability to speak the Georgian language and

having Georgian ancestry. While of relatively low importance is given to being born in Georgia (49.9%).

No significant differences were identified between the responses according to gender or age. For both females and males, and in all age groups, the three most important factors are as follows: feeling oneself Georgian, to speak the Georgian language and to have Georgian ancestry (see diagrams #2 and #3 below).

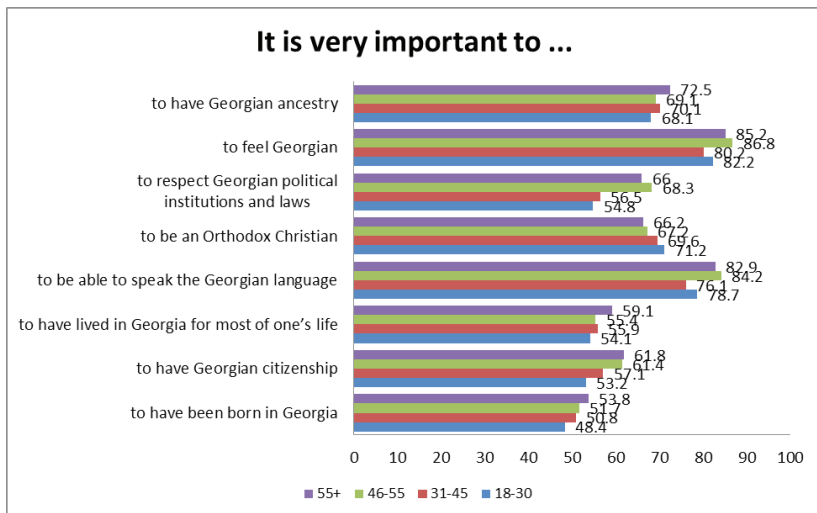
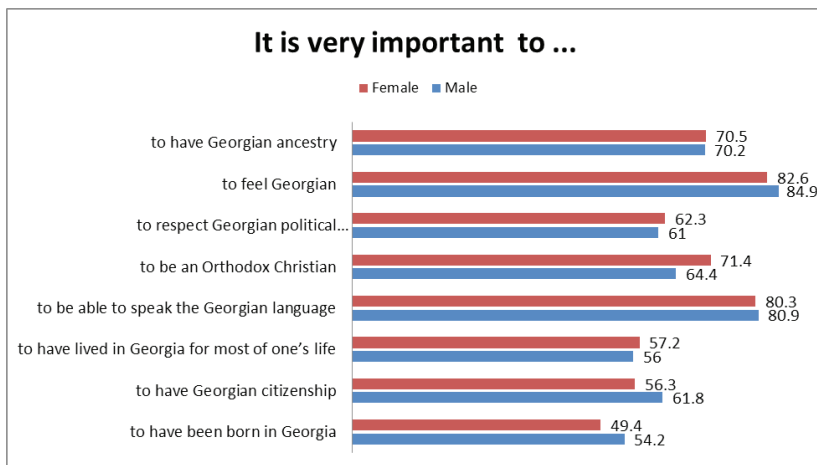


Diagram #2 and #3: the values that define a true Georgian by sex and by age

In order to identify traits and characteristics of Georgian national identity, the above values determining a “true Georgian” have undertaken an exploratory factor analysis, from which structural interrelation among the variables have been determined. According to the factor analysis, the indicators of “the true Georgian” have been grouped into two factors (table #3): the first factor can be called “ethno-cultural national identity”, which incorporates into the following- to feel oneself Georgian, to have Georgian ancestry, to speak the Georgian language and be an Orthodox Christian. The second factor can be identified as “civic-political” national identity. It incorporates the following: to be born in Georgia, Georgian citizenship, along with the duration of an individual living in Georgia.

Although “civic-political” factor received a lesser (factor) loading we should not consider it as being less important. It should also be noted that the following indicator - respect towards Georgian state institutions and laws, has not been included in any of the factor, nor was developed as a separate factor. This is could be explained by the fact that national state institutions are still being formed and they are not yet clearly associated with national identity (neither ethno-cultural nor civic).

Rotated Component Matrix^a

Some people believe the following factors are important in order to be a Genuine, true Georgian. Others suggest these factors are not as significant. In your opinion, how important is each factor listed below?	Factor		1- Very important 5- Not at all important
	1	2	
To have been born in Georgia	.061	.818	1.95
To have Georgian citizenship	.222	.808	1.67
To have lived in Georgia for most of one's life	.258	.745	1.67
To be able to speak the Georgian language	.655	.377	1.30
To be an Orthodox Christian	.609	.295	1.65
To respect Georgia's political institutions and laws	.490	.334	1.55
To feel Georgian	.847	.013	1.24
To have Georgian ancestry	.710	.076	1.51

Table #3: Ethno-cultural and civic-political national identity

The factor of “ethno-cultural national identity” is not dependent on either gender ($p=.083$) or age ($p=.811$). The significance of values contributing to the “ethno-cultural national identity”, namely, feeling Georgian, to have Georgian ancestry, to be able to speak the Georgian language and to be an Orthodox Christian, do not differ according to gender or age. These findings have also been proven through a descriptive analysis. The factor of “ethno-cultural national identity” depends on the education level ($p=.000$). Acceptance of values constituting “ethno-cultural national identity” is not typical of persons with secondary (-0.10) or lower education level (-0.18 ; -0.62). However positive attitudes towards “ethno-cultural national identity” increases in line with a higher level of education (0.08 ; 0.13 ; 0.14).

The factor “civic-political national identity” is not dependent on gender ($p=.404$), while dependence on age is weak ($p=.028$), however there is a great degree of dependence on the level of education ($p=.000$) and the sphere of their employment ($p=.000$).

Main findings:

- The respondents think that for somebody to be truly Georgian, firstly, it is important that they felt themselves as Georgians, to be able speak the Georgian language, to have Georgian ancestry, to respect Georgian political institutions and laws, and to have Georgian citizenship.
- The respondents rated low in the following items: having spent the most part of one’s life in Georgia and being born in Georgia.
- Both women and men of all age groups highlighted the three most important criteria for determining a truly Georgian: to feel oneself Georgian, to be able to speak the Georgian language and to have Georgian ancestry.
- The features characteristic for Georgian national identity have been grouped into two factors: an ethno-cultural national identity and a civic-political national identity.
- An ethno-cultural national identity consists of the following features: having Georgian ancestry, feeling oneself as Georgian, to be able to speak the Georgian language and being an Orthodox Christian.

- A civic-political national identity incorporates the following features: being born in Georgia, having Georgian citizenship and having spent the most of one's life in Georgia.
- An ethno-cultural identity of "being Georgian" is more important both for women and men regardless their age than civic-political identity
- Attitudes towards the features characteristic of civic-political national identity do not differ by gender; however there are slight differences by age, and to be specific, Georgian citizenship as a feature of 'truly Georgian' is more important for the younger generation than the older.

Values that Unite and Divide the Georgian Nation

Within the framework of the research, experts were asked to name both values that unite and that divide Georgian society. The goal of such a question was to define aspects of Georgian national identity in terms of certain values that contribute to either integration and consensus, or those that can cause internal conflict. The experts identified the following civic values that they consider ensure the unity of society: the rule of law, the freedom of speech, religion, expression and political activity; as well as tolerance, i.e. the acceptance of differences with others. One expert emphasizes the Georgians are traditional, and consequently traditional values are incompatible with newly introduced liberal values. He suggests that there is the framework of patriotic values in Georgian society, and an individual with liberal values cannot fit into this framework, which creates a value-based conflict in the society.

Knowledge of the Georgian language has been classified as one of the most important unifying facets. Experts reveal that communication in one language unites different groups, especially groups of distinct ethnic origin. Certain experts give Georgia the status of "a transitional society" and place emphasis upon the coexistence of groups embracing different values. These experts suggest that such situation hinders the formation of the Georgian national identity as well as common value framework.

In the view of the experts, everything that contradicts traditional Georgian beliefs is likely to be unacceptable to Georgian society; for instance, same-sex relationships and issues related with its institutionalization. One of the experts

believes that the unification of values is a difficult task for Georgian society, since it is going through transitional phase of development and model of the democratic system has not yet been fully developed. Several generations need to have passed before this process can end. The same experts have also identified state independence, territorial integrity and economic stability as the most important prerequisites for uniting Georgian society:

“...a unifying idea, a unifying and central value which will unite the whole nation and that can be different in different times is rather problematic. If we take the present situation into account I still believe that economic issues are more important; the idea contributing to overcoming economic problems would be an important one. Some other issues can arise after that though. But today I still believe this is the most significant issue. We need better economic and living conditions and the economy is at the forefront of everything” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One expert further clarifies that exactly poverty contributes to the creation of a special trust of the Georgian people towards the church, since the latter has taken on the function of pacifying people. The church unites underprivileged and poverty-stricken people, of whom there are many. The respondents also mention an enemy image as a uniting factor for Georgian society - the existence of a common enemy can bring together various groups. It has been suggested that in Georgian society the West can be perceived as an enemy on one hand, as it has introduced new liberal-democratic values into Georgia, while on the other hand Russia is thought to be the common enemy as it is an invading force occupying 20% of Georgian territory. In addition the experts highlight that either tragic or joyful events can also unite the population (for example, the tragedy of April 9th 1989 or the success connected with Tbilisi football club “Dinamo” winning the European Cup Finals on May 13th , 1981). Part of interviewed experts indicate that civic consciousness has not yet formed within Georgian society, according to which pride in one’s state is a major value. Expert assessments show that for the contemporary Georgian populace civic values are of secondary importance and the key uniting factors are historic events, accomplishments, monuments and traditions, each belonging to the ethno-cultural sphere.

The focus groups conducted for this research have identified important trends describing the uniting and dividing values of Georgian society.

Both male and female respondents, with ages ranging from 18-30, acknowledged religion and history as uniting factors. However, they believe these two aspects of society have been retained by inertia, and a lack of critical thinking. Additionally, they also distinguish love towards the home country, traditions and a family as significant uniting values:

"... religion is the only thing that unites the Georgian nation but many people do not fully realize how they should follow religion. They only know they should go to church and they do so" (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

"... we follow religion blindly and traditionally, without any faith. What we have now cannot be viewed as faith (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

According to the young respondents there is a value-based conflict between the church and society. As one of the respondents mentions, faith is one of the main values around which society should unite, but in reality, it is also linked to the conflict that divides society into believers and unbelievers.

When discussing such divisive values, the young participants of the focus group highlighted the issues connected with gender equality, and intolerance towards various minorities.

"... Georgians oppose each other because of tiny differences such as differences in surnames, in origin. For these people it will be especially difficult to accept a different religion, viewpoints. We lack unity and cannot agree on anything" (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

These young participants suggest civic-political values have not been well defined in Georgian society. They elaborate by stating that the Georgian nation does not know in what direction to take future developments. The respondents believe that Georgians do not yet understand the process of Europeanization, or the importance its associated civic-liberal democratic values. They think that people unite around political issues because of poverty - people vote in the hope that their economic conditions will improve once a new political force comes to power. In this light, young respondents criticize the civic consciousness of the Georgian population:

"... I have just recalled political values. In this case as well the Georgian

nation has not decided on which way to go. They say, we should move towards Europe but they do not know what the process of Europeanization means, they say things that they have overheard and do not have an in-depth understanding. We face polarization in this direction as well, in my view, and as for economy, the Georgian people unites around the hope that they will be passive and the state will give them benefits" (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30). "

The participants, aged 31-45, emphasize modern processes and discuss the values incoming from Europe. They are typically cautious towards European values and perceive them as threatening. The respondents highlight the current political-economic situation in Georgia and note that often people do not have an adequate understanding of democracy. They think the political and economic situation contributes to divisions within the population, when the nation should unite around the values like language, homeland and faith. According to them, today, because of economic hardships, these values are devoid of meaning. The participants also named the media as one of the significant factors dividing society.

Respondents, aged 46-55, consider the love of the homeland, Georgians' love towards one other and the religion as the unifying values within Georgian society. As dividing factors they list: envy towards each other and poor fundingial conditions:

"We, the Georgians love one another we can unite and fight for the common idea. But we now face fundingial issues, when a person does not have the minimum wage she/he cannot think of anything else but to earn a living. Love unites and economic issues divide us" (the focus group, a female respondent, 46-55).

According to the representatives of the aforementioned age-group, politics is also a sphere that contributes to opposition among people:

"... we are divided by politics, we have different viewpoints and contradictory ideas; some people favor the governing party, others favor the opposition. This is a huge minus, attacking one another in politics" (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

As some elderly participants noted, the national government should come to power in order to assist people living well. Their attitude towards Western values is critical, and they adhere most fervently to the protection

of their own culture, to Georgian traditions, to faith and to the national territory. They believe that the Georgian population is not yet ready for global innovations. These respondents saw the media as a manipulator, and criticized television channels for favoring globalization. According to them the information spread through the media supposedly contradicts national values and, thus, hinders the development of the new generation, which consequently leads to “the degradation of Georgians”:

“Like the state, society has not been properly formed. No matter how active communications are, they preach the anti and we have no idea how the new generation will develop, this is the degradation of Georgians” (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

Only one participant named Georgian citizenship as a bonding factor within society in this age-group. In his opinion, faith and traditions are not sufficient uniting values and it is legislation, written for the country’s citizens, which provides the foundation for unity. His views aroused controversy among the majority of participants:

“We are united by citizenship of Georgia. If we place an emphasis on traditions and faith, this means others also residing in the country will not make part of Georgian society. I live in the Georgian state; representatives of various ethnic and religious minorities also live here. If we are building a united state, we should then be unified by Georgian citizenship. We need to have a united society, if we are to build our society, let’s do it, who is against it? For instance, they have come up with legislation, who would you write the law about, about the citizen or about the Georgian?” (the focus group, a male participant, 45-55).

Respondents above the age of 55 also have the fears concerning the loss of traditional values. They suggest that television and opening Georgian borders have contributed to an influx of new values, and acceptance of these values by the youth. The respondents within this age group view a love towards the homeland and generally, towards anything that is Georgian - as major uniting value within Georgian society. They also identified the family as a foremost value that according to them should be of great significance to every Georgian. The participants within this age group are critical towards the new generation, since in their opinion the values which

traditionally passed on from generation to generation no longer matter to the youth. They blame this change on development and opening up the country's borders:

"... everything was different in the past, when we were young. I do not know why we have it the other way – life, development and opening borders has brought about changes, I guess. It will be great if we select and adopt the positive and throw the negative away. Our ancestors used to teach us the other way, our parents used to teach us the other way too" (the focus group, a male participant, 55+).

Furthermore, the elderly participants suggest the values coming from Europe threaten national Georgian values and divide society. In their opinion, Georgia should only adopt and share values that are common to their national values, effectively those, which are considered "good".

"... the process of development of wrong, untrue values is going on. We are told that we have to be heading towards Europe. What are we getting from there? Ok, let's acknowledge that Europe also has its pros, but when we are made to hold gay parades, this is not acceptable to the Georgian mentality" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

These participants show that uniting values are needed to face of common threats and the common enemy. They regard these values as being traditional, having tolerance, common religion, love of one's country and having virtue. They further suggest that a good education creates the basis for the development of these values.

The elderly respondents further expressed their discontent with current situation in Georgia. They found it difficult to name additional values that could contribute to the unification of the country. In their opinion, this is due to the dire economic and social conditions in the country. The elderly participants believe society should unite around ethno-cultural values, like the love of other Georgians, religion, and family, while, according to them the current economic, social and political situation in Georgia diminishes these values.

Within the bounds of this research study, we have asked representatives of three different media channels which values they would use to describe the Georgian nation. We further asked them to describe the role of the media in the creation or transformation of values that would be embraced

by Georgian society. The interviewed media representatives defined Georgian values in two groups - “good” and “bad” values characteristic of the Georgian nation. Georgian hospitality and tolerance were named as “good” values. They also mentioned the love of freedom and fighting for freedom, and being kind to one’s own friends and relatives. One respondent considers the willingness of the majority to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures as a positive value. On the other hand, the media representatives are critical when it comes to solidarity among the Georgians:

“... Solidarity denotes some kind of equality, not tolerance but sharing and support. It would be just great if we possessed it” (an in-depth interview, a media representative).

One of the media representatives notes that values cannot be quickly changed, simply because changes require much time to occur. Another media representative mentions that the media should contribute to the development of the democratic process in the country:

“Television cannot be an educational center; we cannot deliver a lecture there. The most important thing is to give as much information as it is needed to arouse the willingness of the consumers to learn more about the event you have highlighted” (an in-depth interview, a media representative).

According to one of the representatives of the media, TV channels are biased towards the current processes. In respondent’s view, their approach is impacted by whether they support the Euro-Atlantic integration or emphasize preservation of “traditional” values. However, as the respondent notes the modern Georgian population is less interested in political events than in economic and social issues; the resolutions of which would directly affect their personal well-being.

When describing the Georgian nation, one of the politicians remarked that the current value system of the population is determined by the factors of economy and security. He noted that the major characteristic Georgian values are the rule of law, human rights, civic and ethnic nationalism, religion and adherence to traditions:

“I think that the change of values shared by the population is triggered by economic factors on the one hand, and by the need of security, on the other” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Politicians mention the following when describing “Georgian” values: freedom, tolerance, the aspiration towards Europe. One politician gives a negative assessment to the current political discourse regarding the formation and change of values. He believes modern political discourse is filled with “the language of hatred” and is “mean”, and this type of political confrontations impact the attitudes of the wider population as well. According to one of the interviewed politicians, non-political processes also influence the formation of societal values, for instance: processes taking place in the parish as a result of the influence of the church, confrontations among the members of different generations, the issue of territorial integrity, or the issue of the freedom of the media, etc.

The interviewed representatives from the sphere of education believe that when discussing the uniting and dividing values among Georgians, any value can either unite or divide, depending on whom it affects.

“For instance, religion unites a certain group of people and leaves the others aside; the church does not consider some citizens of the country to be the Georgians because of their religious affiliation and vice versa- unites them this way e.g. some Georgians believe that the Lazi people are also the Georgians even though they are not Christians. One may claim that the language as a value exists. The language acquires this function through the standardization (...) The focus on the past can also be uniting since we share the common past and this is uniting. Shared beliefs are uniting; any value can be uniting if it is shared” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

This respondent believes that our society is deficient in civic value, which is the most important uniting value. According to him, civic value incorporates the belief that we all build our own future, despite differences in our origins and interests:

“If diversity was an important value then it would be uniting. However, we are united despite being diverse; hence this is not a value” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

The Conflict of Values among the Generations and how Time Affects Values

In scope of the research we have focused on change of values over the last 25 years and the differences among the generations during this period. It is important to highlight how people of various age groups perceive current values and how they assess the change of values between various generations. When considering how the value system has changed among the generations during this period, young respondents (18-30), both male and female, think that there is a substantial difference in values. They consider the old generation more collectivist, while later generations are thought to be more individualistic:

"I think for the generation of our parents importance was given to what the surrounding people would say, what was the attitude of society would be regarding your own private life.. Although this has not been decreased or disappeared of course, your generation is less affected by it" (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30).

According to the young respondents the process of Europeanization has brought a new discourse to society, through which the importance of education and the positive role of women have been reinforced. The number of women engaged in politics has also increased. The younger respondents think that this type of discourse is more acceptable for them than for the older generation who value family and traditions most of all. According to the participants the older generation is more stereotypically minded regarding the roles of men and women in society. Young respondents also emphasized the generational difference in awareness and being informed. They consider that exactly such difference in being informed between the generations creates value-based conflicts across the various age groups:

"... The differences among us are caused by the inflow of information, the various information sources, like the internet and different types of literature... It is also an issue that the people cannot afford to get this literature either in electronic or hard copies" (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

As the young respondents note, Georgian society is in the process of transformation, which in turn entails the reevaluation of its values. They believe that as not much time has elapsed since the collapse of the Soviet

Union, and Soviet “insularity” has left its trace on the older generation and has affected their values. The more “closed” society is, the more traditional it is, where the more “open” the society is the more it is “civilized”. The young respondents continue to explain this issue of “openness and insularity” according to awareness, which is often determined by the availability of modern technologies.

The respondents between the ages 31-45 display a critical attitude towards the value-changes of values mostly impacted by Europe and the West. According to them people were once more focused on traditions (implying the respect towards older generation and taking their views into account). On the other hand, the new generation is associated with the notion of freedom, and this freedom, in participants’ opinion, is made possible through the availability of information. However, respondents believe that it is important to perceive and comprehend this information in the “right way” in order to avoid the devaluation of traditional Georgian values. In their opinion, nowadays mostly media has an effect on the formation of values:

“The culture of behaviour, culture of relationships... I do not speak from a communist perspective, but the children perceive freedom differently (...) I welcome civilization but we need to understand the information coming through the internet properly, we have to help a child comprehend the information in the right way (...) Many things have been reevaluated. It is important to be educated and be given information in the proper way so that this does not turn into the lack of culture and violation of norms” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-40)

The participants in age groups 45-55 and 55+ have favorable attitude towards the change in values, but they also strongly believe that national traditions should be protected and retained. To this group, it is important that Georgia not be ruled by another nation. They have a critical attitude towards the West, and think that innovations coming from the developed countries have a negative effect on the new generation. The elderly respondents stress the significance of education, and remark that in Soviet time education was widely available for everyone, whereas nowadays it is no longer widely accessible due to fundingial hardships.

“We have a traditional country. We should not forget this. Our generation will not be changed and a child who watches TV will

be affected. Why should I watch the TV channel “Marao”? The television is full of cheap things. The younger generation will take this as normal. As for foreign countries - they already have fixed traditions, they respect the family. We have the status of a developing country, we have adopted some things, and some things have not been understood correctly. We cling to things that no longer exists in developed countries (the focus group, a female participant, 45-55).

On the other hand, older respondents also think that the process of development is accompanied by transformation of values and there are already old-fashioned traditions that should be altered. Nevertheless they still find it critical to preserve certain values, for example, the tradition of the extended family.

The experts interviewed for this study regard the change in values as a process of continuous transformation, the dynamics of which can be positive or negative at different times. The key change brought about by this process is that people gradually become accustomed to differences and they start to comprehend differences as acceptable and even normal:

“The major change is probably getting accustomed to that different members of the society might have different affiliations, viewpoints, opinions and faith, various ways of expression. This is slowly becoming normal (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Part of the interviewed experts connects the transformation of values over the last 25 years with an attempt to create a national Georgian identity, mostly based on civic values. Such identity basically focuses on citizenship, rather than ethnic or religious values. The experts identified a person’s rational choice, political involvement, sovereignty, freedom and human rights as examples of civic values. According to the experts, the actualization of these values in Georgia is linked to processes taking place at an international level. Contact with the wider world is ensured by the use of modern media (e.g. internet, social networks, TV, etc.) Much like the focus group, the experts place emphasis upon the extent the population is informed and the differences in awareness between various classes of society.

According to the experts, being informed about world processes is typically the privilege of the urban elite, while considerable portion of the population is devoid of information. As respondents note this is a very important challenge for society because the introduction of global

innovations creates resistance among the people, which in turn is based on fear towards the foreign and the different. One may conclude that society is divided between groups of those more and those less informed, and this is to a certain extent linked to an inequality in available information. The experts consider that this societal division creates a conflict of values. Therefore, it is difficult for some to rethink the existent values within the new context and to realize that the global horizon incorporates people of different identities.

Feeling of Closeness with Community

Quantitative data

According to the ISSP quantitative data collected in 2013, the majority of respondents feel closer to Georgia (their homeland), and afterwards to their hometown and region. The participants feel the least affiliation with Europe. In addition only 5.9% of respondents consider themselves to be a world citizen, while 85.2% do not. Diagram #4, below, shows the frequency of possible answers in accordance with the means:

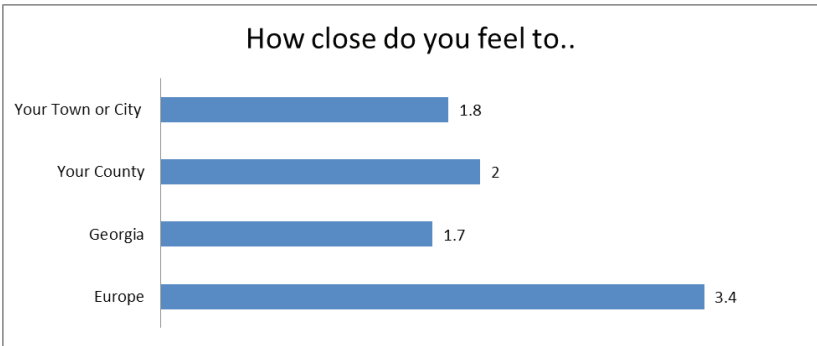


Diagram #4: Closeness with Community

The answers of the participants do not differ considerably with either sex or age. In both cases, mostly similar trends are revealed. Diagrams #5 and #6 demonstrate the data for the response “very close.”

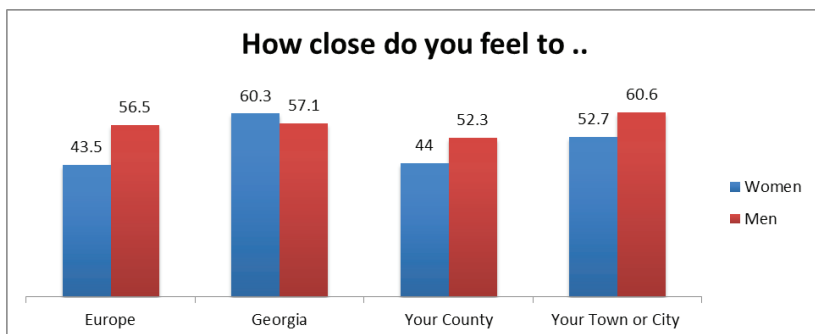


Diagram #5: Closness with the Community by gender

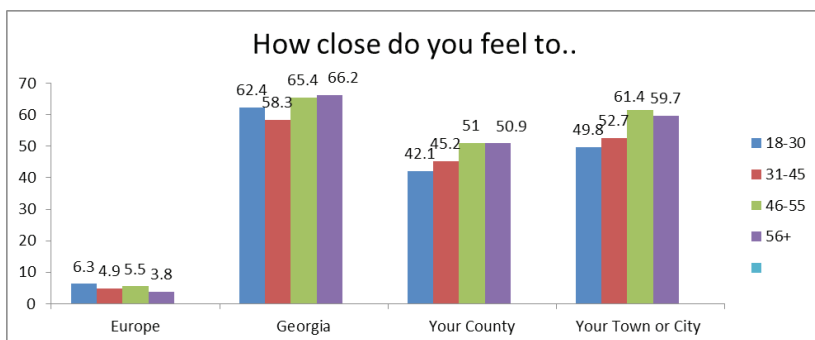


Diagram #6: Closeness with the Community by age

Based on the factor analysis, the defining indicators of closeness with the community have been divided into two factors: the first could be referred as “the closeness with national community (homeland)”, which incorporates an individual’s attachment to their hometown, region and to Georgia. The second factor has been called “closeness with European community”, and it includes the item of closeness to Europe. It is possible to conclude that the closeness with the national community is distinct from that of Europe, and closeness with Europe is weakly expressed. The comparison of means, reinforce this conclusion (see table #4).

How close are you to...?	Factor		1-very close; 5- I am not at all close
	1	2	
Your hometown	.860	.043	1.58
Your region	.825	-.048	1.78
Georgia	.759	.181	1.46
Europe	.061	.990	3.21

Table #4 Closeness with the Community

Factor **“closeness with the national communities”** is dependent on gender ($p=.000$) and age ($p=.000$). When compared to other age groups and women, older generation representatives and men feel the closest to the national community.

Factor **“closeness with European community”** is not dependent on gender ($p=.417$), however it does depend on age ($p=.000$), education level ($p=.000$) and employment type ($p=.000$).

The comparison the means (student t-test) has revealed that closeness to Europe is most common among respondents aged 18-24 (0.400) and 25-34 (0.16). It is least common among the respondents aged 55+ (-0.14). As for the respondents aged 35-54 no such tendencies are revealed.

One should also pay close attention to the impact of the level of education when considering the respondents' feeling of closeness with Europe. The data analysis reveals that people with a secondary or lower education (-.11) feel less close to Europe than those with a higher education (0.45). One may then conclude that feeling close to Europe intensifies with an increasing level of education.

Out of 15 factors within the regressive analysis (table #4), five of these factors have an essential effect upon the result variable. In addition their effect is almost equally significant. The factor of “damage” (that includes two items “Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia” and “International organizations are taking away too much power from the Georgian Government”) is represented by 13.7%. The effect of the remaining four factors is similar: The factor of “solidarity” (including items “to try to understand the reasoning of people with other opinions”, “ to choose products for political, ethical or

environmental reasons, even if they cost a bit more”, “ to help people in Georgia who are worse off than yourself” and “ to help people in the rest of the world who are worse off than yourself”) - 10.7%; the factor of “being informed on politics and Governmental issues” (including items “ I feel I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Georgia” and “ I think most people in Georgia are better informed about politics and government than I am.”) - 10.5%; the factor of “the attitude of the Government towards the population” (consists of the following items : “ People like me don’t have any say about what the government does and I don’t think the government cares much what people like me think ”) - 10,7%; the factor of the “critical attitude towards one’s country” (including items “There are some things about Georgia today that make me feel ashamed of Georgia“, „I am often less proud of Georgia than I would like to be“ and “The world would be a better place if Georgians acknowledged Georgia’s shortcomings.”) – 10.6%.

It should be noted that the most loaded of these, “the damage” factor, has a negative effect on the result variable. The following factors also have a negative impact upon the result variable: “being informed about politics and the Government” and “the attitude of the Government towards the population of the country” (See Standardized Coefficients, Beta).

Two of the significant factors have a positive effect on the result variable: the “solidarity” factor and the “critical attitude towards one’s country” factor.

Coefficients ^a				Share in explaining dispersion
Model		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	
		Beta		
	(Constant)		1.000	
	“Membership of political and non-political groups and associations”	-.071	.005	5,3%
	“Damage Factor”	-.114	.000	13,7%
	“Solidarity Factor”	.101	.000	10,7%
	“Being informed about Politics and the Government” (Inversed)	-.099	.000	10,5%
	“The attitude of the Government towards the population of the country” (Inversed)	-.101	.000	10,7%
	“Critical attitude towards one’s country”	.100	.000	10,6%
	“Benefit Factor” (Inversed)	.071	.006	5,3%
	“Advantages of one’s Country” (Inversed)	-.063	.013	4,2%
	“Being proud of Cultural Systems” (Inversed)	.064	.011	4,3%
	“Attitudes towards legal emigrants” (inversed)	-.069	.007	5.0%
	“Attitudes towards legal immigrants” (inversed)	.058	.020	3.5%
	“Attitudes towards concrete minority groups”	-.062	.012	4.1%
	“Ethno-cultural national identity factor” (inversed)	.069	.009	5.0%
	“Restrictions factor” (inversed)	-.062	.026	4.1%
	“Right to express one’s protest”	-.052	.040	2.9%
a. Dependent Variable: “Europe factor” (inversed)				100.0%

Table # 6

Main Findings:

- The majority of respondents feel the closest to Georgia (their home country), then to their hometown and region. The participants feel the least close to their forth option of Europe.
- When compared to other age groups and to women, elderly people and men feel the closest to their national community (Georgia, one's hometown and their village).
- Feeling of closeness to Europe was mainly revealed among young respondents (18-34). Among the older respondents (35-54) no such tendency has been observed.
- In general, mostly people with higher education, employed respondents and students feel close to Europe.
- The degree of one's being informed about politics contributes to one's willingness to be close to Europe. The less informed the interviewed groups were, the less closer they feel from Europe.

A critical attitude of the population towards international political organizations and transnational economic companies contributes to the feeling of less affiliation with Europe.

- The greater the sense of solidarity observed in the population, the more they feel affiliated with Europe.
- The more critical the Georgian population is towards its country, the closer they feel to Europe.

Qualitative Data:

In scope of the present research the focus group participants were asked where the Georgians feel the closest with and why. The question was divided into two parts: firstly respondents were asked to assess the situation from the position of an observer and say which one the Georgians feel the closest from the following options: Europe, Russia and Caucasus; later they were asked to tell about personal experience and define which one of these options they feel the closest themselves personally.

Europe:

According to respondents, aged 18-30, representatives of their

generation feel attachment to Europe and to the Western world in general. Those respondents who believe that Georgia is closer to Europe consider the similarity of values to be the major determinant of their attachment. They suggest Georgians share the modern European way of thinking; their craving for the Western world is determined by their longing for freedom. Shared values such as freedom and tolerance are named as the reason for their self-identification with Europe.

“Unlike the Russian, the Georgian way of thinking is European, based on humanity and tolerance” (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

Participants in age group of 31-45 describe Europe as completely acceptable. However, according to them, their attitudes towards Europe are largely determined by the physical distance between Georgia and Europe - they feel less close to Europe and do not share European values as much. Some of these respondents do not exclude the possibility that Georgia and Europe may become closer, whereas others suggest the new generation is already feeling closer to Europe. However, according to the participants youth's affiliation with Europe is not based on a value system, rather it is determined by pragmatic and practical factors. It was articulated that Europe is interesting for the new generation, as they often turn to Europe to receive an education.

“Europe is profitable for 16-17 year old teenagers, the new generation. They learn the English language and are craving for the latter” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

Respondents aged 46-55 put forth the issue of USA. While discussing Europe, half of the respondents added the USA to the suggested options. To some participants the USA, from a cultural standpoint, is regarded as a threat, whereas others consider it to be the country that can provide the most assistance to Georgia.

“I would like to ask the American people not to deprive us of Georgianness, leave it to us and just add our country as one of the states. Countries that are successful have been developed under the auspices of the US and Europe. We are well aware of what has happened to those countries that have been developed under the patronage of Russian Federation” (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

Similar to the age group of 31-45, the participants aged 46-55 think that Europe is potentially good, but it is too far away, also Europe does not want to anything to do with Georgia. In their view, Georgia has a long way to go before reaching Europe. Clearly, these respondents feel less affiliated with Europe, however, the majority of them perceive it as a source of progress in terms of discovering new technologies and gaining access to quality education. These respondents see the better future of their children in Europe. However, these perspectives are persistently accompanied by the fear of losing one's identity and Georgian culture. According to one of the respondents, she always warns her children not to *"become like Europeans"* (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55). This reflects the anxiety respondents have, connected with their children losing Georgian values and becoming assimilated with *"the other"*.

In the age group of 56+, certain basic tendencies towards Europe have been identified. Some participants suggest Georgians feel close to Europe. Similar values and cultural affinity were mentioned in order to support the latter opinion:

"Europeans are liberals and so we are too, we have always been liberals and will be in the future" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

"We feel closer with Europeans because we know them better, their culture, for instance. We might do not know an Azeri and an Armenian culture that well, as we know European culture, European novels. It is more appealing to us" (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

The respondents also emphasized the role of Europe as a guarantee to security. According to one of the respondents *"friendship with developed, strong countries can bring safety, peace and guarantees for protection"* (the focus group, a male respondent, 56+). The respondents from this age group also think that Europe is more acceptable for the new generation than Russia and the Caucasus. On the other hand, those respondents who do not feel any affiliation with Europe regard it as less familiar for Georgians. According to them, one can learn many good things from Europe, but *"they [Europeans] are getting familiar with Georgia just now. Centuries should pass in order for us to become Europeans"* (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

Russia

In regards to Russia the decisive impact of the August war 2008 was distinguished among participants, aged 18-30. According to this opinion, Georgians felt more affiliated with Russia before war broke out, whereas after the war Georgia grew closer to the West and the European Union. It is evident just how important the territorial integrity is to the Georgian people as since its violation, the affiliation with Russia decreased.

Some respondents think it is all right to like Russian literature and movies. According to these participants diplomacy instead of political identification is the only acceptable form of interaction with Russia.

Certain participants think that religion is a major contributing factor of Georgian affiliation with Russia. *“Religion makes us closer”, “faith makes us close to Russia, personally I consider Russia to be closer to Georgia, my cousins and uncles are in Russia, thus I feel closer to Russians”* (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30).

In the age-group 31-45 attitudes towards Russia vary: some respondents perceive Russia as a conqueror, whereas others believe Georgia is connected to it by history and faith, and there is an emphasis on patronage instead of conquest.

“We are closer to the Orthodox Russia and the Ukraine. These people are closer to our inner principles. Europe is a completely different dimension, Russians and Georgians have similar attitudes and humour. We do not have many things common with Azeri and Armenian people. We are united by the Caucasus but they are not that close to us, thus, I like Russia better. Good qualities can be found in Europeans, but they are different from us in cultural terms” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

Respondents explain Georgians’ feeling of closeness towards Russia by the common historical experience – being together for 70 years under the Soviet Union. Some participants believe this affinity formed centuries before. Many participants noted new generation displays aggression towards Russia which they do not approve: *“my friend’s children have an aggressive attitude towards the Russians. The mother wants her kid to have a good command of the Russian language but he refuses to study the language”* (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45). They fear that misinformation substantiates the negative attitude among the Georgian youth towards Russia. One of the respondents relates it with the rude behavior of the Georgians in Russia:

"I visit Russia frequently, I am a wrestler and have a wide circle of friends, acquaintances, they do not have the right information, and they call us "Zver" [beast]. They did not even know that we are the Orthodox Christians too. The similar attitude is found in Georgia, we think that the Russians are aggressive and they do not like Georgians" (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

Discussions among the respondents, aged 46-55, reveal ambivalent attitudes, which incorporate the idea of "two Russias". The first "Soviet Russia" is considered as a friend in the Georgian past, whereas the second, "modern Russia", is an invader. Although these respondents acknowledge that Russia has occupied Georgian territory, and remains a threat to the country, they think it is unreasonable to antagonize the strong empire making much of the world fearful, moreover a neighbouring country of Georgia.

"Europe is good, but it is far away... we should build relationships with closer neighbours, Russia is a permanent neighbour... therefore, we should flatter it a bit, relate to it in a diplomatic way" (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

The economic factor was also discussed when explaining Georgian affinity with Russia. *"Russia is a wealthy country and has a huge market"* (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

Some respondents aged between 46-55 suggest Georgians do not share common values with Russia - for example, respect towards the elderly or neighbours and institutes of kinship are thought to be less common among Russians. Some participants expressed somewhat critical opinions concerning a common faith. One respondent also questioned the religiosity of Russia:

"We do not have anything in common except for the Orthodox faith and I have never met an Orthodox Russian. They have saints and ecclesiastic figures but the faith and church life are not wide-spread there." (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

The respondents aged 56+ likewise displayed ambivalent attitudes towards Russia:

"One thing is to talk about a nation and another thing is to talk about the government. We, as a nation, have close relationships with Russia. We have been living together for centuries and we have lot in common.

(...) I have nothing against Russian people. Governments come and go - the people stay" (the focus group, a female participant, 56+)

Older respondents also criticize "current" Russia. One participant suggests he would happily have a good neighbourhood with "civilized Russia", however according to him "civilized Russia" does not yet exist.

The majority of respondents within the older generations have positive feelings towards Russia. They remind communist times in a positive manner, recollecting mixed marriages and Georgian-Russian families, however, despite these warm feelings, current Russian behavior is viewed as unacceptable.

"I had a Russian grandmother but she would go crazy if she were alive and saw what happened. She had patriotic feelings towards Georgia, she had three children and all of them went to Georgian schools" (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

Caucasus:

The majority of respondents, aged 18-30, see only a geographical connection to the Caucasus but not similarity in way of thinking. The participants of the focus group think that despite the many differences one can also find similarities with other Caucasians; nevertheless, this does not mean that these peoples share common values. Identification is substantiated by similar traditions and attitudes. The respondents suggest identification with other Caucasians is strategically beneficial for the state. Additional political factors were also mentioned such as for instance, Armenians and Georgians being further separated by political orientation, since Armenia remains pro-Russian. According to the participants, the Azeri people are closer to Georgians in this respect. One of the respondents thinks that Armenians tend to misappropriate Georgian cultural accomplishments and hence why Georgians have a negative attitude towards their nation.

Typically, respondents, aged 31-45, think that Georgians have extensive experience of co-existing together with Caucasians, and thus Georgians have more commonalities with them in terms of values.

"We are neither Europeans, nor Asians, we are somewhere in the middle. We also have our inner culture and most probably are Caucasians. It is not because of the resemblance either with Armenians or the Azeri people; we have a mixture of European and

Asian cultures. Moreover, we also have our unique own culture.” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

While talking about the Caucasus, respondents aged 46-55 tend to distinguish among various Caucasian nations. Some participants named North Caucasians as closer to Georgians, especially the ancient, aborigine ones: the Chechens and the Ingush. The group further listed various factors that they believe determines Georgian affiliation with Caucasians:

- Common geographic location.
- Experience of past relationships with Caucasians.
- Common values: respect for the elderly, for neighbors and institutes of kinship.

According to one of the respondents Georgia was once considered as the center of the Caucasus but it no longer retains this function - the country is now facing challenges with its relationships within the Caucasus, and will most likely continue to experience these challenges in the future.

The respondents have also expressed the belief that a strong Georgia is a pre-requisite for a strong Caucasus. According to them if Georgia becomes attractive, the problems with Abkhazia, Tskhinvali and Northern Caucasus will subsequently be resolved.

Among the respondents, aged 56+ two major opinions were distinguished: most participants suggest geographic and cultural affinities are the crucial characteristics for the closeness of Georgians to Caucasians. *“No matter what they call us: the Europeans or the Russians, we are still Caucasians by blood”* (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

“These people are of other nationalities but we are still family members, we are close to one another by traditions, we are close to these people... I lived in Yerevan and those people are like Georgians in terms of their traditions, hospitality”. the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

On the other hand other respondents think in fact there is no closeness with Caucasians. One of the respondent even made an ironic remark about the close ties between Georgians and other Caucasians, saying this *“explains is why we “love” the Armenians and the Azeri people so much”* (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

Recipients personal perceptions of affinity:

The participants were asked whether they personally felt closer with Europe, Russia, or the Caucasus.

The majority of 18-30 year old respondents connect themselves with the West and Western values. However, it was also mentioned that Georgians identify themselves with various actors based on different characteristics. In this terms Russia is perceived as “more familiar”. Finally, some respondents state that they do not self-identify with anywhere else, and only consider themselves to be Georgian.

In answer to the question, participants aged 31-45 typically name Russia and the Caucasus. However, it was also mentioned that various countries only take an interest in Georgia because of military bases while Georgians feel uncertain and trust whoever lends a helping hand. The argument for feeling closeness to Russia is due its familiarity and long existent relationships in the past. A common faith is also one of the most common arguments. While talking about affinity with Russia one of the respondents stresses the Russian patronage and the common shared faith:

“Surely I feel closest with Russia because I know the language very well, my children, unlike others speak Russian (...) we have a common faith. We have been coming together for a long time. No matter whether it is our will or not, we are still under its patronage, as a small nation which is being hunted due to its geographic location” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

To one of the participants, internally displaced from Abkhazia, Russia is certainly more of an enemy than a friend or neighbor (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45). In this case, the issue of territorial integrity gains importance. On the other hand, words such as a “predecessor” and a “neighbor” are used when referring Caucasus. However, it should be noted that only those respondents who prefer Georgia’s “neutrality” (i.e. prefer neither Russia, nor Europe) consider themselves closer with the Caucasus. By indicating “the Caucasus” as an answer, they dissociate themselves from the other two options and stay within a local dimension, accepting neither Europe nor Russia. *“I am an “Aziat” and will remain an “Aziat”, a Caucasian.”* (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

The majority of 46-55 year-old respondents feel closer to Russians and Caucasians than to Europe. This can be explained by a mutual history and

long-term national relationships. Whereas, the respondents who chose Europe, note that this is the choice made by younger generation. One respondent considered himself closer to America, as a strong country whose patronage he would welcome. Other respondent thinks that Georgia should build and retain relationships with everyone, although there remains scepticism towards both Europe and Russia.

Typically the older respondents aged 56+ self-identify with the Caucasus. They substantiate their preference with commonalities in mentality and traditions. The preference of Georgians who experienced Soviet times are described by one participant's partially humorous answer, *"I feel the closest to the Caucasians and to Russian women"* (the focus group, a male participant, 56+). Relatively few respondents from this age group choose Europe. Their choice is based upon the cultural similarities and the guaranteed security.

As a summary it should be noted that in the determining participants' motivations when answering the question of which country or political space respondents felt closer to, the factor of age plays a vital role. Respondents of age groups agree that the youth prefers Europe. However, opinions differ among various age groups when considering which factors make the youth feel closer to Europe. The younger respondents believe that the foremost cause for this preference is shared values. Whereas, respondents of other age groups (31-45, 46-55 and 56+) think that the younger generations preference is predicated more on pragmatic reasons than on similarities in values. According to them, Europe is appealing for the young generation as they rush to Europe to pursue their studies there.

According to the youth, the old generation, the *"generation of grandpas"*, those born and brought up in the Soviet Union, have stronger feelings towards Russia. They suggest this is due to nostalgia of the past, being emotionally attached to Russia and to a common faith. As for their own preference, the majority of 18-30 year old respondents have the similar feelings towards Europe.

The role of 31-45 year old respondents is crucial when it comes to categorization by age. The majority of participants discusses issues by using extreme poles, where one pole is represented by the youth and the other pole the older generation, who are generally referred to as the *"grandparents' generation"*. Respondents aged 31-45 are somehow missing within this discussion - they find it easier to describe and characterize both the old and young generation, more so than their own viewpoints. This

may be explained due to their being a transitional generation, one that has survived the most difficult times and one focused on self-survival. The majority of this group were students in the 1990s, the period associated with a demolished Georgian state system, a high crime rate and extreme poverty.

Unlike the younger (age 18-30) respondents, for those aged 31-45 and 46-55 Europe is not as attractive. When they discuss their preferences, it is clear that Europe is beyond their scope. They describe Europe as a “distant” place that does not need Georgia. According to them Georgians are closer to Russians and Caucasians, explained by the shared history and long-held relationship with Russia and other Caucasian countries. When referring to Russia, additional reasons were also highlighted, like economic interests and a common faith.

Participants aged 46-55 had the most extensive discussions regarding Russia. One part of respondents talks about Russia with nostalgia whereas another part considers Russia to be the enemy. Respondents, who are more moderate in this sense, typically have an ambivalent attitude towards Russia - they feel closer to it but are still unable to forgive the occupation of Georgian territories. They still regard Russia as an invader, although they also view them as Georgia’s strongest and richest neighbor offering a huge economic market. Hence, they consider it is better to exercise “flattering diplomacy” towards them.

Within the age category of 56+, the majority of participants view Georgians as closest with Caucasians. As reasons they name: kinship, similar mentality and shared traditions. However, some respondents consider Europe to be closer. In this age group Russia is viewed as once familiar but currently unacceptable country. It is interesting to note that the opinion of the young respondents regarding similarities with European values and cultural affinity with Europe has been repeated only in 56+ age group. Together with shared values and culture, older respondents also use the “choice of younger generation” argument as an explanation. Some of them visited European countries, with the help of their children, and were subsequently impressed by Western culture and the European way of life.

The findings have demonstrated that the various age groups of participants make choices based on their personal connections. Older respondents tend to choose either Russia or the Caucasus because of their friendly relationships and kinship with people living in Russia. At times, they

were disoriented during the discussions – on one hand, they realize that they are not close to Europe, on the other hand Russia occupying Georgian territories somewhat does not allow them the right to feel affinity towards it. As anticipated, the youngest group have the closest links to Europe since they are the most socialized at an international level (Nanz, 2010).).

Main Findings:

Europe:

- According to the participants, craving the Western world is determined by Georgians' desire to be free.
 - The reasons for self-identifying with Europe are common values like freedom and tolerance.
 - Respondents who feel less affinity with Europe mention Georgia's geographic location and great distance as reasons for it.
 - Closeness to Europe is important for participants because of pragmatic reasons. According to these respondents, the new generation is the most interested in Europe, since they tend to go there to pursue their studies. Moreover, the role of Europe as a guarantee for security was also mentioned. Europe has also been viewed as a threat to Georgia.
 - Values that come from the Western world arouse fear in some respondents. They are afraid of losing national characteristics, values and culture; however, the opposite opinion was also identified, as Georgians are close to Europeans because of their cultural similarities and mutual values.
-
- **Russia:**
 - Opinions towards Russia are varied. Some regard Russia as an invader, whereas others believe that the shared history and the Orthodox faith strengthen the links between Georgia and Russia.
 - Respondents think that the territorial integrity of Georgia is the most important issue for Georgians. The majority of participants consider Russia to be an invader, and note that the recent events has negatively affected their attitudes towards Russia.

- Diplomatic-economic relations, rather than the political identification with an invader, are an acceptable form of relationship with Russia.
- When explaining closeness to Russia, many respondents referred back to the 1970s, when Georgians and Russians used to live together, while others think positive attitudes towards Russia have been forming for centuries.
- **The Caucasus:**
 - The following factors are named regarding Georgia's close ties with the Caucasus: blood kinship, common geographic location with a similar latitude and climate, century old experience of relationship with other Caucasians and shared values (e.g. respect for old people, neighbours, and the institute of kinship).

3.1.2 National Pride and National Shame

National identity is often viewed in the context of national pride and shame (Westle, 1999). It is considered, that people experience pride in case if there is definite identification for the nation that is connected with the existence of dimensions of national pride. Such dimensions mainly include politics, economics, culture, and social spheres that are important to both the individual and the collective unit, such as, pride for success in sporting events, democratic ideals or achievements (Cohrs et al., 2004).

Georgian experts interviewed in the scope of our research, believe the idea/concept of Georgian national pride is not yet developed. They consider Georgian historical memory as not fully "organized." Respectively, societal attitudes towards important ongoing events are rather mixed than homogenous.

According to experts, Georgians consider shame as something that does not coincide with their national values or cultural norms. The type of person a "real Georgian" develops during the socialization process. Experts think the development of such cultural norms originates in schools, families, reading books, history, etc. Certain cultural norms identified were created because "Georgians have always been the victims of bigger states," and "Georgians have always defended their identity through the church."

The following quantitative and qualitative data from a research survey reveals the characteristics of feelings of national pride and shame in Georgian society.

Quantitative Data

Data from a survey entitled “National Identity”, held by Center for Social sciences reveals rates of national pride and shame according to the levels of support of the Georgian population towards their country- measured on the scale from 1, fully agree, to 5, do not agree at all. The results show that 83,1% of the participants prefer Georgian nationality to another countries’ citizenship. There is no perceived difference in attitude towards Georgia’s deficiencies of state: for 41,8% of interviewees in contemporary Georgia, there are certain aspects of citizenship they are ashamed of, while 41,1% think the opposite. 52,9% of interviewees, unlike the inverse 33,9%, do not agree that people should support the country, even if it is on the wrong course. For 92,7% of respondents the key reason for national pride is success in international sports events.

Diagram #7 presents the frequency of collaborated positive responses, those that fully agree and that agree, according to their percentage:

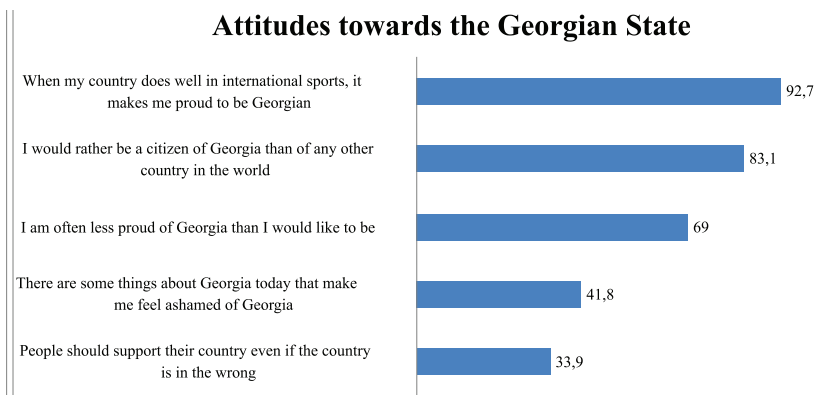


Diagram #7: Attitudes towards the Georgian national state

According to the survey data, there are no definite cases of ethnocentrism. For 37,8 % of the survey participants, the world would be a better place if other nations were like Georgia, however the percentage of respondents who do not agree with this idea is nearly the same (35,1%).

Trends According to Gender and Age:

The majority, from each age group, “fully agrees” or “agrees” with the statement “I prefer Georgian citizenship to any other country’s citizenship.” Accordingly, there is no difference amongst the groups. While the question, “are there any points in Georgian reality that make me ashamed of Georgia?” merited a positive response from 52% of 18-30 year-old respondents. In the 31-45 age group, the answers were polarized, as 42,9% agree, while 42% disagree with the statement. Among the respondents aged 45-55, the trend changes, and the majority with 61% disagree. The group aged 56+ are also polarized, with 45% agreeing there are certain points of shame, while 43.5% disagree with the question.

The majority of participants aged 18-30 and 31-45, do not agree that the world would be a better place if other nations were like Georgia. Although, the situation changes in the groups aged 46-55 and 56+, where the majority agree with the statement. Despite the age groups, typically the participants believe Georgia is a better country than other countries. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents, despite their age, think that if the country is headed in the wrong direction, it should not be supported. There is a consensus among all ages that “they are not as proud of Georgia as they would like to be.” A vast majority of all respondents are very proud when Georgia succeeds in international sporting events. Finally, the participants are extremely proud that they are the citizens of Georgia, with responses varying across the age groups from 72,5% to 77%.

Altogether, one may discern that pride towards the Georgian national state is similar in different groups, despite their age. They are, however, not as proud as they would like to be. A common uniting factor found in all groups, and in both genders, is pride from success in international sporting events.

According to the exploratory factor analysis, the items that determine the attitudes towards the Georgian national state can be grouped into three factors (see table #5). The first factor is **“superiority of one’s own country.”** This factor includes the following variables: The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the Georgians,” Generally speaking, Georgia is a better country than most other countries and “people should support their country even if the country is in the wrong. It should be noted that the last item received the smallest factor loading.

The factor, “superiority of one’s own country”, is not related to gender ($p=.727$), and is only slightly related to age ($p=.019$), but is very much

influenced by the participant's level of education ($p=.000$) and their occupation ($p=.000$). A comparison between the age groups shows that Georgia's superiority is mostly recognized by the older ages, 56+ (0.11; 0.19). This trend is not found in middle-aged respondents (25-54), while the attitude of younger respondents (18-24) towards their country is negative (-0.56). Higher level of education reduces the sense of their country's superiority. Whereas, typically participants with mid and lower levels of education acknowledge superiority of their own country (0.30; 0.20; 0.15; 0.04). The attitude of those with a higher level of education towards this statement is negative (-0.20; -0.49; -0.30). Negative attitudes towards the country's superiority is revealed in groups of people who are employed, in the military, in students, school pupils, interns, and in social workers.

The second factor is a **"critical attitude towards one's own country."** This includes items of feeling shameful because of Georgia, having no reason for pride in the homeland and the failing to acknowledge Georgia's deficiencies.

The next factor, a **"critical attitude towards one's own country"**, is not related to gender ($p=.589$) and age ($p=.076$). Although, it is related to the level of education level ($p=.03$) and occupation ($p=.01$) of the participants. Having a critical attitude towards Georgia is notably expressed in those, who have higher level of education (0.07; 0.13; 0.28).

The third factor, **"taking pride in one's own country"**, includes two items: the preference of "Georgian citizenship to the citizenship of any other country" and the pride of succeeding in international sporting events. It should be noted, the highest means belong to these variables. Thus, one can state that taking pride in one's own country and the superiority of one's country are the most important characteristics of national identity to modern Georgians.

The third factor, **"taking pride in one's own country"**, is not related to gender ($p=.120$), though, it is affected by age ($p=.000$) and the type of occupation ($p=.000$). Taking pride in one's own country is characterized more by older respondents, 56+ ($r=.0.17$), but less so in those aged 18-24 (-0.32) and 35-44 (-0.13). However, the trend is not revealed in other age groups.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

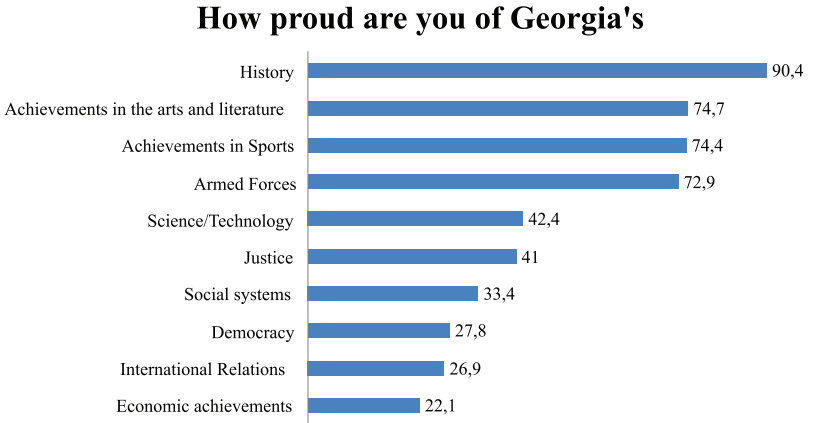
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Factor			Means: 1- Agree strongly; 5-Disagree strongly
	1	2	3	
I would rather be a citizen of Georgia than any other country in the world.	.225	-.064	.699	1.62
There are some things about modern Georgia that make me feel ashamed.	-.141	.650	-.159	3.06
The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Georgians.	.679	-.063	.225	2.87
Generally speaking, Georgia is a better country than most other countries.	.675	-.149	.348	2.22
People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong.	.734	.042	-.160	3.22
When my country does well in international sports, it makes me proud to be Georgian.	-.019	.094	.786	1.25
I am often less proud of Georgia than I would like to be.	-.182	.704	.107	2.21
The world would be a better place if Georgians acknowledged Georgia's shortcomings.	.205	.647	.066	2.39

Table #5: Attitudes towards the Georgian national state (factors)

In the 2013 ISSP survey on “National Identity” the respondents had to evaluate on a scale, from 1 (very proud) to 4 (not at all proud), how much pride they take in Georgia. In order to define this, the participants were asked questions regarding Georgia’s political influence in the world, its economic achievements, its system for social safety, its military forces, its scientific-technological and sporting achievements, Georgia’s achievements in the arts and literature, Georgian history, its attitude towards the existing groups within society, and they were also asked how democracy works in Georgia.

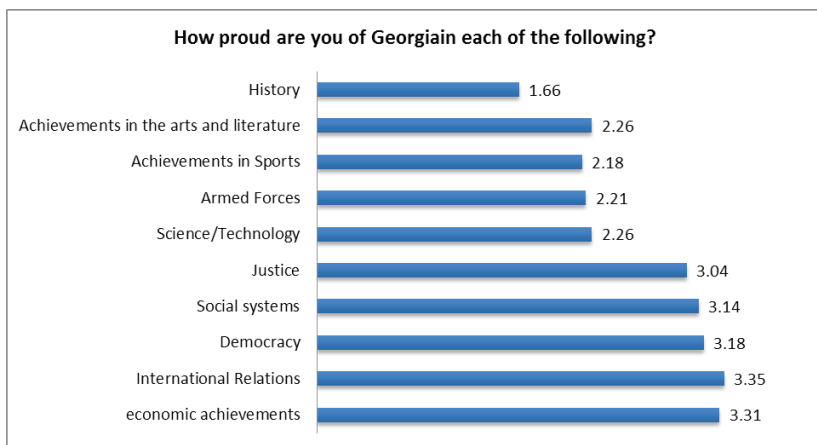
The vast majority of respondents (90,4%) are proud of Georgian history. The second and third most frequently mentioned topics were successes in the arts and culture (74,7%) and in sport (74,4%). While, the Georgian population is less proud of their economic achievements (71,9%). Furthermore, 65,8% of the participants state that they are not proud of the democratic system in Georgia. The number of the respondents who are satisfied by democratic processes in Georgia is less than half of that, at 27,8%. When assessing democracy, it is also interesting to know how the attitudes towards different social groups are equal, with 41% of the respondents suggesting the situation deserves respect, while 49,4% disagree.

The data shows that pride in the Georgian army is high (72,9%). Where, the least acknowledgment was given to the spheres of the economy (22,1%) and social security (33,4%). Moreover, only 26,9% of participants take pride in Georgia's political influence in the world. The following diagram #8, shows the various spheres of Georgian pride.



Diagram#8: Spheres of Georgian pride (%)

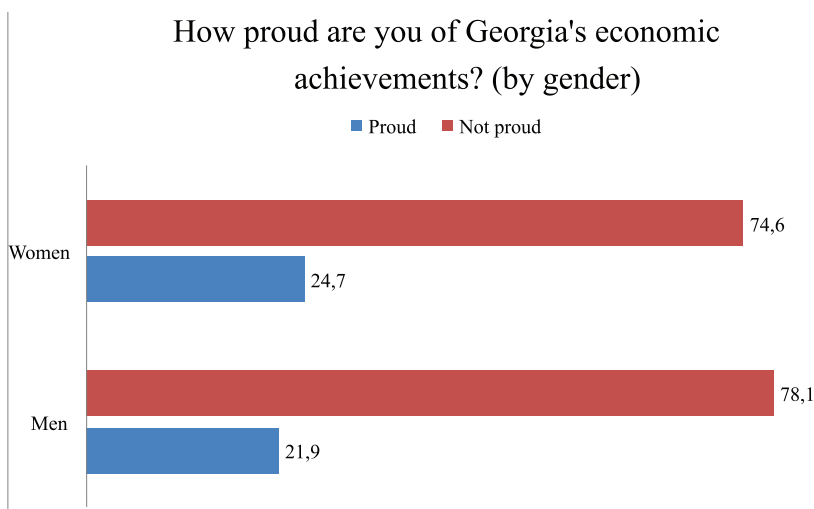
Diagram #9 shows the frequency of answers according to the mean data:

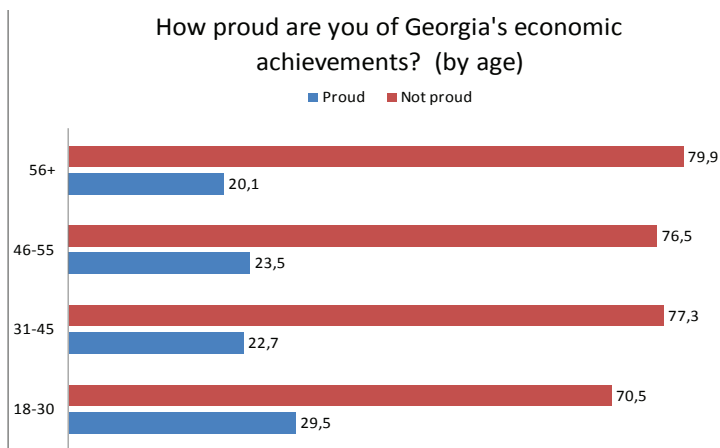


**Diagram#9: Spheres of Georgian pride (mean data of corresponding values:
1-very proud; 2-proud enough; 3-not that proud; 4-not at all proud)**

Diagram #9 reveals that the highest points of pride, feeling very proud or proud enough, are achieved by national history, national sport, security system and national culture. The lowest points, feeling not that proud or not at all proud, are found in democracy, national economics and international relations.

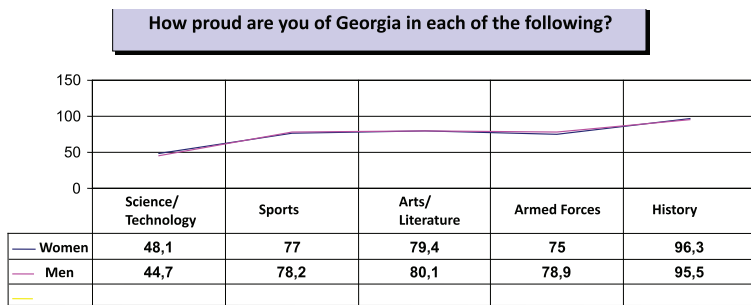
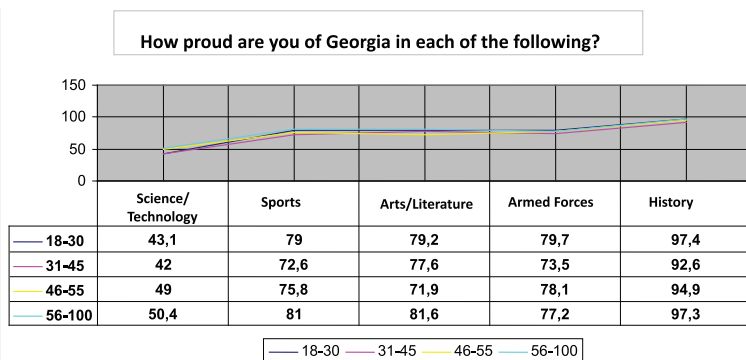
The response of the participants, the same despite gender or age, suggests that Georgian population does not typically take pride in its economic achievements.





Diagrams#10 and #11: Spheres of Georgian pride according to gender and age (%)

Attitudes towards Georgian history, science and technology, army, art, literature and sports remain the same despite the gender and age of the participants.



Diagrams #12 and #13: Spheres of Georgian pride according to gender and age (%)

The data reveals that pride for the Georgian social-political system is slight ,relative to the spheres of history, army, culture and sports. There is no difference according to gender or age.

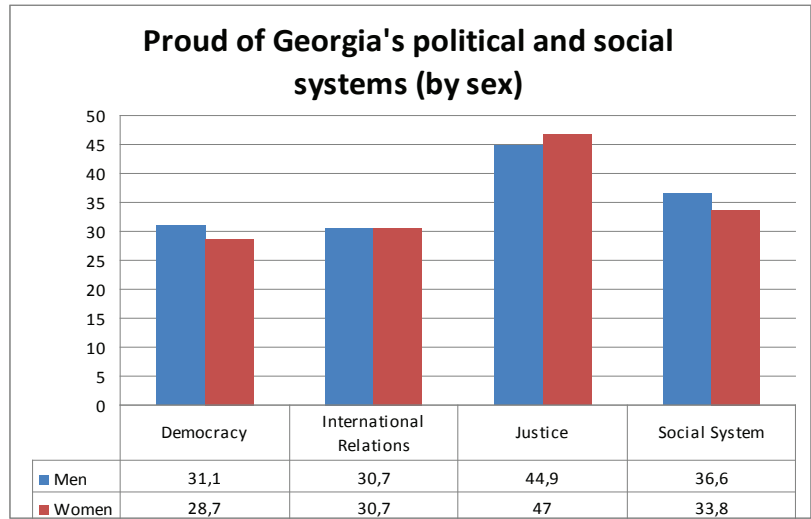
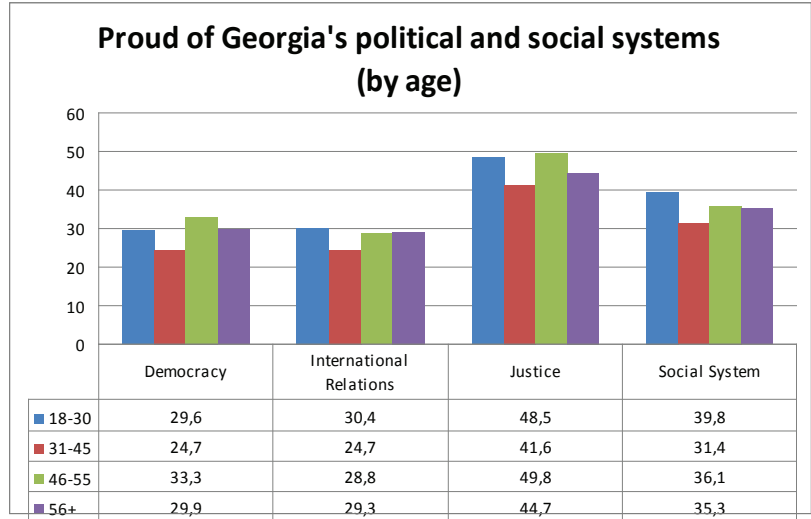


Diagram #14 and #15: Spheres of Georgian pride according to age and gender (%)

According to the exploratory factor analysis, spheres of Georgian pride were divided into three factors, see table#6:

Rotated Component Matrix^a

How proud are you of Georgia in each of the following?	Factor			Means
	1	2	3	1- Very proud 4- Not at allproud
The way democracy works	.689	.055	.058	2.84
Its political influence in the world	.720	.095	.149	2.93
Its economic achievements	.777	.162	-.022	3.01
Its social security system	.691	.185	.010	2.79
Its scientific and technological achievements	.479	.608	-.037	2.57
Its achievements in sports	.142	.828	.142	1.92
Its achievements in the arts and literature	.023	.833	.245	1.87
Its armed forces	.380	.235	.488	1.87
Its history	-.090	.160	.858	1.28
Its fair and equal treatment of all groups in society	.521	.037	.423	2.54

Table #6: Spheres of Georgian pride

In the first factor “the pride of social-political spheres” following items were united: processes connected with democracy, the development of the economy, social security system and equality. On the basis (student t-test) of comparison of the means between the age groups, gender, level of education and occupation, no trends were found. Thus, one can say there are no differences between the groups.

The second factor can be labeled “**cultural pride**”. It includes a satisfaction from scientific-technological, art, literature and sports spheres, where scientific-technological has the least data. From demographic data the most important from these factors is age ($p=.014$) and occupation ($p=.001$), although the trends are only slightly visible. Cultural pride is revealed to

a small degree in the participants who have never had a paid job (-0.16). Whereas, such pride is strong in people with well-paid jobs (0.10).

“Historical pride” stood out separately as the third factor with only one item, being proud of Georgian history. According to the demographic data, the difference between the means among the groups is statistically insignificant, which indicates that being proud of Georgian history is equally important to all groups. One can therefore state that Georgians are united by pride in their history.

It is interesting to note, that being proud of army did not combine in any of the factors, nor did it merit a separate factor. Conceivably, this suggests that the Georgian population has not yet developed a strong attitude towards their military.

Major findings:

- Gender differences towards one’s country’s superiority, where neither being critical towards nor proud of one’s own country was revealed.
- The majority of the Georgian population prefers Georgian citizenship to any other countries.
- The majority of respondents do not take as much pride in Georgia as they would like to.
- Most of the participants do not agree with the idea that people have to support their country, even if it is headed the wrong direction.
- The majority of the Georgian population takes pride in Georgia’s successes in international sporting events.
- Typically, older respondents acknowledge the superiority of their own country. For middle-aged respondents the trend does not exist, while younger participants rarely see any superiority.
- Increasing levels of education reduce feelings of the own country’s superiority
- People with a higher education often depict critical attitudes towards Georgia.
- Pride of their country is shown by elderly respondents, mostly by the retired and less so by students.

- The majority of participants take the most pride from Georgian history, cultural achievements and sports.
- The Georgian population is less proud of its country's economic achievements and its system of social defense.
- Most of the respondents suggest they are not proud of how democracy in Georgia.
- Only one third of the respondents are proud of Georgia's political influence in the world.
- The data demonstrates pride in the Georgian army is high.
- Pride in the economic system is low in all groups, according to age and to gender.
- There are no differences in attitude, for either age or gender, towards history, defense, culture and sports.
- The data for Georgians pride in social-political system is relatively low compared to the data for cultural pride. There are no age or gender variances.

Quantitative Data

During the study several focus groups were conducted with Georgian populace. Participants were asked to name the events where they felt extreme pride or shame at being Georgian. The general picture suggests for those aged 18-30 civil nationalism is much more observable. Even though for all the other groups, the picture is homogenous, the detailed analyses still demonstrates certain differences among the 31-45, 46-55 and 56+ age groups. While, no differences according to gender, occupation or place of habitation were revealed. The focus group highlighted the following events.

Events that Cause Pride:

“National Awakening”

Young people (18-30) find pride in events that caused the “National Awakening”. These events contribute to feelings of national unity, striving for national self-awareness and distinctiveness, and motivation to defend territorial integrity. The following dates were identified: April 9th, 1989; the Rose Revolution in 2003; the August war of 2008 (Russia's great military

aggression towards Georgia), causing the unity of society against Russian occupation; and the social actions in 2012 against the torture of prisoners. Despite the painful emotions connected to these events, the respondents were proud that people could unite under one idea, and fight for national freedom. One respondent recalls the tragedy of April 9th:

“It is very hard, a lot of people died there, but in the difficult moment there was unity, that gives us a great feeling of pride” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30).

In the age groups of 31-45 and 46-54, no such occasions were identified when considering their pride. While, those aged 56+ are proud of events that caused the “National Awakening,” April 9th, 1989, and in the subsequent days, despite the disorder, no criminal cases occurred; April 9th, 1991, the restoration of national independence; and the demonstration in 1978, which demanded the protection of the Georgian language. These events contributed to the protection of national self-awareness and the positive results achieved. The respondents take pride in uniting under one aim, and the successes of this unity. Their pride is stronger as they were participants in some of these historic events.

“Georgianhood” (being Georgian)

Those aged 18-30 stressed features of “Georgianhood” as a form of inter-social integration. One of the respondents felt pride at watching Georgians show sincere hospitality towards an Italian guest. In his opinion, the Italian was delighted not by the cultural heritage but by the hospitality that he received while in Georgia (male, 22years old).

In the other age groups, national superiority was characterized to ethno cultural nationalism and the dominant belief is much stronger (Adorno et al., 1950; de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Schatz and Staub, 1997). For some respondents, aged 31-45, their ethnicity causes feelings of pride and of being unique. From their discussions, one can find examples of the special Georgian wit, shrewdness and heroic character:

“Wherever a Georgian is, he will always find a way back. In whatever need they are, Georgians always behave differently” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45 years old).

“I am proud of being a Georgian, because our calling is being a hero,

we can sacrifice ourselves for a reason without even thinking" (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

One of the respondents, aged 46-55, noted that she is always proud of being Georgian. He characterises himself as a irremediable nationalist and a follower of Jordania. "First Georgian and then everything else" (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55). One can therefore clearly see features illustrating ethno-cultural nationalism in a self concept, for instance, the exaggerated importance to national feelings in the perception of an individual (Adorno et al., 1950). Love of the motherland, among the 56+age group, is considered the essential criteria for Georgianhood. For one respondent, Georgianhood means being a Georgian, loving your parents and the motherland, and being proud of traditions.

In the age group of 56+, feeling of superiority of the nation and being dominant can also be observed. Georgianhood gives the respondents the feeling of being exceptional and superior to others. One of the respondents has warm memories of the time, during the Soviet Union, when wherever he went, as soon as he mentioned he was Georgian, everyone treated him with respect. In his opinion, being a Georgian was a "gold standard". Another participant also mentions that the world was once interested in the shrewdness and extraordinariness of the Georgian people:

"... I think that this is a small incubator, I think the world guessed that there are so many values in this nation... that's why I think... they want this incubator to keep on hatching smart babies, who will serve the world with their wit and mind" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

According to those participants aged 56+, the necessary categories for the realisation of a Georgian male are, simply, reproduction and employment. As one respondent mentions, his greatest moments of pride were when his grandchildren were born and when he had a high paying job. Interestingly, this was also the moment he felt Georgianhood. In his view, the typical image of a Georgian is an employed, self-realized and married person, surrounded by children and grandchildren.

Denomination

Participants aged 31-45 mention the importance of praying in church or attending the patriarch's liturgy. They connect Georgianhood with

orthodoxy, which further offers the respondents feelings of pride: “if you are Georgian and orthodox, you just have to be proud” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45). This respondent sees Georgians as a homogenous group, which simply cannot belong to another denomination. This concurs with the researchers of nationalism who believe the people inclined to ethnical nationalism also define their national group as culturally homogenous and unique (Blank and Schmidt, 2003; Viroli, 1995).

The heroic history of Georgian ancestors was also mentioned in relation to pride:

“I was very proud when I learned that 10,000 martyrs refused to step on the icon and they were beheaded and thrown in the Mtkvari for that”(the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

In this case two features of ethno cultural nationalism, history and religion, are interconnected.

History

The youngest members of the focus group did not mention pride in Georgian history. However, of historic cases of betrayal were described and mentioned in shameful events. While, those aged 31-45 believe Georgians have an extensive history, from a religious, and also a cultural and artistic perspective. One of the respondents stresses history and recollects the wars won by Georgian kings, and he further refers to Stalin as a source of pride and mentions that Stalin, with his Georgian origins, influenced the world.

“I remember Georgian kings, wars won by them and I get the feeling of pride. I am glad that I am Georgian, because I know that this small nation could resist the whole world. During the World War Stalin’s being Georgian was something to be proud of. Churchill, Roosevelt and De Gaulle went mad as they knew that Stalin was Georgian” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

Cultural values

In each groups, one key factors affecting pride is held by cultural values. The youth included Georgian writing and cuisine, alongside art and folklore as part of Georgian cultural heritage, all of which show “the strength of our country”. It is noteworthy that the younger participants (18-30) produce

arguments as to why they are proud of such cultural values. The Georgian alphabet is used as an example, because so few nations have their own writing and foreigners generally agree that the Georgian script appears beautiful. Participants aged 31-45 identify the following significant values: Georgian dance and ballet, Sukhishvili bands, songs, literature, art and painting. Respondents aged 46-55 also named the Sukhishvili concerts in Kiev and Georgian dancers performing in Japan. Furthermore, those aged 56+ mentioned the success of Georgian national music and dance around the world.

Georgians that we are proud of

The focus groups' respondents identified the Georgians who give them pride. Typically they are valued ancestors, alongside significant individuals like the footballer, Davit Kipiani, the philanthropist and opera singer Paata Burchiladze, or the priest Ilia Kartoza, who in 2014 sacrificed his life to save a woman and a child in the Adriatic sea. Also mentioned are the scientific inventions of Georgian children and the notable achievements of Georgians in other countries.

Sporting achievements

A connection between sports and politics was revealed in those aged 18-30 and 46-55. As one youth said, he cried from pride when Tsirekidze won a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30). One respondent (44-56), stated that she felt exceptionally proud in 1981 when Tbilisi "Dinamo" won a European football cup. She remembers the day, where the "world fell to Georgia's feet and the Russians were the on the lowest level," (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

Politics

The respondents aged 46-55, reveal political factors to their pride. One respondent is proud that he was able to take part in the elections of 2012, where people were able to change the government (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55). Being proud of civil activities, like elections, is a form of nationalism.

Shameful Events:

The participants of the focus group were further asked, can you remember any event or situation when you felt exceptional shame for being Georgian? Certain representatives of the older group note that they have never ashamed at being Georgian. One younger respondent added that there have been times that he has disliked certain things, but he would not describe it as shame. The age group of 18-30 were the most critical in answering this question.

To the young participants the Georgian nation's laziness and conformity is shameful. Some respondents relate all other Georgian problems with this "motionless" state. Additionally, being aggressive and irrational were identified as shameful features. It is particularly interesting that these negative features were not mentioned by any other age group.

Issues with sexual minorities

The majority of the respondents aged 18-30 consider the events of May 17th, 2013, as shameful and thus it displays a poor civic attitude towards issues regarding sexual minorities. They believe in the importance of protecting civil rights, and regard May 17th as an expression of intolerance and aggression towards minorities. They suggest the members of the counter-movement, along with the clergy at their head, acted inhumanly. One respondent states that she took part in the demonstration and her life was threatened (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30). Some young participants demonstrated irritation at the behavior of the clergy, since they believe it inappropriate for members of the church to be aggressive and violent.

Respondents aged 31-45 also consider May 17th, 2013, as a shameful event in Georgian history. However, quite unlike the younger respondents, they think it is shameful to hold a homosexual parade. None of these respondents criticized the deeds of the counter-movement or the clergy, nor did they express their discontent at the violation of the rights of minorities. The respondents within this age group believe that sexual minorities holding a parade goes against national values.

The respondents, aged 46-55, also tackled the issue of sexual minorities. They regard it as shameful to be within a sexual minority group. One male respondent thinks that Georgian citizens transitioning from one sex to another should be regarded as shameful (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

The issue of sexual minorities was also addressed by participants aged 56+. One respondent was extremely humiliated and felt shame when he discovered that a homosexual parade had been held in Tbilisi. At that point, he felt like “he was no longer a man, wanted to take a weapon and kill [gay] people” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

The War in August, 2008

Amongst the respondents (18-30), the War in August 2008,⁴ arouses both a sense of pride and of shame. They felt shame due to the lack of the civil solidarity present in certain Georgians, who had an indifferent and even negative attitude towards the internally displaced people from the occupied territories. They also think that the concert held in the center of Tbilisi during the War was inadequate. The youth suggest that during the War, many Georgians displayed a lack of patriotism and civic bravery: “the city was empty, nobody stayed in Tbilisi. If you ask them now they loved their country but none stayed in the city. Some Georgians were in Turkey, some of them went to Azerbaijan” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30). Based on the answers of the younger respondents, it becomes clear that they do not solely place the obligation of bravery, adequacy and solidarity on particular politicians or the government during times of hardship.

Alack of bravery is also regarded as shameful among the respondents aged 46-55. However, they have a different understanding bravery. One of the respondents believes it is a shame that the commander-in-chief, President Mikheil Saakashvili hid during the war. While young respondents also considered the lack of the civic bravery an issue related to Georgian society, a representative of the older generation blames a single political figure. Respondents aged 56+ think it is shameful that, during the War in 2008, “Georgians did not engage in battles even for an hour”. It should also be noted that, unlike the young respondents, none of them mentioned the bravery or self-sacrifice of Georgian citizens during the war.

Disgraceful behavior of ethnic Georgians

The disgraceful behavior of ethnic Georgians is also categorized as shameful. According to the respondents, aged 18-30, such issues as the criminal deeds of Georgians abroad; histories retold by their Abkhaz peers,

4 The vast-scale military attack that Russia carried out against Georgia in August 2008, leading to the occupation of 20% of Georgia's territories.

concerning damages caused by Georgians; or bullying comments regarding Armenian ethnicity made by Georgian teachers. They also mention historic facts of treason. One key characteristics of civic nationalism, viewing people of other ethnicities as equal, is frequently displayed by respondents aged 18-30 and they also tend to express critical attitudes and negative evaluation towards certain historic events.

Respondents aged 31-45 mention Georgian “female sex workers” in Turkey who discredit Georgian women in general, Georgian men who commit crimes abroad, and drug-addiction as a widespread disease. Several respondents noted that they dislike the criminal deeds of Georgians living abroad, although they do nothing extraordinary and it is understood that these shameful characteristics are not unique to Georgians.

Georgians detained for theft abroad are also mentioned by the respondents aged 46-55. One of the respondents states that he was truly ashamed to learn about the behaviors of light-fingered Georgians abroad. He does not generalize, and regards such deeds as a hortfall of the Georgian nation. drug-addiction is considered as a shame by this age group too.

One respondent criticizes the behaviors of Georgians outside the country the most:

“When you are coming to Georgia, if you have to go through Turkey, you feel like you are a normal person till you arrive in Turkey. When you are coming to Georgia and you sit in the Turkish airplane filled with Georgians, you are at home from that point on: noise, drinking Vodka, arguing with the flight attendants, etc.”(the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

Events that disrupt the feeling of unity

For the respondents aged 18-30 events that disrupt the sense of unity are a real shame. For instance, the young participants recalled a gathering that aimed to protest the violence occurring within Georgian prisons, where demonstrators started to humiliate Georgian writers who were also participating in the same gathering. In this case, the issue is the destruction of unifying factors with motives that contribute to the exclusion.

The respondents aged 46-55 consider the absence of solidarity and unity to be an issue. One participant thought it was a shame that back in the 1990s they could not sense the war from Tbilisi, even though full-fledged battles

were underway in Sokhumi. Much like how one is unable to sense the events currently taking place in Ckhinvali (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

The absence of unity is an issue of concern for the respondents aged 56+. They worry about the indifference of people and they are nostalgic for the past when all major occurrences, like killings, would be universally discussed, and everybody would be engaged by these events. These days, they suggest, nobody reacts to anything.

Internal confrontations

The youngest participants referred to their shame at the events of November 7th, 2007, when the police raided anti-governmental protests: “it is disgraceful that a Georgian would go against other Georgians” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30). November 7th is also considered as shameful to the respondents aged 46-55. However, they place the responsibility on a single politician. According to one respondent, “Saakashvili raided the people” (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55). The oldest participants interviewed further perceive November 7th as a massacre of people at a public gathering.

The respondents aged 46-55 are also ashamed of civil war and the division of the Georgian population into separate groups.

Mentality and traditions

Participants (18-30) suggested unruly attitudes should belong within the category of shame. One respondent suggests the number of people with disruptive mentalities has increased due to the amnesty carried out by the government in 2012.

The only comment regarding the authority of the church refers to the festival “KaZantip”. One of the younger respondents notes that this festival does not fit into the Georgian mentality. In order to enhance her point, she points to the negative attitude of the clergy towards the music festival:

“KaZantip was a disgraceful event. It is a pity that the propaganda of this perversion and debauch took place in Anaklia. It should not be held anywhere. Why hold it in Georgia? The clergy was strongly against this festival. It was unacceptable to us. These kinds of festivals were not necessary. The only justification was to bring investments and we “prospered” this way. The people took bank loans, renovated their

houses for the participants of the festival. They thought the festival would bring prosperity in Anaklia. Everything went wrong instead and thanks God for that” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30).

Respondents aged 31-45 show further discontent due to young men not offering their seats to the elderly on public transport. This is considered characteristic of the new generation, which displays a loss of traditions and disrespect towards the elderly.

The older participants criticize the negative facts reported on television as well as “the propaganda of immorality and anti-Georgian values”. These are also perceived as a threat, as they fear that Georgian national traditions and values will lose their significance.

Discontent with politics

The political factor was also categorized with shame. Participants aged 31-45 discussed the issue of occupied territories: namely the loss of Sokhumi and the War of 2008. It should be noted that the loss of territorial integrity is closely tied to discontent with the government, and it is not ascribed to a lack of national bravery. The respondents feel shame regarding the current and the previous governments. One individual believes the years of rule, 2003-2012, by the “United National Movement” were a disgrace and at the time, he was ashamed of being Georgian (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

The two older age groups link the political factors with poor political decisions. One respondent thinks a huge mistake was made when “the Georgians dismissed Zviad Gamsakhurdia” (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55). Other respondents believe it was a shame to have met to Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze made us kneel in front of him on Rustaveli Avenue” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

The shortage of civic consciousness

The respondents, aged 18-30, connected the shame of poor civic consciousness with the inability to keep the environment clean. They refer to their city environment dirtied with plastic bags, garbage thrown in the streets, etc. The respondents aged 46-55 also expressed their discontent at the lack of civic consciousness: “nobody’s looking at the traffic lights, everybody’s throwing garbage in the streets”.

Economic hardship

The respondents in the age group of 31-45 highlight economic factors as part of their shame, for instance, the increasing number of people collecting refuse at garbage bins and sportsmen who are unable to utilize existing facilities due to a shortage of funding.

Respondents aged 56+ suggest economic conditions are associated with the necessity of changing certain traditions. One respondent states that certain traditions are out dated and inappropriate given the unfavorable economic conditions. For example, funerals organized often for as many as 300 visitors.

Major highlights:

The study of the information gathered from the focus groups, in researching national pride and shame in relation to being Georgian, reveals that the age of respondents is a crucial variable. The opinions expressed by the respondents can be divided into two major categories, those aged 18-30 and those 31-56+.

The category of pride consists of events that have already contributed to the creation of the Georgian character, those that show Georgian talent, strength, and uniqueness. The category of shame, however, is connected to issues that demonstrate Georgian criminal behavior, conformism, civic indifference and the inability to stand by one another's side.

The younger participants more often utilize issues typical of civic nationalism when discussing both the categories of pride and shame. While respondents, aged 18-30, highlight the following events that triggered "the national awakening", for example, April 9th, 1989,⁵ "the Rose Revolution of 2003",⁶ the War of August 2008, and the vast-scale military attack Russia carried out against Georgia. These events helped reveal civic bravery and the unity of Georgian society against Russian occupation.⁷ Despite these tragic events, the respondents feel pride in being able to unite under a common idea and to fight for national and the state's freedom. It is interesting that

5 On April 9th, 1989, the Soviet Army raided peaceful demonstrations in Tbilisi. Those participating in the demonstrations asked for the recovery an independent Georgia. Because of the raids, 21 people were killed and hundreds more were poisoned and injured.

6 In November 2003, peaceful protests took place in Tbilisi that were caused by fabricating parliamentary elections. The whole process ended when President Edward Shevardnadze resigned. These events were later titled "the Rose Revolution".

7 The vast-scale military attack that Russia carried out against Georgia in August 2008, leading to the occupation of 20% of Georgia's territories.

no respondent aged 31-55 mentioned “the national awakening”. Whereas respondents aged 56+ included “the national awakening” as a sphere of pride.

Except for the younger participants (18-30), all age groups displayed faith in their national superiority and dominance, which is characteristic of ethnic nationalism (Adorno et al., 1950; de Figueiredo and Elkins, 2003; Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989; Schatz and Staub, 1997). They associate the unique Georgian character with religion and with history. Ethno-cultural belonging creates a sense of pride and uniqueness among the elderly respondents. In their opinion, they are proud of people who are both ethnic Georgians and orthodox Christians. History of the battles won by the Georgian kings, when the size of the Georgian army was much smaller its adversary, further reinforces their sense of national uniqueness. It is noteworthy that history and religion are associated with pride for those aged 31-56+, this undeniably falls into the spheres of ethno-cultural nationalism. As for national arts and culture, they are perceived as universal categories, which all age groups take pride in. The only difference between the groups is in the listing of cultural values, when young people pay more attention to arguments.

A number of older respondents have never felt ashamed of their being Georgian. While, younger participants are more critical in discussing the shameful deeds of Georgian citizens. The vast majority of respondents aged 18-30 do not place the responsibility for shameful events on specific individuals, like politicians, however they place emphasis on the shortage of civic responsibility. The older generation interviewed tends to blame problems on the government, and nobody mentioned personal responsibilities.

One major difference discerned by the study is that unlike older respondents, young participants do not consider the ancient history of Georgia as a source of pride, and they express critical thoughts in regard to the clergy. This may be explained by the youths tendency to focus on the present far more than older generations. Whereas, the older respondents place more emphasis on the distant past and the prior greatness of the Georgian nation.

The greatest difference between the different age groups is found in their attitudes towards sexual minorities, especially when assessing the events of May 17th, 2013.⁸ The respondents aged 18-30 suggest oppression of sexual minorities is something to be ashamed of, while the other age

8 On May 17th, 2013, a demonstration against homophobia created confrontations between participants and members of the counter-demonstrations, a congregation of orthodox Christians. The confrontations ended after the participants of the counter-demonstration raided those protesters against homophobia.

groups express quite contrary opinions.

Thus, on may summarize the findings of the qualitative research the following manner:

- The category of pride for the Georgian population has more characteristics in common with ethno-cultural nationalism, like culture, sports, history, and religion.
- The category of pride consists of events that have already contributed to the creation of the Georgian character, events that show Georgian talent, strength, and uniqueness.
- The category of shame has more connections to civic nationalism, such as discontent with politics, economic hardships, and regret for lacking civic consciousness.
- The category of shame is further connected to issues that demonstrate Georgian criminal behavior, conformism, civic indifference and the inability to unify, side by side.

3.1.3. Citizenship and related responsibilities

This work attempts to discern how Georgian society reflects the forms of national identity distinguished by scholars of nationalism, as well as by Georgian experts and interviewed opinion makers. In the following chapter, the data connected to the civic consciousness of Georgian national identity will be analyzed.

Qualitative data

During the focus groups, conducted within the scope of this research, respondents of different age groups were asked to define their understanding of citizenship and its associated responsibilities. It is notable that the participants aged 18-30 unanimously report a link of citizenship to all forms of civic and political processes of the state. According to these respondents, the responsibilities implied by citizenship are, obeying the law, civic activism, keeping the environment and streets clean and maintaining public order.

“In order to increase the harmonization and vitality of your society, nature and the country it is crucially important to be involved in all processes that form a perfect and developed society” (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

For young respondents, citizenship entails certain responsibilities, which obliges them above all to be well aware of their rights and their duties.

Respondents aged 31-45 suggest citizenship involves the recognition of certain rules, roles and obligations, as well as participation in political processes. This group further emphasizes the following obligations: protecting national values and preserving national identity. These respondents believe civic obligations include, love of Georgia, paying taxes, obeying labor regulations, acting in accordance with the constitution and going through compulsory military service.

“You should have a job. There are lots of obligations such as a tax code, insurance. In a civilized country where people are employed they internalize these things. I cannot internalize them because I’m unemployed. All I know is that I should love the nation, the church and the homeland. Other obligations are: love towards each other, helping each other, not being envious, having a job, paying taxes and helping the state this way” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

The middle-aged (31-45) focus group participants welcome teaching the state constitution in schools. They believe it helps children understand their rights and their duties from the beginning. However, respondents also note that even they are not wholly familiar with the constitution, due to its frequent revisions:

“It is taught in schools as a subject now. We never had this experience when we were kids. A child knows about their own rights. You should know how to protect your own rights, shouldn’t you? I think everyone should know how to protect oneself at least from false allegations” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

For respondents aged 46-55, civic obligations are linked mostly to “Georgianness”. One of the respondents further links the civic responsibility to the duty of protecting state territory:

“I am Georgian from head to toe and I’m obliged to my country, my family, and every Georgian to protect each and every inch of this land” (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55)

For respondents over 55, citizenship implies certain obligations towards the state, connected to obedience of the law. Each participant agrees to

the notion that a “citizen should obey the Constitution”, “everyone should consider the law as superior”, and “the law should be the law.”

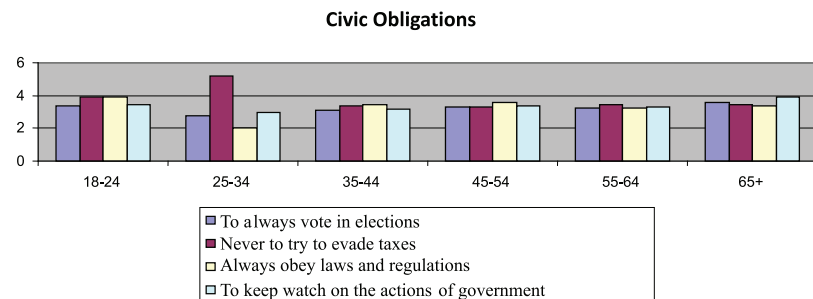
The focus group results reveal that for the respondents citizenship requires obedience to state rules and laws, to the faithful fulfillment of certain “roles” and to fundings participation at the state level, i.e. paying taxes.

Main findings:

- For the respondents, citizenship implies involvement in civic and political processes of the state.
- Following duties were mentioned by participants as basic civic obligations; acting within the framework of the law, civic activity, keeping the environment clean, preserving national identity and values, loving Georgia, paying taxes and participating in compulsory military service.

Quantitative data

Next to the qualitative findings, this study will also discuss the quantitative data regarding citizenship. In 2014, the Center for Social Sciences conducted ISSP survey regarding citizenship. For this survey the respondents were asked what is required of a good citizen, based on predefined statements (working on a scale of 1-7, where 1 is “not at all important” and 7 is “very important”). The following diagram (#16) shows respondents’ opinions by age. The charts represent the means of responses on the scale of 1-7. The descriptive data reveals that the means of responses do not differ by age, and the mean ranges between 3 and 4. This indicates that the respondents’ attitude towards the listed statements is homogenous by age and significant on mean.



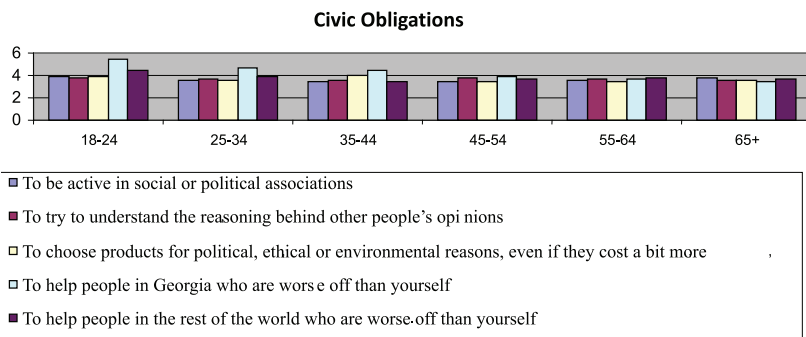


Diagram #16: Civic obligations (by age)

The quantitative data was also analyzed through exploratory factor analysis, which attempted to measure the interdependence of items that determine civic obligations. Using a exploratory factor analysis, structural links were revealed between the items that define civic obligations. The items with the closest links with each other were distinguished. Finally, due to the thematic grouping of characteristic items, factors defining civic responsibilities were also defined (see table #9 below). Three thematic factors were identified as civic obligation, solidarity, active citizenship and the rule of law.

The first, the **“solidarity factor”**, includes the following items: “to try to understand the reasoning of people with other opinions”; “to choose products for political, ethical or environmental reasons, even if they cost a bit more”; “to help people in Georgia who are worse off than yourself”, and “to help people in the rest of the world who are worse off than yourself.” It should be noted that the indicator of solidarity within Georgia is higher than the indicator of global solidarity. Choosing products for political, ethical or enviromental reasons has the lowest rate among solidarity indicators.

The solidarity factor is not dependent on gender ($p=0.47$), however it is dependent on age ($p=0.00$) and level of education ($p=0.00$). The comparison of the means (student t-test) show that solidarity is most common among the 25-34 age group (0.26) and least common among respondents aged 65+ (-0.15). The significance of the factor is not comprehensive for the other groups, as the deviation from the mean is very small. In relation to education, it was revealed that the respondents with a higher education (0.25) embrace solidarity more than those with a secondary education (0.07).

The second factor, a **“politically active citizenship”**, contains the subsequent items: “to always vote in elections”; “to keep watch on the actions of the government” and “to be active in social or political associations”. It is noteworthy that the difference among the item means is statistically significant ($p=.000$). Voting in elections has the highest indicator, at 6.25; keeping watch on the actions of government has only 5.58, while being active in social or political associations rates the lowest, at 4.21.

The factor representing a “politically active citizenship” is dependent on gender ($p=0.00$), age ($p=0.00$), and educational degree ($p=0.04$). Based on a comparison of means (student t-test) it was revealed that men (0.07) are more politically active than women (-0.06). While, voting in elections, keeping watch on the actions of the government and being active in social or political associations is more important for respondents older than 55 (0.18) than those in the 18-44 age groups (-0.20; -0.21; -0.13). The participants aged 45-54 can be considered transitional, although they tend to be politically less active, the tendency is not very obvious. (-0.08). In relation to education, the inverse relationship was observed. This factor is common for respondents with a secondary education and unacceptable to those with higher education.

The third factor can be titled the **“rule of law”**, and it includes two items, both of which are rated highly: “to never try to evade taxes”, at 6.62 and “to always obey laws and regulations”, at 6.53. The factor “rule of law” is dependent on gender ($p=0.012$) and age ($p=0.00$). Paying taxes and obeying laws and regulations is more important for women (0.06) and for older respondents (0.14) than for men (-0.07) and younger participants (-0.14).

	Factor			Means 1-Not at all important 7-Very important
	1	2	3	
To always vote in elections	-.065	.584	.479	6.25
To never try to evade taxes	.261	.060	.758	6.62
To always obey laws and regulations	.115	.168	.764	6.53

To keep watch on the actions of the government	.118	.745	.281	5.58
To be active in social or political associations	.334	.765	-.086	4.21
To try to understand the reasoning behind other people's opinions	.514	.260	.171	5.86
To choose products for political, ethical or environmental reasons, even if they cost a bit more	.545	.333	.004	4.80
To help people in Georgia who are worse off than yourself	.750	-.064	.292	6.57
To help people in the rest of the world who are worse off than yourself	.807	.080	.062	5.50

Table #9 Factors of civic obligations

Major findings:

- The attitude towards civic obligations is homogenous among the majority of respondents, regardless of age or gender.
- Relating to civic obligations and responsibilities three thematic factors were distinguished: solidarity, politically active citizenship and the rule of law.
- The factor of civic solidarity includes the items: “to try to understand the reasoning of people with opinions”; “to choose products for political, ethical or environmental reasons, even if they cost a bit more”; “to help people in Georgia who are worse off than yourself” and “to help people in the rest of the world who are worse off than yourself”:
 - The civic solidarity factor is common for men as well as women.
 - The solidarity factor is more common among younger respondents than with older participants.
 - Respondents with a higher education score greater on solidarity than those with a secondary education.
- The factor of politically active citizenship includes “always to vote in elections”, “to keep watch on the actions of government” and “to be active in social or political associations”.

- Men are more politically active compared to women.
 - Voting in elections, keeping watch on the actions of the government and being actively involved in social or political associations is mainly important for older respondents.
 - The inverse relationship is observed when it comes to the level of education. This factor is common for respondents with a secondary education, however, not acceptable for those with a higher education.
- The rule of law factor involves the items, “never to try to evade taxes” and “always to obey laws and regulations”.
- Paying taxes and obeying rules and regulations is more important to women than to men.
 - The rule of law and obedience towards it is embraced more by older citizens than by younger ones.

3.1.4. The Significance of Religion in Georgian National Identity

From the in-depth interviews conducted with experts and actors involved in the process of forming national identity, the previous chapter of this study demonstrated that cultural dimensions are much more powerful in Georgian identity than state-related civic facets. Language, religion and traditions were all identified as defining elements of the cultural dimension.

As discussed in the theoretical part of this work, the political understanding of a nation is important for civic nationalism, which is itself closely tied to the state, and identifies citizenship with nationality. On the other hand, ethnic (ethno-cultural) nationalism separates citizenship and nationality, because it primarily connects the nation with ethnic and cultural factors. Experts and politicians interviewed during the course of the study actively use this classification. Nevertheless, as we already discussed the problems with the analytical-normative dichotomy of nationalism, we will try not to load this classification with “too much meaning” as Brubaker notes (Brubaker, 2011).

Ethno-symbolism views pre-modern bonds, including religion, as having a considerable impact on the formation of modern nations. As Anthony Smith, one of the most prominent representatives of this approach, denotes, nationalism stands on the foundation of not only political and economic factors, but also social, cultural and religious grounds (Smith, 2004) Smith suggests nationalists often use the past to construct the present, and they

use the selective memory method in order to choose a concrete myth on which their views are founded (Smith, 1987). Theoreticians Theodor Hanf and Ghia Nodia, studying Georgian national identity, suggest that one of the most important events Georgians use to define their distinctiveness, is declaring Christianity as official religion in the Kingdom of Kartli in 377 A.D. (Hanf, Nodia, 2000). The in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted throughout this study also reveal that one of the most profound characteristics of Georgian national identity is to consider Georgia a Christian nation.

The interviewed experts believe Georgian cultural identity is tied to ethnic factors, while religion is legitimized by an ethnic interpretation of national identity. Some of the experts suggest the unity of these elements of nationalism is a reference to the unpredictable character of Georgian national identity, because Christianity as a universal religion should not need to be legitimized by localized elements, like ethnicity. Neophytos Loizides, contrary to the experts' opinions, proposes that intercommunication of nationalism and religion is possible. According to him, theoreticians consider polyhedral character of nationalism adaptable to even philosophically unsuitable ideologies, including religion. This is because nationalism and religion necessitate one another, and agree on mutual compromises (Loizides, 2009). Miroslav Hroch writes that ethnic identity is stronger when it is supported by ecclesiastical institutions (Hroch, 1998). The experts interviewed for this study consider Orthodoxy integrated with ethnic characteristics as "limited" national identity. The experts believe "limited" national identity negatively affects the formation of civic identity, and by highlighting the religious feature, it also interrupts the formation of a Georgian nation around ethnicity.

A Historical Perspective of the ever-changing Meanings of Religion

Using interviews conducted in the scope of this study, the following subchapter aims to outline the changing meanings of religion in the process of forming a Georgian national identity.

Almost all of the interviewed experts support the modernist theory of nationalism, which considers nationalism as belonging to the new era. They suggest that in the 17th and 18th centuries, if a Georgian were to have practiced a different religion, they would no longer be considered a true Georgian: a Georgian with Gregorian beliefs was thus called an "Armenian", a

Catholic was “French”, and in case of Islam, a “Tatar”. Accordingly, everyone who formed part of a congregation of the Georgian Church was labelled as Georgian:

“A person’s ethnicity, origins and blood did not matter. If he/she was in the parish of the Georgian Orthodox Church and the language of this church was Georgian, therefore this person was considered to be Georgian, notwithstanding the fact that he/she was Ossetian, Abkhazian, Kipchak or even Armenian” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The experts note that the first attempts at creating a national identity occurred in the second half of the 19th century, specifically connected with Ilia Chavchavadze and “Tergdaleulebi”. At this time, Georgia was part of the Russian Empire, which had abolished Georgian statehood in 1801. The Georgian Orthodox Church had its autocephaly seized from 1811; it subordinated to the Synod of the Russian Church, and it is now perceived as one of the Empire’s main tools of Russification (Chitanava, 2015).

According to the experts Ilia Chavchavadze fully realized the challenges Georgia faced during that difficult period, in particular the weakness of national unity. Accordingly, his concept leaned on shared history and shared memory, having the unifying function. The experts consider that the model of national identity suggested by Chavchavadze fits with religious diversity - according to Chavchavadze’s vision, a Georgian might not be an Orthodox Christian, and a clear example of this is his policy towards Muslims in the then newly annexed Adjara. Philosopher Giga Zedania suggests that without a secular approach, the cultural integration of linguistically and culturally extremely diverse populations would have been impossible (Zedania, 2009).

According to Zedania, Georgian national identity was greatly impacted by Soviet period. Despite its paradoxical nature, it was in the Soviet Union, based on internationalist principles, that Georgian Ethnic nationalism was born (Zedania, 2009). This opinion is shared by interviewed experts as well. They believe that in the early stages of the Soviet Union, Georgian nationalism was placed in an artificial, non-democratic space, which caused the shared history actualized during Chavchavadze’s period to move to the background, while creating the foundations of nationalism based on ethnic origin. A expert suggests one can perceive nationalism based on the concept of blood ties from the works of Georgian writers in the Soviet Era:

“Georgians were always saying: blood, breed, genetics and other things, we see this in writers from the Soviet period. For example in works of Murman Lebanidze, Mukhran Machavariani “alas someone should come here, settle”, “alas someone tramples us”, “don’t surpass us demographically” and such ideas, Nationalism based on the concept of blood ties was formed precisely during the Soviet period” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

In the 1970-80s, another wave of changes began to affect Georgian national identity. During this period, anti-Soviet sentiments were strengthened among Georgian dissidents. However, according to the work of historian Oliver Reisner, the concerns of the dissidents were less focused on human rights and civil liberties, because their goal was the restoration of an independent Georgia with the return of their own language, religion and traditions (Reisner, 2009). This coincided with electing current Catholicos Patriarch, Ilia Shiolashvili, in 1977. Ilia II is linked with the exceptional reinforcement of religion as a feature of Georgian national identity. This was clearly expressed in the restoration of church services in closed church monasteries at the beginning of nineteen-eighties (Jones, 1989). In his sermon read in Gelati, in 1988, Ilia II used the concept of a “Celestial, Heavenly Georgia”⁹, which implied the image of an otherworldly Georgia, in which Georgian believers could obtain an eternal place in paradise.

According to the interviewed experts, at the end of the Soviet period, when the national movement was strong, the institute of the church had not yet formed as a powerful authority. On April 9th, 1989, the Patriarch appealed to protesters to disperse peacefully, but his request was disregarded and the protest continued.¹⁰ Reisner suggests this clearly shows that the church had only a symbolic meaning for the activists of the national movement (Reisner, 2009). A 1991 sermon of the Patriarch shows that while the church tried to bear the role of unifier, it was not yet certain of its powers:

“As if the Georgian nation stands on the road to freedom, but is divided and separated, while both sides call themselves Christians. I called upon both sides, to meet and talk about controversial issues.

9 The Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, September 21, 1988, ეპისტოლენი, სიტყვანი, ქადაგებანი [Epistles, Remarks, Sermons] (Volume II), Tbilisi 1997

10 A tragic date in the history of Georgia, when a raid on protesters demanding independence of Georgia on Rustaveli Avenue, 21 people were killed.

As we can see the church is the only power in this time full of enmity, which has to unify everyone, only if it will be listened to" (Ilia II, 1991).¹¹

The majority of the interviewed experts and politicians discern that the special role of Orthodox Christianity in the national discourse is linked with the short period of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's governance (1991-1992) after the restoration of independence. Respondents characterize the political space of this period as impregnated by religious rhetoric. For example, part of Gamsakhurdia's opposition demanded the establishment of a "theo-democracy", the restoration of monarchy, etc. Zviad Gamsakhurdia's inaugural speech is noteworthy in this sense, as he spoke about strengthening the role of religion and proposed an initiative to declare Orthodoxy the state religion. In the nineties, the projection of religion was manifested in the replacing of communist symbols with Orthodox iconography (Chitanava, 2015). The in-depth interviews with the politicians reveal the strengthening role of religion during this period, although religious figures had yet to attain much authority:

"Politicians, let's say Zviad Gamsakhurdia, had more legitimacy than the church itself or the Patriarch" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

In 1991-1992, after the state coup, alongside overthrowing president Gamsakhurdia, all other elective state institutions, parliament and local councils (*sakrebulo*s), were abolished; Gamsakhurdia openly expressed his critical attitude toward the certain clergymen, because he regarded them as against the state, or even as agents of the Russian secret agencies. Having fled, Gamsakhurdia writes:

"Our enemy took aim at the church, sent enemies of the Orthodoxy amongst the clergy, wolves covered in the fur of a sheep, who undermined and destroyed the Orthodox faith. There is no place for the agents of the enemy's intelligence services. Our church has to be cleaned up from them, in order not to be ruined completely. New Ruis-Urbnisi is necessary" (Gamsakhurdia, 1993).

The experts further note that the tendency to connect ethnic and

11 The Catholicos Patriarch Ilia II, the Church cares only for unification, September 14th, 1991 & *Epistles, Remarks, Sermons* (Volume two), Tbilisi, 1997.

religious identities started in the 1990s, for instance, the 1991 sermon of Patriarch Ilia II:

“The Georgian people have been Christian from the first century and must stay so. Sects and foreign religions should not influence our nation. Georgia was saved by Orthodox Christianity and will save it another time. Our people should walk on this way, and the ones betraying Orthodoxy, our church, Svetitskhoveli, will be the traitor of the nation, that is why every man, who would support spreading a sects beliefs and various religions, is declared as an enemy of the Georgian nation¹²” (Ilia II, 1991).

One can also presume, from this study’s in-depth interview with a member of the clergy, that the church, during the civil war in 1991-1993, stood aside from these processes:¹³

“They were encouraging us, for the Patriarch to come out and stand in between and so on. This was not possible, thousands of powers were controlling this situation, someone could have fired a gun, they would have shot at our Patriarch and great problems would have followed.... carnage, thousands of troubles, it could not be done blindly and in rush, so, the neutral position was the right way” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

In 1992, after the new parliamentary election, Eduard Shevardnadze was chosen as the chairman of the parliament of the Republic of Georgia. The interviewed experts suggest Shevardnadze needed to shroud the harsh economic situation, the weak state and corruption with support for the church. Thus, he supported strengthening the church, which culminated in the concordat created in 2002.

Eduard Shevardnadze in his memoirs recalls his interrelation with the Patriarch:

“When I came back to Georgia, the first thing I did was to visit his holiness the Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia, Ilia the second. I knew him long ago and respected him. Meeting with the Catholicos Patriarch and talking with him brought a different kind of peace to

12 The Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, September 21, 1988, ეპისტოლენი, სიტყვანი, ქადაგებანი [Epistles, Remarks, Sermons] (Volume II), Tbilisi 1997

13 The Georgian civil war- Internal Ethnic and Political conflicts in Georgia in between 1991-1993.

my soul, I was also baptized. Ilia the second became my godfather, my christening name was Giorgi, it means a lot for Georgians... In 1995 Ilia the second and I initiated the building of the magnificent Sameba Cathedral which symbolically express the revival of Georgian spirituality and Georgian statehood!" (Shevardnadze, 2006).¹⁴

This statement is particularly interesting considering that Eduard Shevardnadze, who, in 1972, was appointed as the General Secretary of the Central Committee of Georgia, is linked to the "anti-religious" campaign aiming at eliminating harmful traditions and being against church marriages, christening and church holidays. Shevardnadze at that time founded organizations for anti-religious propaganda, which intended to remove religious influences and to establish new traditions (Jones, 1989).¹⁵

In reference to national identity, the interviewed experts regard Eduard Shevardnadze's period to have weakened the ethnic markers, when Georgia was politically defined as a multicultural country. The experts suggest that the idea of replacing ethnic markers with more comprehensive civic ones facilitated the removal of ethnicity section in newly issued passports in 1999 Georgia, quite unlike the Soviet documents.

The majority of the population perceived the victory of the ruling party in the Georgian election, November 2nd, 2003, as fraudulent. Negative attitudes towards Shevardnadze's government added to the discontent, which transformed to large-scale demonstrations, and finally concluded with the resignation of Shevardnadze on November 22nd (Nodia, 2005).¹⁶ These events, commonly known as "the Rose Revolution", were followed by the election of Mikheil Saakashvili as the Georgian president and the United National Movement coming to power. Saakashvili's period is distinguished by encouraging civic nationalism, which on one hand, was expressed by the strengthening of state institutions, and on the other hand, by the diminishing importance of ethnic and religious factors.

"During the Saakashvili period, there was a real aspiration to form a Georgian multiethnic nation, that everyone is Georgian despite our

14 Shevardnadze, E., *Thought on the past and future*, Palitra L, Tbilisi, 2006.

15 Jones, S. F., *Soviet Religious Policy and the Georgian Orthodox Apostolic Church: From Khrushchev to Gorbachev*, 1989.

16 Nodia, G., *Development of Civil Society in Georgia: Achievement and challenges*; Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, 2005.

ethnicity, but this idea was resisted by the powers I mentioned before, churches, intelligentsia" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Despite attempts to advance civic nationalism, Saakashvili's time in office is connected to the increased funding of the church, which experts consider a poor governmental decision. In their opinion, during the United National Movement's governance, the church was already perceived as a dangerous power, and to gain their loyalty the government made certain concessions. The experts believe this approach increased the capacity and resources of the church itself, instead of creating loyalty for the government. The events of May 26th, 2009, reveal the vast extent of the church's authority. A rally of the opposition, which demanded the resignation of president Saakashvili, preceded Georgian Independence Day. At Georgia's national stadium, the rally's organizers told its participants that the government would be changed that very day. The plan, however, was altered after a sermon of the Patriarch, in which he states the resignation of members of the government would not be right:

"So, it's already one month and a half that part of our society is demanding the resignation of the president. This is a very difficult issue. And generally, I want to denote that it seems as if we have a tradition of resignation of presidents... we must not take more on ourselves than is allowed from god. We should be obedient to god's will! God's grace will judge everything, and will put everything in its place" (Ilia II, May 26th, 2009).

In contrast to April 9th, 1989, the leaders of this demonstration would not dare to go against the Patriarch's will, and the rally was peacefully dismissed.

Despite the increased funding, the clergy alongside the opposition parties criticized Saakashvili's government, and blamed them for anti-nationalism and attempts to weaken the Orthodox Church. This is particularly evident from an analysis of the press at the time. (Kekelia et al., 2013) According to the estimates of the analyst Arielle Shapiro, the church had a significant role into the results of 2012 election. (Shapiro, 2013) The philosopher Gigi Tevzadze also shares this opinion:

"The church got involved in the elections, so to use a gospel term, in the changing of the Caesar. It is also clear that church got involved in the election because the parish did not go against politicizing the

church. The law was not broken with this, as there is no such rule for the church not to be in politics. Politicizing the church is the joint decision of the church and parishioners.” (თევზ ზაძე, 2012)

After the 2012 election, the United National Movement’s power was changed by a new political power, the “Georgian Dream” party. Regarding Georgian Dream’s policy, part of the interviewed experts thinks that especially problematic is intertwining ethnic and religious markers – terms such as Orthodox and Georgian:

“During the last two years we have been constantly facing this problem, coming from politicians or from the Patriarchate, identification of nationality with a concrete ethnic group - ethnic Georgian and identifying Georgians with a concrete religious group – Orthodox Christians and the Orthodox Church” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

In the opinion of some experts and the representatives from non-governmental organizations, such policy formed the ground for religious intolerance, and the government took no real steps to eliminate it. They believe the government’s inactivity was mainly connected to their timidity in taking unpopular steps.

“When violence is committed in the name of the majority and no one is considered responsible for it, this means that the government is biased by concrete religious grounds” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Both experts and representatives of NGOs assume that the current government, in most cases, sides with the church in religious conflicts, because it holds the position of the religious majority above the rule of law. The experts, however, differ in opinion, as some think there is an irreversible process of accepting multicultural values in Georgia. Striving towards Europe and strengthening international relations are considered to be the determining factors in this process.

The focus groups participants blame the government not for discriminating against religious minorities, but the reverse, for being under the influence of the West and giving privileges to religious minorities. Hence, the opinion of the experts and representatives of NGOs blaming the government for discriminatory policies towards religious minorities is not demonstrated among the focus group participants.

The Church, as the Creator of the look of the Nation

The experts interviewed for this work suggest the contemporary Georgian Orthodox Church is the most successful actor when it comes to shaping Georgian national identity. A direct result of this process is the strengthening the religious feature in national identity. The experts believe that Orthodox Christianity goes beyond religion and has become the main institution of political and social notions:

“The church is creating a precedent, that it is the primary interpreter for the nation and has become the author of ideology” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

According to the experts, the church has taken on the role of the creator of the look of the nation. The church also combines the functions of a moral mentor and a regulator of demography:

“It is a moral Panopticon from where it looks down on society and controls its morals, it also watches demography at the same time in order to see how the Georgian biomass is growing and this concerns the baptizing of every third child by the Patriarch. This is moral authority caring for the national body, the biomass” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

According to the interviewed representatives of NGOs discussing demographic problems in scope of national interest is directly linked to the intolerance towards sexual minorities. They believe that in the rhetoric of the church, as well as organizations and personalities affiliated with it, individuals are divided into notional units; one segment is imagined as macho men with healthy genes to pass on, while the second group consists of sexual minorities, who are deprived of reproduction, and thus cannot multiply the nation. Representatives of the NGO sector believe demographic panic is one part of nationalism, and the traditional family is a stepping-stone on which nationalism stands. It is the modern church that stands for the protection of the holiness of the family.

A representative of the church expresses his position on the issue:

“The basis is manhood and womanhood because god did not create a human with some 53 genders, it was created as a man and a woman. Everything except this is damage, deviation and illness, and advertising this is a sin” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

According to the representative of an NGO the church uses its resources for ideological indoctrination. It has chosen its direction and the interpretation of bible is made to fit that direction. One of the interviewed NGO representatives accuses the church of selectively preaching certain parts of the bible, which interferes with the perception of the essence of Christianity:

“When it is possible to interpret religion with the scope on tolerance, somehow they choose to do it differently” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

One of the politicians interviewed for this study believes that the church, and groups associated with it, fear losing the role of the one and only determinant of the „truth“, and to cope with that they try hard to preserve the stereotypes they had created. This politician notes how the church and those hiding under its name constantly speak about the normativity of certain sexual and gender behaviours. The increasing acceptance of individuals outside this normativity is a sign that the stereotypes, which they created, are weakening. The politician observed that this causes demands from the church and its apologists that sexual minorities not show their orientation in public spaces. The logic behind this is maintaining the power.

Experts suggest that Georgians uncritically embrace the opinions of a majority, which inevitably contributes to strengthening the Orthodox Church. According to them, peoples’ compliant attitude towards the mainstream opinion is caused by the dominant position of such opinion, rather than it’s content. Being in the majority is itself perceived as a value, and a quantitatively dominant group is automatically given the right to oppress a minority group.

Following this argument, the opinion of the church representative is particularly interesting who speaks in the name of the nation and builds his discourse around the dominance of the majority:

“The government is the mechanism for managing the concrete national unit and if this national spirit requires, why does the mechanism have to be an oppressor? I demand, the nation demands, that the family is the unity of man and woman and why does it force me to change my spirit?” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The experts suggest the changing of the nationalism markers can be seen when observing the people, who consider themselves the defenders of national identity. Furthermore, the experts regard that the dominance of Orthodox Christianity is not caused by an increase in faith, rather due to the common identification of it with nationality and patriotism.

Orthodoxy Christianity as the Characteristic of a “True Georgian”

Certain experts and representatives of NGOs identified strengthening religious characteristics in national identity as a form of religious nationalism, or ethno-religious nationalism.

According to experts, the expression “language, homeland, religion” that become a certain motto, serves as a source for the legitimization of Orthodox Christianity as the dominant religion. A representative in education states that the third component of Ilia Chavchavadze’s triad, religion, is understood not as general faith, but as a concrete religion - Orthodox Christianity.

According to the interviewed politicians, the formula “language, homeland, faith”, currently also plays an important role in the identification of national identity; however, it is interpreted in different manners, which has led to the two branches of nationalism:

“Law, human rights, nationalism with the understanding of modern nationalism on one hand, and at the same time, ethno nationalism, religiosity, and flattering attitude towards traditions.” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

For the focus groups, “language, homeland, faith” are named as unifying values to the Georgian nation. The majority of the respondents identify this triad as defining the nation’s dignity. However, according to them due to economic hardships, respect for this triad has been lost. Mostly, the government is held responsible for it. For some of the respondents, the pride in being Georgian is linked to pride in being Orthodox Christian. Although contradictory opinions are also reported, as some suggest relating religious belief to ethnic origins and the identification of Georgian and Christian to one another is caused by reckless fanaticism.

According to the interviewed politicians ethnic Georgians and Orthodox Christians enjoy the highest level of acceptance in society. These experts show that the formula “being a Georgian means being Orthodox Christian” in reality exists, and the church is actively attempting to transform it to

become part of common sense. However, as one of the experts points out this is not a formula one uses in everyday life:

“This is not a formula, according to which people live, this is a formula according to which people talk.” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The experts define this formula as exclusive, meaning that it excludes “others” and forms an exclusive identity, which itself cause conflicts. However, they also state that, at a higher level, institutions do not function using this formula.

The attitudes of the clergy interviewed during the joint project, “The Role of Orthodox Church in the Formation of Georgian National Identity” by ASCN and Ilia State University, 2010-2012, complements the expert’s supposition. Answering whether “a non-Orthodox Georgian is a fully fledged Georgian”, the majority of the clergy considered these two concepts eternally inseparable. In their opinion, removing the nation from its nourishing faith will cause problems, while coincidences between ethnic and religious characteristics create ground for unity:

“As a human being is the harmony of soul and flesh, similarly faith nourishes the nation and you cannot divide them. It has to be one entity. When people have one religion, common thing to talk about, and the common national principle, there is more chance for them to be unified” (კეკელიძე, et al. 2013)

Church representative interviewed in scope of this study, consider identifying a Georgian with an Orthodox Christian to be vitally important - Georgian and Orthodoxy as viewed as identical concepts. The cleric thinks betraying “Georgianness” is betraying Orthodox Christianity, while betraying Orthodox Christianity means betraying “Georgianness”. Despite equalizing these concepts, the representative of the church clarifies that there is still subordination between these notions:

“In this unity the highest standing is Christianity and nationality is subordinated/dependent” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

According to the interviewed experts, only those who are Georgian by blood, Orthodox Christian, heterosexual and follow traditions, are considered to be “real Georgian”. The representatives NGOs propose the similar characterization:

“Georgian, Orthodox Christian, man, heterosexual is the most valued subject, the political subject. All the others are on the peripheries or on lower levels. This is the idealistic icon of a political subject in Georgia” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

Both experts and representatives of NGOs suggest the differences from the widespread “image” of a Georgian, ethnically, religiously or sexually, are not accepted.

The Role of the Church: Consolidator or Conflict Instigator

One part of focus group participants perceive the Orthodox Church as the institution that consolidates the Georgian nation, whereas, a second group considers it a conflicting entity which incites hatred. A large number of respondents think religion bares both of these functions, because while it unites certain groups, it divides others, who are not considered Georgian citizens based on their religion. Young focus group respondents, aged 18-30, consider that, the church is not fulfilling its supposed functions.

“Representatives of church who consider themselves tolerant, demonstrate intolerance/unacceptability towards other people” (the focus group, female, 24-30).

The younger respondents who identify religion as a consolidator further add that these values often maintain themselves unconsciously and with inertia.

In the older age groups the church is considered as a consolidating facet, alongside other values of ethnic nationalism, for instance, ethnicity, tradition or family. In the older generation, the Orthodox Christianity is represented as an institute and a fundament of Georgian values, and it is closely linked to patriotism.

The function of the church as a consolidator is also evident from the interviews conducted with experts in the field. It is necessary to underline the role of church in mobilizing people during recurring foreign threats. Experts link this to the high level of trust society affords the church and its leader. One representative of the church considers the church as a consolidator even when discussing politically polarized parties. In his opinion, the church is sometimes obliged to express certain sympathies, which he considers unacceptable.

“The administrative leadership of the church was trying to reconcile conflicting parties and to declare, that it is a mother for everyone, this side or either that side and this is the right thing. This is right in one condition, for example, United National Movement and also Georgian Dream representatives were coming to me. The “daughter-in-law and mother-in-law” come to me and I am trying to consolidate them, all the sides are coming. This is the right position, because the church cannot be a church for one side, if you are not trying to obviously give preference to one side” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

Nearly all interviewed respondents consider civic nationalism to have to become a uniting factor of the Georgian nation. However, this is still a normative discourse and it reflects what should be, not the current situation. The majority of experts see the church as the main barrier on the road to civic nationalism. They believe the church is not focused on civic integration and consolidation; therefore, funding the church strengthens an institution with opposing goals.

As for the dividing factors, the interviewed experts note that exclusiveness and messianic sentiments associated with Orthodox Christianity are shared by most of society:

“All the main problems are derived from this problem - Orthodox Christianity as an exclusive, distinct faith, which is a characteristic for only Georgians and from that the feeling of superiority which is instilled by church representatives in them. The church narrative, which includes Georgia flourishing, establishes distinctiveness and messianism in Georgia” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

For the focus group respondents a key issue was the disruption of anti-homophobia rally by the church and groups of people they mobilized, on May 17th, 2013. The results of focus groups show that the perception of May 17 is connected with the perception of the church as either a consolidator or as a conflict instigator. Young respondents think there is a conflict of values between the church and society, where May 17th is regarded as a vivid example. Whereas, middle-aged respondents (31-45) and representatives of the older generation (46-55 and 56+) consider the LGBT community's attempt to hold a demonstration on May 17th as a shame. They believe the simple existence of sexual minorities is a national threat, and the church is

thought to be the defender of Georgian values and the inviolability of the national unity.

It becomes evident from the interviews of church representatives that the church is conscious about its role in maintaining moral order and has certain strategies to accomplish this task. Declaring May 17th a day for family holiness was part of their strategy, as confirmed by the interviewed cleric:¹⁷

“The date was chosen on purpose obviously. While the entire nation is celebrating the day of family holiness, a rally of those people [the LGBT community], if they come out and celebrate, will appear very small in comparison to that greatness... I am always saying that this was a Trojan horse, if they were able to succeed in that, this could go far” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

Representatives of NGOs suggest that politicians, along with the clergy, manipulate people with religious feelings, which has a negative effect on society, because it comprises of the threat of division. One of the interviewed experts states the difference itself is not a threat, the meaning parties assign to these differences is threatening. This respondent thinks the stronger emphasis on differences is the result of manipulation with religion, which may, for example cause “chasing people with a stool.”¹⁸

Post-Soviet Georgian Religiosity

Despite the high percentage of Georgians belonging to the Orthodox Christian faith (82%) (CRRC, 2015) and the high levels of trust towards the church as an institution (72%) (CRRC, 2015), the majority of the interviewed experts and politicians do not consider this process is a sign of the strength of religiousness. One of the experts believes that Georgians have experienced quick transformations, which is expressed in shallow belonging to any institution or idea. As respondents note this shallowness is evident from Georgia’s transformation from the most atheistic country in the Soviet Union to the most religious one in less than a decade.

However, according to the experts, the determination of believers diminishes when in order to prove their religiousness they have to make a real effort with regular attendance to liturgies. The reason for such a

17 In 2015 Patriarch Ilia II declared May 17th as a day of family holiness.

18 It is meant 17 May, 2013

tendency, the experts consider, is that very few people are involved in public processes, while the remaining amorphous mass changes views easily and their religiousness is in fact the manifestation of social conformism:

"Maybe, someone thinks that a certain institute has a special influence here, but it can be ruined/demolished with the first case of resistance and vanish in a way that it's trace will never be found" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

In this regard, it is interesting to discuss the work of anthropologist Inna Naletova, *Orthodoxy beyond the walls of the church: Sociological inquiry into Orthodox religious experience in contemporary modern Russian society* (Naletova, 2007). Naletova's dissertation aims to propose a more detailed view of Orthodoxy, and it is often presented in academic research. The author wishes to find an explanation for the diversity of the Orthodox experience in Russia. Her main thesis proposes that although a very small part of society is within a permanent parish of the church, other "formally" Orthodox people do not oppose or are indifferent towards the church. This data reveals the failure of the church to attract more followers and for being enclosed within the walls of the self-identified Orthodox people. However, it also represents the success of the church, as Russian public life is soaked with Orthodoxy, despite the fact that people have still not been transformed into church attendants.

Naletova uses the theory of sociologist Jose Casanova relating to "de-privatized religions" (Casanova, 1994). According to Casanova traditional religions refuse the marginal and private roles granted to them by theories of modernity. The religions do not only occupy the "private" sphere, rather, they move forward into public space. Naletova believes the global processes of de-privatization of traditional religions have created further new problems in Russia. The church is trying ever harder to be involved in public spaces and is especially active in the following directions:

1. The economic sphere (restitution of church property/compensation)
2. The educational sphere (religious education in schools)
3. The sphere of media and the Arts (issues of restrictions of freedom of expression).

It is noteworthy that the aforementioned issues were further revealed in

the results of the in-depth interviews conducted for this study. Almost every interviewee identified the problematic relationship between the church and state, especially the financial accountability of the church to the state. Moreover, the formal and informal influence of the church on education, and the related problem of the church's role as censor was also emphasized.

Relations between the Church and the State

The in-depth interviews within this research revealed several main issues concerning the relationship between the church and the state, namely: the concordat,¹⁹ the politics of funding religious organizations²⁰ and the anti-discrimination law.²¹

The constitutional agreement, signed between the church and state in 2002, recognizes the special role of the Orthodox Church in the history of Georgia and grants it special economic privileges. Each of the interviewed experts for this work negatively assessed the concordat.

*“This is a negative document. Generally, there should not have been such a thing, we should not have allowed it. I support the 1921 constitution provision, where the state is divided from the church and declares the full freedom of belief and everyone’s equality to the law”
(an in-depth interview, an expert).*

The in-depth interviews exposed an issue related to the date of the concordat. Experts believe if the document had been signed in the distant past, it could be only of symbolic importance, but as the agreement was created in 2002, it legitimizes the power of the church. Representatives of NGOs suggest particular attention should be given to the issue of the financial interpretation of the concordat, because the approximate extent of the state's “debt” is unclear there. This refers to the first paragraph of the 11th article of the concordat, which is based on the 1990 government resolution, accepted during the Soviet period:

19 The agreement signed in 2002 between the government of Georgia and the Georgian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

20 In 2014, the government decree entered into force, according to which in addition four religious organization will be compensated for damages: Islamic, Jewish, Catholic and Armenian apostolic churches.

21 In May 2014, the Georgian parliament passed an anti-discrimination law directed against all forms of discrimination.

“The state confirms the fact of material and moral damage to the church, occurred during the 19-20th century (especially 1921-90), in the period of losing state independence. As the actual owner of part of the deprived property, it takes the obligation of partial compensation of the damage,” (Resolution of the council of ministers of the Georgian SSR, №.183, 12.04.90).

The concordat states that in order to dispel financial ambiguity, the parity commissions needed to be created to define the exact quantity of church's damages. For the interviewed experts and representative of NGOs, it is especially problematic that, until recently, there is no defined status on the amount of damages, payment procedures or reimbursement terms. Instead of calculating the damages, since 2003 the state has been funding the church directly. In the opinion of representatives of NGOs, this is not in accord with the constitutional agreement and is entirely non-secular. They believe it is unacceptable to devote budget funds for religious purposes. Furthermore, experts and politicians have emphasized the illegitimacy of the motives for funding and the selectivity of the compensation: Firstly, one should consider that, aside from the church, other institutions and individuals suffered from damages, and if one is to be reimbursed it are unclear why others should not also be reimbursed; another fundamental issue is the succession of rights. Interviewed experts and politicians suggest compensation for damages that occurred during the Soviet Union cannot be imposed on a state that is not the legal successor to the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union; moreover, the state itself is a victim of Soviet Occupation:

“It is not possible that the now independent Georgia was responsible for the acts committed by the invader- one or another, which is absolutely the same, but altered and why is independent Georgia involved in that? What is the principle - citizens of current Georgia paying, they are poor and they pay part of their taxes to the Patriarchate. I don't think that it is fair and rational action. That is why, this is not right.” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

All experts consider the current governmental funding of religion as a threat to the secular state. In their opinion, transferring large sums of money from the state budget to the church creates the opportunity to interfere and manipulate in each other's affairs. Additionally, the experts propose that the disproportionality of the funding and the obscurity of how the funds are managed create problematic issues:

“The Orthodox Church enjoys certain benefits in the education sphere, in different spheres... in the field of taxation, with tax benefits, and practically this document [the concordat] gives much power to one concrete religious group. Other religious groups stay without any state support, which plays a very negative role in the politics of the country, disrupting the balance, enforcing one certain group” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Certain politicians, much like the experts, consider any kind of financial connection between the church and state a threat to the secular state; it also allows politicians to manipulate religion:

“We see on religious holidays all the politicians will line up with candles, or during an interview in a corner with icons in the background, we know these people and also know that this is the apotheosis of hypocrisy. We are ourselves against such things, despite the fact that this step will not and cannot be popular.” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

A representative of the church, however, perceives the funding of the church from a different perspective. In his opinion, money given by the state is in essence to be returned, because the state’s financial assistance is allocated to religious education institutions, which are accredited and accordingly represent state educational institutions. A contradictory argument was given from the political sector, as one of the politicians states that part of the financial assistance goes to religious educational institutions, however he believes the presence of religious education institutions are set aside from the united system:²²

“In our opinion, educational institutions have to be included in the system, by which the education system is funded generally. It has to be funded the same way and there does not have be any kind of preferences in our state” (an in-depth Interview, a politician).

Likewise, the lack of transparency of the funding is considered an additional problem; namely, the absence of control over the church and non-payment of taxes by the church. All of the interviewed politicians note that if the church is funded, the financial assistance has to be carefully checked:

22 The Law of Georgia on Higher Education

“Everywhere where the money is spent it has to be checked and in this case the state does not have to feel ashamed... I think that in a political sense, it is better to pay and in certain way control it, but this does not mean interfere in their affairs. On the other hand, the church has to know, not to take this money or they [the state] will interfere in its affairs. If I was a church, I would not take it, but they don’t think like that, they care for money and cars and do not care for interference.” (an in-depth Interview, a politician).

While for a representative of the church, it is wholly possible to monitor the money transferred from the state, and the lack of transparency of church funding is an artificial problem. He blames Western funded NGOs for the creation of these discussions. Furthermore, in his opinion, it is groundless to talk about the wealth of the clergy or to merit the accusation that state money is spent on improving the economic conditions of clergy.

“I am a priest myself and I know that none of the priest gets from them [the state] even one Tetri... The absolute majority of priests are financially fragile, they don’t have a salary, they don’t have a pension, they don’t have insurance and many of them are below the poverty line. I know priests, they have big families, and that is why they live on the donations which are thrown in the [donation] box. Parishioners provide for their church... For example, I don’t know any rich priests, I am not talking about the higher hierarchies, I don’t know an ordinary priest who is rich, they represent the middle class and there are also certain individuals below the poverty line” (an in-depth Interview, a representative of the church).

There have been contradictory opinions between the interviewed politicians regarding the financial benefits provided by the concordat. Certain politicians, much like experts and representatives of NGOs, consider the concordat’s financial benefits to the church are a serious problem:

“Liturgical products of an Orthodox church are free from any kind of tax. In my opinion this is the biggest problem, there is a kind of gap in the tax system and it gives preferential treatment to certain LTDs or businesses and this is not right in relation to other businesses” (an in-depth Interview, a politician).²³

23 Namely paragraph 5, article 6 of the concordat: Liturgical products produced by the church-

Whereas, one of the politicians considers the detailed fulfillment of the rights and obligations of the concordat as the guarantor of a harmonious relationship between the church and state, and the authority retaining this balance is the Patriarch:

“I think, we have very good and smart Patriarch, who was always playing positive, an utmost balanced role, because, when you are very popular and your word has value, it is always difficult, and this man manages to deliver his word to the public.” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

The in-depth interviews revealed the mixed opinions about the resolution accepted by the government in 2014,²⁴ according to which the state took on the reimbursement of damages to four other religious organizations, besides the Orthodox Church. In terms of religious diversity, the interviewed experts and representatives of NGOs assess the resolution positively, although, they also think that the methods of practical implementation of the resolution is not able to stand criticism. They believe the current state policy is directed at buying the loyalty of religious groups, for instance, the state buys residences and cars for the elites of these religious groups. Accordingly, funding is spent not in the interests of the religious communities, for example, in building the places of worship; rather, the money is used to gain the approval of religious leaders, which increases their accountability towards the state, and naturally correlates to limitations on their freedom:

“The state defines the purpose of the funding; it can also conduct audit inspections. 75% of this money was given to the Muslim community directly for salaries: it is spent on the salaries of khojas, imams and akhunds, which means that the state hires these people. This means direct control. This is expressed in other things as well, they made Muslim religious leaders to say no to the building of a mosque in Batumi and this is a very important issue for the Muslim community, isn’t it? They want a new mosque, because there is no space anymore

its manufacturing, import, delivering and donations, also property and land having non-economic purposes are free from taxes. <http://www.Orthodoxy.ge>

24 The resolution of approval of the “Rules of implementing certain measures regarding the partial reimbursement of the damage caused by the Soviet totalitarian regime to the religious communities in Georgia”, Tbilisi, N. 117, January 27th, 2014. http://gov.ge/files/40370_40370_785819_117270114.pdf

in the old one and they pray in the street. At the same time, Mufti says that he does not want a mosque, that he wants a madrasa for him, he wants to build a residence. The Muslim community demands something else. It is clear from this example how this policy of control causes estrangement between the community and the institution” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

The policy of funding religious organizations is a crucially important topic for the NGO sector. According to the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center’s (EMC) and the Tolerance and Diversity Institute’s (TDI) joint publication,²⁵ in 2014-2015 the total sum given to religious organizations by the state was 68 292 963 Georgian Lari. As far as the Orthodox Church is concerned, their share was 92.5% percent of that funding, which amounts to 63 173 299 Lari. Mentioned research revealed that the largest part of the funding paid the salaries and bonuses of employees of the Orthodox Church, and the remainder went towards purchasing and the maintenance of movable and immovable property.

One of the politicians also comments on the topic of the state using money to gain the loyalty of the church. He views the state as obliged to compensate for damages, which occurred not only to the Orthodox Church, but also to other religious organizations. However, he likewise notes that funding the church shows the dominance of the donor, and forces the church to realize that they are not the main ideologist:

“Whoever pays is the main ideologist, the state is the main ideologist. The constitution is above all, that is why the defender of the constitution can pay the defender of the Catechism, I don’t see a problem in that... We passed the anti-discrimination law, the church was saying that if you pass this law we will deliver you to anathema. Question: why they did not deliver us to anathema? Because we give them 25 million a year. So visa liberalization would not be happening, if we did not give them 25 million, we buy them, this is a cynical answer and this is the correct answer. They don’t have the ability to resist to the state” (an in-depth Interview, a politician).

In contrary, the interviewed experts and representatives of NGOs suggest the funding of the church causes the politicization of the church

25 The politics of financing religious organizations. Analyses of the 2014-2015 practices: https://emcrights.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/broshura_180x250mm_small.pdf

and weakens the dominance of the state. In their opinion, the increase in funding helped to further strengthen the church, instead of raising loyalty, which thus placed the government in the subordinate position:

“Then they say to the church-based government: don’t pass this law, don’t implement this reform. This creates problems in the future also and the second issue is that the church is the wealthiest institution nowadays, wealthier and more mobilized than the state. This funding turns the church into a self-sufficient subject, which loses social sensitivity and social consciences” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

Experts note that if Georgia strives to be part of Europe, then representative funding of religious minorities is essential. In experts’ opinion, the current system is sufficiently discriminative, because the dominance of the Orthodox Church is reflected even in the constitution. Respondents are against the funding of religious organizations in general by the state, but they consider that if the funding remains, it is important to free it from discrimination.

While criticizing the current system of funding, experts and representatives of NGOs hope for the creation of an alternative model, in which the funding for religious organization would be dependent on the parishioners itself. They think the state should only maintain the role of administrator, and not arbitrarily decide where the money is sent.

Part of the experts think the system based on the parishioner membership fees is convenient, even for the case of registering them:

“You know how it is in any normal country, the church has its own parish, if you are a parish, you pay, like a membership fee to the church. Whoever pays is considered as a believer. This is the only source of income for the church, the parish funds the church. That is why, the number of believers is 45-50%, 25% in Czech Republic, 60% in some countries and not 94% like it is in Georgia” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Some politicians expressed the opposite opinion. To them, it is impossible for the church to exist with just the parishioners’ funding, simply because large organizations based on membership fees cannot maintain themselves. One of the politicians also used this history-based argument:

“There are no churches and monasteries enriched and maintained by selling candles. It was a like that all the time, the civic government was always helping the ecclesiastic government. This was the case during Queen Tamar’s and King David’s time and this will be the case for the future governments” (an in-depth Interview, a politician).

The issues regarding the anti-discrimination law were especially emphasized in the in-depth interviews with politicians. One of the respondents thinks that the troubles concerning the anti-discrimination law was a subject mainly to the elite, while it did not reach a broader section of society. Several politicians express pride at the ability of parliament to pass this law. According to the majority of politicians generally, the contemporary politics adjusts to fit the interest of the masses and does not attempt to introduce values, which is why passing the anti-discrimination law is seen as a brave step. The politicians are certain that this law could not have received endorsement in the case of a referendum, which suggests that in this case the political elite chose the top-down approach of introducing values. One of the interviewed politicians criticizes the anti-discrimination law, noting that the law was passed quickly and secretly with the imposed influence from the West:

“How they did all of this? Secretly so that no committee sitting was held; it was a fiction, as if it was held and there was certain basis so that they should pass it in one week. This caused 100.000 people to come out into the streets. What happened really? Nothing at all. What happened, with granting them legal status of the public law? Nothing at all. But such a picture was created, someone wanted to cause an artificial provocation in society with this action, so that in the future the public defender could report that as if there is an Armenophobia in Georgia” (an in-depth Interview, a politician).

The representative of the church maintains the same position. In his opinion, the church raised concerns over the rush and lack of consideration of certain nuances when the government passed the anti-discrimination law.

Regarding the relationship between the church and state, the young participants of this study’s focus groups expressed negative attitudes towards giving the priority to Orthodoxy and the discrimination of other religious groups:

“If the Georgian Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate would be prioritized according to my interests, it can be good, but on the other hand, my personal interests end there, where the state’s interests starts, and I don’t think that it’s in the interest of the state that one concrete group be in better condition and second group be oppressed. Incorrect perceptions of those values and functions causes polarization” (the focus group, a female participant, 24-30).

The majority of experts, politicians and representatives of NGOs think that an alternative model of funding the church would be appropriate. However, they also believe, at this stage, the political elites have no readiness or will for such a change. Moreover, cutting church funding is viewed as unrealistic step, even akin to political suicide.

Religion in Education

The classical theories of nationalism regard universal education as one of the best instruments for establishing unified values for national identity (ანდერსონი, 2003;²⁶ Gellner, 1981).²⁷ Representatives in education and the experts interviewed suggest that, despite formal secularism, the sphere of education is not free from the impact of the Orthodox Church; also, it is evident that the institution attempts to be involved in educational issues. Representatives within the sphere of education suggest universal education enforces a cultural norm, according to which, Georgians have always held the role of the victim to big states, while Orthodoxy helped protect identity and preserve uniqueness. They believe history books, and their audience, to have successfully spread this norm. Their opinions are supported by the research conducted by the Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI) in 2016, *Reflecting religious and ethnic diversity in school textbooks*.²⁸ The TDI research studied the intercultural aspects reflected in the general education books officially approved for Georgian schools. All officially approved Georgian language

26 Anderson, B., *Imagined Societies*, publishing house *Language and Culture*, 2003.

27 Gellner, B., *Nationalism*, London School of Economics and Political Science, Theory and Society 10, pp. 753-776, 1981.

28 Tolerance and Diversity Institute, research authors- Mindiashvili, B., Gakheladze, G., & Taboradze, I., *Assisting tolerance, freedom of religion and protecting human rights in Georgia*. The study was conducted in the scope of the coalition project, with assistance from the Embassy of the Netherlands. http://tdi.ge/sites/default/files/saxelmzgvaneloebis_analizi_tdi_2016.pdf

and literature textbooks and the history and civic education books used in grades 9-12 were selected for the study. The results revealed the absence of religious and ethnic diversity or freedom of religion in the textbooks, while biased attitude is demonstrated towards Christianity.

The experts interviewed in scope of our study note that school programs, textbooks and curriculums vividly reflect the Georgian nation's cultural concepts. Thus, they consider the education system an ally of the church, and a tool of spreading ethno-religious nationalism. One of the experts thinks the education system was once used to disseminate Soviet ideology, and after the restoration of Georgian independence, the system replaced Soviet ideology with Orthodox ideology. A representative in education suggests the issue of legitimization is also noteworthy: if educational institutions once received legitimization by the state, now they are legitimized by the church. The respondent sees the expression of the church's role as legitimizer in newly established norm such as hanging prevalent pictures of the Patriarch or

According to the interviewed experts, the influence of the Orthodox Church is particularly notable in textbooks of Georgian history and language. Other Christian religions are not at all visible, or they are mentioned in a negative context, while Islam is represented as hostile religion because it is linked to invaders of Georgia. However, the textbooks' perception of Russia is not similar:

"We don't say that Orthodoxy occupied us, we say that the Russian empire occupied us. When we mention Turkey or Iran, we say that a Muslim army invaded us" (an in-depth Interview, an expert).

In experts' opinion, hagiographic material has been granted excessive attention, which in itself helps construct an ethno-religious identity and serves the church's interests:

"In fact, whole 10th grade textbook is teaching Christian texts, teaching Christianity and also the entire historic discourse is directed at linking Christianity and ethnicity" (an in-depth Interview, an expert).

Education sphere representatives think that the educational discourse is nationalistic and xenophobic, teachers considering as their obligation to spread it. According to the respondents although it does not comply with official directives, teachers understand their role this way and this creates serious problems in the formation of national identity:

“They imagine that they have to raise pupils to be patriots, in the sense that they preserved their identity in religious aspects for instance, and this is a serious problem” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

Representatives in education consider that church initiatives, which interfere in the content of textbooks, require attention. One of the respondents states, such initiatives were remarkably intensive in 2004-2005, when the ministry of education was regularly involved in a discussion initiated by organizations associated with the church (for example, the “Orthodox Parent’s Union”, “Davitiani”, etc.) The ministry later decided to solve such issues directly with the Patriarchate. The representative in education defines that during that time, the church and the ministry constantly demanded compromises from each other. The church supposed the constitutional agreement gave them the right to interfere not only in issues directly related to religion, but also to define the content of the curriculum in Georgian literature and history. Representative in the sphere of education notes that the relationship between the church and the ministry resembled bargaining, because the church demanded material benefits in return for not complicating the situation.

The representatives in education state that despite secularity, schools and universities are filled with religious influence. In their opinion, this is not a one-sided process: the church constantly tries to interfere in the educational process, while equally, teachers and parents demand more attention on the topic of religion. A clear example is seen in the names of private schools, which are offering Georgian-Western “hybrids”:

“St. George’s British School” or the “Georgian-American Academy”. They want to show that impious and graceless Georgians will not be raised here while the quality will be with foreign standards, values internal. Quality is not a value, it is a technical characteristic, content is domestic” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

One of the representatives in education suggests sharing spaces and the interference of sacred institutions in a secular space is problematic. It is forbidden to display religious symbols in classes, but religion is still delivered to students, for instance, by handing out religious calendars or a church opening in a schoolyard. The respondent also states that it is very common to build churches within universities.

According to the other respondent in education sphere, having place for worship in a school is not a problem:

"There is a church next to this class-room and I want to say that you won't feel religious indoctrination in this school, besides the fact that teachers are part of the parish of this church etc., there are 213 teachers and I can say that only 2 are biased religiously" (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

Interviewed representative of the church thinks the politics of not allowing the clergy to "enter" schools further creates a series of social problems:

"The church is not allowed to enter schools... instead, we have kids who swear at streets and increased immorality, prostitution, premature abortions and disaster, what is happening? Don't you want to take preventive measures? All right, then you get this" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

In the opinion of the representative of church, improving personality starts by improving one's soul, and the church is the nation's soul. If there is a problem, one has to start working on the issue with the church. Although, this respondent specifies that the church does not currently have the necessary resources to teach in schools. Whereas, when it comes to not allowing the church into schools, the representative in education does not follow the clergy's view. According to him, the rules do not represent the reality:

"The state has written in the law that proselytism is not allowed, but reality is different. For example, the ministry can put up a photo and it really does: a minister comes to a newly repaired school, which has a cross on the door, the sign that it is consecrated. They cannot understand that this is a violation of the law, or maybe they are aware, I don't know. In any case, the government often prefers for them not to be aware or to turn it into a hidden message" (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

A representative in education, interviewed within the scope of this study, observes that one of the problems within the sphere of education is the teaching of sacralized history, which lacks specific compiled events and critical analysis. The aforementioned connection is evident from the

interviewed priest's discourse, when he discusses David Aghmashenebeli. In his opinion, the greatness of David as a Georgian was not due to his skills or intelligence, but because he was a good Christian. He states that David never mentioned Georgia in his speeches with soldiers before battles, which in his interpretation implies that David placed Christianity above the homeland.

The tendency to perceive history and religion as a one entity is also evident from the conducted focus groups. While pointing out certain values, middle aged and older respondents often combine the two components. When discussing Georgian pride, two categories of ethnic nationalism, history and religion, are interlinked in the heroic examples of Orthodox ancestors: As one respondent recalls:

"I was very proud when I learned that near the Metekhi bridge 10,000 martyrs did not stamp the icon and due to this they were beheaded and thrown into Mtkvari" (the focus Group, a female participant, 31-45).

Philosopher Giga Zedania argues that the Orthodox Church's canonization of Ilia Chavchavadze, in 1987, under the title Saint Ilia the Just, is one of the vivid examples of the sacralization of secularism. He believes this can be regarded as the starting point of forming a religious nationalism, which defines itself as the successor of Georgian nationalism in the nineteenth century, although, in reality the two are very different (Zedania, 2009).

Interviews with experts, representatives in education and in NGOs revealed that, in terms of interrelation between education and religion, several key problems exist. The issues confronted are, the dominance of Orthodox discourses in textbooks, teachers perceiving their missions as distributors of ethno-religious values, attempts of the church to interfere in the creation of study programs and entering the sphere of education, transforming religion as a legitimizer of education and teaching history and Georgian literature in a sacralized form. The in-depth interviews expose that this is the increasing problem, and the empowerment of religion in education is becoming more and more evident.

The Church as a Censor

Experts and representatives of NGOs interviewed for this research believe the church interferes in spheres that should be free from religious influences based on the principle that the secular state. One of the interviewed politicians notes there are groups affiliated with the church,

which have attempts to establish informal censorship; expressed by disrupting public lectures, violence towards individuals, etc. The politician identified the “Orthodox Parents Union” as one of such group. According to the respondent such actions significantly affect the look of national identity, because people start to believe that “Georgianness” is expressed in this kind of behaviour.

Interviewed media representatives also consider the church as a controlling institution. According to one of the respondents the journalists from their television channel restrain from critical stories related to the church. Furthermore, this abstention sometimes bears the characteristics of self-censorship. Journalists still take into consideration the dominance of the Orthodox Church and avoid conflict with this “imagined power”:

“I think 95 or 90% of the people in the country are fanatically religious and if we say the truth when we don’t like something from the church, this can cause serious confrontation, we can have a war (...) I know exactly, that the representatives of the church together with the population can break in and beat us because there have been such examples” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

Alongside self-censorship, interference of the church as an institution is mentioned in interviews with representatives of the media. For example, one of the respondents recollects a story about the opening of a foundation connected to the Patriarchate which could not be aired in the news because of the fixed running time of the program.

“They called me and said: “have you blocked the Patriarch?”. I was furious, because the Patriarch is very often on our channel. Every Easter, a celebration or baptizing is reported and covered. This is very bad pressure in my opinion and I was very angry” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

Despite this, representatives of media state that they cover everything objectively in the news, for example, the full coverage of the events of May 17th. Although, in the case of thematic coverage they are obliged to self-censor, because this can be perceived as the initiatives of television channels, and could be used as a reason to attack a channel.

The interviewed NGO representatives also discuss the church’s influence as a “censor”. In their opinion, the NGO sector typically does the monitoring

of the government, and subsequently tries to influence the government. However, NGOs are constantly having problems from representatives of the church, having certain leverages in political processes. According to one of the NGO representatives, the church's influence is especially strong in periods when politicians are dependent on the people's opinion; and this tendency is also evident in the executive branch of the government:

"During the election campaign, they [politicians] try to be less engaged with the topics, which are scandalous, and it can cause the anger of church." (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

According to the interviewed experts by becoming more active in public spaces and establishing societal norms, the church aims to regain their past role of "censor". In the experts' opinion, the church already censors various different spheres, but it wants further to legalize its role as "censor".

Discourse Opposing the Church

The interviewed experts think the monopoly of the church is disrupted by actors who try to create a space for critical thinking. An interesting classification was suggested by experts, which lists new and old agents of socialization. Old wave of agents include: the church, public schools and families. While, the newer agents are NGOs and certain higher education institutions, (for instance, Ilia State University and the Free University).

The existence of the agents offering alternative discourses, in experts' opinion, help promote critical attitudes towards information delivered as an "absolute truth". Experts clarify that the most open confrontation remains between the church and NGOs, because NGOs attempt find different foundations, other than the church, in Georgian identity.

Representatives of NGOs agree with experts' opinion: the in-depth interviews indicate that NGOs contradict the ethno-religious nationalism offered by the church. On the other hand the conflict is fuelled by church's intervention in the public space, and thus the erosion of secular principles. One of the respondents believes that while the state and the church were considered rivals during Saakashvili's government, the current government has a comparatively harmonious relationship with the church; and the non-governmental sector is the only retaining factor in the relationship:

"Now I am saying that, in principle, the church and government are married, they have an absolutely content relationship, they

are happy, but the main line of battle is open between civil society and the church. It is not a coincidence that main themes, which are problematic due to church's opinion, are LGBT issues, women rights, the anti-discrimination law, etc. Those are the issues which show the value-based difference between the church and civil society quite well." (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

Religious minorities are thought to be proposing an alternative perspective to the religious discourse according to experts and NGOs. They consider the very existence of religious minorities proves that not every Georgian is Orthodox. One of the experts mentioned the Union of Georgian Muslims as an example, which tries to establish the image of Georgian Muslim and to remind people that Muslims can also have a civic identity. It is also important to mention that interviewed representative of the church stated that losing Batumi, particularly its Muslim expansion, is an international threat.

A representative of the church feels only Orthodox religion gives the opportunity for national self-expression, whereas all other religions oppress and homogenize nationality:

"There is no such thing a particularly Georgian Muslim culture. By the way, not because Georgian Muslims cannot create anything. The thing is that Muslim religion itself does not gives an opportunity to create... The architecture is standard, mosques are standard, there are not icons and hence the universalization is occurring. You cannot create your national culture in Islam, you cannot create your national culture in Catholicism" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

This citation proves the experts' opinion that the Orthodox Church attempts to connect ethnicity and faith creating the strong construct out of this.

The Church in the Global Context and the Era of Modernization

Representative of the church interviewed for this study often mentions uniqueness of Georgian traditions and culture:

"Identification and preserving the Georgian soul, this is a Christian soul, which comprises in itself, as I said before, Georgian culture, that true culture, which is absolutely unique in the world. There is no other like it, it is evident from one look" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The sociologist Manuel Castells writes that the actualization of traditional identities is a characteristic of the new age, which breaks the old rules and imposes a threat to traditional norms (Castells, 2009). The focus groups demonstrate the participants' fear of globalization. While, the fear of losing national identity due to globalization is less evident in those aged 18-30, the 31+ age groups think information coming from the media contradicts national values. In addition, the respondents think that the guarantee of preserving traditions and uniqueness is the Georgian Orthodox Church. Religious and sexual minorities are considered threats to traditional values, and the focus group participants link the liberal approach towards them to Georgia's approximation with Europe: this causes doubts towards the West, and provides a reason to blame the government in its submission to the West.

According to the interviewed experts, the reasons behind such fears are low levels of education, poor awareness, insufficient quality of urbanization and the anti-Western propaganda by pro-Russian forces. The experts suggest the connection between ethnic national identity and religious identity started at the end of 1990-ies. The church, at the time, tailored the niche deterring pluralism and became the defender of homogeneity, which is usually in high demand in the context of anxiety during the transitional period (Delanty, 2008).

Low levels of education and poor social-economic conditions enhances the image of the church as the only tangible entity:

"We live in a society, a state which is not economically strong, nor with a high quality of education and literacy, there is quite an apathy in certain groups, in the youth... There is only one way out- "god help me". Individuals with such a background will enter the [church's] institution where they often tell you, that you don't need to think about anything, or read, nor the literature based on which they are talking to you –'just listen to this, how I translate it and this is ticket for you, to be better off than you are now, otherwise you will feel much worse" (an in-depth Interview, an expert).

The results of the focus groups reveal that religion is linked to something permanent, which saved the Georgian nation and which is the basis for national pride and identity. The experts note that instability characteristic to modernization is the reason for the extremely high level of trust towards the

Patriarchate. Fear alongside the need for stability in turbulent times drives people to the institutions, which, from peoples' childhood, is associated with strength and consistency. If the government is often linked to frustrations and the inability to solve problems, the church is in the role of constraining transformations and defending traditions. According to the experts, the inability of other institutions to fulfill their responsibilities caused the church's strengthening moral authority in the post-Soviet period. At the time, the church took certain obligations on itself, many of which went beyond its competency. The interviewed experts doubt that church is really such a stable institution, and clarify that this is more an imagined position.

"When they say that the church was permanently there and they talk about its strength, we know that this is a very big illusion, there was no such thing. In reality before 1990, the church never played an important role in Georgian life. This was not its fault, but in any case this is an imagined stability and an imagined continuity" (an in-depth Interview, an expert).

The interviewed experts consider a lack of trust towards political institutions and nihilism to have a negative impact on the formation of the state and to cause yet more people to turn towards the church. Interviewed politicians also discuss this issue:

"I think the influence of the church is caused mostly by fear and the need to find eternal authority and to lean on it. There were no permanent staff left- the Soviet regime was unbreakable, principles of life were set and people were not thinking about the church. When everything was destroyed and politics became dynamic, uncertainty and fear of tomorrow dramatically increased. So they thought that the church should take care of them. But I don't think that this is due to the deep belief, this influence is shallow anyway" (an in-depth Interview, a politician).

According to the experts, Soviet Union left Georgians with fear of freedom, and being different, which the church successfully used to attract devotees. As respondents note the church offers collectivist culture instead of an individualist understanding of freedom. In experts' opinion, by the church encouraging collectivism it causes the rejection of everything different and is a barrier for the individualistic culture, which thus turns the

contemporary Orthodox Church into somewhat anti-Western power. One of the interviewed NGOs representatives suggests that next to the anti-Western propaganda of the church, there are pro-Russian forces presenting themselves as defenders of traditions.

Along with the increasing anxiety following modernization, it has become popular to find a common connection to Russia – the Orthodoxy. Theoreticians believe nationalism often drives religion, but not vice versa. Even though there are cases of transnational religious solidarity, it is not always able to stop the conflicts among peoples of religious denomination. The 2008 war between Georgia and Russia stands as an example, when neither Patriarch of the two Orthodox countries was able to avoid the conflict (Loizides, 2009). As the focus groups show, despite the occupation of Georgian territories by Russia, religious factors still determine their ambivalent attitude towards Russia. The majority of young respondents (18-30) believe the common faith with Russia determines the nations' closeness.

It is noteworthy that according to most young participants, society finds common faith important; however, they distance themselves from it. In the older generation, certain respondents disagree with the justification of common faith with Russia. One participant questions the religiosity of the Russians themselves:

“Besides Orthodoxy we don't have anything in common and I have not seen yet an Orthodox Russian. They have saints and clergy, faith and religious life is not widespread there” (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

Russia is considered, by one of the respondents, to be the most treacherous and hypocritical enemy, one who hides behind the mask of Orthodoxy. In his view, it is impossible to resolve problems relating to Russia due to the “Fifth Column”, which changes the direction of processes (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55). Whereas, one participant believes Orthodoxy should not be used to justify the situation:

“We say that it is an Orthodox nation, but I don't want Russia or any other Orthodox nation, if it harasses the values of my country” (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

Regarding notable sympathies towards Russia, one of the interviewed politicians holds an interesting perspective; he considers the end of the

Soviet period as the culmination of Georgia's "productivity". According to him, between the 1960-1980s representatives of Georgian literature, sport and science achieved remarkable success. He continues to suggest the period after the 1980s created degradation, which he believes was caused by the domination of commercial interests over national interests. A representative of the church also agrees with this view:

"We are free for 25 years, which Georgian culture and sciences was revived during these 25 years not having roots in the past? Every existing sphere had roots in the past and in 19th-20th centuries; it started with literature in the 19th century and then with science, literature and sport in the 20th century. It was an amazing revival, let's remember: for instance our team in football. Have Georgians been degraded and where did our talent go, why we were not able to create such team anymore? (...) I have a question: all right it was terrible, an occupant has destroyed us, but how many things were created during this period in the sense of culture, sports, sciences, religion? I have a question; we are free for 25 years, why we have not done anything?" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The representative of church believes the West has already lost any trust it had gained in Georgia, while Georgian aggression towards Russia is slowly diminishing:

"There were very drastic anti-Russian attitudes after the collapse of the Soviet Union and sympathy towards the West, but after the West started the circulation of the immorality, I don't know who is doing this or how or what is the aim, this slowly weakened hatred towards Russia and strengthened fear towards the West. If there was Russophobia in the past, now we have Westernophobia" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The interviewed politicians further suggest there is no absolutism in the political sphere nowadays - one cannot say that all members of any political party fully share either ethnic or civic view of nationalism. Despite this, actors of the ethno nationalistic discourse are more associated with negative attitude toward the West, and a loyal stance towards Russia. One of the politicians states that Russia uses common faith to benefit itself, which

is especially connected to the demonization of West. According to Russia and pro-Russian forces, the West is associated to the threat of disappearing Orthodoxy.

In conclusion, one can say that while describing Georgian nationalism, experts emphasize its ethnic features, while they also discuss the lack, or absence, of the values accompanying civic nationalism. They consider the church as a societal factor that largely defines the existing type of nationalism and hinders the formation of civic nationalism.

Based on the results of the in-depth interviews, from the restoration of Georgian independence onwards, one can see the changeable relationship between the church and the state. However, for certain reasons the government has always avoided confrontation with the church. As a result, the contemporary church has become an influential institution in a social and a material sense.

Part of the experts believes, at this stage, it is difficult to define the look of Georgian identity precisely, largely because it is still in the process of formation. One cannot assert that national identity is currently under the influence of any particular institute, even the church. While religion has become stronger as a characteristic of national identity, the number of alternative discourses have also increased, which is characteristic for the modern processes.

3.2. Modern Georgian Society

3.2.1. Social and State Institutions and their Meanings

The experts interviewed during the scope of this study identified the following social and state institutions as influencing Georgian national identity: the socio-political system, the media, education, non-governmental organizations and the Georgian Orthodox Church.²⁹ The conducted focus groups also revealed interesting result related to these institutions.

The data derived from the focus groups and the expert interviews motivated additional interviews with the representatives of each key institution, which in various ways influence certain characteristics of

²⁹ Later used as a church.

Georgian national identity. The actors defined their influence in the process of the formation and shaping of national identity and of social values, and assess the degree of trust society grants them and, finally, they try to outline the problems and challenges they face.

Expert Assessment of Political Systems

Data from the Caucasus Barometer, held in 2015, indicates that there is a substantial lack of trust in society towards the political system. Only 4% of the respondents trust the Georgian parliament, 12% somewhat trust, 39% hold a neutral position, where they neither trust nor distrust, 19% somewhat distrust, and 18% fully distrust the institution. With political parties, only 2% of respondents trust them fully, 6% of respondents somewhat trust, 40% maintain a neutral position, 21% somewhat distrust, while 20% fully distrust these parties.³⁰ One can discern from the results that there is a high degree of distrust toward both the parliament and the whole political spectrum.

The data from the Caucasus Barometer corresponds with the assessment of the interviewed experts and actors who influence national identity. The experts believe that mistrust towards political institutions is transformed into political apathy and nihilism, which negatively affects the development of the state. The interviewed experts believe that neither the political system nor political parties are sufficiently developed. Therefore, their influences on the characteristics of national identity are weak. One representative within education thinks that Georgian citizens view the state as a formality, in which there is very little trust. Furthermore, politicians' initiatives are considered as imposed by international actors, which will fail to be implemented or will be executed only on a formal level:

"When the state says that we want to have an anti-discrimination law people think: they [Europe] ordered it and that is why, otherwise you know, that you don't want it by yourselves as well. This cynical attitude comes from the Soviet Union. When you know that your boss is somewhere outside and you fulfill certain parts of his/ her tasks partially and you are all in agreement. And there is an idea of cheating: let's do it, but badly" (an-depth interview, a representative in education).

30 Caucasus Research Resource Center- CRRC, *Caucasus Barometer*, 2015. Downloaded from- <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/> {12.08.2016}.

The experts interviewed for this research drew further attention to pro-Russian political groups. They suggest that there is a link between ultra-nationalism and pro-Russian sentiment. Nationalism, they consider, turns to isolationism, which translates to acceptance of Russia. The majority of political groups who preach nationalistic ideas tend to be characterized by apro-Russian position or by communist roots.

The experts criticize political actors for calculating only short-term strategies. They suggest there are no long-term plans in contemporary Georgian politics; for instance, there is no comprehensive plan for building the state, which inevitably harms Georgian statehood. The experts also discuss the disregard for mutual state interests in the political sphere. The experts maintain that there is no understanding of the common good in the Georgian political spectrum.

The Focus Groups' Assessment of Political Systems

The majority of the focus groups participants perceive politics as divisive and their mistrust towards politicians is evident. Poor economic conditions and unemployment are the main reasons for participants' disappointment and discontent. The background social-economic problems, which ought to be prominent in national identity, are perceived as significant issues.

The younger respondents (18-30) consider that attitudes towards politics split society. In some cases, Georgian society is united around political values, but instead of solidarity, they are unified in their hatred towards their opponents. Young participants link political activity and economic factors to one another. They evaluate that elections, and the support of certain political figures, are defined by popular expectations that a new political power will improve the country's material status. The respondents, aged 31-45, believe Georgian society is divided by its current political circumstances and confrontations in political opinion. They further criticize the government's policy, and consider it to worsen unemployment and the economic situation. These respondents further express discontent towards the government because it supports religious and sexual minorities, which violates rights of orthodox citizens. The results of the focus group reveal that integration with Europe and the desire to join Western structures are often perceived as imposed. Middle-aged respondents in particular see a threat of incoming European values, and consider the political elite the bearer of these values.

The participants aged 46-55 regret that Georgia does not have a “National government”, which could implement effective policies against the expansions of Western values. They also identified politics as a dividing value and the respondents pointed to inter-political sympathies. This age group notes that society is divided between the supporters of the opposition and of the government. They consider the country to be in a dire economic and social condition, and the political situation is responsible for these failings. The focus groups suggest “true” ethno-cultural values are impaired by the current situation of the country. While respondents, aged 56+, also express discontent concerning political conditions. They believe the contemporary two party confrontations polarize society. This age group, like others, links the political and economic realities.

Politicians Assessment of Political Systems

Politicians interviewed for this research discussed societal mistrust of the political institution. They note that society is simply tired and disappointed by politics. Certain interviewees explain this deficit of trust by highlighting the lack of responsibility and state-centered nature of the political parties, both of which are necessary for improvement.

One politician explains that, in relation to the formation or change of societal values, the political discourse affects certain people’s opinions. There are voters who actively express support towards political powers, and the political citizens, whose opinions are hardly affected by the political spectrum’s influence.

One politician observes that party ratings and pre-election polls are good indicators of the influence of political parties. While another politician states that pre-election polls do not account for the vast number of still undecided citizens who will vote in the parliamentary election and this can cause disappointment to society. One of the interviewed politician believes it is necessary to change the current Georgian political discourse that often incites conflict:

“Political discourse in Georgia is so plebian, imbued with the language of hatred, that we cannot manage to consolidate in certain occasions, even regarding fundamental issues, that is why, nowadays, political discourse is absolutely unacceptable, despite the fact that I am a part of this discourse too” (an-depth interview, a politician).

The politicians evaluate that, despite the poor level of trust towards the political spectrum, politics still has a certain impact on the formation of national values. Although, the majority of those politicians think that political elite, instead of creating public opinion, try to fit and to rely on it. Therefore, in the politicians' views, political parties influence the formation of values or have a vision for society; however, the inverse process is far stronger. The values and visions of society, including falsehoods, are often reflected in the programs and speeches of the political powers, and these are usually driven by the desire to win elections and control the government. One respondent assess the situation and speaks in general about the backwardness of Georgian politics:

"Politicians, political parties, and political groups have no desire to explain their own values, in which they believe, if they have them at all, those values and visions will be explained to the electorate and make them understand what they mean and why a certain vision is right. In Georgia, and countries like Georgia, political parties and politicians are focused to fit to the values and vision which exist in their society" (an-depth interview, a politician).

One politician, interviewed during this work, considers there is a problem with the incompatibility of politicians' principles to their values, those they are supposed to establish. A clear example of this is the anti-discrimination law, passed in 2014, which failed to change public opinion, though it had official support from the majority of parliament. The reality remains that many parliamentarians themselves did not share the aspirations of the law. Other politicians consider acceptance of the anti-discrimination law as an epochal event. It was not possible to adopt this law via a referendum, thus parliament took the responsibility, and instead of fitting public opinion, they created a new reality:

"The reason you are public servant, a public figure, a law maker is that in certain situations, you have to decide this and even incite public opinion towards this and not vice versa. You have to take responsibility in regards to certain issues, otherwise the country will not be built" (an-depth interview, a politician).

One politician thinks that in Georgian politics, topics related to national identity are manipulated and distorted by the powers, who are against

national identity and originality. This politician suggests that Russia tries to use orthodoxy as a factor to fabricate danger, which can threaten Georgian society and its integration with the West, for instance issues related to religion or peoples' sexual orientation. Political groups associated with Russia manipulate society with such threats. The politician concludes that the West and Western civilization does not threaten Georgian originality, but respects Georgian culture and national identity, unlike the pro-Russian forces pushing Georgia. It is noteworthy that the interviewed politicians critical of Europe use a type of "hybrid mix" for election promises:

"European form and Georgian national content, this are the givens, which will definitely get support of a big part of society in future political fights, I mean the election" (an-depth interview, a politician).

The politicians point out their partnerships with the media and NGOs. In their perspective, the media gives them the greatest part of the TV broadcasts. While, as an example the partnership with the non-governmental sector, one politician names the draft law on "animals right" created by a relevant committee of parliament:

"We adopted this very European draft law and it will probably become a law, but this is the result of partnership with certain NGO activists and parliamentarians, and this will affect public consciousness because, someone will arrange in Gardabani a rooster or dog fight. Police will close their eyes, but we will have a law, that they are acting illegally. Now we don't even have a law that they are acting illegally" (an-depth interview, a politician).

One respondent named the church as a key social institution that conflicts with politics. Although, the church's influence is regarded as superficial, and the high level of trust towards the church is caused by a human predisposition to find as table basis in a faltering political environment. One interviewee believes certain politicians aspire, unacceptably, to develop the morality of public consciousness. In his opinion, morality is not a political concern, and it is not appropriate to mix political and moral issues:

"Politicians are trying to become the guardians of morality, they are taking up the church's function, while their aim is to defend human beings, they defend god from human beings, they defend the church from human beings" (an-depth interview, a politician).

Of the current challenges political actors face, education is named as the main priority.

Expert Assessment of the Church

Nearly every expert interviewed named the church as the most powerful of the institutions currently influencing national identity. The church's power is centered on societal trust. A vast number of the Georgian population, 81%, considers themselves Orthodox Christian.³¹ The quantitative data of the 2015 Caucasus Barometer identifies the respondents' trust in religious institutions. The church is fully trusted by 46%, partially trusted by 34%, neither trusted nor distrusted by 14%, partially distrusted 2% and fully distrusted by 1%.³² As the quantitative data reveals, the overall indicator for trust is 80%, while the indicator for distrust is only 3%.

The experts' opinions mostly typically coincide with the qualitative data from the Caucasus Barometer. In the experts assessment, the contemporary church has the greatest trust from society, which shows that this institution also has the greatest impact on the process of forming national identity. Furthermore, in terms of trust, the orthodox Christian Patriarch, Ilia II, is considered an important figure:

"In modern Georgia, the most active is the one who is declared by the society as their spiritual leader, not necessarily as an individual, but this individual as well plays a big role, but the institution as well, entirely" (an-depth interview, an expert).

The experts view the fluctuations characteristic of modernization as a significant factor for societal trust in the Patriarchate and the Patriarch. They believe the fear of change and uncertainty makes people look to orthodoxy, which is associated with constancy and strength. The experts suggest political powers are often viewed as unable to solve problems related to the process of change, whereas the church is a deterrent of such changes and defends traditions. The experts think that the strengthening of the church's authority started in 1990, when the authority of nearly all state and social institutions were failing to fulfill their proper functions.

31 Caucasus Research Resource Center- CRRC, *Caucasus Barometer*, 2013. Downloaded from- <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/> {12.08.2016}.

32 Caucasus Research Resource Center- CRRC, *Caucasus Barometer*, 2015. Downloaded from- <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/> {12.08.2016}.

The experts observe that the loyalty of society to the Orthodox Church can be explained not by religious or spiritual matters, rather by political factors. Orthodoxy is currently identified with nationality and patriotism, which is the reason for the church's elevation.

The narrative of the Orthodox Church implies a bright Georgia with a messianic attitude, which presents orthodoxy as an exclusive and distinctive faith, this, the experts believe, threatens the formation of a more inclusive and universally civic national identity. The experts regard it as one of society's most significant problems as the current perception of the religious majority, which excludes many different groups.

The vast amount of state funding is a crucial explanation for the church's strength. Most of the experts consider the current financing to be improper and in need of change. However, they see no readiness of the political elite to resolve these issues.

The Focus Groups' evaluation of the Church

The younger respondents (18-30) think faith is a main value around which society ought to unite. Unfortunately, faith is too often associated with a conflict of values, and Georgian society is divided into believers and disbelievers. According to the youth, May 17th, 2013, was an expression of this conflict, when the clergy and their parish began to protest violently. These respondents negatively assess the actions of the priests involved, because they believe it is simply unacceptable for representatives of the church to express aggression or violence. Whereas, the respondents, aged 31-45, consider the church an institution that cares about the preservation of the Georgia nation and societal opinions. They also think it is proper for the church to have these functions. For the older generation (46+), orthodoxy, going to church and the stories of Georgian saints are a source of pride.

The Position of the Church Representatives

One representative of the church explains that his institution, in this case, is not to be considered as the mystic body of Christ, rather as an administrative unit. The church maintains the role of a so-called buffer between the true church, the mystic body, and the other world. The representative suggests the Georgian Orthodox Church has the greatest influence in the process of forming national identity. In his evaluation, the Orthodox Church has advanced the development of Georgian culture:

“Can someone name something in Georgian culture which is not strengthened or given from church? And, if you find something like this, this will be pagan relics, which distort our lives even today... Orthodoxy was the one and only thing in Georgian history, on which Georgian culture itself was developing. That is why now I don’t see Georgia without the church, not the European union or not anything else like communism could create Georgian culture” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

He continues to call the activities of NGOs as an “annexation of immorality”. He also considers it unwise for Georgian NGOs to accept finance from the West:

“If I am leader of the West, I don’t care about my friend Georgia, in the degree that to guess what are the problems of people from there? I don’t care if some small organizations are financing some non-governmental organizations, and if I guess, that their activity incites phobias and fears towards Western or American values, I don’t care in that degree, to restrain and stop this?” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

One can assume, from the in-depth interview with a member of the clergy, that the greatest challenge currently facing the church is the illiteracy of the parish as well as the clergy. According to the representative of the church, the first role model for the parish should be the church itself.

Expert and Actors’ Assessment of the Media

Of the interviewed respondents in the quantitative research of Caucasus Barometer 54% neither trust nor distrust the media. Only 4% of the respondents fully trust the media, 18% partially trust, 10% partially distrust, and 6% fully distrust the media.³³ As one can discern from the data, there is no sharp indicator for trust or distrust towards the media, as was the case for political parties and for the church.

The experts interviewed for this study believe if there were no media, it would be impossible for societal self-awareness to quickly adapt or change. They welcome the diversity of the media, and think that media pluralism supports different visions and values:

³³ Caucasus Research Resource Center- CRRRC, *Caucasus Barometer*, 2015. Downloaded from- <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/> {12.08.2016}.

“Our society is starting to observe that people are different, that not everyone can have the same lifestyle and people can have different opinions and different values, and also perceptions towards gender roles and violence is rapidly changing, and this is with no doubt supported by the media” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

While a representative of an NGO links political parties to certain branches of the media. Political parties create the agenda for their media for social groups, while it is difficult for activists groups to influence the media. The representative criticizes the media for politicizing social issues. They also blame the media, in some cases, for bias and improper coverage of unpopular topics:

“Because there was a pre-election period [May, 2013] even the most critical oppositional television did not air a mainstream show of May 17 events, or said that the church was celebrating the day of family holiness and this story had this context, 2013 May events were not aired at all. Therefore, it is evident how politicized the media is and in some cases conducive of concrete party interests” (an in-depth interview, representative of the NGO sector).

A representative in education considers it a problem that foreign news is only covered with negative connotations; there are only ever stories about the terrible events happening around the world. The respondent believes viewers are given a negative impression, and thus do not expect positive international events, which pushes them towards isolationism.

The interviewed experts state that the media must devote more time to the issues of ethnic minorities and to increasing ethnic involvement. These experts consider it essential to improve the coverage of Georgian language media, because the people living in Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, are typically Russian, Armenian or Azeri language users. The experts indicate that resolving issues may require time, but it does not require intensive work.

The Focus Group’Assessment of the Media

The focus groups conducted during this work mostly associate the media with the threat to loss the national identity. In the respondents’ opinion, the media serves to polarize society.

One young respondent, aged 18-30, thinks the media promotes false values. Those respondents aged 31-45 believe that delivering uncontrolled

information can lead to the improper development of the younger generation.

They further link the media to the process of polarizing society. While, the 46-55 age group agree that television is full of poor quality shows, which can detrimentally affect the formation of the younger generation. The respondents pointed out that they find the LGBT community unacceptable and the community's "parading" has become a permanent occupation of the media. This group perceives the media as a manipulator, and they negatively assess the media's attempts to create a positive attitude to globalization. Often, they believe, information disseminated by the media goes against national values and creates a threat to the correct development of younger generation:

"As there is a failed government, so is society, you can be very active but communications are preaching the anti, and how the next generation will be, no one knows. This is the devastation of Georgianness" (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

The 56+ age group criticize the negativity of all television channels, alongside their "immorality" and "promotion of anti-Georgian values". These respondents think the media supports the loss of Georgian traditions and values, and stir hatred and envy into people, which can split society.

The Position of Media Representatives

The interviewed members of the media believe the media plays a key role in the process of democratization. As one representative explains, the media, without bias or distortion, has to represent the ongoing process in the country and has to explain these practices, while it also has to support the development positive processes. For this, the media has to create an informational space where it is possible to discuss pressing issues, which will simplify the direction of the state:

"The media has to create a platform for holding discussions on the issues important to society. Although those discussions have to have a subject, and don't have to look like useless squabbling between confronting sides etc. The Agora has to be created for that, for people to counsel what they want. We have not yet decided what we want. We have not said what type of state are we building, what relations have to be between citizens, what kind of relations have to be

between state institutions” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

This representative’s assessment shows the Georgian media has had difficult experiences with bias to the political agenda. While one journalist states that media outlets are biased, even today, towards certain political and economic groups, which makes them of interest to these groups. Despite this, the respondent does not see a problem for legitimization of the media. Considering the significant extent of polarization in Georgia, media outlets representing distinctive interest group negatively reflect the relationships of the audiences, parties and media outlets themselves, which end up at conflicting “poles”.

One member of the media criticizes the Georgian media for always starting with a negative viewpoint. This respondent explains that constructivism is not popular in Georgia, while much attention is given to this approach in Western media:

“Constructivism does not mean propaganda of certain events, constructivism means that you don’t mind covering positive tendencies, because they are positive” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

The representative suggests that constantly covering cultural, political or social events in a negative context creates a sense of total nihilism in society. Thus, the populations’ involvement in public processes is negatively affected. Linking Georgian society’s nihilistic attitudes to the absence of a constructivist approach in the media is particularly noteworthy to the discourse of the focus groups. The groups revealed the frustration and discontent of the populace towards the political spectrum and the media.

A representative of the media identified politics as the priority topic for the media. One respondent also drew attention to culture, in regards to representing the diversity of the country and maintaining cultural identity. Further to that, sport was seen as a priority in helping to unify the country:

“For example, fans of a national football team don’t have either ethnic or religious belongings. They are all supporters at a certain sport event and the representatives of the country they live in” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

In reference to the news, one interviewed journalist suggests the structure

of news programs always maintains three key directions: politics, economics and social topics. It is thought that, in the current social-economic circumstances, social topics are more interesting to society than political issues.

The representatives of the media state that when organizing their programs they are typically guided by the interest of their audience:

*“The media covers topics which are real in society, but in developed medias it happens contrarily. The media makes certain events actual”
(an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).*

While one interviewed respondent views the role of the Georgian media in terms of spreading and establishing pro-Western values. Thus, they regard their channel’s biased position as reasonable:

*“If someone calls us that we are biased, yes we are biased, in the sense that our door is always open for subjects and people who think that Georgia’s future is in Europe or NATO... Our editorial policy is developing that way, that we can help as much as we can to the government in this direction. We are partners of the state and the government itself, for the country to become quickly a member of Euro-Atlantic structures”
(an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).*

One member of the media explains that the audience is interested in emotional topics, which is measured by the ratings:

“When for example, we are talking about certain achievements, when we have the development of the country or such topics, this is less watched. I am observing, that mostly interest is towards emotional topics, which leaves emotion in people, like criminal, social issues as well, they are very emotional topics, this is more actual and can stand out with a high degree of watching” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

One journalist hopes that, together with increasing financial independence, there will be an increase in the quantity of educational programs. While, another journalist states that the channel they represent refuses to create such items, which could only ever be shallow in coverage. This respondent believes their attention is given to the development of civic institutions and to widening the ethic and esthetic worldview of spectators:

“Television will never be an educational center, you cannot conduct

a lecture here, and it is a difficult task. Most important is to deliver as much information as possible in order to incite the desire to know more about the facts you showed to them, and then without you to start this thing independently”(an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

The primary goal of the media in regards to the integration of ethnic minorities in Georgia, according to the representatives, is to link information about national minorities to the entire informational picture and to include it in common broadcasts.

The media representative also discussed the coverage of sexual minorities. Certain interviewed journalists note that these topics are aired according to their order of importance. However, they generally try to improve the acceptance of the LGBT community:

“We always try to show that this is normal, they are part of our society and are the same as me, as you and all the rest, and it is not acceptable to distance a person for their religious or sexual orientation. When you have a pretense that you are European and consider that you share those values, which are shared by Europe and West” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

The media representatives further mentioned the scarcity of resources. One respondent is worried that international topics are not covered sufficiently, because they have correspondents in only one international space.

In one of the media representative’s opinion, increasing competition from the internet is an important challenge to television. Their own research reveals that the young generation uses television and radio far less than their older counterparts. Hence, if they want younger viewers, they have to better present their products and they have to be online.

Expert Assessment of the Sphere of Education

Having a common educational space, according to the theoreticians of nationalism, is a key factor in the aggregated universal understanding of culture (Gellner, 2003)³⁴ and for the formation of an “imagined society” (Anderson, 2003),³⁵ the spreading of shared traditions, myths, value

34 Gellner, E., *Nations and Nationalism*, Nekeri, Tbilisi, 2003.

35 Anderson, B., *Imagined societies, Language and Culture*, Tbilisi, 2003.

and symbols. (Smith, 2009)³⁶. The education system is significant as it represents one of the most important agents of socialization, and the values it creates remain deeply embedded in an individual's consciousness. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that the experts and focus groups identified education as the one of the most important institutions in the formation of national identity.

The interviewed experts regard schools as one of the strongest institutions for creating cultural norms and spreading a shared past. They explain that in terms of spreading national identity, the most powerful tool is the texts, and their readers, created by the education system; they provide the face of the "true" Georgian to students. The experts suggest that Georgia has always been considered the victim of larger states and it has always defended its identity with the support of the church, and this cultural norm was established in schools. The interviewed experts reveal that in educational curriculums, school programs and texts the cultural understanding of the nation is very strong.

The current education system in forming values, the experts believe, that play a role in creating passive citizens. A representative of an NGO states that the one and only thing that retains the current educational system is the introduction of unconditional love and obedience towards authority, which also means that students refrain themselves from extra questions.

One expert considers teachers and the administrations of schools as the main problem within the education system. The expert states that if during Soviet times teachers were serving the party ideology, currently they are occupied by orthodox values. In the expert's opinion, only a few higher educational institutions care about creating alternative, non-exclusive discourses.

The Focus Groups' Assessment of the Sphere of Education

The focus groups conducted within the scope of this study found that education is a hallmark between the generations. Young participants think that they are more oriented to education compared to their parents. While, those aged 46-55 blame the education system for the diverse values of the younger generation. Respondents aged 46-55 suggest their generation had a broader education, whereas the young generation has a poor understanding of elementary subjects. According to those aged 56+ the young generation

36 Smith, A.D., *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*, Routledge, 2009.

may currently have a better education, although they think it a pity that traditional Georgian values are now of less significance. They also consider a good education the precursor to the formation of unifying values like traditionalism, tolerance, religion, a love of the homeland and morality.

The Position of Representatives in Education

The representative in education consider the current Georgian system to be very weak. They note how topics of cultural nationalism are predominant in the contemporary educational discourse:

“Teachers have an image that they have to raise their pupils as patriots in the sense that those people maintain their identity, like in terms of religion, and this is an important problem”(an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

One respondent explains that in a teacher’s nationalistic discourse, attention is focused on external threats, for example, the loss of national traditions or language. A representative in the sphere of education notes that these approaches form xenophobic attitudes in pupils:

“We are raised for the employment market and not for being happy, creative, socially oriented, oriented on changes, the educational system is mostly oriented to fit your social functions well. You have to be a real patriot, work hard, find a good job, learn well, have lots of kids, be an obedient mother” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

One representative criticizes the education system for not equipping pupils with the skills of initiative, nor does it evoke the desire in pupils to try or get to know something new. The respondent believes, alongside content related issues, the technical side of teaching is also backwards and the Georgian education system does not comply with modern demands. For example, pupils are not taught modern ways of communication, even the use of a computer to write an email. Additionally, it is problematic that teachers do not recognize the literature pupils are reading outside school. An educational representative thinks that, ideally, the educational system has to find a free and law-abiding creative person, but firstly requires an appropriate “space”, as in Georgian society it is not able to create this space for the individual. In reality, as the respondent notes, the system is still centered around the conservation

of information, and not on shaping skills. They further criticize the Georgian model of general skills, which are taught as a separate subject:

“General skills are general, that it has to consider his knowledge of every subject and not only in a separate subject. No a subject but a program has to be oriented to form those skills. Therefore, a program has to oriented this way, that pupil really to be skillful and this will be the main value of the brand, which will be called the modern pupil” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

Another respondent suggests the national study plan does take into consideration each of the main values necessary for society in the near future. Although, the student and teacher are the main mechanisms for the realization of the study plan, and there is substantial work needed before the plan can be utilized.

A representative in education also discussed private schools, which were created specifically for identity formation. For example, the Patriarchate’s school, where studying is free or extremely cheap, which helps attract potential students.

For national identity, the teaching of civil education is an important issue. One respondent suggests, due to the problems in finding qualified teachers, the state is trying to create a parallel system for civil education, however, in reality the teachers of civil education are chosen from the same educational cohort. The representative assess civil education, ultimately, as taught by the individuals who do not share the values of the subject, which are supposedly to be transferred to the pupil:

“Those teachers teach things which he, she does not believe, because teaching societal values, those values which are not used in society, puts the teacher and pupil in an awkward situation” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

In collaboration with other actors, the representatives in education note that the Georgian educational system has relationships with many international organizations and with non-governmental organizations, which are supported internationally. It also has a partnership with schools on an administrative level. In the assessment of one representative, the education system is in constant competition with the church, because of the church’s desire to gain influence in various processes.

An interviewed representative in education considers it problematic that there is an absence of any long-term state policy because it substantially hinders the development of the education system, particularly in the necessary expenditure of time. The respondent explains that without a long-term strategic vision the process of reforms, instead of attaining results, they are simply oriented on the process, and therefore it becomes increasingly difficult to understand the goals and essence of the reform:

“The focus on the processes means that any kind of correction is realized, only taking into consideration the processes itself and, in most cases, this correction is due to the absence of final aims, which causes uncertainty of direction. Where is this reform going? In most cases, it turned out, that we think that the reform is going forward but it is like a ship without a compass, is not focused on the goal, this is probably the most serious problem of this reform. It is not possible to plan a strategy properly if you have not defined the final aims” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

One representative in education interviewed for the purpose of this study considers the 2004 educational reforms the wrong step, because they totally neglected the original system. Although, the respondent positively assesses the tendency, which began in 2004, to place pupils at the center of teaching processes, and consequently pupil’s knowledge on theories of education have been substantially improved.

Another representative discerns the values characteristic to the new generation and its positive changes. In his assessment, the new generation is accustomed to free thinking; they no longer fear expressing opinions and they know their rights. Despite the older generations’ reproach of the youth for disregarding duties, in the respondent’s opinion, awareness of one’s rights is a basic stage, which will be followed by an awareness of duties. One representative thinks that pupils already have the skills to find information, although, the choice and differentiation of information remains difficult. Better organizational skills and time-management, alongside a love of freedom are seen as the positive characteristics of the generations born in the independent Georgian state.

One interviewed representative in education suggest that the education system is not autonomous. The state does not want to release its leverage over schools while they remain influential on the electorate:

“Until the state considers school as an electorate, a potential electorate we cannot do anything. Generally, school is the only institution that covers all of society, if we don’t take into consideration mass media communication. Schooling is the second biggest institution, which has a substantial impact on the electorate, therefore the state does not want to let it go, because the state objectively is not oriented on the results of development” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

One representative also discusses the autonomy of schools in relation to the church. He explains that, the current principle of secularity, specified by the law, is not upheld in schools; for example, a teacher can light a candle during a class, and the director of the school will simply disregard the act. In the respondent’s opinion, directors are not motivated enough to change the informal practices of their schools, because if they defend the law, they will have to confront the church.

Expert Assessment of the Non-Governmental Sector

On a theoretical level, the agenda of NGOs overpowers the local space, because as Eisenstadt explains, they belong to “multicultural” and “postmodern” movements and, instead of reconstructing the state, they are connected to global issues and can create an autonomous political, social and cultural sphere (Eisenstadt, 2000).³⁷ The results of this research reveal that the multicultural and autonomous dimensions of NGOs are perceived as a threat. The lack of trust towards the non-governmental sector is proven by the 2015 Caucasus Barometer, in which the majority of respondents, 42%, hold a neutral position, whereas only 4% fully trust NGOs.³⁸ The results of this study reveal that distrust towards NGOs is stipulated mostly by the particular work of an NGO, which the majority of the population often consider unacceptable.

One expert interviewed considers the current Georgian non-governmental sector as the most important of the institutions concerning the formation of civic national identity. Thus, NGOs are inevitably confronted by ethno-cultural national identity. The experts positively assess the existence of radically different attitudes across NGOs, and think that it is a crucial aspect of pluralism in the process of forming identity.

37 Eisenstadt, S., *Multiple Modernities*, Daedalus, 129, pp.1-29, 2000.

38 Caucasus Research Resource Center- CRRRC, *Caucasus Barometer*, 2015. Downloaded from- <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/> {12.08.2016}.

The expert interviews furthermore identified that NGOs act as an intermediary between society and other institutions. In this respect, reactions of NGOs push society to consider and to question the elements other institutions regard as the “only truth”. Thus, the experts think that NGOs support the development of critical thinking even in confrontational individuals:

“The role of non-governmental organizations, in this case, is expressed in that they are pushing if not changing others, who are not members of non-governmental organizations or actors and who don’t have sympathies towards them, in contrast, they can have aggressive attitudes” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The experts’ further note that NGOs offer alternative models for the formation of national identity and that their view of nationalism is chiefly based around civil rights. One expert considers the attempt to create an alternative national identity elucidates the confrontation with NGOs:

“The church has a rival in the formation of new identity in the face of those liberal groups. They are feminists, defenders of different minorities, sexual, religious, ethnic minorities and people, which are trying to carefully consider anew the identity, not traditionally, nor derived from the church, but find foundations for it” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One group of the interviewed experts connect the work of NGOs to the insertion of certain societal ideas and the tendency to change stereotypical attitudes, for example, intolerance of violence towards women, gender equality, etc. Nevertheless, despite this positive evaluation, the experts believe that it is necessary to outline NGOs’ strategies. NGOs spend vast sums, but they do not see changes on such a scale, which would be expected after twenty years’ work. Whereas, the other section of experts state that it is true that NGOs stand out with progressive ideas and they support the development of society, but they have still not gained the trust of society. Therefore, as their influence on society is restricted, their share in the formation of national identity is equally limited.

The Position of the Non-Governmental Sector

Representatives from NGOs evaluate their efforts positively, in many ways they assist the progress of the country; from refining legislation to improving the conditions of different discriminated groups. Despite these features, the

representatives of NGOs do not consider their impact on societal values to have been great. In their opinion, the current function of NGOs is not to work on establishing values, but to monitor and criticize the government, which inevitably enhances their estrangement from society. One interviewed representative condemns the non-governmental sector for their part:

“They have more political dimensions, oriented on criticism of the government and resisting them, than social dimensions, which is working exactly on these issues. In principle, because NGOs don’t have that dimensions, they don’t have a link with society, which causes very serious discord between them and society. It is possible they don’t even understand each other’s language and what is most important, in reality certain types of discontent towards NGOs are predisposed because of the discontent and frustration towards the values-theoretical realization of the NGOs, for example human rights, gender equality etc.” (an in-depth interview, representative of the NGO sector).

The NGO representative explains the distrust towards his sector, as their organizational structure is extremely closed, they have very little direct community activity, particularly in terms of immediate contact with society, for instance, with beneficiaries, working with interest groups, or in communications. Furthermore, the actors which NGOs assist do not participate in the creation of their agendas. One representative suggests the disregard of the actors whose rights NGOs defend increases the more their problems are connected to values. Representatives of NGOs additionally seem to pay little attention to the pressing issues of the societal majority. The respondents suggest that NGOs function is to defend the rights of the majority or to solve their problems; however, they also see the need to fight the immediate social issues. One representative of an NGO considers the negative attitude towards his field as strengthened by the attitudes of the church and civil society. They find that the church and the government are in agreement, and the most tangible opponent of the church is the non-governmental sector.

The lack of societal trust towards NGOs is supported by the attempt to politicize the sector. The respondents think that NGOs have clearly defined political ties, which are negatively perceived by the supporters of other political groups. Thus, when such NGOs criticize the government,

often officials accuse them of bias. The interviewees add that the so-called “concept of grant-eaters” is a part of the negative propaganda against NGOs. This notion further creates the societal perception that the work of NGOs is full of invention, artificial topics and forgeries.

The representative of NGOs state that truly all NGOs affect their specific target groups, but in terms of changing values, there is not a great enough fundamental change to spread throughout society. Although, the attitude towards NGOs is gradually changing with women, for example in case of serious family violence, but in general, NGOs remain marginalized in Georgia.

In relation to partnerships with other actors, the interviewed representatives of NGOs chiefly identify their relationship with other NGOs. While international organizations are also important partners, as they are able to mediate between NGOs and the government. Whereas, the representatives state that the association between political groups and NGOs is a difficult process, though communication with political actors is inevitable. While the changing of ruling power also affects their partnership with the government. Losing the open support of the “United National Movement”, who after the 2012 election were left in a minority in parliament, created problems for NGOs, for example, when defending LGBT rights. Such support with political powers is beneficial to NGOs, although it can also disadvantageous due to any association with political groups:

“Our movement was always incorrectly linked with Saakashvili, as if Saakashvili and UNM was financing us, which is naturally not true and the fact that they defend us very actively does not positively affect our reputation” (an in-depth interview, representative of the NGO sector).

The interviewed representatives from NGOs suggest their partnerships with the current government has changed many times. When the “Georgian Dream” first came to power, NGOs had the support of Bidzina Ivanishvili, which changed many aspects of their general perception. With the adoption of the 2014 anti-discrimination law, they maintained the support of the current government. However, as a representative of one NGO reflects, the political weather soon changed, and it is currently more difficult for NGOs to affect change or to gain the support of the government.

The interviewed respondents further note their partnership with the executive branch, because those employed in the executive branch have

duties aside from their party affiliation, and NGOs ask them to react using those formal duties. It is also considered easier to communicate with the executive branch, over political parties. Although often, particularly during election campaigns, the executive government creates many obstacles:

“They try to be less engaged in such topics which are perceived as scandalous, and also cause the anger of the church, also there were awkward cases, when we were working for a long time on the legal recognition of the transgender gender and we had a green light from the ministry on that. They wanted to change the practice, we started to work on that, and then one day a minister just changed his mind”(an in-depth interview, representative of the NGO sector).

A serious obstacle, the NGOs consider, is that despite motivated employees within the ministries, it is the ministers and their deputies that decide on key issues, and topics of societal importance are reduced to party politics. The NGO representatives suggest the majority of NGOs have difficulties finding successful partnerships, but they also have a difficult rivalry with the church.

An interviewed representative from an NGO states that their minor changes to societal values are due to the lack of resources and the problems non-governmental organizations encounter. The respondents believe they have to fight against other organizations and groups to find partners and to secure resources. These problems make it impossible for NGOs to influence societal values greatly. One NGOs representative shows that politicians and the church have far more resources in comparison, which is why they are more able to affect public opinion and values.

Major findings:

Analyses of the populaces’ attitudes to social and state institutions reveal that trust towards concrete institutions is a crucially important factor. The church is currently the most powerful institution, largely due to the high degree of trust it has gained. While the lack of trust towards political parties negatively affects the activity of the population in political and civil spheres. The greatest problem affecting political parties and the educational institution is the absence of long-term plans. Political parties are made to fit to the ever-changing moods of the population and become populist subjects, while the inadequacy of educational strategies decreases their effectiveness

and clearly of final aims of reforms. Representatives in the media and NGOs identified a lack of resources as their main challenge, which in the case of the media, forces them to create television programs of a poor quality.

The results of the focus groups conducted during this research reveal respondents are sensitive to times of uncertainty and to fluctuations connected to globalization, which are perceived as a threat to Georgian national identity. Furthermore, institutions like political parties, the media and non-governmental organizations are perceived, in part, as the importers and distributors of anti-Georgian values. The responses of the focus groups suggests that the “imposition” of European values on Georgian society irritates the respondents. The participants criticize the media for the “propaganda” of sexual minorities, while they also disparage political parties for defending the rights of religious minorities and the LGBT community. They consider the Georgian Orthodox Church the only institution striving to maintain national values, which according to the experts, helps spread an exclusive, limited identity and weakens the formation of civic national identity.

3.2.2. The Significance of Modern Global Processes on Georgian National Identity

Among the modern global processes that transform the look of Georgian national identity the interviewed experts especially emphasize the globalization. As one of the experts suggests *“the people of the world have started to resemble one another, we tend to dress the same way, we eat the same dishes, listen to the same music and this changes everything”*. He believes it is rather difficult for Georgian society to adjust to such changes, since for the majority it is simply easier to maintain familiar customs and traditions. However, he further concludes that *“it is impossible to stop the logic of history”*. The experts express positive attitudes towards the current process of Georgia’s EU integration. According to them Georgia’s close relations with European structures significantly contributes to the development of Georgian identity. Hence, the European intergration causes important changes in Georgia, while various aspects of these changes are perceived in a positive as well as negative light by Georgian society. One of the experts notes that openness of Georgia towards Europe also creates fear in the populace. As he argues, the majority of Georgians are aware that globalization and Europeanization contribute to economic growth of the

country, however these processes are still perceived as a threat to national identity in cultural and political terms:

“I see it as a threat, in terms of losing traditions. When it comes to the economy, I don’t think that society has negative perceptions of these processes. On the contrary, they think of the current processes positively. In my opinion, Georgian society has already realized the possible economic benefits of globalization; they have also learnt that the same globalization has a negative impact on political processes” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One of the interviewed experts proposes that involvement in global processes is chiefly “the privilege of the urban elite”. One of the major challenges Georgia faces, he asserts, is that the majority of the population is excluded from these processes due to a lack of information. An additional challenge is connected with the introduction of a global culture, to which the populace are resistant. The expert suggests the extent of involvement in modern processes is largely determined by how well the populace is informed, and the society is divided into two segments – for one group the global culture and understanding global processes is accessible, while the second group has no access to this information and thus their resistance is explicable. The respondent also believes that involvement in modern processes contributes to identity being somewhat less rigid and accepted as an ever-changing process. Hence, the experts argues that *“(if) the involvement does not take place, you are destined to merely cultivate the things that have already been created and strive to maintain them; to freeze and deprive all these things of their essence. This openness also entails the reunderstanding of your own culture within political contexts - figuring out that this is not the one and only horizon; that you are just the carrier of this culture and the horizon of the global culture is greatly diverse. On the other hand, it is clear that not everybody has an opportunity of this. There is no ideal of equality in our country and hence many people remain outside the above process”* (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The experts argue that there is lot of work to do regarding Georgian society in order to increase population’s understanding and acceptance of the global processes. According to them, this can be accomplished by reforms and by changes, as well as keeping the population better informed about these processes.

In scope of the research, representatives of the media were asked to name the more or less currently interesting topics for Georgian society. One of the respondents notes that Georgian television viewers are constrained by the bounds of the local space, and they tend to familiarize themselves with local news and are less interested in the processes of other countries. However, as s/he notes:

"We [the television channel] are still trying to cover world news as much as possible, as we are the part of the world, and I personally believe that we should still highlight the happenings taking place in the rest of the world, in spite of whether TV viewers will have an interest in the news or not" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

Another media representative notes that Georgia has opted for a European way of development and, thus, it is now the national interest. He further argues that with this choice, in order to become a member of NATO and the European Union, Georgia will have to lose part of its sovereignty.

The interviewed Georgian politicians also define the European aspiration of the country to as a national interest. They suggest national interest is predicated upon freedom, independence, territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the country. Also, as one of the politicians stated, in order for Georgia to become a successful and competitive country, it needs to develop as a modern society, which consequently requires the enhancement of modernization. The respondent states that there is a consensus among most Georgian political parties that Georgia should become a member of NATO and of the European Union.

The focus group participants perceive modern processes both positively and critically. A number of younger respondents (18-30) argue the process of globalization as a complicated and complex process. One of the respondents suggests that *"small countries are like clay in the hands of big countries"*; she considers the influence of Western countries as manipulation, while associating the process of globalization with chaotic changes where foreign norms and standards are copied uncritically. She notes that it is important for Georgians to preserve own identity:

"We, the small countries are incapable of resistance - whether we want to or not, we become the ones that they want us to be" (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30).

The majority of young respondents think the impact of the globalization on Georgia is inevitable, as it is a common process and there is little sense to resist it. However, they also believe Georgia ought to be careful with certain values, which means carefully understanding and assessing any innovations. They think education will grant Georgians the ability properly to assess these changes.

The respondents aged 31-45 highlight both the positive and negative aspects of globalization. They believe globalization helps open physical boundaries; youth is given an opportunity to visit other countries, to get to know other nations, and cultures. They think European civilization should be shared, but not at the expense Georgian values:

“European civilization should enter the country. We do have the ambition to move towards Europe. If we want to be part of it, let’s accept it. If we don’t want it, let’s say no to it and remain the way we are today, but then we should not have this ambition any more. Remain in Georgia, appreciate your land and religion. We should not lose our values; otherwise, Europe is not bad” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

In one of the respondents’ opinion the Georgian nation has economic problems and basically struggles to survive. Thus, for her vital importance is given to economic security, while European values and Western processes is perceived as secondary:

“I can assure you that only 1 million people out of a 4 million population want this. This is something related to external politics and economics. There were talks about uniting the world and forgetting about different cultures. If we want to initiate innovations, we should conduct studies to find out who want those novelties. The nation who cannot satisfy its very basic needs is unable to discuss values. When you are hungry, you stop thinking and the only thing you want is to earn money and to eat. These people, who try to win bread on a daily basis, cannot possibly think either of European values or of American culture, they are simply struggling to survive. We are a nation that is at this basic stage, we struggle to survive” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

The older focus group respondents (46-55+) suggest globalization and

the development of technology has a negative impact on the younger generation. They criticize Western innovations and state that youths “know how to use a computer, and do not pay any attention to traditions”.

The ISSP survey on “National Identity” conducted in 2013 by the Center for Social Sciences sheds light on attitudes towards various modern processes. As a part of the survey, respondents defined on a 5-point scale (1- I agree completely to 5- I disagree completely), whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements (table #10). The statements have been listed according to their content, of those who favor globalization and of those who are against it.

Against Globalization	In favor of Globalization
Georgia should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect the national economy.	For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.
Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia.	Free trade leads to better products availability in Georgia.
International organizations take too much power from the Georgian government.	In general, Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations, even if the government does not agree with them.

Table #10: Statements For and Against Globalization

On the notion that Georgians should decrease the importation of foreign products to help protect the national economy, more respondents opposed (50.6%) the statement than supported (31.8%). A similar tendency is seen with large international companies’ involvement: 50.5% of the respondents believe that large international companies negatively affect local businesses, while 18.5% do not agree with the statement and 31% find it difficult to answer the question. It is also noteworthy that the population favors free trade, as 61.7% of respondents believe that as a result of free trade, better products become available in Georgia. (See table #11 and diagram #17)

	I agree completely	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree completely	I find it difficult to answer the question	Mean
Georgia should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect the national economy.	23,2%	27,4%	12%	25,3%	6,5%	5,5%	2,92
Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia.	18,3%	32,2%	16,9%	15,8%	2,7%	14,1%	3,23
International organizations take too much power from the Georgian government.	8,8%	27,6%	22,6%	19,6%	3,8%	17,6%	3,7

Table #11: Against Globalization

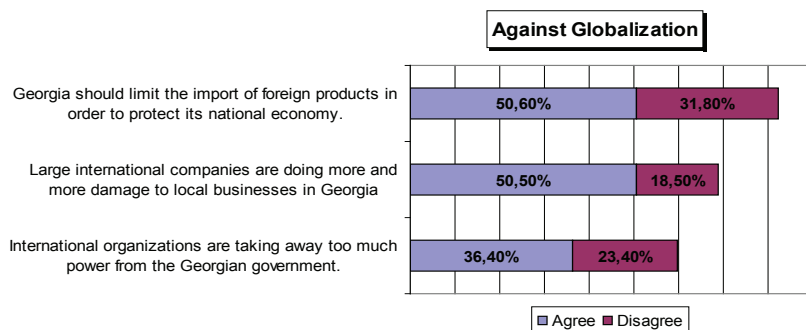


Diagram #17: Against Globalization

The respondents' attitudes towards global politics can be regarded as ambivalent: for instance, 52.2% of respondents agree, that international

bodies should have the right to enforce solutions for certain problems such as the environmental pollution; while, 28.1% of respondents do not agree with the statement. 39.4% of respondents do not share the following statement - Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree – unlike 28.4% who think it is acceptable. 36.4% of the respondents agree and 23.4% disagree that international organizations take too much power from the Georgian government (See table#12 and diagram #18).

	I agree completely	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree completely	I find it difficult to answer the question	Means
For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.	17,8%	34,4%	10,7%	19,6%	8,5%	9,1%	3,12
Free trade leads to better products becoming available in Georgia.	19,2%	42,5%	13,6%	12,4%	3,7%	8,7%	2,83
Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree.	6,4%	22%	18,8%	29,8%	9,6%	13,3%	3,81

Table #12: For Globalization

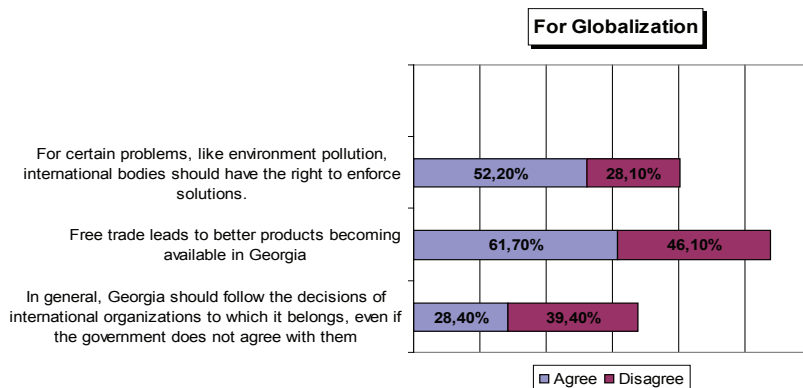


Diagram #18: For Globalization

It is evident from the data that national politics, economy and culture are a priority for respondents: 44.9% of respondents, unlike 36.5%, think that Georgia should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations. Of the participants, 73.5% think that foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in Georgia, and 74.8% of respondents believe that Georgia's television should give preference to Georgian movies and programs.

National Politics in the Process of Globalization

The attitudes of the survey respondents towards national politics in the international context are homogenous by gender or age. The majority of the population think, in an international context, Georgia should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations. The most negative reaction was caused by the issue of selling land to foreigners. The negative attitudes increase by age. The negative attitude towards international organizations and number of respondents agreeing with the statement that international organizations take too much power from the Georgian government likewise increases by age.

Younger participants, unlike older respondents, are more supportive of the statement that international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions for certain problems like the environmental pollution. The majority of the respondents disagree that "in general, Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the

government does not agree". The following tables, #13 and #14, show the percentage of "agree" responses towards these statements according to age and gender:

Statement	Female	Male
For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.	57,6%	55,9%
Georgia should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations.	45,7%	53,2%
Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in Georgia.	77,5%	74,9%
In general, Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree.	33,1%	31,3%
International organizations take too much power from the Georgian government.	42,5%	47,4%

Table #13

Statement	18-30	31-45	46-55	56-100
For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.	59,3%	63,5%	50%	54,4%
Georgia should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations.	46,9%	51,1%	46,6%	50,7%
Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in Georgia.	65,8%	74,2%	75%	84,6%
In general, Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree.	30,4%	34,9%	33,8%	31,1%
International organizations take too much power from the Georgian government.	34,2%	42,4%	48,2%	51,4%

Table #14

The National Economy in the Process of Globalization

The majority of the older (46-55, 55-100) survey respondents (57.9% and 62%), unlike the younger (18-30, 31-45) participants (39% and 51.7%), share the opinion that Georgia should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy. Furthermore, older participants believe that large international companies cause more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia. While being open to free trade is more characteristic of the younger respondents (69.7%, 72.1%) compared to older generation (see table #15), it is still supported by the majority of both generations (63%). No significant differences according to gender were revealed (see table #16).

Statement	18-30	31-45	46-55	56+
Georgia should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy.	39%	51,7%	57,9%	62%
Large international companies cause more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia.	53,4%	56,4%	60,5%	64,9%
Free trade leads to better products becoming available in Georgia.	69,7%	72,1%	66,4%	63,6%

Table #15

Question	Female	Male
Georgia should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy.	51,2%	56,9%
Large international companies cause more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia.	57,2%	61,9%
Free trade leads to better products becoming available in Georgia	67,2%	67,7%

Table #16

The attitude of the respondents towards Georgian movies and television programs is clearly positive. The majority of the respondents, both female (76.8%) and male (79.5%), state that the Georgia's television should give preference to Georgian films and programs. It is noteworthy that such attitude increases with age, and mostly older participants prioritize Georgian movies and programs (diagram #19).

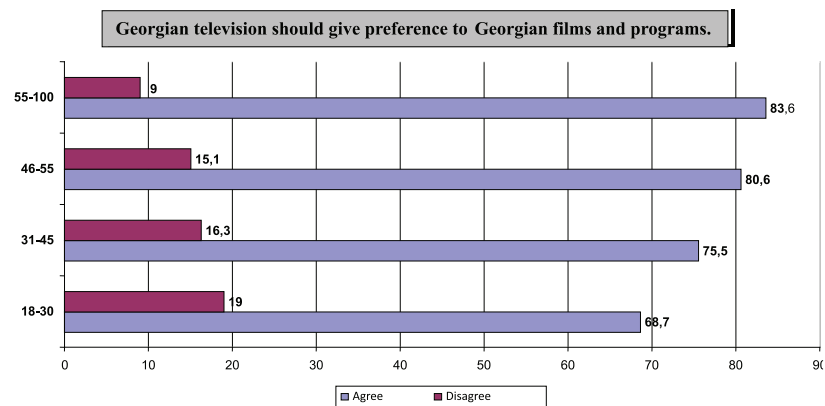


Diagram #19

The factor analysis further reveals that the majority of the survey's respondents treat issues of national politics and the economy with caution and fear. Relating to international affairs, there is a tendency to protect national politics. The relevant items are divided into two factors: the **"Factor of Restrictions"** and the **"Foreign Factor"** (table #17).

	Factor		Means 1- Completely agree; 5- Completely Disagree.
	1	2	
Georgia should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy.	.593	.334	2.63
For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.	-.075	.698	2.65
Georgia should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations.	.167	.672	2.82
Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in Georgia.	.702	.116	1.88
Georgian television should give preference to Georgian movies and programs.	.748	-.236	1.84

Table #17

Three items are united in the factor of “restrictions”: to protect the national economy Georgia has to limit the import of foreign products, foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in Georgia and Georgian television should give preference to Georgian movies and programs.

In connection to demographic variables, the factor of “restrictions” is affected by variables like age ($p=.000$), level of education ($p=.000$) and the type of employment ($p=.000$). The factor of “restrictions” is more characteristic to respondents older than 55 (0.30) and less to respondents aged 18-24 years (-0.55). The factor of “restrictions” is stronger among the people with less than secondary education (0.28) and weaker among respondents with an M.A. degree or higher (-0.24). This factor is more characteristic for currently unemployed respondents who had had a paid job earlier (0.17), while, it is less characteristic to respondents who have never had a paid job (-0.18). In both cases, the tendency is expressed only slightly. The factor of “restrictions” is stronger for those employed in public sector (0.19) and lower for those in private sector (-0.21). This tendency is also just slightly expressed. The factor of “restrictions” is less characteristic to students (-0.71), interns (-0.66) and to military or social service workers (-0.63).

The “foreign factor” is combined by two items: “For certain problems, like environmental pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions”; and “Georgia should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations”. In the connection to demographic variables, only the level of education is statistically significant for the “foreign factor” ($p=.000$). The “foreign factor” is more characteristic for respondents with an M.A. and higher degree (0.44). The variables like gender ($p=.143$), age ($p=.067$) and employment ($p=.06$) are statistically insignificant.

The items determining attitudes towards international economic and political organizations have been divided into two factors (see table #18 below). They are identified as the factors of “**harm**” and of “**benefit**”.

There are two items incorporated in the “**harm factor**”: “Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia” and “International organizations take too much power from the Georgian government”. Of the demographic variables, gender ($p=.000$), age ($p=.000$) and education ($p=.03$) are statistically significant to the “harm factor”.

The following tendency was discerned among the respondents who

perceive international political and economic institutions as harmful: the 18-25 age group (-0.27) and the 26-34 age group (-0.15) do not show negative attitudes towards the institutions as much, whereas compared to other groups the respondents older than 55 show the most negative attitudes (.012). This signifies that the perception of international political and economic institutions as harmful increases by age. As for the level of education, those with education below secondary, show slight tendency of considering international political and economic institutions harmful (0.15). Those with a higher education level (M.A. and above), are less affected by this tendency (-0.20).

It is also noteworthy that the item “I feel more like a citizen of the world than of any country”, was not part of any factor, nor was it distinguished as a separate factor. In addition, this item received quite negative response mean. (4.39).

Rotated Component Matrix

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below?	Factor		Means
	1	2	1- Completely agree; 5- Completely Disagree
Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in Georgia.	.764	-.088	2.43
Free trade leads to better products becoming available in Georgia.	.020	.697	2.34
In general, Georgia should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree.	.024	.775	3.17
International organizations take too much power from the Georgian government.	.779	.025	2.77
I feel more like a citizen of the world than of any country.	-.228	.340	4.39

Table #18

Two items were incorporated in the “**benefits factor**”: “Free trade leads to better products becoming available in Georgia” and “In general, Georgia

should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree.” In the “benefits factor” the demographic variables of age ($p=.001$), education ($p=.01$) and employment type ($p=.01$) are statistically significant ($p=.991$). Negative attitude towards “benefits factor” decreases as the age increases (see table #19).

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
0.07	0.08	0.13	0.05	-0.06	-0.19

Table #19

With increasing levels of education, the positive attitude to free trade and international organizations also increases, while the respondents with incomplete secondary education consider free trade and international organizations the least beneficial (see table #20).

Have not received 8 or 9 years of education	Have received 8 or 9 years of education	Have received education	Have received professional/ technical education	Have a B.A.	Have an M.A.	Have a Ph.D.
-0.44	-0.01	-0.05	0.01	0.04	0.35	0.11

Table #20

According to descriptive and exploratory factor analysis one can conclude that respondents tend to have somewhat fearful and cautious attitudes towards foreign influence in the spheres of national politics and economics.

Finally, a sceptical and negative attitude of majority of respondents towards global political and economic processes indicates ambivalent attitude towards the process of globalization and loyalty to national politics and economics.

Main Findings:

- According to the majority of respondents, to protect the national economy Georgia has to limit the import of foreign products.
- The majority of respondents, particularly the older age groups, have negative attitudes towards large international organizations. They think that large international companies cause increasingly more damage to local businesses in Georgia.

- The Georgian population, mostly the younger (18-30) and middle-aged (30-45) generation, have positive attitudes towards free trade. They believe that free trade leads to better products becoming available in Georgia.
- The majority of respondents think that Georgia should act according to its best interests, even if this will cause conflicts with other nations.
- Most respondents suggest that foreigners should not be allowed to purchase land in Georgia. This negative attitude increases with the age.
- Negative attitudes towards international organizations and the idea that international organizations take too much power from the Georgian government also intensify with age.
- Majority of respondents, especially younger (18-30) and middle-aged (30-45) ones, think that international organizations should be able to influence the government in certain topics, such as Environmental pollution.
- The majority of respondents, especially older generation consider that Georgian television should prioritize Georgian movies and programs.

3.2.3. International Threats Perceived by Georgian Society

When identifying international threats within Georgian society, several basic areas have been outlined. The majority of respondents named Russia as the most acute danger, which according to them threatens not only Georgian territorial integrity but also spreads and propagates anti-Western values. Based on the results of the focus groups and in-depth interviews, the named threats to Georgia are geopolitical circumstances, terrorism, and issues connected to demography and migration. Furthermore, the interviewed experts discuss the need of consensus regarding these threats, without which evasion would be impossible.

Russia, as the Main Threat

According to the interviewed experts and actors involved in the process of forming national identity, as well as the respondents of the focus groups, Russia has been identified as the clearest danger to Georgia. There are several dimensions in the perception of this threat:

- Russia as an international threat, not only to Georgia but also to any other country.
- Russia as a threat to Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- The strengthening of Russian “soft power”, expressed by the deliberate implementation of anti-Western values and pro-Russian propaganda.

Russia as a multilateral threat is evident from one of the politicians interviewed in scope of this study:

“Russia is an international threat for not only Georgia, but it is more common threat - in my opinion, their politics, their current government, mentally, pragmatically, militarilly, politically, propagandistically or even economically and energetically, which one should I name, everything is collided” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

According to the interviewed experts Russia aims to regain superpower status, which is a threat especially for the countries Russia considers within own sphere of influence:

“It can not be a superpower if its influence is only inside of its borders; it necessarily needs the states, which will be in the sphere of its influence. Post-Soviet states are such states. Russia lost the Baltic States, but it is not going to lose others. That is why its aim is to include them in own orbit, like it did with Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tajikistan and Kirgizstan. Therefore, it is unimaginable for Russia, that any state, in this case Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, in the first place, will be torn apart from this orbit and move to a European orbit” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The majority of interviewed politicians consider Russian “imperialist politics” as the greatest threat to Georgia. In addition, Russia remains a permanent threat due to the economic situation; because they hold strong economic leverages, being able to impose economic trade embargoes.

The majority of the focus group respondents also perceive Russia, which has occupied 20% of Georgian territory, as Georgia’s largest threat. In their opinion, the main threat is the Northern neighbour’s foreign policy, directed at the disintegration of Georgia’s territorial integrity. According to the participants Georgia’s geopolitical location also creates threats.

Interviewed media representatives likewise mentioned Russian occupancy as a threat to Georgian sovereignty.

“Russia is the main threat for the country, it is a fact. Whatever we speak regarding the will to settle relations, and whatever we propose to them we constantly get threats from their side. We all remember what happened in 2008, and I don’t know, and cannot understand so called „benevolence“ of some politicians towards this country, when soldiers of foreign country stand 40 kilometers away from here” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

One of the interviewed experts suggests the main threat to Georgia is not Russia itself; rather the weakness of its balancing power, namely the USA. Russia is thus left in an uncontrolled environment, where there are no “policeman” to prevent its lawlessness. In the respondent’s opinion, the 2008 “August War” is a good example, as Russia gradually gauged the situation, and when it realized that its provocations went unpunished in the international arena, it committed an even larger strike.

“Generally small states, which have large, aggressive neighbors, or such liberal ideas, like human rights, can only survive with the existence of a hegemonic power in the international system, which itself possesses those values: liberal values, meaning to defend minority rights, the protection of human rights, protecting the principle of elucidation of nations, territorial integrity, etc.” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Certain interviewed respondents avoid blaming Russia and claim the previous government, under president Saakashvili, was responsible for the 2008 Russian-Georgian war. One of the politicians expressed the view that Saakashvili’s government did not have enough “intelligence or vision” to avoid military confrontation. The respondent believes that Georgians should not use force to return the occupied territories. A priest interviewed for this study also shares this view, suggesting Russia is really a threat to Georgia, but it is also a powerful state, and thus during confrontations, one needs to be careful.

A representative from an NGO believes Russia has become particularly dangerous after the recent events in Ukraine:

“I don’t have any illusions after the Ukrainian example; if Putin wishes on one sunny day to add another two regions to Abkhazia and South Ossetia,

we won't be able to do anything. We can try but it will all be in vain, this frightens me" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

The in-depth interviews revealed that the experts and the actors involved in the formation of national identity emphasize that Russia is strengthening its "Soft Power". According to them, contemporary Russia is not conducting direct military operations towards Georgia; however, using its "soft power" and other leverages, Russia still creates obstacles to the development of the Georgian state and to Euro-integration.

Politicians and representatives of the media connect the activation of Russia's "soft power" to the upcoming election.³⁹ According to one of the interviewed politicians, Russia uses tactics of "hybrid warfare" in Ukraine, while it uses "soft power" in Georgia, which is expressed in the funding of certain election campaigns by pro-Russian forces. A media representative suggests that not only political parties are funded by Russia, but as are media outlets, which actively utilize pro-Russian propaganda:

"This threat will be more intense before elections in our country because large sums of money are coming from Russia, entirely uncontrolled, which are directed towards various media outlets, and spent on propaganda. This will have very bad consequences in the end. I think the Georgian government has to become active in this direction and they have to work on this" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

The experts interviewed for this study further identified Orthodoxy as a supporting factor to Russian "soft power". One expert proposes there is a deliberate, ongoing propagandistic discourse that links Orthodoxy to Russia's foreign policy:

"Since Orthodoxy is a serious factor for identification here, Russia uses it through soft power, so that linkage and identification occurred with Russia and Eurasian culture. As Russia says, we are not European, rather we are nation with a unique identity, we have Eurasian identity, and this can be easily sold in Georgia. This is a threat to identity. Pro-Russian, pro-Orthodox identity is having foreign policy results. Myths are spread in connection to this, the propaganda is working" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

39 The Georgian parliamentary elections, October 8th, 2016.

From results derived from the focus groups, one can assume that respondents' closeness towards Russia is somehow in fact stipulated by a common faith. The middle aged (31-45) and older (55+) respondents express that Georgians are the closest to Russians in terms of culture and value - the common faith is mentioned in this context.

One of the interviewed politicians states that spreading ultra-nationalistic ideas in Georgia also serves Russia's interests, as they negatively affect the democratic process, and in the end, this can lead to the loss of sovereignty:

"We can sustain the illusion of sovereignty and lose democracy, human rights. These principles: the rule of law, the fight against unlawfulness, corruption and criminality, are associated with the West and are achieved by the integration with the West. If we lose that, this will leave us with very undemocratic principles, the face of which is Russia. It is no trouble for Russia, in contrast they will benefit if Georgia disintegrates, having a fragmented society" (an in-depth interview, a politician).

According to one of the interviewed experts, Russia is often disregarded as a threat and attention is concentrated on less important issues, for example, on Georgia's other neighboring states or on the Muslim world. The expert believes that this misplaced attention is an effort to draw attention from the real threat.

When considering Russia as a threat to society, an interviewed representative of the media suggests issues related to Russia on their television channel are always covered objectively, and the topic is given the necessary attention for the biggest threat to Georgia.

Despite the fact that Russia is perceived as the main threat in terms of foreign policy by almost all experts and actors, according to them despite the vivaciousness and clarity of the threat, there is still no final consensus on the issue. One cannot yet state that Georgian society has common views regarding Russia. For the absence of a consensus the interviewed experts name the elite that according to them have not yet decided on its stance towards Russia; as well as the nostalgia of common Georgians being socialized in the Soviet Union towards Russia.

When it comes to the elite, according to the experts there is no common stance regarding the threat of Russia in the upper layers of society. Therefore, the negative attitude towards Russia could not be spread throughout the

wider masses. Moreover, in experts' opinion, the elites do not realize that a pro-Russian orientation is unacceptable.

The experts state that one of the main sources of ambivalence towards Russia is the nostalgia of middle-aged and elderly generations towards the Soviet Union:

"They lament Russia because they lost their function, there is no place left for them, they were educated for a different country, which does not exist anymore. They are unemployed, and no one will welcome them in Europe and also they are aged. They think if they go back to Russia, they will have the same life as before" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One of the interviewed experts suggests in Georgia the Russian model has the greatest share of supporters among the middle-aged people. According to the respondent, the one and only thing preventing a stronger Russian influence in Georgia is the Russian imperialistic intentions, which scares away even pro-Russian Georgians.

A more optimistic perspective was also observed during the in-depth interviews. According to one of the experts, the open aggression in Ukraine seriously damaged the Russian image and weakened pro-Russian forces in Georgia, while it further consolidated Western states.

The focus group participants were posed the question, "with which of them (Europe, Russia, Caucasus) do you feel closeness?" Their responses revealed some interesting insight toward nostalgia for Russia. Amongst the middle aged and older respondents, a non-homogeneous attitude was reported, and it has been revealed that they rely on personal experiences to define closeness. They find nothing in common with contemporary Russia, but they remember the strong relations with Russia in the Soviet past, and therefore, they still feel closer to Russia than to Europe. These respondents, although realize that Russia nowadays is an occupying force, they also think that antagonizing it would be unwise. Results of the research show that the watershed in relation to Russia is the war of August, 2008. Respondents find it difficult to express considerable sympathy towards a country that violated the territorial integrity of Georgia, remaining a major threat.

Western-Liberal Values, as a Threat to Georgian Identity

The interviewed experts explain that the defining the threat is based on kind of values shared by a person. The respondents assert that despite

the existence of Russia as a real threat, Europe and liberal values can also be perceived as threat. One of the experts observes that Europe is initially associated with welfare; however, Georgians do not want accept a complete European way of life. They fear that adopting European ways will ruin Georgian identity and values.

The experts think the refrain “I am Georgian and therefore I am European”⁴⁰ is not yet part of Georgian national identity. Nonetheless, the majority of the Georgian populace thinks that, from an economic standpoint, approximation with Europe helps solve many problems. The experts believe this is the reason why majority supports the idea of joining the European Union. According to them this is a positive, however not yet a strong factor, because although Georgian national identity is still in the process of its creation, it can be easily influenced, while international factors are very significant in this context.

The results of the focus groups reveal that the geographical location of Georgia is perceived as part of the problem. Respondents regard Georgia’s location as the basis for not only Russia’s, but also for Europe and America’s interests. Part of younger respondents identified America as a threat, while older respondents (aged 55+), consider America Georgia’s main international threat. This group further viewed international corporations and organizations as threats to Georgia..

Attitudes in Georgian society towards the West and to liberal values closely resemble anxiety, known as feature characteristic of this century by Gerard Delanty (Delanty, 2008). By Delanty’s definition, anxiety is an existential condition, primarily psychological, although it also has broader social and political usages for modern society. Anxiety as a characteristic for the modern era is due to increasing levels of insecurity, the prevalence of risk and uncertainty, which follows the globalization.

Strengthening Far-Right Groups and the Threat of Strengthening Radical Nationalists

Interviewed politicians, media and NGO representatives each consider the strengthening of ultranationalist sentiments across Europe as active international threats for Georgian society. Gerard Delanty discusses these problems and explains that anxiety, related to migration in Europe, is linked

40 “I am Georgian and therefore I am European!”- The phrase given to a 1999 parliamentary assembly of the council of Europe by the former prime minister of Georgia, Zurab Jhvania.

to the fears of clashing civilizations and of social security. Social discontent, which is more exacerbated by economic socio-economic changes, undermines the traditional basis of identity and allows for xenophobic and nationalistic movements. The rise of the far-right throughout Europe, with certain exceptions, is the result of social fear. This relates to generalized anxiety, expressed in the fear towards “others”. Immigrants are open targets for those parties, which manage to combine the fear of migrants and refugees with anxiety related to welfare. Such anxieties, intermingled with a sense of loss over national sovereignty and changes in the employment sphere, create a fertile ground for xenophobic attitudes (Delanty, 2008).

One of the interviewed NGO representatives suggests that the strengthening of far-right groups in the West could become the greatest threat to Georgia. Consequently, groups imitating the ideas and symbols of the European far-right may well be stimulated and strengthened in Georgia. The NGO representative believes Russia also supports such groups, although connecting themselves with the European far-right grants them more “legitimacy”.

“I am sure that the wave of xenophobia can easily overflow here, moreover that such ground exists” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

The NGO representatives also consider that Russia successfully manages to export xenophobia to other states:

“Ready made homophobic and xenophobic concepts, which are exported from Russia, are replicated in other countries, amongst them in such European countries, like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, especially in the post-Soviet space. This is realistically very dangerous, because those people have consolidated processes” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

As the data related to this issues revealed, the interviewees link the strengthening of far-right attitudes to Russia’s interests. Although, the respondents also note that the aforementioned processes could become particularly dangerous if they continue to grow in Europe. The interviewees’ think that Georgian groups generating far-right ideas inherently operate on the Russian mode, while the nationalistic attitudes strengthened in Europe help support their “legitimization”.

Other Geopolitical Threats

In certain cases, the threat of disappearing values connected to national identity is closely tied with religious factor. Interviewed experts note that this is especially noticeable when it comes to Turkey. Despite the fact that the partnership with Turkey is economically profitable to Georgia, there is a sense that it is dangerous in terms of spreading Islam and Turkish “imperial” influences:

Everyone admits that Georgia benefits from a partnership with Turkey, especially the economic ties. Nevertheless, this still could not overcome those negative and stereotypical assessments towards the perception of Turkey, that Turkey is still a threat to Georgia and its spreading Islam. This in the end strengthens Turkophobic attitudes and the perception that Turkey can possibly create a threat to Georgian identity” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The experts suggest Turkey is considered as a threat not only by society, but by public servants as well who view it as a Muslim power making significant investments, including funding religious educational institutions:

“They think that Turkey can create a threat to Georgian identity, that Turkization will occur, Turks will settle, Batumi and Adjara will be Turkized. It’s clear that this fear exists in society. When you are in a taxi in Batumi every driver, especially in the past and even now, will say that the Turks are coming and we are in their hands etc.” (an In-depth interview, an expert).

A similar attitude is offered from a representative of the church:

“I presume that losing territories and not getting them back is a threat, losing Batumi, more concretely, this Islamic expansion is going on there.” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The results of the focus groups also prove that Turkey is perceived as a certain type of threat. Young (aged 24-30) focus group respondent believes Turkey has its own interests in Adjara. According to the respondent, there is currently a Turkish history textbook in which Adjara is named a territory of Turkey.

The Threat of Terrorism

Interviewed experts, politicians, representatives of the media and NGOs also consider terrorism as international threat to Georgia. This problem, aside from its international context, is significant to Georgia, as some Muslim Georgians are departing for Syria. Representatives of the media in particular draw attention to this threat:

“Events in the Middle East are very important because there are people from here going there and they fight and are members of illegal groups, I mean the so-called Islamic State” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

One of the media representatives states that at this stage, the “Islamic State” is not a direct problem for Georgia; however some Georgian citizens go and join it, resulted in deaths of number of youngsters from Pankisi Gorge. Terrorism is viewed as a worldwide threat, and Georgia has to cope with its share, which it achieves with the participation of Georgian soldiers in peace missions.

Politicians interviewed during this study likewise consider that the threat of terrorism certainly requires attention. One of the politician focuses on Turkey, as a neighboring state that is one of the main targets of large-scale terrorist attacks.

The Standardization of Education as a Threat

The interviewed representative in education suggests there is an important threat in terms of standardization of education. The respondent notes that large international organizations try to spread the idea that education is a standadized process, which do not have a cultural basis or where cultural roots are less important:

“Constant evaluations, comparisons of countries with each other, support this, such attitudes are introducing a practice when you are always trying to introduce things which others have, the way they have it and with the same name. In reality, it’s possible that you don’t have such needs at all” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

The above-mentioned threat closely resembles John Meyer’s theoretical perspective discussing an interconnection between international

societies and the modern nation-state (Meyer, et al., 1997). According to Meyer, many characteristics of the modern nation-state are derived from worldwide models, which are spread by global cultural and unifying processes. These models and goals, for example, equality, social-economic progress or human development are extremely rationalized, soundly articulated and, surprisingly coordinated. World models define the local agenda and legitimize the ongoing local processes, alongside the structures and strategies of nation-states and other national actors, such as business, politics, education, medicine, science, family, or even religion. Such models have the ambition to be universally compatible. For instance, it is assumed that economic models of development will be appropriate not only in certain regions, but in every state of the world. In Meyer's view, when world models are implemented in different regions of the world, their results cannot be considered as "functional" for every society where it was used. (Meyer, et al., 1997).

Migration and Related Threats

One of the interviewed experts perceives labor migration as a severe problem for Georgia, reflected in the demographic indexes:

"There are 3.5 million people in Georgia, and one million left Georgia in terms of labor migration" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

The focus groups further highlight migration as a threat facing the country. Certain older respondents (55+) consider the flow of Georgian citizens into foreign countries as a threat. One of the respondents notes that poverty creates the need for intelligent individuals to seek employment elsewhere, and that Georgia is currently dependent on foreign assistance and investments.

One of the interviewed politicians believes drastic changes to the demographic picture are an imminent threat. He thinks Saakashvili's government did not take the demands of the organic law on citizenship into consideration, and very often, they granted citizenship against the Georgian state interest.⁴¹

"Those people [applicants for Georgian citizenship] against the demands of the organic law knew nor litigation Georgian language,

41 "Georgian organic law on Georgian citizenship" accepted on March 25th, 1993. Certain articles later underwent changes. <http://mra.gov.ge/res/docs/2013110412031013274.pdf>

neither had a knowledge of Georgian legislation, or the demands we have. This was only a formal basis to starting a business in our territory. And starting this business became a defining factor for bringing a family and settling down in our territory (...) This is not xenophobia, this is the national interest of our country and I don't mean narrow ethnic interest. I am just saying that artificial changes of the demographic picture are the realization of hostile attitudes towards your own country in return for a certain benefit" (an in-depth interview, a politician).

The same respondent further refers to the problematic and chaotic processes within the sphere of immigration. According to him, the absence of a demographic policy, and the large number of inhabitants leaving the country, could create an existential threat for Georgia, turning Georgians into a minority in their own land.

Other threats Highlighted in the Focus Groups

The results of focus groups reveal several threats that are not mentioned in the other in-depth interviews. The participants in 31-45 age group identify dependence of the national currency on other currencies, and the impact of the world economic crisis on Georgia as foreign threats. The same age group further name nuclear war, environmental disasters and genetically modified food as international dangers.

Some respondents also express the opinion that various internal threats create foreign threats. One of the participants states the greatest threat to Georgian society is its own internal problems. She identifies the inability to utilize Georgian resources, alongside individual and collective irresponsibility, as such problems:

"(...) Someone will come and settle here, some will leave, but Georgian has to stay Georgian. There is no external threat, it's in us, in our country, we don't cherish it, we don't use its potential, and we should not blame everything on others" (the focus group, a female participant, 55+).

On the other hand, younger (aged 18-30) respondents believe the situation in the sphere of education to be the main threat facing Georgia.

Main highlights

Based on the results of focus groups conducted in the scope of this study, one can discern the international threats as divided into two distinct forms. On the one hand, Russia is identified for violating Georgian territorial integrity and as a political enemy; while on the other hand, Europe and America, the instigators of the approaching globalization, are considered to be dangerous to national and cultural values.

The in-depth interviews revealed that Russia is consistently perceived as the main international threat, which aside from its military threat is expanding the anti-Western values in Georgia through “soft power”. In order to deal with this threat, respondents believe it important to observe the processes in the West itself and to analyze Europe’s existing problems. Interviewed representative of the media explains that nowadays broadcasting European problems in Georgia is perceived as anti-Western rhetoric, hence why such topics are not given much attention. In one of the respondent’s opinion, if European integration is a part of the Georgian national project, it is important to give more attention to the ongoing changes in Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe.

The respondents also consider the strengthening of the “Islamic State” as a threat, one that may yet become more significant when considering the participation of Georgian citizens from Pankisi Gorge in the current events in Syria. Some of the interviewed politicians highlight the need for a peaceful solution to these threats, while other politicians think that military threats indicate the necessity of strengthening Georgia’s defenses.

Among the interviewed experts, some suggest the most effective way to deal with threats is to improve the education system. The experts also consider raising civic awareness as a significant issue. It is also noteworthy that they highlight the need for a consensus in society regarding foreign threats, and accordingly agreeing on this issue is named as one of the crucial objectives at this stage.

3.3. The Dichotomy of “We” and “Other”- Conflict and Integration in Modern Georgian Society

National identity is formed around one’s identification with the nation. The nation-state creates the “we-group”, an internal group, with which individuals can identify themselves. On the other hand, the very existence of internal groups also determines the existence of external groups - in

order for the “we” group to exist, there should also be “others” possessing opposing characteristics to the “we”. “We” distinguishes itself from “others” and by doing so forms its own identity (Bauman, 1998). In other words, “we” defines itself through its distinction from the other, which entails the inclusion of internal and the exclusion of external members. According to Jenkins, the formation of identity comprises of two separate processes of definition, one being internal, the other external. In the first case, self-identification happens based on certain meanings and values; whereas in the second case, external group members define the “we-group”, just as the latter is defined by “we” (Jenkins, 1997). Hence, national identity attains meaning only in relation to the “other” – the internal definition takes place on the basis of cultural, political, historic and territorial markers unifying the nation as an imaginary unity, while the external process is triggered through interaction with external members, the “others” (Triandafyllidou, 2002).

Within the context of national identity, the “others” are, typically, other nations and transnational communities. Therefore, in the process of identity formation differentiating traits between them and the in-group are highlighted. However, when determining the national we-group, instead of “objective” differentiating factors, major cultural elements, such as lifestyle, traditions, religion, language, etc. are brought forth (Smith, 2009). It should also be noted that when the national identity is less solid and the group members perceive some kind of threat towards their culture and identity, the tendency to distinguish one’s own group from the out-groups increases in order to reinforce one’s own national identity. (Triandafyllidou, 2002).

Among out-groups certain “significant others” can be singled out, that play a crucial role in the self-definition of the we-group, when compared to other out-groups. For instance, they either are positive models for the development of the nation or pose a threat to the existence of the in-group. In any case, the “significant other” has all positive and all negative aspects, not characteristic of the in-group, on the contrary, these out-groups do not possess the features of the in-group (Triandafyllidou, 2002).

Because there are certain features ascribed to the national “we” group, it is usually perceived as a whole, homogenous community by its members. However, since many individuals with numerous values and identities are brought together under the “umbrella” of the nation, this homogeneity is only of conditional nature. Triandafyllidou, the researcher of national identity, believes that in this case the “other” exists not only outside the nation state but inside

its bounds as well. Therefore, she divides the “other” into external and internal others. As noted above, the external others are nations and transnational unities outside the political unity, while internal “others” could include ethnic minorities and immigrants. Although symbolically and geographically they are close to the in-group, because of their distinct ethno-cultural characteristics, they cannot fit into the category of “we” group unconditionally. Hence, their existence is perceived as a territorial and cultural threat (Triandafyllidou, 2002).

Ethnic minorities and immigrants are therefore perceived as neither part of the in-group completely, nor the complete out-group members because of their place within the bounds of the nation state. Since a nation forms its identity based on numerous cultural factors and values, one may assume that such ambiguous category consists of not only above-mentioned groups (ethnic minorities and immigrants) but everybody who is perceived as incompatible with the culture and value systems ascribed to that nation. Bauman refers to this type of “internal other” as a “stranger” (Bauman, 1991). As it is problematic to clearly categorize and define “stranger” as a member of either the “we” or the “other” group based on all key-markers, they create anxiety. Undefined “stranger” is perceived to be more dangerous than defined “other” – they (stranger) are simultaneously friend and enemy, both “we” and “other”. In order to lessen anxiety, one should define “the stranger”. It should be either wholly excluded from the “we” group or be fully assimilated in a way that it can easily become part of the in-group. In this instance, the nation state takes on the function of eliminating “the stranger” through their complete assimilation. Although, as the human autonomy becomes more important in line with the increasing trends of de-traditionalization and individualization, the visibility of “the stranger” also increases and their elimination becomes more difficult through the rigid categorization. Under the umbrella of the nation state, groups with various interests and values come forth in the socio-political arena. Some of these groups share much of the value systems typical to the mainstream society, while some are perceived as contradictory, threatening the homogeneity of the “we” group. All these groups strive to define state politics based around their interests. This subsequently creates conflicts of values and interests in the domestic arena (Eisenstadt, 2000). When “the stranger” becomes even more visible in the socio-political realm and strives to politicize their interests, the need for their categorization becomes increasingly indispensable – if “the stranger” has not been fully assimilated to resemble the “we” group in every aspect, then they should be excluded and

become “the other” fully. In this case, “the stranger” is already defined as less ambiguous “other” who is usually expected to be threatening.

Georgian national identity displays the similar features. The Georgian “we” group likewise distinguishes its own “strangers” who do not quite fit in to the construct of the nation, as perceived by the Georgian populace.

Within the bounds of this research, focus groups conducted with Georgian population demonstrate that generally ethnic, religious, sexual minorities and immigrants are perceived as “strangers”. It is noteworthy that the focus groups discussion plan already included the topic of “internal others” - immigrants and ethnic minorities - whose “othering” might happen on ethno-cultural grounds. However, the issue of religious and sexual minorities, as distinct from the national in-group, was brought up by the respondents themselves. In light of the research findings, “the others” of Georgian identity may be divided into two groups: ethnic minorities and immigrants are part of the first, while religious and sexual minorities are within the second group. In the first group, an emphasis is placed on ethnic differences, where the nation - the “we” group - is perceived as more an ethnic than a civic community. In contrast to the first group, instead of ethnicity-related issues, the second one displays incompatibility with the cultural values ascribed to the national community. Even if in Georgian case the categories of religious and ethnic minorities often overlap (for instance, the majority of the Azerbaijani population in Georgia is Muslim, while the Armenians are Gregorian Christians), “othering” of the ethnic minorities is predicated primarily on the ethnic markers and not on religion.

As noted, the in-group perceives “others” as a threat especially when they begin to appear in the socio-political arena and attempt self-expression (Eisenstadt, 2000). According to the interviews with Georgian experts, self-expression is itself the discouraged value in Georgian case (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; World Value Survey, 2015) which further complicates the acceptance of distinctions from in-group’s ascribed features.

Discouraging self-expression and displaying somewhat cautious attitudes towards minorities is in connection with the cultural map suggested by Ronald Inglehart. Based on the waves of world values survey, he proposes that societies differ based on their leading values: those of self-expression, (for example tolerance, trust, civic activism, etc.), or the contrary, associated with self-survival. The values associated with self-expression are more characteristic of societies with a higher standard of living and a stable environment in which

survival is guaranteed. In these cases, equal rights and political self-expression of minority groups are encouraged, and cultural diversity is also perceived positively. Whereas, when a society faces limited resources or is under an existential threat, the advantage is given to survival values. In order to enhance the predictability in an uncertain, unstable environment, the population clings to the established, traditional norms, ascribes them absolute meaning and displays distrust towards different social groups (Inglehart, Wetzel, 2005).

In post-Soviet countries, including Georgia, survival values are evident. The sense of a threat can be ascribed to the traumatic experience these countries experienced after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Because social and political systems were devastated their environments became unstable and the standards of living fell drastically. It is believed that those historic events increased the popularity of values connected to the survival of society, which consequently, had a negative impact on the acceptance of different groups (Inglehart and Weltzel, 2005). It is significant that competition over limited resources between the mainstream and minority groups, ethnic minorities and immigrants, was also raised in the focus group discussions, further details of which will be discussed in details later in this chapter.

Apart from the self-expression vs. survival dichotomy, another dimension suggested by Inglehart places values in traditional - secular/rational context. In societies where traditional values are dominant, special emphasis is placed on the family, on religion, the nation and on collectivist tendencies in general. The in-group and affiliation with it becomes crucially important.

Based on self-expression vs. survival and traditional vs. secular dimensions, Inglehart proposes a cultural map in which countries take different places based on their value type; for instance, compared to Catholic and Orthodox Christian Europe, protestant Europe has higher indicators for self-expression and secular values, including a higher degree of acceptance for different groups. The value orientation of the society can be explained based on specific characteristics of countries or regions such as: the dominant type of religion, the GDP, the leading sector for employment, etc. As the last, sixth wave of world value survey demonstrates traditional and survival values are domineering in Georgia (World Values Survey, Georgia, 2014). Thus, less acceptance is displayed towards the different groups.

Inglehart suggests that the fear of an existential threat is due to the specific features of various countries. On the other hand, this anxiety can also be viewed as a global event. Delanty notes that this is something typical

of the 21st century, brought about by instability, vagueness and insecurity associated with globalization (Delanty, 2008). Societies become anxious and fear that their national identity will not be able to resist various migrants and ethnic identities, and thus lose its function as a social marker. In response, xenophobic dispositions towards other groups become more vital and stronger, for instance, ultra-rightist, populist-nationalist parties have become more popular and have gained increased support in Europe.

The appearance of immigrant identities as part of the globalization is also being discussed in Georgia. However, globalization is further linked with Europeanization. As Delanty suggests, in countries where Europeanization is underway, Europeanization and globalization are associated with each other, and in general, perceived as being a threat to national identity, which consequently causes unrest and anxiety. The findings of the quantitative studies conducted in Georgia, demonstrate that despite supporting the EU, approximately half of the respondents believe that the process of European integration threatens Georgian traditions (*Knowledge and attitudes towards the EU in Georgia*, CRRC, 2015). The expert interviews and the focus groups reveal that the value-based “others” (religious, and especially sexual minorities) are typically perceived as the product of Europeanization.

The features according to which ethno-cultural and value-based “strangers” (“others”), are excluded from national identity are discussed below, based on the quantitative and qualitative data. The work relies on secondary analysis of the existing quantitative dataset; focus group interviews with general public; and in-depth interviews with relevant experts and the public opinion-makers, identified by them (politicians and representatives of NGOs, the media, the church and of the education sector).

3.3.1. The Ethno-Cultural “Other”

Ethnic Minorities ***Quantitative data***

Within the bounds of the survey on “National Identity” carried out in 2013 in frames of ISSP (International Social Survey Programme), citizens were asked about national ethnic minorities living in Georgia. Ascertained from their answers, attitudes towards ethnic minorities are generally tolerant. Approximately 72.4% of the respondents think the government

should help ethnic minorities maintain their customs and traditions. Only 10.4% do not approve of the state contributing to the integration of ethnic minorities (see diagram #20).

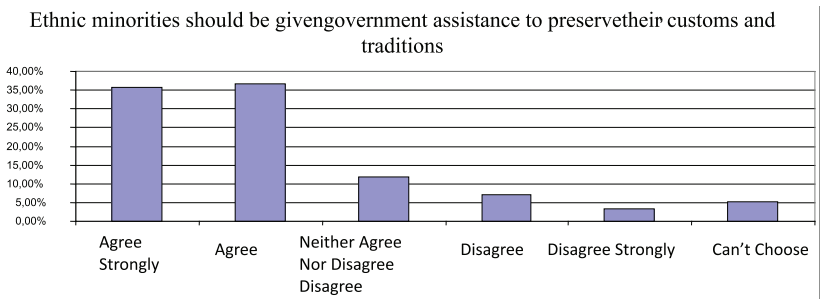


Diagram #20: The State involvement in the Integration of Ethnic Minorities

As part of the survey, the respondents were asked to select one of two proposed statements that reflected their own attitude. (The first statement, “it is better for the whole of society if various ethnic and racial groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions. The second statement-, “it is better if these groups would be adapted and blended into mainstream society.”)

According to the findings, 51.6% of the interviewees thinks that it is better for the whole society if various ethnic and racial groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions, while 38.1% believe that it is better if these groups would be adapted and blended into mainstream society; 10,3% abstained from answering the question, see diagram #21.

Integration and Assimilation of Ethnic Minorities in Society

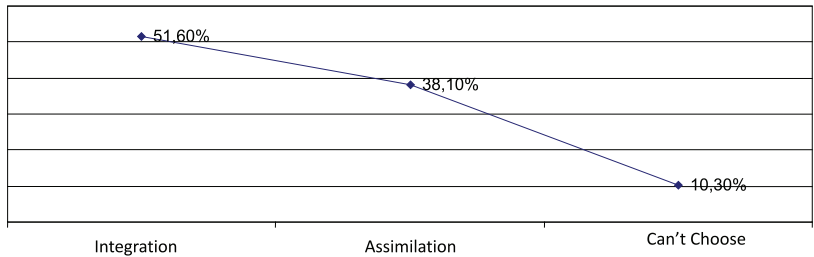
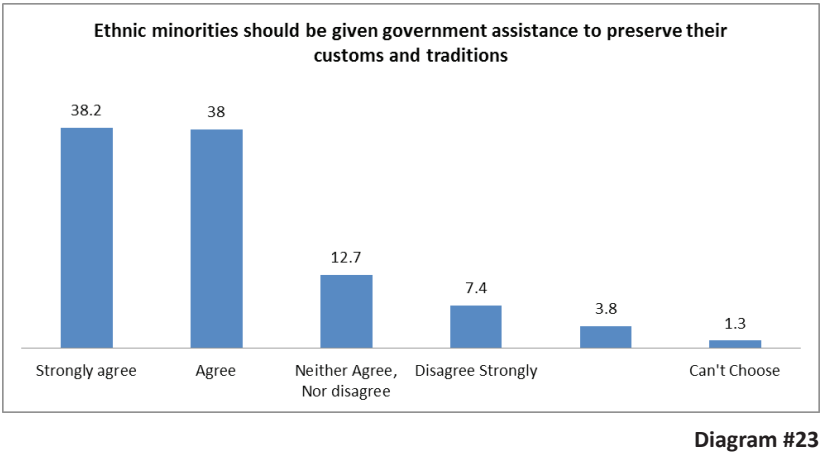
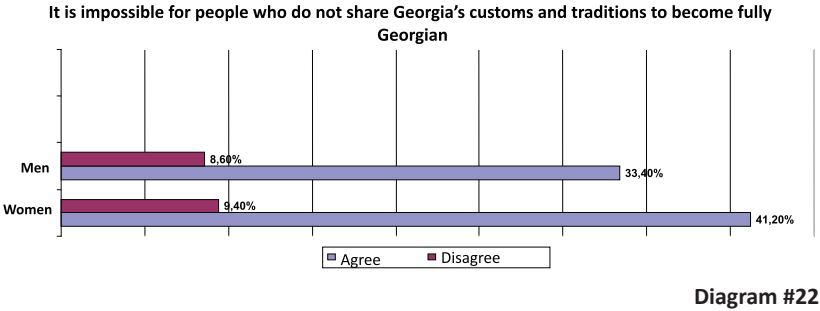


Diagram #21: Integration and Assimilation of Ethnic Minorities

Part of the survey respondents, specifically 41.2% of women and 33.4% of men, think that it is impossible for the people who do not share Georgian customs and traditions to become fully Georgian. There is a slight difference in opinions amongst the age groups. The older generation (56+) tends to agree more (28%) with the statement above (diagram #22 and diagram #23).



The majority of respondents, both women (42.5%) and men (32.5%) think the government should help ethnic minorities preserve their customs and traditions. Older respondents, aged 56+, particularly (28,3%) approve of the statement (diagram #24 and diagram #25).

Ethnic minorities should be given governmental assistance to preserve their culture and traditions

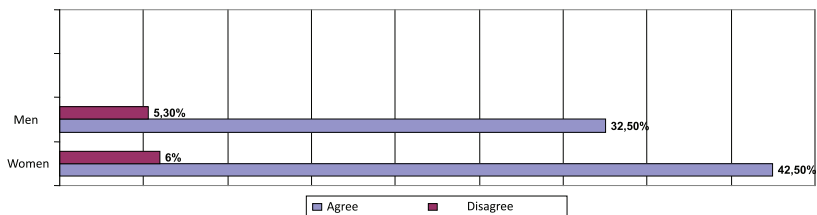


Diagram #24

Ethnic minorities should be given governmental assistance to preserve their culture and traditions

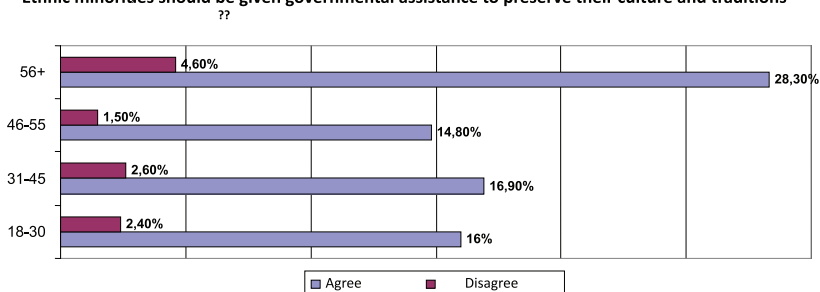


Diagram #25

In the factor analysis both items were grouped as one, “Integration of National minorities” factor. The majority of the population seems to approve of the idea of national minorities preserving their own customs and traditions, moreover, they believe the state should assist them with this process (table # 21)

Component Matrix^a

	Factor	Means
	1	
It is impossible for people who do not share Georgia’s customs and traditions to become fully Georgian	.713	2.05
Ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their culture	.713	2.01

Table #21

Age ($p=.012$) is a statistically significant demographic variable for the factor of “Integration of ethnic minorities”. There is no clear dependence on other variables. It is mainly older respondents who agree with the items united in this factor and welcome the integration of ethnic minorities into mainstream Georgian society (table #22):

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
-0.15	-0.10	-0.05	0.13	0.11	-0.01

Table #22

Major findings:

- The majority of both male and female respondents agree with the statement that the government should assist ethnic minorities preserve their own customs and traditions.
- Older respondents in particular think that the government should be involved in the integration of ethnic minorities.
- The number of respondents who are in favor of integrating ethnic minorities exceeds the number of respondents who believe that it is better if ethnic minorities are adapted through assimilation.

Qualitative data

The findings of focus group discussions identify that, in most cases, the nation is perceived as an ethno-cultural community, which mainly includes ethnic Georgians in the “we-group”, while ethnic minorities remain outside of this group. This was observed during the discussion regarding inclusion of ethnicity on ID cards, and was further established when the groups discussed issues related to ethnic minorities. The respondents’ opinions on ethnic minorities consist of the following aspects: how well informed and sensitive the focus group participants are towards ethnic minority issues, how they perceive the role of the state on this subject, and what their expectations are towards the inclusion of ethnic minorities in political processes.

Ethnicity on Identification Documentation

There is a clear tendency to construct national identity based on an ethnic marker when discussing the issue of including this specific marker on identity documents. In 1997, information about ethnic origin was taken from ID cards in Georgia, which aimed to make ethnic minority politics more liberal and to place emphasis on their integration (Johns, 2013). At the time, these details stimulated societal anxiety. In the post-Soviet world, this was one of the first precedents, on an official level, where a nation was defined in a novel way based on citizenship, and ethnicity became less important for full-fledged membership of the nation. Although issue of indicating ethnicity on ID is no longer crucial in public debates, the focus group discussions demonstrate that in certain cases it is still desirable for the respondents.

For some participants an indication of ethnic origin on ID cards is typically associated with the pride. The respondents display anxiety because, according to them, firstly, within the context of globalization, small nations are being assimilated and disappearing, and secondly, given the diversity inside the country, the Georgian nation is threatened. Hence, it is necessary to indicate Georgian ethnicity on IDs. Information on ethnic origin is perceived as protection from the disappearance of we-group.

“The information about ethnic origin should be present on ID cards. We are a small nation; one should definitely indicate ethnicity and citizenship as well. One should write down one’s citizenship with capital letters, as we are a tiny nation and we don’t want to vanish” (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

An indication of ethnicity on ID cards is associated with a sense of security, but according to some respondents it is also linked to recognition of superiority of ethnic Georgians. In this case ethnic Georgians are perceived as the legitimate residents of Georgia, while ethnic minorities are mostly regarded as visitors and, thus, are not a part of the we-group. Moreover, their equalisation with Georgians is perceived as derogatory to Georgians:

“One should note that we are superior to the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis here; we should somehow note this down” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-25).

“They should realize that they are the guests. The Kurds or the Armenians are guests, no matter how long they have resided here. This is our homeland” (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

“This is a matter of virtue. How are you supposed to deprive me of my nationality, origin and turn me into nothing? Is there no difference between the Azeri, the Kurd and me? This is a huge disgrace” (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

It is interesting that several respondents use the same reasons, only to back their opinion against indicating ethnic origin on ID cards. They believe an indication of ethnicity will put ethnic Georgians in a better position and cause the marginalization of minorities:

“When you indicate ethnicity, you underline your difference from others and that you have an advantage over others” (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

The opponents of indicating one's ethnic origin in ID cards are mainly younger individuals (18-30), and they mention that the identification of ethnicity could cause alienation and conflicts, which could contribute to the breaking up of society. These respondents suggest the indication of ethnic origin will create a xenophobic environment for minorities, and in return could encourage their desire to create autonomous entities in Georgia.

“We are a xenophobic society already and if we indicate this in official documents this is gonna make us even more so” (the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

“When they are identified as an Armenian or an Azeri in official documents they will find it easier to demand autonomy from Georgia then” (the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

In contrary to the above-mentioned opinion according to which the indication of ethnic origin appears either necessary or risky, some respondents think that the information about ethnic origin is arbitrary and only has the function of identification. Its existence on IDs does not change anything:

“I think this is only arbitrary and to me it only has an identification function. If I want to form a negative opinion about a person and marginalize him, I can do the same based on the surname” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-24).

As we see, although the issue of ethnic origin is no longer a burning issue for the society, many respondents have expressed their approval of

indicating ethnicity on their ID cards. One of the experts interviewed during this research noted that anxiety of Georgians over removing the information about ethnicity is a reflection of the dominance of ethnic marker - “Georgian blood”. He thinks that this hinders the unity of the nation:

“For them [people] Georgians constitute blood-based ethnic unity. This is why society was against omitting the information about ethnicity from ID cards. It is illogical that a titular nation was against this. This can be disliked by ethnic minorities. But when instead of being interested in uniting the nation you go against it, you divide your country by ethnicity” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Sensitivity in Regard to Issues of Ethnic Minorities

During this study’s focus groups, respondents were asked to express opinions concerning the problems of ethnic minorities. Respondents, older than 31, are the least sensitive and ill-informed on these topics. The participants believe that ethnic minorities in Georgia have no specific problems, nor do ethnic minority groups find it particularly difficult to retain their cultures or religion, also they are not being oppressed by ethnic Georgians.

“They have no issues. They feel better than we do. They have never had any problems and will have none in the future. They are more valued and respected. It is us, the Georgians, who are not valued when residing in other countries. As for ethnic minorities in Georgia, they are well respected” (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

It is also noteworthy that many respondents underline ethnic minorities’ poor command of the Georgian language, though they do not identify this as a problem. However, at one point it is highlighted the issue of ethnic minorities living in separate settlements, which hinders their integration to mainstream society and their learning the state language.

“They should not be living in separate settlements. This is a problem, in my view. Because their integration does not take place and they cannot or will not master the Georgian language since they do not need to use it” (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

It is interesting that although respondents suggest ethnic minorities feel good in Georgia, during the discussion they themselves distance them from mainstream

Georgian society - express indifference and negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Ethnic Georgians as a group are prioritized for the respondents:

"I do not think about them [ethnic minorities] a lot. I am more concerned with my fellow Georgians" (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

As the focus group discussions demonstrate, apart from the poor identification of ethnic minorities' problems, in some cases, they are also perceived as more privileged compared to ethnic Georgians. The respondents use socio-economic arguments to back their opinion about ethnic minorities being more privileged ones: certain respondents mentioned that ethnic minorities often speak several languages, and that helps them find employment; they are also economically better off and have better lands; furthermore, ethnic minorities find it easier to go to neighboring countries, for example, the Azerbaijanis - to Turkey. In this case, ethnic Georgians are viewed as an "oppressed" group, which is deprived of resources by "others."

"Everybody feels great in Georgia except for the Georgians. Others cross the country borders the way they like, if I, a Georgian, want to go anywhere, I will face lot of issues" (the focus group, a participant, 46-55).

"The Armenians speak Armenian, Russian and Georgian languages, because of knowing many languages they can find jobs more easily" (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

On one hand, the respondents believe these minorities are more "privileged" due to support from the government. They suggest the government pays more attention to ethnic minorities and grants them more rights than to ethnic Georgians. On the other hand, according to respondents the "privilege" of ethnic minorities might be explained by the nature of the Georgian people, who tend to respect "others" and forget one's "own" group.

"They are privileged by State in many ways. They get a lot more support from the government than us" (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

"Georgians are more underprivileged than ethnic minorities, since we the Georgians tend to respect strangers more, accept them, take care of them and forget about fellow Georgians" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

It should be noted that the contradiction of “we” and “other” often becomes apparent in the discussion of respondents. While, “the others” in Georgia are perceived as more affluent than ethnic Georgians, an emphasis is also placed on ethnic minorities using the advantage of their minority status to present themselves as disadvantaged. Thus, they gain more privileges:

“Unfortunately, ethnic minorities act like they are disadvantaged but, in fact, are in a better position. Some of them take advantage of these privileges. We do know that in our country ethnic minorities are not deprived of anything” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

The exclusion of ethnic minorities from the we-group and the assumption that Georgians are less privileged is linked to the perception of the ethnic minorities as a potential threat for the in-group. This trend is predominantly characteristic in respondents aged older 31. As the respondents note, ethnic minorities aspire to grow stronger and occupy additional Georgian territories:

“Ethnic minorities want to get stronger in Georgia. This should be discussed on a governmental level and other relevant organizations should also pay closer attention to this” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

“They are trying to get our territories. Somewhere near Marneuli there is a Georgian church. The Azeri people have pastures there. Young people from Tbilisi told them not to use the church territory as a pasture. One of the Azeri people, a mustached man, came out and told them that his great grandfather used to live there. Who invited his great grandfather here? They have claims towards us and hope that they will take these lands back” (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

It is interesting that since the church is perceived as a part of the Georgian national identity, this statement, to an extent, highlights certain cultural threats. In this sense the findings from the focus groups are consistent with Triandafyllidou’s opinion that because of different ethno-cultural characteristics, ethnic minorities can be perceived as a threat to territories and to culture by the members of the we-group. (Triandafyllidou, 2002).

During the discussion on ethnic minorities, the respondents also mention Abkhazians and Ossetians. The breakaway regions of Abkhazia and Ossetia continue to create traumatic experiences for Georgians:

“These things happened because we were nice, gave them territories and let them preserve their culture. We deserve nothing more” (the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

Alongside ethnic minorities “growing stronger”, their tight settlements and proliferation are further regarded as problems. This is inevitably linked to the fear that, at some point, ethnic Georgians will become a minority group, in terms of numbers, in Georgia.

“In 20 years’ time Georgians will become minorities and face huge problems if they don’t take care of themselves. Ethnic minorities face no problems in Georgia, they get more support” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

“This happens everywhere, they start forming tight settlements and increase in numbers overtime” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

The respondents aged 18-30 are more aware and sensitive towards the problems of ethnic minorities in Georgia. They suggest ethnic minorities are being alienated by Georgians – there is a lack of integration and they are excluded from the socio-political life; also ethnic minorities do not identify themselves with Georgians and display negative attitudes towards them. According to the participants, alienation is caused by ethnic minorities not speaking the state language, a lack of education and by issues with accessing information and employment on one hand, and Georgians’ negative attitudes and a lack of tolerance towards ethnic minorities on the other hand. The mass media is also blamed for failing to cover issues related to ethnic minorities.

“They [ethnic minorities] do not identify themselves as citizens of Georgia. On the other hand, ethnic Georgians also marginalize them and have negative and stereotypical attitudes towards them” (the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

“They have a problem; they do have a language barrier. Those living in Tbilisi speak Georgian, but those ethnic minorities residing in regions and compact settlements do have a language barrier; this causes alienation. They face issues when seeking jobs and are not involved in the current social life of the country. They do not perceive themselves to be Georgian citizens” (the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

The Role of the State in Relation to National Ethnic Minorities

Focus groups conducted with Georgian public reveal the majority of respondents older than 30, cannot see what role the state plays for ethnic minorities. These respondents suggest this is due to ethnic minorities not facing any major problems, and hence the state has nothing to resolve. Moreover, in some cases the respondents express discontent that unlike ethnic Georgians, the state grants ethnic minorities certain privileges. In contrary, several respondents mention the obligation of the state to protect the rights of ethnic minorities, for instance, the rights of ethnic minorities to preserve their culture. However, at the same time the construction of religious sites for ethnic minorities is perceived as a threat. Although there is relative tolerance towards ethnic minorities, when it comes to preserving one's own culture, the religion is the subject when the division of "we" and "the others" becomes more emphasized.

"They should be protected of course. Their nationality and faith should also be protected. They should not build too many churches though. No more than three places of worship" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

It is interesting that the category of ethnic minorities overlaps that of religious minorities, and this enhances the sense of threat. For Georgians Orthodoxy is an integral part of national identity. Ethnic minorities, in striving to protect their own faith, are perceived as a threat to losing Orthodox Christianity, thus Georgian identity. These perceptions will be discussed in more detail below.

Typically the respondents aged 18-30 believe that it is the function of the government to resolve issues related to ethnic minorities, and that it is important that the state interferes in these matters. In their opinion, the state should endorse and contribute to the development of relationships between the cultures of ethnic minorities and of the majority.

Every focus group mentioned ethnic minorities not speaking the Georgian language. Their focus highlights that knowledge of the state language is a major characteristics of the we-group. Language is one of the cultural factors associated with the "ethnic other" and forms "an ethno-cultural other" - as ethnic minorities are unable to speak the language of the in-group, they are left outside of the mainstream cultural space.

The problem of language created divisions in attitude in almost every group. The participants' opinions differ on whether they blamed ethnic

minorities themselves or whether the state was found responsible for this issue. Part of respondents consider the minorities' inability to speak Georgian, and lack of education, is a choice. Thus, they believe, solving the language problem depends of the determination of ethnic minorities. It was also suggested that Georgian language skills should be compulsory for minorities living in Georgia:

"This is not a problem of the state. It is their problem that they cannot speak Georgian" (the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

However, in the alternative view, the state should play a key role in eliminating language barriers and its involvement is crucial to teaching the Georgian language, as well as encouraging integration. The participants propose this could be achieved by implementing intensive and stronger educational programs:

"The government should increase its interest in ethnic minorities, for instance give them certain quotas in universities, with the condition that they will learn the language. I want them to come and mix with us. If they don't mix, they will always be strangers. No one tells them to forget their language but they should know the state language" (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

"The state should play a mediating role and implement certain programs. For instance, the Georgian language program was good but it lacked quality. The idea of it was good" (the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

Political Engagement of Ethnic Minorities

Being a fully-fledged member of a nation also denotes the right to participate in the political processes of a country. Specifically, this allows members the opportunity to hold the key decision-making positions. Therefore, focus group participants were asked whether it would be acceptable for them to have an ethnic minority representative as a leading politician, like the president or the prime minister.

Middle-aged and elderly respondents (30+) have mixed attitudes towards the question, while opinions of the younger participants (18-30) are more or less homogeneous. They think it acceptable to elect ethnic minorities as leading politicians, providing they live in Georgia and are

aware of local issues. The main argument lay in the constitutional rights of the minorities. Several respondents suggest that even though they feel somewhat uncomfortable about the possibility of non-Georgian president, the constitution and the compatibility of the candidate with the goals of the country is of the ultimate importance.

“Legislature is a great measure and if you say that by law this is acceptable, i.e. this is acceptable for the country in general... It does arouse awkward feelings, you kind of think that it is not the right thing to have an ethnic minority representative as a president. But, if it becomes a reality and I have to vote, I will assess whether or not this person is the right candidate, if they match my interests and those of the whole country. In the end, I will force myself to vote for them. This perspective is acceptable in this regard” (the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

The majority of respondents younger than 30, believe, at this point in time, the population of Georgia does not want an ethnic minority representative as a leading politician or statesmen, hence, that individual would receive few electoral votes. The participants suggest that once the national and civic consciousness has increased, these attitudes will change and they use the example of American society to strengthen their argument: as once, America could not imagine an African-American president, though this has already become a reality:

“Nobody could possibly imagine that they would have an African-American president, but this has changed. Their society has become more tolerant...” (the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

Opinions of respondents aged 30+ are more divided. One group thinks an ethnically non-Georgian president or prime minister is acceptable, providing they were born in Georgia and have good stately reasoning. One of the arguments to support the above opinion holds that ethnic minorities might rule more responsibly than ethnic Georgians, and this would create less corruption and nepotism. It should be noted that although this stance views ethnic minorities positively, it still separates minorities from ethnic Georgians. In this instance, representatives of ethnic minorities are perceived as “others” who automatically should have a greater sense of responsibility than ethnic Georgians.

“Why not? If he is clever, with a strong sense of responsibility and won’t steal money from the state, like we do... he will be more cautious while being within the government and won’t make improper decisions. Georgians, on the other hand, will always rely on friends and relatives. They (Georgians) will appoint their relatives on all the good positions” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-44).

However, the contrary argument emphasizes rights implied by citizenship and highlights existing stereotypes as reasons for excluding ethnic minorities from politics. These stereotypes typically portray ethnic minorities as mere traders or greengrocers:

“Just because he is a citizen, he should enjoy the same rights as we do. His right to become a leading politician should also be protected. Do you know why it is unacceptable for us to have an ethnic minority representative as a politician? Because we have stereotypes according to which an Azeri should by all means be a greengrocer, an Armenian is a trader, etc.” (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

The second group of respondents aged 30+, simply believe it unacceptable to have ethnically diverse people in leading positions. Ethnic minorities are perceived as “the other” to whom Georgian history and traditions are unknown. These factors, alongside Orthodox Christianity, are considered as attributes necessary for a leader:

“A Georgian should rule Georgia. Is there lack of clever Georgians?” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

“We should have a Georgian president. He should uphold Georgian traditions and be an Orthodox Christian” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

An ethnically non-Georgian leading politician is associated with degradation and the loss of national identity. It should also be noted that emphasis is placed on Georgia being a small nation. This is one of the key arguments to why a non-Georgian should not hold a leading position. Emphasis on being a small nation is not surprising, if one takes into account the anxiety, mentioned above – one of the threats associated with the ethno-cultural “others” is that we-group will grow smaller and eventually disappear:

"He [a leader] might be an ethnically diverse person and be much better than Georgians, but we are a small nation and I think that these days this is still unacceptable" (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

"It is totally unacceptable for me to have ethnic minorities in leading political positions. In the first place, this will have a negative effect on national identity, it will kill traditions. It is totally unacceptable to do this in a tiny country like ours. We will be devastated mentally. This means the nation is degraded, inferior and illiterate" (the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

It is interesting that some respondents compare Georgia to a family in which a foreigner steps in and starts to manage it. Members of the we-group, the family, may only be Georgian, while ethnic minorities are again perceived as "others" and as "members outside of the family".

"How can somebody else, a person with a different nationality manage my family? This is like having the other enter your family and telling you that he is the head of the family and will manage it" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

The experts interviewed as part of this research agree that in defining the nation, Georgians tend to highlight ethnicity and origin. They suggest cultural factors, such as a language, history and traditions, are thought to be tied to ethnicity, even though they are in reality transmitted from generation to generation, not by blood but by socialization.

"A cultural identity is an identity that is not transmitted by blood but by socialization, a rather complex mechanism. But in Georgia this cultural identity is often interpreted in the light of ethnicity" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Therefore, an ethnic minority that possesses unique cultural characteristics is not perceived as a member of the we-group. According to one of the experts, because of ethnic origin, minorities are associated more with their historic homeland than with Georgia.

"They [ethnic minorities] are always linked with other states, with Turkey, Azerbaijan, the Chechen Republic, etc." (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Returning to the notion of “the stranger” (which creates anxiety by deconstructing the dichotomy of “we” and “the other”, not being able to fit in neither in-group, nor out-group on the basis of all markers) it can be assumed that such aforementioned tendencies in the focus groups is an attempt to define “the stranger” as “the other” by associating them with the out-group (Bauman, 1991). It has already been noted that an alternative way of defining “the stranger” is in its assimilation. Certain experts think that representatives of an ethnic minority group can be perceived as members of the we-group, providing they share the characteristics self-ascribed to Georgians:

“Acceptance is more prevalent towards those people who, fit in the stereotypic image of being Georgian at list shallowly.”(an in-depth interview, an expert).

It is interesting that a similar tendency can be discerned in the research on ethnic stereotypes about Armenians conducted in Georgia (Margvelashvili et al, 2015). It appears respondents consider ethnic minorities, in this case ethnic Armenians, more acceptable when they are less distinctive from Georgians; when they speak fluent Georgian, are integrated into society and identify themselves with Georgians, rather than Armenians. In this case, the stereotypes that Georgians commonly use to characterize Armenians are no longer valid. They are characterized, however, according to auto-stereotypes that respondents use to describe their own ethnic Georgian group. It therefore becomes much easier to perceive “Georgian-like” Armenians as in-group members, rather than accepting ethnic Armenians whose ethno-cultural identity is more “visible.”

The experts interviewed in this study highlight that the majority of ethnic minorities are not engaged in Georgian social, political, economic or cultural life. They typically live in isolated places, have no information on current Georgian events, cannot speak the Georgian language and, in most cases, are not willing to become involved in the social life of the country.

“This is the understanding of ethnic minorities too... Azeri and Armenian students have very little contact with their Georgian peers. They tend to be separate from the others. Maybe in certain cases they do interact with Georgians, but I observe that they keep themselves somewhat aloof. Hence, we have got a parallel society. This should not be happening” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

On the other hand, according a experts, ethnic Georgians equally express distrust towards minorities and think they do not care about Georgia:

“Integration is problematic in cultural life, political life, social life, as ethnic Georgians may not trust ethnic Armenians or ethnic Azeri believing that they are not indeed committed to the country of Georgia, serving the interests of some other country, etc.” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One of the respondents explains the lack of trust towards ethnic minorities by noting how the Georgian state was formed together with a fear of separatism:

“Our modern state was formed along with a fear of separatism. When Georgia gained independence, two de facto states within the territory of Georgia were formed, as a result of two ethnic conflicts in Ossetia and Abkhazia. Hence, the fear that something bad will happen is present in all governments. This will always be the case” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Experts relate such an emphasis on ethnic marker of national identity to the historic factors. Part of them highlight the Soviet period, and believe it was very common at the time to discuss one’s origin and blood. It is noteworthy that the Soviet ideology was on one hand far from nationalism, and on the other hand encouraged it.

“It is weird, but Soviet education was nationalistic and encouraged the Georgian national group (...) not only the education but the art, cinematography, writings, etc., contributed to the creation of a Soviet Georgian identity. Of course, the Soviet ideology is far from nationalism, but in fact, the same Soviet ideology contributed to enhancing nationalism. If we pay close attention, we will discover that even today those political leaders who preach patriotism have communist roots and pro-Russian attitudes” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Several experts mention the weakening political trend of defining the nation by ethnicity. The initial years after Georgian independence, the period of Gamsakhurdia, were marked by accentuation of ethnic origin, but this gradually changed in the period of Shevardnadze, and when Saakashvili became president, active steps were taken to create a civic nation.

Overall, the focus groups and expert interviews demonstrate ethnic minorities are not considered as a part of the national we-group. Because of different ethno-cultural characteristics they are perceived as “others”, and to the members of in-group, in this case ethnic Georgians, they are associated

with threats, such as misappropriating territories or economic resources. These threats are broadly connected to the fear that Georgians will decrease in number and eventually disappear. There is a similar trend in relation to immigrants.

Immigrants

In March 2014, the government of Georgia ratified the law on “the legal state of aliens and stateless persons”.⁴² After this law, the previous liberal attitude and practices were changed, and citizens of 118 countries could no longer stay in Georgian territory for 360 days without a visa. Under the new law, citizens of 24 countries, including the People’s Republic of China, India, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran, do not have the right to enter Georgia without a visa.⁴³ It should be noted that representatives of these countries have the largest number of immigrants in Georgia. The National Bureau of the Statistics of Georgia, in 2015, listed 1,766 individuals from the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1,618 from Iraq and 1,267 people from China immigrated to Georgia.⁴⁴ The overall picture, as presented in table#23 below, reveals there is currently no great migration to Georgia.

Country	Quantity
Russian Federation	10 552
Turkey	5 810
Armenia	4 143
Azerbaijan	2 839
The Ukraine	2 886
Islamic Republic of Iran	1 766
Kuwait	1 320
Iraq	1 618
The United States of America	1 081
China	1 267
Nationals of Other Countries	8 206

Table #23: Number of Immigrants, 2015, National Bureau of Statistics of Georgia

42 Georgian law on the legal status of aliens and stateless persons , Legislative Herald of Georgia, 2014, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2867361>

43 Georgian law on the legal status of aliens and stateless persons , Legislative Herald of Georgia, 2014, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2867361>

44 Emigrants and Immigrants by citizenship, 2012-2015; National Statistics Office of Georgia http://geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=172&lang=geo

Within the bounds of this study, an attempt has been made to study the attitudes of Georgian citizens towards the immigration process and to immigrants, as well as to discern causes of this attitudes. An analysis of the quantitative survey findings conducted by ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) in 2013, and the results of focus groups conducted with various age groups and of in-depth interviews with experts and the key actors influencing public opinion. These actors are politicians, representatives of media, the church and non-governmental organizations.

Quantitative data

This part of the paper presents the findings of the quantitative survey conducted by ISSP in 2013. The data refers to the attitudes of the citizens of Georgia towards immigrants. It is difficult to define whether there is a clear-cut tendency to have negative attitudes towards immigrants among citizens of Georgia. The following table#24, reveals that 40,7% of the respondents, unlike the opposing 32,1%, do not think that immigrants increase the number of crimes in Georgia. Similarly, 40,7% opposed to 34,2% do not think that immigrants undermine Georgian culture. While in the workplace, 51,2% of respondents think that immigrants deprive them of other of occupations. Although, this position is not shared by 28,9% of respondents.

There are different opinions on immigrants.(Immigrants are those individuals who come from abroad to live in Georgia). Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	I totally agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I don't agree	I totally disagree	I will abstain from answering	Means
Immigrants increase the number of crimes	8,9%	23,2%	16,3%	33,2%	7,5%	10,8%	3,61
Immigrants deprive the people born in Georgia of work	19,2%	32 %	11,7%	24,1%	4,8%	8,1%	3,04
Immigrants undermine Georgian culture	11,3%	22,9%	16,3%	32%	8,7%	8,8%	3,48

Table #24

The following diagram presents the mean scores of negative attitudes towards immigrants. The diagram shows that the major trend is between the two answers, “I neither agree nor disagree” and “I don’t agree”.

Negative Attitude Towards Emigrants

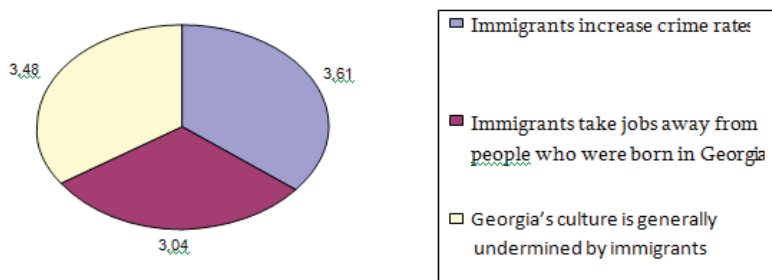


Diagram #26: Negative attitudes towards immigrants (Mean Scores)

Of the respondents 58,1% have a negative attitude towards immigrants introducing new ideas and cultures to Georgian society, where a positive answer was given by 16,3% of respondents. Similar amounts of negative and positive answers were given to immigrants having a positive effect on the Georgian economy: 36,6% agree with the statement, while 32,5% disagree. Diagram#27, below, shows the mean scores of answers to this question:

Positive Attitude Towards Emigrants

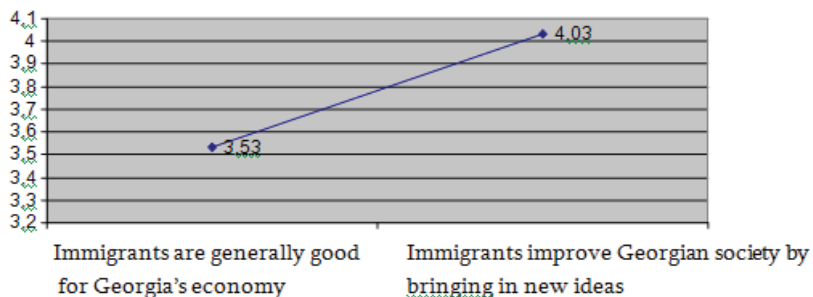


Diagram #27

In terms of equality of rights, the attitudes of respondents towards immigrants is critical. Of the respondents, 60,6% think that immigrants living

legally in Georgia, but with no citizenship, should not have the same rights as citizens of Georgia. However, the majority of respondents (71,4%) think legal immigrants should have access to public education, just like Georgian citizens. It should also be mentioned that 38,5%, unlike only 6,4%, believe Georgia should take stricter measures to limit illegal immigration.

When asked whether the number of immigrants should increase, the majority of respondents thinks that the number should be greatly reduced, the mean of the answers being 4,28. Diagram# 28below shows the percentages:

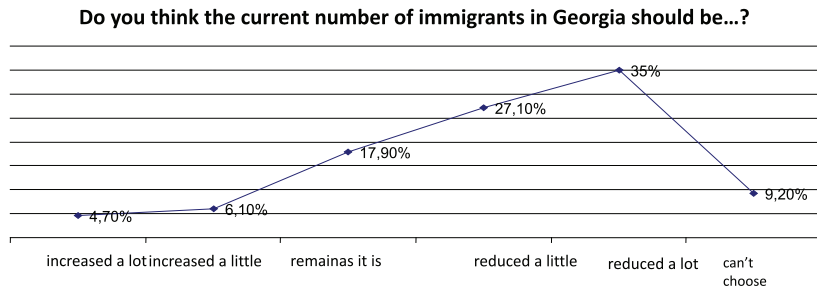


Diagram #28: Attitudes towards immigration processes

The population of Georgia has an extremely positive attitude towards the integration of immigrants. Where 77,6% of respondents think that immigrants should both preserve their own culture and internalize Georgian culture. While 8,4% believe in diversity, and think immigrants should retain their culture and not internalize Georgian culture. Only 8,5% state that immigrants should deny their own culture and internalize Georgian culture.

There are no differences in terms of both age or gender in the answers to the following question: “should immigrants have the same rights as citizens of Georgia?”According to the data, 68,2% of the respondents aged 18-30, 63,8% of respondents aged 31-45, 65,2% of the respondents aged 46-55 and 63% of the respondents aged 56+ state that immigrants should not have the same rights as Georgian citizens.

Despite age, 37,2% of respondents disagree with the following statement: “immigrants increase the number of crimes”, while 26,1% agree. The positions of respondents does not vary in terms of gender: 54% of women and 46% of men disagree with the statement.

Answers to the question, “do immigrants deprive citizens of Georgia of

workplaces?”, highlight that despite their ages, the majority of respondents (55,6%) think that immigrants deprive Georgians of work. Furthermore, most respondents do not agree with the assumption that immigrants undermine local culture.

Based on the research findings, one may conclude that attitudes towards immigrants and immigration vary a great deal among the respondents. There are common negative attitudes towards the increasing numbers of immigrants in Georgia; they think that immigrants deprive local people of work and they compete in the sphere of the economy. The majority of respondents disapprove that immigrants should enjoy the same rights as citizens of Georgia.

One may thus conclude that Georgian society perceives immigrants as a threat in the spheres of economy and demography, which creates certain negative attitudes. In terms of culture and social security, many do not express negative attitudes towards immigrants. Specifically, most respondents do not agree with assumptions, for example, immigrants undermine national culture or contribute to the increase of crimes in Georgia.

According to the factor analysis, the majority of locals express distrust towards immigrants in specific aspects. Variables were distributed in three factor: the first, “negative attitudes towards legal immigrants”, the second, “positive attitudes towards immigrants”: and the third factor, “negative attitudes towards illegal immigrants” (table#25):

Rotated Component Matrix ^a				
	Factors		Means	
	1	2	3	
Immigrants increase crime rates	.417	-.510	-.025	3.08
Immigrants are generally good for Georgia's economy	-.673	.024	-.053	2.96
Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in Georgia	.650	.325	.124	2.61
Immigrants improve Georgian society by bringing in new ideas	-.717	-.027	-.148	3.62
Georgia's culture is generally undermined by immigrants	.672	-.287	-.025	3.03
Legal immigrants to Georgia, who are not citizens, should have the same rights as Georgian citizens	-.138	.646	-.374	3.51
Georgia should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants	.118	-.006	.935	1.76
Legal immigrants should have equal access to public education,as Georgian citizens	-.024	.821	.121	2.05

Table#25

The following statements were found within the first factor, **“negative attitudes towards legal immigrants”**: immigrants deprive local people of work and undermine Georgian culture. This factor also includes the following: immigrants assist the Georgian economy in general and immigrants’ better Georgian society through the introduction of new ideas and cultures. Based on this content, contradictions from the last two statements are due to the negative way they were perceived, i.e. the majority of respondents do not agree with either. Means from the statements in the first factor reveal that the majority of local citizens do not have straightforward or accepting attitudes towards immigrants in Georgia.

According to the demographic variables, the first factor, “negative attitudes towards legal immigrants”, is based on age ($p=.000$) and the type of employment ($p=.02$) but is not dependent on gender($p=.08$) or level of education($p=.26$). As age increases, respondents tend to have more positive attitudes to two of the statements, “immigrants deprive local people of work” and “immigrants undermine Georgian culture”. There is also a negative attitude towards the following statements, “Immigrants assist the economy of Georgia” and “immigrants better Georgian society through the introduction of new ideas and cultures”.

1 18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
-0.26	-0.13	-0.10	0.00	0.14	0.20

Table#26

The second factor, **“positive attitudes towards legal immigrants”**, includes the following statements: “immigrants increase crime rates”, “legal immigrants to Georgia, who are not citizens, should have the same rights as Georgia’s citizens” and “legal immigrants should have equal access to public education as Georgian citizens”. Due to its negative connotations, it is logical that the statement, “immigrants increase crime rates” is represented by a minus sign compared to variables reflecting positive attitudes.

Regarding demographic variables, the factor of “positive attitudes towards legal immigrants” is dependent only on the type of employment ($p=.05$).

In general, it is more common for people employed in the military and in public sectors to have positive attitudes towards legal immigrants. One can check the corresponding details using the relevant indicator.

The third factor is entitled “**attitudes towards illegal immigrants**”. It comprises of a single statement, “Georgia should take more drastic measures and not allow illegal immigrants in”. The mean score for this statement is obviously positive.

According to the demographic variables, the third factor is only dependent on the level of education ($p=.01$). Typically, people with a tertiary education tend to agree with the statement, “Georgia should take more drastic measures and not allow illegal immigrants in”.

Without 8 or 9 years school completion certificate	8 or 9 years school graduation certificate	Secondary school certificate (11 or 12 years)	Diploma of vocational education	Bachelor's degree or 5-years diploma	Master's Degree	Higher than master's degree
-0.06	-0.11	-0.11	-0.01	0.12	0.02	0.36

Table#27

The conclusion is thus based around the aforementioned data, which highlights the fact that the majority of the Georgian population is fearful and has a cautious attitude towards immigrants. The quantitative data analysis has shed light on the various attitudes of the discussed issues. The findings from the focus groups were processed to attain detailed results. Two groups were singled out, according to age, and analyzing the answers of the focus group participants: the group comprising the youth, aged 18-30 and those aged 31+.

Major findings:

- The majority of respondents thinks that immigrants do not contribute to the rise of crime in the country.
- The majority of respondents think that immigrants deprive local people of work.
- Respondents make negative assumptions that immigrants better Georgian society through the introduction of new ideas and cultures.
- In terms of equality and rights, the attitudes of respondents are

critical. The majority think that legal immigrants without Georgian citizenship should not enjoy the same rights as the Georgian nationals.

- The majority of respondents think that the number of immigrants entering the country should decrease.
- The respondents interviewed as part of the study think that the immigrants should retain their cultures and learn Georgian culture as well.
- The interviewed respondents perceive immigrants as a threat when it comes to the spheres of economy and demography, and primarily display negative attitudes in this direction.

Quantitative Data

Attitudes towards Immigrants-

When analysing the advantages and disadvantages of immigration in Georgia, described as the arrival of foreigners for living, working or studying, the young respondents indicate diversity, sharing traditions and trade relations as positive aspects. Sharing knowledge and education, as well as the flow of investment, are also mentioned in a positive context:

“Advantages will be the possibility of labor resources to grow, making student programs, acquiring and sharing more knowledge and moreover creating an environment for investment”(the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

Young respondents further identified two disadvantages connected with the immigration process: firstly, increasing rates of crime and, secondly, the issue of competition in the labor market, which, according to the respondents, is currently in favor of immigrants. Attitudes of the youth towards immigrants are often negative, when they consider themselves in an imbalanced situation and they believe that employers prioritize immigrants. The issue of “hostility” emerges when considering the limited resources available, and it contributes to the differentiation and rejection of “others” from inner groups.

“It was said that an Iranian women cut the ears of two boys on Marjanishvili Avenue, that woman was arrested. This should not be happening. Of course, events like that happen very rarely, but it creates certain an imbalance in terms of security”(the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

"I have had that experience, because someone is a foreigner she or he can be prioritized. Competition should be fair. Prioritizing someone because of being foreigner is unfair"(the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

Young respondents assessed social attitudes towards immigrants and stated that their attitude depends on various factors, for instance, on origin, status, skin color, financial condition, etc.

"It depends on the status, what is her or his status upon arrival, and the duration of her or his stay" (the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

"I wanted to say the same, it depends on the country she or he is coming from. Georgians negatively react to what? If someone is black, Armenian or Azeri?" (the focus group, a male participant, 18-24).

Respondents recalled situations when society revealed discrimination and negative attitudes towards foreigners, for instance, towards black people. It could be a rejection from the students, with negative expectations that they will be infected.

"Students of the Medical University have a big problem. Often Georgian students do not tell them what they have for seminars, do not talk to them. I do not know why it happens"(the focus group, a female participant, 18-24).

However, according to one of the respondents, if a foreigner is beneficial to society they immediately becomes acceptable:

"I will add to the students' issue. You have mentioned a foreign company has moved to Georgia. When a foreigner comes and makes an offer to a Georgian, for instance, employment, entrepreneurship, they will become totally acceptable for Georgians"(the focus group, a female participant, 18-24).

It is clear from the young respondents' answers that negative attitudes are clearly not shown towards immigrants from their side of society. The negativity is rather selective and mostly refers to immigrants who either are from more economically underdeveloped countries or related to differences in ethno-cultural features, such as, differing religion and traditions. The

targets of negative attitudes and hostile behavior are considered undesirable “others”, from whom one cannot attain any profit. If society believes it can gain economic profit, negative predispositions are put aside and the concrete “other” group becomes accepted.

The respondents suggest such selective attitudes are due to a lack of contact and experience with “other groups”, as well as the impossibility of identification with their groups because distinctive differences, for instance, race:

“We cannot make a resemblance between ourselves and others, and distinctive factors seem to be more, simply because they are different physically from us. This means that they are different in other things too. This is because of society is unable to accept them” (the focus group, a female participant, 18-25).

Unlike younger respondents, the older group view negative perspectives and have a distinctively negative attitude towards immigrants who plan to stay in Georgia for longer period. The participants explain their attitudes, as they realize that the arrival of immigrants creates additional competition in the labor market.

“We do not have jobs ourselves. I am eager to work; they come to work and are employed”(the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

According to older respondents, because of competition locals are oppressed and are unable to find employment. Participants of the focus groups argue that immigrants are privileged in comparison to Georgians; in particular, they are free from paying income tax:

“The negative side is that they benefit from more privileges than us. For instance, there are quite a few Chinese shops in Gldani. When they open shops, they do not pay an amount, tax, they are free from paying income tax”(the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

It is significant that respondents’ views on immigrants’ income tax does not match the Georgian legislation. The law of Georgia on the “legal position of foreigners” states citizens of foreign countries, similar to citizens of Georgia, are to pay income tax. This indicates the participants’ lack of sufficient information on the matter.

One negative aspects of immigration was identified in situations where Georgians marry foreigners. It is not seen as acceptable for some respondents:

“Sometimes they marry black people. I do not like it. Georgia has gone through so much trouble. We have not been defeated by conquerors but receive back some things without war”(the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

“They should not stay. There is a risk of losing identity. If a [Georgian] man marries a woman, it is alright. He will keep his last name, but when [Georgian] woman gets married, it is bad”(the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

The competition in the financial-economic sphere is clearly revealed in older age groups, which inevitably creates the rejection of immigrants. Economic factors encompass such aspects as, the “privileged” condition of immigrants in the entrepreneurial-commercial sphere, etc.

The separate issue of the marriage of a Georgian woman to an immigrant is associated with the loss of Georgian identity. Women in Georgian culture have a reproductive function, and thus are crucial to the continuation of the generations. Hence, demographically, women are the most important agents. Therefore, when a woman takes the surname of someone “other” than an ethnic Georgian it is viewed in a problematic manner. This is due to the anxiety over the worsening demographic picture, and decreasing the number of ethnic groups and the disappearance of the ethnic Georgian.

Typically, the older respondents are more negative to immigration than the youth. They indicated more negative factors concerning immigrants, particularly in reference to specific countries. It is significant that respondents underlined the “economical underdevelopment” of those countries and explain their apathy to this factor:

“Who is going to come here? He or she is coming here for studying from less developed countries? I need representatives of higher culture, so that he or she teaches and helps us”(the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

“Of course tourists and teachers coming from Europe have the latter... One cannot make a comparison between British, French and German people and people who come from underdeveloped countries, Afro-Americans. There is no comparison. We prefer people who come from capitalist countries, who are educated and strong”(the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

Presumably, negative attitudes towards immigrants is sometimes caused by fear of competition in the labor market. While, sometimes it is due to an ethno-cultural rejection. In both cases, such attitudes are generated from anxiety over the physical disappearance of ethnic Georgians. It is noteworthy that members of the focus groups do not have a negative reaction towards immigrants who come from economically developed countries. They are not perceived as competitors, nor is emphasis placed on their being “privileged”:

“We are dying and are considered to be underdeveloped. French and British people will not come”(the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

Europeans are the preferred immigrants. However, respondents occasionally indicate Europeans residing in Georgia:

“It depends who is arriving, has one British person come?”(the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

It can be suggested that European “others” are considered less foreign in comparison to certain regions of Georgian society. This is because the internal groups, relating to ethno-cultural indicators, see fewer differences between themselves and Europeans. The ongoing Westernization, in which Georgia is gradually integrating into European structures, creates a natural closeness to Europe, which is stronger than with Asian or African people. Moreover, Westernization and closeness to Europe is important for the purposes of economic development and the prosperity of Georgian society.

Whereas the “undesirable” attitudes towards immigrants from Asian and African countries is based on an ethno-cultural, clear-cut difference. This is further intensified by the Georgian perception that such ethnicities are economically less well developed. Therefore, these immigrants are profiting more than internal groups. Older respondents who support immigration refer to the positive sides of the immigration process, and provide the same arguments as the younger generation: cultural and social closeness, learning from others and deepening economic-commercial relationships.

Respondents of all age groups named both the negative and positive sides of immigration. However, the younger groups, in opposition to the older generation, are more dedicated to the process of immigration, which is linked to the possibility of economic profit and beneficial cultural exchanges. Issues of security and competition in imbalanced conditions are identified on the negative side of immigration. Thus, immigration is perceived negatively only in cases of unfair and unequal competition.

Unlike young respondents, the older respondents reject immigrants related often to competition in the economic sphere, in the labor market and businesses, and due to the deterioration of the demographic picture, the weakening of ethnic Georgians. Moreover, despite their reference to ethnic difference, they still reveal selective attitudes towards representatives of various countries. This may be explained by a cultural familiarity with European countries, unlike with others, for instance, Asian or African countries. The reason why older respondents feel most affiliated with Europe, along with cultural factors, is determined by the economic situation. “Undesirable” countries immigrants either have a large population, as in China or India, and are thus considered a threat in terms of demography by the dominant ethnic group, or they create competition for limited material resources, which further creates demographic anxiety.

As previously indicated, the experts’ in-depth interviews were conducted in the framework of the respective research. The following questions were asked in the context of the previously listed topics: “which factors you would relate to the processes of immigration and emigration in Georgia?; and, “how would you evaluate these processes, what do they bring to Georgia?”

The experts’ opinions on immigration differ. Half of experts believe that great waves of migration have never taken place in Georgia. Hence, they think it as an exaggeration to discuss the risks of immigration:

“In reference to population arrivals, there have never been big population flows. This cannot be said about students who get low quality education at our universities” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

“As for migration, it should be fear if we confess that, not counting small flows, Georgia did not have any experience of external migrations. The named small flows have never been massive. There might be stronger fears than the impact of those migration processes” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Whereas many of the experts indicate that migration also has positive sides, since if foreigners wish to live in Georgia, then there must be opportunities available:

“Objectively, migration to Georgia shows nothing other than the positive aspects of the process. If people come from other countries

and see opportunities here, it means that Georgia is a country where opportunities exist” (an in-depth interviews, an expert).

This argumentation is related to stability and economic development, i.e. the greater the migration, the more developed and regulated Georgia can be considered. It may be seen as a country where representatives of other countries hope to come and work.

The experts consider the negative sides of migration are in terrorism and security issues. The open visa policies and liberal politics, allowing for legal border crossings, are considered quite simple:

“If a law is liberal, the risk that it will be abused is reduced. Someone can arrive for terroristic purposes, I think it is easy to commit a terrorist act in Georgia, since the borders are open. This kind of access contains certain risks”(an in-depth interviews, an expert).

The experts, elaborating on approaches towards population immigration, state that negative emotional aspects and unacceptability accompany the discussion. Factors that cause rejection and negative emotions increase the number of “others”, which is considered a risk by the Georgian population.

“There is a serious problem, especially when it comes to the arrival of immigrants in Georgia. Clearly, it increases the number of minorities and logically intensifies emotions related to the process. Absence of our acceptance towards the latter is problematic and we see what has happened in the case of the Chinese and Turkish people, etc.”(an in-depth interviews, an expert).

The experts indicate that negative attitudes towards immigrants are partially determined by ethnic nationalistic values. Feelings of superiority and dominance are characteristic to ethnic nationalism (Kyle, 2006). Georgia is considered the property of ethnic Georgians, and any other, non-Georgian, groups, are simply regarded as “visitors”. According to one expert, the civil understanding of national identity well balances ethnic nationalism. Where the latter is distinct for having more tolerance towards “other” groups.

“It is clear that the civil understanding of our own identity would seriously contribute to the creation of more tolerant attitudes towards those people who live in this country. However, they might not come from this country” (an in-depth interviews, an expert).

One expert suggests society has lost economic benefits because of intolerant attitudes towards immigrants:

“It is a fact that what has happened in regard to visas has negatively reflected on our economy. I would say psychologically determined approaches that we fear others will come, have brought along damage to the economy. There is a very simple link between these two” (an in-depth interviews, an expert).

In the framework of this research, politicians’ opinions towards immigration are mostly positive. Immigration is related to such factors as intercultural communication, the increase of economic investments and the exchange of knowledge.

“As regard to immigration in Georgia, I am generally of an opinion that everyone should move freely, commence free trade relations, etc. If there is a case of temporary immigration, for instance, a flow of investment, initiation of a business, arrival of engineers from whom Georgian workers can learn a lot is good for the country” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Social Attitudes Towards Selling Land to Foreigners-

Similar to the situation with immigration, since 2012, state policies towards the appropriation of plots of land to foreigners have changed. On 31st December 2014, a moratorium was established on the expropriation of agricultural plots of land. The moratorium prohibits the sale of land to foreigners. This subsequently caused a negative reaction from civil society. In September 2014, Transparency International brought a case to the constitutional court of Georgia on the moratorium.⁴⁵ The court held that moratorium was unconstitutional.⁴⁶

The figures from the survey conducted by ISSP (International Social Survey Program) in 2013, show that 73.5% of respondents believe foreigners should not have the right to purchase land in Georgia. Moreover, increases in age determine the escalation of negative attitudes, see table #28:

45 Ban on land acquisition for foreigners: breach of constitution and its adverse impact on investment, Transparency International Georgia, July 19, 2013 (<http://transparency.ge/blog/utskhoelebisvis-mitsis-shedzenis-akrdzalva-konstitutsiis-darghveva-da-sainvestitsio-garemoze-uaryopiti-gavlana>)

46 Announcement of constitutional court in Georgia, July 9, 2014 (<http://constcourt.ge/ge/news/saqartvelos-sakonstitucio-sasamartlos-gancxadeba-1407.page>)

	18-30	31-45	46-55	56+
Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in Georgia	65,8%	74,2%	75%	84,6%

Table # 28

It is noteworthy that territorial integrity and land ownership represent fundamental values for the population, and are identified as some of the most significant factors by the interviewed respondents.

Younger respondents have no clear positions on selling land to foreigners. However, its defenders argue that it increases investments, cultivation, development of business, etc. Accordingly, these facets all contribute to Georgian economic development:

"I agree with selling land. For instance, there are statistics on the non-cultivation of million hectare plots of land that are ultimately going bad. In the case where a million hectares is sold, imagine how the country's economy will benefit from investments, from taxes. Furthermore, finances generated from cultivation will still flow into Georgia. Foreigners can profit but Georgia will not lose in taxes" (the focus group, a male participant, 25-30).

Whereas, the opponents' position suggests that the expropriation of land might positively influence the Georgian economy. However, large territories may yet be sold to foreigners if this tendency continues. This will ultimately cause the loss of territory. Priority to expropriation is given due to economic progress. Consequently, the defenders emphasize the economic factors, while its opponents consider the risk of losing territory to be the most important feature of the process. Hence, they would prefer to grant land on lease and have fewer investments, which creates opportunity without losing territory:

"Selling not because a foreigner has full rights on that concrete land and that many will come, if one small part of the land is sold, it would not be a problem, but if it will get intense character, then the country, Georgia will be lost. Only Tbilisi will be left" (the focus group, a female participant, 18-24).

"If we follow this, we will get what? One fine day, the country will be sold out. From this perspective, one says the truth and I agree that it will contribute to economic development. Ultimately what do we get?" (the focus group, a female participant, 25-30).

Thus, the younger respondents' opinions are divided on the sale of land to foreigners. The supporters emphasize cooperation with foreigner buyers, and explain that the sale, in the long-term, would be pragmatic and beneficial for the state. These supporters also are more accepting of immigrants.

On the other hand, opponents of the sale of land to foreigners consider it a precondition in violating territorial integrity. Selling plots of land to "others" and the cession of territory and resources to these "others" is associated with an increase in the foreign population and a decrease of ethnic Georgians.

A slight difference was found among the older respondents' opinions. They demonstrated a tendency, in comparison to the younger generation, to be negatively disposed to the sale of land, and they express their position with categorical statements:

"Only citizens of Georgia can have the right to land"(the focus group, a male participant, 31-55).

"Of course, land should not be sold because what you sell either from a family or from the state, it is lost, it cannot be returned" (the focus group, a female participant, 56+).

Certain concrete national, ethno-cultural, and racial groups have been identified to whom respondents have the least acceptance, namely, black people, the Chinese, Indians, Iranians and the Turkish. The reasons behind these negative attitudes to ethnic groups are predominantly associated with risk, and thus associated with the decrease or, even the disappearance, of the ethnic Georgian. Ethno-cultural differences and competition in the labor market are also indicated. With so many socially unprotected Georgians, it is believed that privilege should not be granted to representatives of these "other" groups.

"Why should the Chinese buy land when we have so many of them and have so many socially unprotected citizens? The state should give those lands to the latter group. He will build a house and live there"(the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

Fear generated from economic competition is clearly discernable in the respondents' answers. They are fearful of losing Georgian material resources. This anxiety is discerned in the rejection of "others" and in the intensification of an inter-community Georgian solidarity, which in turn, is oriented towards maintenance and distribution of resources among the we-group.

Whereas, no negative opinions were discovered for the sale of land to citizens of developed countries. Presumably, this can be explained due to the relatively few cases of Europeans buying Georgian land:

“Europeans do not buy hectares of land”(the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

The reasons that determine the rejection of concrete national, ethnic-cultural, and racial groups, as indicated above, most notably to, Indians, Chinese, Iranians, Turkish and Africans can be grouped in several factors:

- a) **The fear of losing territory:** each of the groups listed, in terms of racial, national, ethnic and cultural perspectives, are considered as radically different “other”, which appropriates a fundamental component of Georgian national identity. Furthermore, the protection of Georgian territory is historically linked to the preservation of national identity. Those groups are associated with vast sales of land in Georgia, which creates societal fear and suspicion about losing territory and leaving Georgians with nothing.

“Each and every part of land is sold in Georgia. What can future generation do when they are left without anything”(the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

“This unfortunate Georgian land is soaked with our blood when Iranians or other someone comes and buys it”(the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

“Why were our predecessors dying? This was because of the preservation of that small land. There is our blood in it. There is saying, if you squeeze the land, blood will flow” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

- b) **The perception of unilateral, one-sided profit:** the sale of land to foreigners is considered one-sided, i.e. only “the other”, “the stranger” benefits, at the expense of the internal group’s territorial resources. This perception, naturally, strengthens hostility and competition:

“A Chinese person buys a forest and does not allow you to enter. There are vivid examples of not letting Georgians in it for gathering wood,

making fire and warming one's home. One cannot use pastures, cannot lead cattle to those territories, i.e. the Chinese person gets profit. He will sell that forest or power station or fish, various kinds of fish. Georgians should subscribe to that territory that is why I am telling you this"(the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

"Then he [the foreigner] exports that product and earns money"(the focus group, a male participant, 46-55).

It is noteworthy that the supporters of selling or leasing land, among the older respondents, similar to younger groups, predominantly relate to the economic profit, the benefits and the increase of valuable investments:

"When you see that land is not cultivated, you prefer that someone gets and uses it and by doing so, brings money to the state budget" (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

However, unlike the younger groups, these respondents believe there should be certain criteria and requirements for foreigners willing to buy land. Part of such requirements encompass the civil-economic sphere, for instance, receipt of citizenship, employment of locals, whereas certain requirements refer to ethno-cultural facets, for example, marriage to an ethnic Georgian or learning the Georgian language.

As previously mentioned, it is important that the respondents have ambivalent attitudes concerning marriage to foreigners. On the one hand, they generally assess the marriage of Georgian women to immigrants negatively, as these women may reproduce a new generation of "others". While on the other hand, the discussion of the sale of land reveals that marriage to Georgian women is a key instrument of assimilation:

"Land should be transferred by lease, everyone should get used to our culture and language"(the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

"In my opinion, putting censorship on the purchase of land is a bit difficult. However, land is a ground for establishment in this country. The state should set some kind of rules, for instance the obligation of learning the language, acquiring citizenship or marriage to a Georgian woman"(the focus group, a female participant, 46-55).

"In the case of granting land on lease, the duration should be defined.

The latter should be minimized as well as a definite benefit to the people and the state should be guaranteed. Likewise, one should be interested in who will work on the land and the lease should be granted for a short period of time”(the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

Respondents from older age groups in favor of selling land to foreigners still find anxiety from ethno-cultural, the difference in language or culture, and economic factors, such as immigrants profiting over the local population. However, unlike the opponents of land sales, instead of the prohibition of the purchase of land, they prefer impartial ways with preconditions for “the stranger” group, which would neutralize any risks, both from an ethno-cultural and an economic perspective. Using such an approach, anxiety is reduced and the space for economic profit for the in-group members becomes available.

The experts tend to indicate the more positive aspects of selling land to foreigners. The most important argument being Georgian economic development. They maintain that the sale of land to foreigners is linked to the flow of new investment, creating jobs, transferring tax profit to the state budget, cultivation of unused space, etc. Ultimately these facets assist the economic development and prosperity of the country:

“My attitude is quite liberal, I do not see any problem...if a citizen of Georgia has the right to build a house, a factory or buy land, foreigners should have the same rights. I do not see any risks in the latter. Quite the opposite, it will contribute to economic development and will attract them for the purpose of investment”(an in-depth interview, an expert).

One expert states that the moratorium and setting restrictions is unprofitable and that damages society, every citizen and the state:

“I was saying the opposite, it [prohibition of land sales] is bad for the economy, it is bad for 99% of population. Out of indifference, that is not profitable, we have received such a result”(an in-depth interview, an expert).

As for the negative aspects of selling land to foreigners, according to the experts, there is the possibility and risk of fraying relationships between foreigner buyers and the Georgian ethnic majority, which could create a real conflict. Distinct cultural differences are the factors identified that cause tension or conflicts. This is also similar with religious conflict:

"We should not go far and cause conflict, religious confrontation. In the case of Adjara such incidents have taken place"(an in-depth interview, an expert).

The expert assessment of the populations' attitudes is divided. The majority of experts believe that social attitudes are predominantly negative because of the ethno-cultural difference in values and the fear of competition for material resources. "Others" who purchase land are at risk, because they are fundamentally and characteristically different to the internal group. Furthermore, the internal group has no experience of peaceful coexistence, nor do they have enough information to balance the perceived threat of the "other" group. The internal group does not fully comprehend what to expect from a radically different foreigner, who, in terms of economy, may become a competitor. This presumably intensifies the sense that "others" might "defeat" Georgians, by gradually decreasing the number of ethnic Georgians.

"Who is afraid more, she or he knows less about the issue because someone other will appear with different skin color, eye color, religion, ethnic identity who is his or her competitor in some cases, for instance she or he purchased land, started cultivation"(an in-depth interview, an expert).

"The same fears are met in a person who sold the land, it was their own, but they still sold either a factory or something else, and now he is unconsciously afraid. He or she has the following explanation: I have sold it because I was in need. However, he or she has fears related to selling land to others, a non-member of that group, and thinks of the bad implications of the behavior"(an in-depth interview, an expert).

In the framework of the in-depth interviews with experts, a position different from the majority also has been identified. They suggest the negative social attitude towards the sale of land is imposed and lobbied by certain small groups who have specific interests, but do not reflect the attitude of the whole of society.

"I am not sure that the majority thinks this way, that it contains certain risks. Often a well-organized minority can impose their own position on society, which is frequently indifferent towards the issue and ultimately it loses"(an in-depth interview, an expert).

According to the cited expert, the state, despite its position, has fulfilled the ongoing societal demands. This is because it has set the moratorium on the sale of land and restricted visas. The expert states that those governmental steps were wrong; the state has prioritized ethno-cultural nationalist interests and set economic profit aside, which is not beneficial to the country.

“In general, when such dissatisfaction is in place on local level, surely the government takes the latter into consideration. The government might have liberal attitudes and it might liberate the expropriation process but it still cannot reject social opinion”(an in-depth interview, an expert).

The experts believe a solution to the sale of Georgian land is in proper regulation and the creation of an “intermediate model”. By their estimation, neither the ethnic majority nor the state’s long-term economic interests would be damaged. Experts suggest the state must take the most important role in the solution to the problem. The state needs a unified vision, a strategy and a policy on the matter.

“This can be regulated. What the entitlements should be depends on the country. For instance, we have 500 hectares of land that is not cultivated. There is an investor, for example, an Arabian, who purchases this land or gets it on a long-term lease. This needs a well-defined policy”(an in-depth interview, an expert).

3.3.2. The value-based “other”

We have discussed the ethno-cultural “other”, distinct from the “we-group” by its ethnic features. The next part of the work looks to discuss the value-based differentiations inside the ethnic unity itself. Unlike the ethno-cultural “other”, the “other” distinguished according to value system, contradicts the culture and values ascribed to the we-group. In other words, if in prior case, exclusion of a group is based on ethnic indicators and cultural factors connected to it (for instance language), in this case some ethnic Georgians are seen as “others” on the basis of certain features they display - they are considered as less “Georgian” by members of the focus groups. Such value-based “others” basically include religious and sexual minorities.

Religious Minorities

Part of the focus group discussion plan was designed to tackle the dichotomy of “we” and “others” from an ethno-cultural perspective. However, the topic of religious and sexual minorities as value-based “other” was identified by participants themselves.

It is clear from focus group discussions that the participants often place ethnicity and religion in a single framework and in doing so unite them – as previously mentioned, for them Georgian national identity is inexorably linked to Orthodox Christianity. The importance of religious factors is clearly identifiable when respondents discuss the pride associated with the we-group and with being Georgian:

“When you are Georgian and Orthodox you should be proud” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

As Orthodox religion is closely linked to the general look of Georgianness those outside of the majority based on this marker, are not considered as full members of the we-group. Therefore, building non-Orthodox places of worship is perceived problematically and negatively:

“We are divided by religion too. It is the most important. We are [Orthodox] Christians. Others are Catholics, others Muslims. I appreciate it. But when it comes to building their churches, I am against it” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

The experts further discuss the interlinking of ethnic and religious identities in Georgia. They consider “Georgian” and “Orthodox” to be similar notions in common Georgian perceptions. Moreover, being Orthodox is often thought to be a privilege, which distinguishes the we-group:

“The most important problem is related to the perception of religion that the majority has. Nowadays Orthodox Christianity is perceived to be an exclusive, distinct faith that only Georgians have, giving them feeling of superiority. It stands for Georgia’s exclusiveness and brightness” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

According to experts idea of “Christian Georgian” becomes most apparent in relation to religious minorities. The expert suggests that since Georgian ethnic identity is linked with the Orthodox religion, those worshipping under another faith are considered a threat. According to the

respondent, the marginalization of religious minorities takes place not only by society but also at a state level. This is confirmed by the state protection of only Orthodox churches, and no other religions' sites:

"Cultural memorials in Georgia are not considered to be part of the Georgian national cultural heritage. For instance, there are several interesting mosques in Adjara that were constructed by ethnic Georgians and the latter group prays in those mosques. However, it is part of a non-Orthodox iconic building and thus is not included in the protection of Georgian monuments, despite their being Georgian" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

As indicated, religious minorities might include non-Orthodox ethnic Georgians, for instance, Adjarian Muslims, whose exclusion is based around religious differences. On the other hand, the category of a religious minority often overlaps the category of an ethnic minority. As one of the interviewed experts argues when religious differences are also added to ethnic distinction, the acceptance of non-ethnic Georgians becomes even more problematic:

"On one hand, I think that it was a progress to recognize ethnic minorities as equal citizens as others. However, when religion comes into play and they realize the possibility of building mosques, firm rejections and refusals appeared" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

According to experts, there is less tolerance towards religious minorities in Georgia than towards ethnic minorities. In addition, traditional religions are more acceptable than newer, sect-like religions:

"Religion is the most acute issue. "Traditional religious groups" are more acceptable in society" (an in-depth interview, an expert).

In general, the results of the expert interviews and the focus groups reveal that religious values are perceived to be inseparable from ethnic identity. Thus, religious groups are placed outside of the in-group. It should be noted that the ethnic national identity intertwined with Orthodox religion, except with religious minorities, creates tension against sexual minorities as well. The issue of sexual minorities will be discussed below in details.

Societal Attitudes towards Sexual Minorities

The attitude of Georgian society towards sexual minorities is strictly negative. Evidence of this attitude is apparent from the raid of Georgian citizens of anti-homophobia rally on international day against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on May 17th, 2013. The results of a 2013 survey of Tbilisi's population (Caucasus Research Resources Centre, a survey about Georgian internal affairs, May 2013) reveal that sexual minorities are thought of as the second most notorious societal group, after criminals. Of the respondents, 29.9% state they would not like to have a homosexual neighbor. Another survey, representative to Georgia's population (Caucasus Research Resources Centre & the National-Democratic Institute, a survey about political attitudes, April 2015) demonstrates that to almost half of the population (49%) defending the rights of sexual minorities is not an important issue.

The participants of the focus groups, as indicated, were not asked about religious and sexual minorities during discussion. However, the respondents themselves indicated sexual minorities as part of the "other" group. The younger participants do not express negative attitudes when discussing sexual minorities. They tend to focus on the existing discriminatory environment. They believe issues connected to sexual minorities divide society into two, and for the majority such ideas are simply unacceptable. The younger respondents further identify opposing side of this conflict: the religious institution, namely the Orthodox Church and religious society:

"A conflict exists between LGBT society and Orthodox society" (the focus group, a female participant, 18-30).

"Also, LGBT people and such sub-categories are distinguished by the church. This divides the society" (the focus group, a male participant, 18-30).

On the other hand, the attitude of older respondents toward sexual minorities is strictly negative:

"I was emotionally destroyed by „gay parade“. I am serious, that's when I felt that I was ashamed of being a man. I wanted to take a gun and kill the people" (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

In the discussions regarding sexual minorities, the following issues were identified in the older age group:

- Sexual minorities as a group cannot couple with the Georgian traditional-cultural model: the respondents think that sexual minorities are against Georgian traditions and mentality:

"I am sorry, but conducting „gay parades“doesn't go along the Georgian mentality" (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

"We shouldn't be forced to conduct a parade, we have different traditions, we won't tolerate it" (the focus group, a male participant, 31+).

The opinion that sexual minorities damage traditional gender roles was also mentioned:

"A man doesn't look like a man and a woman doesn't look like a woman.

The city is full of gays" (the focus group, a male participant, 31+).

It can be concluded that in case of sexual minorities, the we-group emphasizes cultural factors and values as the main markers of difference. Despite sexual minorities ethnically belonging to the we-group, they have been banished from the traditional-cultural model, those that represents the most important component of the we-group. Thus, the distinction is so great that for the respondents it becomes impossible to consider them as members of the we-group.

- Visibility of sexual minorities: Based on focus group discussions the visibility of sexual minorities is considered as especially problematic for respondents. Problem emerges when when sexual minorities come out of the shade and begin to discuss their rights and requirements:

"There are so many cases of girl being with a girl. There were such things earlier as well, but they were quiet"(the focus group, a male participant, 31+).

"How could gays come out in our time? If something like that happened we would kill them. Such things never happened and we will not tolerate. If they did something separately from us, we didn't even know"(the focus group, a male participant, 31+).

In this context it is important to highlight Eisenstadt's thesis supposing that in modern society conflicts of interests emerge when groups different to the majority start to self-establish and protect their rights. (Eisenstadt, 2000).

- The issue of sexual minorities as a forced topic from the West, from “outside”: the respondents’ opinions reveal a tendency to view topics regarding sexual minorities as something forced from the “outside”, mainly from Europe and the West, generally. Respondents think that European structures and the North Atlantic Alliance force the Georgian government to defend the rights of sexual minorities:

“If the government wants to enter NATO, they will have to enforce a law and let them conduct their parade” (the focus group, a female participant, 31+)

„[...]Otherwise we cannot be accepted and the government has to agree”(the focus group, a male participant, 31+).

One can thus presume that as participants view sexual minorities as unacceptable group, by connecting them to Europe and the West, they try to categorize them as “others”.

In the experts’ opinions, sexual minorities are least accepted in Georgian society. They identify the following factors for such disapproval: issues in the education system, a lack of state experience, the visibility of sexual minorities, opposition with influential religious institutions or politicians, ethno-religious identity and nationalism:

“Also, opposing the church, etc., are mostly the factors that work, because actually you are the member of a very unpopular group that is mainly overlooked, and you dare to demand your rights and oppose the most influential institutions and politicians in the country” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

One of the experts regards that the normative and most desirable features of the we-group members are included in ethno-religious identity, for example, heterosexuality, a strict set gender roles and sharing the fundamental dogmas of a dominant religion, in this case, Orthodoxy:

“As we see, speaking of ethno-religious identity, the ideal that is in the center is: being of a Georgian origin, heterosexual, mainly male. Women mostly are in a subordinate position. Everything that is different from that ethnically, religiously or sexually will be unacceptable and banished” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

“Nationalism stands on the idea of uniformity, that we are one

nation, have a lot in common, be it a tradition, genetic code or a strict set gender roles, especially with men. If you step out of that system, you are immediately perceived as a person acting against national values”(an in-depth interview, an expert).

Therefore, as the experts highlight the more different a group’s features from these markers, the higher degree of their marginalization and unacceptability to society. When considering the relationship between sexual minorities and nationalism, the expert also focused on demographic factors:

“Adding to this all, one part of the nationalism is the demographic panic that we may become extinct. That’s why we need people who manage to reproduce. The best example for that is the family, on which nationalism stands. There are lots of factors, but actually feminists and LGBT people are the ones that oppose the status quo most of all. When you start speaking not about the nation, but about individual freedom you break the system that national ideology offers you. You start saying that a human is not a reproductive machine and I don’t have to give birth to children for the state. I will only have children, if I want to. That’s why this idea is so unacceptable” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

To summarize, the in-depth interviews with experts identify the key reasons for the unacceptability of sexual minorities in Georgian society. These reasons are typically connected to the fear of destruction of stable institutions and the notion of physical disappearance.

Interviews with Opinion-Makers

The experts interviewed during this research identified different types of actors that influence social values, namely, representatives of the media, of the church, the educational system, of non-governmental organizations and politicians. They each play a significant part in societal processes, such as assigning definite features to the we-group and excluding “others”. To highlight the perspectives of these opinion-makers, in-depth interviews were conducted with them.

Politicians Concerning Ethnic Minorities

The politicians interviewed tended to focus on the inclusive political nation, however it is worth noting that in the context of national identity, contributions of ethnic markers alter according to different politicians. Part

of the respondents note that for the majority of the Georgian population ethnicity is the foremost marker of national identity, although they do not personally consider this marker to be the most important, and instead stress civil markers:

“My people and I view Georgian identity differently... Some people think that this is being 100% ethnic Georgian, having a straight orientation and getting all A’s at school. This excludes all minorities, even sexual ones from being Georgian. There will come time when everyone will know well what national identity is. National identity is the state’s people standing together for the country’s future endeavors. One nation consists of people who see themselves together in trouble and on the road towards the future. In such case ethnic origins, of course, matter but they aren’t the most important basis. Nation and ethnos are different concepts” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

An alternative position views ethnic minorities as a part of the nation, but this idea of a nation is centered on “ethnic values”, and minorities are only tolerated:

“The Georgian content implies the traditions that brought the country to these days. On the one hand this means protecting and spreading Georgian ethnic values, and on the other hand, a tolerant approach to ethnic minorities living in the territory of our country. This will determine the harmonic development of the Georgian political nation” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Interestingly, although some politicians claim that tolerance towards ethnic minorities is the main value of Georgian society, they themselves mention the issue of acceptance of minorities in society:

“For me national identity is very complex and it consists of tolerance, human-loving and acceptance... yet, the situation is very complex. As much as I know, the most difficult issue is still the acceptance of minorities. I travel a lot, meet people and when they ask me if I will deal with this problem or not, it is very difficult to answer (..) There are chauvinistic attitudes and it is not over yet.” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

In spite of emphasizing the general problem of acceptance, politicians believe that social and state approaches towards ethnic minorities have become better since the 1990s. Although there are problems regarding minorities who can not speak Georgian and their inclusion in the political system, the official policy is inclusive - the state is aware that they have to contribute to the inclusion of minorities. Furthermore, a statesman commenting on the ethnic origin of a political opponent is considered as disrespectful. The majority of the populace also do not consider mixed blood as a problem:

“To my mind, it shows great lack of culture if a politician uses hatred, discriminatory, homophobic or ethnic elements in a speech. I feel that Georgian society as a society of high culture and European traditions, has outgrown that” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

“The Georgian nation is being developed right now. We can speak about all the citizens being Georgian. Nobody questions if someone whose grandmother’s name is Sirana [Armenian name] is Georgian or not. Such questions aren’t painful any more... Previously it was believed that an ethnic minority has to love the country unconditionally. Now we know that we have to do something so that the ethnic minority at least has a chance to study the language. Previously it was thought that as we became independent, why shouldn’t an eighty-year-old Armenian person know Georgian? He has to learn it in a day and pass an exam. Now we know that for a change we should work not with 80 year olds, but with 5 year old Armenians” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Politicians Concerning Immigration:

Politicians interviewed in this research have two different approaches concerning the sale of Georgian land to foreigners. The majority, in spite of their political views, agree with selling land to foreigners, believing that this is an important and beneficial step for the country’s economy. As with the experts, politicians suggest selling land is connected to the creation of employment opportunities, investments and the stability of the country:

“To tell you the truth, I am a liberal and have a very positive approach to this. If the economy develops, if funds get invested, there will be the prospect of more working opportunities etc. There’s not a problem” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Politicians do not solely view this topic from economic or material standpoint, because they also note security. They suggest selling land can be viewed as a form security. The greater the number of foreign investors, the higher their interest and motivation to maintain stability and peace in country:

“One way we can ensure our security is if a German, a British, a Chinese, etc., buys our land, they will be interested to keep stability within the country. They will care for the security of the country, where they have invested” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Politicians believe that society’s negative approach, suggesting that by selling land “others” will take over Georgia, is irrational. Certain politicians identify a lack of education as the reason for the attitudes of those afraid of losing “Georgianness”:

“This is the same fear as it was connected with paternal names. If it isn’t written in your passport that you are a Georgian, it means that you are not” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

The fear of losing “Georgianness”, or the “irrational” fear” as it is labelled by politicians, together with the anxiety previously discussed, are viewed as diminishing cultural features connected to the reduction of ethnic Georgians and their potential physical extinction.

The interviewed politicians also note that fear of economic competition drives the Georgian hostile approach toward foreigners:

“There also is a second aspect; the Chinese came to our land that gave one harvest. They got three harvests on it. Georgians kept attacking them until they also got only one harvest. This means they were concerned by the hardworking Chinese” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

This again proves that limitations on resources affect attitudes toward “other” groups. However, when there is a balance of resources, the internal group does not view a loss of profit or that “others” are profiting at their expense.

The politicians agree that selling land to foreigners has negative aspects as it creates tension in society. They suggest this is connected to the important changes that might be occur with the sale of land. This reflects on the natural habitat of local people. This alone will cause a definite reaction toward these changes:

“Indeed, when generations are used to living in the country and they know that they have a pasture. This is not a normal economic structure, with small land nobody gains any profit for themselves or for the country, but sometimes we need to take some things into consideration” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

The politicians thus suggest that the solution to this problem may be through properly informing society and having well-defined regulations. They believe that creating such conditions and limitations would reduce the social tension created from selling Georgian land to foreigners.

One politician, against of sale the land, argues that in return for the economic benefits, the national demographic situation worsens. This argument views the danger of reducing the we-group into the minority ,which would make any economic benefit secondary to a greater “existential threat:”

“The artificial change of the demographic picture, this is the realisation of hostility towards one’s own country for concrete benefits. We cannot call it anything else. I take this threat as an existential threat. If this becomes a regular political campaign and is well funded, very soon we will become the minority” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Typically, politicians’ views regarding the sale of land to foreigners are divided into two opposing sides. On the one hand, politicians justify selling land because of significant economic factors, and believe that the policy is in favour of the country and society; while on the other hand, the most notable counter argument is the possible reduction of the ethnically Georgian population and the threat of their extinction.

Politicians Concerning Religious Minorities

Regarding religious minorities, the views of politicians interviewed during this survey are divided into two parts. One group thinks that the majority of the population are strictly negative towards such minorities, although others disagree. The perspective of the first group coincides with the experts, who suggest the populace views religious minorities as “others” who are not very accepted. One politician, to prove his assertions, cites the clashes that followed the registration of religious organizations as legal entities. Many viewed this legal change as a threat to “losing Orthodox religion.”

“When other religions, like the Georgian Orthodox Church, were given the right to be registered as legal entities, it was followed by great demonstrations. I remember that it was followed by big clashes and I had a feeling that we would get swept away by others, we would lose the Orthodox religion, that’s why they shouldn’t be given such rights” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

The second group of politicians, however, believe tolerance to religious diversity in Georgia is a cultural factor connected to national identity. Therefore, there is a high level of acceptance towards religious minorities and there have been no conflicts on these grounds. For an example, they name the existence of adjacent sites of worship of different traditional religions, Orthodox, Gregorian-Armenian, Muslim and of Judaism found in Old Tbilisi:

“Contradictions on a religious basis hardly ever exists, because in Georgia there is a cultural moment. Just by walking on Leselidze Street, you will meet all the churches together in Abanotubani” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Politicians Concerning Sexual Minorities

The majority of politicians interviewed indicate that sexual minorities are the least accepted group in Georgian society. Unlike with other minorities, the majority of society are openly negative, aggressive or even physically violent to this minority group:

“I think that this homophobic attitude is very strong. It may sound wild, but I have a feeling that the members of this group are under the threat of physical destruction, whereas in the case of other groups we only spoke about conflicts” (an in-depth interview, a politician).

One politician asserts that society is not ready for this form of equality. He maintains that the anti-discriminatory law was issued simply for association with Europe, as the majority of the population oppose this law, particularly its relation to sexual minorities.

While other politicians suggest the reason for the populace’s critical and negative attitude towards sexual minorities is in their fear of losing power. This fear is connected to the growth of visibility of the groups that were previously marginalized. Representatives of sexual minority groups started

to demand their rights. These demands are challenging the existing order and the hierarchy of power, which threatens the majority holding the power.

"They say it's OK to have a different orientation, just don't show it. In this type of thinking, we see the fear of losing power. If they don't come out, they don't fight my social structure, so let other be there by themselves" (an in-depth interview, a politician).

Whereas, from the interview with politicians, different point of view was further mentioned. It stated that the only legal marriage is one between a man and a woman. This statement also connects to Christian religious beliefs:

"The fact that marriage should be between a man and a woman, as stated by god, has never been questioned before. I think for us as well as for a country with 2000 years of Christian religion this is an important statement, excluding all exceptions" (an in-depth interview, a politician).

This respondent focuses on the fact that not only in Georgia, but also in other countries, society protests sexual minorities. To prove this, the politician names European countries, and notes that negative attitudes towards sexual minorities has reached a global scale:

"I take interest in the fact that in Stuttgart, in France or Italy multi-million people march against this gender theory, that we started establishing in schools here. So, Georgia isn't an exclusion from the global world" (an in-depth interview, a politician).

One can argue that two main positions on sexual minorities were identified from the in-depth interviews with politicians. One section of politicians mentions that the majority of society holds sexual minorities as unacceptable. The reason being the fear of losing the power and a poor understanding of equality. Whereas, the second section of politicians view sexual minority groups as unacceptable for Christian culture. Moreover, the negative attitude towards them is seen as global and not characteristic only to Georgia.

Media Representatives Concerning Minorities

Representatives of the media suggest sexual and religious minorities are the most unacceptable in Georgian society, while the attitude towards ethnic minorities is more tolerant.

Highlighting minority issues occurs most often in the news. Although in some case, minority representatives are sometimes invited for discussions on talk shows. The respondents state that they are sensitive towards the problems of minority groups; they attempt to give an unbiased perspective and to state that individuals should not be excluded because of religious or sexual differences:

"We always try to make bullied people see that this bullying is not normal. These people are a part of our society and are exactly the same type of people as me, as you and rest of the people. People shouldn't be judged for sexual or religious differences, if you think that you are a European and share the values that Europe and the West shares"(an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

"I think that this was a very good report, the journalist tried to show that this is also a person. We all have our rights and nobody can feel superior to me because of my sexual, ethnic or religious difference. If anyone feels superior to me, this is a problem of that person's ignorance" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

It is significant that television channels often become the subject of social criticism for devoting time to problems with sexual or religious minorities; however, the respondents note that even together with such criticism, the channels' rating grow. On talk shows, minorities often take part against their opponent, for example with representatives of the church, which often results in conflict.

"There have been cases when representatives of the Patriarchate have come to take part in a talk show and eventually it has resulted in confrontation" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

"Of course, we become the target of social criticism for giving them so much television time, though we will always devote time to such people, because they are a part of society... Ratings grow, but so does confrontation" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

All of the respondents suggest that it is better to discuss the information on minorities on different television programs, rather than if there were a specific program for such topics. Such categorisation further contributes to the rejection of the aforementioned groups from society. It was also

mentioned that information concerning minorities should not only be discussed on relevance news pieces, but they should be highlighted on a regular basis.

“If there is a separate program about the problems of such groups, it turns out that this topic is separate from all other topics, from the whole informational space, from the whole creative process. It would only be watched by the representatives of that group, whose problems it is devoted to. We said that this is not right. Actually, it would be much better if these topics were incorporated with all other products... on a regular basis. We shouldn't wait until someone beats such people or they come out in the street and say something. We have to speak about these topics” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

Interestingly, in the case of ethnic minorities, the problem is not only highlighting their issues, but also keeping them informed. As mentioned, without knowing the Georgian language, television programs, and the Georgian media in general is not available to them. As one respondent notes, ethnic minorities should be given a simultaneous translation because of the language barrier:

“The issue is simple, integrating the information about them into an informational space. This means delivering the information about them to everybody and not just to them. Making current information available to them not just for 12 minutes, but for as much time as it is available for all the rest of the people. Do you see how difficult this task is? If we don't do this, it means we don't do anything at all. If we say that we should somehow integrate them, then we definitely have to do it. We have to integrate the general informational space and make the information available to them” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

As for the media focusing on issues of immigration, during this research it was discerned that these topics are only highlighted when there is violence connected to immigrants. However, critical comments are addressed at state policy on related subjects, for example, selling land to foreigners, setting barriers for visas or limiting immigration. According to the respondents, the media played the great role in the government's abolition of the barriers for visas:

“Artificial barriers shouldn’t be created for people, so that they cannot enter the country. On the contrary, we should have best conditions to invite more students. Those students automatically become a profit for the country, they pay for education and when businessmen enter the country, we have to be even more accepting. By the way, the media policy played its role, the state had to refuse its initiative and abolish visa barriers” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the media).

Representatives of the Education System Concerning Minorities

Representatives within the education system also named sexual and religious minorities as the least acceptable societal group, alongside foreigners:

“The least acceptance is characteristic to sexual minorities, then come the religious minorities and after that foreigners. Among the foreigners are Russians, than Americans and as it was taught in history, then come Armenians and Turks” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

In the modern world, education plays the greatest role in the process of cultural homogenisation of members of a national community. From the results of the interviews, one can discover that school discourses play a vital role in excluding “others” from the we-group, particularly in the case of ethnic and religious minorities. The problems at hand are connected with both the teaching plan and with the teachers.

Respondents think that, since 2007-2008, the curriculum has changed and became more inclusive than in the past, for instance, previously textbooks portrayed Azeri and Armenian population as enemies, though this rarely happens now. Moreover, special textbooks were created that introduce students to the cultural achievements of the people living in Georgia. In spite of this, respondents point out that there are still many problems:

“This was the text in the textbook: ‘Russians made it possible for Armenians to settle in Javakheti and it was a mine against the Georgian state. By the end of 80s Georgians started settling there again. Joyful sounds could be heard again and the region became alive once more.’ There were lots of such texts in the textbooks. The texts said that they were terrible, they contained a threat for us and

we had to get rid of them. After that, fortunately, such textbooks changed with new ones” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

“The fact that there isn’t fear towards differences doesn’t mean that we have become accepting. We are at the stage of overcoming major contradictions connected with differences. This is also a great achievement, because the hate speech has vanished, attempts to portray minorities as enemies have vanished, but this is really not enough” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

The respondents’ opinions concur with the results of studies regarding school textbooks (Ghvinianidze & Barkaia, 2014; Mamedov, 2016), which shows that books designed for students still contain elements of discrimination towards ethnic and religious minorities living in Georgia, and contributes to their exclusion from the we-group. For instance, in a number of textbooks Azeri and Armenians are viewed in the context of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and very rarely as part of the Georgian nation. The studies also reveal that instead of civic education subject teachers often teach history.

Respondents interviewed within this study suggest the problems with textbooks are easier to solve than those connected with teachers, because regardless of what is written in a textbook, often teachers will instil their personal beliefs. Teachers try to develop patriotic students - this usually implies accenting the Orthodox religion and building an image of an enemy from “the others.” Findings from the interviewed respondents correspond with the results of study about religion in public schools (Ghvinianidze & Barkaia, 2014), according to which often teachers believe they have to strengthen students’ Orthodox beliefs and “convert” students of other religions.

“Teachers are a harder case than textbooks. Teachers verbally express their attitudes and this is shown well when you meet teachers without students”(an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

“Teachers have so-called “hidden” curriculums, that aren’t really displayed anywhere officially, but exist in their imagination. They think they should bring their students up as patriots in the sense of, let’s say, religion, and this is an important problem. It is nationalistic in a sense that they often tell students that a threat should be expected from outside of the country and they have to be ready to fight. This is an

undesirable influence on the students, e.g. losing traditions and their own language belongings” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

Further to the “creativity” of teachers, the inclusion of the church in schools is also highly problematic. According to one of the respondents, simply naming the non-Orthodox historical public figures in a history textbook caused the church to protest:

“The Patriarchate protested that in a history textbook of the seventh grade well known Georgians of other religions are mentioned. They wondered why Orthodox Christians weren’t mentioned in the same list” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

The respondents suggest that to increase the level of acceptance of minorities among students, together with textbook replacements, it is necessary to have improved contact with minority groups within the educational system. This would consequently make the educational environment more inclusive:

“There have to be lots of manifestations at schools representing identity. There are posters where it is written “cheers to something,” but we don’t have photos from “Tbilisi History” where Armenian salespeople, Armenian kintos would be shown. Most of us think that Kintauri is a Georgian dance. It is important to plan excursions that will be aimed at informing students and developing the textbooks” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

The respondents in education also discussed topics connected with immigration; typically, they named Pakistani, Indian and Indonesian students. The immigration process is viewed positively, as respondents believe that native students become accustomed to new cultures and values:

“I think they have a very positive influence on our students. For example, in the Medical University they have day-to-day communications. They still live in groups, but they manage to communicate and this is very important for Georgians to see that there also is another culture. Mostly these are Pakistani, Indian and Indonesian students. They manage to organize their cultural events” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

Aside from University students, younger pupils were also a focus of attention, where notably a new problem became apparent; the Georgian education system is simply not ready to teach immigrant pupils. Apart from that adaptation of students who arrive from the West to the Georgian authoritarian style of teaching was also identified as a problem:

“Students who have arrived from Western countries are unwelcome, because they say exactly what they think and can defend what they say. Teachers say that they are nosy. Really, they just state their position” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

“The education system still doesn’t know how to cope with them [immigrant students]... They can’t include these students and the approach towards them is wrong. For instance, they are told to make a presentation about Iran. They are fed up with talking about homeland any more; they want to be like others. Some of them don’t know Georgian and we cannot teach Georgian as a second language. This is a problem” (an in-depth interview, a representative in education).

Church Representative Concerning Minorities

Representative of the church believes that Orthodoxy and Georgian national identity are closely connected. According to him Georgians autonomously developed their language and culture, only in the context of Orthodoxy, which would be impossible in case of another religion. Subsequently, the notion of betraying the Orthodox religion equates to betraying Georgianness and vice versa. The church respondents’ opinions further coincide with the focus groups’, in which religious minorities are viewed as “others” and “incomplete” Georgians:

“If I betray Orthodox Christianity, I betray my Georgianness and if I betray my Georgianness I betray my Orthodox Christianity, although among these two, Orthodox Christianity is superior and my nationality is second rate” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

Holding that only Orthodox Christianity provides the opportunity for the country to develop a unique culture, this church representative believes that it is impossible for Muslim-Georgian or Catholic-Georgian heritage to exist:

“Muslim-Georgian culture on its own doesn’t exist. It doesn’t exist,

not for the reason that Georgian-Muslims cannot produce anything. The case is that Muslim religion doesn't allow the opportunity of creating things... What happens is that you cannot create your own culture within Muslim religion or within Catholicism" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The respondent continues to name sexual minorities as the least tolerated group in Georgian society, and he adds that it is also his personal opinion. He views homosexuality as an illness and as a sin. He states that is a significant topic, but he declares May 17th, the day considered an international day against homophobia, as Family Purity Day. He considers this a day of great importance, when the Georgian nation celebrates the family, and thus LGBT activists become marginalized:

"It was specially assigned, of course. The nation celebrates the day of the family on this date anyway. They [sexual minorities] will celebrate, come out and, compared to the scale of the other party's celebration, will seem very small" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

The respondent considers LGBT activists entering the public space as the potential future threat of "making homosexuality legal", and to prove this he reminds Western countries:

"All the time I say that this was a Trojan horse. If they succeeded in this, they would go even further. What makes you think it won't happen the same way as it happened in Europe?" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

It is noteworthy that the church representative mostly associates the LGBT community with the West. He thinks that "immorality" comes from the West, and sees this as a significant threat to Georgia. He also believes that the West does not respect Georgian free will, because it hopes to "make homosexuality legal", which contributes to the anti-Western attitudes of the population:

"How can the fact that Georgians respect families and don't want to make homosexuality legal as a norm, hinder Europe or America? What problem does this cause for them?" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

Further to the topic of sexual minorities, the respondent also discusses the topic of immigration. He focuses on the sale of land to foreigners, and notes that selling land should simply not be happening in Georgia:

“If we want to take after America, why don’t we take after them in this aspect as well? You cannot buy land in the US nobody can buy land in the US. Land is state property there. Let it be the same way here and it won’t cause a problem anymore” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the church).

Representatives of the Non-Governmental Sector Concerning Minorities

In experts’ opinion, non-governmental organizations, as a rule, are the most liberal and inclusive actors. In a number of cases, target groups of their activities are directly minority groups. As number of interviewed NGO representatives work with the groups, interesting for our study, their opinions were discussed as expert opinions above. Alongside the expertise, their views are also important when it comes to discussing the role of the non-governmental sector in the inclusion of “others.”

Non-governmental organizations typically identify sexual and religious minorities, as well as black coloured immigrants, as the least accepted groups within Georgia. Throughout the interviews, it was revealed that the various activities of NGOs include the advocacy for minority rights, informing groups about their rights, reviewing legislation changes or political decisions based on minority rights and helping put them into practice. Apart from that, NGOs also focus on raising awareness among the general public. Although, the representatives of NGOs, just like other experts, believe that in spite of their attempts, the influence of their sector on the greater populace is, as yet, relatively small:

“The non-governmental sector did much for the country’s progress, e.g about the legislation that we have, that is put to practice to defend the rights of different minority groups. Lots of these things happened through non-governmental organizations. But this still doesn’t allow us to say that the non-governmental sector can influence values a lot” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

From these interviews, one can deduce that the relatively small amount of societal influence of NGOs is partially caused by the negative attitudes

and distrust of society. According to the respondents there are several reasons for this lack of trust: Firstly, although NGOs work for the acceptance of minorities, often important social aspects that affect the majority are given little attention. It was also noted that NGOs frequently have to confront the Orthodox Church, often on issues connected to sexual and religious minorities, and thus they are viewed in opposition to Georgia's most influential institution.

"In the NGO agenda, social topics aren't highlighted and in the background the majority of the society is worried by other topics. Of course, this doesn't mean that NGOs don't share the values and desires of the majority, we see the need to put forward some social topics" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

"The negative attitudes towards NGOs are strengthened by the confrontation that exists between the church and civil society; (...) the main topics of contradiction are LGBT rights, women's rights and the anti-discriminatory law. These are the topics where major value differences between the church and civil society can be observed" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

It was further highlighted in this study's interviews that the lack of societal trust towards NGOs is connected to the general opinion that NGOs are, so-called, "grant eaters," as the minority, the "others", are not viewed seriously by the majority. Society considers the topics NGOs fight for as artificial, fake and created solely to gain foreign grants:

"The concept of "grant eating" is not connected with the fact that I defend LGBT rights... it is connected with the idea that the problem really doesn't exist and we create it artificially to gain funds. With this, they try to prove that LGBT people and women really are not in an oppressed situation. That we now create lies and get money from that" (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

According to the respondents, another issue is the politization of NGO's. This includes doubts as to whether some NGOs are funded by political parties, and that they obey these parties or the West.

"When NGOs are fairly critical towards the government, some politicians from the government usually state that they shouldn't

be listened to as they are representatives of the United National Movement. Some people might say that they have received funding from the West and do not act fairly” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

The association of NGOs to the West is also caused by their common values. This was identified during the focus group analyses. The “other” (especially sexual minorities) is separated from the we-group because of certain values, and the protection of their rights by NGOs is perceived as forced from the West. NGOs consider this as the influence of Russian propaganda:

“The things that work best are misogyny and homophobic discourse: the West, feminist women, “becoming gay” in Georgia. This creates anti-Western attitudes (...) ‘The West is perverted and Russia protects pureness of families,’ - some agents produce such discourses in Georgia”(an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

The respondents suggest that for NGOs activity to become more effective, they require a less Eurocentric attitude when working with society. They should work with more authentic, local practices. It is crucial to build a relationship between the NGO sector and society, one which is not based on learning or hierarchy, but on shared experiences. Furthermore, communication is considered the most productive when the information shared comes from the “other” themselves, speaking about their own experiences:

“We should free the language from this Eurocentrism, that we should learn something from them. We have to choose authentic, national practices and narratives. This requires work and nobody does it” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

“Whenever you go to a person with the attitude that you need to teach him something, in my experience this doesn’t work, you create the hierarchy and the audience never likes it... I haven’t come to teach you something, I’m just sharing my experience. I might know more on a definite topic, because it is my life and part of my job. I am only sharing this, I’m not teaching you. This works better. Also Speaking in the first person works better” (an in-depth interview, a representative of the NGO sector).

Main findings:

The research results have revealed that the aforementioned groups are perceived as “internal others”, or “strangers” which fall only partially under the anthropological and cultural characteristics of “we.” They are consequently viewed as inferior members of the we-group. Moreover, In-group members define these “strangers” as “the others” on the basis of associating them with the groups living outside of Georgia. For instance, ethnic minorities are perceived in the context of their ancestral homelands or sexual minorities to the West.

While, the focus groups and expert interviews have shown that the ethno-cultural as well as value-based “internal others” are all perceived as opposing and threatening for in-group. Each of these groups is associated with the fear of degenerating Georgian culture and values, the decreasing the number of ethno-cultural Georgians and the eventual disappearance of the Georgian nation.

When discussing ethnic minorities and immigration, the focus group participants especially stressed the issue of decreasing the number of ethnic Georgians at the expense of “foreigners”, and viewed the severe threat of a demographic crisis. (Over the last 25 years, the Georgian population has reduced by almost a third, 30%, from 5,400,000 in 1989 to 3,720,000 in 2014).⁴⁷ The concept of a “foreigner” in Georgia refers in essence to religious minorities, because the Orthodox religion is closely linked with Georgian national identity. Demographic topics are also important in connection to the LGBT community. If in the case of “foreigners” the fear is related to the reduction of ethnic Georgians and the growth of non-ethnic Georgians, here the responsibility for demographic crisis lies with those who do not share gender or sexual norms ascribed to the in-group and are not associated with the reproduction.

Politicians interviewed during the course of this study also focused on demographic problems. On one hand, demographic threats are connected to “other” groups, like immigrants. On the other hand, this also occurs without marginalising “other” groups. The thought that the Georgian nation may not exist in the near future creates further anxiety.

“Despite a person being the most important, you still feel sorry thinking that in 100 years your descendants might not exist. Although an existing

⁴⁷ preliminary results of national population census, 2014 (http://www.geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/georgian/population/agceris%20cinascari%20shedegebi_30.04.2015.pdf)

person now is more important, than his descendants, this fact is quite sad from the national point of view” (an in-depth interview, politician)

The open self-expression of “others” in the socio-political arena intensifies the feeling of fear between members of an internal group (Eisenstadt, 2000). The experts interviewed believe neither personal nor political expression is encouraged in Georgia, this creates the most serious problems for those who do not share the cultural characteristic of the we-group.

“Public demonstration of personal life and expression are problematic for a Georgian, especially if these feelings don’t coincide with culture norms... e.g. everybody may know and be accepting that a definite person is gay. He may be treated among his friends as a usual person. But as soon as that person decides to come out and openly start talking about his orientation, a great issue will follow this. This is connected with personal life. A Georgian can’t be such a person, Georgians are all great women and men and there are no exceptions” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

“We tolerate “others” next to us until those “others” start talking about their rights” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

This is in connection with the dichotomy proposed by Inglehart suggesting there are two types of societies: those oriented on self-expression or those oriented on survival (Inglehart and Weltzel, 2005). The data of value research reveals that Georgia is oriented on traditions and on survival (WVS, 2015). Focussing on saving on survival values in Georgian culture is stressed by the experts and by members of the focus group. A focus group participants believe the reason for this is economic distress:

“A person who is oriented on wages and day to day survival, doesn’t care for European values or American civilisation, all his does is striving for survival. Our nation is at that stage, fighting for survival” (the focus group, a female participant, 31-45).

According to the experts, in case of Georgia reasons for existential anxiety and the need for survival are economic hardships; unemployment; the migration of the youth; the perpetual threat from Russia; the occupied regions; and the lack of integration of ethnic minorities. Each of these contribute to increasing anxiety which creates grounds for negative and cautious attitudes towards various groups:

“Mainly our culture is oriented on survival. This is not the culture that thinks of development. We have great fears about our survival. This is absolutely normal in the conditions that we are in right now: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Russian influence, we have a fragile state. Also, there are too many people in Georgia that don’t speak the Georgian language and don’t want to be integrated in Georgian society, or we cannot assist them in the process of integration. All these reasons create a feeling of fear of the degradation and destruction of the nation” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

“The fear of an uncertain tomorrow exists, if we will have money to get bread. And even if we have money for bread, what if someone gets ill; will we be able to cure them?” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Aside from the factors that cause alarm and anxiety, the experts interviewed mention the instability and ambiguity created after the fall of the Soviet Union. The experts believe that the breakdown was followed by a sense of instability and that generation finds it hard to cope with a lack of “stability” and being out of control.

“There isn’t a fear of what will happen, but there is a fear of something that already happened. Actually, the secure world broke down 25 years ago... We are in the position of “free sail”, but there are people who prefer not to confess this and say that they prefer to live as they are living now. How are we living now? We have been out of control for the last 25 years, with no developed security mechanisms at all” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

Furthermore the processes of globalisation and Europeanization also creates anxiety, which was expressed by both members of the focus group members and experts alike (Delanty, 2008). As previously noted, the immigration processes is connected with globalization and causes existential problems for the we-group. The process of Europeanization is also associated to the loss of Georgian identity and traditions:

“Society is worried that we might lose something that is a part of Georgian identity. Coming close to the European Union and Europe itself may influence the question of identity within the country” (an in-depth interview, an expert).

According to the experts, in the context of Europeanization, issues connected with the national values and identity becomes particularly sensitive in relation to sexual minorities. The focus groups reveal that visibility of LGBT community in the social-political arena is considered as incited by European forces. This perception contributes to the marginalization of these groups from national identity, and the crucial attribution of them as “others.” Beyond the LGBT community, other non-traditional religious organizations are also associated with Europe:

“... the process of development of wrong, untrue values is going on. We are told that we have to be heading towards Europe. What are we getting from there? Ok, let’s acknowledge that Europe also has its pros, but when we are made to hold gay parades, this is not acceptable to the Georgian mentality” (the focus group, a male participant, 56+).

“Jehovah, [and] other sects get to our houses almost by force. Those sects come from Europe” (the focus group, a male participant, 31-45).

In conclusion, one may say that fear of ethno-cultural and value-based “others” is mostly connected to the fear of cultural and physical extinction of the Georgian nation. Consequently, the strong feelings of an existential threat and the exclusion of minorities from the we-group may be connected to the dominance of survival and traditional values on one hand, and to the self-defensive reaction of a national community against globalization and Europeanization – on the other.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aforementioned findings of this study provide the grounds on which to draw general conclusions about Georgian national identity and the value systems of Georgian society. The theoretical part of the research identifies the difficulties associated with defining the terms “nation”, “national”, “ethnic”, and “civic.” It is also noteworthy that the differentiation of nationalism as “civic” and “ethnic” are only conditional and not as effective for analysis (БРУБЕЙКЕР, 2012). However, an alternate option has not yet been established in contemporary scientific literature. Thus, in order to distinguish the two forms of nationalisms one must use the terms “civic-political” and “ethno-cultural.”

During this work, the experts and politicians interviewed define Georgian identity not as partially formed, but as a process affected by time, and by changing political, economic, social and cultural influences. The analysis of the ISSP survey data reveals that the markers of Georgian national identity are grouped into two factors. The ethno-cultural factor incorporates having Georgian ancestry, feeling Georgian, speaking the Georgian language, and being an Orthodox Christian. Whereas, the civic-political factor includes being born in Georgia, having Georgian citizenship and living in Georgia for most of one’s life. It is noteworthy that “to respect Georgian political institutions and laws” was grouped in neither of the factors nor did it emerge as an independent factor. This can be explained because national state institutions, which are still forming, are not yet clearly associated with ethno-cultural or civic identity.

Regardless of their age or gender, the survey respondents distinguished three key criteria for defining the “true Georgian”: to feel Georgian, to speak the Georgian language, and to have Georgian ancestry. Therefore, despite age and gender, the ethno-cultural markers of “Georgianness” are more significant than the civic-political. While with demographic variables, the civic-political markers of national identity are not dependent on gender, however there is a minor difference according to age. In particular “having

Georgian citizenship” was a key feature of the “true Georgian”, more so for the younger generation than for older citizens. It should also be noted that the majority of respondents are most proud of Georgia’s history and its cultural and sporting achievements, whereas there is little pride in the socio-political system.

The interviewed politicians propose that the ethno-cultural and civic-ethnic factors are tailored to one another and should be considered as cornerstones of Georgian national identity.

The focus groups conducted during this study reveal that participants feel the most emotionally close to Georgia and they prefer Georgian citizenship to that of another country. After the homeland, respondents feel the closest to Europe. Furthermore, it has been identified that Georgians strive towards the West from a desire for freedom and due to common values with Europe, in particular, freedom and tolerance. Respondents with a higher education, students and the employed typically express their closeness to Europe. Additionally, being informed about politics plays an important role. The less informed a respondent is about politics, the less close they feel to Europe. The study findings indicate that when they discuss emotional closeness, the respondents of various age groups name countries or regions to which they are personally connected. Frequently, the older participants mention Russia or the Caucasus and their relevant family, friendships, religion or their historical links and experiences. Certain ambivalent attitudes became apparent during the discussions; on the one hand, Europe is far from their current vision for Georgia, often characterized as distant and unnecessary; while on the other hand, they believe they have no right to feel closeness to Russia because of the occupation of Georgian territories.

Certain respondents believe that Europe also poses threats for Georgia. They are suspicious of Western liberal values and afraid of losing national culture and traditions. Whereas, the respondents also give the contrasting position, because of the cultural closeness and similarities in values, Georgians are closer to Europeans. The findings of the focusgroup reveal that the respondents are quite sensitive towards the uncertainty associated with modernization and globalization, which are considered a threat to Georgian national identity. Georgian societal attitudes towards the West and Western liberal values are very similar to the anxiety, which is considered a feature of the twenty-first century by Gerard Delanty (Delanty, 2008). This anxiety, characteristic to the modern era, emerges alongside a level of

insecurity. The processes of globalization brings these risk and uncertainty together. It can be noted that, generally, compared to people from other regions, European “others” seem to be more familiar to Georgian society. The ethno-cultural markers of the in-group are fewer between their own group and Europeans, thus the feeling of closeness is greater with Europeans than with Asians, Africans, etc.

The respondents suggest that citizenship implies involvement in civic and political processes. Their attitudes towards civic obligations are homogenous with age and gender. Three thematic factors were distinguished when it comes to civic obligations: solidarity, politically active citizenship and the rule of law. The solidarity factor is more common for younger respondents and individuals with a higher education.

The analysis of the population’s attitudes towards social and state institutions reveals that trust towards certain institutions is a key aspect. The church is currently considered the most influential institution due to the high level of societal trust it has attained. Whereas, a lack of trust in political parties has resulted in low levels of activism in political and civic spheres. The interviewed experts and the focus group participants are each skeptical towards the Georgian political spectrum. In the case of political parties, and educational institutions, the elementary problems are the absence of realistic plans, poor long-term vision in the building of the state, and forcing political parties to fit to the erratic attitudes of the voters. The majority of the focus group respondents express distrust towards political parties. While, poverty and mass unemployment are considered the greatest causes of frustration and discontent.

Almost every interviewed expert considers the current Orthodox Church the most powerful institution influencing national identity. The power of church is predicated on societal trust. Certain experts think Georgian national identity is presently in the process of formation; hence, one cannot say that a single institution influences national identity, even the church. Although, religion is gradually becoming a more significant feature of national identity, the alternative discourses are simultaneously gathering more power, which is characteristic of modern processes.

The in-depth interviews with the clergy reveal that the lack of education among parishioners, as well as the clergy, is one of the greatest challenges currently facing the church. One representative of the clergy thinks that the church primarily needs to provide positive examples to its parishioners.

The interviewed experts believe the NGO sector is the most significant institution that encourages the shaping of civic identity, thus, they are fundamentally opposed to ethno-cultural identity. While the experts suggest it is necessary to review NGOs' strategies because, despite spending a great deal in recourses, there are few visible changes from 25 years of involvement in Georgia.

The representatives of NGOs mention that the foremost activities of Georgian NGOs concerns the monitoring and criticizing of the government, which can create distance between them and the general populace. The NGO representatives link society's poor level of trust in NGOs to their lack of attention to wider public issues. Nonetheless, the respondents think that the general function of NGOs is not to solve the problems of the majority, although, they also understand their need for greater focus on social issues. The lack of trust in NGOs is also considered to be due to the politicizing of the sector.

The focus groups with the public and the interviews with experts reveal that ethnic minorities are not perceived as inside the national "we-group". Because of differing ethno-cultural features, they are considered "others", and are associated with such threats as the appropriation of territories and of economic resources, thought to belong to the in-group of ethnic Georgians. The perception of such threats is largely connected with a fear that the number of ethnic Georgians will decrease, and as a result, will either become a minority group or disappear completely. Very similar attitudes are further displayed towards immigrants. Together with fear over the degradation of the ethnic Georgian, the majority of the respondents think that immigrants take jobs from those born in Georgia, and thus deprive the "we-group" of material recourses. The respondents' typically express these negative attitudes towards immigrants based on such factors.

While the racial, national, ethnic and cultural differences of immigrants and ethnic minorities contribute to their perception as very different "others". These "others" utilize one fundamental component of Georgian national identity, Georgian land. Therefore, it is common for Georgians to associate the safeguarding of land and territory with the preservation of their national identity. These notions were discussed by the focus groups, however, unlike the older respondents, the younger generation expressed a more accepting attitude towards immigrants.

From the focus groups with the population and from the interviews with the experts, one can see how "others" are singled out based on ethno-cultural

differences, and “internal others”, the religious and sexual minorities, are identified based on differences in values. These groups are each perceived as opposing forces and a real threat to the in-group. These groups are essentially associated with the fear of the degradation of Georgian culture and values, with anxiety over the decrease in ethno-cultural Georgians, and finally with the overall physical disappearance of the Georgian nation. When considering ethnic minorities and immigrants, the respondents particularly emphasize the reduction of native Georgians at the expense of “foreigners” and the threat of a severe demographic crisis.

It is hoped that the present research, its findings and conclusions accurately reflect the modern appearance of Georgian society, and will contribute to additional studies of Georgian national identity and its value systems.

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6. APPENDIX

2013 NATIONAL IDENTITY⁴⁸

Q. 1. How close do you feel to... (Please, check one box on each line)

	Very close	Close	Not very close	Not close at all	Can't choose
a) your town or city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) your [county]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) [COUNTRY]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) [Continent; e.g. Europe]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[1. Precode: “Feel close to” is to be understood as “emotionally attached to” or “identifying with”.

1b) [county] (or province, state, etc.): to be understood as the most relevant administrative unit smaller than the entire country/nation.

1d) [Europe]: give relevant continent or subcontinent: Europe, North America, East Asia/Southeast Asia]

48 ISSP National identity survey questionnaire for all countries. In Georgian case the questionnaire was translated and adapted for Georgian context

Q. 2. Some people say that the following things are important for being truly [NATIONALITY]⁴⁹. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is... (Please, check one box on each line)

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not important at all	Can't choose
a. to have been born in [COUNTRY]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. to have [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. to have lived in [COUNTRY] for most of one's life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. to be able to speak [COUNTRY LANGUAGE]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. to be a [religion]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. to respect [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] political institutions and laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. to feel [COUNTRY NATIONALITY]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. to have [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] ancestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[2. Precode "truly [COUNTRY NATIONALITY]" e.g. "truly British", "a true American".

2d) [dominant language(s)] If two or more languages are recognized nationwide both are included in the question. However, if there is one national lingua franca (Spanish, Russian) just give this language.

2e) The dominant religion or denomination in your country should be given (e.g. Christian in the US and Canada, Catholic in Ireland and Italy, Russian Orthodox in Russia)].

⁴⁹ Insert nationality corresponding to COUNTRY.

Q. 3. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Please, check one box on each line)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
a. I would rather be a citizen of [COUNTRY] than of any other country in the world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. There are some things about [COUNTRY] today that make me feel ashamed of [COUNTRY]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the [COUNTRY NATIONALITY]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Generally speaking, [COUNTRY] is a better country than most other countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. When my country does well in international sports, it makes me proud to be [COUNTRY NATIONALITY]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I am often less proud of [COUNTRY] than I would like to be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. The world would be a better place if [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] acknowledged [COUNTRY's] shortcomings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 4. How proud are you of [COUNTRY] in each of the following? (Please, check one box on each line)

	Very proud	Somewhat proud	Not very proud	Not proud at all	Can't choose
a. the way democracy works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. its political influence in the world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. [COUNTRY's] economic achievements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. its social security system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. its scientific and technological achievements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. its achievements in sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. its achievements in the arts and literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. [COUNTRY's] armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. its history	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. its fair and equal treatment of all groups in society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now we would like to ask a few questions about relations between [COUNTRY] and other countries.

Q. 5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Please, check one box on each line)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
a. [COUNTRY] should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. For certain problems, like environment pollution, international bodies should have the right to enforce solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. [COUNTRY] should follow its own interests, even if this leads to conflicts with other nations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Foreigners should not be allowed to buy land in [COUNTRY].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. [COUNTRY'S] television should give preference to [COUNTRY] films and programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Please, check one box on each line)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
a. Large international companies are doing more and more damage to local businesses in [COUNTRY].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Free trade leads to better products becoming available in [COUNTRY].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. In general, [COUNTRY] should follow the decisions of international organizations to which it belongs, even if the government does not agree with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. International organizations are taking away too much power from the [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] government.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I feel more like a citizen of the world than of any country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now we would like to ask a few questions about minorities in
[COUNTRY]

Q. 7. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Please, check one box on each line)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
a. It is impossible for people who do not share [COUNTRY's] customs and traditions to become fully [COUNTRY'S NATIONALITY].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their customs and traditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 8. Some people say that it is better for a country if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions. Others say that it is better if these groups adapt and blend into the larger society. Which of these views comes closer to your own?

- a) It is better for society if groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions. ☐
- b) It is better if groups adapt and blend into the larger society. ☐
- Don't know ☐

Q. 9. There are different opinions about immigrants from other countries living in [COUNTRY]. (By “immigrants” we mean people who come to settle in [COUNTRY])⁵⁰. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Please, check one box on each line.)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
a. Immigrants increase crime rates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Immigrants are generally good for [COUNTRY'S] economy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in [COUNTRY].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Immigrants improve [COUNTRY'S NATIONALITY] society by bringing new ideas and cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. [COUNTRY's] culture is generally undermined by immigrants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Legal immigrants to [COUNTRY] who are not citizens should have the same rights as [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. [COUNTRY] should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Legal immigrants should have equal access to public education ⁵¹ as [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁵⁰ The preceding parenthetical comment is part of the question wording

⁵¹ “Public education” refers to compulsory, pre-college schooling. For example in Britain it would be “state schools.”

Q. 10. Do you think the number of immigrants to [COUNTRY] nowadays should be...

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| increased a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| increased a little | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| remain the same as it is | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| reduced a little | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| reduced a lot? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can't choose | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q.11. Which of these statements about immigrants comes closest to your view: Immigrants should retain their culture of origin and not adopt COUNTRY's culture. ☐

Immigrants should retain their culture of origin and also adopt COUNTRY's culture. ☐

Immigrants should give up their culture of origin and adopt COUNTRY's culture. ☐

Can't Choose ☐

Q. 12. How proud are you of being [COUNTRY NATIONALITY]? (Please, check one box below.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very proud | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat proud | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not very proud | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not proud at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am not [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can't choose | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Note: COUNTRY NATIONALITY refers to the nation that the survey is being conducted in. If there are sub-national units, it refers to the nation as a whole, so "British" in Great Britain, not "English," Scottish," or "Welsh." If the standard national terms would not be understood as including some minority groups, it might be necessary to implement a functionally equivalent term that all citizens of the country could respond to. "I am not [COUNTRY NATIONALITY]" is designed to be only for non-citizens in countries that sample both citizens and non-citizens.

Q13. How much do you agree or disagree that strong patriotic feelings in (COUNTRY)⁵² ...
(Please check one box on each line.)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
a. strengthen (COUNTRY's) place in the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. lead to intolerance in (COUNTRY).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. are needed for (COUNTRY) to remain united.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. lead to negative attitudes towards immigrants in (COUNTRY).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 14. Are you a citizen of [COUNTRY]?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Q. 15. At the time of your birth, were both, one, or neither of your parents citizens of [COUNTRY]⁵³?

Both were citizens of [COUNTRY] ☐

Only father was a citizen of [COUNTRY] ☐

Only mother was a citizen of [COUNTRY] ☐

Neither parent was a citizen of [COUNTRY] ☐

⁵² "Strong patriotic feelings in [COUNTRY]" are to refer to patriotism towards the nation as a whole and not to any sub-entity. If this formulation would not convey this idea, then some functionally equivalent wording that does convey this meaning should be used.

⁵³ If your country was recently part of a larger political union (e.g. Russia, Slovenia, and the Czech and Slovak Republics), parental citizenship should refer to the preceding national state that your country devolved from.

Optional – Regional Associations – Ask these questions if you have an appropriate regional association. If you have no appropriate association like the EU or NAFTA, omit these questions.

Q. 16. How much have you heard or read about [the European Union]?

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| A lot | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Quite a bit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not much | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Nothing at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can't choose | <input type="checkbox"/> |

[16. Precode: [the European Union]: Take the appropriate association for your continent/subcontinent—EU, NAFTA, etc.]

If “Nothing at all” to Q 16, the rest of the optional items should be skipped.

Q. 17 Generally speaking, would you say that [COUNTRY] benefits or does not benefit from being a member of [the European Union]?

(Non-members “would benefit” or “would not benefit”)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Greatly benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Largely benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Benefits only a little | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does not benefit at all | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have never heard of [the European Union] | <input type="checkbox"/> |

[17. Precode: take the appropriate association, as in Q16.

Scale for non-members of whatever association is used: Would benefit/
Would not benefit/Don't know/Have never heard of [the European Union]]

Q. 18. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
(Please, check one box.)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Can't choose
[COUNTRY] should follow [European Union] decisions, even if it does not agree with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[18. Precode: take the appropriate association, as in Q16].

Q. 19. Generally, do you think that [the European Union] should have...
much more, more, as much, less, or much less power than the national
governments of its member states?

Much more	<input type="checkbox"/>
More	<input type="checkbox"/>
As much	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less	<input type="checkbox"/>
Much less	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/>

[19. Precode: take the appropriate association, as in Q16].

[For prospective EU members only]

Q. 20. If there were a referendum⁵⁴ today to decide whether [COUNTRY] does or does not become a member of [the European Union], would you vote in favor or would you vote against?

Vote in favor ☐

Vote against ☐

Can't choose ☐

[20. Precode: take the appropriate association, as in Q16].

[For current EU members only]

Q. 21. If there were a referendum⁵⁵ today to decide whether [COUNTRY] does or does not remain a member of [the European Union], would you vote in favor or would you vote against?

Vote in favor ☐

Vote against ☐

Can't choose ☐

[21. Precode: take the appropriate association, as in Q16].

54 If Referenda are not possible in COUNTRY, use the word "vote"

55 If Referenda are not possible in COUNTRY, use the word "vote"

Focus Group Discussion Plan

1. In your opinion, which values unite Georgian society and which are dividing values?
2. How were these values changed between your and the previous generation, and vice versa?
3. Can you recall any event or situation when you felt ashamed of or proud of being Georgian, and why?
4. Do you think ethnicity should be listed on ID documents? Why?/Why not?
5. Does citizenship include any obligations? What are they and why are they necessary?
6. How close do Georgians feel to Caucasians, Russians and to Europeans? Why do they feel this closeness? Who do you feel the closest to, and why?
7. What do you think what is the greatest international threat to Georgian society?
8. In your opinion, what types of problems do Georgia's ethnic minorities face? What role should the State play in relation to ethnic minorities?
9. Would it be acceptable to see members of ethnic minorities as key decision makers (like the president or prime minister) in Georgia? Why or why not?
10. Do you think foreigners should have the right to buy land in Georgia, and why?
11. In your opinion, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of immigration?
12. In your opinion, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of emigration?

Interviews with the public opinion makers

Interview guide for the NGO sector

1. Which values would you use to describe the Georgian nation? In your opinion, how does the NGO sector contribute to the process of value-formation? How does it contribute to changing these values?
2. What are your basic activities and who is the target of your work? Who is the general target of NGOs: the population or the government?
3. How would you assess the trust of the population towards NGOs? The NGO sector is often accused of “spreading foreign values”, how would the NGO sector respond to this?
4. In your opinion, which themes are currently considered the most or the least important to Georgia?
5. Which ongoing processes most affect the changing and the shaping of values of the Georgian population?
6. Which reform or amendment to the law was opposed the most by the population as a threat to Georgian identity? How would you explain such resistance?
7. Considering international threats, which one do you think is the most dangerous to Georgia?
8. How would you define Georgia’s national interests?
9. Which civic actors do you cooperate with, and which actors are harder to cooperate with or challenge your activities? Can you give concrete examples?
10. In your opinion, which groups are the most and the least accepted in Georgian society? How would you explain this?
11. How have attitudes towards the named groups changed in the last 20 years?
12. How would you evaluate the State policy towards minorities?
13. What do you think about the policy of funding religious organizations by the State? What are its advantages and its disadvantages?

Interview guide for representatives in education

1. Which values would you use to describe the Georgian nation and Georgian national identity?
2. Which values do you think lead to unification or to conflicts in Georgian society?
3. How would you describe the current educational discourse? In your opinion, how does it contribute to shaping societal values?
4. Do you think the Georgian value system has changed in the last 25 years? Which current processes would you identify that change the look of Georgian national identity? How are these changes expressed? How are these changes reflected in the current education system?
5. In general, how would you evaluate Georgia's educational system and its influence on Georgia's population? What is the current secondary and higher education study plan based on?
6. How would you evaluate the processes within educational space over the last 20 years? What has changed and what remains the same? What are the challenges connected to these changes?
7. Which are the most important reforms that have changed the educational system and that have influenced the consciousness and education of the population?
8. How would you evaluate the autonomy of current educational system? Which civic actors do you cooperate with and which create challenges?
9. How is the Orthodox Christian religion reflected in the educational system? Does a formal approach differ from non-formal practices?
10. Considering international threats, which one do you think is the most dangerous to Georgia?
11. In your opinion, which groups are the most and the least accepted in Georgian society? How would you explain this? What role does the educational system play when it comes to these groups? For instance, how are they portrayed in textbooks? What is the teacher's role in this regard?
12. What do you think about the teaching of civic education in schools? What is the goal of this subject? What challenges do teachers face during teaching this subject?
13. In your opinion, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of the processes of immigration and of emigration for Georgia?

Interview guide for politicians

1. In your opinion, what defines, and creates, Georgian national identity?
2. Which values would you use to describe the Georgian nation? In your opinion, how does the current foreign and domestic political discourse contribute to the shaping of societal values?
3. Which ongoing process in Georgian politics influences the populations' values the most?
4. How much impact do political actors currently have in shaping societal opinions, and in preserving, updating or transforming national values in Georgia?
5. Since Georgia's independence, which reform or amendment to the law was opposed the most by the population as a threat to Georgian identity? How would you explain such resistance?
6. Considering international threats, which one do you think is the most dangerous to Georgia?
7. How would you define Georgia's national interests? Are there any common positions among major political actors? Are there any areas where national interests are given priority over the interest of any international organizations (UN, EU)?
8. In your opinion, which groups are the most and the least accepted in Georgian society? How would you explain this?
9. How would you evaluate the State policy towards minorities?
10. In your opinion, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of the processes of immigration and of emigration for Georgia?
11. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of selling land to foreigners?
12. How would you evaluate the policy of funding religious organizations by the State? What are its advantages and its disadvantages?

Interview guide for the media

1. Which values would you use to describe the Georgian nation? In your opinion, how does the media contribute to the process of value-formation? How does it contribute to changing these values?
2. How does your television station contribute to preserving or changing values? Please provide examples.
3. Which social spheres are the most emphasized in the media?
4. In your opinion, which themes are considered to be more and to be less important in contemporary Georgian society? How is this reflected in the media? Please provide examples.
5. In your opinion, is there any difference among Georgian television viewers, considering their social or demographic factors? If so, how would you describe these differences? How is diversity of television viewers reflected in your program schedule? Which other priorities are recognized when creating your program schedule?
6. Considering international threats, which one is given the most time in your program schedule? Which do you perceive to be the most dangerous to Georgia?
7. How would you define Georgia's national interests? Is there any common viewpoint among media representatives about it? Is there any topic or coverage that could be restricted due to certain national interests?
8. Does your television station also broadcast on the internet? Who are its basic users? How does internet broadcasting change communication with television viewers?
9. In your opinion, which groups are the most and the least accepted in Georgian society? How would you explain this? How do you cover issues regarding minorities? Do you face any challenges?
10. Which group is given the most time in your coverage? How often do you cover issues regarding minorities? Do you invite minority representatives onto your programs? Do you discuss existing problems with them?
11. Is the media interested in the topics of immigration and emigration? How are these topics covered? What are basic emphasis and the basic content?

Interview guide for representatives of the church

1. In your opinion, what defines, and creates, Georgian national identity?
2. Which values would you use to describe the Georgian nation? In your opinion, how does church contribute to shaping, preserving or transforming societal values?
3. Which ongoing processes in Georgian politics influences the populations' values the most?
4. Over the last 25 years, there have often been tense political confrontations in Georgia. What was the role of church in these processes? Has it changed? What role should the church have?
5. Which reform or amendment to the law was opposed the most by the population as a threat to Georgian identity? How would you explain such resistance?
6. Considering international threats, which one do you consider the most dangerous to Georgia?
7. In your opinion, who can be considered as Georgia's ally in the international arena? Who constitutes the greatest threat?
8. How would you define Georgia's national interests? Are there any spheres where national interests are given the ultimate priority?
9. In your opinion, which groups are the most and the least accepted in Georgian society? How would you explain this?
10. In your opinion, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of emigration for Georgia?
11. There are different models of funding the church. What do you think about the current model? What are its advantages and its disadvantages?

Interview guide for experts

1. In your opinion, what defines, and creates, Georgian national identity? Which actors and institutes participate in shaping national identity the most?
2. How strong is the current feeling of “Georgianness” among Georgians? Is there a formula that could define a “good Georgian”?
3. Which events or details would you consider that Georgians perceive as shameful or in which they find pride?
4. Which values would you distinguish in order to characterize Georgians?
5. Which values do you think lead to unification or to conflicts in Georgian society?
6. In your opinion, has the Georgian value system changed in the last 25 years?
7. Which current processes would you identify that change the look of Georgian national identity? How are these changes expressed?
8. In your opinion, is Georgian society prepared for the changes associated with the current processes or globalization?
9. How would you define Georgian nationalism and Georgian patriotism?
10. Are there any areas where national interest could be considered as the one and only interest?
11. In your opinion what was the societal outcome from abolishing ethnic identification on ID documents?
12. Which international threats are, or would be, the most dangerous to Georgia?
13. In your opinion, what kinds of problems are faced by Georgia’s ethnic minorities?
14. How would you evaluate the State policy towards minorities? Do you see the need for any changes in this State policy?
15. In your opinion, which groups are the most and the least accepted in Georgian society? How would you explain this?
16. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of selling land to foreigners?

17. To what are Georgia's immigration and emigration processes connected? How would you evaluate these processes? What are the advantages and the disadvantages?
18. What do you think about the policy of funding religious organizations by the State? What are its advantages and its disadvantages?
19. What do you think about the existing constitutional agreement, the concordat, between the State and the church?