



HUMAN RIGHTS: FOCUS ON TORTURE

PUBLIC SURVEY IN TBILISI, GEORGIA: MARCH 2007

Final Report



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Organizations

EU	European Union
GCRT	Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims
ICRC	The International Committee of the Red Cross
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MLHSS	Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Security
MoD	Ministry of Defence
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNVFTV	United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Various

HR	Human Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MD	Mental Disorder
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PD	Physical Disorder
POW	Prisoner of War

Technical Terms

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
DK	“Do Not Know”
DTS	“Difficult to Say”
HSD	“Honestly Significant Difference”
NA	No Answer

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MAIN REPORT

1. Background & Methodology

Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT) is the not-for-profit non-governmental organization providing psychosocial and medical assistance to torture victims in Georgia. The centre activities are assisted by European Commission, UNVFTV, UNHCR, OSCE_ODIHR, and ICRC. It is perceived that reliable quantitative indicators reflecting relevant social trends are a precondition for the efficient planning of centre activities. To this end, the survey of torture incidence, and broadly of HR awareness, in Tbilisi, Georgia was carried out.

800 face-to-face interviews with the citizens of Tbilisi were conducted, at their residences. **Fieldwork** was conducted in March 2007. The present survey is a follow-up for the similar survey conducted in October 2003, *just prior* to the revolutionary events of November 2003. Thus, throughout the report the current indicators are compared to the benchmark data of “pre-revolutionary” Georgia.

Questionnaire is presented in the Appendices A1 (English) and A2 (Georgian). While reading this English report, one should bear in mind that the meaning of some original questionnaire questions and/or answer options may be distorted in English translation. Therefore, when exact understanding is important, we would recommend reader to consult the Georgian version of the questionnaire, or contact us for clarifications.

Survey respondents were chosen according to district and demographical (gender, age, occupation) quotas. Quotas were determined according to the official statistical data¹.

Data cleaning, tabulation, and **analysis** were performed by contracted research specialists. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA, F-Test) was used to determine whether there were differences (in opinions, experiences, etc.) between different respondent groups. When such differences were discovered, the multiple pairwise comparison test (Tukey’s HSD Test) was used to determine the exact groups that differ from each other. Also, χ^2 -test was routinely used to find response differences when nominal variables were concerned. Multidimensional scaling techniques were used in some cases.

Throughout the survey, **95% confidence level** was used as a cutting line for significant results. At this level, for the sample percentages reported in the text, the largest possible error is 3.5%. Also, all the contentions made about the differences between respondent groups are significant at 0.05 level.

Primary purpose of this questionnaire survey was to explore the issue of *Torture* – its incidence, public awareness of, attitudes to, and opinions regarding the surrounding topics and actors. Extreme sensitivity of the issue under study made certain demands on the size and structure of the questionnaire. Namely, in order not to “scare” respondents from the beginning, and receive maximally adequate responses to the principal (i.e. torture-related) questions, the questionnaire had to begin with relatively general and neutral questions and gradually approach the principal topic of interest². In no way this means that responses on the initial survey questions are useless. On the contrary, the broader issues of *general socio-economic problems facing Georgia, Human Rights, and aggression and violence* in the society put the principle survey topic into the general context, what is particularly important for readers not well acquainted with Georgia.

Namely, the questionnaire may be seen as consisting of four parts:

First part attempted to set the principal survey topic into broader socio-economic context of Georgia. The general socio-economic situation was broadly assessed by respondents. Also the most urgent specific problems facing the country were rated in terms of their urgency and respective development trends.

In the second part the notion of Human Rights was introduced. Namely public understanding of the notion was explored through recording the respondents’ association with it and through connecting the notion with specific socio-economic problems discussed earlier.

In the third part the incidence of severe abuse, both moral and physical, has been assessed.

At last, in the fourth part, the principal topic of *torture* was explored. Namely, understanding of torture, its incidence, and public attitudes to it were assessed. Also the need for preventive/rehabilitative measures was determined.

¹ Source: State Department of Statistics

² The “funnel principle” well known in questionnaire research.

2. Survey Results

2.1. General Socio-Economic Context

Q1. How would you assess current socio-economic situation in Georgia?

Q2. How the socio-economic situation in Georgia changes over time?

Starting questions of the survey were intended to set the principal survey issues into broader socio-economic context. First question asked respondent to evaluate the current socio-economic *situation* in Georgia. The second question asked to assess general development *trend*. The comparison of responses from years 2003 and 2007 are presented on the Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

Figure 1: General socio-economic *situation* in Georgia

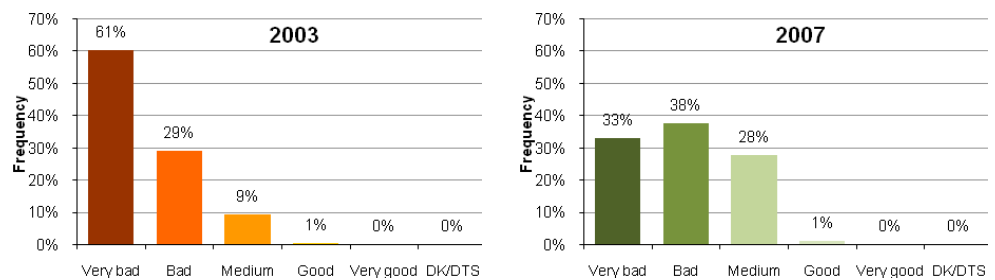
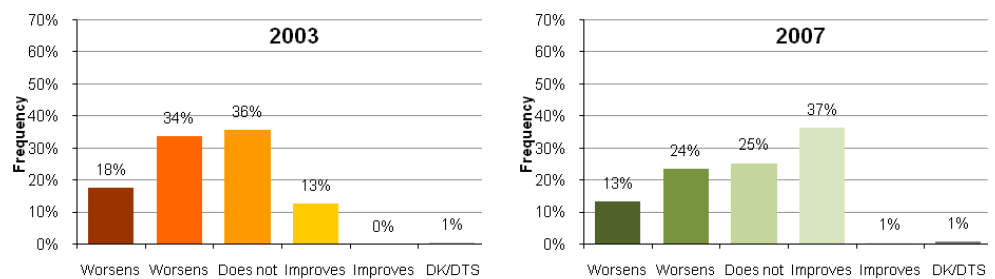


Figure 2: General socio-economic *trend* in Georgia



The general socio-economic situation in October 2003 was seen by grand majority of Tbilisi residents as catastrophic. 90% of population would assess it as *very bad* or *bad*. Furthermore, only 13% of respondents believed it was improving somehow. In 2007 responses were considerably less bleak, though still not very bright. 71% would now say situation is *bad* or *very bad*, but, to sharp contrast with previous survey, 38% of respondents believe it is improving.

Gender: In 2003, there was no significant difference between the assessments of general socio-economic situation by male and female respondents. In 2007, women are more negative in their assessment than men.

Age: Both in 2003 and 2007, younger people are more positive & optimistic than elderly.

Income: In 2003, those with relatively higher reported incomes, were as negative in their assessments as the rest. In 2007, the financially better-off are more positive and optimistic than the rest. This indicates that ongoing reforms bring more benefits to economically active part of the society, while poor remain disadvantaged and dissatisfied.

Q3. Which of the following problems are ?

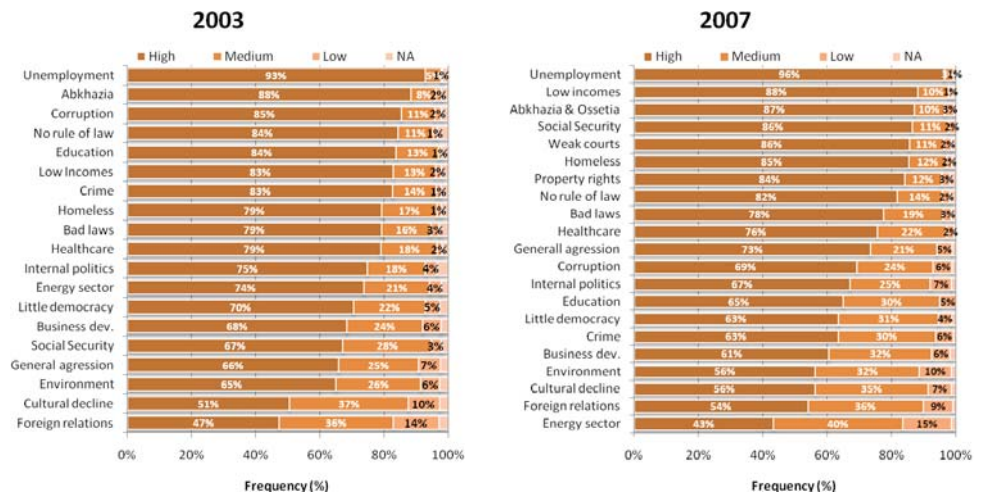
... list of problems

Q4. How the situation changes in Georgia in respect of the following problems?

... list

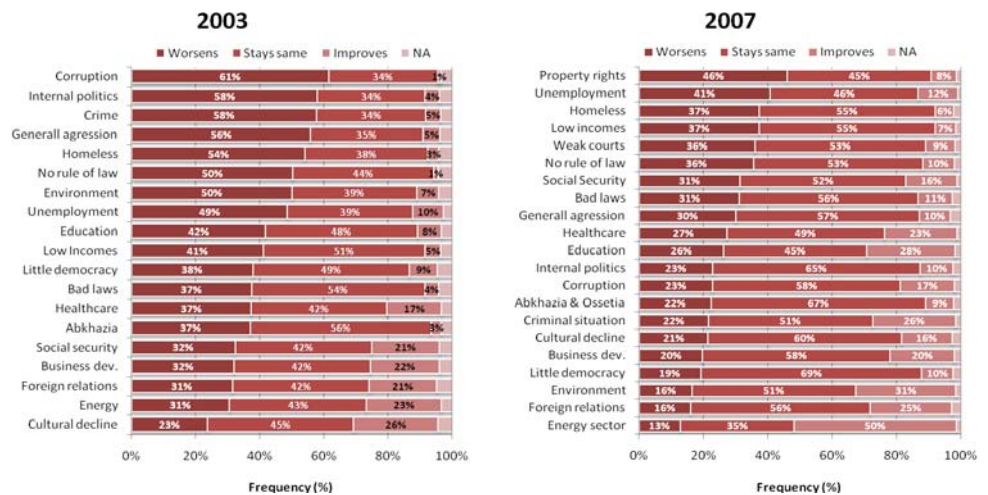
Further, respondents were asked to rate certain problems as to their *severity* for Georgia.^{3,4} Also they were asked to assess the *development trends* in respect of the same problems.⁵ Answer distributions are given on the Figure 3 and Figure 4 below.

Figure 3: Problems *severity*



Note: the assessment was done on a 3-point scale (1-low, 2-medim, 3-high)

Figure 4: Problem *trend*



Note: the assessment was done on a 3-point scale (1-worsens, 2-stays same, 3-improves)

Both in 2003 and 2007, *unemployment* has been seen as the most pressing problem for the country. But in 2007, society seems to be even more demanding to see things changing here. The ratings of related problems (*low incomes, poor social security, homeless people*) are noticeably higher. At the same time, the *business development*, i.e. exactly what is supposed to directly boost population incomes, was and is seen as relatively low priority. Most of the population still sees the *public*, not *private*, sector as the source and foundation of social welfare.

Unsettled internal territorial conflicts (*Abkhazia⁶ and Ossetia*) remain another top concern for the society. In 2003, this problem has been seen as stagnant by majority of respondents. Only 3% believed it was being resolved. In 2007, the share of optimists has increased to 9%.

³ The list of problems could be much longer than the one finally used, but there were technical constraints – we wanted the list to be homogeneous (i.e. contain problems of approximately similar level of generality), to be relatively short (i.e. contain only most pressing problems), to be somehow related to GCRT activities. Thus some problems, which many may consider highly relevant, still may have been omitted in the questionnaire.

⁴ The rating was done on a 3-point scale (1/2/3) corresponding to (low / medium / high).

⁵ The rating was done on a 3-point scale (1/2/3) corresponding to (worsens / does not change / improves).

⁶ Breakaway region, with hundreds of thousands displaced people.

Problems related to the *rule of law* (*impunity syndrome, weak courts, bad legislation, violation of property rights*) remain near the top of the problem list, but number of those who believe that things are improving (or at least not worsening) here, is larger in 2007, than in 2003.

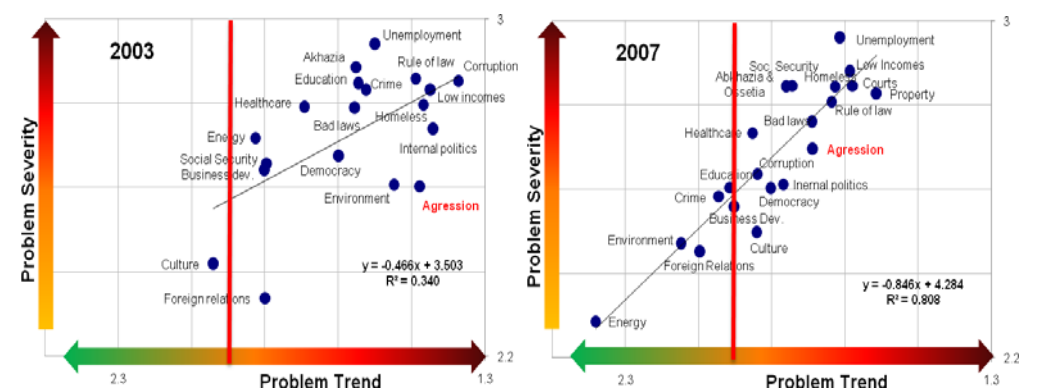
There are certain problem issues which were at the top of the problem list in 2003, but where positive developments are clearly seen by 2007. Such are *corruption, crime, education, and especially energy supply*.

Environmental problems, cultural decline, and bad foreign relations were and are of least concern to public.

It is interesting that *general human aggressiveness* is more of a problem in 2007 than it was in 2003. Society perceives itself to be more violent than it was in 2003; and the anger still mounts, though at a slower rate than in 2003. Nonetheless, most of our respondents are inclined to think that imperfection of social institutions (*weak courts, bad laws, etc*) is currently more of a problem for Georgia than general aggressiveness of its citizens.

The scatterplot on Figure 5 maps particular problems (their *severity*) against the perceived respective *trend* of development⁷. The general data patterns differ noticeably. The general shift towards left and bottom is clear, meaning that in 2007 **general severity of the problems facing Georgian society is lower, and development trend is more positive than in 2003**. Though, in absolute terms, most of the problem domains are perceived to be on a downward trend in 2007.

Figure 5: Problem severity v. trend



Note: the assessments were done on 3-point scale s (Severity: 1-low, 2-medium, 3-high; Trend: 1-worsens, 2-stays same, 3-improves); the graphs show average response scores for each problem.

Another important broad observation is about the general link (dependency) between the problem *severity* and *trend*. The correlation between these two variables is much stronger in 2007 than in 2003. I.e. in 2003, it was possible to discover problem which were perceived as very severe but stagnant rather than (e.g. *healthcare*), or not very severe, but rapidly becoming worse (e.g. *human aggression, environment*). Now, in 2007, development problem *severity* and respective *trend* are practically synonymous. That is, public *perception of a problem* as such is *defined* by perceived *trend* rather than *current snapshot* picture of the domain, which indicates that, 1) in this short period, the society has acquired an important skill of retrospective analysis and forecasting; 2) society is more demanding of *change in the specific policy domains* than it was in 2003, when the *change of the whole system of governance* was demanded.

In 2003, practically for all named problems except *cultural decline* mean response scores indicated that situation was worsening. In 2007, four domains clearly display improving trend (*energy, environment, crime, foreign relations*⁸) and two more domains – *education system, and business sector* – are controversial, about equal number of people thinking they are improving or degrading.

⁷ Mean response scores are used as mapping coordinates

⁸ It seems that strengthening links with western democracies overbear the concerns related to extremely tense relationships with Russia.

Gender: Generally, women care more about the problems and see less positive developments than men. In 2003, women perceived more acutely that general aggressiveness in the society is increasing. They also were more cautious of increasing environmental pollution. In 2007, the problem domains where women expressed different (higher) level of concern than men were *unemployment, cultural decline, low incomes, and weak courts*. Also women perceive less positive ongoing change regarding *unemployment, healthcare, and environment*.

Age: Generally we can be quite sure that higher age of respondent is associated with a darker view of life. Especially, for such domains as *social security* and *healthcare*. Generally older people do not see, or refuse to see, positive *change*. The correlation is not very strong however.

Education: There is no clear link between the educational status of respondent and general perception of problem severity and development trend. Though some differences may be observed for specific problem issues. E.g. those with higher educational status care less about *homeless* or *energy supply*, but care more about *cultural decline*.

Occupation: Generally there is little difference in opinions among different occupational groups, except for *students* (relatively more positive) and *pensioners* (relatively more negative), whose opinions are rather conditioned by *age* (see above), than by *occupation* as such.

Income: The higher is the respondent's income, the lower is problem severity assessment and more positive is perceived development trend. This is especially true for the problems of *homeless, low incomes, energy, and healthcare*.

2.2. Human Rights: Situation, Awareness

Q5. To which of the following statements you would rather agree?

A. Every person has inborn rights that state must protect.

B. State should determine the rights of every person according to his merit.

In this section of the questionnaire we have attempted to assess the general liberal/conformist split of population, explore the meaning of “Human Rights” notion to our respondents, assess the public awareness of HR-related legal institutions, and measure the general attitude of the population towards different societal groups.

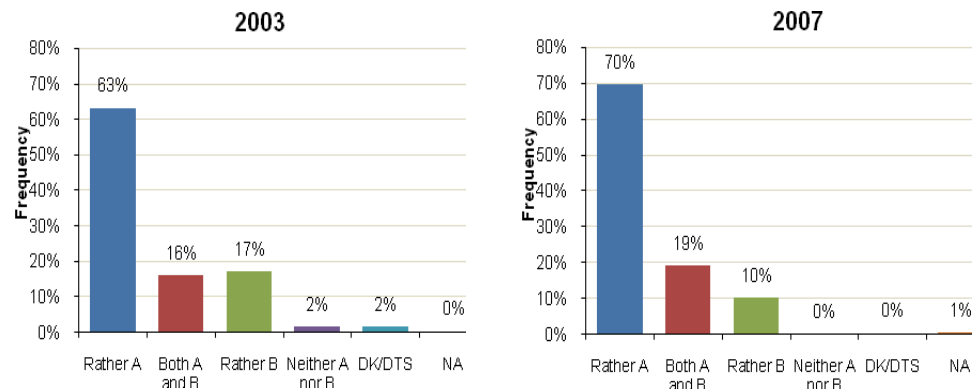
Figure 6 presents the liberal/conformist split of the survey population. In 2003, hard conformists (those who chose B option) represented 17% of the population, about one person in six, while in 2007, their proportion is reduced to 10%. Correspondingly, the share of those who strongly believe in supremacy of *individual* over *state* has increased from 63% to 70%. About one in five respondents (19%) would not chose any of the extreme statements and would accept that truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Socio-demographic profile of conformists (Group B) is easy to predict. These are older and poorer citizens of Tbilisi. Decrease in the number of *conformist* over the last four years suggests a number of thoughts. First, against the backdrop of aging population, it is not the *age* as such that determines conformism, but the ideological conditioning of the political system, *soviet* system in our case. Second, the democratic ideological pressure over the last several years bears its positive fruits.

- In 2003, average age of Group B was 47.5 years, and 41.5 years for Group A. In 2007, the same indicators are 48.3 and 42.2, respectively.
- In 2003, average reported family income for Group B was GEL 173 per month, while for Group A it was GEL 264. In 2007, these were GEL 293 and GEL 408, respectively.

Average age and income of those favouring mixed approach (Group A&B) are also between the corresponding values for the extreme groups.

Figure 6: Who's first: Individual or State?



Coming back to the issues discussed in the previous chapter, it is interesting to review these from liberal/ conformist perspective. Interestingly, while pure *A and B groups* do not differ from each other in the assessment of general socio-economic situation in Georgia, the “*balanced*” (*Both A&B*) group displays considerably more criticism than *group A* regarding both general situation and the development tendencies.

Q6. What first comes to your mind when you here the words "Human Rights"?

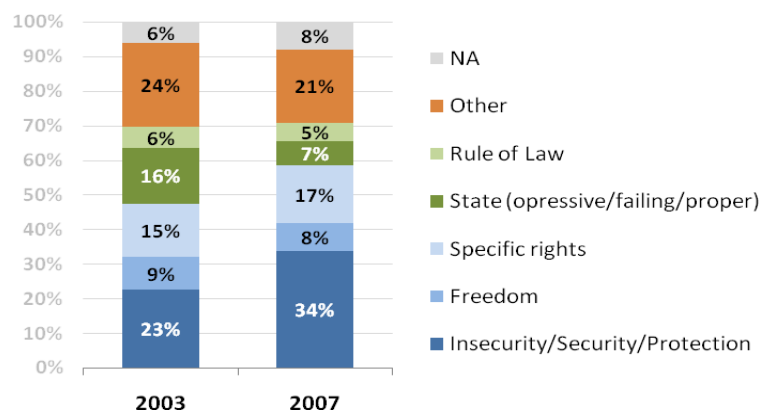
At this stage, the "Human Rights" term was first introduced by the interviewer, who asked respondents to record the first associations that occurred to her/him on hearing the words.

Responses were grouped using the following broad categories:

- "Negative": *insecurity, oppressive state, failing state, other negative*
- "Neutral": *protection, rule of law, specific rights, other neutral*
- "Positive": *security, freedom, proper state, other positive*

The *negative/neutral/positive* grouping is artificial and should not be used in the analysis of responses. E.g. "security", "protection", "insecurity" (the first falling in the *positive*, the second in the *neutral*, and the third in the *negative* group) are essentially different aspects of one and the same notion. The same is true for "failing state" and "proper state" responses. Generally, the grouping was arbitrary and, while having the merit of presenting the big picture of respondents' associations in analytically friendly way, still conceals much of the response diversity. To form an adequate idea of the whole body of reported associations we would recommend reader to review the complete list presented in the Appendix. Distribution of grouped responses is presented on Figure 7.

Figure 7: Associations with "Human Rights"



In our opinion, most analytically instructive are the following points:

First, the split between those for whom "Human Rights" are primarily associated with *individual* (his "security"/"protection"/"insecurity", "freedom", "rights", etc.) and those for whom the association is mostly with *social institutions* ("state", rule of "law"). In 2007, considerably more people stressed the *security*/notion than in 2003. The result lends itself to multiple and often opposing interpretations, e.g. it may both mean the increased sense of *insecurity*, or increased sense of *security*. The first interpretation, still seems more plausible, since fears (as constant factors) are more likely to surface in such surveys than positive (transient) feelings. In the minds of respondents *state* acts both as source of *protection* and source of *oppression*. The fact that the number of associations (both positive and negative) with state is significantly reduced, may indicate: 1) that state is less of oppressor than it was before, but at the same time fails to improve its role as of protector; and 2) the increased feeling of *insecurity* mentioned above largely stems from feelings of *economic* insecurity (and related fears of ill-health and generally ill-being).

Second, the proportions of those for whom HRs are associated with "security" ("Insecurity"), on one hand, and "freedom", on the other. As seen, the size of the "freedom" group is smaller and has not changed in the last years. To put it boldly, Georgian society has not become any more "free" or "open" than it was 4 years ago.

Q7. Is there any Georgian or international legal document that seeks to protect Human Rights?

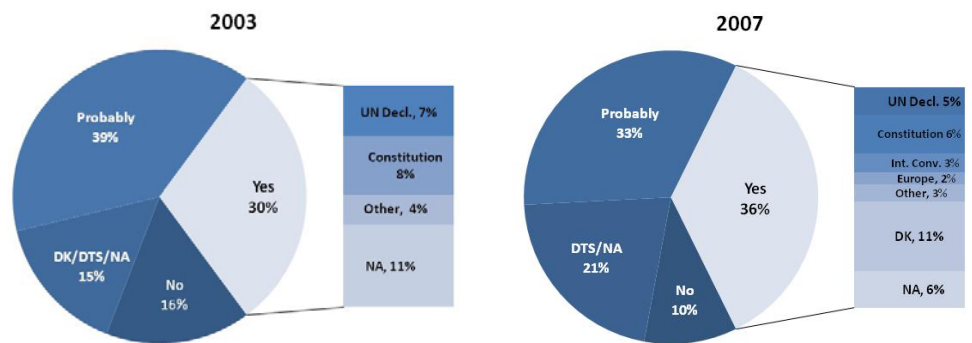
Respondents were asked to say whether they know any Georgian or international legal documents that are concerned with the protection of Human Rights. The results are presented on the Figure 8.

In 2003, three in ten (30%) of respondents were positive about the existence of such legislation and additional 39% considered it probable that such legislation exists. The rest, either thought there is no such specific legal document (16%) or found it difficult to answer the question (15%). In 2007, the number of those who confidently said there are such legal documents has increased to 36%, 6 percentage points increase of the 2003.

However, both in 2003 and 2007, those who were definite about the existence of specific legal documents related to HR, found it difficult to name such documents. Actually, the 6 percentage points increase mentioned above comes at the expense of such people. In 2003, about 38% of those who answered “Yes” to the main question, could not remember any specific document, while their share in 2007, has increased to 47%. That is, while general awareness of human rights may have increased since our first survey, the specific knowledge about the broad legal framework for protecting HR has not improved that much.

Though some higher sophistication of respondent awareness may still be observed. In 2003, the most frequent responses regarding the specific HR legal documents were *UN Declaration* (7%) and *Georgian Constitution* (8%). In 2007, a large number of respondents named *international conventions* (3%), and many went so far as to name the *specific conventions*⁹ (2%), even though some of such conventions have little or no direct connection with Human Rights. Generally it may be noted that for many respondents the notion of Human Rights is closely associated with Europe and European cities (Helsinki, Vienna, Geneva, Rome, Hague, Strasbourg, etc.).

Figure 8: Human Rights Legislation



Male respondents were generally more confident in answering “yes” than female. The latter, more than men, liked the “probably” answer option. State and private employees, as well as students said “yes” more often than other groups, especially pensioners and housewives.

⁹ Helsinki Convention, Vienna Convention, Geneva Convention, etc.

Q8. Are the problems listed below relevant to the "Protection of Human Rights"?

Further, we attempted to capture what actually is understood by our respondents as "Human Rights". This was done through connecting the notion with the list of problems discussed earlier.¹⁰ The distribution of answers is presented on Figure 9.

Figure 9: Problem connection with Human Rights"



Note: the assessment was done on a 3-point scale (1-weak, 2-medium, 3-strong)

The change over the four years is considerable. First of all, ubiquity of *Human Rights* notion is increased – virtually all aspects of public life are thought to have Human Rights angle to them, and such connection is perceived to be much stronger than earlier.

Second, the structure of notion is obviously changing. In 2003, Tbilisi residents thought that *work* and *education* are the spheres most relevant to Human Rights. Understandably, during the transformational period still in its prime, it would be difficult to find a person in Georgia for whom work or educational insecurity would not be a lingering threat.¹¹ This insecurity is particularly stinging against the background of cloudless soviet times with guaranteed work and education for most, if not all. Therefore, work and education was still considered in Georgia as a basic right, rather than something requiring substantial human investment.

To the sharp contrast, in 2007, the *unemployment* and *education* have moved considerably down in the list, giving place to problems that can be addressed only through effective work of the social institutions (government, laws, courts). In other words citizens are much more prepared to take responsibility for getting education and finding proper job – this is not something that government shall primarily do for an individual.

The strong Judiciary (good laws, strong courts, Rule of Law) and associated problems are, in 2007, clearly seen as being most relevant to the notion of Human Rights.

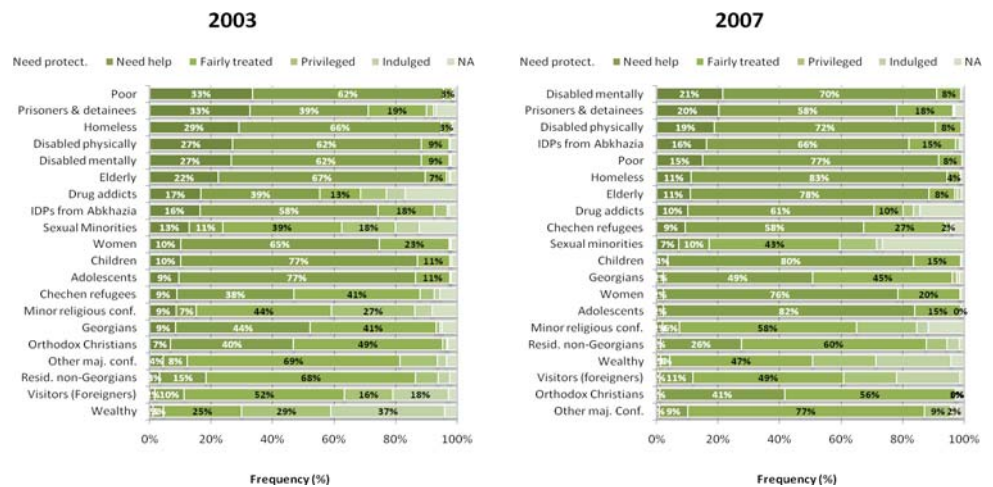
¹⁰ The rating was done on a 3-point scale (1/2/3) corresponding to (weak connection / medium connection / strong connection).

¹¹ For young people directly, for mature people indirectly through their children.

Q8. Are the problems listed below relevant to the "Protection of Human Rights"?

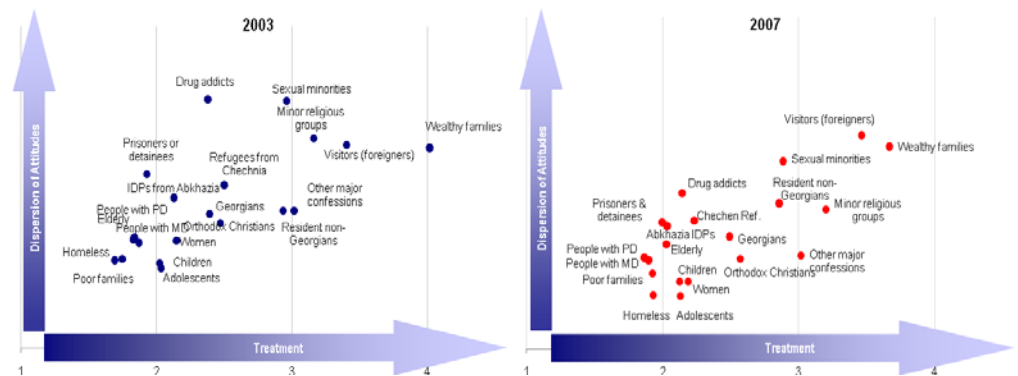
Further, we attempted to measure the situation of (public attitude to) different social groups. Distribution of results is presented on Figure 10.

Figure 10: Social attitude towards specific groups



Note: The rating was done on a 5-point scale (1/2/3/4/5) corresponding to (discriminated, need protection / need help / treated fairly / privileged / indulged).

Figure 11: Social attitude towards specific groups – average and dispersion



Note: The rating was done on a 5-point scale (1/2/3/4/5) corresponding to (discriminated, need protection / need help / treated fairly / privileged / indulged). The graphs show the average response scores.

Generally society seems to become somehow more tolerant – considerably less people than in 2003 think that certain social groups are intentionally discriminated against the others. Also, the society has become more homogeneous in its attitudes towards different groups – the degree of controversy regarding certain groups (e.g. IDPs, prisoners, sexual minorities, drug addicts, etc) is decreasing, though is still present.

The groups which, almost unequivocally, are disadvantaged and need certain urgent assistance are *poor*, *homeless*, *disabled*, and *elderly*. *Women*, *children* and *adolescents* are also viewed as needing more social assistance than they have at the moment.

Prisoners and detainees, as well as *IDPs from Abkhazia* introduce a certain degree of controversy. While many feel that these groups are discriminated and need assistance, still many think that they are treated fairly.

Drug addicts, *sexual minorities* and *minor religious groups* represent similar cases in that they polarise the society most. The social attitude towards *drug addicts* has undergone possibly the most drastic change over the last several years – considerably more people now think that these people need help.

Georgians and *orthodox Christians*, representing the basic benchmark for the treatment of the other groups, have moved towards the centre of the distribution (*fairly treated*), but still are on average seen as slightly disadvantaged. Obviously, xenophobia is decreasing in Georgia but is

still an important social factor. *Ethnic minorities* and members of *other religious confessions* (especially of *smaller ones*) are viewed as having certain advantage over *Georgians* and *orthodox Christians*.

And, at last, the best-off groups: *foreigner visitors* are generally seen as fairly treated or over-privileged, while *wealthy families* are seen as being too much advantaged.

The overall frequencies described above conceal some differences in the assessments *by* different socio-demographic groups. On the other hand, there are cases when there is no difference in assessments where one might have reasonably assume one. For instance, in 2003, assessment of social treatment of *women* was about the same by male and female respondents. The only significant difference between men and women was in their assessment of how *minor religious groups* are treated by society. Namely, men were more tolerant towards these groups. In 2007, the only observed difference in opinions by male and female respondents are towards the social treatment of *women* and *adolescents*. Women are more sympathetic to both groups than men are.

Respondent's *age* is also a useful factor in predicting his/her attitude to certain groups. Both in 2003 and 2007, younger respondents were more tolerant of the representatives of different religious groups. In 2007, older respondents are more sympathetic of *children* and *adolescents*, while this was not the case in 2003.

Understandably, the material welfare of respondent affects his/her certain assessments. The lower the respondent's income the more supportive of *poor* he/she is. In 2003 this dependence worked as well the other way round, i.e. low-income respondents were noticeably less tolerant of *wealthy*. But in 2007, this is not so anymore. The same general pattern is observed for other social groups. Relatively ***high aggression and intolerance*** of low-income social strata towards certain groups (*sexual minorities, minor religious confessions, drug addicts, IDPs* and *ethnic minorities*) that was clearly evidenced by the survey of 2003, has by 2007 transformed itself into ***higher compassion*** towards other - consensually vulnerable – groups (*disabled, IDPs, refugees, etc.*)

2.3. Abuse and Humiliation in the Society

q10, q11, q12

Can you remember, within past year, any actual case of strong human humiliation ?

q13, q14, q15

Within past year, have you personally ever been strongly humiliated?

In this part of the questionnaire we have attempted to measure the extent of severe human abuse (both moral and physical) in Tbilisi. First the relative importance of certain factors (such as ethnicity, economic status, religion, etc) has been assessed in provoking moral or physical abuse. Then, the incidence of abuse by State bodies, as well as by private actors has been measured. The summary of responses is presented on Figure 12 and Figure 13.

Figure 12: Strong humiliation: victim 3rd party

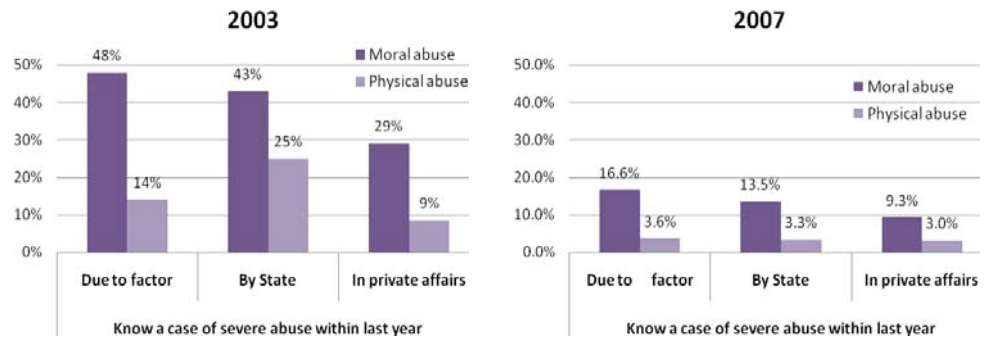
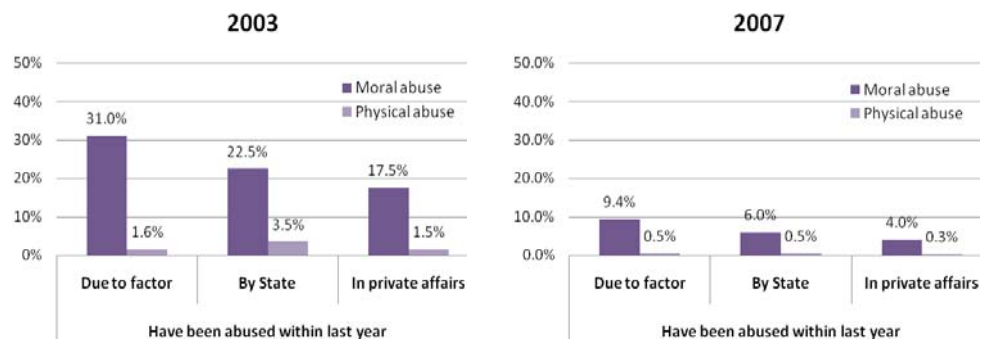


Figure 13: Strong humiliation: victim respondent



On the following pages, the incidence of specific types of abuse is described.

Q10. Can you remember, within past year, any actual case of strong human humiliation due to one of the following factors? ...

List of factors

Q13. Within past year, have you personally ever been strongly humiliated due to one of the following factors? ...

List of factors

Respondents were asked whether they can remember, within the last year, any case of moral or physical humiliation of a person (3rd party) that was provoked by certain individual qualities (factors), such as economic status (poverty), age, ethnicity, gender, behaviour, etc. Later, they were asked the same question, but regarding themselves.

In 2003, 48% and 14% of respondents have known a recent case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse attributable to at least one of the listed factors. Besides, 31% and 1.6% of respondents, respectively, have reported being a direct victim of such abuse.

In 2007, only 17% and 4% of respondents reported knowing a recent case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse attributable to at least one of the listed factors. Furthermore, only 9% and 0.5% of respondents, respectively, have reported being a direct victim of such abuse. 5.4% of respondents chose “difficult to say” response option when answering the question regarding themselves.

Specific case distributions are presented on Figure 14 and Figure 15.

Figure 14: Factors encouraging abuse: victim 3rd party

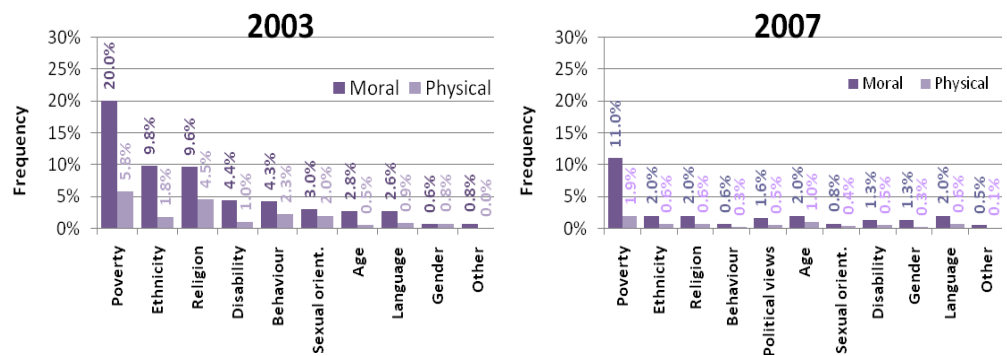
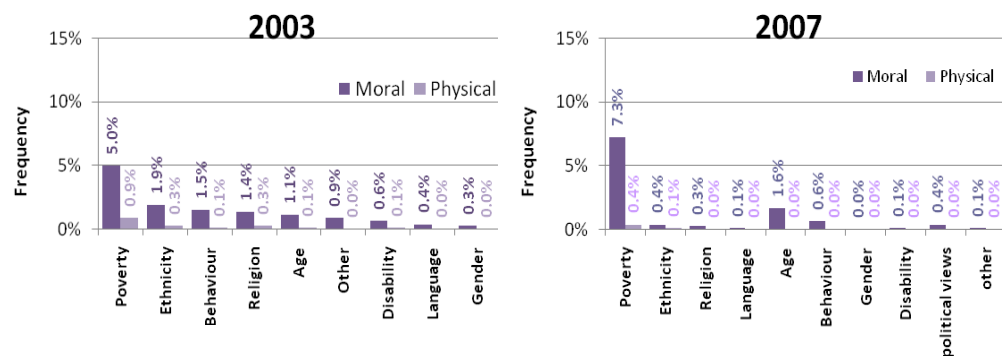


Figure 15: Factors encouraging abuse: victim respondent



As seen, *poverty* remains the key source of personal humiliation in Georgia.

- In 2003, 20% of respondents could remember a case of strong *moral* humiliation of some person, and 5% admitted that within the last year, there was at least one case when they themselves felt morally humiliated due to economic hardship. Moreover, about 6% personally knew a victim or have been a witness of physical humiliation due to low economic status. 7 persons (0.9%) admitted that they have been victims of physical abuse due to their low economic status.
- In 2007, although the reported 3rd party humiliation cases have decreased from 20% to 11%, the personally experienced humiliation incidence is higher today – it increased from 5% to 7.3%.

Regarding the other important factors catalysing human abuse in Georgia, the trend is much more gratifying:

- In 2003, *ethnicity* and *religion* have been the next major source of personal humiliation. Every one in ten respondents had encountered recently a case of moral humiliation due to person's ethnicity or religious beliefs. Respectively, 1.8% (14 respondents) and 4.5% (36 respondents) had encountered the cases of physical humiliation. 1.9% (15 respondents) and 1.4% (11 respondents) had reported themselves being recently humiliated morally on the grounds of their ethnicity and religion, respectively.
- In 2007, only 2% of respondents (one in fifty) have recently encountered a case of *moral* humiliation of a person due to his/her ethnicity or religion. Only 0.5% encountered the cases of *physical* humiliation. 0.4% (3 respondents) and 0.25% (2 respondents) had reported themselves being recently humiliated morally on the grounds of their ethnicity and religion, respectively.

Behaviour, mental or physical disorder, age, sexual orientation are also present as factors presumably important in provoking the degrading treatment of a person. Their relative importance, however, is lower. Interestingly, *gender* is one of the least important discriminating factors according to survey respondents.

Above and below, in interpreting figures about the abuse one have endured personally, reader should always bear in mind that such figures are invariably biased downwards, due to usual unwillingness of respondents to report such incidents.

Q11. Can you remember, within past year, any actual case of strong human humiliation by some State body? ...

List of institutions

Q14. Within past year, have you personally ever been strongly humiliated by any State institution? ...

List of institutions

Respondents were asked about the incidence of human abuse by different State bodies.

In 2003, 43% and 25% of respondents have known a recent case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse committed by representatives of some state institution. Besides, respectively, 22.5% and 3.5% of respondents have reported being a direct victim of such abuse. Specific case distributions are presented on Figure 16 and Figure 17.

In 2007, only 13.5% and 3.3% of respondents have reported knowing a recent case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse committed by representative of some state institution. Besides, respectively, 6% and 0.5% of respondents have reported being a direct victim of such abuse. 6% of respondents chose “difficult to say” response option when answering the question regarding themselves.

Figure 16: State aggression: victim 3rd party

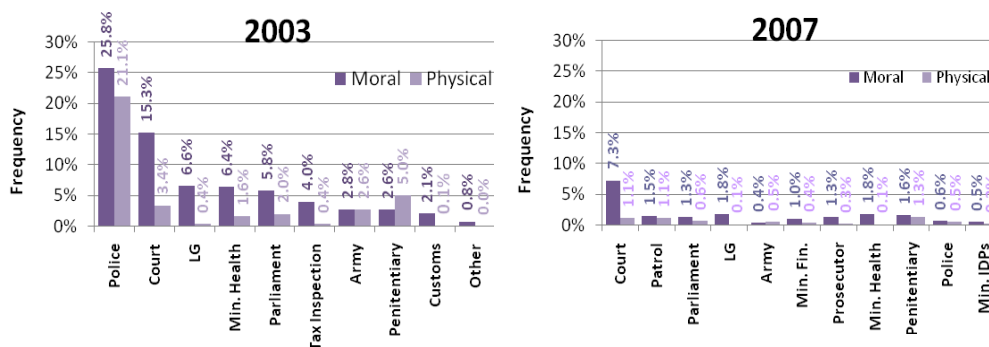
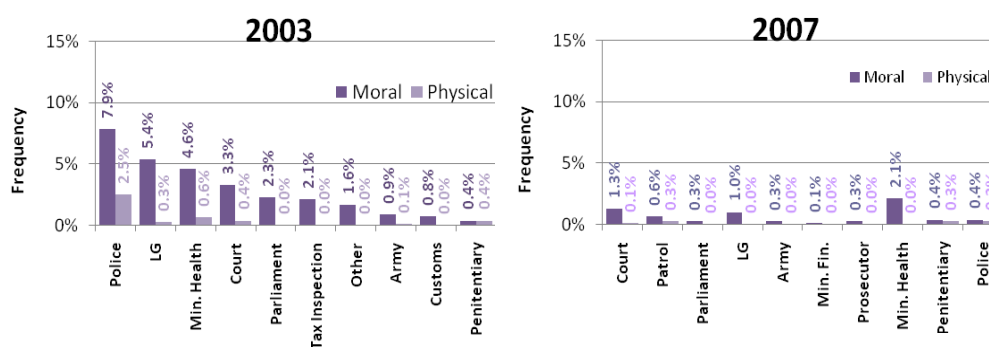


Figure 17: State aggression: victim respondent



In 2003, *police* was by far the most abusive state power in Georgia. 26% and 21% of respondents had recently encountered a case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse of a person by police. Moreover, 8% and 2.5%, respectively, have reported being a recent victim of such abuse. In other words, every 1 in 12 of Tbilisi citizens had been recently (within a year prior to the October 2003 survey) morally abused by police, and every 1 in 40 had been abused physically. In 2007, only 2.1% and 1.6% had recently encountered a case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse by police (road and criminal). Only 1% and 0.6% reported being victims of such abuse.

Court system is also reported as an important source of human abuse. Although certainly requiring attention, this, however, may not be that alarming. Given the basic nature of courts work – judging on arguments – it is only natural to assume that in most cases of adjudication at least one party will feel frustrated (i.e. morally abused). *Physical abuse* by court system has been also reported. These cases refer to the use of power by court officers (bailiffs).

Ministry of Health, penitentiary system, local governments remain important source of personal humiliation in Georgia, though in relative terms the incidence of such abuse is significantly lower than in 2003.

Q12. Can you remember, within past year, any actual case of strong human humiliation in private affairs? ...

List of private actors

Q15. Within past year, have you personally ever been strongly humiliated in private life? ...

List of private actors

Further, respondents were asked about the incidence of human abuse in private affairs.

In 2003, 29% and 8.5% of respondents have known a recent case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse committed within the frames of private relationships. Besides, respectively, 17.5% and 1.5% of respondents have reported being a direct victim of such abuse. Also 2.5% chosen the “difficult to say” answer option when answering the question about themselves.

In 2007, 9.3% and 3.0% of respondents have known a recent case of strong moral and physical human abuse in private affairs. Besides, 4% and 0.3%, respectively, reported being a victim of such abuse. However, 6% or respondents said they found it difficult to answer the question regarding themselves. Specific case distributions are presented on Figure 18 and Figure 19.

Figure 18: Non-state aggression: victim 3rd party

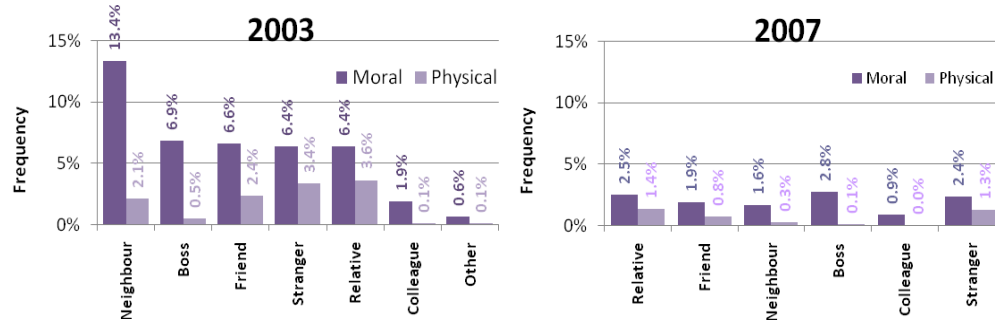
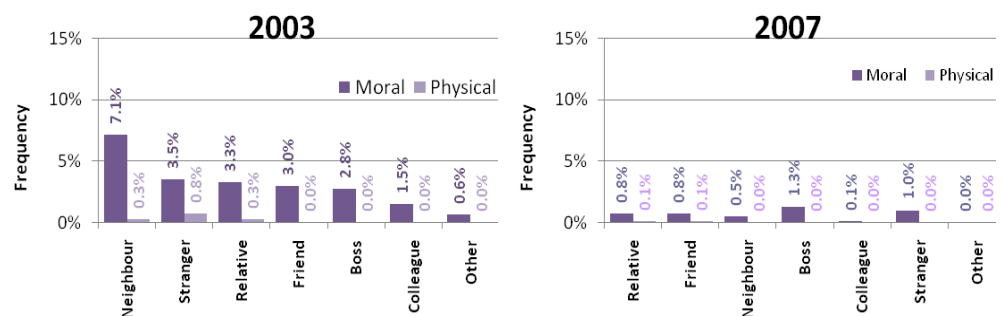


Figure 19: Non-state aggression: victim respondent



In 2003, relations with *neighbours* was one of the most stressful experiences in Tbilisi. 13.5% and 2% of respondents had recently encountered a case of, respectively, moral and physical abuse of a person by his/her neighbour. 7% had reported being a recent victim of the abuse by neighbour. In other words, every 1 in 16 of Tbilisi citizens had been recently (within a year prior to the October 2003 survey) morally abused by neighbour. In 2007 the incidence of such abuse has decreased considerably. Only 0.5% of respondents (4 people) have reported being a recent victim of such abuse.

However, neighbour relations, and abuse resulting from these, are seemingly less *intensive* than that within *families* where proportion of *physical* abuse is higher. In 2003, 6.5% and 3.5% reported knowing about recent actual case of domestic, respectively, moral and physical abuse. In 2007, the same indicators are reduced to 2.5% and 1.4%. In 2003, 3.3% reported having been recently strongly humiliated by a family member, while 0.9% reported so in 2007.

Apart from immediate family members, abuse often comes from *friends* or *acquaintances*. Interestingly, the figures for abuse by perfect *strangers* are just the same as for the domestic abuse. Generally we can conclude that domestic violence in Tbilisi is roughly of the same scale, if not larger, than that outside of the households.

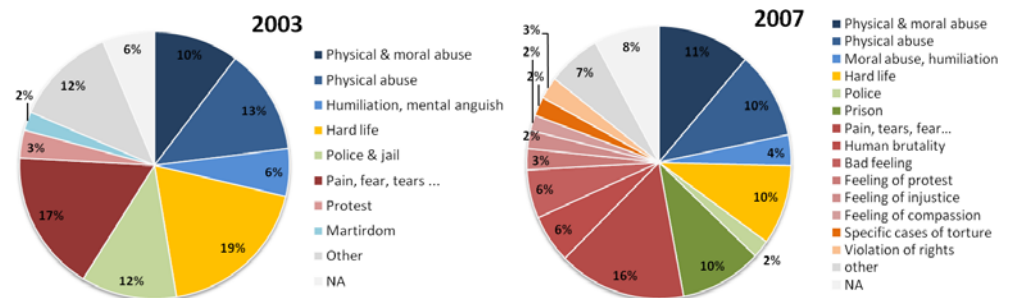
2.4. Torture – Understanding, Incidence, Attitudes

In this section we attempted to determine what is understood under the term “torture” by Tbilisi residents; assess the incidence of torture (generally, severe violence) in Georgia; measure the level of public tolerance of it; determine the need for torture victims rehabilitation.

Q16. When you hear the word “torture”, what comes first to your mind?

First, we asked respondents to record their free associations with the word “torture”. The full list of responses is presented in the Appendix A4. Figure 20 presents the distribution of categorised (grouped) responses.

Figure 20: Associations with “Torture”



Both in 2003 and 2007, many respondents named *abuse (violence)*, either *physical*, or *moral*, or *both*. This kind of responses may be considered as attempts to *define* torture rather than as visual or emotional associations with it.

In 2003, for many, about 1 in 5, the word *torture* has a broader connotation of *life* itself, meaning either current economic hardship in Georgia, or, in isolated cases, life in general, i.e. in the metaphysical sense of life being a kind of difficult exam to pass. By 2007, the share of such responses has decreased to 10%, possibly indicating certain improvement in the quality of life over the past several years.

Generally the religious life is intense in Georgia, affecting many attitudes and actions, and corresponding variables should certainly be minded by social researchers and policy analysts. In 2003, for 2% of respondents the word “torture” had a first association with the martyrdom of Jesus Christ and various Georgian sufferers – Ketevan, Shushanik, Abo. By 2007, however, the number of such responses has decreased to just 0.5%.

Another important and very distinctive group of associations with “torture” may be called “*Police and Jail*”. For about 12% of respondents these notions are about synonymous. And notably the situation has not practically changed between the two surveys, except that previously it was mostly *police* with which the torture was associated, while now it is mostly *jail*.

In 2003, about one fifth of respondents (20%) have reported having primarily emotional associations with *torture*. Understandably these are mostly negative feelings of pain, fear, grief, pity, “something terrible”, and protest (3.4%). In 2007 the number of such emotional responses have increased considerably. These are associations with “*pain, fear, tears, blood, ...*” (16%), feelings of repulsion towards human *brutality* (6%), of *protest* (3%), of *injustice* (2%), of *compassion* (2%), and unqualified *bad* feelings (6%).

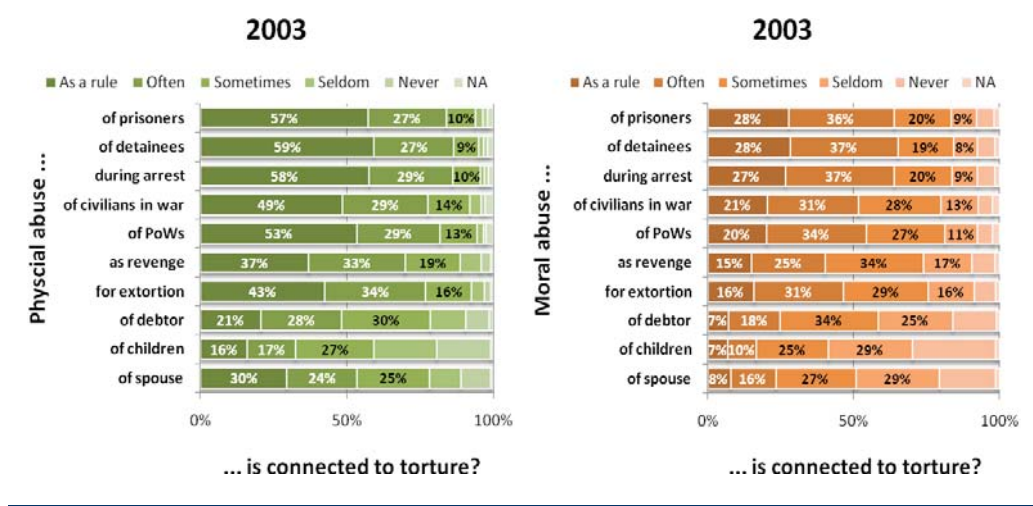
In 2007, 2% of respondents say the word mostly evokes the specific cases of torture, of which Girgvliani case was by far the most frequently named.

Q17, Q20. In your opinion, in the list below what is more connected to torture and what is less?

Respondents were asked to connect the notion of “torture” with different typical scenarios of *physical* and *moral* abuse; to assess the incidence (frequency) of such cases (scenarios) in Georgia; and also to say whether (to what a degree) such abuse may be justified.

The connection of typical scenarios of *physical* and *moral* abuse with “torture”, as seen by our respondents, is presented on Figure 21.

Figure 21: Physical and Moral Abuse v. Torture (2003 only)



Generally, we can say that “torture” in Georgian has quite a broad spectrum of meanings. First, in its most general sense, as it was seen above, the term is quite often used as a substitute for “hard life”. In its narrower meaning, the borderline between torture as such and physical abuse in general is quite fuzzy. Also, although predominantly associated with physical violence, the notion of ‘torture’ is not at all disconnected from moral abuse. From another perspective, while strongly associated with state institutions (“power structures”), the notion of ‘torture’ is not entirely seen as confined to *state-individual* relationships; it is also present in private life – to larger degree in the cases of criminal abuse (money extortion, revenge) and to lesser degree in family relationships (e.g. abuse of wife or children).

Men in many respects see torture differently from women. E.g. they obviously differentiate between the physical abuse of suspects during arrest and detainees, on the one hand, and of prisoners, on the other. Male respondents think that the latter is less connected with torture than the former, while female respondents do not make any significant distinction between these cases. Also, in contrast with women, men think that physical abuse of one’s wife is less connected to torture. Regarding *moral* abuse, clearly women are more sensitive to it and in many cases are readier to associate it with “torture” than men.

Generally, there is no significant correlation observed between the *age* and *income* of respondents and their vision of torture.

Q18, Q21. In your opinion, how frequent in Georgia are the abuse cases described below?

Respondents were asked to assess the incidence (frequency) of the above abuse scenarios in Georgia. The respective answer distributions are presented on Figure 22 and Figure 23. One should bear in mind that unlike the figures presented in the previous chapter, which described the actual cases of abuse, the figures below reflect the *perception* of public about the abuse frequency.

Figure 22: Physical abuse incidence

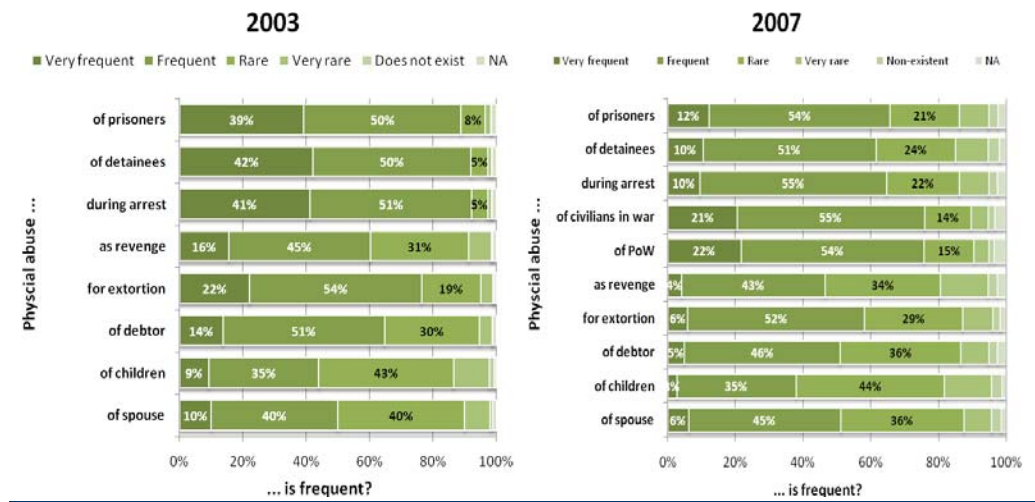
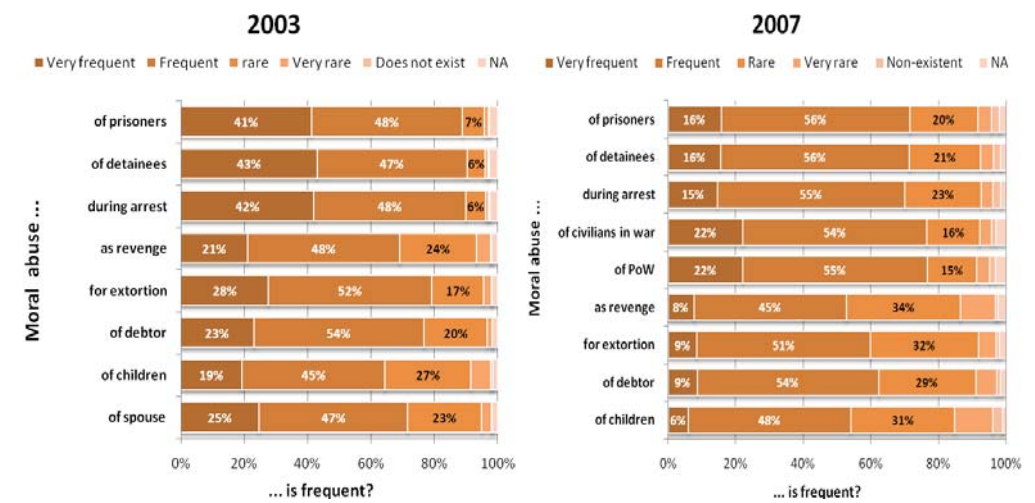


Figure 23: Moral abuse incidence



In absolute terms, the reported incidence seems alarming, though, in the absence of long-term historical or cross-country data, it is difficult to comment on the validity of the assessments and on the relative or real magnitude of the underlying problem. Nonetheless,

- In 2003, about 90% of respondents would agree that abuse, physical and moral alike, of suspects, detainees, or prisoners is frequent in Georgia; and half of them would say it is “very frequent”. Physical and, to a larger scale, moral abuse was also perceived to be very frequent in private relationships. So, 76% of respondents would agree that physical abuse *in order to extort money* is frequent in Georgia, as well as physical abuse *to return debts* (66%) and *as revenge* (61%). Family violence was also evidently seen a significant problem. 50% and 44% respectively would agree that physical abuse of children or one’s wife is frequent in Georgia.
- In 2007, the first thing that gets in the eye is the drastic reduction of “very frequent” response numbers. Though, still, many people believe that physical and moral abuse is something one may expect frequently to encounter in Georgia. Around two thirds

(65-70%) of all respondents think that physical and moral abuse of detainees and prisoners is frequent. This is surely a reduction from the 90% indicator of 2003, but not what one might have expected.

To repeat the point made in the beginning of this chapter, public *opinion about the frequency* of abuse is different from the *actual incidence of such abuse*. If the drastic reduction of abuse frequency that is evidenced by actually reported cases (discussed in previous chapter) realistically mirrors the reality, than basing on the *perception* data, one can speculate that: 1) public opinion regarding the abuse frequency has heavy inertia and takes quite a time to catch up with the real developments; and 2) is highly influenced by well-publicised isolated cases, such as that of Sandro Girgvliani.

Gender. Men and women generally agree in their assessments of abuse frequency. The only significant difference between genders concerns the assessments regarding the physical abuse of suspects and detainees. Men assess it to be more frequent than women.

Age. Older respondents assess the frequency of many named cases of abuse lower. Specifically, they think that physical abuse of one's wife, physical abuse to extort money or as revenge, also physical and moral abuse by police is less frequent, than younger respondents think it is.

Occupation. Occupational split reveals large number of differences between various occupational groups. *Business employees* are most concerned (think such cases are frequent) with the *abuse in order to extort money*, or *abuse as revenge*, while *state employees* and *pensioners* are least concerned about it (think such cases are not that frequent). *Unemployed* are obviously most concerned with (report it more frequent) the abuse committed by police, i.e. *physical and moral abuse of suspects, detainees, and prisoners*. *Pensioners* and *state employees* are again on the opposite pole of opinion scale.

Income. The higher is the *income* of respondents' family the more concerned he/she is (the more frequent he/she reports) the cases of *moral abuse to extort money*. No such dependence is seen, however, for the assessment concerning the physical abuse with the same motive. Also, respondents with higher income report as more frequent the cases of moral abuse perpetrated by police.

Q19, Q22. In your opinion, may the instances of abuse described below be justified?

Then respondents were asked whether the above scenarios of physical or moral violence might be justified. The respective answer distributions are presented on Figure 24 and Figure 25.

Figure 24: Physical abuse justifiability

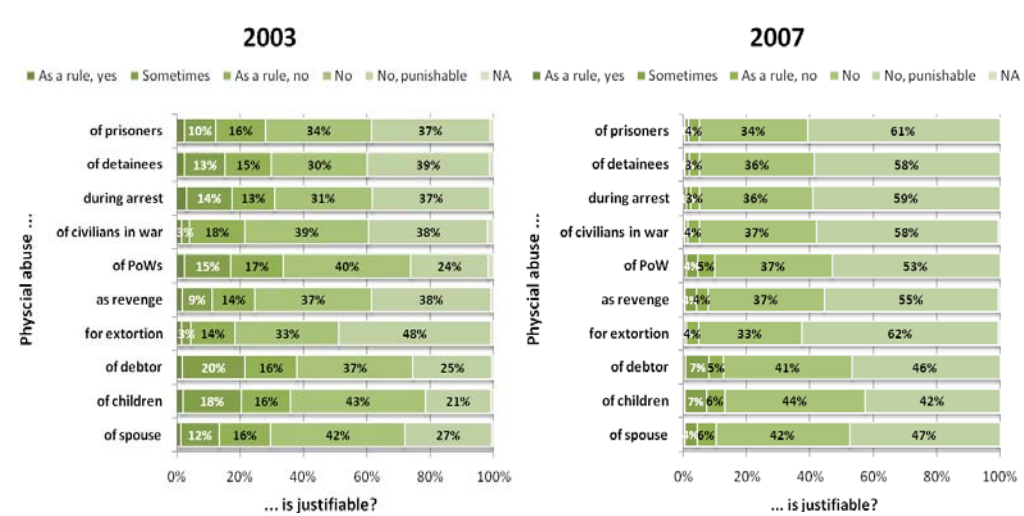
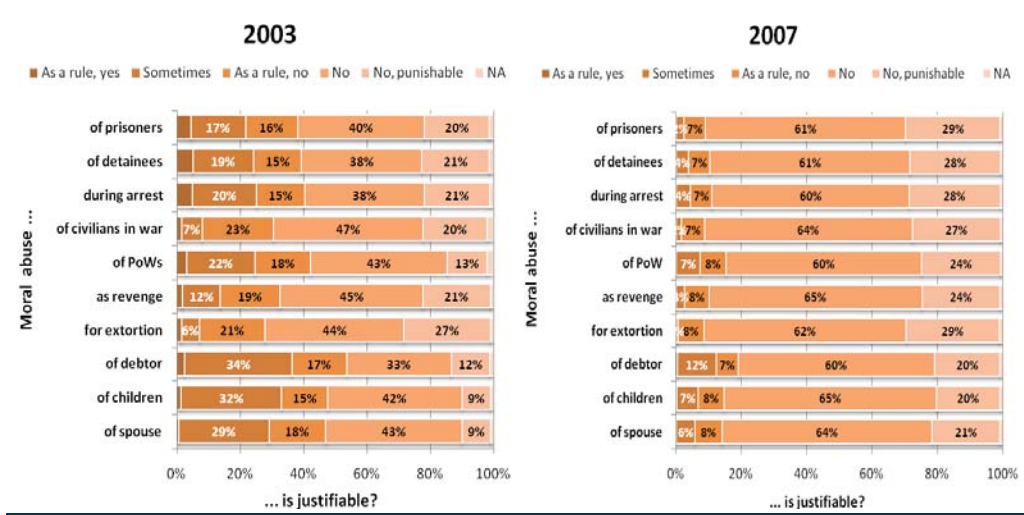


Figure 25: Moral abuse justifiability



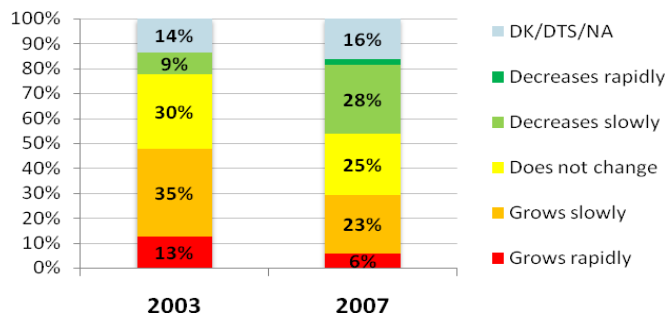
The answers on the above question underscore an important contention about the incidence of torture not being an isolated problem of certain state institutions (e.g. police), but rather a reflection of general system of values (and methods) accepted by Georgian society. In 2003, one fourth to one third of adult Tbilisi citizens would agree that physical abuse may be justified in certain cases. In 2007 the moral judgement of abuse is incomparably stricter – only around 5-10% of respondents would try to justify the violence by law-enforcers. Both earlier and now, physical abuse within private domain (family, debtors, etc.) seems to be tolerated more than that perpetrated by state. Up to 20% of respondents in 2007 were prepared to condone the physical and moral abuse of one’s debtor, spouse, or child. Generally, most of the respondents find *moral* abuse easier to pardon.

This group of question has highlighted also a significant *gender* difference in the tolerance towards abuse. In almost all named cases of abuse, especially of *moral* one, men are more prepared to justify it than women. Somewhat surprisingly there is no significant correlation observed between the *age* of respondents and their willingness to justify different forms of abuse. Generally, moral judgments change (usually become stricter) with age.

Q24. In your opinion, does torture incidence increase or decrease in Georgia?

Respondents were asked whether, in their opinion, torture incidence increases or decreases in Georgia. Figure 26 presents the distribution of responses.

Figure 26: Torture incidence trend

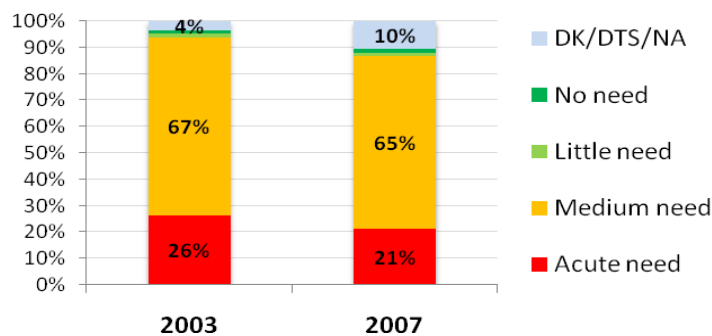


The general picture is obviously improving over time but does not give reason for too much excitement either. In 2007, 30% of respondents would say that torture incidence decreases in Georgia, while only 9% of respondents would say so in 2003. However, at the same time, up to 30% believes that torture incidence is on a growing trend.

Q25. In your opinion, is there an effort needed to curb torture incidence in Georgia?

Then, we asked respondents whether there is a need for additional effort to curb torture in Georgia. Figure 27 presents the distribution of responses.

Figure 27: Need to curb torture



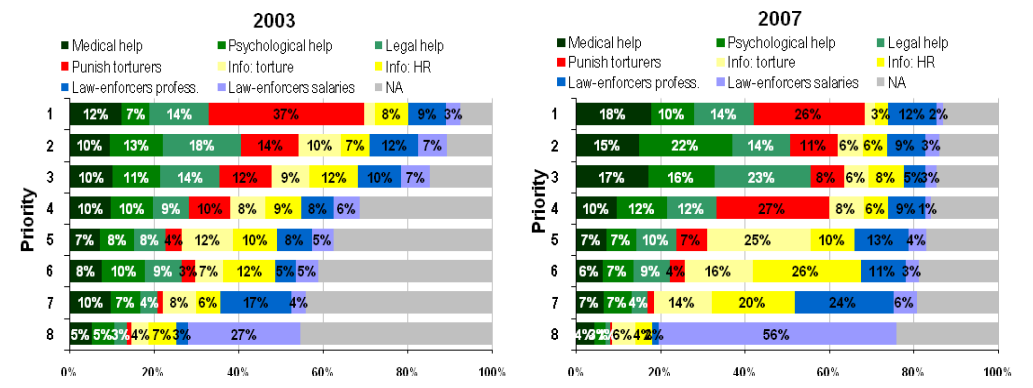
Despite of the considerable (real and perceived) reduction of abuse incidence in Georgia over the last several years, the attitude of population towards the need to combat torture has not changed, if only became slightly relaxed. Out of four answer options, respondents mostly chose only two: 21% thought that efforts to curb torture should be one of the social priorities (i.e. the problem needs to be solved before most other problems facing the society); and 65% thought that this problem needs to be solved piecemeal, along with the other problems facing Georgia. Different socio-demographical groups responded to the question quite similarly.

Naturally, the above two questions (q24 and q25) correlate with each other: the more negative is the perceived trend of torture incidence, the higher is the perceived need for curbing it.

Q26. What kind of measures is needed to curb torture in Georgia?

Respondents were presented with a list of possible measures to curb torture in Georgia or alleviate its effects. Respondents were asked to rank these measures according to their relative importance. Figure 28 presents the distribution of responses.

Figure 28: Ways of dealing with torture



As clearly seen, punishment of torturers is seen as the most important factor in combating torture. Though the emphasis on punishment is fading over years – *help* to victims becomes higher priority. This includes adequate *medical, psychological, and legal* help (the latter also entailing the seeking of retribution from torturers). Medical and psychological assistance are also not only the ways to rehabilitate victims, but also the mechanisms to adequately ascertain the fact of torture. Building professional capacity within “power structures” is seen as next priority, acknowledging the fact that torture is often used in lieu of normal investigative procedures. The “public opinion” factor is seen as less important – many think that simply informing society about the issues related to torture and Human Rights in general, has little value. Considerably less people than in 2003, think it may help to raise salaries in “power structures”.

Male respondents put more emphasis on *punishment of torturers, legal help* to victims, *capacity building in “power structures”*, than women do. Women, on the other hand, readier advocate *psychological help* to torture victims, and *public awareness* efforts.

Younger respondents particularly stress the need to increase awareness about Human Rights issues.

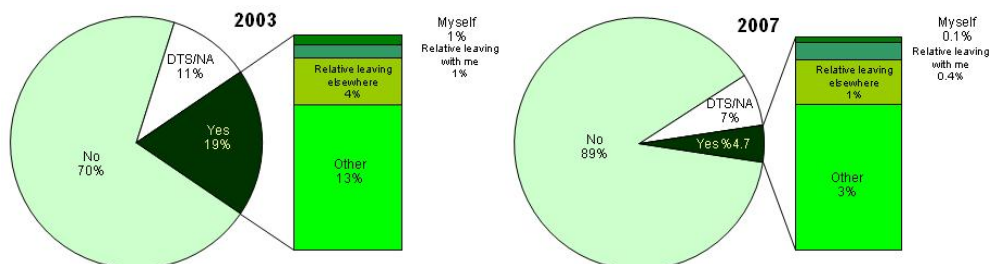
State and private employees as well as *students* favour *legal help* more than others. *Unemployed* advocate *punishment of torturers* more actively than other groups. *Housewives*, as women in general, are relatively more in favour of *public awareness* building than others are. In respect of public awareness, *students* and *housewives* make emphasis on *HR awareness*, while *pensioners* think that reporting *torture cases* will do better. *Psychological help* is advocated more by *state employees* than by other groups, while *students* do not think much about its relative merit. Building capacity in “power structures” is advocated more by *state employees*.

Q27. Do you know any actual case of torture, that happened within the last 2 years?

(Please, reply "yes" if you personally know the victim or was a witness of such case)

At the end of the questionnaire, to assess the real incidence of torture in Tbilisi, as opposed to general frequency assessments by respondents themselves, respondents were asked whether they know any actual case of torture. That is, such a case when they either personally knew the victim or directly witnessed the torture act. Distribution of answers is presented on Figure 29. It is important to note that in 2003 and 2007 the question was asked in a different fashion, and response distributions are not directly comparable. Namely, in 2003 the question was answered in general, without any reference to the period within which the known case of torture had actually happened. In 2007, the question asked to report on the cases from the last 2 years only.

Figure 29: Do you know tortured person?"



In 2003, 19% of respondents (about 1 in 5) said that they knew such a case and 70% of respondents said they did not. Also 11% found it difficult to respond to this question. Later those who knew about specific cases, were asked about the exact *year* when the case has happened. Out of 152 positive responses, 85 people (11% of all) said they knew about the case that happened in 2003, 2002.

In 2007, 4.7% of respondents (38 out of 800) said that they knew such a case within the last 2 years, and 90% of respondent said they did not. About 7% of respondents found the question difficult to respond. However, when asked about the exact year when the case has happened, 3 respondents still admitted that the cases they reported took place either in 2003 or 2004, i.e. earlier than 2 years ago.

Nonetheless the general conclusion that can hardly be disputed, is that torture incidence in Georgia (in Tbilisi) is decreasing. **In 2003, 10.6% of respondents have directly encountered torture case within the last 2 years. In 2007, this indicator has decreased to 4.4%.**

Those respondents who reported being aware about actual cases of torture were asked to describe these cases: to say who the victim was and by whom, when, and how he was tortured. Also we asked whether, in respondent's opinion, the victim needed any assistance at the moment. Responses regarding the torture victims are presented on the same Figure 29 above.

In 2003, About 1% of respondents (7 people) have reported being a torture victim and additional 1% of respondents (9 people) reported that their immediate family members have had experienced torture. Therefore, by 2003, 2% of Tbilisi families (every 1 in 50) have a member who has directly experienced torture or other severe degrading treatment. This means about 7 thousand directly affected families (victims), assuming there are about 350 thousand families in Tbilisi.

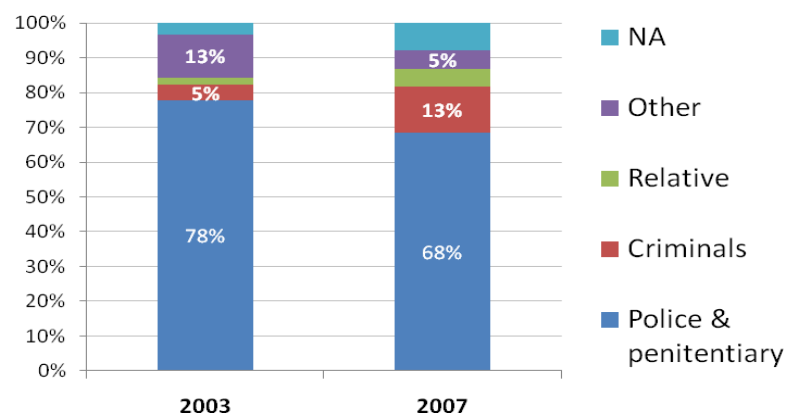
In 2007, only 0.5% families (every 1 in 200) have reported having a member having had experienced torture in the last 2 years.

While interpreting the figures (especially the proportion of those who said they know such case) one should bear in mind that, as was discussed above and will also be seen below, torture is quite a diffuse notion for Tbilisi citizens. Not always therefore the

“academic” or “legal” definition of torture may apply to what respondents in our survey understand under this term. Many respondents may not consider harsh treatment of detainee by Police as torture, and would not report it as such. The opposite may also be true: victim of a street row may be reported as “tortured” by some respondents, while in formal discourse such definition may not always be considered as adequate. Also, respondents tend to overstate the severity of more recent cases, qualifying as “torture” the abuse incidences (e.g. street scuffles) that can hardly be qualified as such by formal criteria. On the other hand, more distant reported cases are usually more severe and fit closer the formal definitions of “torture”. Given these and other sources of bias, dynamic picture may be built only through multiple repeated similar surveys rather than trend estimates by respondents themselves.

The particulars of reported cases are graphically presented on Figure 30.

Figure 30: Who was the torturer?



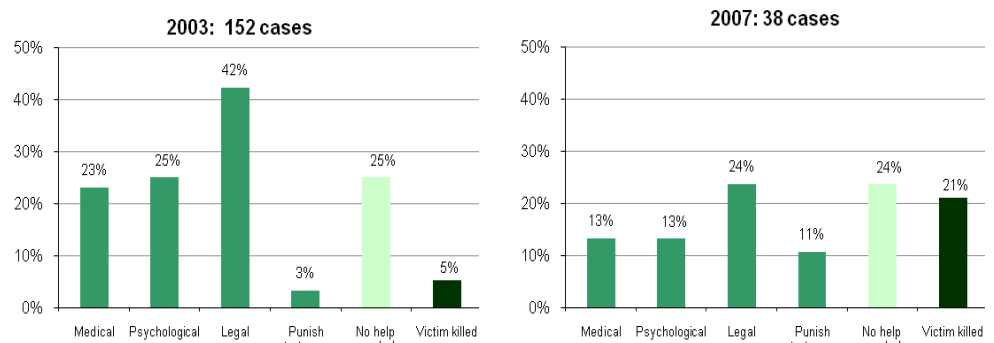
In 2003, out of all 152 reported “torture” cases, 78% were committed by police or penitentiary system servants. The remaining 20% were committed by criminals, family members, neighbours, and strangers.

In 2007, out of 38 reported “torture” cases, 68% were committed by police or penitentiary system employees and 13% were committed by criminals.

Those 38 respondents who reported knowing about an actual case of torture or severe human abuse, were asked whether, in their opinion, the abuse victim needed any help. Responses are presented on Figure 31.

Q27_3. In your opinion, does the victim need any assistance?

Figure 31: Does the victim need help?



Although the absolute number of reported cases is significantly lower, their relative severity is considerably higher – in 21% of cases the victim has died as a result, while in 2003, it was the ultimate outcome in 5% of reported cases. Thus the question of *help* to a victim is generally less relevant in 2007. However, it was said by respondents that the *relatives* of the killed do certainly need such (legal & psychological) assistance. When, in respondent’s opinion, victim still needs help, it is *legal* assistance that is most on demand. *Psychological* and *medical* assistance come next.

Q23. In your opinion, what are the motives of torture by police?

.....
list of possible motives

In the majority of reported cases of “torture”, police and penitentiary system was reported as abuser. All respondents were asked about the motives law-enforcers have to torture people – detainees & prisoners. Responses are presented on Figure 32 and Figure 33.

Figure 32: Torture motives: Primary Detention ”

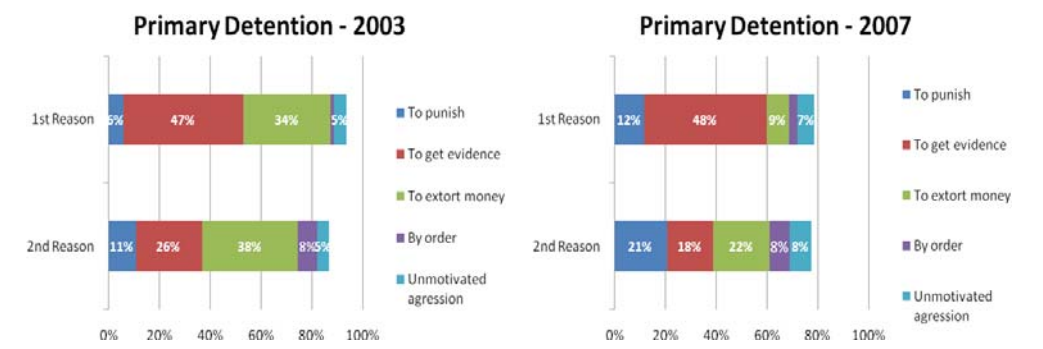
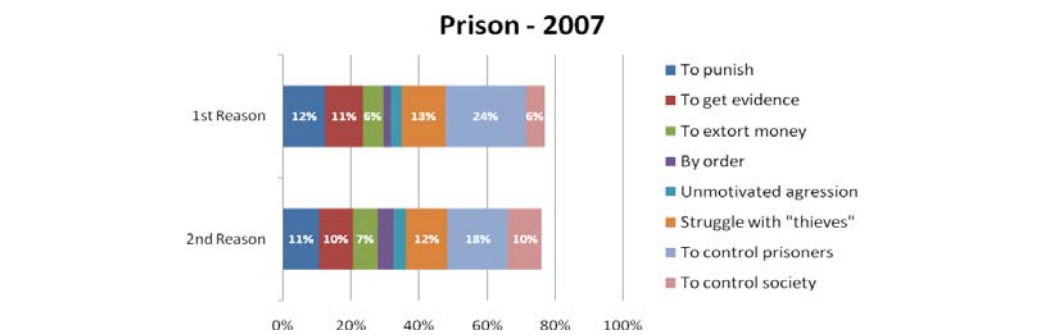


Figure 33: Torture motives: Prison”



In 2003, in the opinion of Tbilisi residents, the two major motives for torturing detainees were *getting evidence* and *extorting money*. Also it is acknowledged that police often takes on the executioner’s function and punishes (supposed) criminals for either their crime or for cheeking police. The other factors that sometimes surface in the discussions about police cruelty (e.g. *punishment by the order of victim’s enemies*, or simple *unmotivated cruelty*) were, in the opinion of our respondents, relatively unimportant.

In 2007, importance of *extortion* motive has clearly decreased, though it is still present to a large degree. The relative importance of *punishment* motive has grown correspondingly.

In 2007 survey new question was introduced asking about the motives of torturing convicted prisoners (as opposed to detainees, who have not undergone the trial yet). *Control of prisoners* is thought to be the major motive for torturing them. *Struggle with “thieves” culture*¹² has been named as the next most important reason.

¹² The criminal subculture, among other features combining complex codified system of authority, behavior, and relationships between criminals, and the popular cult of an idealised – wise and fearless – “thief”.