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GEORGIA AT THE CROSSROADS: FOR THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MOODS IN THE INTERELECTORAL PERIOD (2024-2025)

***Abstract:** The paper aims at exploring and scrutinizing the mobility of the current social moods attributable to Georgia in one of its most determining times in the current history, i.e. in between two crucial elections – parliamentary elections of October 26, 2024, and local elections of October 4, 2025, the period that we refer to as “inter-electoral”. The anti-governmental protests enhanced on a massive scale to the new level since especially, - the parliamentary elections of 2024, the outcomes of which, favoring the ruling Georgian Dream Party (GDP), - became largely disputable with the legitimate questions regarding the integrity of the whole electoral process. Overall democratic backsliding of Georgia under the governance of GDP, particularly visible since the start of the full scale confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, has in fact served as the most important cause for the subsequent protests. This current wave of opposition has uncovered several key trends that call for the thorough examination for considering the future schemes for the internal and external development of the country. Among the most pressing are the following questions: What causes the lack of success, if not a failure of the pro-Western protests, in terms of immediate consequences and effect? Is the deficit of certain willpower from the part of the motor of Georgian public and protesting population - the youth and broader civil society, - the most serious challenge to achieve the change? Is it maybe the lack of unity, i.e. of agreement among the Georgian citizens around the basic values for the country to operate normally? Or why and how it still happens that there is a significant lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding of genuine postulates and practices of liberal democracy within the society in Georgia, similarly like in many other post-Soviet countries and societies that eventually determine and affect the course of social and political events of crucial importance? All of the trends studied in the paper, appear*

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to be almost equally significant for drawing the complex mental composition of the contemporary Georgian society, unfolding the inner and outer obstacles for the democratization, modernization, and Westernization of the South Caucasian state.

Keywords: *Georgia, social moods, socioeconomic theory, waves' theory, Interelectoral Period, willpower, unity, liberal democratic ideals, mental composition.*

Introduction

The paper attempts to examine and analyze the dynamics of the current social moods characteristic for Georgia in one of its most decisive periods in the contemporary history of the country, i.e. in between two significant elections – parliamentary elections of October 26, 2024, and local elections of October 4, 2025, the timespan that we might call “interelectoral period”.

The widespread protests that became specifically intensive since the parliamentary elections of 2024, - due to the justifiable allegations of rigging off the election results in favor of the ruling for twelve years already by then – Georgian Dream Party, as well as due to the overall democratic backslide of Georgia under the governance of the mentioned party, especially for the latest years, the situation becoming even more critical during the Russian-Ukrainian War, have shown several key trends that need to be carefully considered for envisioning the future scenarios of first of all, - the internal development of the country, defining pretty much also its external trajectories. In specific, there arise the following questions:

- What serve as the most detrimental features in explaining the minimal success in attempts to restore the legitimacy of power and constitutional order in Georgia shortly through achieving in the first place, the announcement of new parliamentary elections and bringing the country back on the path of democratization and Westernization?
- Is the lack of certain willpower from the part of youth and broader civil society, i.e. the driving forces of the Georgian public and protesting population, - the most serious challenge to achieve the change?
- Or maybe it is the lack of the most attractive and sought after – the unity or in real terms, the deficit of agreement around the most basic principles regarding the foundational interests, preferences, but first of all, - values for the functioning of the country, - among the ordinary Georgians that makes the society a way too divided, fragmented, and polarized?
- Whether liberal democratic ideals have been so popularly, however in reality – still quite superficially embraced and shared within the Georgian society, that any idea regarding massive disobedience and revolt/revolution as the last resort in response to capturing power illegitimately and overcoming

what is perceived as the most serious threat to democracy for the newly democratizing Georgia, has been assessed as incompatible and hostile, thus unacceptable to the liberal agenda, while ignoring in fact the constitutional provisions of significant democracies that naturally provide for such rights, i.e. to resist, to people in cases of usurpation and evident abuses of power, when no other institutional means like elections, courts, free press, protests or petitions work properly and are ineffective.

In the paper, we have elaborated the following research objectives:

- first of all, studying and discussing relevant theoretical frameworks associated with social mood through approaching and applying socionomic theory and waves' theory to the context of current anti-governmental protests in Georgia, as well as raising at the same time, - the issue of applicability of the theories involved;
- from the perspective of dominant social moods prevailing in the nowadays Georgia, - identifying key trends impacting public actions and socio-political events or vice versa – the latter if suitable, especially from the theoretical point of view, - while targeting the protests, primarily demonstrators, but also broader protesting population in the Interelectoral Period;
- looking carefully at the possible correlations between the internal and external factors and dynamics.

Methods

In the article, there have been predominantly employed critical analysis as the major research method, appropriate for our given analysis.

Critical analysis represents in fact the most substantial and domineering method applied in the paper. In particular, critically have been studied or assessed all of the data, arguments and claims, a spectrum of processes, as well as different phenomena addressed in the article.

When conducting the research, we have been critically examining the theoretical frameworks related to the social mood, in specific, socionomic theory and waves' theory.

The major findings of the paper are as follows:

- All of the trends discussed in the article seems almost equally important for depicting the current mental mix of the Georgian society, and identifying the internal challenges on the way towards Georgia's democratization, modernization, and Westernization, with the external implications.

- The application of the corresponding theories related to the social mood, i.e. the socio-economic theory and waves' theory - to the case study of Georgia, has been proved to be successful at least to certain degree, while we believe that there is of interest and use to investigate in future as well whether the events, for example, some political steps undertaken by the Georgian authorities, - could have given rise to particular social moods first of all, - among the protesting public nowadays. This would clearly deviate from the dominant theoretical assumptions though.
- There seems to be totally observable that the social moods on their part, in line with the theory, - subsequently, have affected and keep doing so in many ways, - the social actions or actually, - inactions to the degree of the less outcome effectiveness. The illustrations of this influence and the applicability of the theory in the given sense, - have been the trends discussed in the paper.

Social Mood – Theoretical Outline and Its Relevance

Among diverse approaches to social mood, the most interesting for us and our politico-cultural context seems Robert Prechter's (an American financial author, stock market analyst, known for his financial forecasts using the Elliott Wave Principle) "socio-economic hypothesis" suggesting that social mood, - inherently a shared mental state among humans that arises from social interaction, predisposes individuals in the group toward emotions, beliefs and actions, and fluctuates constantly in a fractal pattern, being unconscious, unremembered and endogenously regulated, determines various types of social actions in the areas of finance, culture, and macroeconomics. While social mood determines the character of social actions, i.e. the causality of social mood is unidirectional, there is no feedback loop of events back to social mood. According to the theory, waves of social mood are endogenically balanced, swinging toward the "positive" and afterwards the "negative" direction in line with a patterned, hierarchical fractal called the Wave Principle. Because the waves are patterned, they are likely predictable, thus making the character of social trends potentially foreseeable as well².

Taking into account the theoretical frameworks discussed above, the valid question arises here: Is actually Prechter's and socio-economic theory applicable or how much is it in fact relevant to Georgia's current reality to explain the dynamics? Maybe the events of social, but first of all, of political character like from the beginning, the adoption of extremely controversial so-called Russian Law or any other laws or

² R.R. Prechter, *The Wave Principle of Human Social Behavior and the New Science of Socioeconomics*, Gainesville, GA 1999, 463 pages.

actions³ perceived as regressive and repressive from the point of view of democratic consolidation and success on the path of Georgia's European and Atlantic integration, allegedly election fraud during the parliamentary elections of 2024 or abruptness of accession talks with the EU until 2028 did provoke the apparent shift in social moods in Georgia towards much more negative and pessimistic direction, than there was observed before the specific political decisions just mentioned? In which way does this picture fit the socioeconomic interpretations and explanations per se? Maybe in this case, we can think of the waves' theory more, in general, - with the negative wave coming after and altering the positive one? Or is it predominantly the negative social moods characterized as lacking sufficient energy, strategy, leadership, agreements, and overall resources that can explain in terms of social actions, - the less success or even the failure in achieving tangible results regarding changing undesirable reality and in fact most probably, - saving, to the greater extent, - the country's Western future? – Despite the latter being totally in line with the theory, but, taking into account all of the above-mentioned, still, the relevance and full applicability of the theoretical outline discussed, - logically arises here.

Several Key Trends

The anti-governmental demonstrations that in particular, in the Interelectoral Period, - since the parliamentary elections of October 26, 2024, became much more frequent, even more numerous, and transformed into mobilized actions, eventually, becoming permanent, and led predominantly by the youth and broader civil society, being represented by different formal and non-formal groups, organizations, and just ordinary citizens, and where the oppositional political parties also joined, are inspired by reportedly the reasonable doubts and subsequent claims regarding the falsification⁴ of the October 2024 election outcomes, which officially declared the victory of the ruling – Georgian Dream Party (GDP)⁵, in power since winning one of the most important parliamentary elections in 2012⁶, totally altering the previous government in the end.

³ *The Path to Dictatorship: Review of Georgian Dream's Recent Repressive Legislative Initiatives*, Transparency International Georgia, 04.04.2025, <<https://transparency.ge/en/post/path-dictatorship-review-georgian-dreams-recent-repressive-legislative-initiatives>> (14.08.2025).

⁴ *My Vote: The main scheme of large-scale election fraud has been unraveled*, Transparency International Georgia, 28.10.2024, <<https://transparency.ge/en/post/my-vote-main-scheme-large-scale-election-fraud-has-been-unraveled>> (27.08.2025).

⁵ *Report on the Georgian Parliamentary Elections of October 26, 2024*, Central Election Commission (CEC), December 2024, <<https://cesko.ge/static/file/202505141032-annual-report-2024.pdf>> (19.08.2025).

⁶ *Elections 2012: Final Results*, Central Election Commission (CEC), 2012, <<https://archiveresults.cec.gov.ge/results/2012/index.html>> (20.08.2025).

However, the primary causes for breaking out the massive protests are strongly associated with the commonly assessed as such within the country and abroad, – the overall democratic backsliding⁷ occurring in Georgia under the governance of the GDP, which especially deteriorated against the backdrop of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian War, i.e. since 2022.

Georgia's recent regress in the sense of the European and Atlantic integration of the country, attributed substantially to the former problem, i.e. - the democratic backslide naturally, although the complication of Georgia's Westernization process has its own separate dimension as well in its own right, the most apparent illustration of which have been for example, – aborting the efforts to start the accession negotiations with the EU until 2028, - announced by the GD Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze⁸ soon after the controversial parliamentary elections, in particular, in November 2024, being followed by the US suspending Strategic Partnership with Georgia as a result of the GD's decision to unilaterally halt the EU accession negotiations⁹.

The problematic relationships with other Western institutions and traditional partners and allies of Georgia¹⁰ since the country gained independence and defined its foreign, but also domestic policy priorities to be closely associated and integrated within the Euro-Atlantic entities, sharing foremost the Western values and contributing to the Western world on its part, - have been another characteristic of the GD governance and the demonstration of non-, if not anti-Western, policies of Georgia's current ruling party.

The above-mentioned protests have revealed some significant tendencies that are crucial to be thoroughly examined in order to envisage the potential course of events concerning in the first place, - the domestic evolution of the country, impacting also its foreign policy directions.

Major question asks the following:

- What can be discussed as the most decisive impediments causing the lack of success, if not a failure for the given time, - to re-establish in fact the lost legitimacy of power and normal functioning of the state in Georgia in the predictable period through - organizing the new parliamentary elections as the first necessary step, and restoring the overall internal and external course of the country towards democratization and Westernization as its civilizational, geopolitical, geoeconomic, and other choice?

⁷ *Georgia: A Country Profile*, Global State of Democracy Initiative, <<https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/country/georgia>> (29.08.2025).

⁸ *GD Aborts EU Accession*, Civil.ge, 28.11.2024, <<https://civil.ge/archives/638801>> (29.08.2025).

⁹ *BREAKING: U.S. Suspends Strategic Partnership with Georgia*, Civil.ge, 30.11.2024, <<https://civil.ge/archives/639985>> (29.08.2025).

¹⁰ B. Chedia, *Georgia Leaves Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, The Jamestown Foundation, 04.02.2025, <<https://jamestown.org/program/georgia-leaves-parliamentary-assembly-of-the-council-of-europe/>> (31.08.2025).

Trend #1

While observing a variety of features characteristic to the protesters, those who are repeatedly attending the anti-governmental demonstrations, maybe also extended to the wider protesting population, but especially, - the youth and broader civil society that are the driving forces of the Georgian public in general, and the dissenting populace itself, the deficit of certain willpower to firmly withstand without dissolving the gatherings even for shorter periods of time, and therefore, complete the tasks that might lead to the tangible changes, i.e. at least any valuable compromises from the part of the official government, if not their resignation. From the newest history of Georgia, and not only, we know such scenarios pretty well, starting from how the Soviet Union collapsed in the beginning of the 1990s, the determining preconditions of which have been famous discontent and widespread protests of 1980s¹¹ in particular, that erupted in the USSR, Georgia included, - being actually one of the champions, or beyond, - to the Rose Revolution of 2003¹² or even the exceptionally peaceful power change in 2012, again in Georgia.

Apart from other significant factors, like the nature of specific government and the type of governance, whether we literally mean politics made by politicians, and not for example, - by businessmen, but – oligarchs, which may create quite atypical and specific circumstances hard to be handled by the general public in a traditional way, practiced before, as is most probably, - the case of Georgia currently, i.e. since 2012, under the GD rule defined without a big secrecy, - predominantly, if not singlehandedly by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a French-Georgian businessman, politician and billionaire oligarch, we are not debating here even about the actual form of government in the country, - questioning the levels of democracy, but - democratization.

Besides also important aspects connected with the pretty common social and political frustration, apathy, and nihilism caused by many reasons, although majorly the lack of security of any kind, - social, economic, geopolitical, etc., when we are discussing the lack of so-called willpower among the demonstrators in nowadays protesting Georgia, manifested not rarely through the shortage in patience, acting as more compromising in the end, being mild, non-brutal, however, more spontaneous, flexible, and creative, - the latter proved to be advantageous in many ways during often the violent dissolution of gatherings by police and special forces though, and comparing automatically the similar experiences of protests from the past, - we need to emphasize clear generational differences, and serious shifts in

¹¹ *The Protests That Brought The Soviet Union To Its Knees*, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 27.08.2021, <<https://www.rferl.org/a/soviet-union-protests-1991/31429278.html>> (31.08.2025).

¹² *Georgians overthrow a dictator (Rose Revolution), 2003*, Global Nonviolent Action Database, <<https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/georgians-overthrow-dictator-rose-revolution-2003>> (14.08.2025).

lifestyles, perceptions, priorities, choices, and behaviors impacted likely also by more global cultural or even civilizational, and epochal changes.

Whether the trend could be seen through the lenses of the wave and waves' theory, thus, might be comparable to its usual and logical dynamics, with assuming the potentially essential changes in the future, in addition to the identification of how temporary such a tendency can be, - seems to be another point of elaboration in further.

Trend #2

Another solid matter for the thorough consideration is also quite observable lack of some, perhaps inherently the most vital element, just fundamental for the wellbeing and simply, - sustainability of any healthier state and society, the one, which thus seems to be the most sought after and wanted, i.e. – the unity of public in principle and action, demonstrated especially in the decisive moments.

What we mean in particular, under the “lack of unity”, - is critical not only for the individual segments of society internally as well, because this usually is a typical case, - but for the Georgian society per se, as the one can easily imagine, - bearing in mind general ethno psychological characteristics, definitive for Georgians over the centuries even, referring to the famous internal divisions and the habitual condition of inner antagonisms, rooted in the Georgian character, and serving its disruptive role, specifically, in the middle ages and the feudal era of sometimes even fatal disintegration of state entities and local societies back then. Major points of disagreement and contention are around the most foundational ideals necessary for building, - in the first place, and operating of the society, i.e. – the national objectives, choices, although primarily, - the values, over which the Georgian citizens need to obligatorily agree on. Logically, it does not apply without any doubt, - to the opinions and views of the people that are naturally diverse and ought to be. However, the general preferences and ethical standards for the internal and external development of the country, including in fact very limited choices over the foreign policy trajectory of the latter, which became especially obvious on the backdrop of the Russian-Ukrainian War, being crucial for the survival and any viable future for the state and its independence and sovereignty, need to be accorded among the ordinary Georgians, regardless of having different social statuses and belonging to distinct groups.

Profoundly embedded current fragmentation and polarization of the Georgian society cannot be definitely manifested solely through the divergence in political affiliation, i.e. belonging to distinct political parties or adhering to different political ideas and ideologies, but in fact through the total mix of frequently clashing against each other, - mental mindsets.

Taking as a default paradigm that classical and typical definitions and identities are blurred, specifically, - from the Western perspective, although these

features could be regarded as majorly the product of the Soviet and Russian domination and colonialism, we predominantly distinguish between two generalized and bigger groups of the Georgian society that are in fact antagonistic towards each other, - sometimes to exceptionally higher degrees of actual incompatibility and animosity that may not only divide the public even deeper, but also might be seriously concerning in the context of potential civil confrontations, catastrophic for the existence and again, - sustainability of the country.

So, there are two major camps, the majority of Georgians are often identifying themselves with, tolerating usually inner heterogeneities and subgroupings or individual differences within these bigger groups. On one hands, there are conservative “nationalists,” in fact rarely some of them could be identified as neoconservatives, positioning also frequently as “religious” people, - at least in a ceremonial sense, who, at the same time, are still paradoxically supporters of inherently atheistic Soviet Union, those who are actually quite nostalgic to their life during the Soviet time, which, according to them was exceptionally prosperous and easy-going for Georgia. Even though we do not have concrete statistics handy here, which requires a multi-staged, comprehensive and complex research, based on even general observation, this group is comprised of older population, living especially in the rural areas, and they belong to lower and lower middle-class families. On the other hands, there are another individuals, who claim to be “liberals”, less “religious”, “progressive”, favoring democratic political regime and social order. They usually are pro-Western, educated or with the living, working and any other experience abroad, gained normally in Europe, US or other Western countries, who position themselves to be “modern”, much more “tolerant” regarding the diverse identities and viewpoints, etc. No hard to guess that the second group, not smaller either, is being represented by mainly the youth, middle-age persons, those who associate themselves with already quite multi-faceted civil society through being frequently, but not always, - formal or non-formal parts of groups, organizations, media, and/or NGOs. In terms of the social status, usually, the representatives of this group earn middle income.

As we currently witness, the clash, becoming from time to time, - more critical, overt and intensive, and transforming into confrontation firstly, - of the mindsets of the individuals from at least two bigger groups described by us above, and taking place within one – the Georgian society in the given case, when and if gone too far, without re-assessing and compromising their positions between the two camps, might in fact seriously affect and damage the foundations of the state and society as a holistic, self-sufficient, and separate or sovereign entity.

Trend #3

The other trend worth mentioning as well is the issue of in fact quite superficial yet understanding, acceptance, and spreading of the essential postulates of

liberal democracy per se, - as particularly the protesting public of modern Georgia frequently associates itself with the ideology and values.

Specifically, major problem here is related to the presumably hastier grasping, and popularization of in reality deeper and more sophisticated principles of liberal democracy, preferred almost automatically as the only legitimate alternative to the Soviet ideological framework after the collapse of the USSR, without the corresponding examination and internalization of the views and ideals by the post-Soviet societies, including the Georgian one. Still a bit confusing and that's why, somehow discouraging appears to be not inherently an easy topic at all in general though, - connected with the forms of protest in a case when peaceful demonstrations and participating protesters' demands are largely ignored, while in parallel, activists and oppositional politicians severely and disproportionately get punished, being often massively arrested, fined, tortured, attacked physically and psychologically or so, without the due legal treatment and justice ought to be provided, - by the official authorities of the country¹³. For the whole duration of anti-governmental protests, demonstrators, as well as pretty much their sympathizers from the broader public, with the small exception of common in such cases, - micro incidents or provocations, - kept very careful position in organizing or supporting any acts of even clear disobedience, avoiding popularly, but first of all, - vocally, a piece of mentioning of any actual "resistance" and especially, "revolt" or furthermore, a "revolution". Only since recently, just prior to the local elections scheduled for October 4, 2025, part of the most active opposition, under the leadership of the United National Movement (UNM) – previous ruling party and its leaders like Levan Khabeishvili, - currently the chair of the UNM's political council and previously, the UNM's chair from January 2023 to June 2024, along with the civil society activists and representatives of the wider dissenting public, started to mention a "peaceful overthrow", or a "peaceful revolution"¹⁴.

Worth emphasizing that an idea of public defiance, revolt, and/or a revolution as the last measure in order to resist the seizure of power with the apparent erosion of legitimacy and the questionable legality, as well as to eliminate the substantial threat on the path of Georgia's democratization and Westernization, - has been perceived among the Georgian protesters as critically suspicious, often even directly provocative and therefore, largely unsuitable overall for the liberal frameworks. This approach though, - neglects very important part of the liberal democratic traditions of the significant number of democratic states and their experiences or institutional norms about considering and protecting the people's

¹³ *17 countries and EU urge Georgia to reverse repressive measures, release political prisoners*, Georgia Today, 14.07.2025, <<https://georgiatoday.ge/17-countries-and-eu-urge-georgia-to-reverse-repressive-measures-release-political-prisoners/>> (25.08.2025).

¹⁴ L. Papachristou, *Georgia arrests opposition figure who urged 'peaceful revolution' at polls*, Reuters, 11.09.2025, <<https://www.reuters.com/world/georgia-arrests-opposition-figure-who-urged-peaceful-revolution-polls-2025-09-11/>> (11.09.2025).

rights to resist under special circumstances, i.e. in cases of a capture and a clear abuse of power, when no other constitutional instruments, for example, elections, courts and the system of justice, free media, protests or petitions are functional or effective anymore.

General obstacles still quite popularly persisting in Georgia like, - superficial approaches towards internalization and sharing of the Western liberal democratic values and principles around fully, lack of appropriate knowledge on what can be acceptable or maybe not – during also and especially, - the times of the crisis of power, under de facto dictatorships, uncertainty and confusion over embracing the concept of resistance and disobedience in non-democratic or authoritarian regimes, and hugely relevant dichotomy: superficial vs. deep and genuine understanding of the basics of liberal democracy, - noteworthy to be taken into account in the end as well.

Conclusions

After studying carefully and examining in a comprehensive manner, - the major trends attributed primarily to the current protests erupted in Georgia and protesters accordingly, with the implications on the wider society, revealing quite complex dynamics overall, we arrive at the following conclusions:

- All of the tendencies discussed and analyzed above are prone to be considered as equally valuable for shaping and explaining the complexity of mental composition of the Georgian public, being comprised of at least two major camps of people, positioning themselves as often antagonistic and incompatible to each other, which might have long-lasting repercussions in future if the deep social and political, but civilizational polarization and fragmentation of society goes too far, without reaching any viable agreements over the defining values and orienteers for the development of the country.
- The trends observed, contribute significantly to the identification of first of all, - the internal challenges on the way towards Georgia's democratization, modernization, and Westernization, with the external consequences.
- The debates on the applicability of the theoretical frameworks of social mood and the socionomic theory to the case of Georgia, revealed at least partial relevance, with the intention to examine in further if the events, on the example of controversial and provocative for the subsequent dissent – political decisions of the government made prior to the widespread protests in Georgia, - could have impacted the emergence of particular social moods, - more “negative” in specific, prevalent among the protesting public in the first place.
- The unidirectional causal relationship between the social moods and events

is in fact proved on the example of how the “negative” moods of the demonstrators, and especially, - their undoubted frustration keep affecting the particular actions and an “inaction”, as we can refer to the unsuccessful attempts to eventually cause the change of the government in Georgia.

- The waves’ theory needs to be targeted in the future as well, - concerning if and how the dominant as of now – social moods, popular among primarily – the protesting Georgian youth and broader civil society, can transform, - how fast, and become drivers of potential change.

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