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Georgian Institute of Politics

EXPERT POLLS

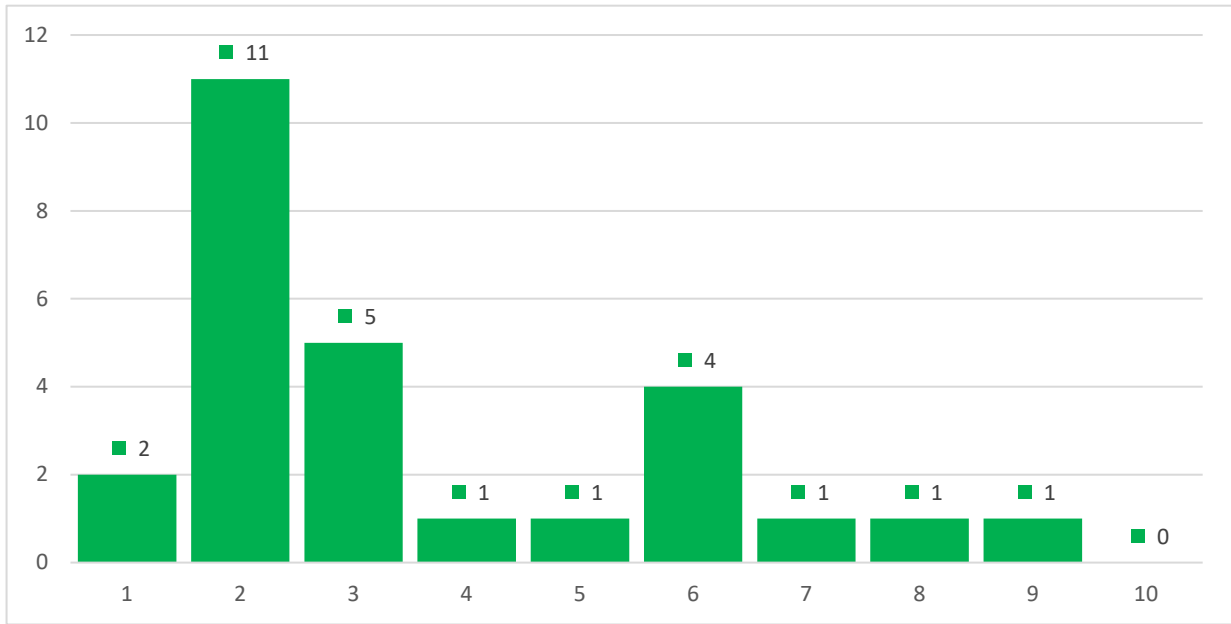
Issue #14

Experts Assess the First 100 Days of the Georgian Dream Government

This poll was prepared as a part of The Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP) report, “The First 100 Days of the Georgian Dream Government: Reality and Challenges.” GIP selected 27 local and international experts, pundits, and scholars, with active involvement in Georgia’s political life, and surveyed them about the issues discussed in the report. The questionnaire was drawn from the report and includes four sections: economic policy, social policy, foreign and security policy, and democracy and human rights.

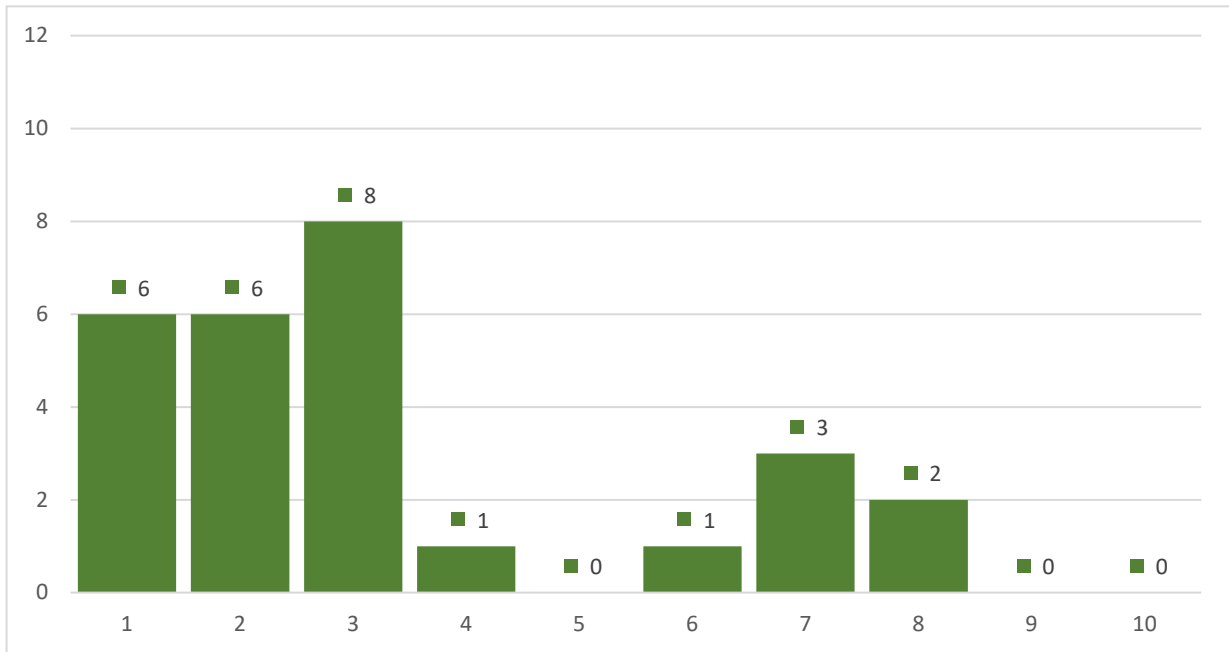
As was to be expected, the survey delivered more critical results than a similar survey from 2017. The majority of those surveyed assessed the performance of the newly elected government in its first 100 days as rather negative, with interesting variations. Of the four sections, GD was assessed most negatively in foreign and security policy. As figure 1 indicates, out of 27 surveyed respondents only seven of them assigned the GD government a score better than average (over five). Additionally, half of the participants assigned GD’s foreign policy actions with a score of 1 (the lowest) or 2 (the second lowest). Moreover, these negative views about GD’s performance were shared by both Georgian and international participants.

Figure 1: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in foreign and security policy during the first 100 days of being in power (December 2020 – March 2021)?



The newly elected government was also very critically assessed in the area of democracy and human rights (Figure 2). Only 6 of twenty-seven respondents gave the GD government a better than average score. This is not surprising considering the recent political crisis in the country, however, it should be noted that the survey was conducted just a week before the landmark agreement between the government and opposition under the EU’s auspices.

Figure 2: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in the areas of democracy and the rule of law in the first 100 days of being in power (December 2020 - March 2021)?



The experts' assessments of GD's performance in economic and social policy areas was also critical, although slightly higher compared to foreign policy and human rights. Even though there were not many positive scores, the negative assessments in the lower half of the scale were distributed more equally, resulting in overall higher scores in these two areas (Figures 3 and 4). In general, the experts's assessments of the GD's performance in all four areas was below average, however, this is not entirely surprising considering the multiple ongoing crises in the country.

Figure 3: On a scale from 1(worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in economic policy (economic reforms, pandemics) in the first 100 days of being in power (December 2020 – March 2021)?

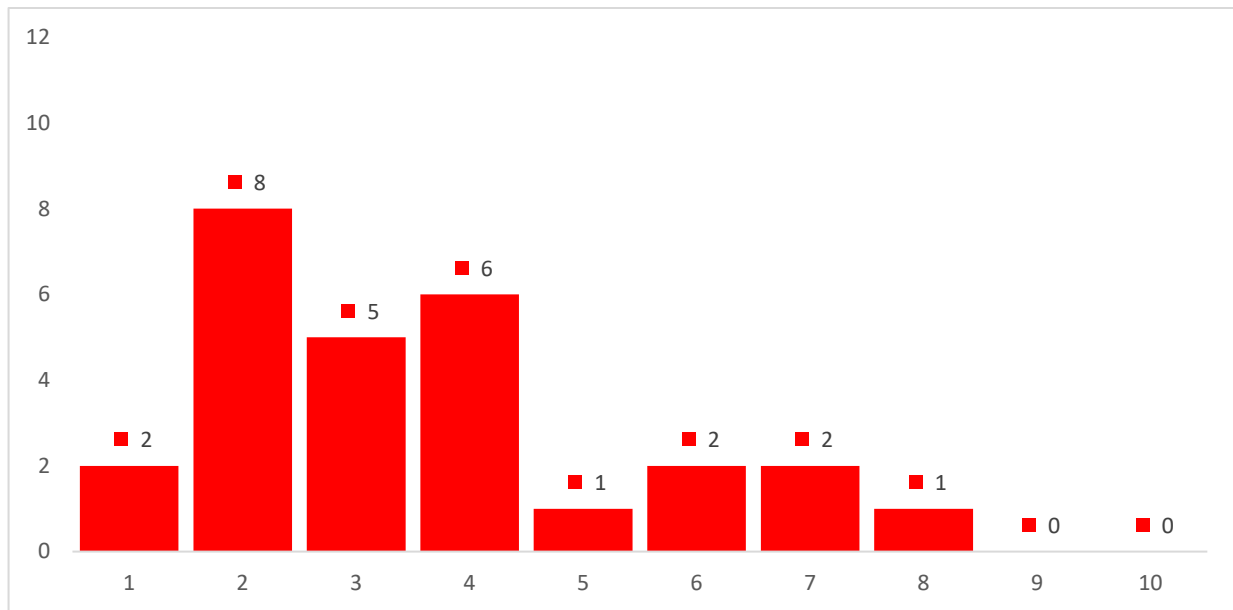
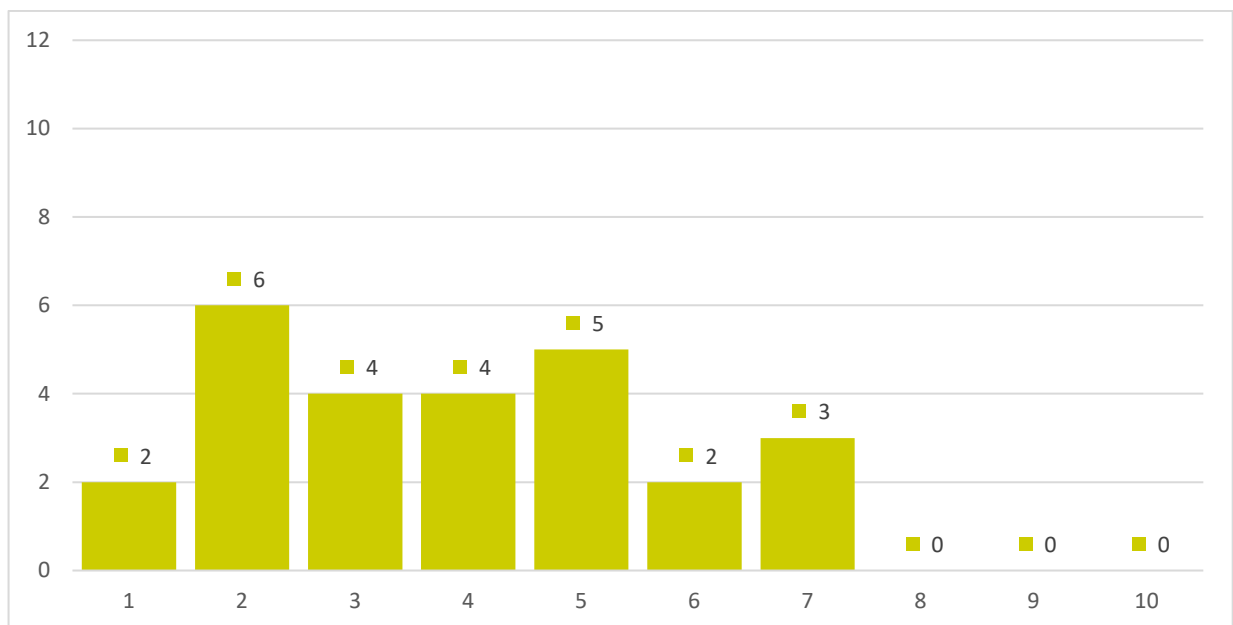


Figure 4: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in social policy (healthcare, pensions, social security) in the first 100 days of being in power (December 2020 – March 2021)?



Participants were also asked to flag the most important challenges to the newly elected GD government during the next legislative period and provide recommendations. In terms of challenges, the respondents identified a series of socio-economic (Covid-19 and the post-pandemic world; poverty; unemployment; brain-drain) and political (polarization; lack of democracy; politicized judiciary) problems.

The respondents advise the GD government to stop, “its polarizing rhetoric” and its, “hardline approach” and to, “detoxify the political culture.” “Instead of basing its legitimacy entirely on the shortcomings of the prior regime,” the newly elected GD government is advised to “exhibit collaborative behaviour” to, “push for further European integration” and to, “claim legitimacy by capitalizing on positive policy outcomes.” Some respondents also urge GD to, “develop a gradual exit strategy,” in order to ensure their place in the opposition once they are no longer in power.

In terms of economic challenges, the GD is advised to concentrate on, “controlling the pandemic with vaccinations” and prepare for, “a post-pandemic ‘reset.’” The GD is also advised to focus on long-term socio-economic issues such as reducing poverty and public debt, or diversifying economic structures, “away from tourism in the direction of a knowledge based economy.”



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Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP) is a Tbilisi-based non-profit, non-partisan, research and analysis organization. GIP works to strengthen the organizational backbone of democratic institutions and promote good governance and development through policy research and advocacy in Georgia.

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