



PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN GEORGIA

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Undecided Voters in 2016: Leaning Towards a Multi-Party System?

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Abstract

The Georgian political party system has been marked by radical polarization between the Georgian Dream (GD) and the United National Movement (UNM) since 2012. However, the Parliamentary Elections in 2016 have shown growing indecision among voters, which indicates dissatisfaction with both GD and UNM as well as the need for a third alternative. Examining the profile of undecided voters and their behavior during the 2016 October elections gives insight into the prospects of a multi-party system in Georgia. However, it seems that despite the considerable need expressed by society, a single and reliable third force is not visible to most voters.

Increasing the Number of Undecided Voters

The 2012 October elections were historic because it was the first time since Georgia reclaimed its independence that political power transitioned via peaceful elections, rather than via revolution, war or demonstrations. One common feature of the October 2012 elections and the subsequent four years of the new administration has been the radical polarization of two political forces: UNM and the Georgian Dream Coalition. One indicator of this strong polarization built on antipathy is that according to the opinion polls of June 2016, 21% of the respondents would never vote for UNM, whereas 19% would never vote for GD. Although this polarization has extended to the recent October 2016 election campaign, an interesting change can be observed compared to previous years. According to the June 2016 opinion polls by NDI/CRRC, the number of voters who cannot identify themselves with any party has been increasing steadily since the previous parliamentary elections in 2012.

In March 2016, 61% of the Georgian population was undecided about how they would vote if parliamentary elections were to be held the next day.¹ Only approximately 34% were decided on their votes.

Although the number of decided voters gradually increased since August 2015, from 28% to 38%, the share of undecided voters has been more stable, at approximately 60% over the same period.² More importantly, half of the likely voters were still undecided in June 2016.³

By comparison, in August 2012, less than two months before the parliamentary elections, only approximately 25% were uncertain about their choice.⁴ The percentage would be even smaller in September, after the infamous “prison videos” revealing the inhumane

treatment of prisoners during UNM’s rule, which largely escalated and polarized the public attitudes right before the 2012 elections.

Interestingly, in spite of the large number of undecided voters before the elections in 2016, those who were willing to vote still outnumbered the abstainers. However, although most of the population was willing to vote, the majority was undecided about their choice. Thus, it was obvious that the results of the October 2016 elections would be highly unpredictable because it would largely depend on the decisions of the undecided voters.⁵

What can a high share of undecided voters before elections say about Georgia’s political development? Can we suggest that there is a growing number of people who feel that they are not represented by any political force? Can this indicate the need for a more diverse multi-party system in Georgia? How can the actual results of the elections be explained, keeping in mind the voter indecision?

Profile of the Undecided Voters

To better understand the challenges and future prospects of the political party system in Georgia, it is important to study the reasons for indecision among voters. The simplest way to do so is to explore the policy preferences and other attitudes of undecided voters compared to those of decided voters.

A comparison between decided and undecided voters shows that there are few radical differences between these groups that would enable the generalization of a distinct image of an undecided voter.

In general, the undecided voters are predominantly young (18–35), almost equally distributed by gender, and slightly more represented in rural and minority settlements.⁶ Additionally, the undecided voters are more

1 <https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI%20Georgia_March%202016%20poll_Public%20Political_ENG_vf.pdf>, p. 48.

2 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 30.

3 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 34.

4 <<https://www.ndi.org/files/Georgia-Aug-2012-Survey.pdf>>, p. 50.

5 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 48.

6 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 31–33.

critical in assessing the actions of the government over the past four years, claiming a lack of progress in key social areas. The undecided voters are also more sceptical about the improvement of their own economic conditions over the next year. Furthermore, the undecided voters are slightly more critical of the pro-Western foreign policy aspirations of Georgia. However, the June 2016 opinion poll does not reveal contrasting differences between decided and undecided voters in terms of the important factors that influence their decision to vote for a party. For both decided and undecided voters, the most important factors seem to be the same, namely trust in specific members of political parties, parties' past performance, and electoral platforms and promises. The preferences are slightly different. In the case of decided voters, more attention is paid to their trust of specific members of political parties, whereas undecided voters pay more attention to parties' past performance. Overall, decided voters were more likely to name important factors than undecided voters were.⁷

Policy Factors

In terms of the most important policy issues while voting in parliamentary elections, the decided and undecided voters were very similar. The majority of both decided and undecided voters (41% and 42%, respectively) mostly care about a party's economic policy. The party's position on national security issues is a higher priority for decided voters, whereas healthcare matters more for undecided voters.⁸

There are also few differences in the perceptions of decided and undecided voters on the most important national issues. The majority of both decided and undecided voters agree that creating jobs is the most pressing issue. Slightly more undecided voters than decided ones think that the rising prices and inflation are the most important national issues.⁹

General Assessment of the Government

The undecided voters were quite critical towards the government before the October 2016 elections and were less positive in assessing Georgia's development over the last four years in key areas, such as healthcare, freedom of

speech, education, rights of women, the court system, and minority rights.¹⁰ However, the undecided voters are not necessarily more negative. Upon closer examination, more undecided voters than decided voters think that the conditions in Georgia have been the same since 2012 in the areas of healthcare, freedom of speech, corruption, jobs, and education. Only in a few areas, such as crime, poverty or inflation, were there more undecided voters who think that the situation has been worse. Similarly, although undecided voters were almost twice less likely to confirm that Georgia is developing in the right direction, most of them were not more negative; instead, they agreed that Georgia is not changing at all.¹¹

The critical attitude of undecided voters is also evident in other questions. Thus, among undecided voters, more than half (55% vs. 39%) would not agree that, before the October 2016 elections, the government was making changes that mattered to them.¹² Additionally, the undecided voters were less optimistic about their own economic conditions over the next year. Whereas 34% of the decided voters believed that their economic situation would improve, only 21% of the undecided voters thought the same. Additionally, 47% of the undecided voters thought that the situation would be the same, in contrast to 40% of the decided voters.¹³

Foreign Policy

For foreign policy, it can be argued that decided voters are slightly more pro-Western and that undecided voters are slightly more pro-Russian and/or more critical towards the stated pro-Western goals. For example, more decided voters than undecided voters approved of the Georgian government's stated goal to join the EU and NATO.¹⁴ Additionally, more decided voters (58%) than undecided voters (49%) agree that Georgia will benefit more from EU and NATO membership.¹⁵ Although the majority of both decided and undecided voters believe that pro-Western policy should be combined with good relations with Russia, more decided voters think that Georgia's foreign policy should be pro-Western (17% vs. 11%).

For pro-Russian feelings, 29% of the decided voters and 30% of the undecided voters believe that Geor-

7 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, pp. 14–17.

8 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 19.

9 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 10.

10 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, pp. 14–15.

11 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 23.

12 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 33.

13 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 41.

14 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 46, p. 53.

15 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 56.

gia would benefit more from abandoning the EU and NATO in favor of better relations with Russia.¹⁶ Furthermore, almost an equal share, one-fifth of both decided and undecided voters, believes that Georgia should be more pro-Russian with good relations with the EU and NATO. A small share of voters (both decided and undecided) also believes that Georgia should be pro-Russian.¹⁷

The 2016 Parliamentary Election Results

Georgian Dream, the governing party, won the parliamentary elections with 48.68% of the votes, based on proportional voting. UNM was second, with 27.11% of the votes, and a third party, Alliance of Patriots, barely passed the 5% threshold to win parliamentary seats, with 5.01% of the votes. The second round was held in 50 majoritarian constituencies on October 30, and it resulted in GD winning 48 more majoritarian constituencies. There were only two constituencies where non-GD majorities won. One represented Industrialists, and the other was won by an independent candidate, Salome Zurbishvili, who was backed by GD. Therefore, GD has secured not only the most votes in the new parliament but also three quarters of the mandate, thus qualifying for a constitutional majority. In addition to GD, the new parliament will consist of UNM, Alliance of Patriots, a representative from the Industrialists, and one independent candidate.

Understanding the 2016 Parliamentary Election Results—The Need for the Non-existent “Other”

An interesting way to analyze the election results in light of pre-election polls is to see the proportion of actual support nationwide. Because the turnout was only 51.63% (less than 60.8% in 2012 and less than 67% willing to vote according to a June 2016 opinion poll¹⁸), the nationwide support of Georgian Dream was 25.13%, that of UNM was 13.99%, and that of Alliance of Patriots was 2.58%. These results are not strikingly different from the June 2016 survey results, except for GD winning more than predicted.

Thus, did the surprisingly high share of undecided voters affect the parliamentary elections in 2016? And if so, how? It can be argued that yes, it has, but not in a very direct way.

According to the June 2016 survey among likely abstainers, the vast majority was undecided (74%).¹⁹ It seems that, as expected, the majority of undecided voters did not participate in the elections at all. Naturally, by this fact alone, the undecided voters have indirectly affected the election results.

Furthermore, it seems that the last months of pre-election campaign led some of the undecided voters to make up their minds. Of the various possible developments from June to October that could have affected the feelings of the electorate, Saakashvili's factor could have played a serious role in triggering further polarization, and not necessarily in his favor. On the one hand, the UNM demonstration was organized three days before the elections, and Saakashvili's promise to win the elections and “cross the sea” to Georgia was taken by some UNM supporters as additional motivation to vote. On the other hand, the undecided voters could have felt discouraged by Saakashvili's continued influence over UNM and by the visible lack of rethinking on the party's side about its past deeds. In this light, some of the undecided voters could have been drawn towards GD to prevent UNM from succeeding, which was a similar impulse as that felt before the 2012 elections.

What is striking in both the pre-election polls and the actual results is that the support for the “other” party is quite high. According to the June 2016 nationwide poll, the share of those who thought that the “other party” (neither Georgian Dream nor UNM) was closer to them was higher (24%) than the declared support for either GD (19%) or UNM (15%). Furthermore, the share of those who could not identify themselves with any party was 40% in June 2016.^{20 21} For the actual election results, 24.22% of the voters voted for a party other than Georgian Dream or UNM. Although such support would easily guarantee parliamentary seats for one party or at least a coalition, in reality, there are more than 20 parties that all differ in terms of their ideology and supporters. Therefore, one major insight of a high share of undecided voters is an increased need for a third force in society. However, it seems that the actual “supply” of political parties or their configuration does not meet this need because the majority of voters cannot see a reliable third alternative among more than 20 different parties.

The two most prominent pro-Western parties among “the other” were Free Democrats (4.63%) and the Repub-

16 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 56.

17 <[https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/files/NDI_June_2016%20poll_Public%20Issues_ENG_VFF%20(1).pdf)>, p. 62.

18 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 24.

19 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 34.

20 <https://www.ndi.org/files/Public-Attitude-Findings-English_3.pdf>, p. 36.

21 These percentages are representative of entire Georgian population, in contrast to the election results, which represents only 51.63% of the voters who participated in elections.

lican Party (1.55%). Their lack of support could be attributed to their past as part of the Georgian Dream Coalition, and it was difficult to perceive them as independent opposition forces. This is particularly true in the case of the Republican Party, which left the coalition only in late March 2016 but retained their political positions for a few more months, for which they were criticized. Because the electorate of these two parties is very similar, forming a coalition could help both of them.

A newly founded party by Paata Burchuladze, who is an opera singer and a prominent activist of children's charities, has gathered considerable support (3.45%) due to his personal popularity, despite accusations of being an UNM satellite. This party might have gathered support of some of the previously undecided voters, thus limiting chances of other parties.

One development, partially confirmed by election results, is that the pro-Russian parties used simple messages to target a broader audience (such as Alliance of Patriots with 5.01% or Burdjanadze—Democratic Movement with 3.53%), which is more effective in mobilizing nationwide electoral support. In contrast, pro-Western parties find themselves closed in small bubbles of like-minded people, mostly well-educated residents of the capital.

Future Prospects

Thus, what are the future prospects for Georgia with the recent elections in mind? As it seems, GD has secured the constitutional majority, resulting in more uncertainties over political institutions because Georgia has witnessed an excess of power during UNM rule. This alone seems dangerous, considering the lack of institutional barriers for limiting the overuse of power. Further-

more, although it is perhaps unsurprising in the modern world, it is nevertheless striking that, after elections that resulted in a parliament in which only approximately 40% of the population is represented, a case could be made for a lack of legitimacy and a democratic deficit.

The 2016 parliamentary elections of Georgia have once more shown the role of television as the main medium with the voters. As a result, strong financial support and simple messages targeting a wide audience should not be underestimated.

Overall, the picture is more diverse in 2016 than it was in 2012 in terms of both the number of participating entities and the actual results. However, this diversity is not sufficiently reflected in the Parliament because only 3 of the 26 participating parties passed the 5% threshold. This suggests the need for lowering the threshold on the one hand and a better-targeted campaign of the “other” parties on the other hand, especially pro-Western ones.

As the 2016 parliamentary elections in Georgia have shown, there is an apparent need for more diversity and a third alternative that differs from UNM and GD. However, the only force that managed to use this window of opportunity (not counting the two previously mentioned above) was the pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots. Therefore, it is possible that pro-Western policies will be challenged to a greater extent than before over the next 4 years.

While GD is rejoicing in its victory, it should ensure that the undecided voters do not become a reason for deeper frustration and crisis. Keeping in mind that the majority of voters are not represented in the parliament, the silent voice of the abstainers should be given more attention in the coming years.

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Georgia's Parliamentary Elections—a Step Forward?

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Abstract

This article reviews the results of Georgia's 2016 parliamentary elections, assesses the pre-electoral environment and discusses the major electoral players. The article concludes that despite the overall satisfactory conduct of parliamentary elections, the political implications might be worrying. Three possible ramifications stand out. First, the elections have produced a highly polarized parliamentary configuration, where the level of political confrontation will be much more intense than it was in the previous four years, thus minimizing the chances for inter-party compromises. Second, with no institutional checks and balances and with the absence of a clear parliamentary counterweight, the Georgian Dream—Democratic Georgia government might be tempted to abuse power and leave Georgia's nascent institutional democracy in a highly vulnerable state. Third, the liberal and moderately liberal third parties performed particularly badly, which prompted a massive shake-up in the oppositional spectrum.

Overview of Results

On October 8, 2016, Georgia held its eighth parliamentary elections since independence. Georgia's constitution, which holds the cabinet accountable solely to the 150-member legislature, makes Parliament a pivotal player in its political system, and the parliamentary polls—a milestone event in the country's political life.

In Georgia's mixed electoral system, voters elect 73 MPs in majoritarian, single-seat constituencies (more than 50 percent of votes are required for an outright victory). The remaining 77 seats are distributed proportionally in the closed party-list contest among the political parties that clear a five percent threshold.

The October 8 elections ended with an overwhelming victory of the ruling party. The Georgian Dream—Democratic Georgia (GDDG) garnered 49 percent of the vote and 44 mandates in a nationwide party-list contest. The major contender—the United National Movement—finished with 27 percent and 27 mandates. The Alliance of Patriots, the third party to enter Parliament, narrowly cleared the five percent threshold and obtained six parliamentary mandates. No other potential entrants have come close to the five percent threshold, except the Free Democrats, who were just 6650 (0.37 percent) votes short of passing the target.

GDDG also secured an outright victory in 23 single-seat electoral districts in the first round of elections and won the absolute majority of runoffs on October 30, claiming a constitutional majority of 113 seats in Parliament (GDDG will be represented by 115 MPs). Only one oppositional candidate managed to win a majoritarian contest (representative of the Industrialists party) along with one GDDG-supported but formally independent candidate (former Foreign Affairs Minister Salome Zurabishvili).

The Political Legacy of the 2012 Parliamentary Elections

The 2012 parliamentary elections brought a peaceful and democratic transfer of power, Georgia's first since the first

multiparty elections unseated the Communist regime in 1990. In 2012, the Georgian Dream (GD), a coalition of multiple oppositional parties unified by the billionaire-cum-politician Bidzina Ivanishvili, unseated the incumbent President Mikheil Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM) in a landslide victory of 55 to 41 percent.

The 2012 parliamentary elections have dramatically changed the Georgian political landscape. UNM has incurred the political cost of its hard-handed governance. The party has greatly suffered because several of its top leaders were prosecuted and imprisoned by the GD government. The combined pressure from the disgruntled electorate and from the victors' justice has stretched UNM's resources and capabilities to the breaking point.

However, the victory in 2012 also caught the Georgian Dream—a coalition that was hastily cobbled together to confront UNM—largely by surprise. Lingering disagreements within the coalition about both foreign and internal politics led to the eventual departure of the two original partners—the Free Democrats and the Republicans. The doubts cast over the GD's genuine attachment to the European course in foreign affairs (especially following the departure of its most Western-leaning members), coupled with lackluster economic performance and the devaluation of the country's national currency, have gradually eroded the party's support base. The government's tit-for-tat politics, which were aimed primarily at the United National Movement, and more recently Georgia's most-watched TV station, Rustavi 2, have also played against the ruling party both domestically and abroad.

Georgia's highly personalized politics have changed as well. President Saakashvili left the country following the 2013 presidential elections and was the governor of Ukraine's Odessa region from May 2015 until 7 November 2016. Although he remains UNM's uncontested leader, his physical absence from Georgia has lessened his impact on UNM's everyday decisions.

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the true architect of GDs victory in the 2012, resigned from his post as Prime Minister in 2013 and announced his withdrawal from active politics. Still, Ivanishvili is largely seen as remaining in charge of key political domains, such as handpicking both of his successors for the position of prime minister, vetting cabinet members and deciding on coalition politics. He has, however, distanced himself from the mundane affairs of governance.

The [incomplete] departure of the two political heavyweights has left both leading parties in a highly ambiguous state of a leadership deficit. This is particularly true for GD, which is a relatively new force with little to no experience in governing. Coupled with the dwindling popularity of UNM and GD, their relative weakness should have opened the political space for smaller and newer parties, thus making the political space more diverse and vibrant. That the electoral playing field was widely open for third-party success was well demonstrated by the large mass of disoriented voters. According to the opinion survey commissioned by the National Democratic Institute in June and July 2016, 67 percent of respondents planned to vote in parliamentary elections, but the majority of Georgians (57 percent) were politically undecided.

Pre-Election Environment and Major Political Parties

Although the electoral field has indeed witnessed some fragmentation and experimentation, UNM and the slightly re-named Georgian Dream—Democratic Georgia (GDDG) remained front-runners, polling considerably ahead of their rivals.

Six other political parties were polling close to the 5 percent threshold that is necessary to win seats in the proportional contest. The “State for the People” party, launched by the renowned opera singer and long-time philanthropist Paata Burchuladze only a few months before the elections, was a surprise challenger to the UNM-GD duo, polling at 12 percent in the International Republican Institute’s March opinion survey. However, poor party management led to embarrassing defections, and the weakly formulated ideological platform failed to impress the disenchanting voters. Later polls showed the “State for the People” struggling to clear the threshold.

Free Democrats and Republicans, the two influential junior members of the Georgian Dream coalition, both headed to the elections independently. Free Democrats, who clearly had a shot at entering Parliament on a party list, ran a sluggish campaign and failed to articulate themselves as a distinct and ideologically coherent political party. The Republicans, who were late to

end their alliance with GD and have since suffered sustained attacks from ex-PM Ivanishvili, focused their campaign on selected majoritarian districts in metropolitan areas of Tbilisi and Batumi. The three other possible entrants—a pro-Russia Democratic Movement led by Nino Burjanadze, a nativist Alliance of Patriots and the populist Labor Party—campaigning actively to mobilize their niche voters.

Interestingly, UNM and GDDG followed a somewhat similar line in their electoral campaigns. Both emphasized their renewal and favored relative political newcomers to lead their party lists. Both parties preferred to communicate with voters through the media rather than the usual massive street rallies. The leaders of UNM and GDDG—Mikheil Saakashvili and Bidzina Ivanishvili—were also closely involved in campaigning through lengthy media appearances. UNM also widely deployed door-to-door meetings and ran an innovative campaign through social media platforms.

Despite the relatively conciliatory tone of GDDG Chairman, Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, and some of the newer faces on the GDDG list, the prevailing tone of their campaign has been rather aggressive in targeting the UNM. Secret audio recordings of senior UNM officials and UNM sympathizers have been uploaded to the Internet, purporting to prove their plans for upheaval. The government has failed to distance itself from these tactics, and law enforcement has failed to identify the authors of the recordings, which led UNM to allege their complicity. While the electoral campaign was mostly peaceful in the beginning, save for a few isolated incidents, closer to the elections the violence spiked, including a shootout at a campaign event in Gori and a bombing of a UNM MP’s car in Tbilisi center.

Winners and Losers in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections

Twenty-five parties/blocks and 816 majoritarian candidates contested the parliamentary elections this year. Only four parties managed to enter Parliament. The largest of the four parliamentary parties, the Georgian Dream—Democratic Georgia, was established in February 2012 and served as the senior partner in the ruling Georgian Dream coalition. Despite its leading position, however, the party failed to establish itself as an ideologically consistent political union. Similar to any other post-Soviet catch-all ruling party, GDDG is an amalgamation of leftists and rightists, social conservatives and progressives, businesspeople and artists. This seemingly incompatible palette of philosophies and personalities is tightly glued together by the massive wealth and popularity of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the party founder and the Prime Minister of Georgia in 2012–2013.

Despite its weakly formulated ideological platform, the party has effectively mobilized its supporters and won a comfortable majority. Three main reasons contributed to GDDG's electoral success:

First and foremost, this had to do with the incumbency advantage. With power come financial resources, guaranteed media coverage and administrative instruments. GDDG has effectively employed all three. The party was particularly successful in securing donations: from June 8 to October 1, GDDG fundraised 16 million GEL, whereas UNM obtained donations worth only 1 million GEL. This, combined with Bidzina Ivanishvili's lengthy and widely broadcasted appearances in regional media outlets, and the concerted last-minute repairs of municipal roads, water supply infrastructure and gas pipes across the country, has contributed to GDDG's electoral success.

No less important was the relatively high approval rates for Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, who has been in charge of the Cabinet since December 2015, well within the honeymoon period for the standards of post-Soviet politics. Kvirikashvili's relatively short tenure as Prime Minister and his reputation as a balanced politician and an experienced manager, coupled with the recruitment of some of his personal allies on the party list, allowed him to face voters with his political capital largely intact.

This holds true for the party mandate as well. In many ways, the 2016 elections were a continuation of the 2012 parliamentary elections. Back then, when the Georgian Dream (GD) coalition unseated the incumbent President Mikheil Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM), the executive burden was disproportionately skewed towards the two junior members of the Georgian Dream coalition—the Free Democrats and the Republicans—despite their relatively minor parliamentary representation. Moreover, the year-long period of acrimonious cohabitation between President Saakashvili and Prime Minister Ivanishvili was widely presented as an obstruction to GD's reform agenda. As a result, for most of its time in office, the party was immune to political responsibility for the government's policy failures, which allowed party leaders to appeal for a fresh political mandate four years after its inauguration.

Last but not least, the 2016 parliamentary elections were as much about the GDDG as they were about the United National Movement and, most notably, its leader and the governor of Ukraine's Odessa region, Mikheil Saakashvili. Things seemed particularly optimistic for UNM at the beginning of the electoral campaign. The polls had consistently predicted a tight race between the leading parties: in the International Republican Institute's March opinion survey, the difference

between GDDG and UNM was just one percent, and in National Democratic Institute's August opinion survey, the difference stood at four percent. However, closer to elections, the party suffered sustained attacks by the government. The government's constant accusations of UNM-planned destabilization, coupled with Saakashvili's vows to return to Georgia after the elections, has catered to the fears of ruling party supporters and won the vote of the undecided electorate, despite the latter's overall disapproval of GDDG's performance.

However, few would have predicted the gap to be that wide, let alone that the ruling party would end up so close to securing a supermajority. Thus, when the early results showed GDDG in a decisive lead, UNM leaders and supporters gathered in front of the Central Election Commission and accused the administration of manipulative vote tabulation.

An intra-party crisis ensued, with Mikheil Saakashvili questioning the overall legitimacy of elections and calling for a boycott of the results, with most Tbilisi-based party leaders preferring to enter Parliament and the majoritarian runoffs. Saakashvili lost the debate, and the party opted against the boycott, except in Zugdidi, where UNM's candidate and Mikheil Saakashvili's wife Sandra Roelofs refused to participate in the second round. UNM headed to 43 majoritarian runoffs (out of 50), hoping to mobilize the voters around the idea of preserving democracy and depriving the ruling party of a constitutional majority. UNM's performance was expectedly meager, however, with party infighting and the reluctance of other oppositional parties to endorse its candidates having minimized UNM's chances of narrowing the difference in majoritarian runoffs. It also enabled the ruling party to divert its campaign and administrative resources to battleground districts. As a result, UNM lost the majoritarian contest, even in those constituencies where their candidates had dominated in the first round.

The Alliance of Patriots, which was the third party to enter Parliament and the youngest of the three, was established in 2013 by Ivanishvili-sympathizers who broke with the Georgian Dream coalition on the grounds of their disagreement in dealing with the United National Movement. The party claims credit for obtaining and publicizing prison torture videos, which was an important contribution to UNM's defeat in the 2012 parliamentary elections, and it is still seen as the most ardent opponent to UNM and Mikheil Saakashvili. The party's populist, nationalistic and anti-immigration ideology resonates well with the country's conservative and religious segments, and its fiercely anti-UNM rhetoric accommodates the concerns of disgruntled GD voters.

Since its establishment, the party has gradually increased its electorate; in the 2014 municipal elections,

the Alliance of Patriots won an unexpected 4.72 percent of aggregate votes. This time as well, the Alliance had all it took to score big in the polls: nonstop media coverage through the party-affiliated Obieqtivi TV and radio stations, private and business donations worth as much as that of the United National Movement and the partial endorsement of Bidzina Ivanishvili.

Political and Institutional Implications

Despite some allegations of unlawful campaigning, several incidents of violence and the dubiously delayed vote-counting process, election day was mostly peaceful, the voting process was orderly and the fundamental freedoms were generally observed. With nearly all contestants honoring the results and no international organization questioning the overall legitimacy of the elections, the parliamentary polls can be considered yet another successful test of Georgia's democracy.

The political consequences are, however, worrying. The hopes for a multi-party parliament have been effectively shattered. Instead, the parliamentary elections have produced a highly polarized parliamentary configuration, where the level of political confrontation will be much more intense than during the previous four years, thus minimizing the chances for inter-party compromises. The pre-electoral expectations for a close race between GDDG and UNM appeared to have been largely overstated as well; UNM trailed far behind in the proportional contest and failed to narrow this difference in the majoritarian runoffs. UNM's poor performance in the second round reignited intra-party debate, with Mikheil Saakashvili trading accusations publicly with the Tbilisi-based party leadership and calling on a radical organizational reshuffle in the party. It remains unclear whether the party will manage to overcome the crisis and maintain its integrity.

With no institutional checks and balances and with the absence of a clear parliamentary counterweight, the GDDG government might be tempted to abuse power and leave Georgia's nascent institutional democracy in a highly vulnerable state. Some alarming suggestions have already been made, including the abolition of direct presidential elections and stalling the plans for reforming the electoral system's majoritarian component.

The liberal and moderately liberal pro-Western political parties performed particularly badly. After an unex-

pected defeat, Irakli Alasania, the leader of the Free Democrats, announced that he would be "temporarily quitting" politics. Although Alasania has claimed that the party would continue its work, several senior party officials have also left the Free Democrats. The Republican Party, once an influential member of the Georgian Dream coalition, failed to enter Parliament with just 1.55 percent of nationwide votes. Shortly after the elections, Davit Usupashvili, the leader of the Republican Party and the former Parliamentary Chairman, announced that he would be parting ways with the Republican Party and starting a new oppositional political force. Several leading party members have also left the Republican Party. It also remains unclear whether Paata Burchuladze's "State for the People" party, which won 3.45 percent, will survive the defeat.

Although much of the pro-Western group's failure had to do with their ineffective campaigning and extreme fragmentation, the election results speak to the society's growing anti-Western sentiments. The results of the elections for the 21-member Supreme Council in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, held along with the parliamentary elections, are particularly telling. Here, just like nationally, the proportional contest was dominated by GDDG and UNM, with 45 percent and 30 percent, respectively, and the third and fourth best results were scored by the two EU- and NATO-skeptics—the Democratic Movement and the Alliance of Patriots—with 5.9 percent and 5.7 percent, respectively.

With a nativist and Russia-sympathetic Alliance of Patriots in Parliament and the more progressive parties outside, it is also inevitable that the political agenda of the newly elected Parliament will be more isolationist and more socially conservative. The Western orientation will continue, however, even though the two ardently pro-Western political parties—the Free Democrats and the Republicans—will no longer be in the Cabinet. The Euro-Atlantic integration will remain GDDG's top priority, as underlined by Giorgi Kvirikashvili on numerous occasions before and after the elections. This is not to say that there will be no anti-Western sentiments in the ruling party. As in the previous Georgian Dream coalition, anti-Western voices will be present in the background, but they will remain insignificant in shaping policy.

About the Author

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Implication of Increased Anti-Western Propaganda in the Election Results

Teona Turashvili, Tbilisi

Abstract

A gradual decrease in the level of public trust toward Western institutions has been observed in recent years in Georgia. Nevertheless, a substantial majority of Georgians still supports the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, and this majority appears resilient to increasing anti-Western propaganda. It is particularly interesting to examine whether these recent developments influenced the final results of Georgia's recent parliamentary elections. The article seeks to demonstrate that the political dimension of the anti-Western propaganda campaign appeared less successful than its cultural and social dimensions.

Introduction

Georgia has generally been regarded as a predominantly pro-European country in which NATO and the European Union (EU) have enjoyed solid support not only from major political forces but also from the general public. However, certain changes have been witnessed in the country in recent years. On the one hand, Euro-skepticism has been on the rise among the Georgian public. On the other hand, specific political groups have advocated altering Georgia's pro-Western orientation. At the same time, the Georgian Dream government sought to adopt new approaches in its relations with Russia to avoid another confrontation with its northern neighbor. This new strategy met with criticism from the main opposition force, the United National Movement (UNM), which accused the government of making concessions to Russia.

The results of the October parliamentary elections could offer valuable insights into the potential implications of growing anti-Western narratives in the country.

In that regard, an overview of the election programs and statements from major political parties with regard to the issues involving the EU, NATO, Russia and other neighboring countries is essential.

Foreign Policy Priorities in Political Party Programs

A content analysis showed that there is consensus regarding Georgia's membership in the EU among political elites, as these elites campaigned to deepen the country's relations with the EU. However, as some experts argued, both the GD and UNM programs lack a precise or realistic strategy to achieve their declarations.¹

The third party, the Alliance of Patriots, obtained six seats in the parliament in the most recent elections. Although its members support Georgia's aspirations to integrate into the European structure, its program none-

theless did not include any concrete steps that might be taken in this direction.

Other pro-Western parties, which did not clear the 5% threshold to enter the new parliament, such as the Republican Party, Irakli Alasania's Free Democrats and Paata Burchuladze—State for People, made similar promises. The Republican Party even proposed to apply for EU membership in the near future. Additionally, its leaders initiated the drafting of constitutional amendments and amending the preamble to the Constitution to read that the Georgian people aspire to “establish a full-fledged place in the security and cooperation system of the democratic Euro-Atlantic states.” Even the leader of the Democratic Movement—United Georgia, Nino Burjanadze, who is widely considered a “pro-Russian politician”, has not opposed Georgia's aspirations for European integration. Nevertheless, she openly campaigned for Georgia's inclusion within the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union.

However, there are significant contradictions with regard to NATO. While liberal and pro-European political parties see membership in NATO as their end goal, the Alliance of Patriots and Burjanadze's Democratic Movement are openly skeptical of or even against NATO membership. Some leading figures in the Republican Party went even further and called for an American military base to be opened on the country's soil until Georgia could join NATO as a full member. Conversely, according to the website of the Alliance of Patriots, since NATO members are not ready to incorporate Georgia into the bloc, Georgians should not “deceive themselves” with unrealistic “expectations”, and greater efforts should therefore be devoted to European integration.² As for Burjanadze's vision, she campaigned on enshrining non-bloc status in Georgia's Constitution. Consequently, she directly opposed any collaboration with

1 Luka Petaia. “West or Russia? What Political Parties Are Offering Us?” *Netgazeti.Ge*. October 7, 2016 {Georgian} Retrieved from: <<http://netgazeti.ge/news/141348/>>

2 Please see the website of the Alliance of Patriots: <<http://patriots.ge/our-vision-program/>>

NATO, maintaining that her proposal would lead the country to unification, economic success and progress.

The various positions of the political parties regarding Russia and other neighbors are also notable. While GD leaders plan to continue a so-called “pragmatic approach”, implying easing tensions with Russia and having a face-to-face dialogue on economic and social matters, the UNM prioritizes building international consensus on the policy of non-recognition of breakaway regions. Meanwhile, the ruling party also asserted that normalization of relations would not occur at the expense of Georgia’s “substantial interests” (implying territorial integrity). UNM also mentions building peaceful resolutions to conflicts with Russia; however, compared to GD, its approach to this matter is relatively passive, as its program argues that the prospects of normalization depend on “Russia’s willingness to change its position on occupied territories.”

Key figures in the Alliance of Patriots believe that finding common ground with Russia is essential to conflict resolution. In addition to engaging with the Russian Federation, they support the involvement of Europe and the United States in this process.

As for the political parties left outside the legislative body, the Free Democrats stress the need for formal and informal negotiations with Russia to deescalate the current tension. In contrast, Burjanadze advocates avoiding the use of the terms “occupant” or “occupation” when talking about Russia. In her opinion, it is Georgia that should show and convince Russia that it is not a threat to Russian national interests. According to some experts, such an approach arguably means abandoning Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic ambitions.³

With regard to other neighbors, the political parties’ programs were limited to broad statements about economic cooperation and people-to-people contacts. The only exception was the Alliance of Patriots, which actively cultivated anti-Turkish sentiments with the help of its television channel, Obieqtivi TV. Its authorities assert that the Turkish government is aiming to seize Adjara and Abkhazia. Additionally, the Alliance of Patriots strongly opposed the construction of a new mosque for the Muslim minority in Batumi. In general, they have used xenophobic, pseudo-nationalist and homophobic rhetoric extensively over the past years. In essence, a substantial part of their program was devoted

to their reflections about patriotism, summed up as follows: “Georgian soul, values and spirit”.

Thus, despite general consensus among the political parties regarding the EU, anti-NATO arguments have gradually come to flourish. Even more, this is the first time since the Rose Revolution that an undoubtedly pro-Russian party, Centrists Khachishvili-Bedukadze, has attempted to register for the elections with the promises of Russian pensions, Russian military bases in Georgia and dual Georgian/Russian citizenship. Another important aspect was the inclusion of a so-called “pro-Georgian”, i.e., nationalist, narrative in the political discourse, which was chiefly exploited by a conservative segment of society.

Public Perceptions about the West

Growing anti-Western sentiments were also reflected in public perceptions. Recent surveys suggest that pro-European attitudes are on the decline, whereas pro-Russian attitudes are on the rise among the population. Overall, the proportion of people supporting EU membership has dropped from 79 percent to 61 percent since 2009. A similar trend was observed with regard to NATO membership, which was supported by 57 percent of the respondents in 2015, compared to 68 percent in 2009.⁴

The issue of ethnic minorities should be highlighted when discussing the scope of Euroscepticism in Georgia. Surveys showed that European integration enjoys relatively low support among ethnic Azerbaijanis and Armenians residing outside the capital. While membership in the EU and NATO is supported by a vast majority of Georgians (83 percent and 74 percent, respectively), only up to two-fifths of minorities share the same position (38 percent and 31 percent, respectively).⁵ Furthermore, although a significant proportion of Georgians (38 percent) considers the EU Georgia’s best ally, Russia is perceived as the nation’s closest friend by most minorities (57%).⁶

As far as cultural matters are concerned, an increasing number of Georgians believe that the EU threatens their traditions. While the share of Euroskeptics fluctuated around twenty percent until 2013, this portion exceeded one-third of the population in 2015.⁷ Moreover, the percentage of respondents who argued that EU membership might result in disrespect for Georgian traditions doubled, reaching 28 percent.⁸

3 Luka Pertaia. “West or Russia? What Political Parties Are Offering Us?” *Netgazeti.Ge*. October 7, 2016 {Georgian} Retrieved from: <<http://netgazeti.ge/news/141348/>>

4 The Caucasus Research Resource Centers. (2009–2015) “Knowledge and attitudes toward the EU in Georgia”. Retrieved through ODA—<<http://www.caucasusbarometer.org/>> on November 3, 2016.

5 Ibid

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Ibid

Possible Reasons for Increased Anti-Western Narratives in Georgia

One of the major reasons for emerging anti-Western and pro-Russian sentiments might be the narrative of particular Western countries being reluctant to support Georgia in counterbalancing Russia's political pressure. Such rhetoric was particularly successful after the Russia–Georgia war in 2008, which was not followed by any sanctions against Russia unlike those that were imposed after Russian military intervention in Ukraine. Additionally, despite the European Commission's positive report on visa liberalization progress, the process was delayed several times, and its final realization still requires approval from other EU institutions.

Apart from public frustration resulting from the prolonged visa liberalization talks and no progress on NATO membership, deliberate distribution of anti-Western narratives played a crucial role. Georgia thus became a subject of growing Russian propaganda since 2013, as the number of websites, Internet-based TV channels, non-profit organizations and political groups inciting anti-Western sentiments has proliferated since that time.⁹

The content analyses of the messages of Russia's soft power agent revealed that by circulating half-true or simply untrue information, they aimed at disseminating false images of the West and Russia. For these purposes, several narratives were propagated among the Georgian audience, including the following: a) Euro-Atlantic integration as an unrealistic expectation; b) NATO as an obstacle to restoring Georgia's territorial integrity; c) incompatibility of Western values with Georgian values; d) the United States and, in particular, Turkey as unreliable partners for Georgia.¹⁰

Cultural and social aspects of stereotypes about the West were the most effective in predominantly traditional Georgian society. In particular, as concluded by the study prepared by the European Initiative—Liberty Academy Tbilisi (EI-LAT), Russian propaganda extensively employed political myths and stereotypes of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities in cultivating xenophobic and homophobic sentiments. As a result, “Russia [presents] itself as Georgia's only ally with common identity, religious faith, history and culture. Meanwhile, it portrays the West as a threat to all the above-

mentioned values.”¹¹ Similarly, the Media Development Fund reported, that anti-Western rhetoric was typically applied in xenophobic and homophobic contexts.¹²

Thereafter, some conservative priests began to express anti-Western myths and stereotypes, particularly with regard to LGBT society and gay marriage. A clear confirmation of Russian propaganda being successful in this regard was the promise by the leader of the ruling party to make constitutional amendments to define the term “family” at the constitutional level.

Conclusions from Election Results

Despite a number of differences in the foreign policy priorities of GD and UNM, it is expected that both will continue their support for Euro-Atlantic policies in parliament. As for the Alliance of Patriots—known for its Euroskeptic and anti-NATO rhetoric—its six MPs will not afford it enough power to modify the country's declared foreign policy priorities in the short run. However, its leaders can also further incite anti-Western sentiments in Georgian society and slow down the reform agenda. In addition, the failure of some liberal parties to secure seats in the parliament coupled with the success of the Alliance of Patriots demonstrate that Georgia's pro-European stance should not be taken for granted.

It is difficult to argue that the poor performance of some liberal parties in the elections is closely related to the growth in Russian's recent soft power. Among other political mistakes, they failed to meet public expectations. Surveys demonstrated that economic problems, such as unemployment, poverty, and inflation, were the top priorities for Georgia's citizens, while the campaigns of the liberal parties concentrated on foreign policy and general liberal principles, largely ignoring domestic challenges.

In addition, most of these parties attempted to portray themselves as a greater pro-Western political force than the ruling party. UNM members applied similar tactics, as they criticized the government for making concessions to Russia.

In spite of these accusations, as the results of public opinion polls suggest, EU and NATO advocates were distributed almost equally among the major political forces (excluding the Alliance of Patriots).¹³

9 Levan Avalishvili, Giorgi Lomtadze and Alexander Kevkhishvili, “Kremlin's Information War: Why Georgia Should Develop State Policy on Countering Propaganda”, *Institute for Development of Freedom of Information*, September 1, 2016, p. 6 Retrieved from: <<http://bit.ly/2c7K7T4>>

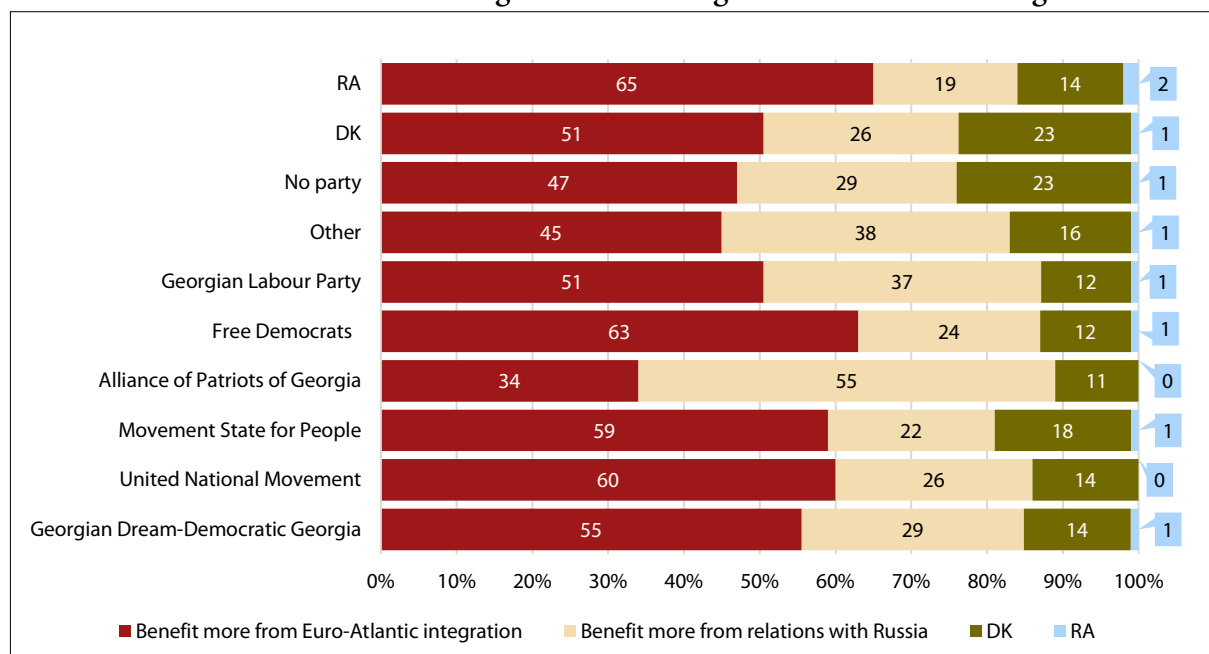
10 Ibid., p. 9

11 Lasha Tughushi, “Threats of Russian Hard and Soft Power in Georgia”, *European Initiative—Liberal Academy Tbilisi*. 2016. Retrieved from: <<http://bit.ly/2f7O9PA>>

12 Tamar Kintsurashvili, Sopho Gogadze, Tata Kapianidze and Tamuna Kandelaki, “Anti-Western propaganda. Media monitoring report 2014–2015”, *Media Development Fund*. June, 2015. Retrieved from: <<http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/15>>

13 The Caucasus Research Resource Centers. (2016) “NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, June 2016”. Retrieved through ODA—<<http://www.caucasusbarometer.org/>> on November 2, 2016.

Figure 1: Which Statement Do You Agree With? For/Against Euro-Atlantic Integration
By
Which Statement Do You Agree With? For/Against Euro-Atlantic Integration



Source: *The Caucasus Research Resource Centers. (2016) "NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, June 2016". Retrieved through ODA—<http://www.caucasusbarometer.org/> on November 2, 2016.*

This scenario may be the result of certain feasible foreign policy achievements of the GD government. In particular, in 2014, Georgia signed an Associate Agreement with the EU. Although no tangible steps were taken in terms of Georgia's long-awaited membership in NATO, new forms of cooperation have become possible since 2012 (for instance, a joint training center in Georgia and a memorandum on "deepening the defense and security partnership" between the U.S. and Georgia).

As far as legitimization of pro-Russian political discourse is concerned, Nino Burjanadze's failure nonetheless indicates modest achievements in this regard. However, Euroskepticism obscured by national narratives

turned out to make the pro-Russian movement a success by launching a newly formed political party with enough votes to enter the parliament.

Thus, it could be assumed that cultural and social—rather than political—aspects of anti-Western propaganda have more potential for exerting influence on Georgia's foreign policy orientation in the long run. This could be useful guidance for Georgia's Western partners in devising effective communication strategies with Georgian citizens and to introducing them to European commitments to respecting different cultures and diversity.

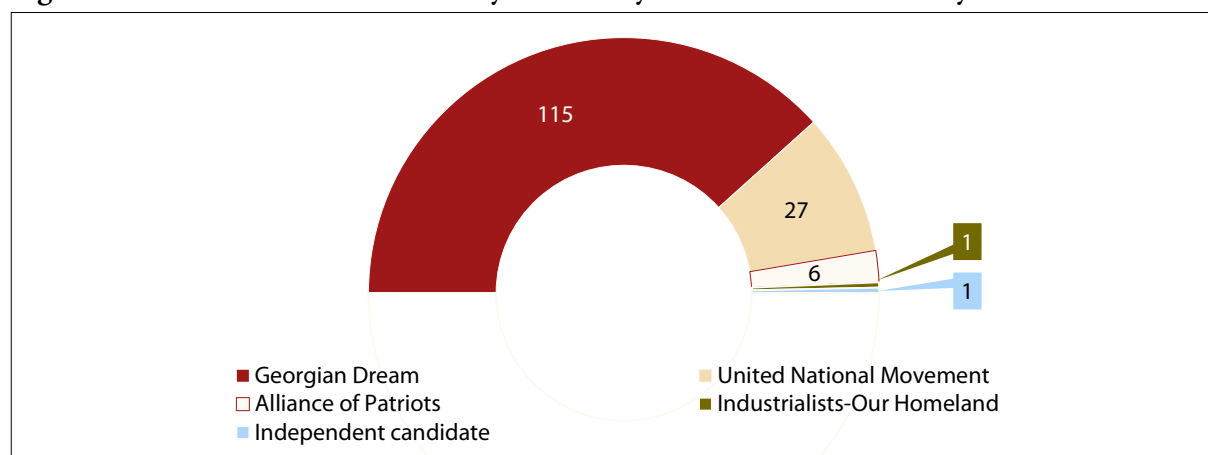
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DOCUMENTATION

The Results of the Georgian Parliamentary Elections

Figure 1: Number of Seats Received by Each Party after 2016 Parliamentary Elections



Source: *News.on.ge* <<https://on.ge/elections/2016/results>> November 2, 2016

Table 1: Percentage of Votes Received by Each Party in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections (Proportional Vote on Party Lists)

Political Party	Votes received (%)
Georgian Dream	48.68%
United National Movement	27.11%
Alliance of Patriots	5.01%
Free Democrats	4.63%
State for the People	3.45%
Democratic Movement	3.53%
Labour Party	3.14%
Republican Party	1.55%
For Peaceful Georgia	0.22%
Progressive Democratic Movement	0.06%
Georgian Group	0.12%
For United Georgia	0.16%
People's Government	0.05%
Communist Party of Georgia – Stalinists	0.1%
Socialist Workers' Party	0.04%
Georgia's United Communist Party	0.08%
Georgia	0.09%
Georgian Idea	0.17%
Industrialists – Our Homeland	0.78%
Merab Kostava Society	0.05%
Ours – People's Party	0.09%
Leftist Alliance	0.04%
National Forum	0.73%
In the Name of the Lord	0.08%
Our Georgia	0.05%

Source: *Central Election Commission of Georgia* <http://results20161008.ccc.gov.ge/>, *Voter Turnout* <<http://cesko.ge/geo/static/2412/amomrchevelta-aqtivoba>> November 3, 2016

Table 2: Percentage of Votes Received by Each Party in the 2012 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Votes received (%)
Georgian Dream	54.97%
United National Movement	40.34%
Christian Democratic Movement	2.04%
Labour Party	1.24%
New Rights Movement	0.43%
National Democratic Party	0.14%
For a Fair Georgia	0.19%
Merab Kostava Society	0.05%
Sportsmen Union	0.07%
Free Georgia	0.27%
Freedom Party	0.05%
Georgian Group	0.11%
Future Georgia	0.03%
Labour Council of Georgia	0.03%
Public Movement	0.03%
People's Party	0.02%

Source: Central Election Commission of Georgia <<http://results2012.ccc.gov.ge/>> November 3, 2016

Table 3: Percentage of Votes Received by Each Party in the 2008 Parliamentary Elections

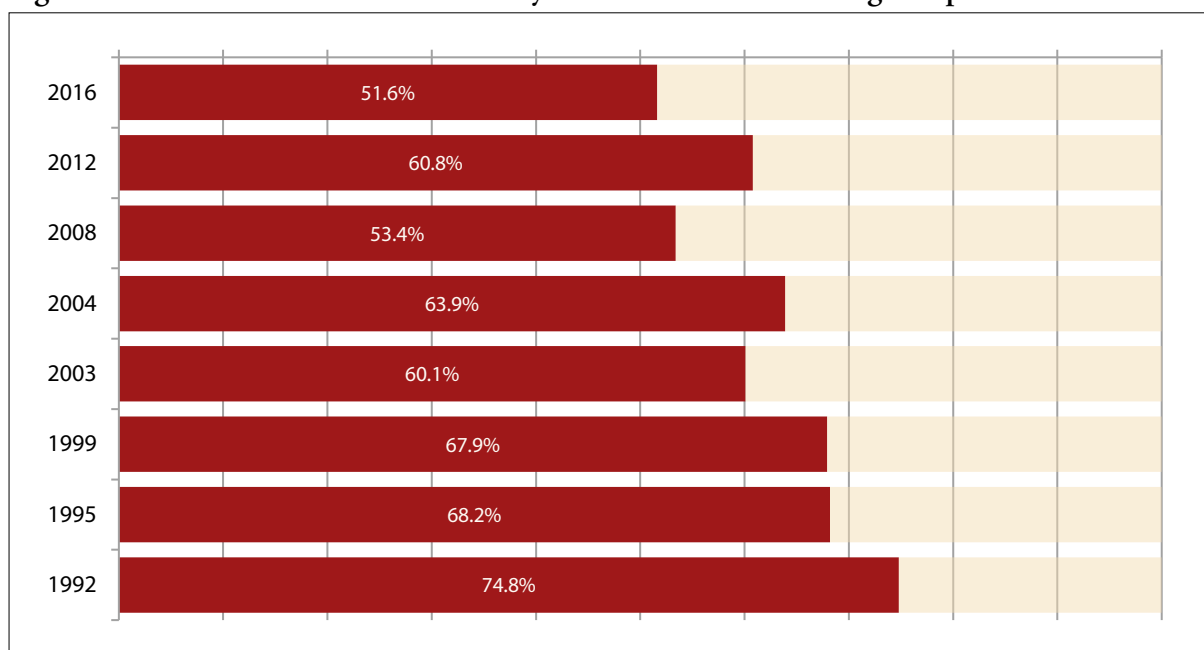
Party	Votes received (%)
United National Movement	58.53%
United Opposition-National Council-New Rights	17.54%
Christian-Democratic Party	8.56%
Labor Party	7.36%
Republican Party	3.74%
New Rights Alliance – Topadze Industrialists	0.92%
Christian-Democratic Alliance	0.88%
Georgian Politics	0.46%
Traditionalists Party – Our Georgia-Women's Party	0.44%
Sportsmen Union	0.18%
National Movement of Radical Democrats of Georgia	0.18%
Our Country	0.12%

Source: Election Guide, Democracy Assistance and Election News, <<http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1412>> November 3, 2016

Table 4: Percentage of Votes Received by Each Party in the 2004 Parliamentary Elections

Political Party	Votes received (%)
National Movement-Democratic Front	67.75%
Industrialists and New Rights	7.74%
Labour Party of Georgia	6.14%
Freedom – Konstantine Z. Gamsakhurdia	4.49%
Democratic Revival Union	3.95%
NDP – Traditionalists	2.61%
Ertroba Bloc	2.53%
Others	4.79%

Source: *Election Guide, Democracy Assistance and Election News*, <<http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/1380/>> November 3, 2016

Figure 2: Voter Turnout for Parliamentary Elections Since Obtaining Independence

Sources: *Central Election Commission of Georgia* <<http://cesko.ge/geo/static/2412/amomrchevelta-aqtivoba>>, *Election Guide, Democracy Assistance and Election News* <<http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/81/>>, *Central Election Commission of Georgia* <<http://cesko.ge/geo/static/385/aqtivoba-2012>>, *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)* <<http://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/109/40>>, November 4, 2016

ABOUT THE CAUCASUS ANALYTICAL DIGEST**Editors**

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