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Since the end of the 2010s, Georgian Dream, the ruling political party in Georgia for over a decade, has adopted a markedly traditionalist conservative ideological framework, breaking with the previous model of amorphous, mostly personality-driven politics. As a symbol of its new ideological course, the party has chosen a 19th-century motto, "Homeland, Language, Faith", as its main electoral slogan in the October 2024 Parliamentary elections. This domestic political shift was followed by a shift in the party's foreign policy, abandoning the exclusively pro-Western course Georgia had followed since 2003 in favour of a more pragmatic, multipolar approach. The present paper analyses the evolution of traditionalism, the Georgian national idea, and what is referred to as "traditionalist conservatism" in Georgia, as well as its impacts in Georgian Dream's domestic and foreign policies. It also analyses present-day relations between Georgia and Hungary, which has been cited by two Georgian Prime Ministers as a model for conservative governance.

Keywords: Georgia; Traditionalism; Conservatism; Hungary-Georgia relations; Zviad Gamsakhurdia; Ilia Chavchavadze; Georgian Dream.

Introduction

On the 27th of January, Shalva Papuashvili, the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, paid an official visit to Hungary, where he was welcomed by President Tamás Sulyok, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, and his Hungarian counterpart László Köver. An Inter-Parliamentary cooperation agreement was signed between the two countries, and Hungary has pledged to continue its support for Georgia in its EU Membership aspirations.[1] Papuashvili thanked Hungary for its continued support for Georgia, mentioning the "centuries-old" friendship between the two countries, "based on common European values emanating from our strong Christian heritage" and its recent upgrade into a Strategic Partnership.[2] While such high-level visits are a common occurrence amongst friendly nations, Papuashvili's carries particular significance due to the present political context in Georgia, both domestic and international. The South Caucasian nation held Parliamentary elections on the 26th of October of 2024 – the first since the beginning of the War in Ukraine, and the first since the approval of controversial legislation on NGOs that led to protests and diplomatic disputes with the United States and most of the European Union.

The ruling Georgian Dream party, in power since 2012, won a large majority of the seats, with over 52% of the total votes. The Parliamentary elections were followed by indirect Presidential elections in December, when former MP Mikheil Kavelashvili, a staunch conservative, was elected to the position by the Parliament. The results of the Parliamentary elections, and the legitimacy of the new President, have been strongly contested by the liberal opposition, supported by several EU Member States and the Biden Administration, and the country has witnessed large-scale protests since then. The protest movement, although still present in the streets of Tbilisi and other major cities, has subsisted compared to its peak in the post-electoral weeks.

Nevertheless, the Georgian government remains under strong international pressure, mostly by Western States, many of whom are dissatisfied with Tbilisi's positions on issues ranging from Ukraine to domestic social policies. The pro-Western opposition, whose de facto leader, former President Salome Zourabichvili, has concentrated much of their efforts in an external diplomatic offensive, benefitting from Zourabichvili's extensive network and the existing cleavages between Georgian Dream and much of the Western European political mainstream. A mainstream which, however, appears evermore as a crystallised reminiscence of a two-decades old zeitgeist. In this context, Hungary has emerged as Georgia's main ally in the EU, with Prime Minister Orbán being the first one to

recognise the legitimacy of the new government, and a major interlocutor with Tbilisi in the Western world.

Georgia, over the past few years, has gradually embraced a form of traditionalist conservatism under the Georgian Dream party of Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and de facto party leader Bidzina Ivanishvili. This is the result of a decade-long process of ideological evolution of intellectual and political ideas from within Georgia and from Europe, notably Hungary and Central Europe. And although the government's political direction is often simplified as being the result of a "populist" or "personalistic" project, it is impossible to understand it without a thorough exploration of this complex process of ideological maturation. The Georgian government under the present ruling party has undergone several ideological shifts throughout the 2010s.

These shifts were both exogenous and endogenous to the party's internal structures and dynamics. On the one hand, the party has sought to address external developments with direct impacts on the country, whether on the intellectual, societal, or political spheres - notably the promotion and popularisation of hardline progressivism and US-style liberalism amongst part of the urban intelligentsia. On the other hand, there has been a notable (re-)discovery of major intellectual and political traditions in the country's distant and recent history, which have been skilfully adapted into an ideological framework aimed at tackling those very external challenges. In this sense, Georgian Dream's trajectory strongly mirrors that of Fidesz, Hungary's ruling conservative party led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

It is no coincidence that since the latter half of the 2010s, Georgian-Hungarian relations have improved in both political and economic terms. Hungary is a strong supporter of Georgia's efforts towards EU Membership, in line with a similar policy applied by Budapest to the Western Balkans. The South Caucasian country, besides being a key geostrategic partner, is increasingly seen as a natural ally for Hungary, due to the shared worldview of the two governments, founded upon a mix of traditional-conservative values at home and a pragmatic foreign policy. On a purely political level, the links between Fidesz and Georgian Dream have also gone beyond mere inspiration. The two parties have established close relations since the beginning of the present decade, with both Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and his predecessor in the office, Irakli Garibashvili, attending Hungarian conservative conferences as high-level guests and praising Hungary as a model for conservative governance.[3] [4]

A Decade-long Dream

Georgian Dream, formerly an ambiguous force that relied heavily on personality-driven politics and short-term calculations, appears to have consolidated its own political and ideological maturity at the end of the last decade. The party was formed as an heterogeneous coalition in 2012, at the time of a Parliamentary vote widely seen as the swan song of Mikheil Saakashvili's Presidency and his final hope to consolidate power for his own United National Movement beyond his time in office. By then, the only three factors binding the Georgian Dream coalition together were opposition to the Saakashvili power apparatus, support for Ivanishvili's candidacy, and a promise to continue the country's pro-Western foreign policy. Its economic policy, despite the presence of strongly pro-market parties in the coalition, promised a quasi-social democratic approach to welfare, which was popular with Georgians after a decade of Saakashvili's economic liberalism. Over time, minor parties either left or were absorbed by the larger Georgian Dream party, which, by the latter half of the decade, was a party in itself, rather than a coalition.

During this first decade, Georgian Dream oscillated between a growing social conservatism in its political base and connected intelligentsia, which counted on burgeoning ties with the Georgian Orthodox Church, and the lingering influence of that dogmatic attachment to liberal, Western-inspired political principles that had marked Georgian politics since 2003. The party was created, financially supported, and organised by Ivanishvili, with the support of leading individuals in his inner circle, many of whom would themselves take political office. Georgian Dream's praxis became that of nominating a Prime Minister for the duration of two years, after which he would be replaced by a fellow high-ranking party member. Ivanishvili himself only served as Prime Minister for over a year, before resigning in favour of Irakli Garibashvili, at the time a young, rising star in the party with a markedly conservative profile. Unlike in the previous government, where power was clearly de facto vested on then-President Saakashvili, Georgian Dream emphasised the rule of party over personality - even if Ivanishvili remained the party's uncontested leader.

Garibashvili was the first Prime Minister to return to office since Georgian Dream rose to power. His second term, lasting from February 2021 to last January, marked the end of Georgian Dream's balancing act and its definite transition to ideological maturity. Thenceforth, any lingering ambiguities were shed in favour of a distinctly conservative platform with a pragmatic, multilateralist foreign policy framework. The party's conservative wing, of which Garibashvili was long seen as

a key leader, rose to undisputed leadership within its internal structures, with previously non-ideological or quasi-liberal members either bandwagoning thereunto or abandoning the party - one such noteworthy case being his very predecessor in office, former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia. Garibashvili's objective was to implement this newfound, traditionalist conservative orthodoxy into both party and State structures. Such measures are widely popular among a significant number of Georgians, namely Georgian Dream's rural electorate and large swathes of conservative, church-attending inhabitants of Tbilisi and other major cities.

Unlike in previous cases, the transition from Gakharia to Garibashvili was a change of guard not between leaders, but between ideological eras within the same party. Gone was the amorphous, broadly populist Georgian Dream of the 2010s. In came a new, concise party with a well-defined ideology, whose tenets can best be defined as traditionalism, social conservatism, a lukewarm attachment to multipolarity, albeit preserving a broadly pro-Western orientation, and a moderate form of nationalism. Although the party has refrained from officially assigning any ideological moniker to itself, I have previously termed its post-2021 ideology as Georgian traditionalist conservatism elsewhere - a term that, I believe, has withstood the test of time and continues to do so in evermore interesting ways.[5]

From Chavchavadze to Gamsakhurdia

Much can be learned and inferred solely from a thorough analysis of the tripartite motto chosen to represent Georgian Dream's conservative turn. Rendered in Georgian as "მამული, ენა, სარწმუნოება" ,[6] the motto was authored by Prince Ilia Chavchavadze, Georgia's foremost intellectual and political leader of the fin-du-siècle. The reference to Chavchavadze is not accidental. The Prince was a leading proponent of Georgian nationalism and identity in the latter days of Imperial Russia. His own idea of a Georgian nation and actions in the benefit thereof were based on the three pillars of the motto. Chavchavadze is best remembered today as a leading proponent of the return of Autocephaly to the Georgian Orthodox Church, the strengthening of a cohesive Georgian national-cultural identity, and the promotion of the Georgian language and alphabetisation therein. This latter cause led him to found several educational institutions across the country, a reason for which he is still widely regarded as a benefactor to the nation. As a nobleman, Chavchavadze was entitled to represent the country's nobility in the Russian State Council. Due to his outsized role in Georgian political and intellectual life and reputation for philanthropy, Chavchavadze is regarded as one of the greatest political and intellectual figures in Georgian history. The Prince's standing

in the Georgian pantheon was further consolidated by his tragic assassination in 1907, which made him a national martyr in the eyes of most Georgians up to the present day. Chavchavadze was canonised by the Georgian Orthodox Church as Saint Ilia the Righteous in 1987, during another notorious period of Georgian national awakening and political struggle.

Chavchavadze's nationalism was strongly influenced by 19th century liberal ideas, many of which he introduced into the Georgian political discourse through his writings. The Prince's own style of national liberalism combined a strong attachment to tradition, language, and common history as cohesive elements; Orthodoxy as a moral-spiritual foundation that, however, did not preclude the participation of religious minorities into a Georgian polity as full, equal members; and basic liberties, including of speech, property, and association, to be guaranteed and recognised. The formulation of the tripartite motto is, itself, interesting, and reflects the influence of 19th century liberal nationalism in Prince's thought: the Homeland takes first place, emphasising Chavchavadze's political ambitions for Georgia, which are indissociable from the self-determination of Georgians in their historical territories. To it follows the Language, long referred to as one of the most defining aspects of Georgianness, due to its own uniqueness and use of a particular alphabet, which also encompasses culture, the literary arts, and heritage. Finally, Faith is added as a third pillar, referencing Georgian Orthodoxy, historically the unifying force across the many Georgian Kingdoms, but remaining vague enough to account for non-Orthodox compatriots. Such a conception marks a strong break with pre-19th century Georgian national self-conceptions, in which attachment to Georgian Orthodoxy was a sine qua non condition to one's claim to Georgianness.[7]

Chavchavadze's "Homeland, Language, Faith" elaboration became the standard definition of Georgian nationalism in the coming century.[8] The Prince's death preceded the short-lived First Georgian Republic and the annexation of Georgia by the USSR by little over a decade. Nevertheless, the Georgian national idea carried on both inside and outside of Georgia, despite heavy Soviet repression to anything perceived as "nationalist" or broadly against Party-defined Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. In the diaspora, several groups of émigrés were formed to preserve pre-Revolutionary traditions, further Georgian intellectualism, and advance the cause of a non-Communist Georgia. One notable such group was the Union of Georgian Traditionalists, an association of monarchist intellectuals founded by Prince Irakli Bagration-Mukhraneli, at the time the heir to the deposed Georgian Throne.[9] Within Georgia, nationalist sentiment, latent throughout most

of the Soviet period, emerged again in the 1970s and 1980s, as the Union, unbeknownst to its citizens, moved towards its dissolution.

It was during this period that Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a well-known professor, dissident and activist for the rights of minority Georgians, came to prominence as a leader of the Georgian national cause and the organiser of mass protests for independence. Gamsakhurdia would eventually be elected the country's first President, ruling between 1990 (as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet) and 1992, in a brief, but highly consequential period of Georgian history. Gamsakhurdia was known for his historicist view of both Georgian and world affairs, which played a key role in the President's ultimately ill-fated approach to the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. His Presidency was short-lived, ending in a coup led by a triumvirate of a National Guard commander, a former Prime Minister, and a rival nationalist militia leader. Despite his brief tenure and the strong controversies that still surround them, Gamsakhurdia's formulations on Georgian nationalism - and their influence on Georgian traditionalist conservatism, to which, to an extent, the first President subscribed - remain highly influential to this day.

Gamsakhurdia was elected President in a landslide election, having been granted extensive powers by the Constitution. His Round Table coalition included several nationalist formations, including the Union of Georgian Traditionalists, now reestablished in Georgia, and Gamsakhurdia's own Society of St. Ilia the Righteous - an homage to Prince Chavchavadze. His conception of Georgian nationalism was traditionalist and conservative, placing a strong emphasis on Orthodoxy as the nation's spiritual basis - albeit due to a perceived continuity with proto-Iberian and Colchian spiritual knowledge - and on the territorial claim by Georgians to the entirety of the Republic's territory. What differed Gamsakhurdia from Chavchavadze and other more liberal-leaning intellectuals was the heavy focus on ethnogenesis, rather than the purely cultural optics of the former. Gamsakhurdia viewed the Georgian nation as a continuation of what he called a "proto-Iberian people", which would have extended from the Basque Country to Asia and, at its peak, had one of its spiritual and cultural centres in pre-Hellenistic Greece.

Georgians' adoption of Christianity was, in Gamsakhurdia's view, both a culmination of a long process of intellectual-spiritual development originating in the proto-Iberians and continued by its per se Kartvelian successors, and the result of an adaptation of Christianity's precepts to Georgia's strongly martial culture. Its adoption of Orthodoxy, and the singularity of Georgian Orthodoxy, on the other hand, was the result of Georgia's reception of and interaction with Western (exoteric) and Eastern (esoteric) traditions - and the combination thereof into a coherent system being both a peculiarity of the Georgian nation and its "Spiritual

Mission".[10] The importance of a linear development from the proto-Iberian civilisation for Gamsakhurdia's idea of Georgianness was reflected in his approach to both Abkhazians - even in the context of the civil war - and to Northern Caucasian ethnicities, such as Chechens and Circassians, to whom the former President was sympathetic. Gamsakhurdia repeatedly called on Caucasian peoples to downplay religious and linguistic differences in favour of an increased awareness of their shared inheritance of a proto-Iberian civilisation, which should function as a uniting element amongst themselves. In Gamsakhurdia's conception, thus, the tripartite "Homeland, Language, Faith" is incomplete, as it lacks the true, uniting element that guarantees the continuity of Georgianness, beyond a single language, religion, or territorial entity: proto-Iberian ethnogenesis.[11]

It is impossible to speak of Gamsakhurdia's concept of Georgianness, and the role of Orthodoxy and culture, without an assessment of his speech about the Gelati Academy. Gelati is both a monastery and a former spiritual academy located on the outskirts of Kutaisi, Georgia's third-largest city, founded by King David the Builder in the 12th century and still regarded as one of the most important religious and cultural sites in the country. Gelati's symbolism is clear, as a centre of spiritual and secular learning, founded by one of Georgia's greatest rulers - a prototypical philosopher-King of the Georgian golden age, responsible for the expansion of the Kingdom in battles against the Seljuks, and today revered as an Orthodox saint. In this speech, delivered in 1990, Gamsakhurdia speaks of David the Builder and other scholar-Kings of the Middle Ages, as the combination of Statecraft (Homeland), scholarly development (language), and spiritual culture (faith) were a defining trait of the Georgian nation. The President spoke of Gelati as a centre of spiritual and secular learning and wisdom in Christendom, positioning Georgia in the centre of a Europe-wide narrative and equating King David with the legendary figure of Prester John. Interestingly, King David the Builder's renown in the West during the Crusades - a topic frequently referred to by Gamsakhurdia - was widely covered by Avalishvili, a notable diasporic Traditionalist.[12] Gamsakhurdia calls on Georgians to uphold this example, stating that "to excuse ourselves today from a similar concern by reference to our being engaged in political struggle, with no spare time for science and culture, would indeed amount to a betrayal of our historical traditions."[13]

Finally, before assessing Georgian Dream's own interpretation of the tripartite motto, it is fundamental to analyse the vision of the concepts of Georgianness and Georgian nationhood of the most important societal and cultural actor in the country: the Georgian Orthodox Church. The Church, whose institutional form is the Georgian Patriarchate, is both one of the country's most influential institutions

and one of its most respected. Georgian Dream, and Ivanishvili himself, have provided the Church with significant political, financial, and societal support. The government has consistently assisted the Church in the construction and restoration of church buildings, educational activities, cultural initiatives, among other areas of interest for the Patriarchate. Especially since the latter half of the 2010s, the Patriarchate's views on social policy - heretofore at odds with those of the governments in certain controversial subjects such as LGBT rights and education due to external pressure - inched closer to the mainstream. Since the second Garibashvili administration, there is little difference between the two, and the Patriarchate's position is de facto reflected by the government in certain areas. This, albeit in line with a traditionalist conservative view of governance, does not consist in the recognition of Georgian Orthodoxy as a State religion - a status that the Church itself is not willing to accept.[14]

Of Iberia and Pannonia

Georgian traditionalist conservatism can only be built upon a solid understanding of Georgian nationhood and the defining elements thereof. The version of this ideology adopted by Georgian Dream is a re-interpretation of the idea originally contained in Chavchavadze's tripartite motto with a stronger input from Orthodox-based nationality doctrine and a marked influence of Georgian nationalist thought from the diasporic and post-Soviet years. It is no coincidence that during the first years of Georgian Dream as a coalition, the Conservative Party of Georgia, a small party that reclaims Gamsakhurdia's ideas and symbolism, was a member, with many of its leading members later defecting to Ivanisvhili's party. Ivanishvili himself does not openly reclaim Gamsakhurdia's heritage, possibly due to the strong emotions still attached to memories of the 1990s, or to the latter's image as as a strongly anti-Russian politician who is accused by some Georgians as being partly responsible for the wars in Abkhazia and South Ossetia - an image Georgian Dream wants to avoid.

Furthermore, Gamsakhurdia was an avowed Russophobe who sought to pursue closer relations with the West - albeit with mixed results - and refused to engage in any way with Moscow - another legacy that Georgian Dream is not keen to repeat. Ivanishvili and other Georgian Dream politicians are also not known for citing intellectuals from the diasporic period who touched upon matters of nationality and the peculiarities of Georgianness such as Prince Mikheil Tsereteli or Zurab Avalishvili.[15] Instead, the party's ideology is presented as a renewed call for a return to tradition, under the guidance of the Orthodox Church, of traditional values, and of an attachment to the idea of belonging to a European civilisation. A

European civilisation, however, which preserves values that precede those progressive doctrines masquerading as "European values", but are nothing else than artificial dogmas of a fading zeitgeist. In this sense, Gamsakhurdia's speech on the Gelati Academy is noteworthy as it contains many of the postulates that would go on to be repurposed by the present government. The former President spoke, at the time, of Gelati's role in remaining a centre of spiritual and secular learning - which, at the time, were one and the same - at a time when "mediaeval - particularly Western - Christianity obscured everything that was humanistic, being opposed to whatever was thought to be worldly".[16] Georgia, both in Mediaeval times and in the present day, is thus presented not as an Eastern outpost of a civilisation, but rather as an integral - and, perhaps even avant-garde - part thereof.[17]

If Georgian intellectuals provided the ruling party with the foundations and guiding principles of its newfound ideological framework, the main source of political inspiration was to be found several miles to the West. It was not to the sublime peaks of the Caucasus, but to the ethereal plains of Pannonia that the Georgian Dream leadership looked for actual political, methodological, and operational guidance in their shift towards a concise and pragmatic form of conservatism. Several articles, both on the right and on the left, have spoken about the similarities between Georgian Dream's new platform and that of Fidesz, emphasising the former's inspiration on the latter. On the one hand, this is correct, as stated by both Garibashvili and Kobakhidze in their speeches at CPAC Hungary, a major, yearly conservative event held in Budapest under the aegis of its American namesake organisation. Such an inspiration did not lead to official party-to-party ties - Georgian Dream is neither a member nor an observer in Patriots for Europe, Fidesz' European-level party, of which Prime Minister Orbán is regarded as the de facto leader.

Nevertheless, Georgian-Hungarian relations experienced a revival over the recent years, which can partly be attributed thereto. In 2023, the two governments held a joint working meeting in the Eastern Georgian city of Telavi, in a strong show of support by Orbán to the Georgian government and its EU candidacy.[18] This came at a time of increased pressure by the EU on Tbilisi over the detention of former President Saakashvili and in the aftermath of the first wave of protests over the so-called "foreign agents law" imposing obligations on organisations that receive foreign funding. Following the cabinet meeting, Orbán spoke of the "Christian character" of the two governments and their emphasis on such values, for which Hungary - and, a few months later, Georgia - would have come under strong pressure from Brussels. The results of this rapprochement have yielded practical

results for Georgia: support for the country's EU membership without harm to its sovereignty or internal policymaking has become a cornerstone of Hungary's South Caucasus policy.[19] Georgia's shift towards a multilateralist foreign policy, including a strategic partnership with China and a renewed impetus in the development of the Middle Corridor project, are also perceived positively by Budapest, as Hungary itself has recently announced a policy of "Economic Neutrality".

The post-electoral turmoil in Georgia has given further indication of the importance of present-day Georgian-Hungarian ties. As many EU Member States have moved towards direct hostility against the country's newly-elected government, Hungary, alongside Slovakia, have been crucial in vetoing sanctions and other restrictive measures aimed at Tbilisi.[20] In assessing Hungarian support for Georgia, one could speak of a triptych – as Renaissance panels divided in three parts are known. Each part is a painting of its own standing, and could exist independently from the others. It is only in their existence as a triptych, however, that their true sense, significance, and aesthetic beauty and depth can truly be comprehended. In Georgian-Hungarian ties, the triptych has as its centrepiece the "centuries-long" cultural-historical-ideological ties that bind the two countries and, without which, the present-day political cooperation would not be possible. Political cooperation per se, in diplomatic, EU-level, and bilateral arrangements, stands in its left, while the two countries' rising economic cooperation completes the triptych to its right. Each component could exist individually, but it is through the proximity between the governance models of Georgian Dream in Tbilisi and Fidesz in Hungary that the present-day Strategic Cooperation is made possible – and, precisely for this reason, this aspect of the bilateral ties takes centre stage also in bilateral engagements.

Quo vadis, Georgia?

Georgian Dream's approach is best described as a partial adaptation to a quintessentially Georgian reality of a successful conservative European model. Georgia is, after all, neither a member of the EU, nor a member of NATO. That Georgian Dream's ideological and geopolitical transitions would have taken place in the early 2020s, against the background of the War in Ukraine, the constant growth in conservative and right-wing movements in Europe, and a retreat in American interest and support for the Georgian government can hardly be considered a coincidence. During the 2010s, preserving a level of ambiguity might have been seen by Ivanishvili and the party elite as an asset. In times of greater politicisation and polarisation on a global scale, too broad a church risks crumbling

under the weight of its own roof. The path chosen by Ivanishvili reflects both the underlying social conservatism of the party's electoral base, the prevailing of its conservative wing in internal party disputes, and the gradual rediscovery of the aforementioned strains of thought on Georgianness and tradition.

The Patriarchate's assertion of its own influence, and its cultivation of positive relations with the government, has also greatly contributed to the synergy between the two powerful institutions, with the result being an ideology that is a mélange of Georgian intellectual traditions, Central European political praxis, and a Georgian Orthodox-based value system. As previously mentioned, intellectual influences do not equal political persuasions. Ivanishvili and Gamsakhurdia would hardly align on most issues - neither would Georgian Dream identify itself strongly with the Union of Georgian Traditionalists of old. Nevertheless, their influence on the formulation of Georgian Dream's ideological framework is remarkable, as they allowed for the creation of an indigenous form of traditionalist conservatism that was then adapted and transformed by the ruling party. The government and the Patriarchate are not always in line with each other's views, priorities and objectives - and, nevertheless, this quasi-symphonia between the two is ever stronger. Ivanishvili and Georgian Dream have, after all, always operated on the thin balance between different, often opposing factions and powers.

Traditionalist conservatism is not an exclusivity of one party, nor should it be. Although there are, at the moment, several parties claiming certain values that could be identified as such, at the moment only Georgian Dream, among the main parties, subscribes to such an ideology entirely. The institutions - whether intellectual, political, or religious - and the processes that led to the reestablishment of such an ideology into the Georgian mainstream are unlikely to go away anytime soon. Neither are these ideas likely to lose their appeal amongst a large part of the Georgian population. Georgian Dream was not the first party to preach traditionalist conservatism in Georgia, nor is it likely to be the last. Finally, it ought to be said that Georgian Dream and Fidesz are not, and should not be identical political formations. The models created for Tbilisi's reality ought not to be applied directly in Budapest, nor should those envisaged for Hungary be considered to be appliable in other polities without consideration of local political, cultural, and socioeconomic elements. The evolution of Georgian Dream into a traditionalist conservative platform was, at least partly, inspired by developments in Hungary, while remaining a mostly endogenous process.

Nevertheless, the role played by Hungary both as an ideological lodestar and as a pragmatic strategic political partner ought not to be underestimated. Hungary can and should play a greater role in ensuring Georgian interests are represented at

both EU level and, as much as possible, as an interlocutor with the new US administrator. Conversely, the South Caucasian nation can play a key role as an Eastern European pivot to the Hungarian model of conservative governance. Ideological and historical affinity is the central element of the Georgian-Hungarian triptych, as it allows for quasi-instinctive coordination between the two governments. This is an element that must be supported in the near future, as much as possible, by Hungary. Georgian conservatism, notwithstanding its wide intellectual bases and societal support, lacks present-day institutions, such as think tanks, research institutes, and other bodies capable of narrative-building beyond the sphere of politics and mass media. The Orthodox Church, and the many educational, media, and other civil institutions connected thereto, plays an important role in this regard, and should not be overlooked as an intellectual actor, especially in light of Hungary's public diplomacy efforts with Christian communities in the East. In Georgia, a nation where preserving and fighting for tradition and identity was the life and fate of many generations, no ideology is stronger than the appeal of those three words eternalised by Prince Chavchavadze - Homeland, Language, Faith.

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