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**Georgia Before and After the August War**

**Report on the Survey of Population: Barometer 2007 and 2008**

**Tbilisi 2009**

**Institute for Policy Studies**

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## **Foreword**

This report is based on the surveys of public opinion carried out by the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) in the year 2007 and 2008. The surveys were supported by Open Society Institute Human Rights and Governance Grants Programme, with the aim to study the opinion of the population on Government policies targeted at poverty alleviation, social security, health, education, combating corruption, human rights protection, media freedom and improvement of infrastructure. In addition, the study focussed on participation of citizens in decision making, assessment of trust towards various institutions and attitudes towards political entities. The main expectations of the population, as well as their values, perception of the political situation in the country and its external orientations, attitude towards democracy were also assessed.

Similar surveys were carried out by IPS in 2002, 2003 and 2006.

Several people participated in the preparation of this report. I would like to particularly acknowledge the valuable contribution of senior researchers of the Institute – Ani Kitiashvili, Ekaterine Pirtskalava and Maya Maisuradze for organizing the survey and data management, the interviewers, all those who processed the data, and especially the respondents for their time and sincere answers.

## 1. Introduction

Years 2007 and 2008 are distinguished in the recent history of Georgia as being dramatic. The Institute for Policy Studies carried out surveys shortly after the following events: the forceful dispersion of peaceful manifestation in November 2007, and the August war in 2008.

Below we will try to demonstrate how these events have been reflected in the attitudes and beliefs of the population on economic condition of their families, values, preferences of political entities, external orientations of the country, as well as attitudes towards authorities and opposition leaders.

## 2. Survey methodology and sample

Surveys were carried out through 1-12 December, 2007 and 14-30 November, 2008 in all regions of Georgia, Achara and Tbilisi.

Hierarchical probability sampling method was used for the selection of respondents, and the sample reflected the distribution of country's population in respect to gender, age, as well as region and type of settlement.

Interviews were conducted face to face in respondents' homes. In each settlement, the interviewers proceeded as identified by focal point of survey managers, visiting every fifth house.

Survey questions were answered by 1,100 individuals (44 percent of males and 56 percent of females) in 2007, and 1,156 (48.9 percent of males and 51.1 percent of females) in 2008. In 2008, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) constituted 13 percent, among them 7.5 percent were displaced in 2008.

Majority of respondents belonged to the Georgian Orthodox Church with a share of 90.6 percent in 2007 and 86 percent in 2008. Georgians constituted the overwhelming majority of the surveyed at 91.7 percent in 2007 and 88.1 percent in 2008. Among the respondents, Armenians constituted 4 percent and 3.6 percent, Azeris 1.6 percent and 6.4 percent, and Ossetians 1.1 percent and 0.5 percent in 2007 and 2008 correspondingly.

Table 1 - *Distribution of respondents by regions*

<b>Region</b>	<b>2007</b> <b>%</b> <b>No=1100</b>	<b>2008</b> <b>%</b> <b>N No=1156</b>
Tbilisi	25.4	23.6

Achara	8.7	7.3
Guria	3.4	3.2
Racha-Lechkhumi	1.2	4.4
Samegrelo-upper Svaneti	10.9	10.2
Imereti	16.4	15.3
Kakheti	9.5	8.9
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	3.0	4.4
Samtskhe-Javakheti	4.8	4.6
Kvemo Kartli	9.3	11.0
Shida Kartli	7.4	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3. August war

As outlined above, the surveys were carried out shortly after the most important events of the country in the preceding two decades – the forceful dispersion of peaceful manifestation by authorities, and the August war. Early Presidential and Parliament elections took place between these two events. These events undoubtedly have shaped the attitude of the population to all political entities, and defined their preferences for external orientation of the country.

As expected, the population rated the August war as the most important event of the year. Somewhat surprising is the position of 10.7 percent of the surveyed (120 respondents) who did not share this perception. Among them 56.7 percent lived in Kvemo Kartli, 13.3 percent in Samegrelo and 8.3 percent in Imereti.

“In the period between the nightfall of 7 and 8 August 2008, following an extended period of ever-mounting tensions and incidents, heavy fighting erupted in and around the town of Tskhinvali in South Ossetia. The fighting which soon extended to other parts of Georgia lasted for five days. In many places throughout the country, it caused serious destruction reaching levels of utter devastation in a number of towns and villages, and loss of human lives was substantial. In the aftermath, the Georgian side claimed a death toll of 170 servicemen, 14 policemen and 228 civilians, as well as 1,747 people wounded. The Russian side claimed the loss of 67 servicemen’s lives and 283 wounded. The South Ossetians spoke of 365 persons killed, which probably included both servicemen and civilians. Overall, around 850 persons lost their lives, not to mention those who were wounded, went missing, or civilians numbering far beyond 100,000 who fled their homes as a result of the conflict. Around 35,000 civilians have yet not been able to return to their homes. Russian armed forces covered by air strikes and elements of its Black Sea fleet, penetrated deep into Georgia, cutting across the country’s main east-west road, reaching the Poti Port and stopping short of Georgia’s capital city - Tbilisi” (IIFFMCG, 2009 p.6).

“Then another round of hostility opened on the western flank where Abkhaz forces supported by Russian troops took over the Upper Kodori Valley” (IIFFMCG, 2009).”

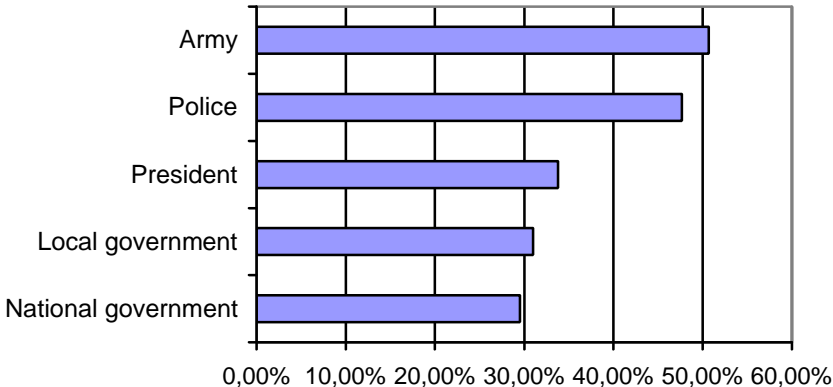
“After five days of fighting, on 12 August, 2008, a ceasefire agreement was reached between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the latter acting on behalf of the European Union” (IIFFMCG, 2009).

By the decision of 2 December, 2008, the Council of the European Union established an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) - the so called Tagliavini Commission.

The war was the culmination of increasing tensions between Georgia and Russia, a finale to the “creeping Russian annexation of Abkhazia and Ossetia”. Although despite this, the majority of the population (67.5 percent) did not expect Russian invasion. As for the main motives behind the Russian invasion, the majority (68.3 percent) considered the annexation of Abkhazia and Ossetia, while 57.6 percent the change of leadership in Georgia, and 43.4 percent as hindering NATO membership of Georgia (respondents were allowed to select three reasons from presented nine). Despite acknowledging the reasons, more than the half of the population thought that it was possible to avoid the war. A large chunk of the respondents (65.4 percent) thought that Russians would not have attempted the attack if Georgia had NATO membership.

As for the cause of the war, respondents (although to a different degree) evaluated actors responsible for the war separately on a scale varying from entirely responsible to not responsible at all, where respondents blamed Russia (95 percent), de facto leaders of South Ossetia (84.3 percent), de facto leaders of Abkhazia (80.9 percent) and Georgian authorities (80.2 percent). Similarly, the Tagliavini Commission also encountered difficulties in attributing responsibility to any one side of the conflict. The report reads that “as the conflict was a result of a long period of increasing tensions, it is impossible to attribute overall responsibility to any side. Everyone is to blame” (IIFFMCG, 2009).

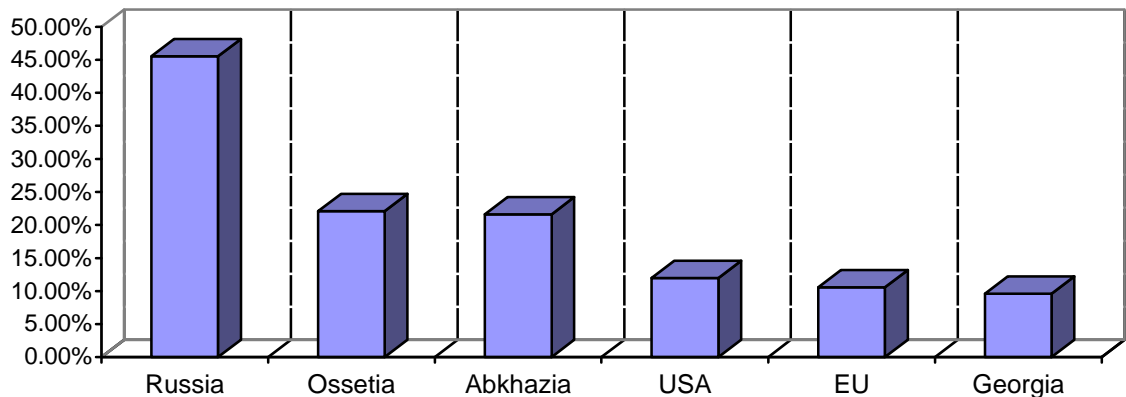
The actions of Georgian authorities in the war were generally negatively evaluated. The majority (79.4 percent) thought that the authorities should have warned the population on the possibility of the conflict on potential threats. Merely half of the surveyed (50.7 percent) and only one-third (29.5 percent) considered the actions of the army and the authorities as appropriate respectively.



Graph 1 - *Appropriateness of the actions of the President and the Government*

The bulk of respondents (89.9 percent) acknowledged the contribution of other countries and international organizations in ending the war. Majority (72.5 percent) pointed to the contribution of European Union followed by US (68.3 percent). Only a very small portion (18.4 percent) gave credit to the Georgian Government for the resolution of the conflict.

There was no unanimity in the assessment as to who was the victor. Less than the half of the surveyed (45.5 percent) considered Russia as the winner, while 9.6 percent thought that Georgia won the war.



Graph 2 - *Winner of the war*

A similar equivocal evaluation was expressed in the report of Tagliavini Commission. It states that there is no winner in this conflict, and that all the sides experienced some kind of loss, be it life, property, possibilities or hopes for the future (IIFMCG, 2009).

A third of the population did not expect renewal of hostilities.

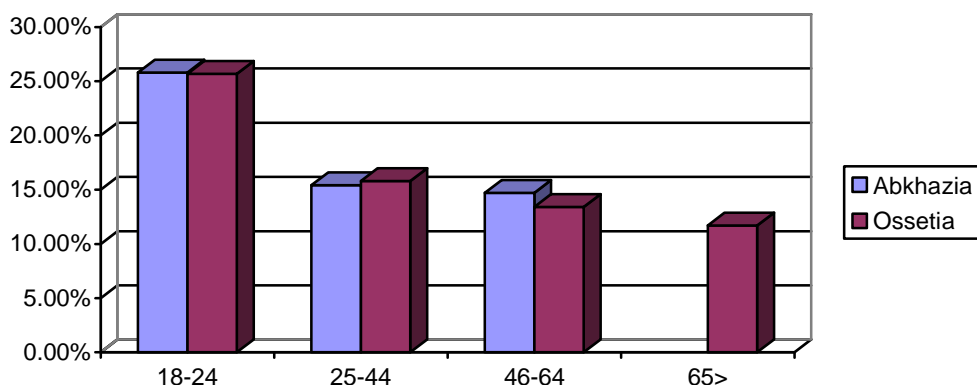
Assessment of the consequences of the war is closely connected with political preferences of the population. The supporters of the authorities evaluated the deeds of the President and the Government much more positively, and shared the official assessment of the results of the conflict, than the supporters of opposition or people without any definite political preferences. As an example, the possibility to avoid the war was perceived by 83.3 percent of supporters of opposition in comparison to 62.8 percent of people without clear political affiliation and 42.3 percent of Government supporters. The actions of the President during the war were considered appropriate by 75.2 percent of Government supporters, in contrast to 17.6 percent of those with unclear political preferences and 4.8 percent of opposition supporters. Similarly, 19.4 percent of Government supporters considered Georgia as the winner of the war, compared to 5.8 percent of the undecided and 2.4 percent of opposition supporters.

Among other factors, political affiliation can be assumed to depend on the impact of the war on population. Fear, anxiety and feeling of helplessness are emotions mostly associated with war. Fear increases person's dependence on people in power and institutions, and strengthens the support of the actions carried out by

them. Therefore, in the regions directly affected by war, i.e. Kvemo Kartli and Samegrelo, the population can be expected to exhibit greater support of the President and the Government. And indeed, Government support was demonstrated by 47.9 percent of the population of these two regions, while the share of people with similar views across the rest of Georgia was only 24.6 percent. The location of respondents had much lesser effect on the attitude towards opposition, which was supported by 5.7 percent of the population of these two regions and 8.6 percent of all the other regions of the country. However, it considerably defined the number of undecided, which in contrast to other parts of Georgia (66.8 percent) was much lower (46.4 percent) in Shida Kartli and Samegrelo. The analyses demonstrated that compared to the population in the rest of Georgia (27.1 percent), the bigger share of population of these two regions (49.6 percent) expressed satisfaction with the actions of the President and all Government structures. Similarly, Georgia was perceived as the winner in the conflict by 20.6 percent of the population of Samegrelo and Shida Kartli, while only 5.8 percent of the population of the rest of Georgia shared such a perception.

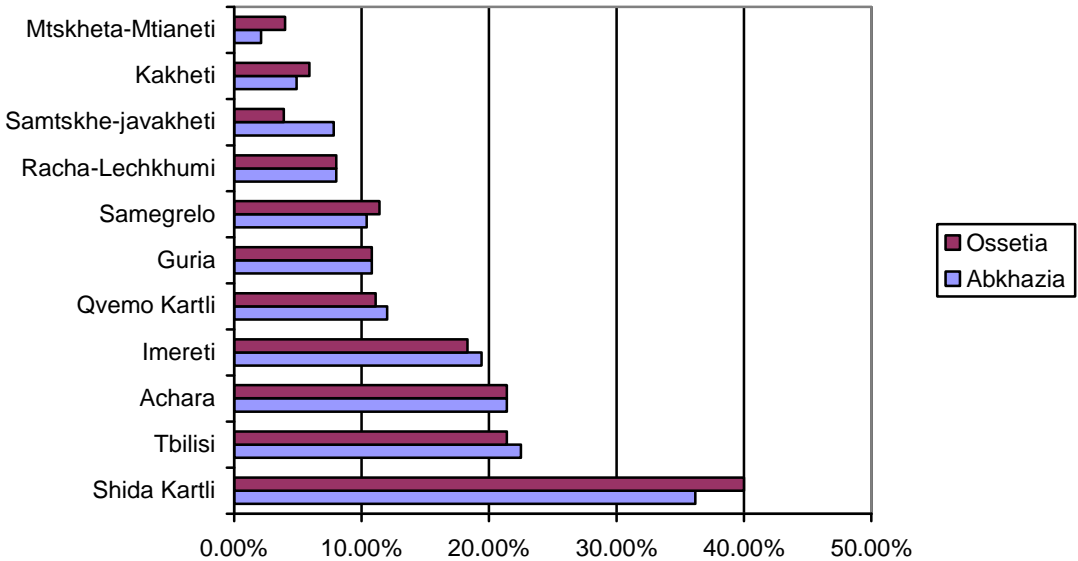
#### 4. Reintegration possibilities of separatist regions

The war has changed the attitude of the population with regards to the strategy of reintegration of Abkhazia and Ossetia. The share of those who considered this possible by the use of force sharply declined. In contrast to 2007 when 37 percent considered reintegration possible by the use of force in Abkhazia, in 2008, their share decreased to 16.5 percent. In regard to Ossetia, corresponding figures were 27.6 percent and 16.3 percent. It appears that there is a stable portion of the population who saw the possibility of conflict resolution only through the use of force. In this regard, statistically significant differences were found across gender, age and location of the respondents. More men than women supported the use of force. A fifth of surveyed men (20 percent) considered the use of force in Abkhazia as appropriate, and almost the same number (19.8 percent) in Ossetia. The corresponding figures among women were 13.5 percent and 13.3 percent. In addition, the number of supporters for the use of force decreased with age. 25.8 percent of the people under the age of 25 supported the use of force in Abkhazia, and 25.7 percent in Ossetia, while only 11.6 percent of senior citizens, those over the age of 65 were in favour of the use of force in Abkhazia, and 11.7 percent in Ossetia.



Graph 3 - The share of respondents supporting the use of force for the reintegration of Abkhazia and Ossetia across age groups

The population of the conflict zones expressed greater support for the use of force. 36.2 percent of the surveyed in Shida Kartli were in favour of the use of force in Abkhazia, and even more at 40 percent in Ossetia. Moreover, compared to other regions, the share of the proponents of the use of force was bigger among the population of Tbilisi, Achara and Imereti. The least support was demonstrated by respondents in Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti.



Graph 4 - The share of supporters of the use of force across regions

Only a very small portion of population (15.8 percent) believed in the possibility of the return of displaced population in Kodori Valley of Abkhazia in the ensuing three years. In addition, the share of respondents (16.5 percent) who in the same period of time expected the return of population to Ossetia was low.

It should be noted that the war did not induce xenophobia in the population (Cheterian, 2009). Despite the critical evaluation of the possibility of return, the majority (67.3 percent with respect to Abkhazia and 66 percent to Ossetia) considered peaceful coexistence with Abkhazians and Ossetians as possible.

**5. Events of 7 November, 2007**

Preceded only by the significance of August war, the forceful dispersion of peaceful manifestation (77.6 percent) and raids carried out by the power structures on TV Company “Imedi” (77.1 percent) were identified as the most important events of the country in the period from November 2007 to November 2008.

During October-November of 2007, public protests throughout the country culminated in large rallies over six days in Tbilisi. (Crises Group, 2007). Official structures used force twice for dispersing the manifestations, in which tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets and an acoustic device was used. As a result of the disproportional use of force, 500 persons were injured. Emergency rule was imposed, which was later lifted in 16 November. Following which, early Presidential elections were announced for 5 January, 2008 (Crisis Group, 2007). The dispersal of manifestation, raiding of the broadcasting company followed by imposing a ban on broadcasting was evaluated very negatively by international organizations.

As the 2007 survey was conducted soon after the above described events, a number of survey questions pertained to the evaluation of the events. Majority of the population (72.6 percent) could not see the need for the use of force, and 80.8 percent evaluated the actions as disproportional. 51.8 percent attributed all the responsibility for the consequences of dispersion to the authorities. In addition, the majority considered the disruption of broadcasting of “Imedi” Corporation as inappropriate.

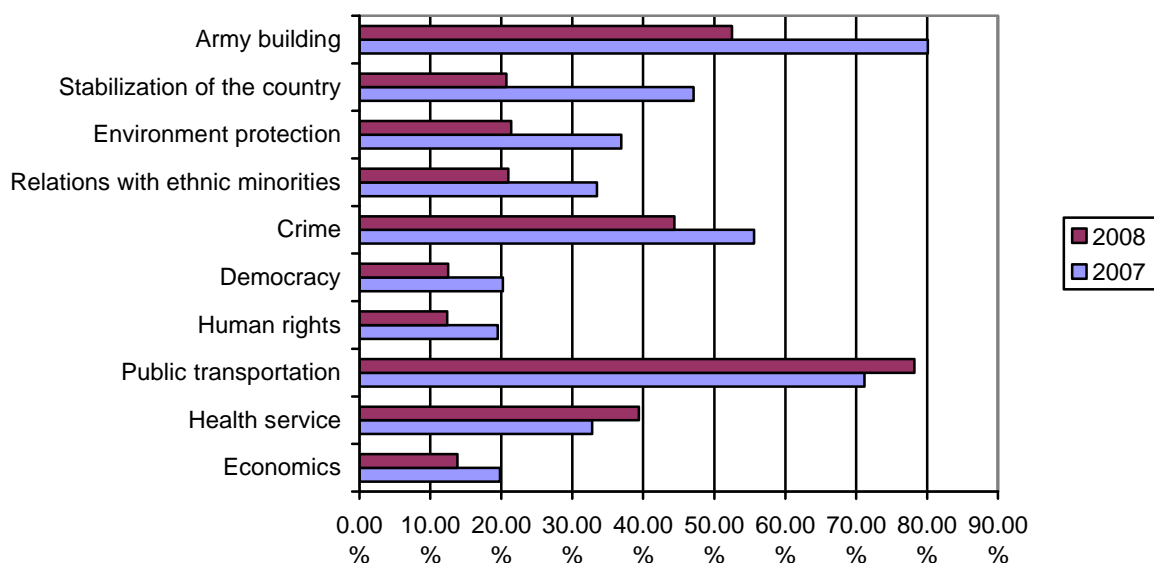
## **6. Country issues**

The war has changed the list of country’s priorities. As priority spheres, the population in 2008 selected creation of jobs (80 percent), reducing inflation (62.5 percent), protecting human rights (48.7 percent), social security (45.9 percent) and avoiding possible Russian aggression (33.4 percent). Whereas in 2007, the top five priority spheres were social security (70.5 percent), protection of human rights (70.5 percent), availability of healthcare (62.5 percent), raising the quality and accessibility of education (44.5 percent) and the reforming judicial system (37.1 percent). The comparison of priorities before and after the war shows a dramatic decline in the number of respondents who considered social security and protection of human rights as a priority.

Overall, respondents assessed the actions of the Government more as being unsuccessful rather than successful. Among the 25 listed spheres in 2008, 15 were evaluated by the majority as being unsuccessful (solution of the conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia, poverty alleviation, economic situation, safeguard of human rights, stabilization of the country, media freedom, establishment of democratic principles, functioning of courts, combating against drug addiction, environment protection, small business development, local self-governance, fight against corruption in State structures and relations with ethnic minorities). The ten spheres where respondents noted success were as following: improvement of roadways, public transportation, work of police, bolstering the army, improvement of attitude towards Georgia in the international arena, fight against crime, improvement of social assistance and pension systems, patriotic upbringing of youth, university and school education, as well as healthcare.

In general, the 2008 survey demonstrated a decline in the number of those who attributed success to actions of the Government. Decrease is evident in 20 spheres listed both in 2007 and 2008 surveys. The decline is especially big in the spheres of building an army, stabilization of the country, environmental protection and

relationship with ethnic minorities. Heightening in the perception of success was evident in spheres of public transportation, healthcare, social security and improvement of global attitude towards Georgia.



Graph 5 - Ten spheres where the biggest difference in the successfulness of Government actions are evident

Comparatively, the perception of economic condition remains stable, where 46 percent in 2007, and 45.4 percent in 2008 emphasized that they had money only for purchasing food or food and clothing. However, the number of those who indicated improvement of economic condition of their families during the past year decreased from 27.3 percent in 2007, to 18.6 percent in 2008. The change did not reflect on the deterioration of the situation, which remained the same, but reflected on the number of those who thought that economic condition of their families remained unchanged during the past year (46.5 percent in 2007 and 54.1 percent in 2008). The period after the war was marked by a significant decrease in economic optimism. If 56.5 percent of the population in 2007 expected improvement of economic condition within a year and 69.9 percent in three years, the corresponding figures in 2008 were 47.2 percent and 60.1 percent. The sharp decline was more noticeable in the number of those who had income from permanent (from 54.8 percent in 2007 to 37.8 percent in 2008) or temporary (from 21.1 percent in 2007 to 17.6 percent in 2008) employment. This can be considered as a reflection of the decrease of those employed in State institutions (from 46.3 percent in 2007 to 39.4 percent in 2008) and private businesses (from 29.3 percent in 2007 to 24.5 percent in 2008). Decline was also evident in other sources of income: financial support from relatives, pensions, allowances, money from selling agricultural products, etc. Nevertheless, the 2008 year survey also demonstrated a positive trend of increase in the number and revenues of small businesses. The share of those who had income from own business increased from 10.1 to 14 percent. Correspondingly, the number of those owning business increased from 12.8 percent to 20 percent.

Shrinking of income was reflected in the decrease of hiring services. The share of those who paid others for housekeeping or babysitting decreased from 11.8 percent in 2007 to 9 percent in 2008. It is worth noting that

the change did not reflect on payments towards private tuitions as 7.3 percent in 2007 and 7.2 percent in 2008 hired private tutors.

The war has altered the perception of possible threats for the country in the ensuing 5 years. Escalation of poverty (64.2 percent), Russian aggression (55.3 percent), increase of diseases (54.3 percent), losing Georgian traditions (52.9 percent), and rebellion against authorities (42.0 percent) were perceived as the main threats in 2008. Comparison of the perception of threats before and after the war reveals an increase in the threat of Russian aggression by 22 percent in 2008, losing Georgian traditions by 19.7 percent, and rise in poverty by 6.7 percent. At the same time, there is decrease in the threat of spreading sectarianism by 19.9 percent, conflict on religious grounds by 13.9 percent, and rebellion against authorities (by 11.9 percent).

The number of people who believed that Georgia was on the right path of development remained small, although after the war it increased to 41.8 percent from 37.1 percent in 2007.

In 2008, approximately half of the surveyed (47.5 percent) expressed preference for power being equally distributed between the Parliament and the President, 18.5 percent opted for the President and 13.7 percent for the Parliament of possessing a bigger share of power, while 20.3 percent did not give a definite answer.

Majority of the respondents expressed scepticism on their impact on decision-making. Although on a country level, there is apparently a positive change in this regard. 54.5 percent in 2007 and 48.7 percent in 2008 believed that the authorities did not take into account the needs and desires of the populations. Moreover, 30.2 percent gave positive answer to the question on whether the authorities should take more into account the needs and desires of population since November, 2007.

The period between the surveys was marked by an overall apathy and nihilism towards politics and its main entities. Compared to 27.1 percent in 2007 who did not express support to either the opposition or the authorities, and more than 20 percent restrained from revealing their political preferences, in 2008 the figure stood at 35 percent who did not support either side and more than 26.6 percent did not express their position as far as political leaning was concerned.

On the background of overall apathy, the trust towards authorities increased after the war, while support towards opposition decreased dramatically. In comparison to 25.5 percent in 2007 who expressed trust towards authorities, in 2008 their share increased to 31.1 percent, on the other hand 27.5 percent in 2007 supported opposition, but in 2008 the share of their supporters dropped to 7.3 percent.

Table 2 - *Ranking of public figures by liking*

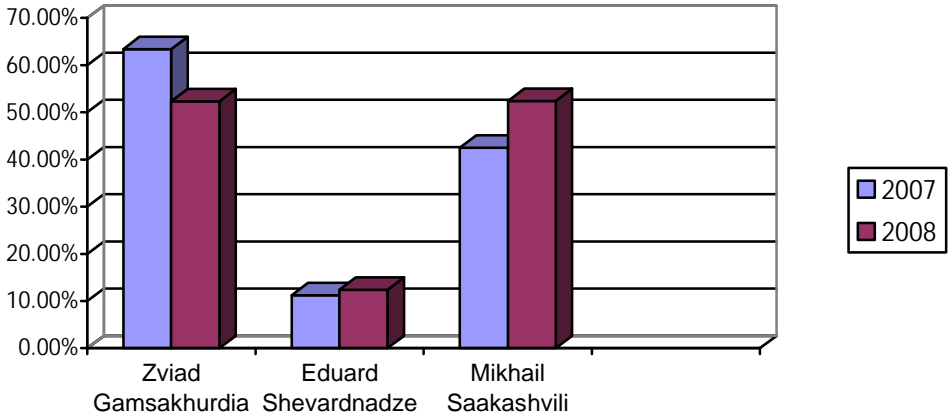
Rank	Name	Position/profession	Liking %
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1	Ilia II	Head of Georgian Orthodox Church	87.4
2	Paata Burchuladze	Singer	72.1
3	Bidzina Ivanishvili	Businessman	71.1
4	Sozar Subari	Ombudsman	62.4
5	Kakhi Kaladze	Football player	52.2
6	Mikheil Saakashvili	President of Georgia	48.3
7	Giorgi Targamadze	Opposition party leader	45.2
8	Gigi Ugulava	Mayor of Tbilisi	42.8
9	Nino Burjanadze	Opposition party leader	43.9
10	Levan Berdzenishvili	Opposition party leader	41.8
11	David Bakradze	Speaker of the Parliament	39.9
12	Irakli Okruasvili	Opposition party leader	39.7
13	Tinatin KhidaSeli	Opposition party leader	38.7
14	David Gamkrelidze	Opposition party leader	37.5
15	Mamuka Khazaradze	Businessman	36.8
16	David Usupashvili	Opposition party leader	36.5

In the above table, only those towards whom the larger section of population expressed liking rather than dislike are presented. Deriving from the table, it becomes evident that politicians are not among the top five most liked and respected persons. Nevertheless, Saakashvili occupies the highest ranking among politicians.

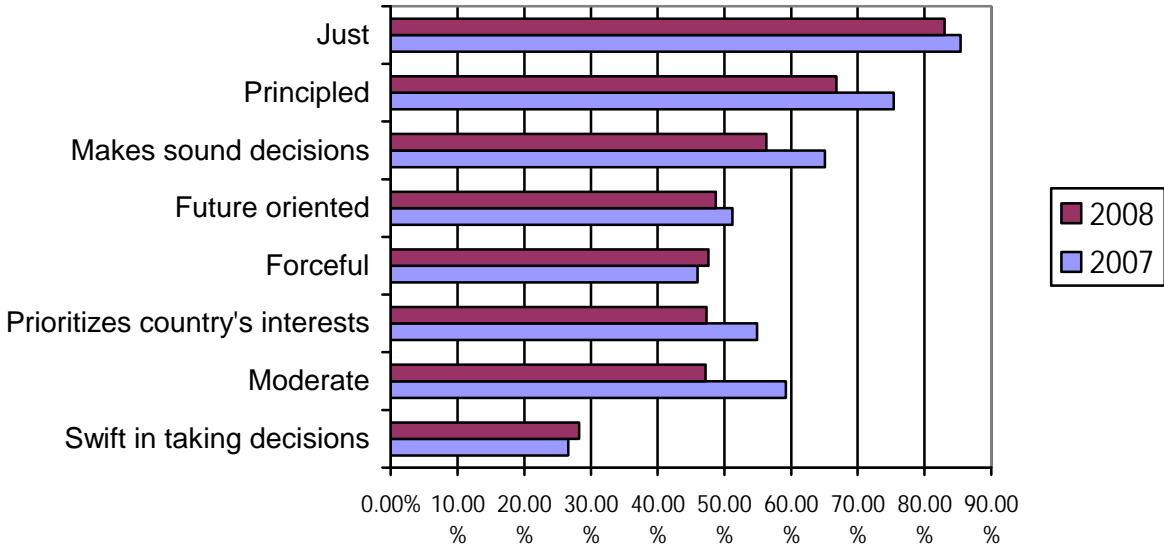
Among political parties, United National Movement enjoyed the most popular support (24.1 percent), followed by Christian Democratic Party (9.9 percent), Labour Party (6.3 percent), New Rights (4 percent), For United Georgia (3.9 percent), Republican Party (2.6 percent) and Georgian Conservative Party (1 percent). The supporters of other parties did not exceed 1 percent. However, it should be noted that a large portion of the surveyed (42.9 percent) did not express their political preferences.

Among political figures, President Mikhail Saakashvili is apparently the most distinguished and liked. His rating rose in 2008. In comparison to 2007, when among the three presidents of Georgia, Saakashvili was preferred by 42.5 percent and was preceded by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, in 2008 the majority of the respondents (52.4 percent) expressed their preference towards Saakashvili.



Graph 6 - Preferred Presidents of Georgia

In the opinion of the respondents pertaining to the qualities required of the President of Georgia, the majority considered being just, followed by principled and the ability to make sound decisions as the essential traits of the President.



Graph 7 - Desirable characteristics of the President of Georgia

Concluding from the Graph 7, it is evident that the requirements of the President having the above mentioned characteristics decreased in 2008, the only exception was being “forceful” and “swift in taking decisions”.

When confronted with the task of selecting the more appropriate action required of the President, from the two options, the majority (67.6 percent) selected the option of heeding the population and satisfying their demands, over doing what the President considers good for the country, notwithstanding the fact whether it is liked or disliked by the population (32.4 percent).

Provision of adequate living conditions (46.8 percent), followed by defending the country from external and internal threats (28.6 percent) and securing human rights were considered as the main responsibilities of the President.

In 2008, the majority of population were of the opinion that the future of Georgia depended equally on Georgia and other countries. The percentage of those sharing this thought increased from 28.3 percent in 2007 to 37.3 percent in 2008. Correspondingly, the number of people who thought that Georgia’s fate depended on Georgia alone decreased from 32 percent in 2007 to 23 percent in 2008, and similarly of those who held the opinion that it was dependent on other countries from 30.7 percent in 2007 to 26.3 percent in 2008. The share of people without any definite position rose from 8.9 percent in 2007 to 13.1 percent in 2008.

Some kind of scepticism became evident in respect to NATO and EU membership of the country. The number of those who favoured NATO membership fell from 76.8 percent to 68.9 percent, and likewise of those who considered EU membership as desirable for the country decreased from 84.5 percent to 79.1 percent in the subsequent year.

The Russian aggression definitely increased pro-American orientation. Compared to 2007, when asked to make a choice whether the country should be oriented towards Russia or USA, 52.6 percent chose USA, and in 2008 their share rose to 56 percent. However, the share of those preferring Russia still remained high.

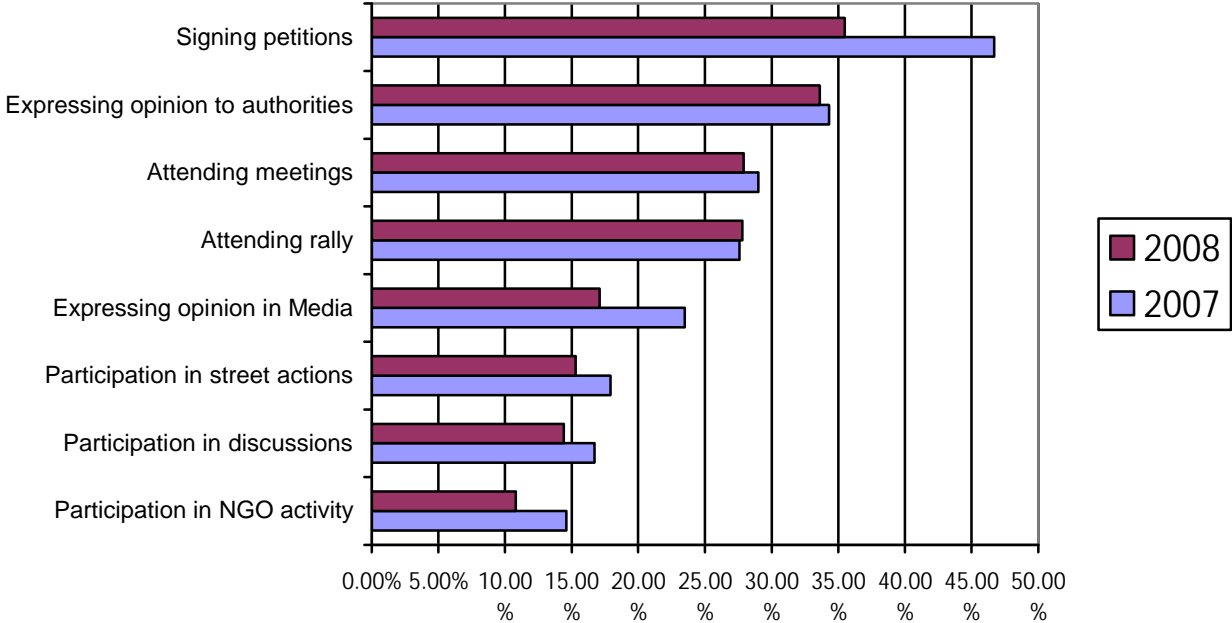
In addition, Ukraine (61.8 percent), USA (61.2 percent) and EU (50.4) were named as partners that Georgia could rely on the most.

## **7. Democracy**

The year between the surveys was marked by the deterioration of democracy in the public eye. The majority considered democracy as the best form of governance, although the share of persons thinking this way decreased from 81.3 percent to 68.7 percent in 2008. Only a handful, less than a fourth of the surveyed (24.1 percent in 2007 and 22.1 percent in 2008) believed that there is democracy in Georgia.

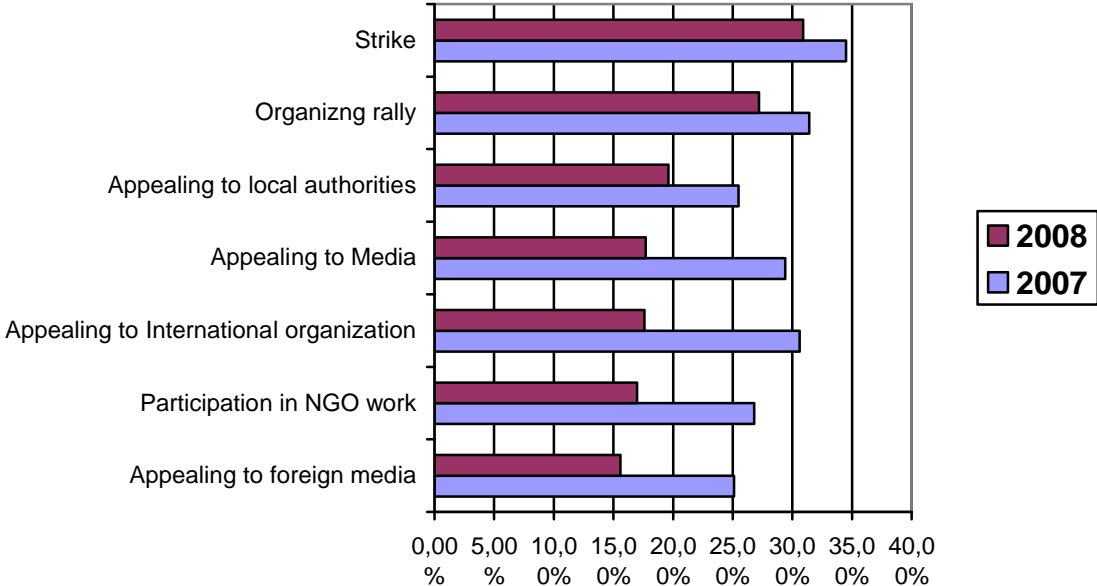
Participation and media freedom are universally considered as prerequisites of liberal democracy. The majority of the respondents (60.8 percent in 2007 and 56.3 percent in 2008) were convinced that resolving the country’s significant problems was possible only through popular participation, nevertheless very few (22.3 percent in 2007 and 23.9 percent in 2008) felt that they could make an impact on the decisions of authorities.

Participation of population in public life is insignificant. Merely very small portion of the population (2.7 percent) were members of political party, Trade Unions or any other kind of voluntary organizations (4 percent). Only 8.7 percent in 2007 and 14.1 percent in 2008 took part in collective actions of any kind. The readiness to take any kind of actions in case of violation of one's rights decreased in 2008.



Graph 8 - Readiness to act in case of violation of one's rights

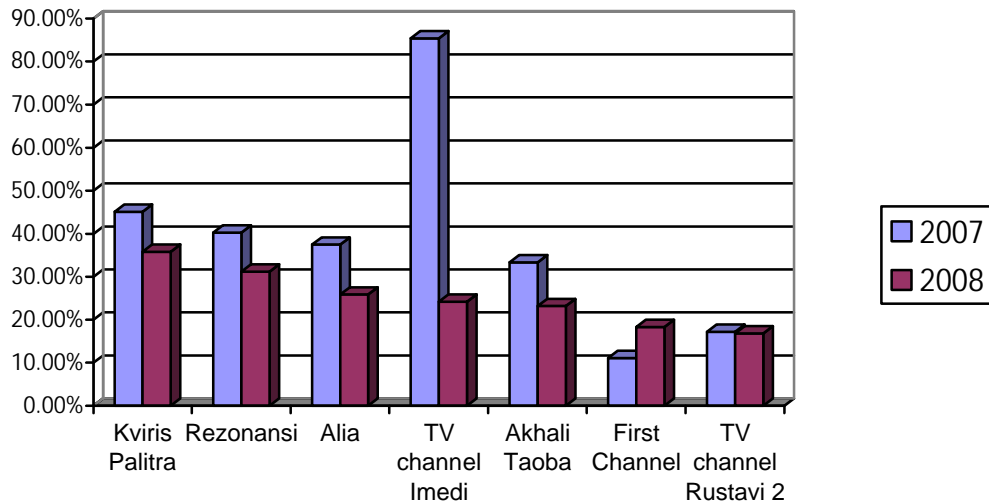
In 2008, the decrease also became evident in the estimation of effectiveness of various activities intended for influencing the authorities. Strikes and rallies were selected as most effective in both years of the survey.



Graph 9 - *Effective ways of influencing the authorities*

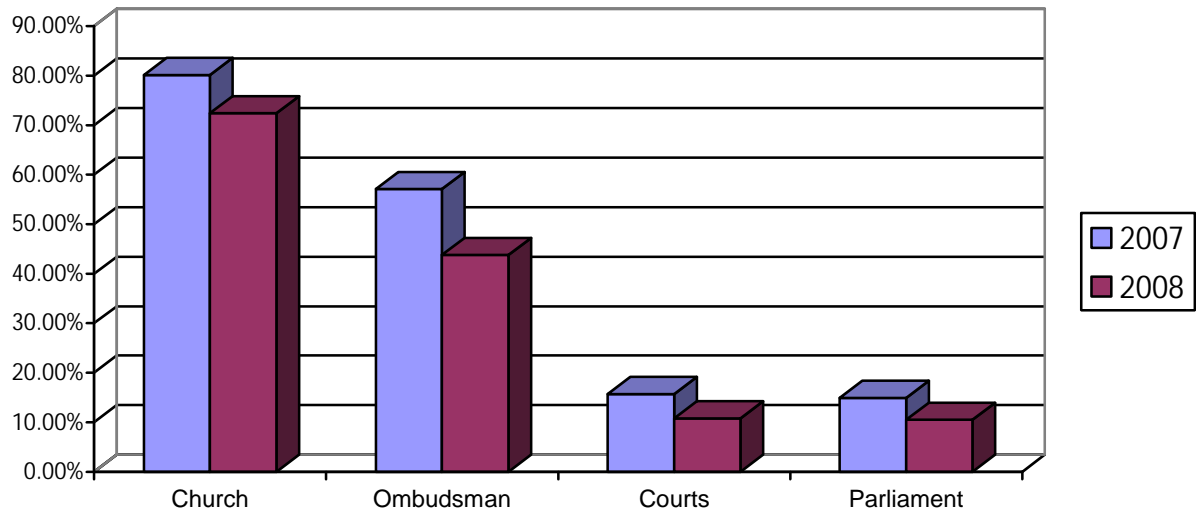
Interest in public life is definitely a prerequisite of participation. It can be stated that Georgia’s population is interested, although the data of 2008 indicates a decline. Majority of the population (67.2 percent in 2007 and 59.1 percent in 2008) expressed that they were closely watching events. Television constituted the main source of information for the majority (97.3 percent in 2007 and 93.8 percent in 2008). TV news was watched by 66.5 percent in 2007 and 57.5 percent in 2008. Among the TV news, the most trusted news were broadcasted by TV stations “Imedi” (87.2 percent in 2007 and 60.9 percent in 2008), followed by Rustavi 2 (58.9 percent in 2007 and 53.3 percent in 2008) and Channel I (30.8 percent in 2007 and 40.9 percent in 2008). The aforesaid figures demonstrate a decrease of trust towards TV stations Imedi and Rustavi 2 and increase of trust towards the news of Channel I.

Trust towards media and institutions such as Parliament, Court, Ombudsman and the Church to a considerable extent depends on the perception of their independence from authorities. In 2008, the number of those who considered them independent decreased. This first of all concerns TV station “ Imedi”, which in 2007 was considered independent by 85.4 percent and in 2008 only by 24.2 percent. The trend of decline in the perception of independence of media as demonstrated in Graph10, took into account all (print or electronic) listed media outlets, Channel 1 being the only exception, where the perception of its independence slightly increased in 2008.



Graph 10 - *Perception of independence from authorities of print and electronic media*

Church and Ombudsman were assessed in both surveys as the most independent, while the Court and Parliament as the most dependent institutions on the Government. However, compared to 2007, perception of their independence decreased in 2008.



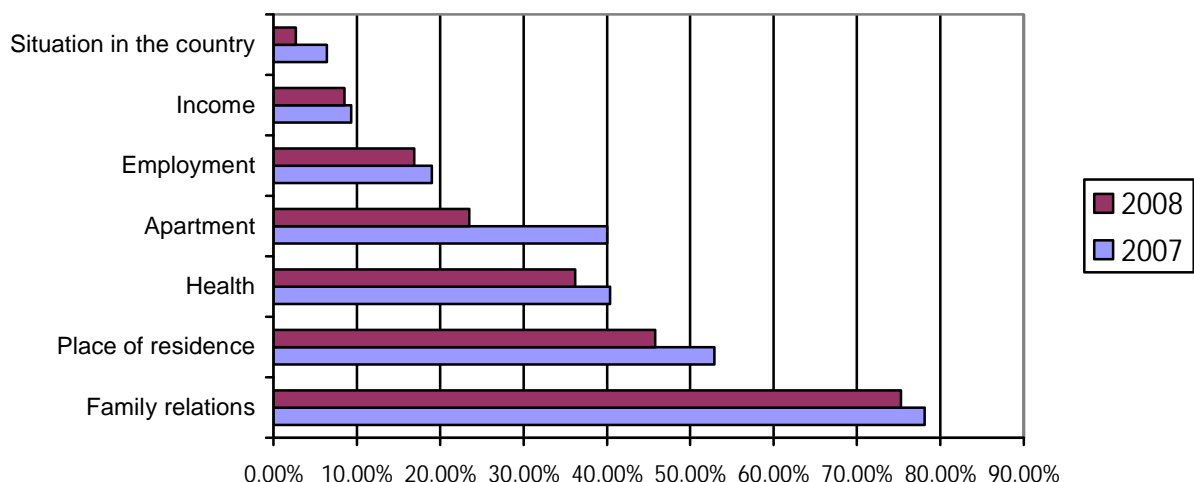
Graph 11 - *Perception of independence from authorities of various institutions*

## 8. Quality of life and values

The consequences of war reflected on the quality of life of the population. Compared to 2007 (34.4 percent), in 2008 more people expressed concerns about their own health (37 percent) and unemployment (47.8 percent in 2007 and 50.1 percent in 2008).

The share of persons with high self-esteem considerably decreased from 64 percent in 2007 to 49.5 percent in 2008, although the extent of happiness did not change (meaning in both years it remained at 3.5 on a scale of 7 varying from feeling most to the least happy).

The satisfaction with all the listed spheres of life decreased, although the ranking of the spheres remained unchanged.



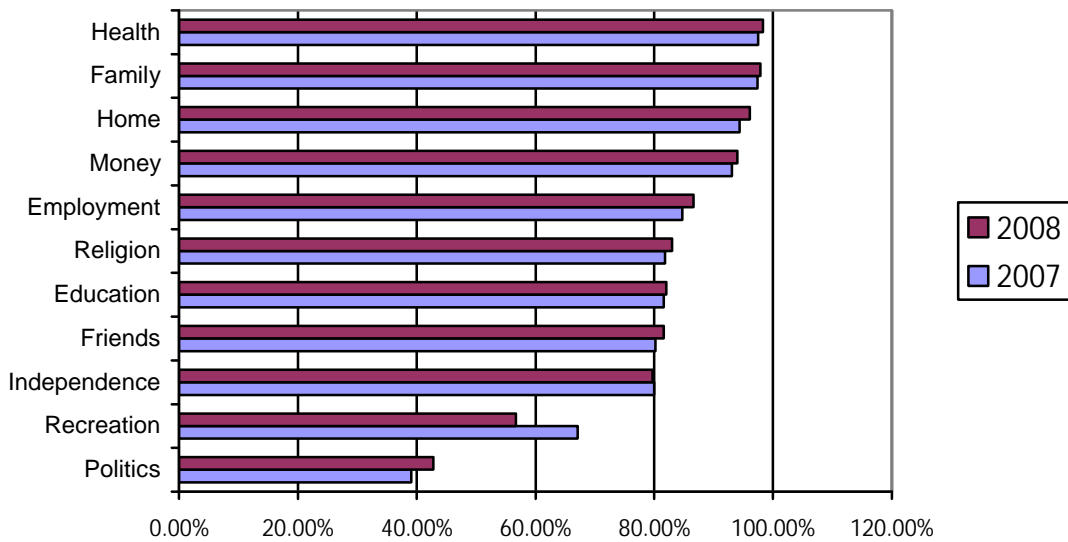
Graph 12 - *Satisfaction with various aspects of life*

The period after the war was marked with a decline in social activities. In comparison to 52.5 percent in 2007, in 2008 only 32.9 percent mentioned of attending ceremonies during the past month marking forty days or anniversary of someone who passed away; 42.6 percent in 2007 and 31.5 percent in 2008 mentioned of attending get-togethers at someone’s home; 18.7 percent in 2007 and 13.2 in 2008 of dining in a restaurant; 9.5 percent in 2007 and 8.6 percent in 2008 visited cinema, theatre or attended a concert.

Generally speaking, the trust towards others is not high in the country, and the year between the surveys was marked with even more decrease in trust. Compared to 2007 when 43.6 percent thought that others could be trusted, in 2008 the share of people sharing this thought decreased to 38.2 percent. Also significant was the decline in the number of those who considered that personal achievements depended more on the person himself/herself (from 57.3 percent in 2007 to 52.1 percent in 2008) rather than on fate or powerful others, and that it was possible to lead a decent life through honest work (from 41.3 percent in 2007 to 36.4 person in 2008).

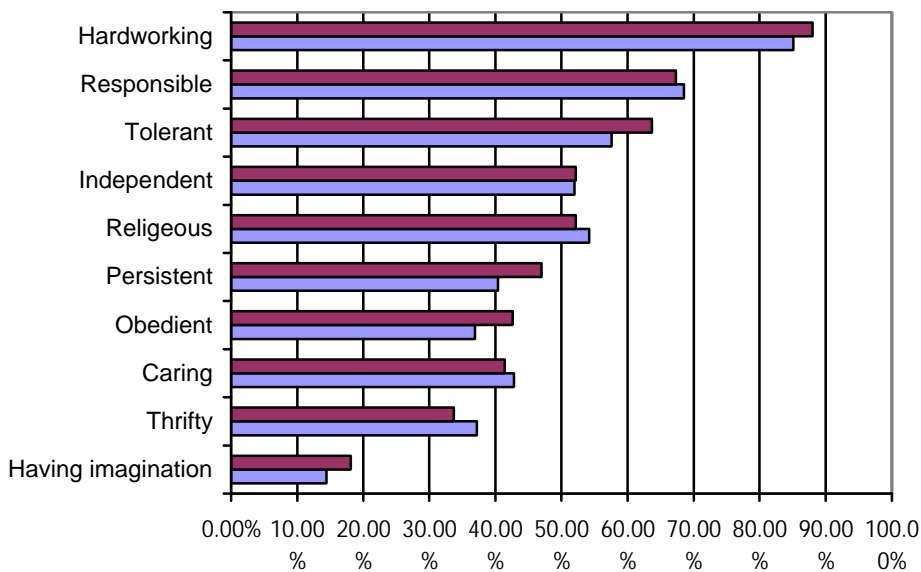
Religious tolerance decreased considerably after the war. In comparison to 26.9 percent in 2007, only 11.7 percent in 2008 considered that other religions and churches should have similar rights as Georgian Orthodox Church.

In both years of the survey, health, family, home and money were regarded as most valuable. Recognition of the importance of peace by the overwhelming majority (98.6 percent) in 2008 allows us to conclude about the increase of its value, but we cannot furnish the numbers due to the fact that it was not mentioned in the list provided to the respondents in 2007.



Graph 13 - *Importance of various aspects of life*

The prioritization of the characteristics that the child could learn at home reflects the value orientation of the population. Being a hardworking, responsible and tolerant person was considered as the most important in both years of survey. Between the two surveys, there was a noticeable change with regard to tolerance, persistence and obedience as in 2008 more people selected these features as being important.



Graph 14 - *Important characteristics for a child*

## **9. Impact of conflict on Residents of War Affected Territory**

The war affected the entire country, it altered the perceptions and feelings of almost all its inhabitants, but its impact can be assumed to be more dramatic on those who firsthand experienced fighting, were exposed to bombings, witnessed deaths, disfigurement of people and devastation of places.

To ascertain the specific impact of war on those who were directly involved, we grouped the respondents of Shida Kartli and Samegrelo and compared their attitudes towards authorities and governance, with the feelings and values of those residing in the rest of Georgia.

Overall liking of the authorities and positive evaluation of their actions is much higher among the inhabitants of the war affected areas. Compared to 38.5 percent of the rest of the population, 52.1 percent of the war zone population believed that Georgia was on the right path of development. They also supported more the idea of the President having the biggest share of the power (27 percent compared to 15.8 percent of the population of the unaffected zone). Larger section of war affected population (37.4 percent compared to 20.8 percent) believed that authorities took into account the needs and wishes of citizens and heeded more to the people (52.6 percent compared to 23.1 percent) since the events of November, 7.

The feeling of security was higher among the population of the war affected territories. This was revealed through various assessments made by them, in comparison to the evaluations of those from areas unaffected by the war zone – more (34.1 percent in contrast to 15.6 percent) thought that human rights were protected in the country; that citizens were equal under the law (33.9 percent in contrast to 18.8 percent). In addition, more of them felt further secured from injustice (37.1 percent compared to 18.2 percent). Similarly, the larger share of people from the war affected areas considered that private property was protected in Georgia (38.3 percent compared to 17.4 percent).

People from combat territories and from the rest of Georgia adhere to different values. Respondents from the war affected zones expressed less preference to the protection of human rights and justice by the President (19.3 percent compared to 26.4 percent) and much more to the provision of adequate living conditions to the population (51.4 percent compared to 45.3 percent).

Democracy was considered as the best way of governance by 75.6 percent of the population of a war affected zone and 67.1 percent of the remaining areas. Moreover, the share of those who thought that there was democracy in Georgia was bigger among people from the war affected territories (37 percent compared to 19.4 percent)

People from the war affected territories expressed more trust towards authorities; this was revealed following the direct question on trust, as well as an indirect one, where in fact a bigger share (24.5 percent compared to 15.3 percent) considered that the solution of the significant problems faced by the country was possible without the active participation of the population.

It appears that respondents from the war zone experienced more self-efficacy, 31.3 percent compared to 21.5 percent saw the possibility of influencing the decisions made by the authorities, and more (44.1 percent

compared to 34.0 percent) thought that in Georgia one could lead a decent life through honest work. Much less efficaciousness was experienced in regard to the country. The proportion of the population living in the war affected zone who believed that the future of Georgia depended mostly on Georgia itself was considerably smaller (20.5 percent compared to 24.6 percent).

The two groups of respondents revealed dissimilar external orientations. The share of those who considered NATO and EU membership desirable for the country was bigger in Shida Kartli and Samegrelo Regions , than in the rest of the country. NATO membership was supported by 73.2 percent of the war affected population compared to 64.9 percent of the rest of the surveyed, and EU membership was supported correspondingly by 85.0 and 75.0 percent of population.

Quality of life was lower among people from the war affected zone than of the rest of the population. The larger share among them thought that they did not find their place in life (39.5 percent compared to 31.4 percent), and the share of those experiencing satisfaction with their own life was smaller (17.1 percent compared to 21.4 percent).

## **10. Georgia after the August war**

The war is an event of utmost importance, its impact is reflected at all levels, be it individual, small group or community or the society as a whole. Despite the fact that it lasted only for five days, the impact of the war strong all over the country . Therefore, the discussions on the affects of war should not be limited by its impact on the territories of actual combat - the number of those who died or were wounded, villages destroyed, persons displaced or territories lost, but the changes that the war induced in the attitudes and behaviours of the population should also be considered.

Modern wars are marked by an increase in civilian deaths. In the beginning of the twentieth century, casualties among the military outnumbered casualties among civilians by nine times, while at the end of the same century, nine times more civilians than military died in the wars (Mollica, et al. 1994). 55.3 percent among those who died in the August war from Georgian side were civilians. Wars are marked not only by deaths or mutilation, but also by the violation of human rights. Violations are especially numerous and severe in combined type of wars, where the fight takes place against internal and external enemies, which was the case in August (IIFMCG, 2009). The war affected everyone, and apart from empathy and solidarity to the people of war affected territory, it also invoked fear. Behaviour always becomes subjected to fear when the safety framework is violated (McCauly, 2002). Fear often results in self-blame, causes distancing from the others, losing control, as well as feeling of helplessness, shame, anger and injustice. It can create mistrust and social disorganization among population (Schlebusch & Bosch, 2002).

Apathy and nihilism, which became evident as salient features of the society in 2008, were reflected in the increase of the number of people who refused to answer a number of questions, as well as on the share of those who did not have a definite political preference or restrained from expressing them. The period after the

war was also marked with the decrease of people interested in politics and of those ready to defend their own rights.

Fear increases the feeling of helplessness and dependence especially on powerful figures and institutions. Helplessness was revealed at all levels – individual, community as well as society, and the share of those who believed that what a person achieved in life depended more on himself rather than on others and situation decreased, the same can be said about those who believed that a decent life could be achieved through honest work. The war also decreased the number of those who believed that the future of Georgia depended more on itself than on other countries, and that Georgian authorities could be effective in resolving a renewed conflict. Such shifting of responsibility and power from the country and its authorities to other countries or outside actors was not unique to the population. It was evident in public speeches. For example, in his 26 August, 2008 statement, President Saakashvili declared: “But now the restoration of Georgia’s territorial integrity and protection of Georgia’s independence is no longer a matter of only Georgia or a matter of Georgia-Russian relations, this is a matter of Russia and the rest of the civilized world... Georgia’s independence and further strengthening is a matter between the Russian authorities - which are shattering laws - and the entire civilized world...Georgia’s future is no longer the future of only Georgia, it is the future of freedom, democracy and of the entire civilized mankind”.

Despite negative evaluation of the actions carried out by authorities during the war, such as the belief among majority that there was a possibility of avoiding the war, also large portion of the surveyed assessing the activities of State structures as ineffective, and feeling of helplessness in the population accompanied by increased dependence on powerful others, the rating of Saakashvili and the trust towards State structures increased after the war.

The war reflected on the quality of life. Despite the fact that the perception of the economic state of families has not changed after the war, economic optimism decreased, i.e. share of those who in the coming one to three years expected an improvement in their economic condition. The population became more concerned with matters related to health, and the number of those who expressed high self-esteem, satisfaction with various aspects of life as well as trust towards other people decreased.

More prominence of almost all the discussed changes among the population from war affected areas can be considered as a proof that much of differences found between the two surveys should be attributed to the war.

Threat often evokes reaction of psychological defence, which is a process of regulating painful emotions such as anxiety, depression and decrease of self-esteem (Freud, 1936). Defence mechanisms could be triggered both by inner causes – as a result of the fear of own thoughts and desires and by external threats (Paulhus, Fridhander & Hayes, 1997). In situations when a person fails to integrate his/her experience, he/she is confronted with the choice to become aware of the anxiety and experience all the pain associated with it, or to deny it, to ignore the reality and in this way decrease the anxiety. Denial is the simplest, and from developmental viewpoint the most primitive form of defence. It mainly acts as a protection from painful aspects of the external world (Goldberg, 1983) and self-deception is one of the mechanisms for its realization.

Activation of defensive mechanisms as a reaction to fear, humiliation and depression is not surprising. The rally on 11 August, 2008 in front of the Parliament which included performance of songs and was some kind of carnival celebration (Kachkachishvili, 2008) as well as a declaration that Georgia had not lost the war (e.g. Saakashvili, 2009) can be considered as manifestation of denial. Defence mechanisms is often functional

from short-term perspective as it can provide temporal relief in situations when it is impossible to change unpleasant situations by rational actions, but it is very dangerous from a long-term perspective, especially when it exists over a considerable period of time and on the level of the society. Denial and self-deception are nothing more than denial and self-deception and are manifestations of infantilism. As noted by the famous Georgian writer Grigol Robakidze “The historical truth will render self-deception very costly” (cited in Kiknadze, 2008). Refusal or inability to acknowledge the truth creates significant hindrance in conflict resolution and development in general.

Obviously, the war was a very severe and negative experience for the whole country. It took the lives of many people, and health of even more. Hundreds of families lost their houses and were induced to leave their native villages; it changed the course of life for thousands. But now we would like to emphasize what could have happened, but fortunately did not take place. The war did not induce xenophobia, and neither hatred towards Ossetians and Abkhazians.

The future of the country considerably depends on the choices it makes and on how it will utilize the experience gained from the war, will it become aware of the causes of war and mistakes committed, or will it ignore them and try to find temporal relief through denial.

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