Tamar Bagratia & Medea Badashvili / David Jijelava / Irakli Khmaladze

Intra-party democracy and local governance

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Content

Preface

Dear reader,

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy is pleased to present these three NIMD Policy Papers, which we commissioned in 2011. The papers look at key aspects of intra-party democracy and local governance and address issues important to Georgia's democratic development.

The paper on women in political parties, written by Tamar Bagratia and Medea Badashvili, assesses party statutes and organisations, external partnerships and decision-making patterns from a gender perspective. Looking also at women representation in party structures, as well as in national and local legislatures, the paper provides thought-provoking findings. Key decisions within Georgia's political parties are biased against women and the majority of them find it extremely difficult to participate in politics, the paper asserts. Georgia, already a poor performer in this area, is experiencing a steady decline in the rates of women's participation in politics and in political parties. A variety of approaches can be applied to remedy the situation and the authors suggest some well-tested and relevant mechanisms.

David Jijelava in his paper on youth and politics looks at the role young people play in political parties. His research, drawing on available polling and statistical data, provides interesting insights into the patterns that affect youth involvement in politics and their functions in political parties. Youth participation, much like women's participation, has steadily declined since Georgia's independence, surging only at revolutionary moments. Only 21% of Georgian MPs have experience in political party work and only 4% of MPs have experience in youth political parties. This creates an environment where a general decline in political activism is further exacerbated by the fact that political party experience is seen as not sufficiently important in building one's political career. Georgia's political system might be risking the alienation of young people from politics, and this will undoubtedly affect Georgia's energy to establish itself as a consolidated democratic power.

Finally, Irakli Khmaladze reviews current legislation and practices of local governance and provides useful advice on how to better engage local citizens in order to improve the level of transparency, effectiveness and accountability of local authorities and, especially, their budgeting processes. He recommends a series of actions to make local budgets more transparent, easier to understand and evaluate. These include steps that can be taken to establish a more just system

of allocating local resources, and measures that can be taken to make information more accessible to the general public and other stakeholders. The recommendations and decisions offered in the paper constitute practical, actionable advice on how best to improve the performance of already existing arrangements on the allocation of important financial resources and their effective, just and fair distribution for the general public's benefit.

The three issues that are covered in these papers are essentially the building blocks of modern democracy. Without the active involvement of young people, politics will be devoid of new, innovative ideas and dynamism. Similarly, without equal opportunities for both women and men, any political system will be leaving an important, vital group of stakeholders without a voice in politics, thus eroding its quality and people's trust in it. Finally, local governments are the cornerstones of any democracy. Their effectiveness, as well as the quality of the services they render, determines what trust and support will be accorded to the general arrangement of the nation's political system. The challenges that are discussed in the three papers are important and should not be neglected; the opportunities they present are ripe and will need to be further exploited.

We therefore hope that this publication makes an interesting contribution to Georgia's progress towards becoming a more balanced, highly participatory and genuine multiparty democracy serving its citizens justly and effectively.

Our thanks goes to OSCE/ODIHR's Democratization Unit and more specifically Marcin Walecky for providing peer-review and his generous comments and suggestions to the authors of these papers.

Levan Tsutskiridze
NIMD representative in Georgia

Developing intra-party democracy from a gender perspective

Tamar Bagratia & Medea Badashvili

Introduction

Political parties represent the main subjects of political relationships in a democratic environment. The history of the development of a multiparty system in Georgia is brief, and this determines the spectrum of political parties. In Georgia almost 200 political parties have now been officially registered, many of which have only been active in the previous decade. Accordingly, citizens' awareness of the majority of these parties is very low.

Political parties play a crucial role as important actors in establishing social justice and democratic norms in the country, and in extending such democratic values as gender equality and the defense of women's rights. All the functioning political parties in Georgia recognise the importance of women's empowerment and express the desire to promote women's participation; however we face many obstacles and challenges that lead to low political representation for women.

The social scientist Dahlerup identifies the importance of women's participation in political decision-making and emphasises three supporting arguments:

- Women represent half of the population and have a right to hold half of the mandates in all political decision-making bodies (the so-called fairness argument);
- Women and men have different experiences caused by different socially constructed features and therefore women should be represented in politics (the so-called argument of experiences);
- Women and men have different interests and men cannot advocate women's interests (the so-called arguments of interest groups).

Consequently, equal participation in politics facilitates gender equality; legitimisation of political processes; effective utilisation of human resources; and the reconciliation of different interests and political conceptions.

Despite the fact that public opinion towards women's active political participation in Georgia has been becoming positive and women express their rights through various forms of political mobilisation, some challenges still remain. The level of women's political representation remains low. In fact, women make up only 15.7% of cabinet ministers; 6% of parliamentarians; and just 10.5% of posts in local self-governmental bodies.

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[1] Dahlerup, Drude. 1978. "Women's Entry into Politics. The Experience of the Danish Local and General Elections 1908–20." *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 1, nos. 2–3, p 139-140

Women's representation in political institutions is affected by social, economic and political factors and by other sub-factors. In order to achieve gender equality, other countries are using various methodologies, in accordance with their political and socio-economic systems and level of development.

When constructing a liberal democracy, political parties are the basic subjects of political relations. Therefore, in contemporary politics, political parties represent the main channel for promoting women's interests.

Despite the fact that the party system in Georgia is constantly changing and fragile due to the fragmentation of political powers, political parties represent the basic instrument for women's integration into politics. Political parties are the main players in promoting women's political participation and achieving gender parity. Gender parity is a vital issue as it is an instrument for promoting women, an indicator of a political party's internal democratic development and an indicator of a democratic society's development.

This policy paper presents an analysis of the existing political environment for women as constructed by different political parties alternatives and aims to evaluate all partner political parties of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) in Georgia from the perspective of gender equality. The paper also evaluates existing mechanisms and instruments, identifies ideas and provides recommendations for achieving gender parity and contributes to discussions on the issues of women's full-scale participation in political life in Georgia.

The publication also covers important issues such as gender asymmetry in the electoral process; the interrelations between electoral systems and women's representation; successful international experiences of implementing gender quotas; and the gender peculiarities of electoral behaviour.

Analysis of intra-party democracy from a gender perspective

The analysis in this policy paper is based on research[2] into seven NIMD partner political parties in Georgia: United National Movement, New Rights, Our Georgia-Free Democrats, the Labour Party, the Republican Party, Georgia's Way and the Christian-Democratic Movement.

The analysis of these political parties was carried out by way of research on various important thematic issues, including:

- Party statutes and groups focusing on the institutionalisation of women's and gender issues;
- Functions of women's/gender groups, strategic plans and the issues of funding;
- Special mechanisms for promoting women;
- Gender-based statistics;
- Distribution of functions through gender lenses;
- Cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations;
- Cooperation with political parties;
- Viewpoints on the legislative changes related to women's rights; and
- Sharing international practices for achieving gender equality.

Party statutes and groups focusing on the institutionalisation of women's and gender issues

United National Movement
The department of Gender Equality, an organisational unit within the party, was created in 2010. However, the statutes of the party do not make any reference to the unit. The party's gender policy and the norms associated with it are instead described in the department's charter. The aim of the department is to promote gender balance in accordance with internationally recognised legal norms and the principles of rule of law; the protection of the equal rights of men and women; and the promotion of the idea of equality in all spheres of Georgian society. The department has the following objectives:

- Promoting gender equality in the process of forming public opinion and during decision making in social spheres as well as within the party;
- Improving gender equality at all levels of democratic government; and
- Promoting equal representation of men and women in central and local representative bodies.

New Rights
The women's club within the New Rights party was created on 15 July 2001, at the time of the party's registration. The purpose of the organisation is to promote the active participation of women in political and social life; make efforts targeted at their political education; promote women's active participation in political,

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2 The research was conducted in June, 2010

economic, social, cultural, and other spheres; and take measures to improve the physical and psychical condition of the new generation. There is no provision relating to the women's club in the party's statutes. Since 2005, the club has changed the profile of its activities and acquired more political character. The basic purpose of the organisation is to:

- Encourage the growth of a number of party supporters within the country;
- Increase the level of women's participation in public and political affairs;
- Encourage the self-realisation of women; and
- Develop the skills of women who are party members in order to increase their active participation in elected bodies.

Christian-Democratic Movement
The women's organisation is a structural sub-unit within the Christian Democratic Movement. The statutes of the party do not make any reference to this unit. There is only a general provision regarding the establishment of a structural sub-unit; the women's organisation has been founded based on this provision. There is no provision on gender equality in the political party charter. The aims of the women's organisation are to activate women's political participation; motivate them and provide support in gaining promotion in their political career; actively participate in decision-making; and achieve gender parity.

Republican Party
There is a unit ('Gender Equality Group') within the party working on gender issues. The charter recognises a principle of universal equality and equal rights for all members of the party regardless of their sex. The charter does not include any provision regarding the gender unit. The gender unit has developed a strategy on "Increasing the role of women in party activities as an indicator of intra-party democracy." The procedures for the selection of woman candidates are currently being elaborated. The goal is to ensure the balanced participation of male and female candidates in the elections.

Labour Party
There is no current mechanism for promoting gender equality within the Labour Party. A unit within the part, the Council of Women, functioned until 2003. In the future, the party plans to re-establish a mechanism for gender equality in a new format.

Our Georgia – Free Democrats
While there is no mechanism for gender equality within the party of Free Democrats, some provisions on gender parity are presented in the party's charter.

Georgia's Way
This party does not have any mechanism for gender equality, nor any provision on this issue in its Charter.

Special Mechanisms for Promoting Women in Politics
None of the parties under review apply gender quotas or any other special mechanism for promoting women in political life. On the question of whether

they would support the introduction of gender quotas if the party was elected in parliament, the United National Movement and the Republicans answered that they have not yet made any decisions regarding this issue. New Rights stated that they would not support such legislative initiative. Other parties expressed their willingness to support this idea. It should also be noted that the United National Movement did not adopt the establishment of special mechanisms for achieving gender equality in the framework of the Georgian Law on Gender Equality in 2010.

Gender-Based Statistics

Despite the fact that, in general, parties do not collect basic statistical data broken down by gender and do not have any instruments or methodology to acquire such information, it was nevertheless possible to obtain some statistical data on this issue (Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1

Percentages of women party members and women in party governing bodies, Georgia. (%)

■ WOMEN MEMBERS

■ WOMEN IN GOVERNING BODIES
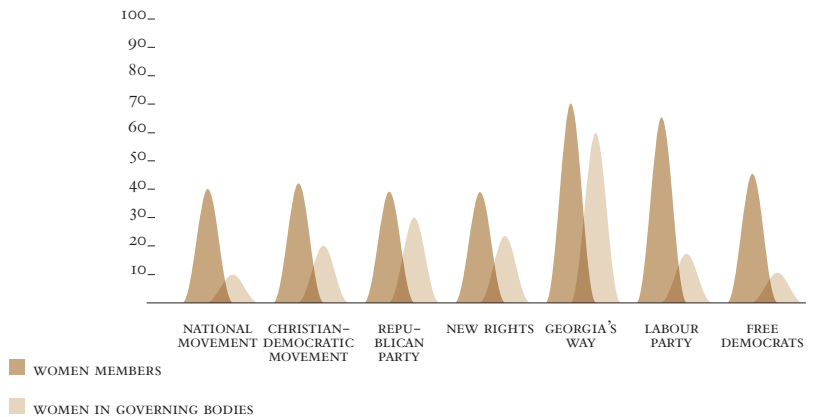
The highest percentage of women – both in the governing bodies and among the party membership – can be found in the party Georgia's Way. The party with the lowest percentages of women in governing bodies and as party members is the United National Movement. However, it should be noted that the majority of women in the Georgian parliament and in the local self-governmental bodies represent the United National Movement, which as a ruling party became an important instrument for the promotion of women. In fact, women from the United National Movement Party represent 60% of the total number of positions held by women in the parliament of Georgia and 80% of the total number of positions held by women in local self-governmental bodies.

On average, women make up more then 40% of an individual party's membership; nevertheless, their general participation in party governing bodies is clearly low.

Distribution of Functions from a Gender Perspective[3]
Quantitative data clearly indicates that there is a pyramid of power in political parties. The same can be concluded about the distribution of functions within the parties. In the framework of a survey we offered party representatives the opportunity to analyse the functions within their parties from a gender perspective and identify whether various functions were carried out primarily by male or female party members or by both sexes. The following scheme reflects the results of the analysis of the surveyed parties (Figure 1.2).

FIGURE 1.2

Distribution of functions within the parties from a gender perspective
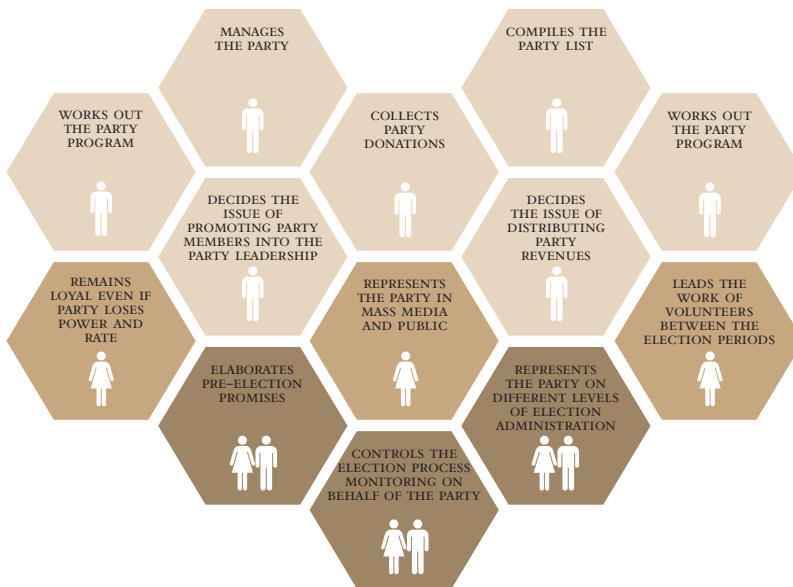
The functions of making important decisions and raising and managing funds are carried out by men. Women mainly coordinate the work of volunteers and manage lower level election campaigns – the so-called 'spade work'. However, both men and women undertake some functions equally: for example, party representation at different levels of electoral administration; the formulation of election promises and monitoring the fair process of elections.

Cooperation
As the survey indicates, the parties cooperate with non-governmental and international organisations working on gender issues. However, the majority of the respondents pointed out that it would be desirable to make this cooperation systematic, and oriented towards long-term results. The respondents believe that a regular cooperation format is required in order to cope with challenging issues.

[3] The research on the functions within the Political Parties was done by using the methodology elaborated in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (2001) Source: Women Can Do It- II, Training Manual

Nowadays, there is no successful cooperation between women/gender groups (that is, inter-party coordination) despite the fact that some precedents for such cooperation do exist. It should be noted that all the parties recognise the necessity of such cooperation.

Sharing international experiences
All of the political parties surveyed stated that they are familiar with the achievements in gender equality in different countries while also recognising the need to improve their knowledge in this respect.

Legislative initiatives in protecting women's rights
When asked what kind of legislative initiatives would be important for the protection of women's rights, respondents had to give scores from 1 to 5, with 5 signifying the highest importance and 1 signifying the lowest importance.

FIGURE 1.3

Legislative initiatives in the sphere of protecting women's rights

According to the majority of parties, future legislative changes on the subject of protecting women's rights should primarily target maternity and pregnancy rights, followed by labour and social rights. Legislative changes on the issues of domestic violence and political rights were considered of less importance.

Political parties and the election process – Gender asymmetry

In Georgia, the electoral process is characterised by gender asymmetry.
In this existing asymmetry the political parties play a significant role. For the
purpose of identifying this role, the latest parliamentary (2008) and local self-
government (2010) elections were analysed.

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Unfortunately, in both Parliament and the local self-governmental bodies the
number of women decreased with every election. This indicates significant
obstacles preventing the promotion of women's participation in political life.

FIGURE 1.4

**Percentage of women in the Georgian Parliament and in local
self-government bodies (last four elections)**

PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
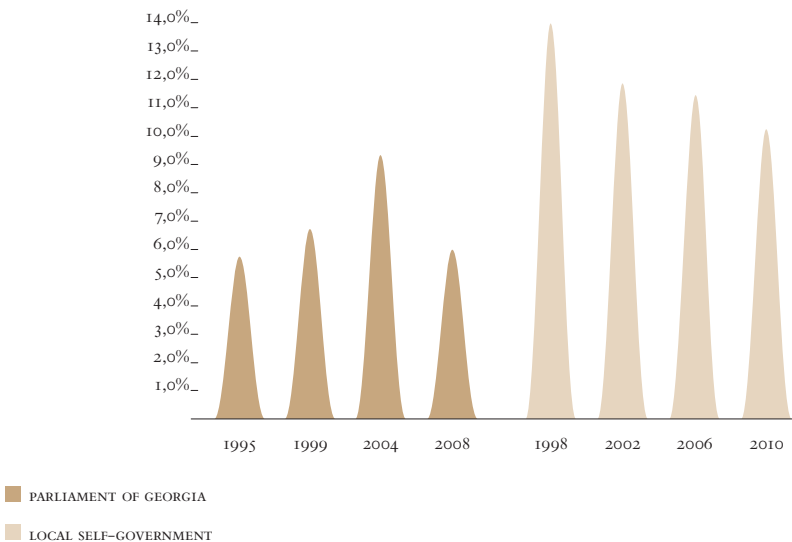
Parliamentary Elections of 21 May 2008
The elections of 2008 were preceded by important legislative changes. The
following changes in the law had a crucial effect on women's representation:

• The number of seats in the Parliament had been decreased from 235 to
  150 as a result of the referendum held on 2 November 2003;
• The ratio of seats also changed: in the Parliament of Georgia 75 members
  were elected by proportional electoral system and 75 members through the
  majority electoral system;
• the election threshold decreased from 7% to 5%; and
• Only political parties were enabled to nominate majoritarian candidates, while
  initiative groups were deprived of this right.

A total of 53% of the 3,465,736 registered voters in Georgia participated in the parliamentary elections. Out of the 50 political parties that applied to the Central Election Commission to participate in the elections, only 23 met the requirements set by law and were registered. The following picture has emerged from a gender analysis of the nominated candidates:

- Only three electoral subjects[4] nominated women candidates in the first five places on their party lists (see Table 1.1).
- In total, the 12 election subjects nominated 13 women – that is 10.8% of all nominated candidates;
- The number of female majoritarian candidates was 57 (12% of all of the nominated majoritarian candidates); in 33 out of 75 majority electoral districts (that is, 44% of electoral districts), no women were nominated at all; and
- The Republicans and the Labour Party nominated the highest number of female majoritarian candidates, while 'Industry will Save Georgia' and the 'Georgian Sportsmen's Union' did not nominate any woman as candidates in the election.

See Tables 1.1 and 1.2 for a full breakdown of women candidates in the 2008 parliamentary elections.

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[4] According to the Election Code of Georgia, an election subject is a party or election bloc registered by the appropriateelectoral commission.

TABLE 1.1

Women candidates nominated by the parties under the proportional election system

Electoral Subject	Order of Priority in Candidate List									
	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50
1 Political Union of Citizens 'Georgian Politics'	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	2
2 Republican Party of Georgia	0	1	0	0	2	3	2	0	2	3
3 Electoral Bloc 'Alliance of the Rights, Topadze-Industrialists' (M.G.S, Unity, E.D.P)	0	0	1	3	1	1	2	2	0	0
4 Shalva Natelashvili – Labour Party	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
5 United National Movement – for Victorious Georgia	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
6 Political Union 'Georgian Sportsmen's Union'	0	0	0	1	4	1	1	1	2	0
7 Electoral Bloc 'The Joint Opposition (National Council, The New Rights)'	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	2
8 Radical-Democrats 'National Party of All Georgia'	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	2
9 Political Union 'Christian-Democratic Alliance' (CDA)	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2
10 'Giorgi Targamadze – Christian-Democrats'	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	1
11 Electoral Bloc Traditionalists – Our Georgia and Women's Party	1	1	1	1	2	0	3	1	0	2
12 Political Party 'Our Country'	2	1	1	1	3	2	0	0	3	3

TABLE 1.2

Women candidates nominated by the parties under the majoritarian system

The Electoral Subjects	Number of Majoritarian Candidates
1 Political Union of Citizens 'Georgian Politics'	2
2 Republican Party of Georgia	13
3 Electoral Bloc 'Alliance of the Rights, Topadze-Industrialists' (M.G.S, Unity, E.D.P)	0
4 Shalva Natelashvili – Labour Party	11
5 United National Movement – for Victorious Georgia	1
6 Political Union 'Georgian Sportsmen's Union'	0
7 Electoral Bloc 'The Joint Opposition (National Council, The New Rights)'	4
8 Radical-Democrats 'National Party of All Georgia'	1
9 Political Union 'Christian-Democratic Alliance' (CDA)	5
10 'Giorgi Targamadze – Christian-Democrats'	6
11 Electoral Bloc Traditionalists – Our Georgia and Women's Party	10
12 Political Party of Georgia 'Our Country'	4
Total	**57**

Women in the Parliament of Georgia[5]

According to the election results, women were elected to nine seats; this constituted just 6% of the overall number of MPs. Eight were elected through the proportional election system and only one woman through the majoritarian electoral system.[6]

In terms of women's representation per party, five women were elected as members of United National Movement for the Victorious Georgia, with two women representing the Electoral Bloc 'United Opposition (National Council, New Rightists)' and one woman elected as a representative of 'Giorgi Targamadze – Christian Democrats'.

While a total of 57 women were nominated under majoritarian electoral systems, only one was eventually elected, in the Samgori electoral district. Therefore, the percentage of female majoritarian candidates elected amounted to 1.7%. To put it another way, 98,3% of women candidates nominated in single seat electoral districts failed to win a seat. Women were more successful under party list electoral systems, gaining 10.6% of seats by party list.

[5] http://www.parliament.ge/files/1123_18877_518391_genderuli_analizi.pdf
[6] It should be noted that two of the eleven MPs who later resigned their seats in protest were women, bringing the actual number of women in Parliament to seven, or 5%. As the goal of this paper is to identify the impact of institutional factors on women's representation the comparative analysis includes statistical data derived from the election results.

Local Elections – 30 May 2010

Unlike the 2006 local elections, no significant changes occurred in either the electoral system or the administrative-territorial arrangement model of self-government prior to the local elections in 2010. In this context, local experts did not expect major changes in terms of women's representation.

In single seat districts, only 10.9% of the nominated candidates were women, while on proportional electoral lists this figure rose to 18.2%. A total of 35 women, all of them representatives of the opposition parties, withdrew their nominations before election day.

As a result of the elections, more than 160 of the 1,695 seats in the Sakrebulo (or local councils) were held by women, but this was fewer than the number elected in the previous local elections.[7] These seats were distributed as follows:

- National Movement   134 seats
- Christian-Democratic Movement   10 seats
- 'Alliance for Georgia'   8 seats
- National Council   3 seats
- Tortladze Democrats   1 seat
- Topadze Entrepreneurs   1 seat.

There are significant problems in terms of women's passive[8] electoral rights in both types of electoral systems. The number of women elected as representatives decreases from election to election. The election process itself is asymmetric from a gender point of view and is not perceived as an articulation mechanism for women's political interests.

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[7] http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/68206
[8] 'Active electoral right' refers to the right of a citizen to participate, through voting, in general elections and a referendum. 'Passive electoral right' refers to the right of a citizen to be eligible for election to a representative body of public power and of a public office.

## Impact of the electoral systems on women's representation in electoral bodies

The worldwide trends reveal that there is a direct link between the electoral system and the representation of women in elected bodies.[9] In general, in those countries that use the proportional electoral systems, the average amount of seats that women hold in elected bodies is 20%, compared with 9% in countries with single seat majoritarian electoral systems.

Matland[10] found that there is no systematic link between electoral systems and the number of women in the developing countries. He pointed out that the existence of a certain level of political development is necessary in order for women protecting their rights to be able to make use of electoral systems.

In Georgia, there is a systematic link between the electoral system and women's representation. Under the mixed electoral system, more women are elected to the Parliament and the local self-government through the proportional electoral system then through the majority electoral system. In 2006, women in local elections gained 15% of proportionally allocated seats and 8% of majoritarian seats; the situation was similar in the previous Parliamentary elections (see Figure 1.5).

FIGURE 1.5

Representation of women in the Parliament of Georgia according to electoral system

■ PARTY LIST SYSTEM

■ MAJORITY ELECTORAL SYSTEM
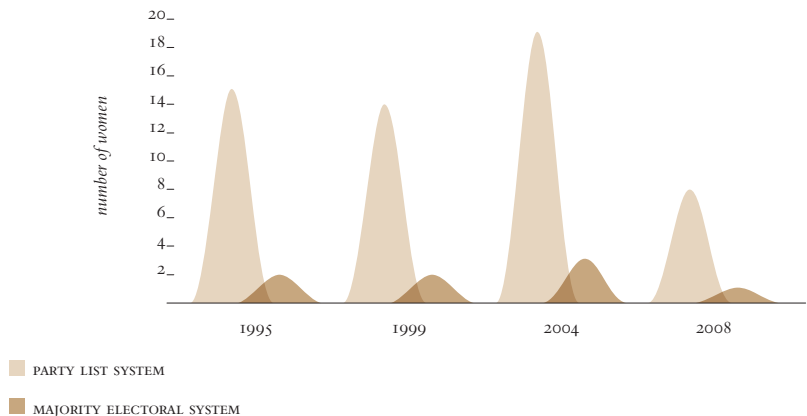
Women's representation can be influenced by various factors, including the electoral threshold. It is obvious that if the threshold is higher, the level of political party fragmentation is lower within an elected body. This factor increases the chance that women who are predominantly presented below in the electoral lists will be elected in legislative bodies.

9 Norris, P.(2006), *The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women's Representation*
10 Matland, R. (1998),*Women's Legislative Representation in National Legislatures: A Comparison of Democracies in Developed and Developing Countries*

In 2008, the increase in the election threshold from 5% to 7% was theoretically expected to have a negative effect on women's representation; however, due to the fact that neither of the parties received 5% - 7% of the votes, this factor did not have any impact on women's representation.

Women's representation can also be influenced by other elements of the electoral system, such as the number of seats in the electoral districts (the existence of single mandate seat districts decreases women's chances of winning) and the type of voting ballot.

Based on the election results we can conclude that the current electoral legislation plays a negative role on women's representation. It is difficult to forecast or predict which electoral system will be used in the forthcoming parliamentary elections of 2012. It is quite possible that some changes will be made to the electoral legislation. Based on the current electoral code it can be concluded that there is little chance of increasing the level of women's representation in elected bodies.

Despite the fact that the electoral system forms an environment where candidates and voters behave, electoral systems cannot determine the negative or positive opportunities that those systems usually create. The electoral system's influence on political processes cannot be viewed as a single, isolated factor that affects women's participation. In 2010, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation 1899, namely: "Increase of Women's Representation in Politics through the Electoral Systems". This recommendation calls on member states to boost women's representation by imposing quotas and reforming the electoral system in a way that will result in an increase in the number of women in elected bodies.

Gender quotas: Vague phobias and unclear hopes

Over the last few years, legislative initiatives on gender quotas in the Parliament of Georgia have failed several times. However, the variety of types of quotas enables parties to make independent decisions and establish party quotas, although none of the acting parties in Georgia makes use of this mechanism. Despite the fact that some politicians oppose the idea of quotas, they still remain one of the most effective instruments for increasing women's representation. As the existing practice has revealed, there are no other more effective means for protecting women's interests and institutionalising their rights. The most common arguments of those who support or are against the idea of quotas are as presented below:

FIGURE 1.6

Arguments of the supporters and opponents of gender quotas[11]

Supporters	Opponents
Elected bodies shall reflect the social groups of society. Women represent half of the society and shall hold half of the mandates	Quotas contradict the principle of equal opportunities when priority is given to women
Quota for women is a compensating rather than discriminative tool for overcoming those barriers that hinder women in getting political positions	Assigning quotas is an antidemocratic practice as far as the voters shall decide by themselves for who to vote to
Women as citizens have a right of equal representation. Representation in decision-making bodies means adequate reflection of social interests and political outlooks in the representative bodies	Assignment of quotas result in the fact that more highly qualified men are not represented in politics
Women's experiences are needed in political life	Introducing quotas creates significant conflicts within the party organisation
Women are not voted, not because of the lack of professional skills but because they are women	Quotas violate the principles of liberal democracy
Women are equally qualified as men but in the political system, where men dominate, their qualification is brought down to minimal level	Political representation is the representation of ideas and interests rather than gender and social groups
Quota is the fastest and the most effective mechanism for women's representation	Political representation is a competition where the best candidates win
Formal or informal quotas are used for various categories	A lot of women do not want to be in politics, in case they decide to, their number will increase
Quotas are successfully used in many countries	Quotas enable women to win only because they are women despite their intellectual abilities and skills

There are several sub-types of quotas that differ according to their form and principles, including party quotas, gender quotas at the legislative level and reserved seats.

[11] http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutQuota.cfm#pros

Quotas can be regulated through four legal instruments, either separately or in combination, namely:[12]
- Constitutional provisions;
- Electoral codes and laws on political unions;
- Special laws on equal status and gender equality; and/or
- Party statutes.

As mentioned above, none of the political parties operating in Georgia uses internal party quotas. The political parties have not yet expressed gender equality as a guiding principle in their political will and have not mobilised corresponding resources to bring this principle into reality.

Institutionalisation of quotas at the legislative level was initiated in the Parliament of Georgia for the first time in 2003. Only 67 members participated in the debates on this legislative initiative and the voting process failed.

In April 2008, the initiative of a citizens' group was submitted for adoption in the Parliament of Georgia. A total of 32,400 signatures were collected in support of the initiative, the aim of which was the adoption of the changes outlined below:

Changes and Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Unions of Citizens

Article 1

According to the article 34 of the Organic Law of Georgia

Changes and Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Unions of Citizens shall become 1 paragraph and the following paragraph 2 shall be added:

"In case a party violates the gender equality principle protected under the Georgian Election Code while nominating party lists or basic or reserve candidates' list, per each 5% of the violation of proportionality rule of nominating party lists, the basic funding of the party shall be decreased by 5%; 10% reduction will take place in case of the violation of the gender equality while nominating basic and reserve majority candidates."

Organic Law of Georgia on Changes in the Election Code of Georgia

Article 1

The following changes to the organic Law on Changes in the Election Code of Georgia shall be made:

Part 7 of the Art. 96 shall have the following wording:

"7. The rule of forming the party list shall be defined by parties and electoral blocs, **so that every second person in the list belongs to the other sex**"

Part 4 of the Art. 97 shall have the following wording:

"4. A party/electoral block shall nominate a full candidate and a substitute to stand in single mandate constituencies. There shall be a representative from opposite sex out of each three nominated candidates. In case of the nomination of 5 candidates, two of them shall come from an opposite sex. If there are 4 candidates nominated in a multi-mandate constituencies with less than 3 seats, than both sexes shall be equally presented."

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[12] T. Bagratia & N. Lagvilava (2006), "Gender Parity in the Party as a Social Consensus".

After looking through the procedures defined by law, the hearing took place at the committee during which the amendments to the law were not discussed and the amendments initiated by the 32,400 signatories were not considered.

The Parliament repeatedly failed to adopt initiatives on the positive discrimination proposed in the draft law on gender equality in 2010.

Paragraph 4 of Article 13 of the Law proposes allocation of additional media time for electoral subjects with equal number of candidates in the party list. Paragraph 5 of the article envisages sanctions to electoral subjects with more than 2% difference between sexes of elected representatives.

Abstract from the Draft-law on 'Gender Equality'

Article 13

Guarantees of equal electoral right

1 Gender equality shall be observed while realising the passive electoral right and the conditions for the realisation of this equality;
2 Gender equality shall be upheld during the formation of the list of candidates; equal representation shall be ensured in the election subject to governing bodies, executive monitoring, and other units;
3 Acting laws define those measures that target at the protection and promotion of gender equality during the election process;
4 During the pre-electoral campaign those election subjects that have equal number of men and women candidates among the first 75 candidates in the election lists will be given free additional media time on public broadcasting channel which will be ¼ of the time allocated for the parties;
5 In accordance with the organic law of Georgia on 'Citizen's Political Unions' those parties will have 100% funding from the state that have less than 2% of correlation between genders in the list of deputies elected in the legislative bodies. In case the correlation between genders in the list of deputies elected in the legislative bodies is more than 2%, state funding of the parties will be decreased by 25%.

According to Article 11, paragraph 3 of the law on gender balance, women's rights are general and have a declarative character:

Article 11

Guarantees for equal right to vote

1 Everyone has the right to take part in elections on equal terms without any discrimination;
2 Equal opportunity for participation of representatives of both sexes shall be ensured in enforcement of the right to be elected in a representative body;
3 Women and men can be elected on equal terms without discrimination.

The Constitutions of different countries determine the issues of gender equality and settle gender quotas for women's empowerment. For example, Article 100 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia stipulates that in the national parliament, which consists of 250 deputies, gender equality shall be observed in accordance with the law[13]. The same principle is embodied in the Constitution

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[13] Vasil Gonashvili, (2008), *Constitutional aspects of gender equality.*

of the French Republic, Article 3 of which grants equal rights to both sexes to be elected in elective bodies.

Two amendments were made to the French Constitution in 1999 that were preceded by a long process of heated debate. The Constitutional Council expressed its opinion regarding gender equality in 1982 and 1999. In 1982 the debate dealt with assigning quotas for municipal councillors, while in 1999 it was about assigning quotas for regional councillors. In 1982, the Constitutional Council recognised the draft law, according to which candidates of the same sex in the electoral lists should not outnumber 75%, as unconstitutional. In 1999, the article about gender parity was recognised as unconstitutional. The conclusion of the Constitutional Council was formulated in the following way: "According to article 3 of the Constitution adopted in 1958, national sovereignty shall vest in the people, who shall exercise it through their representatives and by means of referendum. In 1999, the Council rejected one more amendment with the same argument. Despite this, in June 1999, French authorities strengthened the principle of equal participation of both sexes in elective bodies through a constitutional amendment.[14]

In 2000, the French law on elections imposed financial sanctions on those political unions that do not protect gender equality among their nominated candidates. State funding is of crucial importance for political parties in France. For example, in 1999 state subsidies amounted to 51% of the total revenue of political organisations. State funding decreases if gender balance is infringed by 2% or more. Thus, a party that nominates 49% women and 51% men will not become the subject of sanction. In case the difference in percentage is higher than the indicated margin, state funding will be decreased by half of the difference in percentage. For example, in a case where a party nominates 60% male candidates and 40% female candidates, the difference is 20% and state funding will be decreased by 10%.

What practical results does the assignment of quotas bring?
After introducing quotas for political parties, the number of women in legislative bodies increases. For example:

- In Belgium women's representation increased from 12.7% (1995) to 35.3% (2007);
- In FYR Macedonia women's representation increased from 6.6% (1998) to 31.7% (2008);
- In Spain women's representation increased from 26.7% (1996) to 36.3% (2008); and
- In France this number increased from 10.9% (1997) to 18.9% (2007).[15]

What are the positive results of implementing gender quotas for society?
In Norway, after increasing women's representation in the governing structures, the number of centres oriented towards child care doubled; and monetary assistance for children increased by 22%.

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[14] T. Bagratia & N. Lagvilava (2006), "Gender Parity in the Party as a Social Consensus".
[15] http://5050-group.com/blog/?p=25

The provisions regarding women's representation in political parties and gender equality given in the guiding principles of OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission indicate that assigning quotas is one of the main ways that states can address to increase women's representation. In its recommendation #1899 (2010) on increasing women's representation in politics through electoral systems, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls on its member states to establish quotas for increasing women's representation. The countries with party list electoral systems are advised to adopt obligatory quotas that are expected to result not only in a high number of women candidates (at least 40% in the best case), but also in establishing a strict rule of ranging. One example of this would be the so-called 'zipping' system implying the sequence of man/woman candidates, or a method whereby in every three-person group (that is, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 and so on) there should be at least one representative of the other gender.

TABLE 1.3

Internal party quotas in the political parties of various countries[16]

Party	Acronym	Type of Quota
Germany		
Social Democratic Party of Germany	SPD	At least 40% of each gender in boards and lists (Party Statutes, Article 11 [2], Electoral Code of the Party, Article 4 & 8 [2]).
The Left Party		On nomination lists, the first two and then every other place are reserved for women (Party Statutes, Article 10 [5]).
Alliance 90/The Greens		Since 1986, Alliance 90/The Greens have had a 50% quota for women on party lists (Geissel 2008, p. 61).
Christian Democratic Union	CDU	At least one-third of CDU electoral lists and party officials should be women (1996). If this quota is not met, the internal elections have to be repeated (Party Statutes, Article 15 [2-3];
Iceland		
The Social Democratic Alliance	S	In electoral lists, the main rule is to strive towards gender equality. In all elected bodies within the party, each sex should be represented with no less than 40%. If, among the candidates, one sex is represented by less than 40%, these candidates will be nominated without a vote (Party statutes 1999, article 2:10).
The Left-Green Movement	VG	When candidates are chosen for positions at all levels in the party structure, as well as for electoral lists, gender equality shall be observed (Party Statutes 1999, article 3).

[16] http://www.quotaproject.org/systemParty.cfm

Progressive Party (Centre Party)		When choosing candidates at all levels of the internal party structures and for electoral lists, each sex must be represented with at least 40%, unless there are obvious and manifest impediments (Party statutes 2005, article 13:8).
Romania		
Social Democratic Party of Romania	PSDR	The PSDR had a 25% quota for women on party lists. The party is now, since 2001, a member of the 'Partidul Social Democrat' (PSD), the Social Democratic Party.
Democratic Party	PD	The Democratic Party has adopted a 30% quota.
Social Democratic Party	PSD	In 2001 PSDR (Romanian Social Democratic Party) and PDSR (Socialist Democratic Party of Romania) merged into a new political party; PSD. Prior to the 2004 election PSD adopted a 30% gender quota.
Slovakia		
Communist Party of Slovakia	KSS	One woman among the eight first candidates. The party has not been represented in parliament since the 2006 election.
Alliance of the New Citizen	ANO	ANO has an informal 33% quota for women. The party has not been represented in parliament since the 2006 election.
Party of the Democratic Left	SDL	SDL had a 20% quota for women on party lists. The party merged with the social democratic SMER. SMER has no quota for women.
Slovenia		
Social Democrats	SD	In 1992 the United List of Social Democrats introduced a firm 33% quota for both genders. In the 1996 election 42% of the party's candidates were women, but not even one of these got elected. The quota was changed from firm to soft in 1997, and the party currently has a 40% target.
Liberal Democracy Party	LDS	In 1998 the quota was changed to a gender neutral 25%, but is supposed to increase by 3 percentage points in every upcoming election until it reaches 40%.
Sweden		
Social Democratic Party	S	Party quota: Zipping system (one sex alternates the other on party lists) (1993).
Left Party	V	Party quota: A 50% minimum quota for women on party lists (1993).
Green Party	MP	Party quota: A 50% gender quota on party lists, plus minus one person (1997).
Moderate Party	M	Party quota: Two women and two men shall be placed on the top four positions on the party list for the election to the European Parliament in 2009.
Switzerland		
Social Democratic Party of Switzerland	SPS/PSS	The party has a 40% quota for women on party lists.

United Kingdom		
Liberal Democrats		In 2001 the Liberal Democrats adopted a target of 40% women candidates. Liberal Democrats implemented a 'zipping' system on their candidate 26 lists for the European election in 1999 which were conducted using List-PR, but did not use the zipping system in the European Parliament election of 2004.
Labour Party		Party members have two votes – one for a woman and one for a man. The man and woman with the most votes are selected.
Austria		
The Greens-Green Alternative	GA	GA has a 50% quota for women on party lists (1993).
Austrian People's party	ÖVP	ÖVP has a 33.3% quota for women on party lists (1995).
Social Democratic Party of Austria	SPÖ	SPÖ has a 40% quota for women on party lists (1985).

Women voters and gender peculiarities of electoral behaviour

According to data compiled by the Central Electoral Commission of Georgia, the number of voters on 20 May 2010 amounted to 3,544,770.[17] Unfortunately, there is still no gender segregated data available. The only source of information providing us with the data on female voters is the age and gender structure of the citizens presented by the Georgian State Department of Statistics[18]. According to this data, female voters make up 56.3 % of the total number of voters.

No substantial research has been conducted on the issue of women's electoral behaviour and their participation in elections in Georgia. There are also no surveys showing the political or ideological preferences of female voters. These types of surveys are very significant as they usually raise the effectiveness of election administrations, as well as international and non-governmental organisations, in promoting women's political rights.

In 1980 US Presidential elections, Jimmy Carter received 7% more of the women's vote than Reagan. There is a postulate in the US stipulating "When women vote, Democrats win."[19]

TABLE 1.4

Gender segregation of US Presidential Election Candidates[20] **(%)**

	Women	Men
2000		
George Bush Junior (Republican Party)	43	52
Albert Gore (Democratic Party)	54	42
1996		
Bill Clinton (Democratic Party)	54	43
Bob Dowell (Republican Party)	38	44
Ross Perot	7	10

It would be interesting to study the interrelation between women's organisations and women voters; however, due to the fact that the women's movement in Georgia is rather weak and fragmented, their influence on women voters is quite minimal.

According to the available information, it is difficult to define what type of relationship there is between women voters and women candidates – that is,

17 http://www.cec.gov.ge/files/archevnebi%202010/sxva%20informacia/Saparlamento_-_Full.pdf
18 http://www.geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=151&lang=geo
19 http://www.sadlyno.com/archives/507.html
20 The Gender Gap. CAWP Fact Sheet.(Center of American Women and Politics – Rutgers University)

whether or not women voters support women candidates. According to women's opinions, both the low number of female candidates and their weak electoral campaign cause the low rate of women politicians.

As part of research into public opinions on women's participation in politics conducted in 2008 within the framework of the UNDP project 'Gender and Politics in the South Caucasus' on the question "Would you vote for a male or female candidate?" the answers of respondents were as follows: (see Table 1.5)

TABLE 1.5

Would you vote for men or women at the elections of the governmental bodies?[21]

Intention	Women	Men	Total
Vote for women	11.8	8.2	10.5
More likely to vote for women than men	16.1	11.4	14.4
Gender does not make a difference	38.1	31.5	35.7
More likely to vote for men than women	17.0	29.9	21.7
Vote for men	4.6	12.5	7.5
Can't decide	12.4	6.5	10.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

36% of respondents were neutral about voting for men or women. It should be noted that male candidates are given priority by 42% of men and 22% of women. Just 28% of women voters and only 19% of men voters prefer to vote for women. It should also be mentioned that there are some positive changes in the public opinion of 2008 in comparison with the data from 2006.[22] The survey conducted in 2008 demonstrated that:

- Women's awareness regarding the elections had increased by 18%;
- The number of voters thinking that the sex of a candidate is not important when making one's voting choice had increased by 10%;
- The number of respondents thinking that existing stereotypes are the main obstacle to increasing women's representation in politics had increased by 14%;
- The number of respondents thinking that improvement of the economic situation was the major factor for women's active participation in politics had increased by 6%;
- The number of supporters of the idea of increasing the number of women in political parties had increased by 3%; and
- The number of respondents thinking that women must be represented in politics had increased by 15%.

21 http://www.parliament.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=647
22 http://www.parliament.ge/files/648_11140_392842_LocalSurvey.pdf

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

Institutional issues

- All the political parties that participated in the survey recognise the necessity of activating women within their parties. All the party leaders expressed their willingness to support women's increased participation in party activities.
  However, despite a few precedents, they do not have clearly defined strategies for reaching gender equality;
- The parties recognise that sex-based discrimination is a violation of universal human rights, though only a few of them have embodied this universal right in their Charters;
- Political parties can be conditionally divided into two groups:
  - Parties without any established mechanisms for institutionalising gender equality; and
  - Parties with more or less formally organised systems having neither institutional basis nor status similar to other structural units. Functioning of these groups is determined by their own regulations;
- Major functions of women's groups include the protection of women's rights and their integration in political life;
- During the last few years women's groups have progressed and acquired relatively more important functions. However, they still remain weak units in comparison with other structures. Only one party has cancelled its Women's Council, while at the same time planning to establish the equality mechanism in a new format;
- Women's and gender groups have no long- or short-term plans for their strategic development. Only a few parties have strategies for working with women voters;
- Women's and gender groups have only spontaneous funding. In addition to this there are no strategies and plans defined in the beginning of the fiscal year; therefore, there are no budgets identified and approved in advance for the functioning of those groups.

Gender audit and gender statistics

- Parties do not carry out gender audits; their gender related information is quite scarce and often contains errors;
- Parties do not have the methodological instruments, or the knowledge and experience, to collect gender segregated statistical data;
- The Central Election Commission keeps gender related statistical records at various levels of the election administration but there are no general gender based statistics on voters that rate their participation in elections;
- The organisations observing elections have little or very limited information on this issue.

Number of women in political parties
- The number of women in the governing bodies ranges between 10% and 60%. The Political Party 'Georgian Way' has the highest number of women among its members. The lowest number of women can be found in the governing bodies of the 'United National Movement';
- Similarly, the highest percentage of women can be found in the party 'Georgian Way', while the percentage of women in other parties ranges between 40% and 45%;
- The available statistics reveal the existence of a so-called 'gender pyramid of power' – the higher the power, the lower the women's presence.

Division of functions within the parties from the gender perspective
- There are gender-based regularities in dividing the functions among the party members. In general, men acquire more functions in the parties and have more responsibilities;
- Men are predominantly engaged in party management, funds attraction and election list preparation;
- Men and women are equally involved in designing pre-election campaigns and working out the election program, as well as election administration and election monitoring process;
- Women are quite active with mass media. They also manage volunteer work and stay more loyal than men to the party in case losing popularity.
- The so-called 'Gender Pyramid of Power' revealed in the gender statistics applies also to the division of functions.

Formation of election lists and nomination of majoritarian candidates
- Systems centralising list formation and candidate nominations and the non-existence of transparent mechanisms for promotion within parties remain the main obstacles to women's advancement;
- The analysis of election lists reveals that women are definitely concentrated in the lower half of the list, where their chances of winning are lower;
- During the 2008 Parliamentary elections, the highest number of women were nominated by the Republicans and the Labour Party; while the highest number of women in the first 50 candidates of the party election list were nominated by the political party 'Our Country'.

Special mechanisms for increasing women's representation
- None of the parties use any kind of special mechanism (that is, quota) during the process of forming party lists and nominating majoritarian candidates;
- The political parties (except the United National Movement) intend to support gender quota if their party is elected to the Parliament;
- In 2010, the United National Movement, which holds the majority of seats in the Parliament of Georgia, did not support the provision of the Law on Gender Equality, which would have introduced special mechanisms for supporting women's promotion;
- At this stage, parties are not ready to establish internal party quotas. Among other factors they explain that this reality is caused by the lack of qualified human resources and note that the major criterion considered during the forming of party lists are the candidate's experience, skills, and professionalism;

- Parties are well aware of the best practice implementation of gender quotas in other countries.

Educational programs on gender issues and social programs for women
- There is an evident lack of woman-oriented programs (both social and educational) within political parties;
- There are no special programs for women's groups with certain type of individual profile (for example, young women or ethnic minorities);
- Training of party members on gender issues is carried out only with the support of international and non-governmental organisations;
- There is a lack of gender experts within the parties.

Interparty coordination
- The absence of successful practice in terms of cooperation and interparty coordination in women's groups hinders the consolidation of their efforts and the resolution of various problematic gender issues;
- All the parties recognise the importance of such coordination and express their readiness to cooperate with each other.

Cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations
- The parties cooperate with gender- and women-oriented non-governmental and international organisations;
- The parties emphasise the importance of (and their willingness to engage in) regular cooperation with non-governmental and international organisations, and believe that only through such cooperation will it be possible to solve challenging issues.

Awareness raising and sharing international experience
- The majority of the parties are familiar with successful Western practice associated with gender equality, while at the same recognising that it is necessary to improve their knowledge on this issue.

Electoral systems and their impact on women's representation
- Parties are not well informed about the electoral system as a legal instrument impacting on women's representation;
- Local self-government and parliamentary elections reveal systematic links between electoral systems and women's representation;
- In 2008, eight women were elected through party lists but only one through the majoritarian electoral system;
- In the local elections of 2006, women gained 15% of seats through party lists but only 8% through the majoritarian system;
- Despite the fact that there are frequent debates about electoral legislation and need to make changes in the electoral system, women's issues are routinely ignored;
- None of the political parties surveyed raised the possible positive, neutral or negative impacts that electoral systems might have on women's representation.

Women's movements and unions

- The weakness and fragmentation of women's movements remains one of the most important obstacles in the process of women's promotion and advancement within political parties;
- The role of women's movements supporting female politicians based on the international practice is rare in Georgia and few precedents can be found.

Political culture/gender peculiarities of electoral behaviour

- While the parties recognise the importance of the gender peculiarities of electoral behaviour, existing information in this area is quite poor;
- No research into the gender peculiarity of electoral behaviour that would assist the parties in planning election campaigns and activating women voters has been conducted;
- During election campaign parties do not have any distinct strategy for working with female voters. Women as a target group fall under the spontaneous electoral technologies. There is no gender line in the election campaign and the same communication language is used both for male and female voters, while their values, challenges and approaches are often very different.

Parties' attitudes towards the legislative aspects of women's rights

- Parties recognise that legislative protection of maternal/pregnant women's rights and labour rights has to be improved;
- According to the parties, the legislative basis for protecting women's political rights is a less important issue.

International and local normative acts regarding the protection of women's rights

- The parties welcome the elaboration and adoption of the Georgian law on gender equality;
- The parties have also been informed of the international documents on gender equality but do not consider them as very significant;
- The parties have scarce information about women's political rights, existing recommendations and resolutions in this respect.

In general, it can be concluded that despite the existing trends, parties remain major instruments for the promotion of women in political life and are crucial actors in scenarios for women's appearance in politics. The political process, however, has not yet become the mechanism for articulating women's interests and basically serves as an instrument of the realisation of active electoral rights and, in some cases, passive electoral rights.

Political parties have a predominantly 'male profile'. Because of the dominance of men in political parties in Georgia, they have managed to establish formal and informal rules within the parties. These rules serve as an obstacle to women's promotion in their political careers.

Recommendations

Institutional issues/finances
- Groups working on women's/gender issues should be established, and the existing groups should be institutionalised in party charters;
- Clear provisions regulating functions, organisational structure, and activities of women's groups should be established;
- Recommended is that the party women's group leader automatically becomes member of the highest governing body to actively lobby the group's interests;
- Strategies for working with voters and mass media should be elaborated;
- Groups should draft budgets and attract funds from the budget and other sources in accordance with the work plan for their financial sustainability. This will ensure fair distribution of party financial resources;
- Parties should emphasise gender equality issues and solutions to women's problems in their election programs.

Gender audit and statistics
- Political parties should establish instruments and mechanisms for making gender based records to facilitate the collection of reliable information and statistics;
- Parties must provide information about the attitudes of the electorate through a gender lens, as well as gender based statistics about the party members, activists and decision-makers;
- The central election commission should provide the statistical data on: a) voters' gender composition, b) voters' turnover through a gender lense, c) distribution of seats among winner political parties by gender. The election monitoring organisations have to identify and establish more mechanisms for gender monitoring of the election process.

Number of women in political parties
- Quotas should be assigned in the governing bodies of parties in order to ensure gender equality;
- Political parties should elaborate strategies in order to attract more potential female supporters to the party.

Distribution of functions within parties from a gender perspective
- Parties following the principles of democracy have to ensure equal access to all types of functions for both sexes;
- Parties must possess a charter that includes all the principles of democracy including the protection of gender parity.

Formation of election lists and the nomination of majoritarian candidates
- The system of nominating candidates should be made more transparent within political parties;
- Presently centralised systems of party management should be made transparent in order to create equal opportunities for all female members.
- The mechanisms of promotion within the parties must be transparent and should treat men and women equally.

Special mechanisms for promoting women's representation
- Political parties must demonstrate political will and identify resources for implementing gender quotas within the parties;
- When implementing quotas, it would be much more effective to establish the quota system defining not only the quantity/percentage of the same sex candidates, but also the sequence.
- Political parties should be subject to financial sanctions or a reduction in state funding if they do not maintain a gender balance in their party lists for representative bodies;
- Parties must lobby the initiatives of women's organisations regarding the establishment of gender quotas in the electoral code and related laws.

Educational programs on gender issues and special programs for women
- Parties should elaborate educational programs for women in order to raise awareness and gain the skills required of women politicians;
- Parties should elaborate programs for various women's groups (for example, young women, or ethnic minorities) in order to raise their political awareness on various issues;
- Parties should also involve experts and expert groups working on gender issues.

Inter-party coordination
- Women's organisations and gender groups within parties should cooperate closely with other organisations working on gender issues and when necessary express united interparty positions regarding gender issues;
- Parties should launch campaigns lobbying for gender equality;
- Parties should create coordination units as the main mechanism for effective discussions and implementation;
- Coordination of various political party representatives elected in the governing bodies should be regarded as very significant;
- A certain level of parity in terms of the political party representation should be maintained in the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia.

Cooperation with international and non-governmental organisations
- Parties should cooperate actively and regularly with international and non-governmental organisations working on gender issues,

Sharing of international experience
- Parties should increase their knowledge regarding best practices on gender issues;

- Parties should also become familiar with and analyse successful cases of gender parity in politics, as well as internal schemes in other parties serving as good examples of gender equality.

Electoral systems and women's representation
- Various elements of the current electoral system have not succeeded in increasing women's representation and therefore require reform;
- The establishment of special mechanisms (quotas) in various formats should be emphasised during discussions regarding such electoral system reform.

Women's movements and unions
- Parties should cooperate actively with women's organisations and support the creation of a strong women's movement.

Political culture/gender peculiarities of electoral behaviour
- Political parties should elaborate a strategy for working with female voters, as well as with neutral voters and those who previously voted in favour of other parties;
- Parties should also study gender peculiarities of electoral behaviour and plan the electoral campaign accordingly.

Party attitudes towards legislative changes on women's rights
- Parties should take steps immediately to protect pregnant women's rights and women's labour rights by adopting or changing related laws supporting women's interests.

International and local normative instruments for women's rights protection
- Political parties should become familiar with the major international documents on gender equality and take into consideration their recommendations and guiding principles; study Georgian legislation from a gender perspective, as well as gender equality law and the national action plan; and regularly participate in elaboration of the mentioned documents and their further implementation. Finally, parties should also monitor the process of implementation of laws and international documents.

Youth development in Georgian political parties: Looking for ways to utilise party resources

David Jijelava

Summary

Objective of the research

Young people in Georgia have historically played a critical role in the country's political development. However, little has been done to understand what drives youth organisations, how they work, what are the motivations of young people in joining political parties, and what background youth party activists tend to have. In this research we provide some initial attempts to scrutinise youth political activism. In particular, the research will focus on youth wings of political parties.

Political parties are essential for functioning democracies. However, political parties are often weak and disconnected from the policy process, and struggle to connect with their constituencies. This is especially true for developing countries like Georgia, where the party system is fragile and parties often lack adequate organisational structure. One of the most cited sources of this weakness is human resources. The youth wing of a political party is a vital element in party's human resource development and long-term planning.

Key findings of the research

The most important finding of this research is that, according to data at hand, young peoples' involvement in politics is not being rewarded accordingly later in their careers. Unlike most liberal democracies, where the majority of politicians have been involved in youth politics at some point in their lives, in Georgia, the number of such politicians is extremely low. This can be very discouraging for young people who are interested in politics and are seeking successful political careers. They might conclude that joining the youth wing of a political party is not the best way to go about becoming a successful politician, and that it's better to find other paths through business or civil service. Although there are a significant number of politicians in Georgia, including parliamentarians and ministers, these people rarely come from a party background and are therefore not products of party development. In Georgia, the percentage of 'political outsiders' – that is, people who come to politics without a good understanding of party dynamics – is very high. This poses a number of problems in terms of political cohesion and ideological consistency.

The second reason for young people's discouragement when it comes to Georgian politics is the unfavorable perception of politics in Georgia. Such perceptions are fueled by frequent swings between parties, corruption, and politicians' allegations against each other. If parties want to attract bright young minds, then the perception of politics has to become more respectable. All polls show that interest in politics is declining among the population, and the low rate of youth interest in politics is particularly alarming.

When considering these findings, it should be acknowledged that the independent Georgian political system is itself very young and has experienced turbulent developments in recent years, including a complete change of regime in 2003. Thus, it is impossible to have an objective view on how or whether political activism at a young age will pay off later. However, in the Georgian context, party activists tend to be more mobile than in other countries, and it has often been the case that an activist from one party has developed a career in another. Even the systemic change in the aftermath of the Rose Revolution in 2003 didn't necessarily translate into termination of the political careers of the young people who were part of the old system. On the contrary, many young party activists during the Shevardnadze era managed to establish a successful political career after the demolition of the old political system. These considerations are important when making conclusions about youth political activism in Georgia.

The research also looked into the profile and motivations of young people. Although characteristics vary across parties, it is not surprising that the nuclei of youth wings of political parties are comprised of students. Interestingly, almost all party representatives said that the majority of their young activists study law. Usually, these people come from the middle or lower classes. They are originally from the regions but now live in Tbilisi in order to study at their institutions.

As for motivations, it seems that young people in Georgia are usually guided by very pragmatic considerations, and consider the gains which involvement in youth party activism might bring. These may include access to resources, such as public lectures by famous experts or politicians; participation in conferences; and gaining more understanding of politics. Also, young people often join political parties to enhance their social lives and have more communication with current and potential friends. In other words, they are trying to expand their social capital. Such considerations are quite different from the considerations of young people in established liberal democracies. Usually the driving force of youth involvement in such countries is ideological interest and a generic desire to be involved in politics.

Methodology

Definition of youth

There is no one accepted standard when it comes to counting 'young people'. For example, the United Nations definition of youth includes the age group between 15 and 24. However, countries vary in their assessment of who should be counted as 'youth'. In some cases, the lower threshold starts as low as 14, and in some cases it is 18, while the upper threshold can be anywhere between 24 and 31. In Georgia, there is no direct legislative definition of 'youth'. However, the State Youth Policy is being developed at the moment, and is supposed to define who should be perceived as 'youth' by the government. Individual parties also have their own definition of 'youth'. Usually, there is no strict limitation on who can be involved in youth activities. In this research, youth is defined contextually. When considering figures from political parties, we are using their definitions of youth. When considering political activism, such as voting and interest in politics, we use the age group from 18 to 25. When discussing activities of political parties, it would be useless to use the 18 to 25 age group, as Members of Parliament (MPs) can be elected only from the age of 25. For this reason, we define MPs as 'young' if they are aged between 25 and 35. Also, different studies have used different thresholds for defining youth, and when citing such studies, we will have to use their figures.

Methods

This study includes several basic quantitative and qualitative methods. The first phase included desk research, and a review of available relevant literature and data. Data used was collected by national and international organisations, such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), International Republican Institute (IRI), and the Caucasus Research Resources Center (CRRC). IRI and CRRC conduct periodic nationwide polls, and the data is usually available to the public. IDEA collects election-related information from around the world and anyone can download customised data in Excel format. This is a very useful tool for a researcher. We used these sources to retrieve data on voter turnout at parliamentary and presidential elections in Georgia since 1992.

Another quantitative method used was collecting data on Georgian MPs from the parliament's website. Unfortunately, we were not able to conduct a survey of MPs or local city council ('Sakrebulo') representatives in order to analyse issues such as their party background or involvement in youth politics. So we had to use data that was publicly available. We went through the profiles of each of the 137 MPs and coded them, based on several pre-selected variables.

These included the party to which the MP was elected; age (to determine how many MPs would fit under the 'young category'); involvement in party activities before being elected to the parliament; experience or involvement in youth party politics: and occupation prior to parliamentary career. Although the resultant profiles do not include detailed answers for each of these categories, we believe that available information, coupled with a basic knowledge of the biographies of a number of MPs, allows us to make some conclusions.

We also conducted interviews with the leadership of the youth wings of the political parties. We managed to interview representatives from all major political parties, including United National Movement, Our Georgia - Free Democrats, the Republican Party, New Rights, Christian-Democratic Movement, and the Labour Party. The interviews were conducted via telephone. We sought information on various aspects of political party youth wings, including issues of recruitment, motivation, structure of work, profiles of the young party members, and success stories – in other words, cases when a member of the youth wing of the party achieved a significant success either within the party, or was elected to a local or national representative body.

The final method that was employed entailed analysis of youth civil and political activities in Georgia. Organisations like 'Kmara' are believed to have a significant impact on the direction of politics in Georgia.

Youth participation in politics and party membership trends: International experience

Although there exists extensive literature on political parties and youth participation in politics[1] there is surprisingly little research that directly analyses youth party membership issues. Hooghe and Stolle (2005) provide a structural approach to explain why youth party membership has declined in recent decades in liberal democracies. They claim that it's not only about the lack of interest on the part of young people, but also the characteristics and needs of modern political parties. In the era of media and social networks, parties do not need mass membership in the same way that they did two or three decades ago. Hooghe and Stolle go further and suggest that urging young people to be more active in joining political parties may make little sense:

"This implies that there is little future for a moralistic approach, simply urging young people to become more engaged. Any policy effort to raise young people's engagement levels should also look at the demand side: who is mobilising these young people, and with what effect?"

In terms of why young people join political parties or civil organisations, research by Weinstein analyses the case of England. Weinstein interviewed 58 respondents from different youth organisations, political as well as civil. He researched the motivations, backgrounds, and perceptions of young people who chose to become members of political organisations. The aim of his research was to compare young people who join political parties with those who join civil organisations. Weinstein's research shows how much these two groups differ based on the above-mentioned variables.

In the last 40 years, there has been a clear trend in established democracies that voter turnout is decreasing[2]. This is believed to be mainly due to decreased voting by younger generations. Young people who voted 20 or 30 years ago tend to continue voting when they are older. But the new generation of young people now votes less, compared to previous generations. Hence, the overall turnout is continually decreasing. There are various theories as to why this is taking place. For example, Francis Fukuyama in his 'Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity' suggests the low turnout is caused by increased actions from the government – in other words, the modern welfare state is involved in too many areas of people's lives (1996). Other authors attribute the decline of civil and political activism to the boom in technological product consumption. Thus, Robert Putnam suggests that the decrease in social capital is a result of the mass proliferation of televisions in the 1950s and 1960s. As people started to spend more time at home in front of their televisions, general social participation and, consequently, voting declined.

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[1] Wring D. et al (1999); White C. et al (2000); Park A. (1999)
[2] Niemi R.G., and Weisberg H.F. (2011), p. 31

Youth participation in politics in Georgia

Analysis of youth participation data

If we look at the data from Georgia, we can see that voting participation is also steadily decreasing. At the first independent nation-wide parliamentary elections the turnout was 75%; this fell to 53% during the last parliamentary elections in 2008. Similarly, the 69% turnout at the presidential elections in 1995 decreased to 56% in 2008. The extraordinary turnout in the January 2004 presidential elections was an immediate effect of the Rose Revolution, which had occurred about six weeks before the election day.
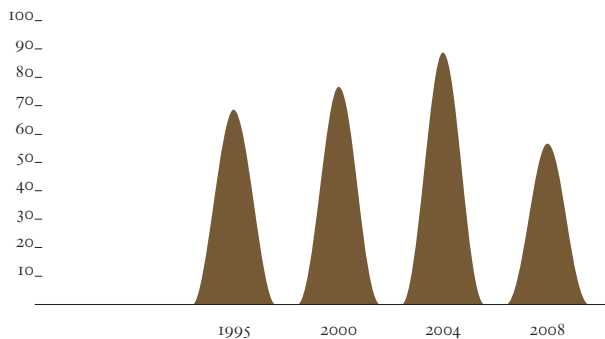
FIGURE 2.1

Turnout in parliamentary elections (%)
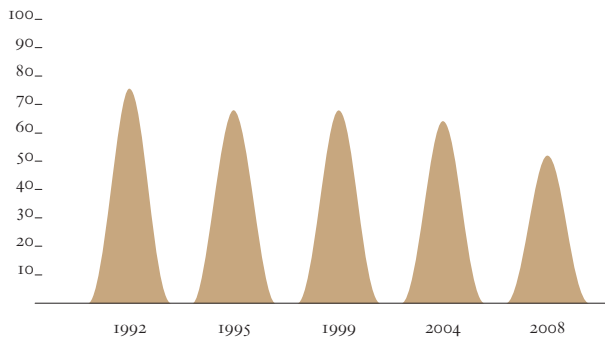
Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Voter Turnout Database

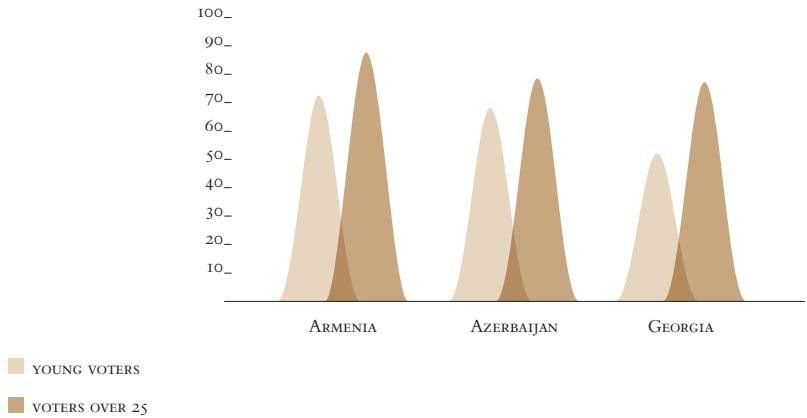FIGURE 2.2

Turnout in presidential elections (%)

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Voter Turnout Database

Unfortunately, there is no publicly available official data on voter turnout broken down by different age groups. However, in its annual Caucasus Barometer survey, the Caucasus Research Resources Center (CRRC) asks whether a respondent participated in the last national elections. Below is a graph that breaks down eligible voters into two categories – 'young', meaning voters aged 25 or less, and voters who are more than 25 years old. The data is taken from the latest available Caucasus Barometer, conducted in 2010. We compare the results across the three countries of the South Caucasus. Interestingly, as can be seen from the graph, the youth voting rate in national elections in Georgia is the lowest in the region.

FIGURE 2.3

**Election turnout of young and other voters in South Caucasus**

YOUNG VOTERS

VOTERS OVER 25

Source: Caucasus Research Resources Centre, Caucasus Barometer 2010

The downward trend of voter turnout, demonstrated in figures 2.1 and 2.2, is accompanied by a decrease in interest in politics. An American organisation, International Republican Institute (IRI), has been commissioning surveys on different aspects of politics in Georgia for many years. One of the questions they ask respondents in their periodic nationwide survey is "how much interest do you have in politics?" From the first collection of polling data in October 2004 to the latest publicly available survey results released in June 2011, there has been a clear indication of decrease in interest in politics. In October 2004, 32% said that they were "highly interested" in politics, while 38% indicated "low interest". By contrast, in 2011 only 24% said that were "highly interested" and 44% indicated "low interest" (see figure 2.4). However, whenever major political events take place – for example, the November crackdown against protesters in 2007, the presidential elections in January 2008, or the war with Russia in August 2008 – interest in politics seems to rise significantly. Nevertheless, the data shows that this interest does not last for long and decreases within a few months.

FIGURE 2.4

"How much interest do you have in politics?" Results of polling data commissioned by IRI from October 2004 to May 2011
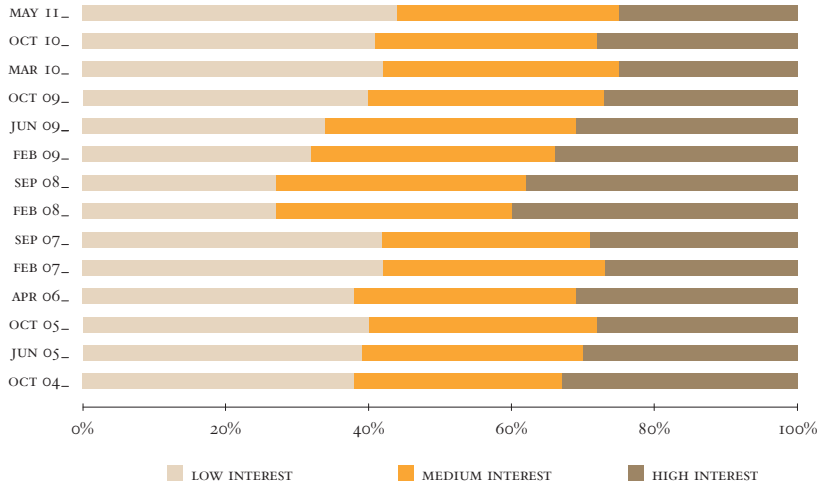
Source: IRI Georgian Public Opinion Survey, implemented by IPM, data in PDF format available at http://www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/iri-releases-survey-georgian-public-opinion-4

On the topic of interest in politics and the comparison of young people to the general population, we can use data collected by the CRRC. Using publicly available 2010 data, we can break down interest in politics into three more specific categories, namely interest in local politics, national politics, and foreign policy. Young people are defined here as people aged between 18 and 25. People below the age of 18 were not surveyed, and only people aged 25 or older can be elected to the Parliament, and so this seems a good threshold for defining 'youth' in this particular context. In all three categories, as demonstrated in figure 2.5, young people show less interest in politics compared to the general population. 64% of the general population is "quite interested" or "very interested" in local politics as opposed to 55% of young people. Similarly, 62% and 53% of general population are interested in domestic and foreign policy issues, respectively. For young people, these numbers are 56% and 45%. This suggests that there is very little motivation on the part of young people when it comes to becoming involved in politics.

FIGURE 2.5

The comparison of interest in local (municipal level), domestic (national level), and foreign politics between the general population and young people in Georgia

NOT AT ALL INTERESTED   HARDLY INTERESTED

QUITE INTERESTED   VERY INTERESTED
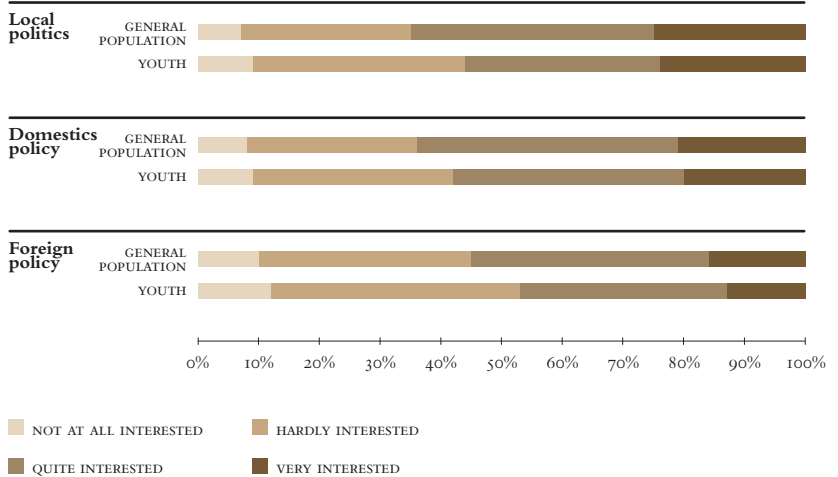
Source: Caucasus Research Resources Centre, Caucasus Barometer 2010

Youth political and civil organisations without party affiliation

Georgia has experienced turbulent political changes in the last few decades, and young people have always been at the epicenter of events. Young people were involved in political processes both as members of an organised group and as participants in spontaneous actions. During the Soviet era, organised groups existed, such as 'Gorgasliani', which included such prominent future politicians as Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava[3]. On the other hand, there were also student actions that protested against the Soviet government's policies in a particular field. For example, there was a mass demonstration in 1978 in which students protested against the lowering of the status of the Georgian language in the Soviet Union. The second half of 1980s was also marked by the rise of youth movements filled with nationalistic sentiments.[4]

After Georgia gained independence, youth activism was passive for almost a decade. Perhaps the most notable youth movement was 'Kmara' (a word that translates as 'enough' in English), which commenced its activities at the beginning of this century. The organisation was based on the model of the 'Otpor' movement in Serbia, which helped to peacefully overthrow Milosevic's unpopular regime in 2000. Kmara was largely based on the union 'Students' Self-Government Development', the establishment of which was assisted by the human rights organisation 'Liberty Institute' in 2001.[5] Contrary to popular belief, however, Kmara's role was not as crucial during the revolution as it was often portrayed.[6]

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[3] Gamsakhurdia and Kostava were the two most prominent leaders of the independence movement in twentieth century Georgia. The mass Georgian rally for independence on 9 April 1989 and the subsequent declaration of independence in 1991 is largely credited to these people. Gorgasliani was one of their earliest attempts to organise people in order to separate from the USSR in the 1950s. Gamsakhurdia and Kostava were only teenagers when they started this protest movement.
[4] Toft M.D. (2002)
[5] Wheatley J. (2005), p. 179
[6] Mitchell L.A. (2009)

Another aspect of Kmara's story is its post-revolutionary activities. Unlike its Serbian analogue, Kmara did not remain an active watchdog after the revolution, and a significant number of its leaders joined the ranks of the government. Another part of the Kmara movement chose to pursue a different track. Soon after the Rose Revolution, a few former Kmara activists established another youth organisation, the Equality Institute. The organisation tried to be actively engaged in the political process, and was involved in the 2007 November demonstrations[7] but it never achieved the visibility or support that Kmara had enjoyed in the pre-Rose Revolution period. There were also other attempts to reinvigorate the youth activism. One example was the organisation 'November 7', which mainly consisted of youth activists from different opposition parties. However, none of these attempts led to the kind of strong youth movement that could be an important actor in the policy-making process in Georgia.

Prospects of young people in political parties

As we shall see in the next section, one of the main motivations for young people to join political parties is to establish a successful career. Young people expect to rise on the party career ladder and become elected representatives of the party at the legislative level. In most liberal democracies, a high percentage of people in legislative bodies have had the experience of being involved in the youth wing of a political party. Hooghe and Stolle, for example, present the findings of their study in which they surveyed members of the representative body of the Flemish community in Belgium. About 41% of the surveyed indicated that they had started their political career in the youth organisation of their party.[8] There is a similar trend in other liberal democracies. Many current prominent politicians started their career in youth party organisations.

In interviews with Georgian political party representatives, respondents also indicated that young people have opportunities to climb the party ladder within their parties. Some gave instances of youth party activists becoming regional coordinators of the party, or joining the highest decision-making body of the party. For example, Labour Party representatives gave the example of Gaga Mtvarelidze, who started as a youth party activist and is now the Labour Party's official representative to the Central Election Commission and at the same time a member of the Political Council, the highest decision-making body of the party. A representative from the Republican Party gave another example, saying that they had put forward 30 candidates from the youth movement in the last four elections. Unfortunately, none of these candidates succeeded in getting elected to local or national representative body. The United National Movement (UNM) was able to provide more successful cases, particularly instances of elections to local representative bodies, or Sakrebulo.

Because the information provided to us varied and not all respondents could recall successful cases of promotion of people from youth wings, we decided to gather quantitative information. We took the data of all Georgian MPs, and analysed their backgrounds. It would also have been good to analyse data of Sakrebulo members but unfortunately such data is not publicly available. Parliament's website also gives somewhat flawed information on candidates' party backgrounds but looking at their previous jobs and positions within a party,

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[7] On 7 November 2007, police violently dispersed an opposition protest in front of the Parliament building. It was the first major mass rally organised since the Rose Revolution in 2003. During the same day, popular opposition-leaning TV channel, *Imedi* was shut down and a nationwide state of emergency was declared.
[8] Hooghe M. and Stolle D. (2005)

one can reasonably deduct information on involvement in party structures. We reviewed the profile of every MP listed on Parliament's website, and coded them according to several categories including party background (whether one had a party career prior to joining the Parliament); involvement in youth organisations; age (35 years or less would count as 'young'); and occupation prior to joining the Parliament. In total, as of 30 September 2011, there were 137 MPs in Georgia.

Results from the analysis are quite striking. Only 21% of MPs have a party background – that is, at least some experience of working in their party prior to joining the Parliament. Only 4% of all MPs have been involved in the youth wings of their respective political parties, while 10% of all MPs are aged 35 or less.

FIGURE 2.6

Characteristics of MPs in the Parliament of Georgia

Party background	21%
Share of young MPs	10%
Involvement in youth organisations	4%

Source: website of the Parliament of Georgia

Thus, the figure on involvement in youth organisations for politicians in Georgia is about ten times less than the figure in Belgium or in other established democracies. Georgian MPs usually come from three major sectors: local governance, business, and the civil service. Below is a detailed breakdown of occupations of MPs prior to joining the Parliament. Note that the number of MPs whose occupation involved party activities prior to joining the Parliament is lower than the number of people who were involved in party activities sometime earlier in their career. For example, an individual could have been involved in party activities, and then worked in the civil service. If such a person were elected as an MP, we would classify him/her as someone who has party background, but whose job prior to joining the Parliament was in the civil service.

FIGURE 2.7

Occupations of current MPs prior to joining the Parliament

- 25% LOCAL GOVERNANCE
- 22% BUSINESS
- 20% CIVIL SERVICE
- 14% NGO, MEDIA AND ACADEMIC SECTOR
- 13% PARTY
- 10% ARTS AND SPORTS
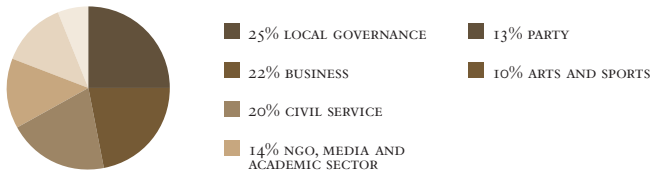
Source: website of the Parliament of Georgia

If we take the examples of such established democracies as Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, we see that although the percentage of people coming directly from party positions to the parliament is between 10-15%, there are also other categories of people who were indirectly involved in party activities, including consultants and barristers. Thus, the share of political 'outsiders' is quite low. In Georgia, the opposite seems to be the case. The number of political 'outsiders' – in other words, people who are not well aware of internal party dynamics – is very high. This is also related to the fact that parties are not actually based on ideological divisions within Georgia. MPs not only have dramatically different backgrounds, but also widely varying viewpoints on political issues. Politicians do not often join parties based on their own visions.

Youth involvement in political parties

Functions of youth political organisations

Youth organisations within political parties generally have several key functions. These functions can be broken down into two categories. Under the first category, we would place functions through which parties give knowledge and experience to young people. The second category would be the type of functions through which a party uses young people as resources.

In the first category, perhaps the most important function would be inducing a political ideology amongst young people. However, when political parties are not based on distinct ideological foundations, this becomes irrelevant. This is often the case in countries where political party systems are not well established and parties often swing between ideological orientations. Georgia is often acknowledged as one such country.[9]

Other functions that supposedly allow young people to gain from parties are related to increased understanding of politics and policy issues. Being an active party member requires a person to develop good understanding of such issues, and being in the party helps to draw information and understanding which cannot be easily obtained from public sources. Also, some parties tend to organise non-formal education mechanisms through which young people can not only learn more about politics and policy issues, but also about other issues, from cultural studies to information and communication technologies. Such education is usually delivered through workshops, seminars and conferences. For example, Sumbadze and Maisuradze described the role of the UNM youth wing as "mediator between youth and state structures," where the party assists young people in gaining different kinds of information in areas of their interest.[10]

The second category of functions includes those where young people are seen as givers rather than takers. For example, parties often might need young people to mobilise communities or organise rallies, and use them as agents for recruiting more voters. In this context, young people become more essential for party activities during an election period. Parties need human resources to put up party banners, disseminate booklets, and be involved in other election-related activities.

There is no set time that young people are required to spend within a party organisation. Time spent within parties is quite unstructured and flexible. The 'core' of the youth movement, which can consist of around 20 activists, spends about 3-4 hours at the office planning and organising various activities. Other members usually participate one or two times a week during a non-election period, and spend a few hours working for the party. Of course, there are also passive members who spend very little time with the party and check in only occasionally.

[9] Nodia G. and Scholtenbach A.P. (2006)
[10] Sumbadze N. and Maisuradze M. (2010), p. 91

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Why do young people join political parties?

Although personal motivations for joining political parties vary significantly, we can identify three main reasons why young people join political parties. The first reason is ideological connections. When a young person is interested in a certain political ideology, then joining the ranks of a political party with a similar political ideology seems like a logical step.

Of course, such a motivation is more characteristic when it comes to parties with an established ideological niche. For example, in interviews with representatives of the Labour Party of Georgia, both Ramaz Samniashvili (Deputy Head of the Election Campaign Staff) and Temur Tsiklauri (Head of the Youth Wing of the Labour Party) said that the main reason why young people join parties is because of the party's ideology. However, for both respondents, 'ideology' seemed to refer not only to left/right divisions but also "[the] implacable fight for Georgia's better future and uncompromised reputation of the party."

Temur Tsiklauri also stated that "… everybody sees how much we try and do for Georgia… so we have a high reputation, and young people join our ranks because of our work and our position." A similar narrative was also suggested by Giorgi Papelishvili from the Christian-Democratic Movement, who said that when joining the party, young people take into consideration the values a party stands for and the work it has already accomplished.

Other reasons for joining political parties are more pragmatic. From interviews with youth organisation leaders, it seems that existing friendships or a desire to meet new friends is often a main motivator for young people to join parties. One of the respondents, who didn't want to be quoted directly, said that there is a lack of ideological drive among young people and parties are often seen as a place for social gatherings, where young people can come together in their spare time.

Young people often see political parties as platforms for career development, although not necessarily within the party itself. Parties often provide free learning opportunities for students, and opportunities for discussions with established politicians or experts in a particular field. Archil Tsertsvadze from the UNM, for example, noted that the main reason why young people join the party is the opportunity for self-realisation. There are numerous ways within a party to satisfy one's interests in a variety of fields.

As for opposition parties, Sulkhan Ghlonti from the Free Democrats said that opposition-minded people have a choice between different opposition parties, and join the kind that is closest to them. It seems that many parties suggest training and other means of informal education for young people. Though sometimes participants choose to stay parties are often unable to offer young people continuously interesting programs, and so they leave. Often, when attending several conferences or seminars, the activity of young people are directed at finding other opportunities that will increase their knowledge.

UNM seems to distinguish itself from other parties. In addition to regular seminars for its participants, it offers follow-up activities so that participants can utilise their newly acquired skills. For example, participants can be taught in research methods, and then publish small research pieces in a periodic journal which UNM produces. Such activities ensure that young people do not lose contact with political parties. It is an effective way of managing, preserving, and developing human resources.

In terms of offering education and training opportunities to young people, we need to distinguish between two main categories: 'civic' education, where participants can learn practical skills including proposal writing, research methods, leadership skills, and democratic practices; and 'indoctrination', where participants are exposed to a party's ideology and positions on various national and international issues.

Given the varying financial and administrative resources of the parties, not every party is on equal footing in attracting young people. The ruling party seems to be comparatively more able to provide young people with opportunities to advance within the administrative structures, which may explain why the UNM is more popular than the other parties. Youth membership numbers are very arbitrary and inconsistent, but interviews and personal observation suggest that the UNM youth wing has several times more members than opposition parties. One of the respondents from an opposition party said that they cannot attract young people in the regions and organise activities there because there are no sufficient funds within the party.

There is some international support addressing the educational needs of young people within political parties. Such programs include taking young members of a party on study tours in Europe to see how parties with similar ideologies operate. There is also a large IRI program that offers training for young party members on a wide range of issues, including specific research methods. Trained young people can then independently conduct small-scale polling, focus groups, or door-to-door surveys. Often members from different parties are also given an opportunity to participate in debates with other parties. Such debates used to be aired on a television station that covers the Tbilisi area.

Backgrounds of youth activists
We can look into several aspects of young people who join political parties. We will briefly discuss educational background, social status, rural/breakdown, and what differentiates political activists from their peers. This assessment is based on the literature and on several in-depth interviews with youth wing representatives from major political parties in Georgia. Although we were able to derive some useful information, quantifiable information would provide us with much deeper insights on the matter.

It seems almost universal that core activists in youth organisations are either students or have graduated from universities and institutes. Discussing the English situation, Weinstein notes that most young party activists study political science or other social sciences.[11] In Georgia, it seems that young people from

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[11] Weinstein M. (2004), p. 9

law faculties are more prominent in political parties. Tiko Dzneladze from the Republican Party, for example, said that approximately 70% of youth activists study law. Other party representatives said that their youth activists combined a variety of educational backgrounds, but that a legal background was most common. CDM was slightly different from other parties. As Mr. Papelishvili suggested, because the party leadership is comprised of former journalists, many young students of journalism have decided to join the party.

In the English experience, Weinstein argues that the majority of party activists come from the middle classes, and usually from families in which politics had been an interest of the previous generation[12]. Thus, fathers and mothers influence the political careers of their children. In Georgia the influence of parents is less apparent. However, the interviewed party representatives said that their activists come from either the working or middle classes. Only Labour Party representatives said that their activists come predominantly from the poorer sections of society, while Republican Party representatives said that they draw activists primarily from the middle class. Similarly, the Labour party differs from other parties in that many of its young members, who have graduated from universities, are unemployed. As for other parties, all of them said that the majority of the young people who have graduated from higher education institutions work in the non-governmental or private sector, often banks. The bulk of youth party activists are current students.

Another characteristic in which the Labour party differs from other parties, in the words of Ramaz Samniashvili, is that they draw their young party activists mainly from the region in Georgia. For other parties, the practice is usually recruiting people from the regions who have come to Tbilisi for their studies. In the absence of a survey, however, we cannot present quantifiable data on urban/rural division of the party activists.

In terms of gender distribution, interviewees from political parties noted that young women are not discriminated against when joining political movements. Although there are no reliable statistics, interviewees said that the percentage of young women in their respective youth political organisations ranged from 50% to 70%. Again, it is hard to verify these numbers, but the political activism of young people during both the election period and mass rallies suggests that young men play a larger role.

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[12] Weinstein M. (2004), p. 12

Conclusions and recommendations

In the end, we can draw several conclusions and suggest some recommendations about what can and should be done by political parties and organisations involved in the process of strengthening the party system in Georgia. These conclusions and recommendations can be broken down into future research related activities, and activities that will require decisions from political parties.

Firstly, there seems to be an apparent lack of systematic data on the youth membership of political parties. Political party representatives are rarely in the position to provide accurate figures on the number of young people in a party. Parties should make more of an effort to record such data, and international organisations should support such initiatives, as they will be beneficial in a number of ways. First, accurate data will increase the capacity of a party, since it will know its resources. Second, parties will develop in-house expertise in data collection and will be able to transfer this skill for other purposes, using a systematic approach. Finally, collecting data on young party members could lead to a range of research activities which will identify the needs of parties and their members. Effective policies and recommendations could then be based on such data.

Secondly, already existing nation-wide surveys could be effectively utilised to collect valuable information. IRI, NDI, or CRRC could include questions on party membership, and attitudes towards party membership, in their polls. Having such data would make it possible to triangulate different sources and would provide more credible data on party membership in the country.

Another gap in data that this research exposed is the lack of information on elected members of city councils. There is some information available on MPs but to have a complete picture, it would be also very valuable to have at least some basic information on city council members.

In addition to research-related activities that can strengthen the political system in Georgia, there are also other steps that political parties need to take in order to ensure higher participation on the part of young people. First of all, parties and other stakeholders should try their best to renew the reputation of party membership, which young people often perceive as 'dirty work'. Such stereotypes did have a basis in the political past of Georgia but need to be addressed if the future of the Georgian political system is to be significantly improved.

In order to improve the political party system in Georgia, another obvious suggestion for political parties is to increase the role of political insiders –

that is, people who have established relations with a political party for long period of time – within political structures. By political insiders we do not exclusively mean party members, but also research consultants, lawyers, and economic advisers who might have worked with a party. A profile analysis of MPs clearly demonstrates that currently the share of political insiders in the Georgian parliament is very low.

More efforts need to be made in order to attract young people to political parties. Currently, even when young people attend educational or sports activities organised by different political parties, they often choose not to stay for very long. If a party could offer activities that elicit continuous interest from young people, then party membership rates would rise. Offering one-off training is not enough – there need to be follow-up activities. For example, a party could offer training on various topics, such as political ideologies or European party politics, and then provide opportunities for small-scale research projects. Ideally, such projects would lead to publication in a small brochure or maybe even an academic journal.

For many young bright minds, such mechanisms would be excellent motivation for more active involvement in party politics. In this context, there is room for international assistance organisations to provide such support to political parties. They can bring in international experience and, more importantly, serve as a platform for further development of young political activists. They can also provide support for publication of work undertaken by young party activists.

To increase the motivation of young people, parties should also be able to demonstrate that party membership will pay off in the long term. Having very few MPs who have had the experience of working within youth organisations does not serve well the idea that becoming a party member at an early stage will increase one's chances of a political career. In order to rectify this, the reputation of party membership needs to be renewed, and a larger number of party people need to assume positions on legislative and executive bodies.

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List of interviewees

Political party	Interviewee
Labour Party	Ramaz Samniashvili, Deputy Chief of the Election Staff Temur Tsiklauri, Head of the Youth Wing of the Labour Party
New Rights	Davit Patsatsia, Head of the Youth Wing of the New Rights
United National Movement (UNM)	Archil Tsertsvadze, Member of the Board of the UNM Youth Wing
Republican Party	Tiko Dzneladze, Executive Secretary of Young Republicans
Christian-Democratic Movement	Giorgi Papelishvili, Head of the Youth Wing of the Christian-Democratic Movement
Our Georgia – Free Democrats	Sulkhan Ghlonti, Head of the Youth Wing of Our Georgia – Free Democrats

Increasing civic involvement in the budgetary processes of local self-governing units

Irakli Khmaladze

Summary

Over the past two decades, Georgia has taken steps towards decentralisation. Despite instances of progress, however, academic and professional circles have voiced a lot of criticism; their main accusation is that the process of decentralisation in Georgia has been nominal in all but name, and supporters of greater decentralisation have pointed out that the competences of local self-governing units are limited.

Opponents of this process – mainly ultraliberal circles – argue that some services are easier to provide at a central level, pointing out that the central government is fully aware of the problems the population faces and that the fragmentation of financial resources and services would lead to economic inefficiency.

It is very important to delegate functions and resources to local self-governing units, but this is not enough: it is equally important to ensure that locally financed activities correspond to local needs and that every citizen benefits equally from these services. This could be guaranteed by civic involvement in local decision-making, the most important form of which is involvement in local budgetary processes.

Self-government budgetary processes consist of the following steps:

1. Drawing up lists of priorities
The budgetary process commences every year on 1 March, when local self-governing units begin to compile lists of priorities and to plan the main priorities for the next four year period.

2. Preparing draft budgets
Work on the draft budgets of local self-governing units begins no later than 15 July, when the Georgian Ministry of Finance communicates its main budgetary data to local self-governing units. The Ministry of Finance is bound to communicate concrete data on financial aid to all local self-governing units within five days of submitting its draft budget to parliament. After having received this information, the local self-governing units' executive bodies begin to prepare their own draft budgets, which are submitted to representative bodies (regional assemblies) by no later than 15 November.

3. Preparing final budgets
Once a budget has been approved, and within 15 days of its publication, the financial bodies of self-governing local authorities divide it into months and quarters.

4. Dividing up and calculating budgets
Within a month following the end of each financial quarter and according to the provisions of the national budget, the executive bodies of local authorities prepare a review of the previous financial quarter including additional amounts. During the last two months of the year, these bodies also prepare an annual report on the implementation of their budget which they then submit to representative bodies.

Revenues of self-governing units
- *Local taxes*

Property taxes are the only local tax and the only tax revenue to be paid into the budget of self-governing units.
- *Local levies*

The gambling sector is one of the largest contributors to local levies. Additional revenue comes from refuse collection, street sweeping and building permits; the granting of special (zonal) agreements; and cultural heritage. These levies primarily benefit self-governing cities.
- *Grants and loans*

The main sources of revenue for self-governing units are resources transferred from the state budget. In 2010, approximately 522.5 million Georgian Lari (hereafter GEL) was allocated to self-governing units, making up 54% of their entire revenue. In addition to such transfers, other sources of financial aid are transfers of powers delegated by the state and special transfers.

Expenses of self-governing units
Between 2008 and 2010, in accordance with the provisions of the chapter on salaries, GEL 328 million was spent from the budgets of self-governing units. This category of expenses accounts for the salaries of employees who work in the administration of self-governing and budgetary organisations.

Between 2008 and 2010, in accordance with the provisions of the chapter on social expenses, GEL 289 million was spent, mostly in Tbilisi (81.3%). This sum includes the 10 Lari pension increase, which resulted from the 2010 local self-government elections. According to Georgian legislation, social matters are the responsibility of the state government; local self-governing units are, however, authorised to draw up social programs on a voluntary basis.

Between 2008 and 2010, in accordance with the provisions of the chapter on goods and services, GEL 580 million was spent. This category of expenses includes the following: the salaries of extra staff working under contract; business

trips; office supplies; communication expenses; expenses related to the provision of food in public nurseries, kindergartens and orphanages; and vehicle maintenance and use.

It is worth noting, however, that municipalities spend less per citizen than self-governing cities do on the provision of social, economic, educational, healthcare and cultural services.

In October 2011, a special survey was conducted at Rustavi City Hall. The aim was to learn more about civic participation in budgetary processes. The results showed that citizens only take part in this process as passive listeners. Representatives of the local authorities blamed this on the population's low levels of motivation and interest.

The survey's respondents approved the idea of increasing civic participation in local budgetary processes. Increased involvement could be brought about by the distribution of informative brochures and booklets and by introducing the principle of co-financing of municipal services. Given the difficult economic situation and the high rate of unemployment, however, co-financing would be difficult to achieve.

The author, however, believes that civic involvement in such processes should not be an end in itself. The active participation of citizens in budgetary processes can be of great benefit, and requires the following important steps:

Programmatic budgeting
Self-governing units should draw up a program within the framework of defined competences and services to be provided to the population, based upon which they should then calculate a programmatic budget. This program should list all the activities which the local self-government must carry out in order to meet its priority objectives as defined by its competences. The activities in this program should be grouped into categories, and the activities of every category should be implemented in the long-term with the aim of achieving a single, final result.

The fair and planned distribution of resources among the different built-up areas of individual local self-governing units
It is important that resources be distributed within the area of local self-governing units in a fair and planned manner– that is, according to objective and accountable criteria. Such criteria could include the number of inhabitants; the distance

between municipalities and the administrative centre; poverty indexes; the number of pre-school children; and the number of pensioners. Information on the budgetary processes of local self-governing units should be made more accessible. For example, self-governing units should publish free annual calendars and distribute them among the local population; besides the dates of public holidays and normal working days, these calendars should also indicate important dates for the local self-governing unit's budgetary process.

Local or regional television stations should also be used to improve access to information on the budgetary process of local self-governing units. Newspaper articles could also improve such access. It is also important that local self-governing units publish annual guides to their budgetary process. Finally, to improve access to information on their budgetary process, self-governing units should make active use of Internet resources.

Increasing civic involvement in the budgetary process
In order to increase such involvement, local self-governing units should improve the population's access to information on their budget and budgetary process. They should hold meetings with citizens as soon as they have drawn up a list of their priorities and before submitting it to the Ministry of Finance and the regional governor. It is important that the heads of local self-governing units take part in all village, community and town meetings (20-30 meetings in total) and that they prioritise those issues the population believes should be addressed as a matter of urgency based upon their interaction with citizens.

Besides organising meetings with citizens, it is also important to hold public hearings during which draft budgets are presented to the city council and quarterly and final reports on their implementation are made. One form of civic participation in budgetary processes is the gathering of information from citizens on the efficiency of services provided to them, as levels of popular satisfaction and feedback are the most reliable indicators of the level of efficiency of local governments themselves.

When implementing a municipal program or project, it is also very important to create a mechanism for popular feedback, for instance a municipal telephone hotline for people to express their opinions. Feedback could also be obtained in other ways, such as via a dedicated letterbox so people could express their opinions anonymously. This would help the heads of local self-governing units to draw additional conclusions regarding the efficiency of services provided to the population.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Georgia has taken steps towards decentralisation. Since the late 1990s, local authorities have defined their exclusive rights and responsibilities and have managed their own independent budgets according to the legislation regulating self-government.

Despite instances of progress, however, academic and professional circles have voiced a lot of criticism; their main accusation is that the process of decentralisation in Georgia has been merely nominal. Supporters of greater decentralisation, on the other hand, have pointed out that the competences of local self-governing units are limited, especially in such spheres as education, health care, employment and social care. More importantly, local self-governing units do not have the necessary financial resources to fulfill their responsibilities. According to official statistics, a mere 3.4% of collected taxes are allocated to the budgets of local self-governing units, with 2.25%[1] going to five self-governing cities (Tbilisi, Batumi, Rustavi, Kutaisi and Poti) and 1.15% going to 60 municipalities representing 45% of the population. Grants (specific and general) transferred from the state budget make up 60% of the entire revenue of self-governing units.

Because local authorities are very much dependent upon decisions taken by the state, supporters of decentralisation believe that they are incapable of solving local problems and that their financial autonomy should therefore be increased. Many surveys have been conducted over the past few years on budgetary relations between the state and local authorities with a focus on fiscal decentralisation, and their results suggest that relevant political measures should be taken. It is common knowledge that sharing more functions and financial resources with local self-governing units will improve the provision of services at the local level, and that this, in turn, will improve quality of life and encourage social and economic development.

Opponents of decentralisation – mainly ultraliberal circles – argue that some services are easier to provide at a central level, pointing out that the central government is fully aware of the problems the population faces and that the fragmentation of financial resources and services would lead to economic inefficiency – particularly considering the fact that the economic efficiency of a geographically small and financially relatively modest state is very important.

Both the opponents and the supporters of decentralisation have a point. In a geographically small state, some services could be provided by the state or by

[1] Source: Ministry of Finance of Georgia

local authorities and both alternatives could be discussed through the prism of economic efficiency. Municipalities, however, are at an advantage with regard to the provision of services, thanks to their proximity to the local communities, which enables them to know more about their needs and expectations.

It is therefore very important to delegate functions and resources to local self-governing units, but this is not enough: it is equally important to ensure that locally-financed activities correspond to local needs and that every citizen benefits equally from these services. This could be guaranteed by civic involvement in local decision-making, the most important form of which is involvement in local budgetary processes.

The main goal of this policy paper is to identify the extent to which citizens are actively involved in such processes. Appropriate political recommendations are made based upon the results of surveys. These recommendations include concrete actions to increase civic participation in the preparation, discussion, implementation, monitoring and assessment of local budgets.

A general review of local budgets and processes

Local budgetary processes

Drawing up lists of priorities

The budgetary process of local self-governing units begins on 1 March every year, when they begin to compile lists of priorities and to plan the main priorities of the next years.

This list of priorities is the main plan for the development of administrative units and provides information on mid-term action plans. Local governments should bring to the fore urgent problems faced by the population based upon the reality of existing conditions, define the order in which these issues should be addressed along with priority directions, plan concrete actions, and define the resources and schedule these actions require.

Lists of priorities are drawn up by the executive bodies of local authorities in consultation with relevant local government administrations.

When drawing up lists of priorities, particular attention should be paid to special transfers from state budget funds, the most important of these being the fund for projects to be implemented in the different regions of Georgia, whose amount is defined by the law of the state budget for the appropriate year. The decision to transfer special resources from this fund to a specific local authority is taken by the Georgian government in response to the application of a local governor.

Preparing draft budgets

Every year, local self-governing units begin to co-ordinate their budgets with that of the state by no later than 15 July, when the Georgian Ministry of Finance communicates its main budgetary parameters to local self-governing units. This basic budgetary data should enable local authorities to draw up their budget – that is, enable them to plan their expenses effectively according to existing financial resources and to prepare their draft budgets. The provisions of these draft budgets are discussed with appropriate departments of the Ministry of Finance. Having received advice and technical instructions, local self-governing units can define equalisation payments as well as the predicted amounts of other sources of revenue and make appropriate changes to their expenses. Infrastructure projects that local authorities are planning to finance with state funds are also discussed at this stage.

The government submits the draft state budget – which includes all the financial aid that is to be transferred to each local self-governing unit – to parliament before 1 October. This financial aid can take the form of equalisation payments; specific transfers for the realisation of delegated responsibilities; or special transfers. The Ministry of Finance is later bound to communicate concrete data on financial aid to all municipalities within five days of submitting its draft budget to parliament. After having received this information, the local self-governing units' executive bodies begin to prepare their own draft budgets which must be submitted to representative bodies (regional assemblies) by no later than 15

November. The draft budgets submitted by local self-governing units to regional assemblies can be changed according to remarks made by members of these assemblies, new initiatives suggested by executive authorities or changes in the state budget, and must be approved by no later than 31 December.

Preparing final budgets
Once a budget has been approved, and within 15 days of its publication, the financial bodies of self-governing local authorities divide it into months and quarters.

The programs and activities of territorial units financed by the budget are divided into two categories: those projects and activities that are to be financed by the municipalities' own resources, and those that are to be financed by specific transfers from the state.

Resources that local authorities receive from the state budget are calculated according to financial quarters and months and are based upon consultations with the Ministry of Finance. The calculation of local authorities' own revenues is done according to the data of previous years and to available information.

Expenses are calculated on the basis of different sources of revenue, with the following expenses being calculated first: salaries, servicing and covering debts, and other expenses arising from contractual obligations.

Dividing up and calculating budgets
Within a period of time no greater than a month following the end of each financial quarter and according to the provisions of the national budget, the executive bodies of local authorities prepare a review of the previous financial quarter including additional amounts. Within two months of the end of the year, these bodies also prepare an annual report on the implementation of their budget, which they then submit to representative bodies.

Actual data in the local authorities' quarterly and annual reports should be compared with the estimated data for the same period, and significant discrepancies between the two must be explained. Different kinds of analytical information should be included in these reports, and information on the implementation of programmed and capital budgets will be included from 2014 onwards.

Primary sources of revenue of local budgets

The table below (Table 3.1) displays the budgetary revenues of the state, autonomous republics and local self-governing units between 2008 and 2011.

TABLE 3.1

Budgetary revenues 2008–2011 (GEL, millions)

	2008	2009	2010	2011
State budget	7,157	6,351	7,088	6,995
Budgets of autonomous republics	123	130	111	113
Budgets of self-governing cities	741	855	1,120	885
Municipal budgets	536	404	447	300

Source: The budgets of the state, autonomous republics and local self-governing units (2008 –2011)

Common state taxes
According to changes to the legislation governing self-government and budgets, since 2007, common state taxes that used to be proportionally shared with local self-governing units have been paid directly into the state budget. This has significantly reduced local authorities' degree of financial autonomy and has rendered them wholly dependent upon the state's policy regarding transfers.

Local taxes
Property taxes are the only local tax and the only tax revenue to be paid into the budget of self-governing units. Between 2005 and 2010, several categories of property (that is, individual property except agricultural land) were exempt from this tax if a person's income was less than GEL 40,000; if the property was in the country's occupied territories; if the property was in a free industrial zone; or if the property was a vehicle. Property taxes also make up their own small share of the budgets of local authorities, despite the fact that this small share increases annu-ally in absolute terms. Nevertheless, local self-governing units have no discretion with regard to local taxes (for example, by defining their basis for imposition, their rate or particular dispensations) and this in turn reduces their ability to expand their local tax base.

Local levies
While the tax on gambling was turned into a local due and amounts due were increased threefold (or even more for certain categories of gambling) as a result of changes introduced to the tax code in 2006, these reforms have only increased the revenues of self-governing cities. Besides the gambling business, additional revenue comes from cleaning populated areas, building permits, granting special (zonal) agreements, and cultural heritage. As with gambling, however, these levies only benefit self-governing cities.

Grants and loans

The main sources of revenue for self-governing units are resources transferred from the state budget. In 2010, about GEL 522.5 million was allocated to self-governing units in this manner – that is, 54% of their entire revenue. The state uses a special formula – defined by law and based upon data from the treasury and the national statistics office of Georgia – for calculating the value of equalisation payments. These are then paid out to each self-governing unit. First to be defined are the total budgetary expenses of self-governing units and the growth of non-financial assets, whose combined sum should represent at least 4% of the projected nominal national product of the fiscal year being planned. Next to be calculated are the expenses and the rate of growth of the non-financial assets of each self-governing unit. The budgetary revenues of self-governing units are then worked out. The last figure to be calculated is the amount of equalisation payments. Coefficients of equalisation (for example, number of inhabitants, poverty index, average age of population, population density, total length of local roads) and status are used when creating the formulas for these calculations.

Because the state delegates some of its competences to local self-governing units, these bodies receive payments from the state budget. A list of delegated responsibilities is also defined by the state budget. These responsibilities include calling citizens up for military service; caring for internally-displaced persons (IDPs); and remembering the war victims. In 2011, the total amount paid out in compensation for responsibilities delegated by law was GEL 10.4 million. It should be noted, however, that the state has not formulated a special rule defining the amount of financial resources local authorities need in order to fulfill responsibilities delegated to them by the state. Some municipalities do not even receive such transfers at all. Criteria according to which the amount of resources required to fulfill delegated responsibilities would be calculated, have also not been defined.

As a result of legislative reforms carried out in Georgia between 2006 and 2010, local self-governing units are increasingly able to receive special financial transfers from the state budget. Originally, these transfers were only designed to support local authorities in addressing environmental issues, natural disasters or other unavoidable expenses. Such 'unavoidable expenses' were later changed into 'current expenses' and then into 'other expenses', thus enabling local authorities to use financial transfers paid from the state budget for many different reasons. Special rules or criteria defining these special payments have, however, not yet been enshrined in legislation. According to the 2011 budgetary legislation, the cities of Batumi (GEL 88.7 million) and Tbilisi (GEL 108.1 million) benefited from special transfers of financial resources from the state.

Since 2009, the procedures by which self-governing units can receive state grants have been simplified, as the need to obtain permission for receiving such grants or other resources from the state has been abolished. As for loans, local authorities are allowed to borrow money from the Georgian government or from another lender with the government's permission.

Main expenses of local self-governing units

According to budgetary legislation, expenses are divided into several categories: the development of non-financial assets, decrease of financial assets, and decrease of obligations.

Expenses

Between 2008 and 2010, in accordance with the provisions of the chapter on salaries, GEL 328 million was spent from the budgets of self-governing units. This category of expenses accounts for the salaries of employees who work in the administration of self-governing and budgetary organisations.

According to the provisions of the chapter on social expenses, GEL 289 million was spent between 2008 and 2010, mostly in Tbilisi (81.3%). This sum includes the 10 Lari increase to pensions that resulted from the 2010 local self-government elections. According to Georgian legislation, social matters are the responsibility of the state government; local self-governing units are, however, authorised to draw up social programs on a voluntary basis.

Between 2008 and 2010, in accordance with the provisions of the chapter on goods and services, GEL 580 million was spent. This category of expenses includes the salaries of extra staff working under contract; business trips; office supplies; communication expenses; expenses related to the provision of food in public nurseries, kindergartens and orphanages; and vehicle maintenance and use. Of this amount, GEL 331.4 million was spent on kindergartens, GEL 187 million on self-governing cities and GEL 144.4 million on municipalities.

GEL 1,130 million was spent on other expenses between 2008 and 2010, 70% of which went to self-governing cities. The provisions of this chapter mainly include capital expenses spent on the lifts, roofs and access roads of communal buildings.

As for the development of non-financial assets, GEL 1,244 million was spent between 2008 and 2010. This category includes amounts used to build or rehabilitate capital infrastructure in local self-governing areas such as roads, bridges, parks, and rubbish tips. A further GEL 807.9 million was spent on road construction between 2008 and 2010, of which GEL 560.9 million went to self-governing cities and GEL 247 million to municipalities. It is worth noting here that municipalities spent less per citizen than self-governing cities do on the provisions of social, economic, educational, healthcare and cultural services.

TABLE 3.2

Local budget expenses per capita in large cities and municipalities in 2010 (in GEL)

Expenditure Category	Tbilisi	Kutaisi	Poti	Rustavi	Batumi	Municipality Average
Financing of economic activities	135.4	24.9	96.1	46.4	270	39.1
Environmental safety	55.3	15.8	47.7	22.9	130	7.8
Communal services	203.2	459.2	62.5	55.4	778	30.4
Health care	26.5	3.4	7.8	1.6	3.5	2.2
Cultural activities	21.1	41	49.1	23.7	131	19.8
Education	39.6	28.7	23.1	14.8	61.1	14.5
Social services	106.5	5.4	17.4	20.4	17.8	6

Survey:
Civic involvement in the budgetary processes of
local self-governing units – the example of Rustavi

Aim

The aim of this survey was to find out to what extent the population is involved in the budgetary processes of self-governing units.

Period

This survey took place at Rustavi's City Hall in October 2011.

Methodology

The methodology of this survey consisted of semi-structured interviews with the head of the Office of Rustavi City Hall and with the heads of Rustavi City Hall's finance and economic departments; a meeting was also held with the deputy financial officer of the Office of the Mayor of Rustavi.

Questions

1 Which department is responsible for drawing up Rustavi's list of priorities?
2 Which departments and stakeholders are involved in the drafting of this list of priorities?
3 Are independent experts (local or international) involved in drafting this list of priorities?
4 What guidelines does City Hall follow when drawing up this list of priorities? Are the opinions of citizens considered? How are these opinions identified? Is it compulsory to consider popular opinion in every case?
5 Is the list of priorities shared with the city council? How does this take place? How does the assembly express its opinions and make remarks? Is it compulsory for City Hall to consider these remarks and opinions?
6 Besides the assembly, with which departments is this list of priorities shared? What role does the presidential appointee's administration play in this process? Is this list of priorities discussed with the Ministry of Finance or with other state bodies? What are the formal procedures for agreement?
7 Must the final version of this list of priorities be approved by City Hall or by the city council? Is this list normally published? Besides being published, how is this list of priorities shared with citizens?
8 Which department is responsible for calculating Rustavi's budget?
9 Which agencies and stakeholders take part in the calculation of this budget?
10 What guidelines does City Hall follow when calculating Rustavi's budget? What role do citizens play in this process? How are they involved in this process? Is it compulsory to consider their opinions in every case? How is the budget divided up according to populated areas (wards and regions)?
11 At what stage of the preparation is the budget shared with the city council? How is it shared? Does the assembly hold open meetings to discuss the draft budget?
12 Besides the city council, is the draft budget shared with other departments? What role does the presidential appointee's administration plays in this process? Is the budget discussed with the Ministry of Finance or with other state bodies? What are the formal procedures for agreement?

13 Is the budget normally published? Besides being published, how is it shared with citizens?

14 In your opinion, how well are programs for the provision of public services represented in Rustavi's budget? To what extent do the activities listed in the budget correspond to the needs of citizens? How would you assess the level of popular satisfaction with the services provided?

15 Who is responsible for reporting on the budget's implementation? Besides the city council, with which other interested parties or stakeholders is this report shared?

16 What purpose does the presentation of this report serve? To what extent are the details of this report discussed? How does the city council check the accuracy of the information it contains?

17 In your opinion, should the involvement of citizens in the budgetary process be increased? How could this be achieved?

Results

In their answers to the first question – "Which department is responsible for drawing up Rustavi's list of priorities?" – survey respondents identified Rustavi City Hall's financial department. It should, however, be mentioned that Rustavi's economic development department is working on a plan for the city's social and economic development, and information contained in the list of priorities will obviously correspond to the provisions of this larger plan.

Besides the financial department, several other departments are also involved in the process of drawing up the list of priorities, including the economic development department; the infrastructure and construction department; and the department for social services, culture and sport.

Local and international experts are, in practice, not involved in the process of drawing up the list of priorities, but Rustavi City Hall has expressed its readiness to involve such parties in future. Given the city's limited resources, international expertise would have to be provided by international donors.

When drawing up the list of priorities, City Hall considers suggestions made by citizens. Besides written statements, information on the needs of citizens is gathered during meetings held between local members of parliament, the Mayor and his deputies, and members of the public. The heads of the city's different wards also provide information on the people's needs. Rustavi is divided into ten wards, each ward being under the authority of representatives of the Mayor.

Surveys to identify the priorities of citizens have also been conducted, but not on a regular basis. City Hall representatives declared that the list of priorities is based upon the needs of the population but were unable to explain how these needs are prioritised. The final decision is made by the heads of the city council and City Hall. Once the list has been drawn up, it is shared with the city council. Existing legislation does not require the city council to officially approve the list until November, when it is presented – along with the draft budget – to representative bodies. According to the survey respondents, the list of priorities is always discussed during meetings of the Office of the Mayor, when City Hall

normally considers remarks and suggestions made during the meeting. The city council does not, however, submit these remarks and suggestions in writing.

Survey respondents declared that while the administration of the presidential appointee is not involved in the process of drawing up the city's list of priorities, City Hall always discusses current and planned events regarding self-government with it. Because self-governing units rely upon financial resources transferred from the state budget, lists of priorities are normally discussed and agreed with the Ministry of Finance, which expresses an opinion regarding the priorities listed and informs local authorities to what extent these may or may not be fully financed. Recommendations made by the Ministry of Finance are very often taken into account by Rustavi's City Hall. It should also be noted that the Ministry's recommendations to local authorities are verbal and not put on paper.

Respondents declared that the list of priorities was shared with the population, and that this process took place during the preparation of the city's draft budget. Two meetings with citizens were held: the list of priorities was first presented to the employees of kindergartens and local theatres, and then to those of local departments of education and culture.

The list of priorities is published in Georgia's official legislative journal ('sakartvelos sakanonmdeblo matsne') along with the annual budgetary legislation, but an electronic version of the list is not uploaded to the official website of Rustavi's City Hall (www.rustavi.ge). When asked why this was not the case, survey respondents answered that the list of priorities will be published online but that there was little demand for it to be accessible on the Internet.

Regarding the content of the list of priorities, Rustavi City Hall has defined the following needs for the period between 2011 and 2014: developing local infrastructure, improving the population's social condition, public safety, promoting a healthier lifestyle and providing relevant infrastructure, and supporting pre-school education.

The main priorities of the self-governing city of Rustavi are:

- the reconstruction of roads;
- developing infrastructure for the provision of utilities;
- the organisation of public services and amenities;
- financing pre-school education; and
- encouraging cultural and sporting activities.

It is important to note that this list of priorities only provides general descriptions, and that it does not provide detailed information on which specific activities will be implemented to improve public services. The list does also not describe how the needs of people were identified and categorised.

The financial department is responsible for both the list of priorities and the draft budget.

Several departments are involved in the preparation of the draft budget, including the economic development department, the infrastructure and construction department, and the department for social services, culture and sport. As mentioned above, the draft budget was presented to the citizens of Rustavi along with the list of priorities at a meeting held in June 2010.

The draft budget does not consider the distribution of resources among administrative units. As survey respondents indicated, the provision of most services by Rustavi's City Hall is centralised and the division among administrative units would be impractical. Services such as repairing the lifts, roofs or access roads of communal buildings could be divided among administrative units, but this is not the case. City Hall representatives blamed this on the general passivity of citizens, declaring that it is more practical to centralise resources for the repair of buildings and to distribute these when requests are received.

Draft budgets and lists of priorities are presented to local assemblies before 15 November each year. While assembly meetings are open and information on budgetary discussions is made public via local television stations, public interest in such information is low.

The draft budget is not officially subject to agreement with the Ministry of Finance, but it judges the extent to which the chapters of Rustavi's budget regarding the consolidated budget's revenue and transfers are compatible with the parameters of the state budget. The administration of the presidential appointee is not consulted over budgetary matters.

Budgetary legislation, once passed, is published in Georgia's official legislative journal as well as on the official website of the self-governing unit. However, only the preliminary version of the budget – which does not include changes that have been made to Rustavi's budget over the course of the year – can be found online. The survey's respondents confirmed that several dozen changes are made to the budget during this period.

Rustavi's budget is divided into chapters and only features those financial resources that are necessary for the functioning of various departments. It is therefore only an account of spending, which does not contain information on programs or on the results that the financial expenditures should achieve.

Drafting a report on the budget's implementation is the responsibility of the financial department, which must present reports to the city council on a quarterly basis.

Representatives of Rustavi's City Hall pointed out that reports on the budget's implementation do not contain exclusively financial information. Besides financial data, reports also provide the city council with information on past activities. The city council has the power to verify the accuracy of the information contained in the report, and in case of doubt can create a special commission tasked with investigating particular issues. This happened, for example, in 2010, when a commission was set up to investigate the financing of kindergartens.

Reports on the implementation of the budget are accessible to all those who officially request a copy from the city councilor at City Hall. These reports are, however, not published on the official website of the city of Rustavi.

Respondents found it a good idea to increase civic involvement in budgetary processes, but were also of the opinion that citizens were passive and uninterested in budgetary issues. Civic involvement should be increased through the distribution of brochures and booklets and through the establishment of elements of co-financing for municipal services. Local citizens' realisation that they should not rely solely upon the government to improve their condition and that they should also play a role in the financing of public services would not only increase their civic consciousness but would also encourage them to take greater care of their surroundings – for example, roads, lifts or buildings. Considering the difficult economic situation and high rates of unemployment, however, the implementation of co-financing is fraught with challenges.

The results of the survey clearly indicate that self-governing units seek to maintain good relations with citizens and to adjust the budget to their needs, but also demonstrate that civic participation is very passive and is largely limited to requesting information. Citizens are not decision-makers when it comes to public services, but merely active beneficiaries. Low levels of civic education and culture, and a limited involvement in decision-making, cause general passivity.

Conclusions and recommendations

How to increase civic involvement in the budgetary processes of local self-governing units

Civic involvement in the budgetary processes of local self-governing units should not be an end in itself, as the active participation of citizens in these processes can be of great benefit.

First of all, civic involvement creates conditions for the emergence of citizens with civic rights and responsibilities. This is one of the main principles of democracy: when citizens are able to take responsibility and improve their surroundings, they feel that the city or municipality 'belongs to them', and this increases their perception of the local government as being their own. These feelings are particularly important in the post-Soviet sphere, where government was formerly centralised and so-called 'co-operative' activities were carried out formally.

Increased civic involvement in and interaction with local government leads to improvements in the activity of self-governing units. In order to increase levels of civic involvement, the employees of self-governing units must improve their communication skills: they should listen to the population, provide them with more information, allow themselves to be influenced by them, and regard citizens as being the customers of public services. Taking these steps would help to improve the activity, motivation and accountability of self-governments.

The involvement of citizens will help to better analyse local problems and to plan their resolution more effectively. Locals possess precise information about problems, and the ways to solve them to citizens' satisfaction can be defined in consultation with them.

Popular participation leads to feelings of common ownership which guarantee that planned events will be seen through successfully. This is particularly important when planning the implementation of infrastructure projects. The involvement of local populations improves the efficiency of monitoring mechanisms and in doing so guarantees the increased effectiveness of projects; but it also creates opportunities for free labour.

Civic participation also fosters higher levels of social awareness. In the long run, the social awareness of citizens increases; this enables them to understand the degree of complexity of the public sector and that it is they who must choose

between alternatives for the provision or improvement of policies and services. Accordingly, this increased awareness and sense of responsibility guarantees that citizens will identify challenges, appreciate public decisions, and no longer limit themselves to being critical of the activities of local authorities.

In order to achieve higher levels of popular involvement in the budgetary processes of local self-governing units, the latter should undertake the following set of political activities:

1   Make budgets more understandable to citizens

The budgets of most self-governing units currently only contain numerical data. The average citizen, having little knowledge of finance or accountancy, will have difficulty understanding the information contained in certain chapters, what certain chapters refer to, and the nature or purpose of certain expenses.

TABLE 3.3

Extract from the budget of the city of Rustavi

Name	2009 real	2010 real	2011 planned	2012 planned	2013 planned	2014 planned
Rustavi	**21,918.8**	**27,540.7**	**38,540.6**	**25,608.4**	**26,450.4**	**27,246.4**
Number of employees	310	356	386	356	356	356
Expenses	15,120.9	18,721.4	27,314.8	23,530.6	24,227.3	25,033.7
Salaries	1,977.9	2,619.7	3,079	3,206.3	3,353	3,499
Goods and services	5,311.6	6,843.8	7,581.5	6,949.3	7,360.2	7,775
Percentage	225.3	279.4	942	356	305	345
Subsidiaries	1,134.4	3,002.3	4,622.2	4,074.2	4,219.4	4,373.2
Grants	16.8	0	6,200	6,200	6,200	6,200
Social services	3,548.3	2,971.7	2,422.8	2,343.8	2,388.6	2,440.4
Other expenses	2,906.6	3,004.5	2,467.3	401	401.1	401.2
Development of non-financial assets	6,441.5	8,436.5	10,702.6	1,694.8	1,788.1	1,764.7
Reduction of obligations	356.4	382.8	523.2	383	435	448
Self-governing units	**3,929.7**	**4,698.7**	**12,464.1**	**11,612.1**	**11,827.1**	**12,090.6**
Number of employees	221	265	295	265	265	265
Expenses	3,323	4,190.7	11,832.7	11,219.1	11,381.6	11,631.6
Salaries	1,384.7	1,924	2,365.7	2,463.3	2,573	2,681
Goods and services	1,608.2	1,908.8	2,285.5	2,194.8	2,298.3	2,400

Name	2009 real	2010 real	2011 planned	2012 planned	2013 planned	2014 planned
Percentage	225.3	279.4	942	356	305	345
Subsidiaries	35.9	0	0	0	0	0
Grants	16.8	0	6,200	6,200	6,200	6,200
Social services	38	71.7	26.5	4	4.2	4.4
Other expenses	14	6.8	13	1	1.1	1.2
Development of non-financial assets	250.3	125.2	108.1	10	10.5	11
Reduction of obligations	356.4	382.8	523.2	383	435	448
Rustavi assembly	**517.8**	**1,113.2**	**2,496.2**	**2,337.8**	**2,430.8**	**2,521.6**
Number of employees	37	57	86	57	57	57
Expenses	508.9	1,073.1	2,388.1	2,327.8	2,420.3	2,510.6
Salaries	250.5	364.9	474.9	475	480	485
Goods and services	258.3	703	1,894.1	1,847.8	1,935	2,020
Social services		5.2	6	4	4.2	4.4
Other expenses			13	1	1.1	1.2
Development of non-financial assets	9	40.2	108.1	10	10.5	11
Rustavi city hall	**2,748**	**2,893.6**	**2,112.4**	**2,199.3**	**2,314.3**	**2,427**
Number of employees	184	208	209	208	208	208
Expenses	2,506.7	2,808.5	2,112.4	2,199.3	2,314.3	2,427
Salaries	1,134.2	1,559.2	1,890.8	1,988.3	2,093	2,196
Goods and services	1,320.5	1,176.1	201.1	211	221.3	231
Social services	38	66.5	20.5	0	0	0
Other expenses	14	6.8	0	0	0	0
Development of non-financial assets	241.3	85.1	0	0	0	0
Reserve fund	**0**	**0**	**160**	**105**	**110**	**115**
Expenses	0	0	160	105	110	115
Goods and services	0	0	160	105	110	115
Financing local bodies of the National Archives of Georgia	**39**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

It is therefore important to make budgets more comprehensible to the population. The government has already taken some steps in this direction: budgetary legislation passed in October 2009 envisages that the state budget (as from 2012) and the budgets of local self-governing units (as from 2013) will take the form of programmatic budgets.

The main advantage of programmatic budgets over traditional ones (that is, those that are divided into chapters) is the fact that the former enable the budgets themselves to be result-oriented as early as the planning stage. In a properly drafted programmatic budget, the link between the reason for financing a concrete measure and the predicted result of this financing is clear. The clarity of this link is an important precondition for the effective spending of the state's financial resources. The programmatic nature of budgets also enables citizens to understand these budgets as a series of programs to be implemented and their predicted results, rather than as a purely organisational document.

The main goal of a programmatic budget is to achieve a series of final and intermediary results, as opposed to merely divide resources among agents responsible for their realisation. These results should first be planned, along with indicators for measuring the degree to which they have been achieved. The cost of achieving these results can then be then calculated, and the ratio between existing resources and planned expenditure then becomes apparent during the preparation of the budget.

Within the framework of their defined competences and that of the public services whose provision they are responsible for, self-governing units must draw up programs upon which to base a programmatic version of their budget.

These programs should bring together activities to be implemented towards achieving the goals of the priorities defined by the self-governing units' competences; these activities are grouped according to their nature and are implemented in the long term towards achieving a single, final goal.

Considering the specificity of self-government, programs can either be continuous and implemented in the long term, or else implemented over the course of a year. Self-governing units should implement programs such as maintaining and repairing local roads; refuse collection and street sweeping; social and cultural activities of local importance; and pre-school activities.

When planning programmatic budgets, self-governing units should identify and describe the goals and entailed activities of individual programs with the active involvement of citizens. Programs can differ in terms of type, but each of them should bring together the activities required for the achievement of a final goal; programs should also have a final goal and a budget. When planning programs, the self-governing units implementing them should consider the following factors:

- Programs should respect current legislation and correspond to the priorities defined by the central government (in cases where responsibilities have been delegated or where activities are to be funded by special transfers);
- Only one department should be made responsible for implementing a program and achieving its final objective, as this will simplify the organisation and efficiency of the program's management; and
- Programs should represent the main categories of programmatic budgets, whose financial plan will be defined by budgetary legislation.

Programs should be grouped according to content in the following manner:

- By **management and regulation**

Programs belong to this category if they imply administrative activities destined to improve the functioning of the system or if they are linked to the regulation of several issues in a relevant sphere. This group should contain programs requiring the disbursement of funds linked to the functioning of the city council and City Hall. Grouping such programs together will enable citizens to understand how 'expensive' it is to run their local administration.

- By **service provision**

The programs contained in this group are those aiming to achieve long-term concrete results or to achieve results year after year. These programs bring together activities whose goal is the provision of public services, and their short-term results are defined by concrete quantitative or qualitative indexes.

- By **subsidy**

The purpose of sub-programs and activities of programs of this type is the sub-sidisation of different social groups or institutions with the help and co-ordination of self-governing units. Sub-programs will be assessed according to indicators presented in quantitative indexes, and the final results of their parent programs will in most cases be the visible improvement of the living conditions of particular groups of citizens or that of particular social spheres (such improvement being assessed according to appropriate indicators).

- By **infrastructure**

The aim of activities carried out within the framework of such programs is the development, construction, rehabilitation or equipment of particular items of in-frastructure. The intermediate results of such programs will in most cases be the satisfactory condition of large items or groups of items of infrastructure, and their final result will be the benefits which particular items of infrastructure were meant to have. Indicators according to which such programs can be assessed cannot be presented in quantitative indexes.

Programs should also be grouped according to duration:

- **Long-term**

Long-term programs aim to solve a particular problem, create a new policy, or implement a new system or service. Most programs should be implemented in the long term because their aim is to achieve a global, final result.

- **One-year (short-term)**

Programs can be implemented in the short term in rare cases where final results can be achieved within a year and they are not part of a larger process.

2   Distribute budgetary resources among the different communities of self-governing units in a more just and planned manner

Following the implementation of reforms in 2006, the self-governments of villages, communities, towns and cities were abrogated and transferred to the

regional level. In addition to losing their right to govern themselves, these units also lost all their fiscal and administrative authority.

Whereas residents' associations in the capital have preserved a degree of authority within multi-storey buildings according to the provisions of a special law passed in 2007, municipalities representing thousands of people have neither status nor authority. The budgets of self-governing units are drawn up according to the same logic: financial resources are not broken down according to administrative and territorial units but are considered as a whole, and it would therefore be difficult to identify benefits for specific communities even if programmatic budgets are introduced. If financial resources are not distributed based on administrative and territorial units, the involvement of citizens in the budgetary process is pointless.

Carrying out such a policy does not, however, mean that the entire amount of financial resources should be distributed among populated areas: universal public services should continue to be provided centrally, and those public services which are to be provided to specific communities (for example, rehabilitating roads or the establishment of cultural centres) should be planned according to administrative and territorial units. It is also important that the distribution among communities of self-governing units' budgets should be carried out according to the principles of justice and predictability.

Distributing resources among communities in a just manner implies their distribution according to objective and accountable criteria such as the number of inhabitants; the distance between municipalities and the administrative centre; poverty indexes; the number of pre-school children; or the number of pensioners. Such indexes are used to create formulas for the calculation of the equalisation payments self-governing units receive from the state. Different coefficients can be applied to populated areas such as towns and cities, whose needs differ from those of villages, thus enabling the state to transfer slightly more to the former.

It is important for individual administrative and territorial units and those appointed by the provincial governor or mayor to know what resources they will be allocated. Besides being assigned money by self-governing units, citizens should also be given the right to decide how to manage these resources. That is, the citizens of villages, towns or cities should be able to decide themselves how to spend the money their self-governing unit has allocated them.

Distributing resources in a planned manner implies communities knowing precisely what resources they will be allocated over the next four-year period. Budgetary legislation demands that the budgetary forecasts of both the state and of self-governing units will cover the next four years; the same principle should be applied within the self-governing units themselves. Local populations should know what resources they will be given, as this will help them identify which projects they should finance instead of limiting themselves to one-off projects or activities.

In order to be able to effectively manage their financial resources, individual communities should be allocated sub-accounts within the parent account of self-governing units in which their own financial resources can be kept. These resources should be spent by the responsible provincial government or by the City Hall based upon the request of the presidential appointee.

Resources allocated to villages under state programs should be placed in the sub-accounts of individual populated areas, and these areas should also be given the authority to spend these funds. This would enable GEL 5,000-50,000 to accumulate in the account of every community (depending on its size), and would do a lot to encourage local populations to become involved in the budgetary processes of their own self-governing units.

3 Improve access to the budget and to budgetary processes

Local self-governing units should make information on their budgets and budgetary processes more accessible to the local population.

In order to achieve this, they should publish free annual calendars and distribute them among the local population. Besides the dates of public holidays and normal working days, these calendars should also indicate important dates for the local self-governing units' budgetary process. The availability of such calendars would enable the local population to obtain the information they need by visiting the executive and representative bodies of their local authorities and by attending those meetings during which the local budget will be discussed or reported on.

TABLE 3.4

The following dates should feature in the calendar:

Date	Significance
Before 1 March	The financial department of the self-governing unit prepares and presents its annual report on the implementation of the budget to the representative body.
As of 1 March	The executive body of the self-governing unit begins to work on drawing up its list of priorities.
Before 1 May	The executive body of the self-governing unit prepares and presents its review of the implementation of the budget for the first quarter to the representative body.
Before 1 May	The representative body of the self-governing unit publicly discusses and decides whether or not to approve the annual report on the implementation of the budget.
Before 15 July	The Georgian Ministry of Finance communicates its main budgetary parameters of the planned fiscal year to local self-governing units.

Date	Significance
Before 1 August	The executive body of the self-governing unit prepares and presents its 6-month review of the budget's implementation to the representative body.
No later than 5 October	The Georgian Ministry of Finance informs local self-governing units of the amount of financial aid they are to receive according to the country's draft budget and communicates the predicted capacity of tax revenue.
Before 1 November	The executive body of the self-governing unit prepares and presents its nine-month review of the budget's implementation to the representative body.
No later than 5 November	The executive body of the autonomous republic informs its local self-governing units of the amount of financial aid they are to receive according to the autonomous republic's draft budget.
No later than 15 November	The executive bodies of all self-governing units (except those in the autonomous republic) submit their lists of priorities to their representative bodies and to the Georgian Ministry of Finance.
No later than 15 November	The executive bodies of local self-governing units submit the unit's draft budget to the representative body.
No later than 25 November	The head of the representative body of the local self-governing unit sends the unit's draft budget back to the provincial governor (mayor) with possible remarks.
No later than 10 December	The provincial governor (mayor) of the local self-governing unit submits the preliminary or corrected version of the unit's budget to the representative body.
No later than 31 December	The representative body of the local self-governing unit approves the unit's budget.
No later than 15 days after the local budget is published	The financial department of the local self-governing unit divides the unit's budget up into quarters and months.
No later than 20 days after the local budget has been approved	All self-governing units (except those in the autonomous republic) submit their lists of priorities corresponding to the approved budget to the Georgian Ministry of Finance.
Within one month of the state budget having been passed into law	The executive body of the local self-governing unit and the appropriate state body sign an agreement on delegation.
Within 10 days of the end of every month	The financial departments of all self-governing units prepare budgetary accounts showing revenue, levies, balance and balance variation.

Local or regional television stations should be used to improve the diffusion of information on local budgets and budgetary procedures. These stations should not only broadcast city council meetings during which the budget is discussed – as this leaves viewers passive and engenders only low levels of public interest – but should also prepare programs during which budgetary matters will be discussed. Representatives of local and representative bodies, the local population, non-governmental organisations and experts should be invited to these televised discussions, during which local problems and the financial resources needed to resolve them are discussed.

It is important that these televised discussions are scheduled around the important dates of the budgetary calendar. Attention should not only be paid to issues related to future budgets but also to those dealing with the current budget and assessing past results. It is also important for citizens to be able to send in questions via telephone or else attend these discussions in person and ask questions regarding important problems.

Newspaper articles could also be used to improve the access of information on local budgets and budgetary processes. A local newspaper, partially or totally financed by the local authorities, is published in almost every self-governing unit. In order to diffuse information on the local budget, it is important to draft newspaper articles and conduct interviews with representatives of local self-governing units. In addition to giving interviews, small items of information on current and past budgetary data could be inserted into articles, as well as information on local programs and their successful implementation. Other useful information could include the revenues of self-governing units; the basis for such revenue; the names of the main contributors of a certain revenue; the names of potential employers; and other important economic or financial information.

Another way in which information on local budgets and budgetary processes can be made public is by self-governing units preparing annual brochures outlining their budgetary guidelines. Such brochures should provide information on the budgetary processes of self-governing units in straightforward language, and should feature the main parameters of local budgets, universally-implemented programs and programs which are to be implemented in specific administrative or territorial areas.

The goal, forecast of the results, financial calculation, stages and implementation dates of each future program should also be included in such publications. In addition to this information, the brochures should also give the contact details of the department that has been appointed by the self-governing unit to implement, monitor and assess a particular program.

These brochures should be distributed free of charge among the community, as this would enable citizens to obtain the information they need concerning future programs or projects and to directly contact the departments responsible in order to express their satisfaction or disappointment with the implementation.

Self-governing units should also make use of the Internet to improve the accessibility of information on local budgets and budgetary processes. Information on current budgetary plans, implementation reports, city council decisions regarding the local budget and other items of useful financial information should be published on the local self-governing unit's official website and should be regularly updated. In municipalities with no access to the Internet, such information could be published on the official website of the presidential appointee or governor.

It is important that information on the budget is published online in an interactive manner or format so that visitors to the website can obtain information about the goals, predicted results and dates of implementation of municipal programs, and send their relevant questions, remarks or opinions to local authorities.

4   Increase civic involvement in budgetary processes

In order to increase civic involvement in budgetary processes, the executive and representative bodies of self-governing units should hold regular, unofficial meetings with members of the public.

Local self-governing units should begin holding meetings with citizens as soon as they have drawn up a list of their priorities and are preparing to submit this list to the Ministry of Finance and to the regional governor. It is important that the heads of local self-governing units take part in all village, community and town meetings (20-30 meetings in total) and that they prioritise those issues the population believes should be addressed as a matter of urgency. Such meetings should also be held when the draft budget is being prepared. It is important that public services are the subject of an agreement between villages, communities and towns.

Regarding the financial resources transferred to communities discussed above, it is important that local authorities help local communities manage their own resources effectively. In order to do so, representatives of self-governing units and local appointees should hold meetings with locals at all levels; explain how priorities and problems can be identified and solutions are chosen; and encourage citizens to become involved in the implementation of projects (local manpower) in order to ensure that resources are spent effectively.

Besides organising meetings with citizens, it is also important to hold public hearings during which draft budgets are presented to the city council and quarterly and final reports on their implementation are made. Hearings are 'public' when every citizen can visit the local authority's offices, can become acquainted with budgetary information, and can ask direct questions to representatives of executive or legislative bodies. Questions can be asked regarding specific current projects or programs, or regarding problems faced by the local population with the aim of finding out the local self-governing unit's plans for their resolution.

Local authorities should be ready to hear founded or unfounded criticism, and should try to explain their budgetary decisions based upon arguments and facts.

One form of civic participation in budgetary processes is the gathering of information from citizens on the efficiency of services provided to them, as levels of popular satisfaction and feedback are the most reliable indicators of the level of efficiency of local governments themselves. When drawing up their programmatic budgets, self-governing units should therefore include this level of popular satisfaction among other indicators for assessing predicted results.

When implementing a municipal program or project, it is thus very important to create a mechanism for popular feedback by, for instance, setting up a municipal telephone hotline for people to express their opinions or other mechanisms for obtaining feedback. It is important that public opinion is gauged and taken into account when contracting companies to provide services to the population and when planning, implementing and monitoring such projects. This is particularly important when the activities involve rehabilitating local infrastructure (for example, water mains), refuse collection and street sweeping, or different kinds of educational, cultural and social activities.

Feedback could also be obtained in other ways such as via a dedicated post box so people can express their opinions anonymously in writing. This would help the heads of local self-governing units and other administrations draw additional conclusions regarding the efficiency of services provided to the population.

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List of priorities of the Self-governing City of Rustavi for the period 2011-2014

The 2011 budget of the Self-governing City of Rustavi

12-month analysis of the Self-governing City of Rustavi's budget for 2009

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This publication is a combination of three policy papers commissioned by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) in Georgia. The policy papers stem from the extensive research carried out by professionals of relevant fields and address three critically important challenges of the young democracy in Georgia. Improvements in women's participation in politics, youths' involvement in political parties, and increased civic engagement in self-government are continuous processes that require long-term commitment and cannot be achieved overnight. This publication attempts to uncover the current state of affairs in the respective fields and shed light on experiences of the past that constructed them. In the end, with careful consideration of international practices and backed up with evidence, every policy paper provides a set of practical suggestions on how to improve the current state. The publication is intended for policy makers, scholars and practitioners of the field, as well as the broad audience.