

Women in the Parties:

Deconstructing Myths



Women in the Parties: Deconstructing Myths

Giorgi Urchukhishvili

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Table of Contents:

Abstract
Description of the problem/introduction
Research goals
Objectives of research
Methodological approach, method and tools
Research methodology and tools
Types of respondents
Sampling/sampling frame
Target audience for research outcomes
Fieldwork, interviewing, data collection
Ethical Issues:
Transcribing interviews, text coding (creating analysed theoretical categories)
Theoretical categories

Data-based Analysis of Intraparty situation

A Intraparty categories
A1.1 Recruitment
A1.2 Internal mobility and advancement
A1.3 Centralization and elitism
A2 Gendered division of work within the parties:
A2.1 Gender of party job/activities
A2.2 "Pseudo care"
A3 Cultural anxieties and stereotypes within the parties
A3.1 Patriarchal inertia ("voters prefer male candidates")
A3.2 Intraparty conformity through gender lenses
A3.3 Controlling women's bodies/stigmatization
A3.3.1 Woman as an unreliable political partner (Eva)
A3.3.2 "Provincial woman" (nature vs. nurture)
A3.3.3 Marriage/husband/family/relatives/gendered responsibilities
A3.3.4 Motherhood troubles (pregnancy/maternity leave)
A3.3.5 Body image/sexuality and age
A3.3.6 Politics as a dirty job
A3.3.7 Female political candidate/conflictual woman
B. Categories outside the parties
B1 Alternatives
B1.1 Migration from towns:
B1.1.1 Education and employment-related migration
B1.2 Marriage
B1.3 Paid work
B2 Concerns outside the party about female party members
B2.1 Family, relatives, friends and neighbours

Data interpretation. Myths and their deconstruction
"Intraparty crisis of masculinity and femininity"/ revealed myths
Myths inside political parties

"Crisis of masculinity and femininity outside political parties"/revealed myths
Conclusion/Deconstructing the myths
Recommendations
References

List of acronyms

(EMC) Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre,
(NIMD) Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy,
(NDI) National Democratic Institute,
(UNDP) United Nations Development Programme.

Abstract

During the transformation phase after Georgia's independence, the country's politics struggled to cope with the challenges of democracy. The first reaction to globalization and to the introduction of the concept of "gender" was the isolation/exclusion of women from the political arena.

The aim of the following study is to "encourage and support women's political participation and deconstruct the myths which have contributed to creating the present social and political (intraparty) reality in such a way that has made difficult the transformation to a structure based on the principles of democracy and equality".

Based on feminist and intersectional approaches, and by using the methods of face-to-face interviewing and Grounded Theory, we have studied, analysed and created a theory related to existing social reality in Georgian parliamentary parties (Georgian Dream, United National Movement, Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, European Georgia). We attempted to reveal the gendered and unwritten social practices within the parties, as well as the myths which have persisted as barriers for women in party life throughout the years.

Overall, we conducted 35 face-to-face interviews with upper, middle and lower-level party representatives in cities and towns such as Tbilisi, Telavi, Dedoplistskaro, Zugdidi and Poti. We have revealed 19 intraparty and 8 myths external to the parties and attempted to deconstruct these myths through interpreting the data. We have drawn up a list of recommendations for the further improvement, and development of the parties.

Description of the problem/introduction

In 1989, at the dawn of the 200-year anniversary of French revolution, Eastern Europe was plunged into a wave of new revolutions just as important as the events of 1789. In 1989 the communist regimes of Eastern Europe successively lost power.¹ The so-called "Perestroika" doctrine was instituted in the Soviet Union, which also affected Georgia. A short time later the country gained its independence and moved toward democratic governance.

In the process of writing a new constitution and creating multi-party parliamentary systems Georgia, among other Eastern European countries achieved considerable success. In most cases the spectrum of political parties resembles those of Western European countries².

At the same time, Eastern European and former Soviet countries faced significant political and economic challenges in their attempts to build a new society³.

¹A. Giddens, "Sociology", Open Society Foundations, Georgia, Tbilisi, 2012 pp. 388-421;

²Ibid, p.388-421;

³Ibid, p.388-421;

New questions and challenges emerged, such as: "Will Eastern European and former Soviet countries be able to create stable, liberal, democratic systems of governance?"⁴ Considering the fact that most of these countries have not had an independent history of liberal democracy, moreover, some of them did not even exist before as separate states."⁵ This debate is also related to Georgia, which before the 1990s had existed as an independent state only for 3 years⁶. Consequently the country faced a number of new challenges in the process of becoming an independent state.

In the words of Merab Mamardashvili, Georgia resembled a small child who on its own and independently from the Russian Empire had to learn how to walk, speak, and experience adolescence, a number of worldviews and changes in order to be established as an adult state. During 26 years of developing into adulthood, Georgia has undergone numerous difficult social and political changes: globalization, entanglement of global and local contexts, transnational capitalism, all kinds of producers, consumers, sexualities, identities, recognition and non-recognition of women's work, ostentatious liberation of the private and public spheres and democratization of almost everything.

These changes have affected women in particularly unfavourable ways. In certain countries, women's representation in the parliament or other political institutions has dramatically decreased. For instance, in Czech Republic in the first phase of transformation the number of female politicians dropped from 34 to 4%, in Poland from 20 to 3%, in Bulgaria from 21 to 8%. Due to the move toward market economy the number of unemployed has significantly increased, and women constituted a considerable percentage among them⁷. It turned out that the process of building a nation-state is starkly masculine and patriarchal. To draw on Vicker's historical analysis, in the process of formation of nation-states political and civil rights were never accessible to women, while in anticolonial and post-colonial contexts women along with men enjoyed more or less equal civil and political rights.⁸

Post-Soviet Georgia became a platform where multiple and diverse discourses clashed with each other.⁹ Democratization and women's sexuality was seen as in opposition to nationhood and developed into a so-called discourse of "losing Georgianness"; the state faced challenges of domestic violence, sexual repression, oppression of identities, and devaluation of women's work.

Insofar as one of the key goals of Georgia as an independent state has always been upholding democratic processes (and hence the principles of gender equality) the country joined a number of international conventions¹⁰ on the elimination of oppression of women and adopted a state law on Gender Equality¹¹. There were attempts at institutionalizing gender issues and setting up non-governmental organizations focusing on feminist issues. This so-called "NGO-ization" process was to be later dismantled in order to foster local

⁴ According to Samuel Huntington there are number of factors, which may have a crucial effect on this process: experience of democratic governance in the past, the level of their economic development, effective governance during the Communist regime and the extent to which it is possible for new governments to efficaciously implement economic reforms.

⁵Ibid. pp.388-421;

⁶1918-1921

⁷A. Giddens "Sociology", Open Society Foundations, Georgia, Tbilisi, 2012 pp. 388-421;

⁸ Y. Abu-Laban, "Gendering the Nation-State: An Introduction", UBCPress. Vancouver. Toronto, 2008, pp. 1-21;

⁹ G.Urchukhishvili. Sociology of Goergian Body."Heinrich Boell Foundation", Tbilisi, 2016

¹⁰ <https://matsne.gov.ge/>;

¹¹ <https://matsne.gov.ge/>;

feminist knowledge and activism without reliance on donor organizations.¹² An Independent Group of Feminists was founded¹³, awareness-raising campaigns were implemented; in academia scholarship in the fields of gender sociology, gender and politics, feminist academic texts and other gender-related interdisciplinary subjects have been translated into Georgian. In Georgian and other academic spaces, a number of studies – applied or academic research projects were carried out focusing on the barriers that Georgian women politicians face in political participation.

These include works by scholars such as Tamar Sabedashvili¹⁴, Ketevan Chkheidze¹⁵, Ekaterine Gejadze¹⁶, Medo Badashvili, Tamar Bagratia¹⁷, and Lela Khomeriki¹⁸. International and local non-governmental organizations such as EMC, NIMD, NDI, and UNDP have actively been working on issues of women's political participation. Media increasingly focused on activists' work from the feminist movement. In addition, blogs and articles focusing on gender issues appeared in the media, the question of gender quotas was put on political agenda, the state financially encouraged (introduced incentives) political parties¹⁹ to include female candidates in candidate lists. Groups aimed at women's empowerment and supporting them to become political actors were setup at universities. Despite all the above-mentioned activities aimed at promoting/strengthening women's participation (we will focus on the barriers below), no significant increase in the number of female candidates either in the party life or generally in politics, especially at the decision-making level (either in local or in central politics), could be achieved.

If underrepresentation of women in politics in the beginning of 1990s was nothing out of the ordinary, since the country was experiencing difficulties and there was no time for questions such as women's political participation, gradually, numerous activities to promote women's participation did not result in any positive changes: the number of women in parliament in 2012-16 was 18, while there are 24 women in the current convocation of the legislature (serving 2016-2020). The situation is even worse in regions and local self-governing entities, in the sakrebulo (councils). For instance the sakrebulo of the eastern town of Telavi has only two women out of 33 members.

Apart from all the above-listed attempts to strengthen women's political participation, public perceptions and attitudes on this issue are also very important. In November 2016 NDI conducted quantitative survey (opinions and perceptions in Georgian society) which aimed at studying public perceptions regarding women's political participation.

¹² Tamta Melashvili: "Modern feminist activism in Georgia" in *Who is afraid of feminism?* Heinrich Boell Foundation, Tbilisi, 2014, pp.115-124;

¹³ Ibid, pp. 115-124;

¹⁴T. Sabedashvili. "Gender and Democratization. Georgia 1991-2006".Heinrich Boell Foundation, Tbilisi, 2006

¹⁵ K. Chkheidze, "Women's Political Participation During Democratic Transformation: The Case of Georgia", International PhD Programme in Gender Studies, CSS, Tbilisi, 2014;

¹⁶<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&hid=4102&AN=ceul.b1146697&db=cat00823a&site=eds-live>;

¹⁷ T. Bagratia & M. Badashvili / D. Jijelava / I. Khmaladze, "Intraparty democracy and local governance", NIMD (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Georgia Representation), Tbilisi, 2012, pp. 7-31;

¹⁸ <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/uploads/library/13/file/MDF-Publication-2015-GEO-WEB.pdf>;

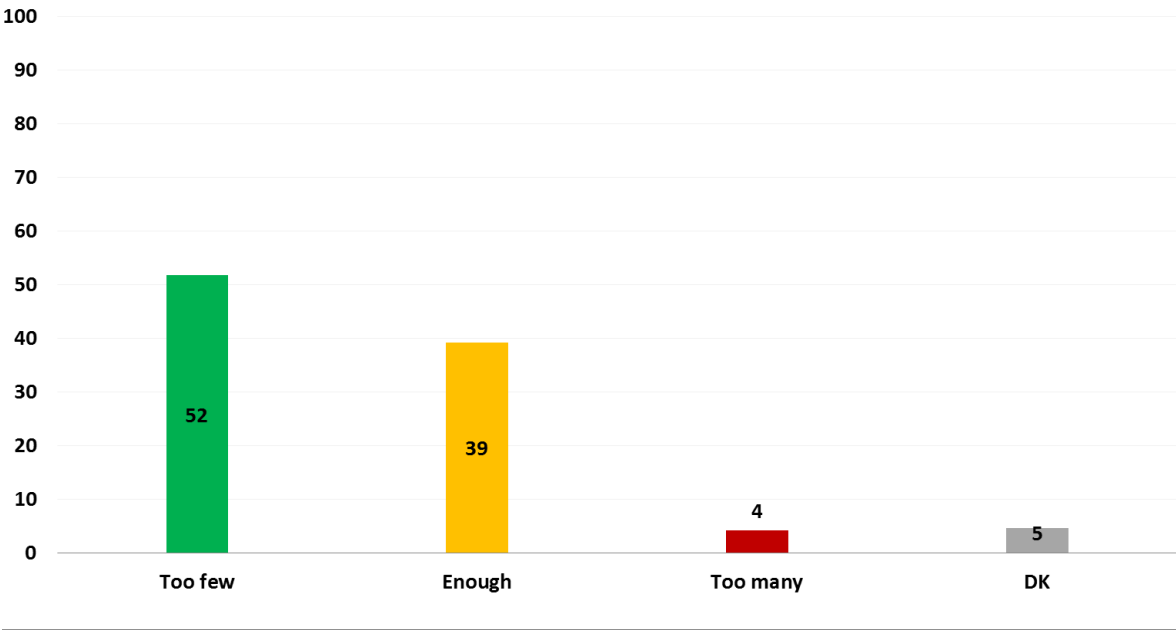
¹⁹ <https://matsne.gov.ge/>;

First, we will give an example of data according to which there should not be a problem with women's participation in Georgian politics²⁰.

In the above-mentioned survey 76% of male and 85% of female respondents agreed with the statement that women and men in Georgia are equally capable of making decisions. Additionally, 69% of male and - 66% of female respondents agreed with the statement that women in Georgia have good chances of advancement in political parties.

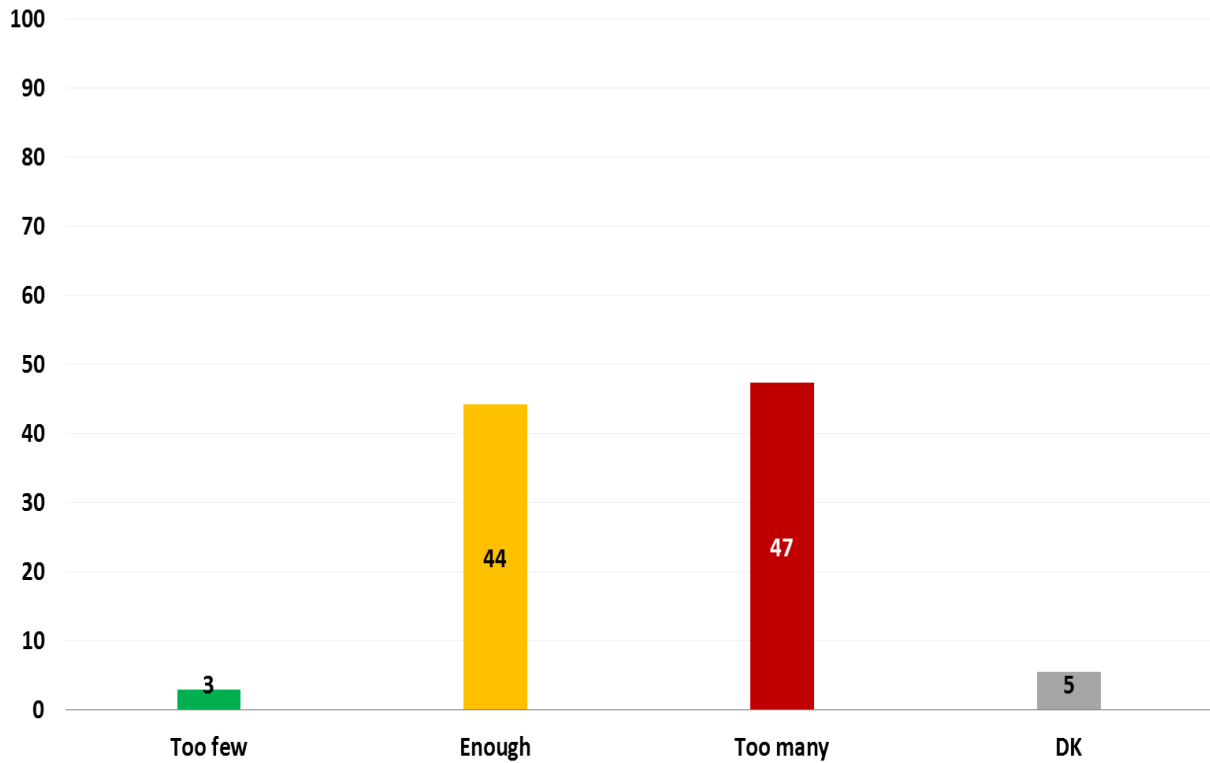
There are rather interesting responses to the following statements as well:

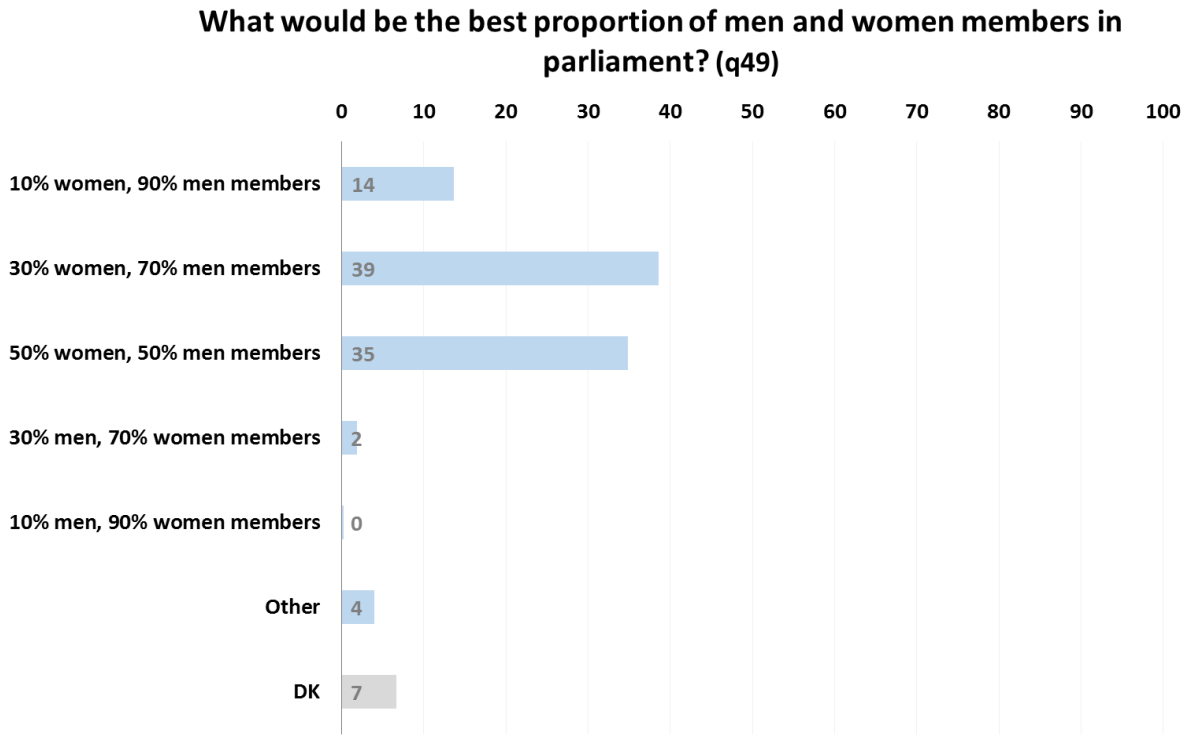
Currently there are 23 female members of parliament out of 150 (15%). Do you think this is . . .? (q47)



²⁰The data was retrieved from the web-page <https://www.ndi.org/publications?country=1069>.

Currently there are 127 male members of parliament out of 150 (85%). Do you think this is . . .? (q48)





Lastly, 56 per cent of respondents believe that "increased share of women in parliament will have a positive effect on Georgia". Considering these responses, the question arises: If the society is ready for women's enhanced political participation, what are the existing barriers? Why has the situation remained unchanged for so many years?

The above questions reflect opinions and attitudes of the public on general issues; they do not represent an assessment of existing social and political situation.

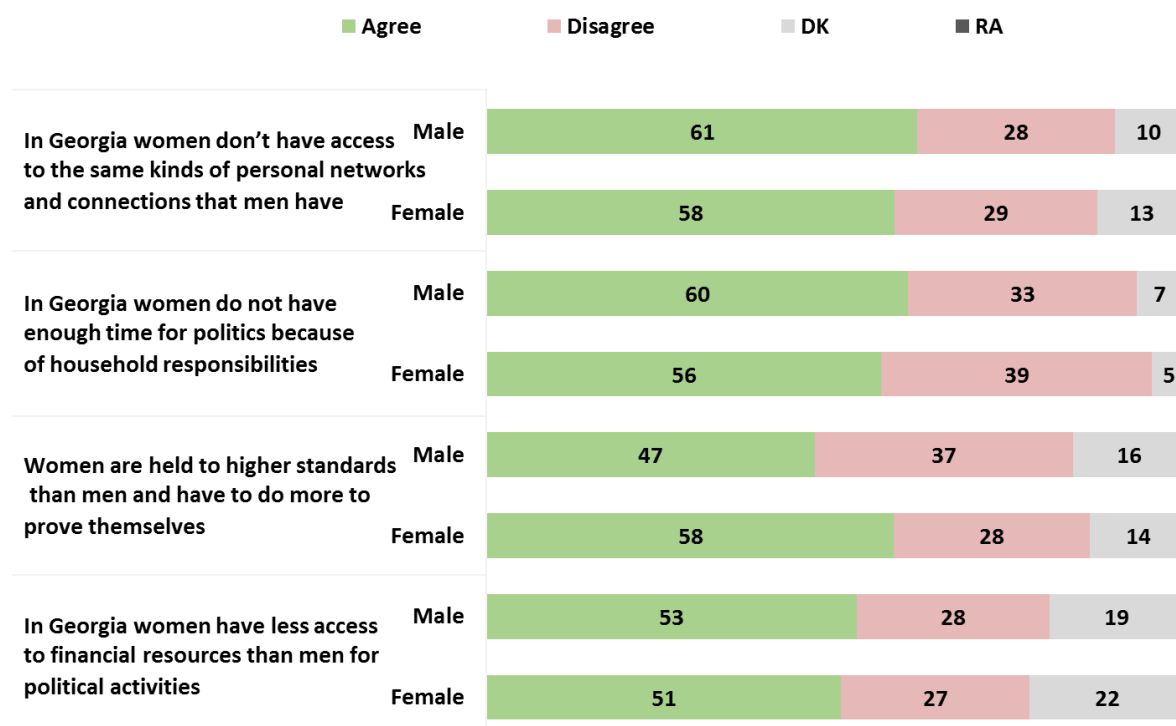
Opinions on the current situation are as follows:

69% of female and 69% of male respondents agree that the constituencies in Georgia prefer male over female candidates.

And 60 % of both male and female respondents agree that women in Georgia are brought up as leaders.

The following diagram demonstrates public perceptions on existing social and political reality:

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (q46 X Gender) Part 2



The NDI survey has revealed two aspects: according to public opinion, women's participation will have a positive effect on Georgian politics, and Georgian society is ready to "let women into" politics. Nevertheless, in reality this is not being implemented.

The question then is where we should look for the problem if the society has already changed and is ready for increased women's participation. Shall we find the problem within the political parties? We should examine Georgian parties and try to find out the circumstances inside the parties with regard to women's political participation.

In this regard, among existing studies focusing on Georgian political parties from the gender perspective we would single out the study by Medo Badashvili and Tamar Bagratia which investigated intraparty democracy in 2012. The study came to the following important conclusions:

- Women's groups within the parties have short-term plans for their strategic development.
- Only a few parties have strategies for working with women voters.
- Parties do not carry out gender audits; their gender-related information is quite scarce and often contains errors.
- Parties do not have the methodological instrument, the knowledge/experience to collect gender-segregated statistical data.

- Available statistics reveal the existence of a so-called "gender pyramid of power" inside the parties - the higher the power, the lower the women's representation.
- Division of functions among the party members is gendered: men have more functions and responsibilities.
- Men are predominantly engaged in party management, fundraising and drafting the candidate lists.
- Men and women are equally involved in designing pre-election campaigns and working out the election programme, as well as election administration and election monitoring process.
 - Men and women are equally involved in preparing pre-election activities and working out the election programme, as well as election administration and election monitoring process.

Women are quite active with the media. They also actively participate in volunteer work and are more likely to remain loyal to the party in case it loses its popularity.

To summarize the above-mentioned study, it can be concluded that Georgian political parties have an explicitly "masculine profile". Thanks to this domination, men lead and establish formal and informal rules inside the parties. These rules operate as barriers for women who are unable to build their political carriers.²¹

These conclusions were subsequently proved right in 2016 when NIMD carried out gendered classification of political parties. NIMD studied three components: electoral component, institutional aspect and programme direction. A short summary of conclusions follows:

Electoral component: *when it comes to granting real power to women, the party that included the least women in the party list receives most of the mandates.*

Institutional aspect: *the study revealed that no political party has any funds allocated to gender equality issues. This does not necessarily mean that parties, when needed, do not spend any money on the issue. It only indicates that such expenses are not envisaged in advance.*

Programme direction: *results have shown that only one party, the Republican Party, has introduced quotas or instruments for achieving gender equality. Representatives of other parties also mentioned certain informal trends in this direction in their organizations, though considering the current criteria; this information was not taken into account.*

Based on the analysis it can be concluded that public opinion does not influence the "making" of Georgian politics and the parties remain the only route by which women can make their way toward political participation. Insofar as parties are not willing to promote women's political empowerment or encourage their involvement in decision-making

²¹ T. Bagratia & M. Badashvili / D. Jijelava / I. Khmaladze, "Intraparty democracy and local governance", NIMD (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Georgia Representation), Tbilisi, 2012, pp. 7-31;

processes, for the last quarter century women have remained outside politics and have observed these developments from the margins, from a position where their voice is not heard and no one is interested in it.

For women living in the regions it is particularly difficult to be included either in local or in central politics. Nevertheless, they are quite active and play a significant role in political life (as campaigners, electoral commission members or secretaries) as well as in activism. This has also been revealed in the above-mentioned study conducted by Badashvili and Bagratia.

Despite the fact that there are many women who have a thorough knowledge of existing problems in a given region or have connections, parties nominate men as majoritarian (single-mandate constituency) candidates; men also dominate the party lists (for seats distributed by proportional rule). Oftentimes women do not have enough financial capital to fund their own electoral campaigns. According to NIMD's study on gendered classification of parties, parties tend not to allocate significant funds to the campaigns of female candidates. What are the reasons behind this despite all the hard work? Why have the parties not changed and why is it impossible for women to reach the decision-making level in politics? Perhaps -as is emphasized by Tamar Tskhadadze in her article "Who is afraid of feminism"- the patriarchal inertia is to blame. Alternatively, maybe this is the result of growing anti-feminist attitudes which emerged as a defensive reaction of the patriarchy to the introduction in Georgia of gendered politics and gendered knowledge.

The answers to these questions lie beyond the scope of this study. In the following research, we decided to investigate the intricacies of Georgian political parties and the gendered processes that hinder women's political participation.

Research goal:

Promote women's political participation and deconstruct the myths which have contributed to the present social and political (intraparty) reality in such a way that has made difficult the transformation to a structure based on the principles of democracy and equality".

Research objectives:

- ✓ Examine the gendered processes taking place inside political parties, which directly or indirectly result in discrimination against women.
- ✓ Reveal and analyse gendered stereotypes existing in the parties.
- ✓ Collect information on recruitment of party members, internal mobility/advancement, emancipatory practices and impeding factors.
- ✓ Examine impeding factors/barriers that exist outside the party.
- ✓ Analyse data collected from an intersectional perspective, which means the combination of various social, political, geographic and demographic factors will be taken into account when creating the categories of respondents, as all these factors influence respondents' lives, as well as the ways their opinions and ideas are formed.

Methodological approach

In the study we draw on feminist methodology, which represents the sum of different methodologies and approaches.²² We take from the definition of feminism offered by Tamar Tskhadadze, according to which feminism stands for recognition of three main aspects: a) *Women have certain limited opportunities as compared to men in the existing social order (i.e. women represent an oppressed group)* b) *Men's superiority is socially determined/constructed – it cannot be explained/justified by any natural or supernatural circumstances, biological or theological views.* 3) *The social system has to be changed in ways which would reduce gender inequality and make the system more just*²³.

Furthermore, feminist ideas and perspectives informed each phase of this research, which, according to Reinharz, indicate that "feminist researchers are interested in a woman as an individual and also as a social category."²⁴

In order to find out the ways in which women are disadvantaged compared to men we need to collect the data and explain them from feminist perspective. "This means analysing the collected information by thinking through the intersections of different phenomena and by destabilizing/challenging the existing system."²⁵

Reinharz says, "the purpose of the feminist approach is to expose the ways in which certain aspects are completely overlooked. In her words, feminist research aims at making the invisible visible, bringing the peripheries to the centre, attaching meaning to issues seen as trivial, placing women in the centre of exploration and recognizing them as independent subjects rather than objects of men."²⁶

In addition, when conducting research feminists elaborate on how the readers can use the results of the research.²⁷

Like other feminist studies, this research offers recommendations based on analysis of first-hand collected sociological information so as to contribute to changes in the Georgian social-political arena and political parties.

Research methods and tools

Qualitative research methods - face-to face interviews were used within this study, as we sought openness and honesty from our respondents.

We also drew on in-depth interview methodology that would facilitate the respondent's

²²S. Reinharz. *Feminist Methods in Social Research. Conclusions.* Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House. Tbilisi, 2003. Pp.135-185

²³T. Tskhadadze. *Antifeminism: Ignorance, Irresponsibility or Fight to Maintain Privileges?* Heinrich Boell Foundation, Tbilisi, 2014 ,pp.9-27

²⁴ S.Reinharz. *Feminist Methods in Social Research.Conclusions.* Bakur Sulakauri Publishing House. Tbilisi, 2003. p.137.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 137;

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 137-138;

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 137-138

openness: silences, echo, statement and remote sensing.²⁸

In terms of research tools, we used a semi-structured questionnaire²⁹ which was modified during the interview process according to the respondent's narration. However, the key contents - issues, thematic points were left intact. The themes were: party formation/recruitment of members, practices of intraparty mobility/advancement, how the candidate should look/appearance, barriers/factors impeding women's political participation, the image of an ideal politician, the gender of an ideal politician, stereotypes and ideas about female politicians.

The interviewing method helped us gather information that had not been visible before, or lost in the experiences of individual respondents. Qualitative methods open up the possibility of giving voice to women, which is consistent with feminist approaches and aims.³⁰

As regards the analysis of first-hand sociological data and developing a new theory, we drew on the principles of Grounded Theory- developing a new theory and theoretical categories without any previously existing theoretical framework and instead, drawing on first-hand sociological data. The theory is being developed in parallel to the data-gathering process. Thus, the theory is developed based on the information gathered. Grounded theory provided the possibilities for more flexibility and there is a continuous interaction between the data gathered within the research and the theory.³¹

Types of respondents

While forming the types of respondents, we used the intersectionality approach,³² which enabled us to present a wide array of information and reflect the diversity of the individual respondents. When analysing their approaches we took into account respondents' age, gender, geographic location, party, party status, education level, marital status, characteristics of social, cultural and symbolic capital.³³

Intersectionality is based on the following key principles: 1) The lives of individuals cannot be explained by analysing only the single categories such as gender, race etc. 2) When analysing

²⁸ T.Zurabishvili. "Qualitative methods in social research". Centre for Social Sciences. Tbilisi, 2006.p.21;

²⁹See appendix #1 and #2

³⁰ M. L. DeVault, "Liberating method: feminist and social research". Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2009, pp. 30-31

³¹ W. L. Neumann, Social Research Methods, Allyn and Bacon, 1994, pp. 322;

³²The scholar of racism Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw introduced the term "Intersectionality" in social sciences in 1989. According to her, the lives of individuals, take forms by intersection of different social locations (*race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability, migration status, religion*). *Interaction between these social locations happens in the context of the existing power system and structure*(for example: laws, politics, state governance and other political or economic connections, religious institutions, media). *Independent forms of privileges and oppression are established through these processes, which are formed by globalization, historical context, colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, misogyny, patriarchy, labor market, etc.*

³³ We draw on views of Pierre Bourdieu on different forms of capital: cultural capital, which refers to different forms of legitimate knowledge, social capital – relations valuable for individuals, and symbolic capital, based on dignity and prestige.

social issues, the meaning of any social category or structure is not predetermined; instead, categories and their meanings have to be revealed during the research process. 3. Relations between social locations and processes (racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, sexism) and the power dynamics are intertwined. 4) Individuals can be both privileged and oppressed at the same time. 5) Researchers, scholars, policy-makers and activists should take into account their own social position and power while employing the intersectional approach.

"Flexibility" is the key tool when a researcher determines priorities and directions of the research. 6) Intersectionality, as well as the feminist perspective focuses on transformation, creation of coalitions between diverse groups and on social justice.³⁴

It was these principles that enabled us to collect views of all types of respondents and then interpret the data and draw up recommendations.

We took into account the following characteristics while creating the types of respondents: party affiliation, party position, age, sex, education level, and marital status, and geography/location, social, cultural and symbolic capital.

Let us discuss each of them:

Regarding party affiliation, respondents were divided into representatives of pro-governmental and oppositional parties. As regards party positions – high, middle level managers and low-level female activists.

Age groups: under 25, 25-45 and 45-65.

Sex of respondents: female and male respondents.

Level of education: higher and secondary education.

Marital status: married, divorced and single,

Geographic location: respondent from eastern, western parts of Georgia and from the capital - Tbilisi.

Social, symbolic and cultural capital: respondents with/without social, symbolic or cultural capital.

Sampling

Political parties were selected according to their indicators of success in the parliamentary election of 2016. By applying this approach, we learned and analysed political culture, unwritten social events the four political parties which hold seats in parliament: Georgian Dream, United National Movement (UNM), Alliance of Patriots of Georgia and European Georgia.

Geographic area of research: we selected three major and problematic regions with the lowest share of political participation by women or ethnic minorities, where women have no possibilities for political participation. Tbilisi, Kakheti and Samegrelo. Cities: Tbilisi, Telavi, Dedoplistskaro, Poti and Zugdidi.

³⁴ O. Hankivsky, PhD, "Intersectionality 101", The Institute for Intersectionality Research & Policy, SFU, 2014, pp. 2-3.

Selection of respondents: we used the so-called snowball method. After meeting the high-level party managers, they directed us to the middle-level management and low-level female activists based in the regions.

Target audience of research outcomes

In parallel to analysing the first-hand sociological data the information was categorized into open data (available to public) and confidential data, information to be shared with individual parties in the form of recommendations.

The following study represents the public version of the research, while the parties will be provided with conclusions and recommendations drawn up for each one of them individually.

The UNDP working group was actively involved in the research planning and implementation (fieldwork, data analysis and interpretation) processes. Furthermore, together with the working group we decided how to use the research results and elaborated ways that would enable us to facilitate women's empowerment and political participation.

Fieldwork, conducting interviews, data collection

Altogether we conducted 35 face-to-face interviews. Cities and parties along with the number of interviews are presented in table N1 and N2.

Location	Number of interviews conducted
Tbilisi	10
Telavi	6
Dedoplistskaro	5
Poti	7
Zugdidi	7

Parties	Number of interviews conducted
Georgian Dream	15
United National Movement	11
Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	2
European Georgia	7

Ten high-level managers from central party apparatuses, nine mid-level managers from the regions and 16 low-level female party members from regions were interviewed.

Ethical issues:

Ethical issues were duly considered during the fieldwork phase, data analysis and the compilation of the report. At the start we sent out letters to the parties informing them of the aims and objectives of our study. Respondents were informed in advance that the interviews would be recorded and later used in accordance with the research objectives. Respondents' confidentiality is protected, thus their real names and surnames are not used in the report; instead the types of respondents stand in place of their names. On some occasions, respondents would share information which they did not want used in the report and we respected their wishes.

Transcribing and coding (drawing up analysed theoretical categories)

After the fieldwork, 35 interview transcripts were prepared. In parallel to reading the transcripts, memos/field notes were created³⁵ in accordance with Grounded Theory principles³⁶. By using the inductive method, we classified and coded the phrases of the respondents. In the meantime, larger theoretical categories were created, for instance, in line with this passage from an interview: *"As regards mobility, in general very few people are involved in politics, the number people actively involved is enough; advancement or any other changes rarely happen"* – a corresponding theoretical category was created: "intraparty mobility and advancement".

At the same time, data interpretations and further recommendations were added to the memos.

We made an extended document gradually took shape and resulted in larger theoretical categories. After data analysis, we further interpreted these categories and combined some into larger ones. Theoretical and interpreted categories were modified several times during analysis and interpretation of the text. In the future, these categories can be placed within a certain theoretical framework, a new theoretical framework can also be developed and existing categories can be further modified as well.

The key research objectives were to create revealed theoretical categories based on analysis, to find the myths hindering women's political participation, to classify them into interpreted categories and then deconstruct the myths that have been created. Each analysed and interpreted category is accompanied by respondents' quotes, which confirms that the analysis and interpretations are based on the data.

³⁵Short field notes

³⁶H. R. Bernard, "Research Methodology in Anthropology", Altamira Press, 2006, pp. 492-493.

Theoretical Categories

Several broad categories were formed based on transcript analysis, which we divided into relatively smaller categories that were further divided into subcategories. In what follows we examine theoretical categories and present them along with the quotes from narratives of different types of respondents.

The first big theoretical category: **intraparty categories, referred to as A.**

This category comprises of three relatively smaller categories, which in turn is divided into the following sub-categories:

A1. Intraparty democracy:

A1.1. Recruitment;

A1.2. Intraparty mobility and advancement;

A1.3. Centralization and elitism;

A2. Gendered division of work/activities within the parties;

A2.1. Gender of party activities;

A2.2. "Pseudo care";

A2.3. Gender of work ethics and responsibilities

A3. Intraparty anxieties and stereotypes:

A3.1. "Patriarchal inertia";

A3.2. Intraparty conformity through gender lenses;

A3.3. Controlling women's bodies:

A3.3. Woman as an unreliable political partner;

A3.3.2. "Provincial woman" (nature vs. nurture);

A3.3.3. Marriage/husband/family/relatives;

A3.3.4. Motherhood troubles (pregnancy/maternal leave);

A3.3.5. Body image, sexuality and age;

A3.3.6. "Politics as a dirty job";

A3.3.7. "Female political candidate/the conflictual woman";

The second big theoretical category: categories outside the parties, referred to as B.

This category comprises the following subcategories:

B1. Alternatives

B1.1. Education and employment-related migration from small towns:

B1.2 Marriage;

B1.3 Paid work.

B2. Anxieties outside the party, stereotypes about female party members:

B2.1 Family/husband/mother-in-law/relatives/neighbours/opposing party

These theoretical categories sometimes are intertwined and are often simultaneously present in the life of one individual/respondent to a greater or lesser extent. For instance, the rules of recruitment and alternatives to entering politics outside joining the party may intersect in the life of a party representative. We will elaborate more on this issue in the sub-chapter focusing on data-based theoretical interpretations.

Data-based analysis of intraparty situation

In what follows we will elaborate on theoretical categories built on the narratives of respondents. We begin with the category A, intraparty categories, which begins with A1. intraparty democracy. The information gathered suggests that the parties we have examined do not have a consistent intraparty organizational structure, thus the intraparty democracy does not exist in their party work/activities.

In this regard, we will draw on the interview of one male respondent, an 25 to 45-year-old high-level manager, a representative of a governmental party, with higher education, married, and having social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In general intraparty democracy in parties, including our own party, is not developed to the degree it is developed in Western parties, and this has its subjective and objective reasons. Parties are not strong enough. A party as an organization has to become stronger and only at this point the will the party be able to have intraparty democracy. If you are weak and have an intraparty democracy, you will not survive attacks from outside. This is the common problem of Georgian parties. This is the reason why currently in Georgia intraparty democracy is very weak. This is true of our party as well".

The development of information technologies and global social networks has greatly influenced the internal organisation of the parties and requires that they adapt their internal structures. In addition, the days of mass-type parties whose success was determined by number of members and ideological preparedness is becoming a thing of the past while newer-type parties are gradually appearing which may be smaller but are better able to communicate with the electorate with the use of modern technologies. Moreover they are equipped with professional skills required for political positions³⁷, despite this fact, as we learned from this research, the above process is not characteristic to Georgian parties, which continue to exist as massive parties, and their success is largely determined precisely by the number of their members and ideological preparation. This characteristic is reflected in recruitment, intraparty mobility and party management.

³⁷ "Politics and Parties, guidelines for political party representatives", Tbilisi. 2015, pp. 24.

Subcategories of theoretical category A:

A1.1. Recruitment

The respondents' answers within this research revealed somewhat ambiguous and inconsistent rules of recruitment inside the parties. The following factors determine whether a new member is recruited or not: *recommendation/network, being popularity/reputation, gender, financial means, desire for power, ideological consistency with the party and categories such as - patriotism, "fire in the belly" and idealism.*

Respondents from all party levels state that there are no recruitment rules in their parties and no written document describing the requirements or responsibilities of a new candidate. However, there is one common, universal recruitment tool mentioned by the respondents, which is a "recommendation".

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old male, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, having social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"New members are recruited to the party based on ideology and an individual's 'fire in the belly'. We need members who join the team out of patriotic feelings ... their skills, talent and mindset are also important."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old male, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, having social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"We do not follow strictly structured processes of recruitment and advancement as in the case with European parties. A lot of work has to be done in this direction. As regards recruitment and advancement in our party, it largely depends on personal factors of course. There is no strict, structured process in our party."

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old female, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Applicants have to fill in a form which will be further examined by the 'person' who is supposed to give a recommendation. If that 'person' considers the applicant a suitable candidate and that he/she deserves to be given the recommendation, in this case the applicant is accepted in party."

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old female, with higher education, widowed, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Based on the recommendation... and education of course is a requirement. It does not happen in a structured way, but applicants have to be devoted to their country. "

The above responses show that candidate's "network/connections" and "being famous/popularity" is of great significance in the parties.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old female, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Early last year the prime-minister started reforming the party, regarding parliamentary group, or the list of candidates for the elections. At that time he invited some people to be part of this process. I had experience working with two former prime ministers, and I personally knew the then acting prime minister and I was of course among those who was offered to participate..."

Governmental party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old female, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If a woman is famous and has a good reputation and authority, I believe that it means a lot. It also matters why a person famous, what are the values of the party ... but if the woman is famous, it is an advantage."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old male, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"For a new member to be accepted in the party ... it is important that each applicant has already been successful in previous career/activities. They have to be successful before they decide to go into politics."

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I used to be employed in the government, in 2004-2012. After 2012 I was the head of an NGO ... and they already knew about me"

Similar conclusions can be found in the doctoral dissertation by Ketevan Chkheidze: "The majority of women MPs [...] indicated that the major determinant for their engagement was the party leader or leaders, friendship with the leaders or long-term acquaintance with them."

A study conducted by Ekaterine Gejadze in 2010 also points to the same tendency that informal negotiations, social contacts and patronage have a significant role. The subjective nature of the process means only specific men and women are involved in political life.

There was one opinion regarding recruitment that differed from the rest of responses, which we found interesting. According to one respondent from opposition party (high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man) when recruiting the new members it is decisive if the person has a so-called "'desire for power', which is related to economic well-being. Though this is related to the candidate's motivation, and does not represent the party's view on why/how it selects its members".

The process of recruitment is interesting in small towns, where it is complicated by the size of population. Respondents believe that very few people are interested in politics.

Governmental party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"As for the recruitment, the number of persons involved in politics is so small, that the number of us already involved is enough; new members join the party very rarely."

We will first examine intraparty mobility and advancement strategies and then elaborate on the disadvantages of recruitment practices for women's political participation.

A1.2. Intraparty mobility and advancement

The parties we examined have no structure of intraparty mobility or advancement. The following factors determine whether a party member is promoted: Number of votes the member will be able to receive, social contacts/capital and visibility/popularity among party leaders. Based on the above factors the leader from the central party/high-level manager decides which party member will be promoted. There are no indicators of skills or competences based on which the party promotes its members.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"We could observe this woman during the pre-election campaign in terms of active involvement, communication skills with others, whether she managed to deliver the information regarding the party ideology to the

people ... she performed very well and we decided to assign her to Mtskheta-Mtianeti , Dusheti, Kazbegi and Tianeti insofar as she proved to be very competent."

The party is not aware of what it really needs. It only requires votes from a successful party member, but the way this can be achieved is not elaborated within the party. The only clear indicator is the so-called social connections of the party member.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Those who are good at networking ... who can stay with us throughout the course of an election, have authority/reputation. The number of followers is important for me. Apart from elections, the person has to be able to attract others, for instance if we think of youth, and the students in general... if an activist approaches me and tells me that he/she can attract a certain number of motivated students, and I am not being cynical about it, and then later these students can attract others, and I will make a decision on promotion considering this factor."

It has to be emphasized that in case of advance mentor nomination of majoritarian candidates as well, being popular and successful has a significant effect.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"A majoritarian candidate is somewhat different from an ordinary party member... when the focus was on a majoritarian candidate, the candidate's popularity was important. It could be the case that the candidate was not a politician, but with the previous experience or the field of activity, he/she had to be successful and respected by others. This is how the majoritarian candidate was selected; apart from this, the candidate's political views were important."

One more theoretical category will be examined below:

A1.3. Centralization and elitism

Data analysis indicates that party processes are directed from Tbilisi and is of a centralized and has an elitist nature.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Eighty per cent of MPs in the previous parliament are from Vake-Saburtalo [districts of Tbilisi]. This is Georgia, this is how Georgia is centralized. The projects focusing on decentralization were precisely because of this. Democracy will not be representative if only Vake-Vera [districts of Tbilisi] is making decisions. This is neither democracy nor representation; this has to be changed in our country. And this change is possible through intraparty democracy. When there is a real democracy within the party, not only by showing that some fake candidates are there, while I know for sure that X has to be the winner ... and another way to make a change is through real competition, when there are real teams competing to win and the majority makes a decision, when the majority considers it the right thing to do, though this cannot objectively be the best decision, but this is what the majority believes is right and we have to conform to it ... of course through some filter."

One respondent concentrated on elitism and centralization:

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"This is so obvious, for instance, when there were strikes at Rustavi 2 [popular government-critical TV station], we would join it from the regions, but the leader would not join it and stand with us, which was a big drawback."

Another talked about the generally closed nature of parties in Georgia and centralization as well:

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"We are still entrapped in the 'obsession with the Leader'. For instance, if a party of ten members was established, after years there emerges the problem within the party because someone says the party is not able to be well represented in the parliament. Yet the aim should be to be represented in the legislative branch and to have certain leverage on governance. But the top 10, 9 or 8 persons are against accepting others into the party, because they fear that the new members would take their place, and this is how closed these spaces are."

It can be broadly concluded that, for parties and local organizations, selecting a new member or promoting members in existing Georgian parties represents a kind of an Achilles' heel, inasmuch as their local organizations are represented by small homogenous groups within which competition and encouragement of new leaders under existing circumstances is almost impossible. The reason behind this is mainly the central party entities' approach to local organizations, since, in essence, the individual that is selected in the central office is further appointed as a chairperson of the local organization, which is then made official by conducting formal elections in the organization. On the level of the municipality, the Tbilisi party elite should not define selection of local political candidates, as used to be the case, insofar as intraparty democracy should mean open competition within the local organizations for leading positions.³⁸

One female respondent from the opposition party confirms that this is the case:

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, without social, cultural and symbolic capital, representing ethnic minority:

"The party has changed drastically lately. It has become more open and accessible to any citizen. Unfortunately, earlier there was some kind of alienation, probably because of the wrong management inside the party, which meant that the party was not completely open and personally I also had a problem with integration in the processes occurring within the party ...There were some party members who were blocking this process, and this was simply the decision made by one or two persons. This was a problem ... currently we are developing a new strategy which will be based on principles of transparency and participation/involvement. It also happens that apolitical or neutral persons are involved in the process of strategy planning, and they openly share their views."

The respondent's narrative clearly underlines the elitist nature of Georgian parties examined in this study, which is against the principles of intraparty democracy and equal participation and isolates politically minded individuals from Georgian politics.

To sum up, the type of parties examined in this study can be defined. Considering relations between leaders and party members, parties can be divided into two types: democratic and undemocratic. If we consider the selection strategies of mayors as well as the party list candidates, it can be concluded that majority of them adhere to operating the parties in an undemocratic way. When the party life is undemocratic and is centralized, it is hard to imagine any successful transformation of the country and the society into the fully-fledged

³⁸"Politics and Parties, guidelines for political party representatives" Tbilisi. 2015, pp. 26.

democracy. Thus, the roots of ugly forms of "semi-democracy" or "hybrid-democracy" can be found in the ways the parties operate.³⁹

We will first analyse the next big category based on the gathered data and then discuss why the absence of intraparty democracy creates obstacles for women:

A2. Gendered division of work/activities in the parties

Phrases like the following were used often in the narratives of female respondents: "We do not shirk from any kind of job - we hang the posters, and join the demonstrations." (under 25)The respondents wanted to emphasize that they were not "incapable" of doing male work just because they were women. Thus, the party work is clearly gendered.

A2.1. Gendered activities in parties

Women in parties are responsible for the following activities:

Routine work: writing and accountancy, agitation and propaganda, election-related temporary activities, Election Day activities, low-paid party tasks, and communication with the media. Women often tend to work as PR managers of majoritarian party candidates. The reason why women perform these tasks is the following: most men refrain from (are ashamed of) performing low-paid tasks, while women and young male students (only in Tbilisi) perform such tasks.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from Tbilisi, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Women are responsible for the routine tasks of the election campaign. This is explained by the fact that women are not ashamed of going door-to-door to campaign. In my experience, out of 1,000 people involved in the door-to-door campaign in the city 950 are women and 50 of them are young male students. The low-paid work that is generally routine, tiring, and requires hard work is acceptable for women, but not for men. When it comes to menial work, during 3 months, for instance, you are supposed to do the same work from 10 to 6, which turns out to be boring for men. Women can do the same work 'today and tomorrow'. Election administration is a very good example of this in terms of statistics: In total there are 3,600-3,700 precinct electoral commissions in Georgia, each with 13 members. That comes out to about 42,000. I am not exactly sure about the numbers, but the proportion is the following: there is a chairperson in

³⁹"Politics and Parties, guidelines for political party representatives" Tbilisi. 2015, pp.24

each precinct, a deputy chair and a secretary. The chairperson is the head. The deputy chair does nothing at all, since according to the law, in case of absence of the chairperson the deputy replaces the chairperson, apart from such cases, the deputy has no other responsibilities. Of the people in the administration, the chairperson has to do the most tasks; all the documents have to be prepared by the chairperson. If we look at it through gender lenses, 80% of chairpersons are men, 99% of deputies are men and 99% of secretaries are women – the minutes of the meeting, routine, accounting, everything [are done by secretaries]. Wherever there is routine work, there are women. In a district precinct for instance I will have to appoint 3,600 persons in local government elections and I can tell you now that 3,500 out of this number will be women and 100 – men, and the men are generally involved in the cities, young male students."

We can clearly see the gendered distribution of tasks if we look at district party meetings.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"During elections, when a lot of work has to be done, there are always more women involved, in contrast to more relaxed times, when 90% are men. For instance, when there is the time for questions and answers during party meetings, not a single woman raises any questions; the ones who talk are always men. Women would offer coffee and ask questions such as 'Would you like some coffee?'...And the same happens in most cases anywhere else, in regions, the functions are divided. I used to tell them, the women, that I came here to listen to you, I don't want coffee, and the women would reply: 'Here are the men, they would rather talk to you'."

According to the collected information, one more interesting category has been revealed:

A2.2 "Pseudo-care"

In the parties we examined, it turned out that for female party members the issue of so-called "pseudo-care" is very painful. "Pseudo-care" is based on a gendered division of tasks: women are not perceived adequate for certain tasks because they are weak and fragile. It turns out that male party members use this to maintain inequalities. Some female respondents elaborated on this issue:

Government party, low-level activist, under 25-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"The tasks were not divided; we were doing all the work together. Despite the fact that I was a woman, I used to go with them everywhere. We would distribute agitation material or candidate posters, newspapers, flyers, all the material that we received together, and we used to hang the posters also together."

Government party, middle-level manager, under 25-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There was one attempt in the beginning, for example: because I was a girl I had to stay in the office, and the basic thing – hanging the posters. Later they figured out that I could do the same tasks as the boys. There was no such problem four months later: other girls would sometimes say that boys should hang the posters. We do have some fragile girls, they tend to suppress themselves. As for me, I am ready to go everywhere where there is the work to do and I will do it."

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, divorced, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"We did everything. We used to hang the posters as well. We had a team and in fact we were doing everything, including the physical work."

Gendered division of intraparty activities contributes to women getting assigned places within historically reinforced gendered stereotypes and roles. We will touch upon this issue later.

A2.3 Gender of work ethics and responsibilities

As far as work, discipline, responsibilities are concerned all types of respondents agree on one thing, that these skills are better developed among women than men.

Opposition party, low-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There were some critical days when we were told to come at 10 in the morning and we would leave at 1 at night. Moreover, I can add that all women would show up at 10, but not all men. Women have a better sense of responsibility regarding work."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Women are special in terms of some specific qualities, in the type of politics that we want to have. Women can even be more successful than men because of their personality traits, such as being cautious, pragmatic, purposeful, hard-working... these are all women's qualities."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In general, to look at the gender dynamics, or gender specificity -I think my male colleagues might get upset with me - but women are more active and motivated, with a better sense of responsibility towards work than men, well, at least this is how I feel about it, but it is harder for women to make a step forward, and advance towards more important positions."

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Of course, our woman coordinators... we used to work 12 hours, would they send men for this job? Men are invited to different places, and all the work has to be done by women."

We will now elaborate on the third small subcategory of category A and then we will try to answer the question as to why women - who seem to be more responsible and hard-working - are less successful than men in the parties.

A3. Cultural anxieties and stereotypes in the parties

Based on our data it can be concluded that respondents have no cultural anxieties or stereotypes regarding men's work in political parties, while in case of women there were several categories revealed either inside or outside the party.

A3.1 "Patriarchal inertia" ("voters prefer male candidates")

Male respondents from the parties point out that voters do not vote for female majoritarian candidates and this is why they nominate male candidates. One of the respondents emphasized that voters are disinclined to vote for women because they do not see them as powerful:

Opposition party, high-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If you ask me, an absolutely ignorant person, the first thing is that there is this tradition that a woman is not perceived as someone with power. This is the most important question. The main reason why women are not nominated is the consensus - not the absolute consensus - around the assumption that a woman cannot be a leader, be the head of something. This is a very blurry thing ... that she is not capable of doing it. It can be assumed as well that women cannot be decision makers."

One female majoritarian candidate spoke to us about how she was able to overcome this patriarchal inertia was nominated as a candidate. She also overcame many barriers arising from male party members' assumption that "society is not ready".

Opposition party, high-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, without social, cultural and symbolic capital, representing an ethnic minority:

"The argument was that the society is not ready, and they will not support a woman. This is bullshit: candidates were always men. And also there was the age factor. It is somehow assumed, unfortunately even now there is such a stereotype that only men will gain support and receive votes. The fact is that who the candidate is and the candidate's personal qualities are what's important. A woman can have better personal qualities, but somehow this is often overlooked. When it concerned my nomination, I faced a lot of barriers. But there were quite few who supported my nomination".

The question that arises is, who maintains this "patriarchal inertia"? We will first analyse the second sub-category of the third category.

A3.2. Gender of intraparty conformity

A rather interesting category of conformity was revealed within the study, one which turned out to be prevalent among men than women. Women tend to be more nonconformists and critical. Thus, intraparty conformism is also gendered.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"The question is to what extent you are loyal and conformist, and do not object to anything inside the party, in such case you can be promoted. ... The women I personally know in the party are much less conformist than men."

One male respondent elaborates more on the intraparty conformism, which confirms the views of the previous participant:

Governmental party, middle-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"It is important to follow the rules and regulations of the party, and not to do something based only on your initiatives, without agreement from the party. If you want to act on behalf of the party you need to obey certain system in the party."

Almost all types of respondents explicitly or implicitly expressed their views on "intraparty conformism".

While analysing the data, another interesting category related to intraparty anxieties and stereotypes could be revealed, in this case concerning the women's bodies. Therefore, a new theoretical category emerged:

A3.3 Control over women's bodies/stigmatization

This category was divided into smaller categories:

A3.3.1. Woman as an unreliable political partner (Eve)

The study showed that women within the parties are perceived as unreliable political partners.

Opposition party, higher-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I can recall in 2008, in the parliament, I heard this for the first time and I was shocked ...during a discussion one woman from our party said, that she did her utmost so that certain women not be allowed to join the party, because as those women were perceived as a threat."

This category is linked with the category of "intraparty conformism" and once again underlines the fact that men are generally not perceived as a threat due to their 'obedience', while women are perceived as less reliable and hesitant. We will touch upon this issue in the chapter where we present the interpretation of the data and theoretical categories. For now we will focus on the next important category:

A3.3.2. "Provincial woman" (nature vs. nurture)

One more category related to the category of "centralization and elitism", focuses on how politically active, provincial women (i.e. not from Tbilisi) are isolated from central politics. One female respondent elaborated on this issue during the interview:

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There were several things. The accent of people coming from Imereti was mocked, while in the case of men this was not the case even if they originally were from Imereti as well. ... It is interesting how and why people get into activism. There were more boys than girls, but the good thing about it was the fact that the group of people were not from Vake-Vera ... people from Vake-Vera used to be aggressive, and would see us as provincial, they would not spend time with us, they would ask questions such as 'don't you live near 'Mrgvali Baghi' [in Vake-Vera]? Why do you hang out with these provincial people?' I think the girls failed to be more active because of such attitude."

The next smaller category is related to the aspect of the family in the lives of women from the parties. Family is often a barrier for them and the source of intraparty manipulation. The focus is often directed to the pregnancy and motherhood of women, but also on anxieties of parents and relatives related to the fact that they have a family member involved in politics. We will first elaborate on family and pregnancy-related issues which are barriers for women's political participation.

A3.3.3 Marriage/husband/family/relatives/gender of responsibilities

Women from the parties we have analysed - in particular those who have families and children - all agree that women have a considerably greater sense of responsibility toward families as compared to men and that this is often the cause of women being bullied and stigmatized (also experienced by the family).

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Family is a problem. Many women don't want to be stigmatized because of it. I can talk about myself as an example: many of these women don't want to be fodder for gossip ... That she is someone's mistress for instance, or someone's relative. It was not a pleasant moment for my family either, despite the fact that they did not stop me from getting involved in politics."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In our case, there are certain gendered, or cultural and historical circumstances. Another part of this is that women, in my opinion, bear much greater responsibility in their personal lives - i.e. responsibilities within the family: children and other members of the family. I personally believe that this is a problem for many women. I have a child and spend a lot of time away from my child, which is very difficult. I can afford to leave my child with other family members and they are very supportive, which gives me the luxury to do what I want to do. This is normally not a barrier for men, which puts us in a significantly disadvantaged position. ... This is an additional burden and dealing with this is not easy."

The above-mentioned category creates the next subcategory on "motherhood troubles" about married women with children in the parties:

A3.3.4. "Motherhood troubles" ("pregnancy/maternity leave")

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"During my pregnancy I had to stay in bed for a while. I had very difficult pregnancy. Then I had to stay home because of my child, which in fact was a big barrier for me. This is never the case for men, is it? First of all, they don't have to go through pregnancy and they never take paternity leave, although there is such a possibility in line with Georgian law. There are maybe one or two men [who have taken paternity leave] ...As for me, I have to distribute my time between children and work, while men never have to worry about striking such a balance."

While analysing the data we learned that there are intraparty anxieties regarding women's body image, sexuality and age, thus there emerged another sub-category:

A3.3.5. "Body image, sexuality and age"

Based on the analysis we found out that there are certain anxieties regarding women's image and the way they dress in the party.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Being young was an additional reason to be bullied – inside and outside the party. Once it happened that a woman changed the colour of her hair, and this was followed

by a kind of 'court hearing', in a friendly way. It was a big deal. This was a case where she tried to underline her individuality ... that she was different, the way she wanted to be, which is not acceptable for the society. Everyone dyes their hair, women and men. There was no discussion of this when a man dyed his hair, while in a woman's case it was really a huge topic of discussion, and she received comments and advice that she should instead dress in this or that other way."

Governmental party, middle-level manager, under 25-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There was a girl who loved wearing short skirts and during discussion in the party they said that if she received votes it would only happen thanks to her short skirts."

Furthermore, it was interesting to follow how respondents described what they thought of as an appropriate look for women in the party. According to their views, a female politician should not be sexy, young and feminine insofar as these characteristics are not advantageous; moreover, men in the parties do not regard them as serious politicians.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, divorced, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In my view a female politician should not have a sexy or vulgar appearance. She has to be very intelligent. In terms of age, probably between 30 and 55. She has to be confident, well-spoken, and most of all she has to believe in what she is doing."

Governmental party, middle-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"A female politician should have no sexuality. Sexuality has to be taken outside the party. Being sexy is not advantageous for this job, because it means she cannot be loyal and focused. This is my view. This type of a woman has other functions. If I were a man saw a beautiful woman with big breasts etc. who wanted to join the party, I would think that I don't need this woman for a serious job, I would rather see a loyal, determined person in the party."

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I think she does not have to look sexy. If a woman is sexy, Georgian men do not regard her as a serious person. Men, and society in general, will not listen to her. Instead they will focus on her looks. She may have interesting things to say, but men will not take her seriously. Well, she has to look clean and tidy ... but everything in moderation. In my opinion she has to be single and middle-aged."

We will now focus on the next interesting category, created while analysing the data:

A3.3.6. "Politics as dirty job"

The results of the study revealed the ways male respondents tended to underline the "dirty" side of politics, they believe that women can choose not to be promoted or be rather active in politics due to this reason.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital, decision-maker:

"I can think of one good example: if we turn on TV and watch the debates, what happens during the debates? There is no respect for each other, they swear a lot, throw cups and bottles at each other and women therefore tend to think that politics is dirty, and they try to stay away from politics."

The sub-category of "dirty politics" is followed by another related category:

A3.3.7. "Female political candidate/conflictual woman"

Male respondents believe that it is not desirable to nominate female majoritarian candidates because women are weak, timid, not brave, and find it difficult to do door-to-door campaigning, or argue with someone. If a woman wants to establish herself as a politician, she has to be argumentative, or in other words, a 'warrior'; sexuality and beauty can only be considered as supplementary to her courageous character. Thus, they measure success by the ability to be "conflictual".

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital, decision-maker:

"Yes, she might be thought of as an argumentative person, but it will not be a barrier in my job. Quite the contrary, if a woman is conflictual it can be useful to persuade my team ... Therefore, this can be an advantage for a woman...It can also be helpful in terms of destroying the stereotype about women according which they are weak and not courageous. This is the stereotype that everyone believes in, maybe 9 out of 10 persons have this argument that a woman is a problem in the party."

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"A majoritarian female candidate has to be active ... She has to be purposeful, focused on her objective. She has to be fearless. If a woman is fearless, she can do anything."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In my opinion, if a woman is not brave, it will be hard for her to run an election campaign, because to be a majoritarian candidate means to be ready to work 24 hours every day. You are supposed to have meetings with voters; during the day you are supposed to visit different locations, and be busy with it throughout this process."

It can be concluded that being "conflictual" is a requirement and an expectation for a woman candidate.

We have thus far been elaborating categories inside the parties which were revealed based on data analysis. We will now discuss theoretical categories outside the parties, which influence women's lives in the parties.

B. Categories outside the parties

B1. Alternatives

While analysing the data we found categories outside the party that affect women's party-related activities. The first such category is alternatives to joining the party, which includes other sub-categories, such as migration from towns, marriage and paid work. The results showed that due to existing social-economic and cultural circumstances in the towns, young women instead of engaging in politics opt for migration/move for education or employment, get low or high-paid jobs locally.

We will further analyse each of these subcategories:

B1.1. Migration from small towns:

B1.1.1. Education and employment-related migration

According to one female respondent, women do not stay in the parties and parties do not encourage them to stay. Young women thus prefer to find a better-paid job where their work will be appreciated, where they will not spend most of their time campaigning or on other election-related activities.

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"According to my observations, apart from the cultural barriers, girls prefer to get an education and find a job. They do not stay long in the 'sakrebulo' [local council] and such jobs. As for salary, women can stay in the parties if they are well paid, but does the party need these women? It does not. They only need women to do low-paid work, such as agitation."

Male respondents explain this by the centrality of Tbilisi -i.e. "all girls want to move to the centre".

Governmental party, middle-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, single, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Tbilisi is the centre, political, economic, financial, educational etc... if women are given chances and are offered good conditions, many of them may leave."

When interviewing one of the respondents, the problem of emigration was also emphasized:

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, single, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"It is because of unemployment. Most young people left for Turkey for jobs. Almost everyone is gone. Approximately 6 out of 10 women. And most women work as caretakers."

The category of "alternatives" is divided into the following categories:

B1.2 Marriage

According to respondents, in small towns young women prefer marriage over political engagement.

Governmental party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, single, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Girls do not see any future prospects in the peripheral areas. She finds a job, faces barriers and stops being active and starts contemplating getting married, which for her means that as a woman she will be more fulfilled. This will not be the case if she gets involved in politics."

The next sub-category is paid work.

B1.3 Paid work

This subcategory is divided into two directions: women from towns who are mostly interested in low-paid jobs and women from Tbilisi who prefer to work for big organizations, public organizations and NGOs.

Here are extracts from interviews with respondents from the towns:

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Young people can leave the party unless they are offered a paid job. Obviously, having a paid job is important for everyone, rather than working just based on enthusiasm. They can stay in the party, physically... but then they don't have time to manage everything."

Opposition party, low-level activist, about 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"It is possible that a young woman prefers working in a market instead of in politics. Of course, she finds a job available to her – as a stylist, as a salesperson or anything. Political or social activities become less important ...when you have to worry about income for daily sustenance".

As regards Tbilisi, according to one male respondent (governmental party, high-level manager) women tend to seek employment in NGOs. One reason is the higher salaries, and besides, it is much easier to criticize Georgian politics from the outside, he said.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Women leave and get employed in NGOs. What is the role of NGOs today? It is much easier, to be honest. You feel no responsibility. You make statements, criticize, and these NGOs today get funding from different European countries. They do not have any problems. And they get the same salary as, for instance, any department head at a ministry. But in this case, they do not have the responsibility."

A subcategory of category B is B2.

B2 Anxieties outside the party regarding women in the party.

This is comprised of the following subcategory:

B2.1 Family, relatives, friends and neighbours

The results of the study suggest that family and environment have a significant influence on women's success inside a party. Often families and the environment tend to be associated with various cultural anxieties, while respondents whose parents support their political activities, or those who do not have their own families, are much more successful in Georgian politics as compared to women who did not get that much support either from a husband, parents or relatives.

Women from the parties (whether from low-level positions and regions, or from higher-level positions and Tbilisi) emphasize the significance of families. The analysis of the data indicates that the family factor is a universal theoretical category for all types of respondents.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Family is important ... sometimes a husband disapproves of his wife's involvement in door-to-door campaigning. I cannot see anything negative now. If you believe in yourself, in what you accomplished in the past, there is only the family and husband who can create obstacles."

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Mothers-in-law also can be against women's late working hours. My mother-in-law, for instance, was afraid that I would stay from morning till late at night at work after I got a job in the public sector."

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I am not married and I don't have a husband, I was brought by a philologist (my mother) and an economist (my father). I am successful because of this. It is very individual. I think you have to be determined, have to have goals and principles, and the environment should be supportive when you try to prove

something. My parents were very active. We all had the sense of national spirit."

The phenomenon of relatives is very important in the regions. It is also of great significance if a woman belongs to opposition or governmental party. Results show that there are more obstacles for women from opposition parties rather than from governmental parties.

Governmental party, middle-level manager, under 25-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I can say what can be an obstacle: in a small town parties are divided, here everyone has some kind of relation to each other, or a friend, it cannot happen otherwise. In pre-election times being a friend or a relative to anyone becomes unimportant. This is a barrier, I personally know people who would not participate because of their relatives, personally I have warned others about it, but for majority it is a problem"

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"It matters a lot which party represent... you need to have some support from the political party. In a small town this can be a barrier. In case I am a friend or a neighbour andyou are isolated, and when you are a woman you just step aside in order to maintain good relations with neighbours."

A woman's age also plays an important role, as do as her friends' views about her being active in politics. We found that being a young active woman in politics can expose one to bullying and ridicule, particularly in the regions.

Opposition party, low-level activist, under 25-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If you are young, why would you be interested in politics?' I experienced this myself, from my friends. They would wonder why a young girl would be interested in politics. But I do not care what others think about it. I do it because I want it this way and not because of other reasons. My family members also used to tell me that I should quit being this active, but I insisted on my views and decision. Later they changed their minds and even supported my decision; now I am certain that this is exactly what I want and will do."

As a result of analysis we drew up the theoretical categories discussed above. The next part of the research will focus on data-based interpretation. We will analyse the myths and obstacles to women's political participation according to the theoretical categories.

Data based interpretation: Myths and their deconstruction

Theoretical interpretation is based on data analysis. Theoretical categories were interpreted based on the sociological information collected within the study. An umbrella interpretative theoretical category was created which was titled "Intraparty crisis of reproducing masculinity and femininity inside and outside political parties in transformation-era Georgia."⁴⁰

In what follows we will define the umbrella theoretical category and the key concepts.

Sociological reproduction and transformation⁴¹

Because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and globalization, and increased new knowledge and information, Georgian society faced many difficulties. Traditional gender roles changed. This on the one hand was caused by erosion of traditional institutions (religion, family, science) and on the other hand by the appearance of gender politics in Georgia.

Explanations of the concepts of femininity and masculinity through the prism of biology, religion or the supernatural were blended with explanations using social constructivism, which made it difficult to reproduce new "femininities" and "masculinities" during the transformational phase.

A crisis formed. According to Giddens, this crisis is caused by societal transformation. The position of men in various fields is not a dominant one anymore. Man is no longer considered the sole breadwinner. Boys are less confident about their aims in life.⁴²Therefore, the behaviour of men and women in a modern society is partially the response to the "crisis of masculinity and femininity".

40 At this stage it is impossible to go beyond binary division and introduce other gender identities. It was not possible based on the data that we collected. Nor was it the aim of this study to analyse and interpret such data.

⁴¹The aim of sociology is to study the outcomes caused by the ultimate balance between social reproduction and social transformation. Social reproduction indicates the ways "societies keep developing over time, while social transformation focuses on changes these societies undergo. Social reproduction takes place on a continuum, insofar as there is a continuum of what people do daily or yearly and the social practices they follow. Some changes happen because individuals intend to make them happen while others are outcomes which no one envisages in advance.

⁴² O.Koefoed, "Masculinity in Crisis", Roskilde University, 2012, pp. 10;

The concept of crisis was introduced in ancient Greece. Doctors would refer to the condition of a patient as crisis when his/her health significantly improved. Thus, *crisis*, as opposed to common assumptions, is not associated with something negative. On the contrary, it points to a significant change, a new and improved condition.⁴³

To expand this concept, individuals do not experience this crisis just because of difficulties. History is full of dramatic examples of defeat in the face of barriers and difficulties.

The problem is not that we are confronting difficulties, but the fact that we are surrounded by such difficulties which we cannot understand. We are unable to deal with them because we simply do not know that kind of difficulties we are dealing with. To put it another way, we cannot deal with the difficulties because no one is capable of defining them in all their vagueness and persuade us of their rightness.

This study draws on a feminist approach and its aim is to recognize the reality caused by the crisis, due to which women in the parties are oppressed.

Moreover, our aim was to tease out the information from respondents' narratives which would not explain women's oppression through their biological, religious or obsolete functionalist views ("a woman has to be confined to the family/private sphere so that the biologically determined mode of reproduction of society is not undermined. She has to take care of children and men have to be responsible for sustenance") and establish that, on the contrary, intraparty oppressive practices are socially constructed and thus become the myths which later are realised in the society and cause women's isolation from parties, or their "disappearance/invisibility" within the parties.

In the process of collecting, analysing data, creating theoretical categories and interpreting them, we found that the above-mentioned theoretical categories existing either outside or within the parties (based on the outdated model of male and female gender roles, according to which men belong to the public/political sphere while women belong to the private, apolitical one) play a significant role in the making of Georgian politics. On the other hand they are not productive any longer and respondents assess them as barriers to women's political participation.

The study results suggest that there are various myths and stereotypes which contribute to perpetuation of traditional gender roles in the parties. They are transformational, globalized and need to be revised and improved. This was precisely the aim of our study – to collect information and identify the theoretical categories that emerged in the process of analysis as difficulties that we had not been aware of. Analysis of collected information or invisible knowledge will enable us to facilitate certain changes.

As a result of interpretation, we formed the interpreted categories based on categories inside and outside the parties that were revealed during analysis.

Thus a big interpreted theoretical category was formed, which we called "crisis of perpetuation of femininity and masculinity within parties and society in transformational Georgia". This big category was divided into two relatively smaller interpreted categories:

⁴³Ibid, p. 10.

"crisis of masculinity and femininity in the party" and "'crisis of masculinity and femininity outside the party".

We will elaborate on each of these categories.

"Crisis of masculinity and femininity in the party/revealed myths"

This category consists of a smaller one: "Fear of men of losing privileges/power", i.e. 'Masculinity', insofar as the privileges/power are associated with men).

"Women's fear of failing to be good women" –their attempts to preserve femininity, be good mothers, wives, neighbours, friends and relatives in parallel to being party members, inasmuch as all of the above are associated with women. All these categories are intertwined and each has the same significance in women's lives.

The category "men's fear of losing privileges/power" entails another sub-category: "the problem of publicly recognizing women's competence/capability and redirecting to 'conflictuality'".

On the one hand men tend to privately say that women have appropriate skills for the job and a proper sense of responsibility. Yet, instead of "competence", they name "conflictuality" as the main advantage of female politicians - that is, the very characteristic that in reality the men of the party have and that is universally regarded as a "male" characteristic by men themselves.

It seems we are dealing here with projection and replacement, that politics is a 'masculine/male business' and one needs to have only "male" qualities to be a good politician; if women want to be successful in politics they have to use these male qualities, while women's skills and competences in this case are disregarded. In this case we are dealing with the situation when the historically and socially constructed male quality – "being conflictual" turns into a myth.

It is evident from an interview with a male respondent in which he shares his views about a woman from the opponent party, who is perceived as a successful female politician.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"She is self-confident. How did she manage that? She managed it over many years, because she has demonstrated that she is not afraid to be openly in conflict and she is raising the standard, so to speak. This contrasts with the general tendency for women to stay out of politics because they lack the energy to deal with conflict situations, or this [energy for conflict] cannot be encouraged as a woman's trait, since 'fighting' is a male quality'.

Therefore, the myth of "conflictuality", established as a standard for a successful politician, has been revealed.

Women from the party have different views on this subject. They believe that by creating this myth of 'conflictuality' men are trying to cover their incompetence and whenever they are not able to accomplish something, when they don't have the knowledge, are not responsible and hard-working, men are manipulating 'conflict' and consider it a key component of a successful political activity.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I cannot agree about conflicts. First of all, this is simply the way these incompetent men try to justify their actions, whenever they do not have a proper argument about certain subject they turn to sexist, gendered language and conflict. For instance, if I talk about a certain article in a draft law being in contradiction with the constitution and I do it in an argumentative way, their respond is that 'a woman cannot teach them anything'."

"Not recognizing professional competence and redirecting to conflict" is maintained in the party by the phenomenon of "gendered distribution of work".

This is why women are made to do specific tasks (such as writing work, agitation), which subsequently leaves no space for "conflict". Since the conflict is associated with political action and the actor's hegemony, women are no longer seen as actors or as individuals having the power - they are simply "menial workers".

The category "Fear of losing privileges" creates another category that we call "Recruitment, advancement and centralization/Georgian nature or form of elitism".

A well-organized recruitment and advancement system in the party attracts a non-elitist, competent and responsible individuals for the party. Analysis of the data suggests that this characteristic is more associated with women than men.⁴⁴

The presence of such women in the party would threaten elitist, conflictual and hegemonic men with regard to the distribution of power. This can explain the fact that "professional skills", as an indicator for promotion and recruitment, are overlooked, while being "conflictual" is regarded as the most valuable characteristic for successful politics.

⁴⁴ One respondent said she was in a work situation recently where something was being taught. The men "made mischief" and received a rebuke. "We women blushed but the men just smiled. I think women have more self-respect."

Another respondent remarked: "There are more men than women, but during previous elections there were only three of us, women, as compared to 40 men, but we did most of the work."

By adhering to this view men maintain intraparty privileges and forget about their own "incompetences". They put it this way: "Because a woman is not conflictual, she cannot be a successful politician. She has to stay at home and take care of her children. It does not matter if she is hard working and competent."

Besides, the myth of "conflictuality" is an obstacle for women in the party to establish themselves in politics.

As it turns out, not only Georgian politics is characterized by the phenomenon of peaceful vs conflictual.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"This happens all around the world. For instance, if you look at peace negotiations - I do not exactly remember the percentage, maybe 30 - the point is that there are more women involved in the process of negotiations. But when it comes to signing the documents, there are only one or two. Unfortunately the same trend can be found in companies as well."

Moreover, men from central party apparatuses try to base recruitment and promotion system on "recommendations" and "connections" so as to further reinforce their power within the parties. When a woman joins the party based either on connections or on recommendations, she is no longer an independent subject/actor - instead, she is representing those men who helped her enter politics.

In addition, women in the parties are denigrated as "women who were promoted by men"; they are chastised with phrases like, "because of men now she got into politics", "because of her sexuality she is in politics, she must be some man's mistress". This myth of politically engaged women is an additional barrier for women's involvement in the process.

The results of the study suggest that the existing phenomenon of "a woman who joined the party with men's help" - either outside the party or within the party - is the reason many women are subjected to bullying that discourages them from joining a party.

The interesting part is that such bullying is often used by women who were themselves able to join the party based on connections. Women whose political success was also "created" by men. Thus, the phenomenon of "interstigmatization" was identified and can be perceived as a projection of guilt onto others, the emotion of guilt which is formed within and by the inappropriate system of recruitment and promotion. Furthermore, the phenomenon of a "scapegoat" is subsequently created.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If they were independent candidates and had not participated in elections with the help and X's money, etc. and if they were going against a male majoritarian candidate, in my opinion, without further political considerations, unfortunately, voters still have preferred to vote for a male candidate."

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I have no idea about X, whether there was something sexual or not, but the fact remains that there was something related to her being a woman. I think there was this thing that she was a 'pretty girl', and it works. Anyway, this is how this was perceived."

Male respondents also share such views every time they discuss a woman from an opposing party, though according to the analysed and interpreted data, the demeaning of women because they were "helped by men to join the party" is used by all men in the parties.

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There is a woman who is the mistress of the deputy to the head of the local administration, this is why she was promoted, and later she was appointed as his assistant. Then the emphasis is placed on this fact rather than on her professional skills".

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Nukri Kantaria [ruling MP] in his speech addressed members of the National Movement [opposition party]. He that there were no chances for them so they should save the young girls with bright eyes from political pimps."

According to female respondents, "Georgian nature/way of recruitment, mobility and promotion" encourages such an attitude from the society where people are interested in the private lives of female politicians and the main pressure is directed at their private lives. Therefore public and private spheres of women involved in politics overlap. In addition, competent female politicians are damaged by this pressure and they find themselves in the position of having to prove that, apart from "connections" they were accepted into the party because of their skills and competences. "Connections" turns out to be an additional obstacle to women's political participation.

Women spend more energy on such explanations and consequently it becomes an obstacle to their party-related activities, which is not the case for male politicians. Therefore, men similarly create the above-mentioned myth in order to make women "invisible" in the parties and reinforce their own power.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, without social, cultural and symbolic capital, representing ethnic minority:

"It is very bad that there is such an attitude. We tend to forget one important thing - that one may criticize a female politician because of her actions, but not because of her private life ... so far it has been difficult to reach this understanding in Georgia."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If you have been appointed on a certain position, there is always a question – 'how did you accomplish it all by yourself?' And not only men have these questions - it's women as well. They mean that someone pulled the strings for you, that you were not capable or did not have enough skills to overcome the obstacles and reach success."

However, there have been women who were unable to deal with such pressure and left politics.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There is a woman who sometimes can be seen in the party, and is involved in some activities, but she is not the member of the political council. In the previous parliament, one MP asked her: 'what are these particular skills that you have', meaning – 'what are the techniques which helped you become a member of the party?'"

We have identified another interesting tendency while interpreting intraparty categories concerning the regions outside Tbilisi. The biggest obstacle for women from the regions is the centralized management of the party, or centralization due to the fact that elite members of the party are not very familiar with the women from the regions - they have no communication and no desire to get to know them better. Elite men from central party apparatuses personally know only women from Tbilisi and they tend to 'bring in' women (from Tbilisi) through their connections to the party. They only communicate with men from the regional parties and seek to interact only with new male members.

Men reinforce and preserve their privileges and power from the centre over the peripheries by means of these male connections and by completely ignoring the regional women. In addition, men in the regions have developed their own so-called "intraparty conformism" that helps them preserve privileges and reproduce them on the regional level. Therefore we arrived at the following wording: "Men in the regions try to reinforce their privileges by means of intraparty conformism and through male connections."

Centralization, conformism and male connections on regional level help men in the parties to manipulate and form a new myth: "Tbilisi wants it this way". A low-level activist women, as well as middle-level managers from regional parties discussed this issue; for high-level managers - both men and women - this phenomenon is invisible.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"During intraparty elections, for instance in Kutaisi - when I arrived there I found out that there were only men who were appointed. There were as many candidates as there were seats. I said that this was not the way elections should be held. We had to fight so that everyone could nominate a candidate and compete. I was forthright. Their answer was that they had to take into consideration Tbilisi's position - whatever was acceptable for Tbilisi - and therefore they could not oppose it. If it was an instruction from Tbilisi that the number of candidates was enough, they could not oppose it so as not to undermine the team spirit within the party. But this meant that the elections were not real. All this needs more experience and more time, and someone from the party management has to interfere."

Male connections, conformism and the "Tbilisi wants it this way" phenomenon are evident in the following passage from an interview with a male respondent, regional middle-level manager:

"It is important to follow the rules and regulations of the party, and not to do something based only on your initiatives, without agreement with the party, if you want to act on behalf of the party you need to conform to a certain system."

As it was demonstrated above, the party is associated with Tbilisi and Tbilisi is associated with men, or in other words both have a male face.

Another female respondent from the regions agrees with the statement that the parties are managed from Tbilisi, she agrees with the views on centralization and management by Tbilisi elite as well, though she also focuses on local elites which she refers to as "Kakhetian feudalism".

Opposition party, low-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I was based in Tbilisi for many years and everyone thought that I was originally from Tbilisi. I believe that where you come from is not determinative but your circle, your connections, are very important. The father of the parliament chair had been a deputy speaker. They have their own circle, if we were of the same age and I was more talented than him, it would still be hard for me... from our region MPs are from regular families, sometimes I think it is all about 'Kakhetian feudalism'. I think I coined this term."

Furthermore, managers from Tbilisi parties maintain reserved/closed relations with regions by taking an elitist pose and keeping their distance. As a result, party members see the central politics as some kind of a "film" and the party members from central politics are perceived as film directors or main characters. Therefore another myth is formed: "Tbilisi elite party members are the only good politicians" - and consequently recruitment, promotion and centralization are maintained by means of this isolation, based on which "male privileges" and power hierarchy are reproduced within the parties.

Opposition party, middle-level party manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"This is so obvious, for instance, when there were strikes at Rustavi 2 [leading TV station], we would join in from the regions, but the leader would not join it and stand with us, which was a big hindrance."

A female respondent from the region, a low-level party activist, points out that for her the representatives from the central party apparatuses were like movie characters - quite distant from her until she met them in person.

Opposition party, low-level party activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, divorced, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I also had this kind of attitude myself - until I joined the party, I perceived them as very distant from us. Maybe this is the human way of thinking. Then when I had a chance to meet them in Zugdidi, it was a surprise for me. I had never been in touch with them before, and when I left the room I was left with quite a pleasant feeling that I could actually talk with those people."

Two other female respondents similarly reflect on the above issue. They point out that perceptions of "isolation" and "elitism" are the cause of certain complexes/insecurities among women which cause them to become insecure about their involvement in politics, because politics is some kind of a "movie from Tbilisi" in which their "directors"(also from Tbilisi) would never let them have leading roles due to the fact that they are women. Also they do not personally know the scriptwriters or producers and the leading roles are reserved for men, who are better acquainted with the Tbilisi elite.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"They should be closer to us, but they are not. I think in general, politicians themselves are reluctant to be in close communication with people in the parties. Accordingly, even if I had some personal encounter, I still have the perception that they are quite far from us, and that they are not accessible."

Opposition party, low-level party activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"It is important to be in communication with party members, meetings, so that women can overcome these insecurities. With women from any class/social strata, it can be in the form of meeting up for a coffee, or a general conversation between women and men from Tbilisi with the ones from the regions. This way it will become obvious to them that this movie-like politics is real and it's not so distant from us"

The categories of elitism, centralization and recruitment/promotion are linked with another category of "control over women's bodies/stigmatization", and the sub-category/myth of the "provincial woman" (nature vs nurture). The "provincial woman" is not forgiven anything in politics and has to meet high expectations either inside or outside the party.

Provincial women are alienated. They are perceived as reckless, irresponsible individuals, as well as non-conformists in the parties. This myth is reinforced by the "nature vs. nurture" debates, which in turn revolve around the notion that everything/everyone existing outside the city is "uncultured/uncivilized" and uneducated, that educated and cultured individuals can exist only in the cities, which then becomes the basis of political life.⁴⁵ Isolation of the provincial women is necessary for perpetuation of male power and privileges. The fact that such women can be quite competent, loyal and useful for parties is overlooked. The most important thing is not to undermine elitism, male privileges and power, and this once again highlights the "crisis of masculinity".

One female respondent elaborates on "alienated" provincial women in the following way:

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, divorced, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

⁴⁵ B. Turner, "The Body and Society", Third Edition, SAGE, 2008, pp. 1-17.

"Everything has its framework, including democracy. They say that democracy means respecting certain rules/laws. You are not allowed to do anything you want to do. You will not be forgiven for crossing the line. It does not matter whether you come from Imereti or Chaladidi, it is not essential. You are just expected to behave in a certain way and be careful about any actions that may damage the party in any way."

On the one hand we have identified what we can call intraparty non-conformism coming from isolated women and not "provincialism". It seems that the above respondent is not focusing on provincialism. But if we take into consideration interviews with other respondents, the notion of the provincial woman is one of a person who exists outside the city and is uncultured, has a specific regional accent, is uneducated and therefore is not submissive. This approach later is presented as an icon/image of an "enemy of the party", who can violate the rules and damage the party. Therefore, this is the reason why this individual is consequently alienated from the party. However, we can bring numerous examples of men who have violated the rules and continue to represent central politics.

We will later elaborate more on the image of an 'enemy to the party' in relation to women with critical views.

We will now describe another unwritten practice that has been revealed within this research: while men are associated with "male connections" and "intraparty conformism" and always support each other, women do not act in a similar way. They are not supportive to each other, but this should not be a reason to demean women in the parties. Perhaps they have not experienced what it means to have "female connections", which could be an asset for them, and they try to make contacts and later deals with men rather than with women who number very few in the parties and have little power.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I would like to focus on one more aspect, which is very painful to me. It concerns women's political participation: men always support new male members, while women do not express this kind of solidarity. Women are so few in the parties that they start to compete with each other, while men do not regard each other as rivals."

Our data analysis has deconstructed the myth that "women in the parties are unprincipled/unprofessional". It was revealed that women tend to be "non-conformists in the parties" not because they are unprincipled, disloyal or unreliable, but rather because they are more principled, courageous, critical, and dedicated.

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Women cannot see themselves in politics. I do not know the reason for this. Women are more adaptive than men, but women are more critical as well and do not agree on many points inside the parties. They are more principled and they tend to act in their own ways."

When a woman is tough and determined, it creates anxiety both within and outside the party and generally in Georgian society, where a woman is expected to be "submissive" and "obedient". This order of things dates back to before the transformational period.

As for the theoretical category of being "popular/famous", in this case a woman is chosen because she is famous, and not because of her education or competence, or for being a woman. Therefore, yet another myth is identified, which we call "if a woman becomes active and famous, she is determined to go into politics"⁴⁶.

One female respondent pointed out that if a person is accepted into the party because of his/her reputation/fame, it can happen that the person is unaware of the local context. And this can work as a disadvantage insofar as local people may be against the nomination of such a candidate.

Another female respondent from the same party said that there is more aggression towards "famous" people from voters than towards candidates they had not known before, who may be presumed as being competent. But this is a different matter. "Famous" male politicians tend to maintain and perpetuate intraparty privileges and power, as well as the Georgian style of recruitment and advancement, since they tend to describe "famous" women in the parties as principled, established and "conflictual" - just like themselves. Furthermore, "famous women" have joined the party with the support of men and thus embody the ideological extension of those men rather than individual women in politics. While this circumstance creates additional barriers for non-famous but competent women to establish themselves in the parties or in politics, it also belittles the achievements of "famous" women (who might have joined the party through connections) but are nevertheless competent and skilled.

One more direction of the category related to the intraparty anxieties is the following: "woman as an unreliable political partner" (i.e. the biblical Eve), which validates the interpreted theoretical category "femininity as an intraparty crisis".

Women in the parties are demonized as "unreliable partners" just because they are women. In fact these women do not simply repeat the schemes offered by men - in fact they tend to be more resistant and critical to certain issues that arise inside the parties. Such "non-conformity" turns into a myth of women being "unreliable political partners".

Based on the data it can be concluded that women established in the parties tend to bully and demonize women in the same parties by emphasizing their "unreliability".

⁴⁶ According to one female respondent, men can also be described in this way. Parties do nothing to train and support their members, to help them establish themselves as political actors. Parties only work to promote them so that they become famous.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I can recall the times in 2008, in the parliament, I heard this for the first time and I was shocked ... During a discussion one woman from our party said that she did everything so that certain women not be allowed into the party because those women were perceived as a threat."

The results of the study carried out by Bagratia and Badashvili similarly emphasize that women are more loyal to the parties than men, both when they are in the government or afterwards, when the party loses its power and popularity.

According to one respondent, in 2012, in a city in western Georgia, after the victory of the Georgian Dream coalition many male members of the National Movement left the party and joined the new ruling team while women in the same party remained loyal and still are members of the now-opposition National Movement.

To sum up, the perception of women as "unreliable" is another myth which is used to make women "invisible" in the parties. In fact, intraparty nonconformity is presented as a type of unreliability associated with women. Women in the parties are more critical to the issues discussed inside the parties and are characterized as more loyal party members as compared to men.

Therefore another myth -"women are timid/fragile" - is formed, but it was revealed that men are more afraid of novelty, criticism and non-conformism within the parties, which can be explained by as a "crisis of masculinity". Men have higher salaries in the parties and are therefore scared of non-conformist and critical views that could undermine their high-paid jobs.

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There are quite a few women, but they are not involved in political processes. The reason for this is that they had expressed their views in a straightforward manner several times. These views were ignored. Such women are regarded as enemies. If you are criticizing certain issues and are self-reflective, you are somehow perceived as an enemy. Men are cowards, because they have so much more to lose. They have more responsibilities toward their families in terms of financial matters, because they have higher salaries. Therefore, in my view they refrain from criticism/fight. Whenever a real problem emerges in the party, you start to act and deal with it, but after a while you notice that there is no-one supporting you, you are left alone and when you are alone, you cannot win, and you just leave."

Another interpreted theoretical category was formed based on intraparty conformity: "you have to adapt to everything once you are in the party" –which represents another myth associated with men rather than women.

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"You have to be adaptive to situations, once you are engaged in politics. You are not expected to create some situation, you have to adapt to it. I have no knowledge of the situation elsewhere, but at least in the regions, you have to adjust to the situation. You are not expected to voice your ideas, or fight for your principles, as an individual, you just need to adjust. There is no space or possibility for implementing new ideas."

We will further discuss the phenomenon of "the desire to be like a man", which relates to the intraparty anxiety category "control over women's bodies/stigmatization". More specifically it was interpreted based on the category A3.3.3, "body image", "sexuality" and "age".

Insofar as power is associated with men, party women, including those who are particularly feminine, and, in general, individuals of both sexes in the parties emphasize that it is preferable that women in the party not look sexy/provocative, not be young and not be feminine. Here we are dealing with the "crisis of femininity in the parties". There seems to be no space for "beautiful women" (which was the feminine characteristic in the gender order before transformational Georgia) in politics and if there is a woman in politics, she should rather be less feminine and more masculine.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If a woman is beautiful, she is not taken seriously. Men, and generally society will not listen to her. Instead they will focus on her looks. She may have interesting things to say, but men will not take her seriously. Well, she has to look clean and tidy - but everything in moderation. In my opinion such a woman should be single and middle-aged."

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"A woman should be dressed in a classy way - not provocative or sexy. Such women should not be in politics, especially in front of the cameras. This is my point of view. I believe that this kind of look can lead to a frivolous attitude: they will not listen to the discussions within the parties. At least

this is what I think, I don't know. For instance, if you watch TV and there is a politician giving a speech and her look or dress is provocative, then you start to think about her looks and not about what she's talking about, even if she's discussing an important issue."

In the previous two quotes respondents reflected on how women from the parties should look and what they should wear. They further discuss the tendency for women to look like men or become more "masculine", which may help them to gain more power in a male-dominated environment.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Women tend to think that if they become more masculine they will have more influence among men. Though Thatcher in terms of looks was feminine".

Other female respondents under the age of 35 reflect on the issue in a different way. For them sexy and beautiful women are not associated with weak and vulnerable women in the parties.

Opposition party, low-level activist, about 25-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Yes, she should be sexy. I remember once referring to a woman in the party when discussing her with my friend, who agreed that she is an attractive woman, never mentioning that she was also smart. I like when a woman is sexy, and I think men will change their mind gradually."

Another young female respondent - who is vividly feminine - points out that she should accepted the way she is, i.e. feminine, in a dress, with long hair. But later during the interview she referred to the qualities which are established as masculine in politics, namely being "tough and straightforward". By saying this she herself regards femininity as a weakness and tries to add another masculine quality. Thus another myth has been formed, which we have worded as "a beautiful woman in the party has to be tough".

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"You have to be who you are. I expect that society accepts me the way I am. Just because I have long hair and wear dresses, does not mean I am not tough enough, that I won't be tough enough when it is needed, it does not mean I will be emotional when making decisions. I just believe that we should not forget our feminine side for the sake of becoming successful politicians."

Hence, another myth was revealed: "A successful woman has to be masculine".

Let us return to the "gendered distribution of work" and its subcategory "pseudo-care", which creates circumstances in which women are reminded that there is "no place" for women in the parties. They are weak and fragile, i.e. they cannot cope with "men's work". Thus the parties try to preserve gender roles which had existed before the transformation phase in Georgian history. The age factor is also relevant. According to the high-level manager, a female respondent, in Samegrelo there are only men who participate in discussions while women are only responsible for providing tea and coffee and their age is between 45 and 65.

Meanwhile, women age 35 and younger during the interviews always tried to stress that they were ready to do the tasks previously perceived as men's work, (hanging posters, staying late hours at work, and being "conflictual"). Young women describe the gendered division of work in the party as oppressive, which leads them to reflect on it and start to act more like men.

Another myth that was revealed is related to the "women being weak and therefore not capable of doing male work in the parties". Thus, the myth that a successful female politician has to be masculine or should be able to do male tasks (tasks previously defined as male, in line with the gender order within the party) has been reinforced.

Furthermore, as regards gendered division of work, relying on women for tasks like writing or campaigning does not necessarily mean that this is what they really want to do. Instead it indicates that men are often incapable of this kind of work. (In the words of one respondent, women are responsible for "menial" tasks, which is beneficial for men). Consequently, the entire system (based on this work) is organized thanks to the efforts of women. If parties decide to allow men to do these tasks, men often refuse to do them, considering them shameful. One female respondent, a high-level manager, reflects on this issue: *"Men are unemployed, they look for jobs, but whenever they are offered a job for 2-3 months at a salary of 120 lari [per month], they tend to reject it because the salary is very low, even though otherwise they do not get any salary at all."*

This leads us back to the "crisis in masculinity". Men apparently consider that this kind of job will "challenge their masculinity" (that's the reason why men mainly are involved in campaigning or writing work only when they are students, i.e. before they become "men"⁴⁷ - and even this only happens in Tbilisi; jobs that are not "masculine" are easier to do in the urban area because one is less likely to come into contact with people one knows and thereby be exposed doing "unmanly" tasks).

Furthermore, men often do not have these skills and are unwilling to admit that women are more competent in this area, which is determined by the cultural and social knowledge and stereotypes on which we base our conclusions that men are generally more competent in

⁴⁷ According to the same female respondent, "for young male students 120 Gel per month is a considerable amount of money, which does not create any 'crisis of masculinity'. On the contrary it is considered an achievement, while for older men this is not regarded a proper salary and causes 'crisis'."

intellectual work or otherwise/in the public sphere (while campaigning also takes place in the public space, where men belong to and not within the families). By admitting women's competence men admit their incompetence, i.e. being on a lower level of hierarchy.

Since men believe that if women are more competent they are superior to men, then in a case where a man is not competent enough, he will feel that he can be subordinated by a woman.

This is exactly what we call a "crisis of masculinity in the party". Men do not acknowledge women's competence so that they don't lose their own their privileges and expose their incompetence and laziness.

There is one more interesting interpretation regarding intraparty gendered division of work. Men in the parties employ women as campaigners by emphasizing women's peaceful nature. They do not consider this a drawback - on the contrary, they consider this quality an advantage. Besides, we should not overlook the fact that women are expected to be "conflictual" and at the same time they emphasize that in the case of a majoritarian candidate, it cannot be safe for a woman to be involved in door-to-door campaigning.

In case of majoritarian candidates, the old version of the gender order is reinforced, according to which "women should not be spending time outside, because it can be dangerous". It may occur that when a woman is involved in a door-to-door campaign, someone can treat her disrespectfully, or insult her in some way or another, or she may get tired since she is fragile. Our research revealed cases of "pseudo-care" from men towards majoritarian candidates, which contradicts their stance on using women's labour for campaigning. Despite the possible danger or hard work, women are actively involved as campaigners, but this circumstance comes to the surface only in case of female majoritarian candidates. Therefore, this "ambivalence" is associated with men.

Here the "pseudo care" in fact defines the selection toward women's work in parties and by means of this selective attitude men reinforce their power and privileges in parties. This is reflected in the intraparty theoretical category "patriarchal inertia". Men emphasize that "a woman cannot be a majoritarian candidate, because she is a woman and society does not give preference to women", though when we compared attitudes towards female campaigners and female majoritarian candidates, we found out that the key characteristic is "patriarchal inertia" and "pseudo care", rather than the assumption that the society does not prefer women candidates, or assumptions related to women being peaceful, conflictual or vulnerable. This is related to recruitment structure and hence to preserving power.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Men are strange, they take more risks, and face aggression, which causes conflicts, not only in the regions, but also in Tbilisi. This is why you prefer to have a woman, in case there is some tension and conflict, it can develop in a less dramatic way. Of course there are quite a few aggressive women as well, who can also get involved in conflicts, but there is less risk of - for instance - physical confrontation."

Here we would like to deconstruct myths regarding "patriarchal inertia", "pseudo care", and 'conflictuality'. According to female respondents it is more advantageous to nominate female candidates due to their peaceful nature. Women are more eager to meet with the local population and listen to them in a way that will not result in any conflict. There was a case for example when one woman overcame the "patriarchal inertia" as well as "masculinity crisis" and was nominated as a majoritarian candidate. She was actively involved in a door-to-door campaigning and did quite well. This contradicted the myth of "patriarchal inertia" that assumed that voters prefer male rather than female candidates.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital, ethnic minority:

"I think I worked quite hard. I received 9,500 votes, and I can say that I met with approximately 700 individuals out of this number. I worked hard during the three or four months of the election campaign. I was actively involved in the door-to-door campaign, in the villages and everywhere. I visited each village three times and when I would return to this or that village, people could recognize me."

According to one female respondent, a low-level activist, door-to-door campaigning is not particularly difficult for women but is an equal challenge for both men and women. Therefore this cannot be used as an argument against women, but still in the party there is no discussion of nominating a female candidate. This phenomenon leads us again to "patriarchal inertia", which we will concentrate on below in greater detail.

Governmental party, low-level activist, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Probably this is a mentality issue, the assumption that women won't be able to meet regularly with the voters, that they avoid public meetings. Perhaps it cannot be required from her family, but she might still try to avoid certain difficulties. I don't know the reason. During elections neither men nor women can be entirely confident. Perhaps those involved in drawing up the lists – the organizational side of the party – do not even admit that women can also do it. There is no discussion that there can be a female majoritarian candidate."

Here is another example of a woman who is more capable of listening to the locals and dealing with conflicts and understanding the problems of people than men:

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I was accompanying X when he was a majoritarian candidate. During one meeting someone threw a leaflet at me. I bent over and picked it up, said thanks and turned away. There were two men who considered this insulting, but I didn't."

If we combine 'patriarchal inertia' (intraparty anxieties) with the categories outside the parties - "alternatives to joining the party"- we will see that in the regions, men from the parties see the problems considering women's political involvement in different ways: as regards young women they believe that young girls would rather leave, get an education or get married. Middle-aged women, as they see it, are not used to the public sphere and feel uncomfortable or insecure during meetings.

Meanwhile, women tend to identify different problems: they emphasize that the key barriers for women to joining a party is centralization and the so-called "patriarchal inertia". They say there are quite a few smart and motivated young women in the regions and their resources are not being used by the parties.

In addition, the myth of "patriarchal inertia" is associated with the Georgian nature of recruitment and promotion, which isolates young, motivated, competent and experienced women from politics and reinforces the myth that there are no competent women in the regions who would like to join the parties, since women would rather prefer to get married or continue with their studies.

Governmental party, low-level activist, about 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I personally know quite a few young girls, graduates from local universities, who are now in different parties. They are very active. Furthermore, according to a 2012 study conducted by the Women's Fund in Kakheti, male respondents... liked it when they saw women in the parliament or in high-ranking, decision-making positions. Many of them emphasized that they would like to see their family members - a wife or a daughter - in these positions. Some were in favour of this only in cases where these women were not their family members. By the way, the question was about who or what kind of a woman they would rather see in the parliament and according to the responses, they preferred if a female politician was Georgian, with good looks and reputation, educated, Christian, hard-working, charismatic etc. It was kind of a stereotype. I personally know quite a few such women, but none of them are recruited by the parties."

Opposition party, low-level activist, about 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There is a potential in the party, but I am not sure about the chances. There are quite smart educated women with good reputation in this party, in Zugdidi, but ultimately they somehow get blocked."

The analysed theoretical category "patriarchal inertia" causes additional problems. The standard thinking has it that local populations do not prefer female candidates - but this notion is dispelled by a quantitative poll conducted by NDI and by the attitudes of women

surveyed here, who have high motivation and readiness to get involved in politics. Thus, another myth is created by men: "women have no motivation" and they blame the society by emphasizing that "the locals do not give preference to female candidates". This myth is maintained so that men do not lose their intraparty power and privilege; it reinforces isolation and elitism.

Governmental party, low-level activist, about 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I personally know what I am capable of very well, and I believe I should not be where I am now, I am capable of working in higher, decision-making positions. The public agrees with me, but those who are responsible for drawing up the lists, do not think the same way."

There is another interesting theoretical interpretation of one more analysed category "motherhood troubles" (stigma of pregnancy/maternal leave'). Results of the research suggest that being pregnant or being a mother is a reason/motive to stigmatize women's bodies and bully women within the parties.

The dynamics of relations between married women with children and single women without children are also very interesting.

The results of the study suggest that party women without children -who adjust quite well to the masculine type of politics since they cannot be manipulated or bullied by their own families and children - bully women within the parties who are married and have children. This creates another myth: "mothers cannot be successful in the parties". Not surprisingly, women who have children themselves have more empathy towards other mothers inside the parties. Furthermore, we learned that smokers do not smoke less in the presence of pregnant women and in so doing emphasize the notion that mothers' place is at home, and not in public institutions/politics.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"There was one complicated case with a woman from the party. She was pregnant and then she gave birth, she had to stay in bed for a certain time, and stay away from work, but an additional problem was the environment of smokers. They smoke even when there are pregnant women in the same space. This created some tensions and conflicts.

"We all were supposed to work together, and pregnant women had to be with us. On the other hand smokers considered it important to be able to smoke, and in such cases we don't know how to behave - should we stop working or should they leave and smoke outside? And what about pregnant women? These are obvious things, but they become real problems. When

that woman was on maternity leave, she had to stay in bed as her doctor advised, she could not even walk, and consequently she stayed in bed for 6-7 months. She was replaced by another woman in the party, who was unhappy to have to do additional tasks and would complain about it a lot. She could not confront her personally, but she would complain behind her back."

Thus, a myth of "pregnancy and motherhood being a barrier for women in the parties" is being created. While according to the law, fathers can also get involved in raising children and take paternity leave, this is not implemented in practice if we consider, our study showed.

It has to be mentioned that "oppression of pregnant women in parties" does not happen without reason. Manipulation of women's pregnancy and motherhood is linked to recruitment and excludes any possibilities of bringing women to the parties in the very beginning by emphasizing that women represent certain risks to the parties, as one respondent pointed out.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, single, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"I look at it from a different perspective: For party leaders it is much easier to accept men. There is less risk in this case, insofar as they have far-reaching goals regarding this new male politician, which is not the case with a young girl."

On the other hand, this is linked with the recruitment as well, because young men are given preference in hiring because of the myth of "women's pregnancy and motherhood". In fact all of this serves quite different goals. If we consider the fact that male connections determine party life, then it is rather advantageous to accept men into the parties who are conformists. This reinforces and perpetuates the male hold on elite power and privileges in the parties.

Intraparty myths

Based on the intraparty theoretical categories and the analysis of interpreted category "crisis of masculinity and femininity inside the parties" we have revealed the following myths in the parties:

- "Men in the parties are more competent"
- "Women in the parties are not competent"
- Successful female politicians are "conflictual "

- "Women are [generally] not conflictual"
- "Men 'bring' women into politics, "connections"
- "Tbilisi wants it this way"
- "Only Tbilisi elite representatives can be good politicians"/"politics as a movie"
- "Female provincial politicians are not civilized/cultured"
- "Party women are not reliable, they are not courageous and determined/they have no integrity" (Myth of Eve)
- "Party men are reliable/principled/brave"
- "You have to adapt to everything in the party"
- "Women with power are manlike"
- "Excessively feminine women in politics are vulnerable"
- "Pseudo-care"
- "Campaigning door to door is too much work for female majoritarian candidates but not too much for female campaign activists"
- "Patriarchal inertia" ("the public does not like female majoritarian candidates")
- "Motherhood is impossible/is not encouraged in politics"
- "There are no competent resources in regions"
- "Women avoid responsibilities/are irresponsible"

"Crisis of masculinity and femininity outside the parties"/"revealed myths"

We will briefly analyse the interpreted theoretical categories based on the ones revealed outside the parties, which we refer to as "crisis of masculinity and femininity outside the parties". These categories are important inside the parties and exist because of the lack of intraparty democracy.

Based on respondents' narratives we have identified the following theoretical category: "alternatives to joining the party", which in turn includes subcategories like "migration related to education and employment", "marriage" and "paid job". These categories seem to be objective, and point to the barriers existing outside the parties, although if we take a closer look at them, they are determined by "intraparty reality", and in fact are the result of the perpetuation of barriers to women's political participation.

For example, as regards the first category, "migration related to education and employment", which is more characteristic to the cities, for young women living in the regions, due to the elitist nature of parties and the male connections, there is no chance of getting jobs in the parties. Furthermore, in the words of a female respondent, there is no strategy for developing small towns and no interest in retaining the younger generation in rural areas by using their skills in district parties and in other organizations.

In addition, women mentioned that there are enough women who stay in the towns but they still are not accepted as party members. This means that leaving towns either for education or for employment for bigger cities is another myth used by men to justify their

actions and maintain their privileges ("there is nobody, what should we do?"), thus they reinforce old male connections and isolation.

The second theoretical category, "marriage", seems to represent an obstacle external to the party, but, as we have seen, parties prefer to recruit young men rather than women, this is why "getting married" is the alternative, though it does not mean that they do not want to get involved in politics.

The myth about "marriage" is characteristic of other formal or informal organizations as well, and is used as a tool of manipulation by male party members.

The assumption that women are uneducated and therefore they prefer to get married represents yet another "justifying" argument used by men, which is linked to the myth of "marriage". Although, after analysing some narratives of married female respondents, it can be concluded that their views are not taken into consideration and they have no choice other than leave politics and get married, despite their education and competence. This consequently reinforces the myth of "non-competent women".

The third sub-category of the "categories outside the party" is "paid work". This factor does not exist outside the party, quite the opposite, it exists inside the party. Parties either do not pay any salaries for women, or pay very low salaries and women's skills are only used during the campaign or on Election Day, or quite sporadically, while men are employed full time in the parties, they regularly receive salaries, regardless of the election date. Therefore, women are forced to look for other paid jobs. One of the respondents elaborated on this tendency: according to her, the fact that other paid jobs are available to women means that jobs in the parties are not available women. This is especially true in the regions.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Sometimes, a young woman prefers working in the market over politics. Of course, she finds a job that is available to her – as a stylist, as a salesperson or anything, and then political or social activities become less important, when you have to worry about income for daily sustenance."

According to one male respondent "educated women prefer jobs in non-governmental organizations over politics, because of less responsibilities and higher salaries they receive in NGOs", which is another myth. In fact, this myth works as an obstacle for women to get involved in politics, since women tend to be less conformists and more critical, therefore they are perceived as 'less reliable' and 'enemies to the party'; their presence might undermine conformist male connections, subsequently these women are used as agitators, and they agree to these low-paid jobs due to their social-economic circumstances, but it does not mean that these women are not interested in politics. They agree to such jobs because they have no other choice.

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Probably every day, ordinary problems are the main obstacles for women's participation. We can compare it to Maslow's pyramid [hierarchy of needs], where the everyday problems become significant and the leader's qualities become weaker, gradually the will for change also diminishes. The skills needed for public activity also deteriorate and you cannot be engaged in debates with politicians anymore."

Opposition party, middle-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from eastern Georgia, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"Young people might leave the party if they are offered a paid job. Obviously, having a paid job is important for everyone, rather than working just for enthusiasm. They may physically be there, but then they don't have time to manage everything."

Another myth that emerged from the theoretical categories existing outside the party is the following: "Women avoid politics because it's a dirty job". This is perpetuated by social institutions, especially the media that specifically focuses on physical confrontation, 'fighting' in the parliament.

This is done deliberately, in order to discourage peaceful, competent and skilled women from engaging in politics. In addition, it creates anxieties around women -with families and friends regarding possible "danger of physical confrontation in politics, insofar as women are weak". The attempt to expose this myth operates as a manipulation, and in reality it aims at creating more obstacles to women's political participation. We will elaborate on this aspect below.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"If we turn on the TV and watch the debates, what happens during the debates? There is no respect for each other. They swear a lot, throw cups and bottles at each other."

We will now discuss category B2. "Anxieties outside parties regarding women in the parties" and its sub-category "anxieties of family/relatives and neighbours (parents, husbands, children, neighbours, relatives and friends)".

The family factor may seem to be an obstacle external to the party, though it in fact originates within the party, because parties encourage "conflicts" in politics, as we have discussed above. "Dirty politics" is also created by parties. Thus, family members are concerned that this "wild" environment may damage women.

Opposition party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"My mother considered politics a dirty job, she used to tell me that I had an education and I could find myself in another field rather than in politics. She thought I would be blamed for everything and treated badly in politics rather than respected."

One respondent from the regions reflects on the factor of "husband and children". Her reflection demonstrates the crisis of masculinity and femininity existing outside the party. She said her husband demands that she quit her political activity, because he would not be able to defend her in case of any attacks - and this would undermine his "masculinity/manhood" and he would be embarrassed to be seen in public.

This obstacle is not one that originates outside the party, it once again points to the male, conflictual and masculine nature of parties and husbands' "masculine conformism". Furthermore, after analysing the data we revealed that opponents often approach a female party member's husband and advise him not to allow his wife to get involved in politics. This example on the one hand points to the "masculinity crisis" (assuming that a man is not sufficiently strong or manly if he cannot force his wife do whatever he finds appropriate for her to do), on the other hand is related to the universal phenomenon existing either outside the party or generally in society: "male connections" (this is connected to notions such as "he is a man, he will understand"; "he'll have a man-to-man talk with him"; "two men will decide whether a woman will be active in politics").

Opposition party, low-level activist, 45 to 65-year-old woman, with higher education, married, from western Georgia, without social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"My husband does not fully agree with me, but I can share what my son tells me. At one point when I confronted X over some issue, my husband and son told me that there was a chance that our daughter might be injured in a [deliberate] car accident and they would not be able to defend her as men should do. When I experienced other conflicts at my job, my husband told me that it would be difficult for him to defend me because he is not in appropriate physical shape and so I should not create additional problems for him. If I were a man in a Georgian society I would have accomplished much more, given all my skills, and abilities. If I were a man I would have a successful career, and I

would have used my potential much better, but I am a woman and this fact very often works as a barrier for me."

Another respondent also reflected on the problems related to families, which seem to be more characteristic to regions as compared to Tbilisi.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In my view women are quite motivated to get involved in political processes. The family is a factor[for not going into politics] mainly in the regions - not so much in the cities. Women are generally motivated, but there are stereotypes which are barriers for women's advancement in politics, especially in the regions."

Thus, the "family factor" is another myth created by men that does not hold true in real life. We have to consider women who joined politics and whose families did not support them in the beginning but gradually changed their minds and came to accept the political participation by a woman from their family. Our data suggests that if a woman insists on being involved in politics, her loved ones gradually get used to the fact and it does not represent a barrier anymore.

We have revealed another myth related to "the origins of the family", which is used again to maintain men's power and perpetuate elitism and the recruitment system.

All respondents agree that poor families cannot bring up educated, free and active women. This means that women who have no cultural, social or symbolic capital are isolated from politics. Therefore, the assumption that women's family origins have a significant influence on their party activities is another myth, along with the following one: "women are not reliable partners".

Opposition party, high-level manager, 45 to 65-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"It does matter whether you come from a family with financial resources, or are an intelligent, free individual. If a family manages to secure a better education for their child, encourage them be active and have good relations with the wider society, the child will have developed inner freedom to a greater degree. So we can conclude that there are more women in politics with such upbringing, as compared to those whose families could not afford all these things due to their social strata ... Although there are women from underprivileged families as well in politics, in terms of percentage, this is not a big share. We need to admit and be honest about this fact."

In fact, party elitism and its male profile are maintained in part by emphasis on social strata/class affiliation. The last and very elaborate myth created by high-level managers from the parties is a statement that "the world is becoming a better place", which operates as a "pseudo hope" for women who want to be active in politics.

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"The modern world is changing, it's improving and there are new attitudes are toward women active in politics."

Governmental party, high-level manager, 25 to 45-year-old man, with higher education, married, from Tbilisi, with social, cultural and symbolic capital:

"In general our aim is to entirely change the political tradition. Today Georgian politics is all about confrontation. We want to move towards a more European type of politics, a new system where the focus is on different issues. Women have specific qualities, and they should not be overlooked. This is what makes them special - we can put it this way. In other words, we are moving towards a politics in which women can even be more successful than men, due to their personal qualities."

We have identified the following myths based on the analysis and interpretation of categories outside the parties "crisis of masculinity and femininity":

- "Women prefer other jobs"
- "Girls prefer marriage to being involved in politics"
- "Women from the regions prefer moving to the cities"
- "Politics is a dirty job"
- "Women are less responsible"
- "Family is an obstacle"
- "Origin of families"
- "World is changing/pseudo hope"

We will try to sum up the analysed data of the research and then deconstruct the unwritten cultural practices that have spread as myths in lives of women from the parties, and which are a significant factor isolating women from politics.

Conclusion/deconstructing the myths

Based on the analysis and data interpretation we can conclude that the phenomenon of women's political participation and women's isolation from politics is not based on biological, religious or supernatural factors. Nor is it determined by so-called "feminine" qualities, a phenomenon socially constructed by men from the parties in order to perpetuate their privileges and power. In transformational Georgia, this is based on the so called "crisis of perpetuation of masculinity and femininity in parties and in society", which is the product of changed gender roles, historically determined gender stereotypes and "biased attitudes" created by means of merging local and global information.

It reveals the ways men have historically dominated society and politics, and how it has become difficult for them to let their privileges go. Georgian society on the one hand expects Georgian men to be "traditionally masculine" while on the other hand there is a transformational reality which envisages establishment of democratic institutions in the country and politics, which requires equal participation of citizens, especially women, since women represent the majority.

Insofar as politics is the biggest social institution through which ideologies are propagated, thus shaping the gender order in the society, men are forced to create myths and tools for implementing these myths, by which they maintain power and privileges both in the parties and in society. The crisis around this phenomenon is linked to the fact that it cannot deal with modern democratic challenges and thus causes social, political and cultural problems in real life.

We drew on feminist research methodology (which is aimed at exposing the social nature of women's oppression⁴⁸ through relevant research and facilitating political, social and cultural changes to achieve gender equality) and intersectional approach (which allows us to reveal the ways in which various social components intersect in respondents' lives and how this intersection influences their views). We used qualitative research methodology and face-to-face interviews, grounded theory (i.e. analysed and interpreted theoretical categories based on the data), we collected and analysed the information on unwritten social practices in Georgian parties. These practices either in hidden or in obvious ways represent barriers to women's political participation and operate as myths which are accepted by the society, as if these myths had been created through biological or supernatural phenomena. Consequently, the oppressive, social and patriarchal nature of this phenomenon remains invisible to society.

The results of the research indicate that "the crisis of masculinity and femininity inside and outside the parties" causes "men's fear of losing privileges/power", which would at the same time mean losing "masculinity", as privileges and power are associated with men. We have also revealed that "women are afraid of not being proper women", or not being able to preserve/emphasise femininity, motherhood, being proper wives, neighbours, friends and relatives in parallel to being active in party life.

⁴⁸ And oppression of subordinated social groups in general.

These categories intersect with each other and each of them is equally significant in women's lives. They create theoretical sub categories which entail the barriers to women's political participation in a rather hidden way.

"The crisis of masculinity and femininity inside and outside the parties" includes two small interpreted categories:

1. "Georgian style/nature of recruitment, advancement and centralization/elitism in the parties" due to which competent, "non-conflictual", non-elitist, not famous, provincial women are not allowed into the parties (by means of non-recognition of women's competences, gendered division of work, "pseudo-care", the phenomenon of "bringing women into the parties through connections", intraparty male conformism, by denouncing provincial and nonconformist women as "party enemies"), young girls and women are forced to look for alternatives (education or employment-related migration, paid job, marriage). All this is further presented as an objective, outside factor, which originates from outside the parties and operates as barriers, and consequently its real origin (inside the parties) is invisible.

2. "Control over women's bodies inside and outside the parties, placing them in the private, rather than public sphere" –caused by "the Georgian nature of recruitment and advancement, according to which men are accepted in parties due to the fact that they are conformists" consequently it reinforces the "male connections" by which the party maintains privileges. As regards women, the parties tend to manipulate women's biological (pregnancy, beauty, weakness) and social roles (motherhood, womanhood, being on good terms with family members), which causes anxiety within the society, party, family members and relatives of a woman and create barriers to women's political participation.

Precisely these manipulations represent the prevailing myths.

Based on the analysis of categories inside and outside the parties, as well as the "crisis of masculinity and femininity in and outside the parties" we have developed 18 intraparty myths and 8 extraparty myths, in total – 26 myths. We have further identified the aims of these myths, which are universal and are aimed at reinforcing male privilege and power. We have revealed the tools by which these myths are imposed on reality. We attempted to deconstruct these myths by data based interpretation. In what follows, we will present the list of the deconstruction of the above-mentioned myths:

In the beginning, we will concentrate on the deconstruction of intraparty myths:

Myth	Aim of myth	Tools of implementation	Deconstruction
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<p>1. "Men in the parties are competent"</p>	<p>Maintaining male privileges and power in the parties</p>	<p><u>Georgian nature of recruitment/advancement:</u></p> <p>Isolating competent individuals (women) from the parties so as not to expose men's incompetence</p> <p>Elitism: Isolating non-elitist but competent individuals (women) from parties, which would undermine/expose elitist but incompetent men.</p> <p>Gender of party-related activities (devaluation of women's work): Difficulties with publicly recognizing women's competence and "redirecting towards conflictuality".</p> <p>Creating the myth of 'conflictuality', which is needed to perpetuate male privilege and power.</p>	<p>The data indicate that men are less competent than women.</p>
<p>2. "Women in the parties are not competent"</p>	<p>Reinforcing/preserving men's privileges and power in the parties</p>	<p><u>Georgian nature of recruitment/advancement:</u></p> <p>Gender of party-related activities (devaluation of women's work):</p>	<p>The women in the parties we have examined are not promoted within the parties despite the fact that they are competent, responsible, and determined/purposeful.</p> <p>Only campaigners and low-level activist women are admitted to the parties, who are not well-educated and experience problems making ends meet.</p> <p>The impression given is that all women are uneducated and poor and happy to work as campaigners and commission secretaries.</p>

			In reality, there are many educated women who are simply not recruited into politics.
3. Successful female politicians are "conflictual"	Establishing "masculine" qualities as standards which help to maintain male power and privilege in the parties.	Encouraging "conflictual" women in the parties and in so doing rejecting once again the fact that competence and a sense of responsibility are associated with women.	The majority of female respondents point out that skills, hard work and responsibility are what is needed in politics rather than conflicts. They emphasize that the factor of "conflict" is created by incompetent/unreasonable men.
4. "Women are not conflictual"	Overlooking/belittling female qualities such as "competence" and "responsibility", distancing them from the standards of politician. Subsequently, isolating women from the decision-making process by which male power and privileges are maintained.	<u>Gendered division of work</u>	According to female respondents, skills, hard work and responsibility are what is needed in politics rather than conflicts, they emphasize that the factor of 'conflict' is created by incompetent/unreasonable men. In fact, the fact that work inside the parties is highly gendered results in women being focused mainly on certain types of work (such as writing, campaigning), therefore women's skills are used in ways which do not leave space for "conflicts". Inasmuch as conflict is associated with political action, women are not perceived as actors or as individuals with power, they are just "menial" workers.
5. "Women are supported by men to join politics/are "brought" by men into politics	Demonization of women through asserting that they are not capable of joining parties/becoming politicians by themselves, which again results in perceiving parties as masculine, maintaining male privilege and power.	<u>Georgian nature of recruitment/advancement:</u> Men from central politics try to base the system of recruitment and advancement on "recommendations" and "connections" in order to reinforce their power inside the parties. Women "brought into" the parties through "recommendations" and "connections" do not represent independent political subjects/actors - rather, they represent the men they were supported by. Bullying and stigmatization of each other, "scapegoat" phenomenon.	In reality this myth creates barriers for women's political participation, inasmuch as women's competences and their sense of responsibility are overlooked, and in the meantime the fact that a woman was "brought" by men into a party is emphasized, therefore competent and educated women find themselves in the position of justifying themselves/proving that they are competent.

		Society is interested in the private matters of female politicians, and consequently women become targets of bullying.	
6. "Tbilisi wants is this way"	<p>Centralization, not accepting new members and reinforcing the old system, which had been adjusted to elitist men.</p> <p>Elitist men should not lose control over Georgian politics.</p> <p>Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.</p>	<p><u>Georgian nature of recruitment/advancement:</u></p> <p><u>Centralization/elitism</u></p> <p>Intraparty conformism is in particular characteristic to men in the regions, which results in the perpetuation and reinforcement of local privileges.</p>	<p>Non-elitist, provincial but competent individuals are outspoken about this issue.</p> <p>One majoritarian female candidate from an opposition party emphasizes that this is a myth, and if we attempt to deconstruct this myth it will become possible to nominate new faces, namely competent female candidates from outside Tbilisi.</p>
7. "Only political elite from Tbilisi can be good politicians" / "politics perceived as a movie"	<p>Centralization, not accepting new members and reinforcing the old system, which had been adjusted to elitist men.</p> <p>Elitist men should not lose control over Georgian politics.</p> <p>Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.</p>	<p><u>Georgian nature of recruitment/advancement:</u></p> <p><u>Centralization/elitism</u></p> <p>The party members with high-level positions maintain the distance from the party by elitism and by keeping distance from the region. Subsequently, central politics is perceived as a "movie" and individuals involved in central politics as film directors or main characters of the movie. Thus the myth is created: "only the Tbilisi elite can make good politics".</p>	<p>According to female respondents, until they personally met with representatives of central politics, they perceived them as abstract and distance. Like actors in a film. Later, personal acquaintance with these central elites encouraged women to stay and get more involved in politics.</p> <p>"Isolation/closed nature" and "elitism" cause certain complexes in local women, when they do not believe in their capacity to participate in politics, due to the perception of politics as a "film" created in Tbilisi, directed by Tbilisi directors. Women tend to think they will never be approved as main characters because they are women. They do not personally know scriptwriters or producers therefore only local conformist men are approved on these roles, since they are better acquainted with "Tbilisi elite directors".</p>
8. "Provincial women in the parties are uncultured/uncivilized".	Isolation of provincial women from parties reinforces elitism, perpetuates male	The myth is perpetuated by the debates around "nature vs. nurture", according to which everything/everyone that exists outside the city is	There is no notion that provincial women can also be competent, loyal and useful for the party. The most significant thing is not to undermine elitism. Thus male privilege and

	power and privilege in the parties.	uncultured, uneducated, and contrary to this, educated, cultured individuals are located in the cities, which are the foundation of sophisticated political life.	power, all of which point to the existence of "masculinity crises". Provincial women are perceived as "party enemies" if they do not conform to "party rules"/disregard the "party borders" and undermine the party's image. However, there are many male politicians in Georgia who have not respected "intraparty borders" or those existing outside the parties, despite this fact these men continue to be irreplaceable in central politics.
9. "Women in the parties are not reliable, they have no principles, are timid (Myth of Eve)"	Reinforcement of male privileges and power in the parties.	The results show that men have "male connections" and are "conformists" consistently supporting each other, which is the case with women. They do not support each other. Perhaps they have not experienced what it means to have "female connections", which can be an asset for them. And they try to make contacts with men rather than with women who are very few in the parties, besides, they do not have any power. The results of the study reveal that women in the parties often tend to bully or demonize women from their own parties by underlining their "unreliability" and so-called female nature.	Based on the data interpretation, the myth of "women having no principles" has been destroyed, it turned out that "intraparty conformism" is characteristic to women not because they lack principles, are enemies or unreliable, quite the contrary, they are principled/determined and express critical views inside the parties.
10. "Men in the parties have principles and are brave"	Reinforcement of male privileges and power in the parties.	Men have "male connections" and are "conformists" consistently supporting each other, which is not true in the case of women. They do not support each other. Women are perceived as unreliable and unprincipled.	In fact, women are more loyal to the parties than men are. Bagratia and Badashvili's research confirmed that women are more likely to stay in a party when it loses power. According to one respondent, in 2012, in a city in western Georgia, after the victory of Georgian Dream many male members of the National Movement left the party, join the Georgian Dream, while women in the same party stayed loyal, and are still members of the National Movement.

			To sum up, perceiving women as "unreliable" is another myth, which is used to make women "invisible" in the parties. In fact, intraparty nonconformity is presented as unreliability, associated with women. Women in the parties are more critical to the issues discussed inside the parties and are characterized as more loyal party members than men.
11. "You have to adapt to everything once you are in the party"	Reinforcement of male privileges and power in the parties.	Men's intraparty conformism, denouncing women as party enemies and non-conformists.	Hence the myth that "women are weak/timid". But we found that in fact men are more afraid of novelty, criticism and nonconformity within the parties. This can be explained by the "crisis of masculinity": men have higher salaries in the parties and are therefore scared of nonconformist and critical views that threaten to undermine their high-paying jobs.
12. "Women with power are like men"	Control over women's bodies, reinforcement of male privilege and power in the parties.	<u>Control over women's bodies in the party</u> There seems to be no space for "beautiful women" (which in Georgia's pre-transformational gender order was the only feminine characteristic) in politics and the women who are in politics tend to be more manlike and less feminine.	Women under 35 have a different attitude to the issue of sexy/beautiful women: they do not perceive them as weak or vulnerable in party life.
13. "Women who are too feminine are vulnerable in politics; women in the parties have to be tough".	Control over women's bodies, reinforcement of male privileges and power in the parties.	<u>Self-stigmatisation</u> One young female respondent - who is vividly feminine in appearance -says that she demands to be accepted the way she is, but later during the interview refers to the qualities which are perceived as masculine in politics, i.e. being "tough and	Women under 35 have a different attitude to the issue of sexy/beautiful women: they do not perceive them as weak or vulnerable in party life.

		straightforward". By saying this, she indicates that she herself regards femininity as a weakness and tries to add another masculine quality. Thus another myth has been formed, which is defined as "a beautiful woman in the party has to be tough".	
14. "Pseudo-care"	Emphasizing male priority, thus perpetuating male privilege and power in the parties.	<p><u>"Gendered division of work"</u></p> <p><u>Control over women's bodies</u></p> <p>According to male respondents: "women cannot be majoritarian candidates since they are inherently weak".</p>	<p>Women in the parties become involved in activities associated with men, while men are not involved in the work that is considered "women's work" (like campaigning).</p> <p>Thus the myth of "patriarchal inertia", "pseudo-care" is deconstructed.</p> <p>Female respondents emphasize that it is beneficial for parties to nominate female majoritarian candidates since they are peaceful by nature, more eager to meet the local population and listen to them; they are also less conflict-prone.</p>
15. "A woman can campaign door-to-door if she is a party activist but not if she is a majoritarian candidate"	Emphasizing male priority, thus perpetuating male privilege and power in the parties.	<p><u>"Gendered division of work"</u></p> <p><u>Control over women's bodies</u></p> <p><u>"Male ambiguity"</u></p>	<p>"Menial work is done by women, which requires relevant skills and competence."</p> <p>Men do not have such skills, or they refrain from doing "unmanly" jobs, especially in smaller towns. The fact that young male students agree to perform such work deconstructs this myth. It turns out that the assumption that it's shameful for men to get involved in door-to-door campaigning is a social construct. Since young boys are not yet men and they can perform such work.</p>
16. "Patriarchal inertia" (the public prefers male majoritarian candidates to female ones)	Emphasizing male priority, thus reproducing male privileges and power in the parties.	<p><u>'Gendered division of work'</u></p> <p><u>Control over women's bodies</u></p> <p><u>"Male ambiguity"</u></p>	Collected data suggests that the public wants more female politicians. And women themselves are ready to get involved in politics.

17. "Motherhood is not encouraged/not possible in politics"	Reinforcing the system of recruitment and thus perpetuating male privilege and power in the parties.	<p>"Oppression of pregnant women in parties" does not happen without reason. Manipulation of women's pregnancy and motherhood is connected with recruitment and excludes any possibility of bringing women into the parties from the very beginning by emphasizing that women represent certain risks to the parties.</p> <p><u>Control over women's bodies</u></p>	This phenomenon is linked with recruitment as well, because young men are encouraged by the myth of "women's pregnancy and motherhood". In fact, all this has quite a different goal. If we consider the fact that male connections determine the party life, which is associated with men, then it is rather advantageous to accept men into the parties, who will be more conformist than women, which will reinforce and reproduce elite men and generally male power and privileges in the parties.
18. "There are no competent women in the regions"	Reinforcing the system of recruitment and thus perpetuating male privileges and power in the parties.	<p><u>Centralization, recruitment system and the masculine nature of intraparty conformism</u></p> <p>In the regions, party men see the following as barriers to women's entry into politics: in the case of young women, their likely early departure because of marriage; and in the case of middle-aged women, female complexes about the public space and interacting with people.</p>	<p>The main barriers for women to join the party are seen as the centralization and so-called "patriarchal inertia". Despite the fact that there are quite a few smart and motivated young women in the regions, this resource is not properly used by the parties.</p> <p>In addition, the myth of "patriarchal inertia" is associated with the Georgian style of recruitment and promotion, which isolates young, motivated, competent and experienced women from politics and reinforces the myth that there are no competent women in the regions who would join the parties. Instead, women prefer to seek an education or start a family, the thinking goes.</p>

We will further concentrate on deconstruction of myths outside the parties:

Myths outside the parties	The aim of the myth	Tools for Implementation	Deconstruction
1. "Women prefer different jobs"	Reinforcing male privilege and power in the parties.	Georgian nature of recruitment and advancement in the parties.	Due to the elitism of parties and male connections women do not

		Centralization, elitism and isolation Gendered division of work; low-paying women's jobs.	envisage potential employment in the parties Women are forced to look for alternative forms of employment that are more accessible.
2. "Young girls choose marriage over politics"	Reinforcing male privilege and power in the parties.	Georgian nature of recruitment and advancement in the parties. Centralization, elitism and isolation Gendered division of work; low-paying women's jobs.	Parties choose to recruit young men rather than girls. For young girls getting married is another alternative that does not mean that they are not willing join the parties. Parties prefer young men rather than girls because of intraparty conformism, which reinforces "male connections".
3. "Women from regions prefer moving to Tbilisi"	Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.	Georgian nature of recruitment and advancement in the parties. Centralization, elitism and isolation Gendered division of work; low-paying women's jobs.	There is no strategy/concept for developing small towns, in terms of preserving younger generation by using their potential/skills in regional parties or other organizations. According to female respondents, there are many educated and competent women in these areas but they are not recruited by the parties.
4. "Politics as a dirty job"	Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.	"Women avoid politics because it's a dirty job" - this notion is perpetuated by social institutions, especially the media which fixate on physical confrontation, including fighting in the parliament.	This happens on purpose, in order to discourage peaceful, competent women to get involved in politics and on the other hand to create anxieties among potential female politicians' loved ones over their safety insofar as "politics is not a safe sphere" for women, since they are physically weak/fragile'.
5. "Women are irresponsible"	Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.	Gendered division of work; low-paying women's jobs. Stigmatization of educated women.	An educated woman will be less conformist, more critical, thus "unreliable" and "party enemy", which will undermine conformist male connections. These women are employed as campaigners, and they agree to these jobs due to their social, economic circumstances - which does not mean that they are not interested in politics. They are

			forced to take these jobs in order to make ends meet.
6. "Family represents a barrier"	Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.	Parties encourage "conflicts" in politics. Parties create the assumption of "politics as a dirty job" while family members are afraid that women might be damaged by this "wild" environment.	Married women who joined the parties and whose families did not support them in the beginning gradually adapted and were not against political participation of a woman from their family.
7. "Family origins"	Reinforcing male privilege and power in the parties.	By establishing class-related borders in terms of recruitment and advancement, the elitist nature and masculine profile of parties is reinforced.	In one case, a female politician who grew up without a father managed to win a large percentage of the vote - in defiance of expectations. Thus, family origin does not necessarily determine whether a woman is a successful politician or not.
8. "World is changing/pseudo-hope"	Reinforcing male privileges and power in the parties.	"Male ambiguity" "pseudo-hope"	This myth is deconstructed by the fact that throughout 26 years of independence women's political participation very slowly increases/or does not increase at all.

Our attempt to deconstruct the above myths points to the social nature of myths around the parties, and the aim of these myths to reinforce parties' masculine profile and the power by which men stay more privileged than women, young men, or Georgian citizens of other gender identities, age and ethnic background.

Recommendations:

1. Parties should establish "Working Groups on Gender" that will involve both men and women. Young men and women from Tbilisi as well as the regions can also be recruited into these groups.
2. These working groups should work towards increasing intraparty awareness on gender issues (on general issues such as gender mainstreaming in parties, etc.) as well as on more

specific questions such as women's political participation, "the crisis of masculinity and femininity in parties in transformational phase", "intraparty democracy and gender mainstreaming", "control over women's bodies in the parties", etc.

3. The working groups should try to secure funding for implementing small projects under which party members will be trained on specific gender issues.

4. A "Network of Working Groups on Gender" should be established in the parties, "social network/connections" should develop between these groups in Tbilisi and different regions. These networks/connections will facilitate sharing experience, planning working meetings and trainings focusing on gender issues.

5. "Working Groups on Gender" should develop methodology and tools for doing statistical analysis, carry out audit in the parties, which further will be done in regions and districts as well by a network of intraparty working groups on gender.

6. Parties should improve their rules for recruitment, inner mobility and advancement and base them on competences and skills. Parties should recognize women's competences and their sense of responsibility at work and stop perpetuating the myth of "conflictuality".

7. Parties should set up an intraparty mechanism with a quota system that will facilitate women's greater participation in politics; consequently women's skills and competences will appropriately be used in party activities.

8. Parties should make every effort to overcome the phenomena of "isolation" and "elitism", support the youth competent and motivated men and women both from Tbilisi and from the regions. Research data analysis revealed that overcoming the so-called "patriarchal inertia" and nominating a female majoritarian candidate proved beneficial and brought success for the party.

9. It is not sufficient to reflect gender issues in campaign platforms - to pin one's hopes for a better future on "refined" rhetoric (meant to placate international organizations) about gender and women's equal participation in politics, because ultimately this rhetoric remains on paper and in media archives and has no influence whatsoever on women's participation in politics.

Gender experts responsible for drawing up priorities of Gender Working Groups and creating intraparty knowledge on gender should be recruited by the parties.

10. Central party apparatuses should develop closer connections with regional/district offices and use the knowledge and experience of women (who have been dedicated and working in district offices for years) from the parties for planning and management on the local level.

11. Women from the central party apparatuses should frequently organize meetings with women from regional party offices; to draw on the quote of one respondent "it only becomes possible to start some kind of conversation with them during having coffee or tea". Parties should introduce a culture of so-called "social evenings", which will be useful for

politicians from the centre and women from local parties to plan events together such as excursions and discussions focusing on intraparty life.

12. The "social evenings" should be organized in a manner which will facilitate deconstruction of intraparty gendered division of work, which concerns different tasks and activities - starting with barbequing and ending with litter collection. And none of these tasks should be divided by gender.

13. Parties should create so-called "women's groups" which will enable women to develop "women's connections" (networking) and empower each other.

14. Parties should support women to develop skills for the art of debate through trainings, which will enable them to better defend their positions and be more argumentative.

15. Parties should establish intraparty regulations on overcoming/managing the obstacles and manipulative practices in the parties in relation to pregnant women and mothers.

16. Men in the parties should be trained on the principles of gender mainstreaming.

17. Parties should collect stories about women's lives and histories from party members, publish them in social networks and in media, set a precedent of recognizing women's work and making them visible.

18. Parties should be open to innovations and adapt to new, modern challenges. Parties currently resemble "closed organisms" that are no longer developing and experiencing stagnation. There are many young, motivated women in Tbilisi activist circles alone - and their skills should be properly put to use instead of creating the myth that women are not eager to participate in politics or that women prefer criticizing the government from the non-governmental sector;

19. And finally, parties should simply name women as majoritarian candidates, because the research data shows that doing so leads to success.

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