Georgian Rose Revolution: The Challenges and Peculiarities of Democratization in Post-Soviet Countries

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Anna Gabritchidze
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This thesis titled
Georgian Rose Revolution: the Challenges and Peculiarities of Democratization
in Post-Soviet Countries

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Abstract

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This thesis will describe and analyze the challenges and peculiarities of democratization in post-Soviet countries with Georgia as the main focus. It will cover the investigation of phenomena of so-called “fourth wave” democracies with their transition regime styles. In the end of the 1990s Samuel Huntington asked if we can expect a new wave of democratization in the 21st century and what factors would define it. The dramatic wave of political changes which gripped republics of the former Soviet Union during this short period led to “Rose Revolution” in Georgia in November 2003, the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in November 2004 and the “Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan” in March 2005. The Georgian case study could be an evident demonstration of this political and social change with the challenges common to all post-Soviet countries as well as with its uniqueness. Due to very recent character of this process the literature on post-soviet transition is still in its formation stages. Therefore, this research under the condition of its future development could be a definite input in the formation of such studies.

However not a long time ago, in 2002, Georgia was referred to countries with a dominant-power system of government, where transition to democracy was under
question as it reminded more transition to autocracy. The Rose Revolution (November 2003) changed a lot of concepts. So, testing the democracy in Georgia in the light of illiberal democracy theory we can pose the following research questions:

What political peculiarities had the regime of illiberal democracy in Georgia?

What factors influenced revolutionary change of political regime in Georgia?

Thesis also explores the state of affairs in the post-revolutionary Georgia. What really changed after the Revolution? Here I will try to present the evidence of achievements as well as failures of the new government and make some conclusions.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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I want also to express my deep gratitude to my family back in Georgia for their unconditional love and constant encouragement. I also would like to acknowledge my friends and colleagues from International Development Studies who provided me with great joys and happiness during the time I have made Athens my home.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Fourth Wave Democracies</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study and Research Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: A Case Study of Georgia</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crises of Power</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of Opposition</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Revolution</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyses</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Literature Review</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts of the Third Wave Democracies</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Illiberal Democracy</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy and Constitutional Liberalism: based on Georgian Case Study</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: After the Revolution</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements and Mis-achievements</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2007 Events</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Georgian Chronics 1989-2006</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: The results of the Parliamentary Elections, November 2, 2003.................21
Chapter 1: Fourth Wave Democracies

Introduction

This research is directed to the study of the challenges and peculiarities of democratization development in post-soviet countries of Eastern Europe with Georgia as the main focus. It will cover the investigation of phenomena of so-called “fourth wave” democracies with their unique transition regime styles. In the end of 1990s Samuel Huntington asked if we can expect a new wave of democracy in the 21st century and what factors would define it (Huntington, 1991). Dramatic wave of political changes which gripped republics of the former Soviet Union during this short period led to “Rose Revolution” in Georgia in November 2003, “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in November 2004, “Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan” in March 2005. Due to very recent character of this process the literature on post-socialist revolutions is still in its formation stages. Therefore, this research under the condition of its future development could be a definite input in the formation of such studies.

Georgian case study could be an evident demonstration and detailed explanation of the political and social change with the challenges common to all post-soviet countries as well as with its uniqueness. According to non-violent and progressive character of the Rose Revolution it could be called a successful achievement of democracy development in the region. Citing Lincoln: “The Rose Revolution represented a victory not only for the Georgian people, but also for democracy globally. The revolution that took as its peaceful symbol a red rose, demonstrated that, by aggressively contesting elections, exercising basic freedoms of speech and assembly, and applying smart strategic thinking, a
democratic opposition can defeat a weak semi-democratic kleptocracy” (Lincoln, 2004, p. 347).

**Significance of Study and Research Questions**

For better understanding of the essence of all the challenges and peculiarities of democratization in post-communist countries we can take case study of Georgia, as one of the most recent “success story” of democratization process among countries of former Soviet Union. However, not a long time ago, in 2002, Georgia was referred to countries with a dominant-power system of government (Carothers, 2002), where transition to democracy was under question as it reminded more transition to autocracy. The Rose Revolution changed a lot of concepts. So, testing the democracy in Georgia in the light of illiberal democracy theory we can pose the following research questions:

What political peculiarities had the regime of illiberal democracy in Georgia?

What factors influenced revolutionary change of political regime in Georgia?

**Methodology**

The study will be qualitative in nature seeking to find answers to the proposed research questions through qualitative data collection during field work: documents study and analyses. A qualitative approach has been selected because the study proposes to understand the origins of democratization in Georgia, and analyze the particular factors that may be affecting it. These factors include strengthening of civil society in Georgia,
building of constitutional liberalism, creation of political institutions, and the most important factor – role of media in this particular event.

Given the nature of research questions, a qualitative study is better suited to understand changes in attitudes and perceptions during a period of time. According to Hamel, case studies usually analyze very deep detailed particular events under particular conditions and specific relationships between them (Hamel, 1993, p. 8). Researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

Different publications and reports will be analyzed to gain a better idea of challenges in democratization process. The data will consist of excerpts from various documents (Freedom House reports, on-line sources, books, periodicals) while ensuring that the context is preserved. The collected data will be organized to derive major themes, and illustrative case examples towards answering the research questions.

I will also analyze different journals, books and articles related to the topic of research with the aim of gaining a solid theoretical background in democratization concepts and theories (local publications and foreign: Journal of Democracy, Foreign Affairs, World Politics, etc.). The collected data will then be analyzed interpretively, which involves data reduction, description and interpretation.
Chapter 2: Case Study of Georgia

*Historical background*

In 1991 Georgia was one of the first Soviet Republics to declare its full secession from the USSR. However, already in 1992, the independence was followed by a escalation of the civil war in Georgia, when, according to Ghia Nodia: “Georgians began to kill fellow-Georgians because of different understandings of political issues” (Nodia, 1992, p 32). During the soviet era there was one autonomous region – South Ossetia, and two autonomous republics: Abkhazia and Ajaria. The liberation from a communist and imperial regime was attended by ethnic conflicts in these areas, which are not settled yet.

At the same time the first President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was elected. A populist politician and a charismatic leader, he became a fatal figure in Georgian history. Gamsakhurdia was conducting a policy of ‘Georgia only for ethnic Georgians’, often lacking flexibility towards ethnic minorities. During this period Georgia completely lost its international reputation. Most western publications described Georgian development under Gamsakhurdia as “bizarre, and new political elite as something between insane and fascist” (Swante, p.57). His ethnic policies received great criticism abroad. Soon his policy raised a split in his own camp and, eventually, his former lieutenants (insurgency) dismissed him in coup d’etat coup in 1992. And the insurgents invited the former Leader of Communist Party – Eduard Shevardnadze, a legendary political figure of “perestroika”, to take power. The former communist bureaucrat became a new political leader, supported by people as a symbol of past order and stability. People were so tied from all
the troubles of the transition, that a ‘nostalgia’ for the past was very popular in the newly independent countries. The most interesting phenomenon is how soon this former communist became a democrat, accepting new rules of the political game.

Unfortunately, in the territories of the former Soviet Union Republics regimes of ‘controlled democracy’, where in spite of all voting procedures, the ruling elite consolidate power in their hands, were quite common. However, Georgia was again the first post-soviet state which broke this vicious circle in 2003. Thus, what happened in Georgia?

One of the Georgian paradoxes is the long-time power of former president Eduard Shevardnadze. Even after such shocks of 1993 as war in Abkhazia, civil war in Western Georgia, conflict in South Ossetia, the power of Shevardnadze in Georgia even became stronger. The matter is the citizens believed the experienced leader. People hoped that with the end of conflicts there would begin economic growth and political stability. These hopes were mainly based on the expectation of the Western assistance and widely advertised plans of making Georgia a transport corridor of East-West and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. The realization of the future plans was connected with the name of Eduard Shevardnadze, his private connections and influence in the world political elite.

The state mechanism which was shaken by the stormy political events of the end of 80s and beginning of 1990s, began the stage of bureaucratization under Shevardnadze’s power. Most of illegal armed groups of guerillas were broke up. Their leaders and activists, who could not go abroad, found themselves in prisons and some of them were died under suspicious circumstances.
In 1995 a new constitution of Georgia was adopted and first Parliamentary elections were held. There was reestablished the post of the President of Republic of Georgia, which had been earlier abolished after overthrow of Zviad Gamsakhirdia. The former First Secretary of Soviet Republic of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, became the second President of the now independent Republic of Georgia. It must be noticed that Shevardnadze was building a new Georgia, using his old experience and relying on old cadres. Everywhere in authoritative structures there appeared former Komsomol or Communist Party members, which replaced previous cadres from national-liberation movements. However, Shevardnadze also brought near himself some new young politicians, who were not connected with the former nomenclature. They were making his image of pro-western politician and reformer stronger. Among these young politicians was notable the leader of Green Party, Mr. Zurab Jvania, who became at his 32 the speaker of the Georgian Parliament.

Shevardnadze’s political support was provided by his party of “Georgian Citizen Union” which took majority seats in the Parliament. A lot of people were aimed at becoming this party members, looking for career growth under the cover of presidential party. That is why bureaucratization of the state structure and the rapid growth of corruption, connected with this, became special signs of “Shevardnadze’s” Georgia (Swante, p.45).
Crises of Power

At the end of 1990s the tendency of economic growth, which was quite weak before, just stopped. The huge amounts of money received as financial aid from Western countries, were plundered by authorities. Very famous became business-financial activity of Shevardnadze’s relatives as a clan. Delays in payments of miserable pensions and wages became regular, unemployment grew. Hundreds of thousands of Georgian citizens began to migrate to other countries seeking there any kind of work. The society began to understand that all the reforms and fight with corruption, declared by the President of Georgia had only formal character. There were not any successful results from popularized international economic projects. Simultaneously, the sources of state budget functioned very ineffectively (Nodia, p.23). The strong discontent of population was coursed by often cessation of light and gas. Settlement of Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts reached a deadlock. The situation was aggravated by the presence of the great number of refuges.

Dissatisfaction of the society with this situation again concentrated on the Shevardnadze’s personality, because earlier people waited from him the fulfillment of all national plans. Under such conditions there were conducted the Parliamentary (1999) and Presidential (2000) elections. Again the “Georgian Citizen Union” won the elections, but massive rumors about falsifications of elections began passing in the society. Such term as “electoral carousel” was put in use.

In October 2001 Georgian coercive structures, with the help of armed Chechen unit, organized senseless invasion to Abkhazia, which came off second-best and led to
political, material and moral losses. Probably, this became the last straw, which caused massive demonstrations of citizens, unsatisfied with the general situation. In November 2001 there were a lot spontaneous demonstrations before the building of the Parliament. People scanned “go away!” before the windows of the President.

**Formation of Opposition**

During this period the disunity between Shevardnadze and the group of young “pro-western” politicians from the ruling party became very evident. Zurab Jvania left the post of speaker of the Parliament. Michail Saakashvili, a young member of the Parliaments, became a very important figure in the new opposition. He was a lawyer, who got his education in USA and then worked for a some period of time in the international lawyer office in New-York. He became famous in the Parliament with his revelatory speeches against high rank officials, embezzlers of public funds. The reformation of judiciary system of Georgia is connected with his name. During a rather short term he had been a member of Parliament, and, then, after leaving it, he worked as a Minister of Justice of Georgia (Shevardnadze appointed him). Then he again came back to the Parliament, after winning of the majority elections, and little bit later he won local elections and became the head of the city assembly of Tbilisi. His reputation as the head of city assembly had a very positive affect on people.

The post of the speaker of the Parliament was taken by Mrs. Nino Burjanadze, who went (as Jvania and Saakashvili) through the political school of Shevardnadze in the “Union of Citizens”. Observers evaluated her as a compromise figure, satisfying as the
opposition as well as Shevardnadze. However, Burjanadze soon joined the opposition, not leaving the post of the speaker. At this time Shevardnadze lost his prestige in opinion of his western friends, which were observing the situation in the country. There was an opinion that Saakashvili and Jvania are well perceived by western politicians.

**Elections**

All the political forces of Georgia were preparing to the Parliamentary elections of 2003 very thoroughly. Ambitious political leaders, taking into consideration the fact that 2004 was the last year of Shevardnadze’s Presidency, attached great importance to these elections, as a special stage of the fight for Presidency. New alliances and associations began their formation. In particular, the younger generation, which left the “Union of Citizens” had formed two political blocks:

1) “United Democrats” with Jvania and Burjanadze at the head. Almost at the last minute in one block with “democrats” united the “Union of Traditionalists”, which was headed by A. Asatiani.

2) ”National Movement” with Saakashvili at the head. In this unit there were included different political elements:

- A number of significant figures from disintegrated “Union of Citizens”;

- Republican Party of Georgia (one of the oldest political organizations of the country, which was organized in 1978, but then destroyed by KGB, but rehabilitated during “perestroika”), with a former political-convict D. Berdzenishvili;
• Association of national forces – organization, the main part of which is the disintegrated movement of “zviadists”, with the former companion of Z. Gamsakhurdia – Z. Dzidziguri.

Already at the height of the pre-election fight the names of the popular leaders appeared in the titles of these opposition units, like “Burjanadze – Democrats” and “Saakashvili - National Movement”. It must be pointed out that in Georgia the average electorate still votes more for separate political leaders, than political organizations in a whole. Soon the streets of Tbilisi were full of posters with the title “KMARA!”, what in Georgian means “Enough!” . They were made by young boys and girls who were members of the NGO with the same name. This slogan meant a protest against the existing situation, against corruption, protectionism, unemployment, poverty, etc. Members of “KMARA” came out under white flags on which there was drown a clenched fist (The same kind of flag and tactic of actions had political movement “Repulse” in Serbia during overthrow of Miloshevich). The advertisements of “KMARA!” were regularly translated on TV during the most expensive evening time. There were rumors that “KMARA” was financed by western funds (George Soros).

In the election fight “National Movement” supporters played especially active role. The great resonance had their raids to Southern Kartli, region which was under control of President’s governor in this area – L. Mamaladze, and in Batumi, (capital of Adjarian autonomy) where situation was controlled by a very powerful Head of Adjarian Autonomy – Aslan Abashidze.
The noisy raids of “National Movement supporters” caused the adequate reaction of local authorities. In these collisions a lot of people were hard hit, including some public officials and politicians. Such actions brought political dividends to National Movement. Electorate decided that “Nationals” were a suffered side and began to express more sympathy to them.

During election company National Movement, as well as other strong political units, regularly made visits to different regions of Georgia, where with the support of local organizations they hold meetings with electorate and different political actions. Such visits were often accompanied by clashes with the proponents of the competing parties. Such kind of clashes already became the typical event of political life in Georgia.

Strong debates were around formation of Central Elective Commission (CEC) and discussion of some special issues connected with the elections. Subjects of elections (24) were afraid to be deceived during polling. These debates went above the borders of the country and the former US State Secretary James Becker came to Georgia, taking on himself the role of mediator between central authorities and opposition (as Shevardnadze personal friend).

In this situation Shevardnadze, who lost in fact the main supporting political organization, decided to create a new one right before elections. This new political unit was called “For a New Georgia” and was rather eclectic, as there found place the rest of “Union of Citizens”, “left” socialists and “right” national-democrats, movement of national-patriotic character “Language, Motherland and Faith”, party of “Greens”, “Party
of Abkhazia Liberation” and new Christian-Democratic Party. Pro-government block was headed by the State Minister of Georgia – A. Jorbenadze.

There is a list of other “favorites” of the elective race, which overstep 7% barrier (Svobodnaja Gruzia, November 10, 2003):

- “Union of Democratic Revival” – organization, which was supported by the Ajarian Autonomy, but which also had a wide network in other regions of Georgia, including Tbilisi.
- “Laborites Party” - which staked on the most socially unprotected part of Georgian population;
- “New Rights” – organization of the right-liberal character. The main participants there were young businessmen from former “Union of Citizens”
- The party “Industry saves Georgia” – with the representatives of large, serious business.

**Falsification of Elections**

Right before elections all the participants of the pre-electoral races, including representatives of pro-governmental block began talks about grandiose falsifications of the polls. Most of the participants saw in these events machinations of competitors. Mass Media and NGOs began active participation in this discussion. It occurred that in the lists there were not included the significant part of potential electors. There were missed whole streets, micro-districts and big apartment buildings. However, in these polls there were found the names of people who died 5, 10, 20, 30 years ago. They were called...
“dead souls”. In spite the “dramatic” and tense struggle for correction of mistakes, the situation was not changed. The citizens were asked to visit privately election sites, check on Internet, trying to put their real names in the polls. Most of people did this, but, in vain, because corrected polls again “magically” were distorted. A lot of people who revived their names 2-3 times, after having come to the election site during elections again found themselves out of polls.

The elections on the 2nd of November were held under great activity of the population. People in Tbilisi were standing 3 hours in the lines to get to the vote-boxes. There were two main reasons of such activity:

1) People really were waiting for the fundamental changes in their lives and transformation of Georgia to democratic country.

2) Mass Media already several months before the elections began writing in newspapers and broadcasting on TV and radio about future elections.

Even the small details relating to the electoral preparations were discussed broadly, and every evening about 10 of the main TV channels (state and independent) broadcasted, giving their air-time to the representatives of the different political parties. The audience felt this strong pressure of the political advertisements, which called for the active participation in the voting.

The results of the elections, which were held under the supervision of the great amount of foreign and local observers, occurred different according to data of Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and data of different NGOs. These data are presented in percentage in the table: under figure 1 of the table there are data of CEC; under figure 2 -
data of the Georgian branch of the international NGO “For fair elections and democracy”; under figure 3 – data of American organization “Global Strategy Group”.

Table 1: The results of the Parliamentary Elections, November 2, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations which overstep 7% barrier</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“For a New Georgia”</td>
<td>21,32%</td>
<td>18,92%</td>
<td>14,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Union of Democratic Revival”</td>
<td>18,84%</td>
<td>8,13%</td>
<td>7,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Saakashvili – National Movement”</td>
<td>18,80%</td>
<td>26,6%</td>
<td>20,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Laborites Party”</td>
<td>12,04%</td>
<td>17,3%</td>
<td>14,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Burdjanadze – Democrats”</td>
<td>8,79%</td>
<td>10,15%</td>
<td>8,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“New Rights”</td>
<td>7,35%</td>
<td>7,95%</td>
<td>Less than 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Svobodnaja Gruzia, November 10, 2003*

The publication of the abovementioned data caused great indignation from the side of “nationals” and “democrats”. Near the building of Parliament they organized twenty-four-hours meeting of protest, threatening the authorities that they would stay there till the time when the President would declare that the data of CEC invalid. Shevardnadze, playing for time, offered to settle the question in the court, according to rule of law. However, the pressure from protesting people was growing headily, in spite of the fact that the rest political forces of Georgia with a definite extent of power, did not
support them. Saakashvili and his supporters demanded the authorities to admit the results of elections not valid in: Adjara autonomy, in Djavakheti region and in Southern Kartli, where the majority of votes were given to the “Revival” and pro-government block.

The private meeting of the President with the leaders of the opposition, Saakashvili, Burdjanadze and Jvania, did not lead to agreement and the demands of the opposition were just strengthened. Thus, there was raised a slogan: “Georgia without Shevardnadze”. Saakashvili and Burdjanadze went to the Western Georgia, where they called upon all the people, dissatisfied with the ruling authorities, to come together to Tbilisi. Thousands of people on the busses and cars went from the Western Georgia to the Eastern Georgia in columns. The independent TV company “Rustavi-2” showed the impressive march to the capital of a long rows of cars.

*Revolution of Roses*

On 21st of November, in the evening, the columns of buses with the flags of the National movement arrived in the capital. In the first bus in front was Saakashvili. The crowds of people greeted him. During the same evening in the square of Freedom, in front of the City Hall, where there was located Saakashvili’s office, there was held a big meeting, where Saakashvili, Burdjanadze, Jvania and other leaders of opposition spoke a lot. In front of the Parliament building there was continuing the meeting of the supporters of the “Revival”. However, it was not so large and as emotional as the “Nationals”. Between expostulating meetings, faced with the opposition, there were police forces and
forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which strictly notified people not to go towards the Parliament building.

Then the oppositionists who were besetting the State Chancellery demanded to surrender the building. Thus the State Chancellery was surrendered. On the November 22 the President Shevardnadze announced “the state of emergency” in the country. Simultaneously, he called the opposition to negotiations, but only after leaving the occupied objects. This proposal was, of course, ignored.

On 22nd of November Shevardnadze had to open the session of the new Parliament. The leaders of the opposition were against this action. Some other political forces were hesitating. This session had to be open at 4 p.m., but the quorum was not mustered and Shevardnadze kept waiting.

Meanwhile, the numerous group of oppositionists gathered around the building of the State Chancellery, which also was under the protection of the police. Around 4:30 p.m. delegates at last gathered, the quorum was mustered and Shevardnadze opened the session. This only speeded up the events. Thousands of the oppositionists with their leaders ahead, broke the rows of police (without almost any resistance) and occupied the Parliamentary square. Once again on November 2003 the Rustaveli avenue witnessed armies of protesters squared off against government troops. Violence threatened to erupt at any point. However the grand finale of the month-long drama would surprise everyone from protesters to observers.

The standoff came to a head when turning a deaf ear to the raging popular disobedience beneath his office window, Shevardnadze decided to convene an inaugural
parliamentary session to give his presidential blessing to the new legislature. Leaders of the uprising, from whom the ruling clique so brutally wrested away their parliamentary seats, couldn’t allow for some semblance of legitimacy be granted to an assemblage of lawmakers scared up by the government to fill up the half-empty chamber. Breaking the security cordon, a crowd led by firebrand opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili burst into the parliamentary chamber. Pro-presidential deputies put up last-ditch resistance trying to block the door, however retreated faced with overwhelming odds. Saakashvili marched forth brandishing a red rose as a sign of piece and shouted words that people chanted outside: “resign, resign!”

Shevardnadze was speaking at the tribune, when the door opened and the oppositionists rushed into the hall of the Parliament. In the head of them was Saakashvili with the rose in his hand. Later these events were called “Revolution of Roses”. Some of the deputes rushed to the attack, some of them slipped away. Hand-to-hand fighting began in the room, however Shevardnadze was still standing on the tribune, reading his speech. Only when the fighting approached to the tribune very close, the private security surrounded the President, taking him away from there (as it seemed that he did not realize fully all the situation). Saakashvili took his place and proclaimed the victory of Revolution.

Later Shevardnadze would say he ordered the military not to use force against protesters to avoid bloodshed, however in reality there was hardly anyone by his side to take an order. Disappointment with the government ran deep, and it was not a tall order to convince the poverty-stricken military to switch sides. To the exclusion of a small
political clique that assembled wealth under Shevardnadze’s cushioning rule, hardly anyone was happy with what was happening in the country.

Later in mass media there were spread the information that Shevardnadze tried to find political support from governments of USA and Russia, but did not receive it. The Western governments officially announced that they were not going to interfere into internal affairs of Georgia. The same announcement was made by the authority of the Russian army bases dislocated in Georgia. The President also could not rely on the Georgian armed forces. Even if he had gave an order to set out against the demonstrates, the soldiers and officers would not follow this order. Some of them, having left the arms in the quarters, joined the people.

Saakashvili, who occupied the Parliamentary square, laid down the ultimatum: “or Shevardnadze will come to people, or in one hour we are going to his official residency”. Meanwhile, the surveying group of the independent TV company “Rustavi-2” was waiting in the airport to shoot how Shevardnadze would leave Georgia. But, in vain. On the November 23, Saakashvili and Jvania went to Shevardnadze accompanied by 200 supporters. Their private meeting with the President had even idyllic character, in calm atmosphere. After this Shevardnadze officially announced about his resignation.

“Where are you going?” asked one of the reporters surrounded him. “I’m going home,” wearily smiling Shevardnadze said in an epilogue to a career that led him from a tiny Georgian village to the global political stage. Once internationally acclaimed for his crucial role in liberalization of the Soviet Empire and dismantling the Berlin Wall, Shevardnadze ended up marooned as a failure in his own land.
Thus, even the second President of independent Georgia was dismissed in unconstitutional way. However, in contrast to bloody overthrow of the first President – Gamsakhurdia, this time, fortunately, everything went in a non-violent way, without shots and victims. In less than two months after the upheaval Georgians would overwhelmingly elect Saakashvili charging him with an difficult task to lead the country out of a swamp of poverty, regional conflicts, and tensions with neighboring states. That is a short description of the Georgian “Velvet Revolution” or Revolution of Roses, as Mass Media called this event.

Analyses

Charles Fairbanks’s article “Georgia’s Rose Revolution” works on analyzing the causes and consequences of the Revolution of Roses. The author sees the main prepossessing factors of the Georgia’s Rose Revolution in the weakness of the state system and ‘soft’ style of Shevardnadze’s authoritarianism (Fairbanks, 2004, p.2). According to Fairbanks, the factors include “general economic distress, Georgia’s orientation toward the West, strong influence of USA, and impressive array of vigorously independent businesses, NGOs and media” (Ibid., p. 7). It could be called Georgian phenomenon that media (especially TV) played such a big role in reflection of people’s mood and in creation of public opinion. Another very important phenomena is ‘elite isolation’, when the most powerful and corrupt part of government officials tend to loose the track of current events due to the misperception of reality. This event revealed that the
Georgian public believed much more in the possibility of the victory of liberal democracy than the political elites.

One of the most interesting inputs of this article is revealing of the role of people in democratization. As the author points out: “The Georgian revolution could disrupt so many old patterns only because it was seen as a revolution, abrupt and decisive, and because Georgians accomplished it themselves” (Fairbanks, 2004, p.11). The greatest achievement of all this dramatic transition was the change in people’s mentality. Their passive attitude was transformed into the understanding of the importance of active participation in the policy implementation to avoid manipulation like in former Soviet times. Here we can see positive effects of civil society development in Georgia.

According to Fairbanks, revolutions of any kind are the result of certain objective conditions which lead a subjugated population to mass action. Indeed, no amount of money could force hundreds of thousands of people to leave their jobs, homes, schools, and families to face down heavily armed police and camp out in the bitter cold for weeks. Such boldness can only be fueled by strong, heart-felt motivations (Fairbanks, 2004).

What is important Fairbanks also tries to show the dangers of euphoria to avoid the illusions. People, who were tied too much of corrupted government which fed them just with the promises of the good life. Now people’s expectations are too large as they at last believe in the new government and it is very important for this new ‘young’ government to justify this trust.
On this case study we can see that only under the condition of participation in elections of political powers which have comparable economical, political and media resources, the electoral process could obtain necessary elements of honesty and fairness. Of course, creation and maintenance of democratic institutions will take lots of effort and time. But due to the Georgian case, we see the potential for democracy development. Then again, the change of power occurred not in a constitutional way, but through a “Rose Revolution”.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

This literature review includes mostly works of such political scholars as Samuel Huntington (1996), Fareed Zakaria (2003), Charles Fairbanks (2004) and Larry Diamond (2001) on developing democracy and so-called democracies of the third and fourth wave. The main goal in exploring this literature is the understanding of the major theories, concepts and arguments in the literature on the recent democratization, particularly in the post-communist counties of Eastern Europe. Different studies of recent democratization processes in this region show their challenges and peculiarities. I am going to focus on such important phenomenon of democratization theory as illiberal democracy, transitional paradigm and transitional constitutionalism beginning with the notion of democracy and ending with the trends of its development in Georgia.

Concepts of the Third Wave Democracies

Democracy (literally “the common people rule”) is a widely used word today. Moreover, it is a successful political project in which now are involved most of the world countries. So, can we talk about worldwide democratic revolution? To answer this question we can refer to the opinion of one of the most famous political scholars, the author of the “third wave democracy”- Samuel Huntington (1991). He emphasizes the Western origins of the democratic values and tries to warn us against the euphoria of the victory of a global democratic revolution. He also shows us new dangers which could trap new democratic governments, emphasizing the causes of democratic failures in the high extent of resistance to Western values in non-Western cultures (Huntington, 1996).
More optimistic view could be found in the work of another famous scholar, Amartya Sen, who gives us his special understanding of democracy as a universal value (1999). He claims that the recognition of democracy as “a universally relevant system” is one of the most important achievements of the 20th century. To prove this notion the author gives us his arguments, which are rather forceful. Through examples of different developing countries Sen proves that democracy can function effectively not only in such developed countries as the United States or Britain, but also in poor developing countries like India and Botswana. Sen criticizes Huntington’s approach to democratic values as oversimplified, because it represents the historical commitment of the West to democracy and denies other cultures these characteristics. This explanation of democracy’s universalism is very convincing and encouraging as “people anywhere may have reason to see it as valuable” (Sen, 1999, p. 5).

In the 1990s the third wave of democracy spread to Eastern Europe and countries of the former Soviet Union. Thomas Carothers in his discourses concerning the end of the transitional paradigm shows us different challenges of democratic transitions, like syndrome of ‘feckless pluralism’, syndrome of dominant-power politics (2002). He also gives the reasons: “Democracy is not built in a day, and it is too early to reach judgments about the results of the dozens of democratic transitions launched in the last decade” (Ibid, p.3). He claims that one of the main mistakes in democracy building is full neglecting of the state-building and focusing more on redistribution of state power (Ibid).
Another author, focused on the third wave of democratization in the countries of Eastern Europe, Waldonron-Moore, emphasizes the necessity of development of democratic institutions and the efficiency of new democratic governments (Waldonron-Moore, 1999). Like Sen, Waldonron-Moore begins her article by posing questions about the notion of democracy, but she goes further by presenting such indexes as the level of support for democracy and the level of satisfaction with democracy. What is especially interesting is that in contrast to the opinions of such scholars as Przeworski and Huntington, who support the statement that “without commitment to democratic institutions publics’ dissatisfaction with the economic situation may undermine their support for democracy”, Waldonron-Moore shows that this commitment to democracy, in the case of Eastern Europe, often depends more on dynamics of cultural change and development of new ways of thinking (Ibid., p. 51).

One of the main questions in defining the nature of democracies of the third way in post-communist countries is discussed in Larry Diamond’s article “Thinking about hybrid regimes” (Diamond, 2002). He asks important questions: are Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia democracies? How can we classify these ambiguous regimes? Similar questions are discussed in Thomas Carothers article “The end of the transitional paradigm” (2002), where the author tries to trace the development of transitional countries in this “political gray zone” (between full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship), where they are going through their own successes and failures on the way to democracy.
Michael McFaul in his article “Transitions from Post-communism” (2004) also mentioned that right after the collapse of the communism, most of the countries of the Soviet Union, as well as countries of the Eastern Europe, were not successful in consolidation of the liberal democracy. But he also points out the new trends of the democracy development in this region on examples of Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004). He shows that these particular three cases differ significantly from other democratic transitions. In the process of explanation of that phenomenon, McFaul defines the common factors in all these cases, referring to the method of similarity. One of the main points here is that this kind of analyses can help in predicting future ‘democratic breakthroughs’. These factors are the next: “1) a semi-autocratic rather than fully autocratic regime; 2) an unpopular incumbent; 3) a united and organized opposition: 4) an ability quickly to drive home the point that the voting results were falsified; 5) enough independent media to inform citizens about the falsified vote; 6) a political opposition capable of mobilizing tens of thousands demonstrators to protest electoral fraud; 7) divisions among the regime’s coercive forces” (McFaul, p.7).

**Concept of Illiberal Democracy**

The third wave of democracy got a new phenomenon, even new type of the state regime - illiberal democracy. According to Ester, “illiberal democracy represents particularly authoritarian kind of representative democracy”, in which the leaders and lawmakers are elected by the people, but tend to be corrupt and often do not respect the law, or, the law simply does not protect individual liberties from majority rule (1998). As
one of the famous political scientists, Fareed Zakaria, wrote in his article, all over the world there is a growing number of countries with illiberal democracy (1997). Thus, democratically elected regimes “are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms...Democracy is flourishing; constitutional liberalism is not” (1997, p. 2).

The matter is that both constitutionalism and liberalism represent theory and practice of the limited state power. Meanwhile, democracy tends to maximum concentration of power in the hands of leaders elected by majority. Therefore, the difference between the “old” democracies and “new” democracies is in different approaches and traditions. In ‘old’ democratic systems the principles of constitutionalism, democracy and liberalism form a special kind of balanced system, and in ‘new’ democratic systems the principles of the democracy are often suppressed. In these new transitional forms of states we can see a phenomenon of strong leaders, who believe that they talk and act on behalf of people and really do not understand why they need to limit their power by constitutional frames if their actions are directed for the welfare of people. This fact is well supported in Mill’s “Classic on Liberty” by citation of the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenka: “There will be no dictatorship. I am of the people, and I am going to be for people” (2000, p. 30).

Usurpation of power is a very common situation in the post-communist countries. The absence of the strong democratic institutions, like political parties, regional governments, independent universities, independent courts, strong legislatures does not give the opportunity for the right way of development. Furthermore, it gives the
tendencies for growth of strong presidential systems with populist leaders and multiple parties – a very unstable combination according to Fareed Zakaria (2003).

This kind of democracy is wide-spread on the territory of the post-soviet republics and probably they are familiar with the phenomenon when the will of the majority of citizens could limit the freedom of the individual (Rose, 2001). In the constitution of the former Soviet Union, the regime of which was called “people’s democracy” there were declared a lot of liberal values which had been never fulfilled. Moreover, the idea of the Soviet justice was not in the protection of rights, but in submission of citizens to the state power for the realization of goals set by Communist Party. So, if earlier the concentration of power was reasonable for the achievement of communism, now the concentration of power became reasonable for the achievement of democracy. But in most of the countries of Western Europe, as well as in USA, constitutional liberalism has been developed to secure individual rights for freedom of speech, religion, and property.

The special system was created gradually to provide checks and balances of each branch of government, equality under the law, impartial courts and separation of church and state (Huntington, 1999). The example of the expression of the constitutional liberalism could be the American Constitution. Zakaria in the “Road to Liberal Democracy” (2004) shows us the long way which western countries went through on their development from liberal autocracies to liberal democracies. The main reason of their successful development was that in late 19\textsuperscript{th} century most of them adopted main components of constitutional liberalism, such as rule of law, private property rights, separation of powers and free speech. The author points out that “constitutional
liberalism actually led to democracy, not vise versa” (Zakharia, 1997, p.4). Contrary, the unchecked centralization usually is the first obstacle for the development of liberal democracy. Thus, as Zakharia claims ”illiberal means are in the long run incompatible with liberal ends” (1997, p. 5).

The reasons of most national and ethnic conflicts and even civil wars also have their origins in the lack of the constitutional liberalism under the ‘fast’ introduction of democracy. It is a natural process when during the elections politicians compete for people’s votes and during this competition they often play on people’s ethnic, national and religion feelings. Unfortunately, when one ethnic group comes to power, it tends to exclude another one. This phenomena was called “politization of ethnicity” (Cornell, 2001).

Democracy and Constitutional Liberalism: based on Georgian Case Study

For better understanding of the essence of all the challenges and peculiarities of democratization in post-communist countries we can take case study of Georgia, as one of the most recent “success story” of democratization process among countries of former Soviet Union.

But not a long time ago, in 2002, Georgia was referred to countries with a dominant-power system of government (Carothers, 2002), where transition to democracy was under the question as it reminded more transition to autocracy. The Rose Revolution changed a lot of concepts. So, testing the democracy in Georgia in the light of illiberal democracy theory we can ask next questions: On which principles the legitimacy of state
is built in Georgia? What political characteristics had the regime of illiberal democracy there? If constitutional liberalism has some perspectives in Georgia? All these issues can be looked through in the light of constitutional changes of 2004 in Georgia, after the Rose Revolution.

According to the words of famous constitutionalist, John Elster (1998), there are many democratic constitutions in the world passed by non-democratic way, but there is not any authoritarian constitution passed by democratic way. During the process of passing the constitution it is necessary to take into account two main conditions: the extent in which the passing of new constitution or making the amendments in old one is based on the wide and full-valued discussion and the extent of the democratic level of this procedure. The effectiveness and stability of the model could be provided only under condition of all political forces participation. In opposite case such constitution will take temporary character.

According to Georgian political scientist, Ghia Nodia, constitutional changes, which were passed in January – February 2004 in Georgia were prepared in the lobbies and passed during very short period of time. Moreover, a new model of state government was created just by three main leaders of future government. It is a matter of fact that the other political powers had not the possibilities to stop the process or to change it (Nodia, 2005).

Nodia goes further by making an interesting conclusion: ”during the last fifteen years three regimes have been changed in Georgia, but no one of them by the elections, as the elections were conducted only post-factum, just for the legitimization of already
accepted power (Nodia, 2005). So, if we look at the Rose Revolution through the lenses of this approach, then it looks like a logical continuation of such developments. The question is if such an unfortunate continuity can be avoided?

According to the opinion of Huntington, if in country the power two times in succession was changed by constitutional method, without any revolutionary interference, then democracy is consolidated in such a country. But here I also want to quote Huntington’s work where he rejects the importance of the constitution as well as the type of government: “The most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government. This degree of government is itself dependent on the strength of political organizations, the popular support for these and their institutionalization” (Huntington, 1991).

In this light the situation in Georgia is almost paradoxical, as there is not a liberal democracy, where leaders come to power by elections, taking actions in frames of constitutionalism, and in case of defeat in elections they go (temporary) into opposition with a hope on future victory. There is also no dictatorship, when the will of people does not mean anything and where the people can not change the government at all. That is to say the particular strong and numerous private interests prevent the establishment of dictatorship in Georgia. According to the opinion of the local experts, in such system “there may be a rule of people, but not a rule of law” (Nodia, 2005).

Democracy is a system where people of a society can control the government. Democratic government aspires to serve under "the people" rather than ruling over them. Therefore, the rule of the majority is implemented under the democratic system. But,
there is always the danger of the suppression of minority, what creates the danger for the implementation of human liberties and rights. That is why the idea of constitutionalism (limitation of government by law) serves for protection of the whole society and its every member from this threat. Constitutionalism also implies balance of powers by forming the optimal system of high bodies of state power on the basis of power division.

In the “Declaration of human rights and citizen rights”, passed in 1789 in France, there is pointed out that the division of powers includes such kind of rules for the state organization and functioning, which exclude the dictatorship from the side of authorities and the anarchy from the side of people. The classical model of the powers’ division is a division of powers among three branches: legislative, executive and judiciary, which was first time implemented in England in 18th century. There are different models of the powers’ division and not every model fits for the particular state because every state is unique in terms of history, traditions and historically developed relations inside the state.

In Georgia the state power is divided on three classical branches: legislative, which is implemented by the Parliament; executive, which is implemented by President; and judiciary, which is implemented by the Constitutional court and general courts. The main data of the state power division and state organization was defined by the Constitution of Georgia passed in 1995.

After the Rose Revolution in November 2003 and resignation of President Shevardnadze, new political leaders elaborated the project of Constitutional amendments, which after a short and rather formal discussion was approved by the Parliament on 6th of February 2004. These amendments significantly changed the model of powers’ division
and system of state power in Georgia. The main result of these amendments was a significant expansion of President’s power, significant weakening of Parliament, and bringing out the prosecution from the system of judiciary branch. It is possible to tell that to the traditional three branches of power there was added one more – the power of the head of the state – the President, which was increased at the expense of the rest three branches. Thus, according to Charles Fairbanks, Georgia changed Shevardnadze’s “super-presidential” constitution to Saakashvili’s “hyper-presidential” constitution (2004). But, again it is more appropriateness than exception. As Juah Linz (2000) reminds us: “Presidents, especially who come to power after a plebiscitarian or populist campaign, often find that the power they possess is hopelessly insufficient to meet the expectations they have generated” (Linz, 2000, p.116).

Is there the threat of authoritarianism in post Rose Revolution Georgia? Hopefully, there is not. In one aspect Georgians could be grateful to Shevardnadze for allowing the opening in which active civil society eventually developed. This society is already not easily manipulated and passive “grey mass” of the beginning of 90s. Actually people went through a difficult long way of transition during which their mentality had changed irrevocably and they are ready to protect achievements of “new” democracy. What is good to remember is Larry Diamond’s statement, that “democracies, new and old, liberal and illiberal, can also become more democratic” (2002, p.4).
Chapter 4: After the Revolution

In this chapter I am going to look at Georgia after the Revolution, exploring the results of the reforms undertaken by the new government, as well as the implementation of the promises and obligations taken by them, and their positive and negative perspectives. As Theodor Tudoroiu (2007) justly noticed:

A “revolution” should not be examined only under its spectacular, immediate consequences. Rather, a medium-term perspective should be adopted in order to evaluate correctly the nature and depth of the change. If the new regime reproduces too many of the views, attitudes, and practices of the previous one it is clear that no real revolution has taken place.

Thus, he takes a look at Georgia, not immediately after the Revolution, but three years later, in 2007, as the immediate results had been seen as too “rosy” during the mass euphoria of events and the triumphal election of Mikhail Saakashvili as a new President (by a 96 percent vote), and the peaceful reintegration of Adjara in 2004. However, the changes in the Constitution pushed by Saakashvili, just a few weeks after his inauguration, turned a “super-presidential” Constitution into the “hyper-presidential” Constitution mostly at the expense of Parliament (Fairbanks, 2004). Moreover, according to Tudoroiu (2007), this concentration of power in the hands of one person led the present regime to be compared with a “Bonapartism”, because Saakashvili not only controls two thirds of the Parliament, but also controls the judiciary as Chairman of the Judicial Council.

The restructuring of a society often is implemented through purges and violation of human rights. The media became much more strictly controlled than under Shevardnadze, leading to the prohibition and ban not just on some shows, but the whole
TV channels (as in the example of Imedi, Rustavi 2). The more centralized state model does not seem attractive to the autonomies and regions with the different ethnic minorities (Ahalkalaki - Armenians, Marneuli- Azerbaijanians).

Finally, in November 2007 protests and demonstrations showed people's dissatisfaction with the way of governance. However, the way the government reacted to these demonstrations surprised and terrified most of the public. As it was true in the case of the two previous presidents, democratization trends and strong charismatic leadership very soon changed to personal rule in the classical authoritarian style. According to Areshidze (2007), it is quite remarkable that Saakashvili’s vision of himself as a ruler is more of “founding father” character and the state builder”, as he often compares himself with David the Builder, the most famous and progressive Georgian king (12th century). Saakashvili presents himself in the light of being a strong man creating a stronger state. However, the question is: why is the state stronger? According to Irakli Areshidze (2007):

Saakashvili’s actions created a regime that moved away from institutional development and became fully dependent on one person. But without institutional development, the state may not actually be getting stronger, but rather, seem stronger because the person at the top has a great deal of power and energy (p.196).

Another commonality, which is good to keep in mind, is that since independence in 1991 there has not been what is called “a constitutional transfer of power” natural for liberal democracies. Both Presidents, the first one - Zviad Gamsakhurdia, and the second one – Eduard Shevardnadze, were forced to quit. What about the third President of Georgia? The demonstrations which happened in November 2007 showed the growing
discontent with the regime, but the way of dealing with this discontent demonstrated a very serious picture and threat of authoritarianism.

*Achievements and Miss-achievements*

However, the purpose here is not to undermine the reforms undertaken by the new government. The provision of public goods improved significantly in comparison with Shevardnadze’s times in such areas as public construction, electricity supply, communication networks, and repair of roads among others. Also reforms in the health care and educational systems made them more transparent and modern. The most significant improvements the government was focused on were the elimination of corruption and criminality. Some light at the end of tunnel appeared in 2005 in terms of economic development, as well, when Georgia signed a $295 million contract with the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation which gives large awards to developing countries with high levels of good governance (Arshidze, 2007, p.286). Salaries of civil servants were finally raised and tax collection improved.

One of the first successes of the Saakashvili government, in terms of consolidation of the state's power and restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia, was bringing back Adjara and the banishment of its local ruler, Aslan Abashidze, who basically ruled Adjara as its own patrimony independent from Tbilisi beginning from 1992. Taking into consideration this fact, as well as the strategic position of Adjara (border with Turkey, major Black Sea ports), it gave a hope for the majority of the population that the same could be done with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The most
important fact was the way it was done – without bloodshed. The possibility of serious conflict was very high as Abashidze (who was a much more authoritarian figure than Shevardnadze) would not give up his power easily. However, Saakashvili choose a very smart strategy by combining two policies: one of compromising, and the other organizing public support and putting public pressure on the authorities. According to Irakli Areshidze (2007), the most dangerous situation emerged when, on March 14th 2004, Adjara’s illegal paramilitary forces did not allow President Saakashvili to enter the region (p.192). The possibility of using force had not been absolutely excluded from the side of Georgia’s legitimate government. Saakashvili had mentioned several times that he could use force on a quite legitimate basis. However, the influence of Bush Administration weighed against such action, giving Saakashvili a very transparent message against the use of force, including a refusal to allow U.S. trained Georgian military officers to participate in a military operation against what could be called civil irregulars (Areshidze, 2007, p.193). Thus, Aslan Abashidze made his 'knight's move': by blowing up the bridges which connected Adjara with the main roads. Making this move he, as usual, forgot to think about the reaction of the people, who (inspired by Shevardnadze's fall) went to the streets and demanded his immediate resignation. Finally, Aslan Abashidze had to leave Adjaria and fled to Russia.

One more very significant achievement of Saakashvili's policies was the agreement with Moscow (in 2005) concerning the withdrawal of Russian troops by the end of 2008, which significantly influenced the prospects for Georgia's joining NATO. During Shevardnadze's term there were several attempts to make Russia withdraw troops,
but with little success. Officially Russia was obliged to withdraw its troops to fulfill the new obligations relating to the renegotiation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), signed in 1995. But later Russia did not fulfill these obligations and Shevardnadze was afraid to push more in that direction. This serious subject was solved by Saakashvili as well as NATO’s agenda, which “moved Georgia to the level of Croatia and Albania as the most likely countries to be next invited into the alliance” (Areshidze, 2007, p.195).

In terms of economic development there had been a significant increase in the state revenue, connected with the growth of the national budget from 1.18 billion Georgian Lari in 2003 to 1.77 billion in 2004 (around 50 per cent), as well as the increase in expenditures of 600 million Lari (Nations in Transitions Annual Report, 2004, p. 32). Budget increase came also due to the impressive amount of international aid coming into the country in the form of foreign grants. However, the state also began to find new ways of collecting revenues through quite original and dubious means. According to Mariam Lanskoy and Giorgi Areshidze (2008), this process is well explained in the next statement:

The former government officials and businessmen were forced to make undisclosed payments into off-budget accounts (mostly nontransparent and unconstitutional) in order to avoid criminal responsibility for corruption under Shevardnadze. Later these officials or businessmen were released without the trial (after the payment of arbitrarily calculated sums) or in some cases detained and subsequently tortured (p 155).

Soon such type of treatment started to be applied not just to former Shevardnadze officials, but to other representatives of business and political circles basically aimed at “shaking down wealthy businessmen for money or setting political scores” (Areshidze, 2007, p. 211). Irakli Areshidze in his revealing book “Democracy and Autocracy in
“Eurasia” gives numerous examples, which show harsh violations of human rights and rule-of-law being, ironically, covered up with the slogan ‘fight with corruption’. One of the cases described in his book got international publicity. The case is related to the arrest of Sulkhan Molashvili, the former head of the Chamber of Control, who criticized, very often and very openly Saakashvili’s policies during Saakashvili’s government service as Minister of Justice (Areshidze, 2007, p. 220). Molashvili was arrested under the often-used charge of misuse of state funds and abuse of his official power. According to Areshidze (2007), Molashvili was not surprised by this, taking into consideration his previous position in Shevardnadze’s government and unfriendly relationship with Saakashvili. It was a logical outcome in light of the new governmental policies and activities. Molashvili even expressed his willingness to cooperate with the authorities. The primary official charge against him was the transfer of 10,000 Lari (the equivalent of $6000) from one spending line of the organization to another without a special legislative approval (Areshidze, 2007, p. 223). Molashvili was put under a three-month pretrial detention. The fatal mistake for him was his denial to pay the amount of money demanded of him ($1 million). According to Molashvili, he was also asked to buy some property and then publicly to return it to the government as retribution (www.humanrights.ge). The decision not to do this was fatal as he was tortured brutally during all the time of his detention period in jail. He was prohibited to have any visitors, including not just his family but even members of the Parliament. The public was terrified when one of the national channels showed Molashvili on the third month of his detention as he looked awful, having lost sixteen kilograms, with cigarette burns all over
his body, as well as evidence of electric shock (Areshidze, 2007, p. 224). According to Areshidze (2007), just after “a national and international outrage that arose following the release of tapes documenting the torture, the prosecutor general opened a criminal investigation into Molashvili’s torture case, no one was charged with any crimes, and it is unlikely that anyone will ever be” (p. 225). However, Molashvili’s lawyer sent a petition to the Strasbourg court concerning violations of his rights and torture and the court will consider his case soon. After this development, strong pressure was put on Molashvili to make him withdraw his petition including threats, provocations and new accusations (www.humanrights.ge).

**Media**

Another good example of authoritarian trend in new governmental policies is the treatment of media when any critique of the government and the president, which was tolerated during Shevardnadze's years, became very dangerous. What is remarkable is that in Georgia this process of restraining the freedom of press was called “Putinizacia” (Putinization), and it was reminiscent more of the situation of the media in Russia than of that in Shevardnadze's Georgia (Areshidze, 2007). The sad irony of the whole media situation is that the TV channel (Rustavi 2) which supported Saakashvili very actively during his campaign and played the essential role (mentioned in 1st Chapter) in the Rose Revolution had to stifle its critique and basically became a typical pro-government channel. However, the strong desire of Saakashvili’s government to gain control over the Media (especially TV stations) should not be surprising as Saakashvili in particular
knows from his experience about media's decisive role in “making” the Rose Revolution.

According to Irakly Areshidze (2007):

There were used three different mechanisms to reach this goal: first, by getting existing owners of television stations to toe the pro-government line or by forcing owners to give up control (to “sell” their stations) to individuals friendly to the government; second, by limiting the press access to political information involving the government in general; and third, by pressuring TV journalists directly, thus getting them to self-censor their coverage of government's actions (p. 250).

The next cases are an evident demonstration of the above mentioned policies. The most popular and well developed TV stations went through dramatic changes, including changes in ownership. However, the changes went in different directions depending mostly on the position of the owners. For instance, the owner of the TV station “Channel nine”, Boris Ivanishvili, who was ranked as 228th wealthiest man in the world, a Russian oligarch of Georgian origin, decided to close his station quite soon in 2004, preferring not to take risks and to avoid making dubious deals with the government. Another TV station, whose owner preferred to make a deal with the government was Vano Chkhartishvili the owner of TV station “Mze”, (a former minister of economy, and rich businessman), who sold 50 percent of his stake to David Bezhuashvili, a member of the Parliament from the ruling party and the brother of the foreign minister (Areshidze, 2007, p. 251). The station which was famous, previously, for one of its most interesting and critical shows, was now busy showing and praising the achievements of the new government and new President. The most impressive is the story of the TV station which participated the most actively in “making the Revolution” – Rustavi 2. The owner of the station, Erosi Kitsmarishvili, had not just to leave it, but also to leave the country. That is
why, according to Irakli Areshidze (2007), this approach reminds many of the approach of Putin, when such media magnates as Boris Berezovski and Vladimir Gusinski had to leave Russia, in spite of the fact that they actually helped Putin to come to power. After Kitsmarishvili’s dismissal, the events were developing on a very familiar scheme, as Rustavi 2 was sold to Kibar Khalvashi, a successful businessman and a close friend of that time Defense Minister, Irakli Okruashvili (Areshidze, 2007, p. 253). The before mentioned friendship had a big influence, as according to Areshidze (2007), Khalvashi did not have enough money to buy the station for $30 million, but officially Khalvashi became the owner of the station. The consequences were the most unfortunate, as a couple of the most interesting and challenging political live shows were closed, and the most “revolutionary” station became the most pro-governmental one.

Several other popular stations such as “Channel Europe” choose to stop their work and not to go on in dubious compromises with government. The only TV station which actually resisted all that time (before the November 2007 events when it was closed) was “Imedi”. There were different reasons for it, most connected with the ownership of the station by Badri Patarkatsishvili, the former business partner of Boris Berezovski, a billionaire and a person who actually for a while supported with his money several governmental projects. In addition, “Imedi” was the largest station with almost 100 percent national availability, which gained even more audience, hiring the most popular anchors who had been forced to leave other stations because of government’s censorship and pressure (Areshidze, 2007). Remarkably, “Imedi” continued to give the opportunity for representatives of the opposition, and some non-governmental
organizations, to express their opinions. However, later, in the fatal events of November 2007, “Imedi” had to pay a high price for its desire to be a truly independent TV station.

Concerning the censorship and pressure on journalists, the usual policy was to reward the ones who followed the “unofficial” rules set by the government and punishing (or threatening) the ones who did not. According to Areshidze (2007), the most prominent example of punishing the media was the cases of the stars of Georgian Television – Inga Grigolia (from “Mze”) and Eka Khoperia (from Rustavi 2). Both of them were the hosts of night time debate talk shows, presenting debates between different politicians, or direct interviews with governmental officials. Each of them had a very different style as Grigolia was famous for her bravery in asking different government officials very provocative and tough questions, while Khoperia had a more moderate approach. As Grigolia's show was the most popular and the most profitable for the “Mze” TV channel, she was unwilling to compromise in spite of pressure and continued to ask Saakashvili’s governmental officials very open question about recent arrests and the imprisonment of different people, from famous businessmen to opposition leaders (Areshidze, p. 253). However, Khoperia’s show was not so provocative and often focused not just on Georgian, but also on international affairs, hosting guests from different countries including the United States and Russia. In an interesting “coincidence” both hosts were removed from their positions (Khoperia on February 3, 2004 and Grigolia on February 4, 2004) and their removal coincided with their shows discussing the infamous constitutional amendments made by Saakashvili, which dramatically increased his Presidential power (Areshidze, 2007). Both anchors questioned the necessity of such
changes but in a very different styles: Khoperia by hosting experts in these area as well as governmental officials, and Grigolia by personally attacking the prime minister, Zurab Zhvania. According to Irakly Areshidze (2007), both women during their last shows did not mention any coming changes and ended in the usual manner “by wishing their viewers a good night until the next evening”, which made everybody think that the anchors had no idea about the coming changes (p. 255).

Perhaps the most unfortunate example was the fate of the creator of the most successful shows of Rustavi 2 “Dardubala” - Shalva Ramishvili. As soon as the creators of “Dardubala” advertised that there would be a new cartoon series about the new government and new President, and even showed the first one with the President as the main character, Shalva Ramishvili and David Kokhreidze (his deputy) were arrested and charged with corruption. Soon after they were sentenced to four years in prison on charges of extortion. According to Paul Manning, the author of the article “Rose-Colored Glasses: Color Revolutions and cartoon Chaos in Postsocialist Georgia” (2006), Shalva Ramisvili is still in prison and Manning's request to visit him in prison for an interview was denied (p. 200). The very legitimate questions Manning asks include: ”What kind of regime is most afraid of cartoons like “Dardubala?” and “Can we attribute such policies to democratic consolidation of power or necessary measures for making a state stronger?” (p. 201).

It is very difficult to answer these questions, as well as to admit the fact that many Georgians are afraid of the new regime more than of Shevardnadze's regime. The government listens in on phone calls quite openly. Thus, fear is growing as people, who
became used to expressing their opinions during Shevardnadze's times, are now “afraid to discuss political or financial matters on the phone, and in public settings” (Manning, 2006, p. 202).

Here comes to mind Charles King’ (2004) argument that often overly optimistic propaganda of democratic development takes attention from the real problems, which in long term may create serious obstacles for further development. It is remarkable that just as in the 1990s Shevardnadze’s Georgia was considered as a ‘beacon’ of democratization in the region, so too in the 2000s Saakashvili’s Georgia is known as a ‘beacon’ of democratization again. However, the main problems remain the same: territorial control, economic crises, weak local governance, weak political parties, etc. As King points out (2004): “in failing states, the strategy has been to build a democracy and hope that, in time, the rest will take care of itself” (p. 17).

I do not argue here that the overall situation is absolutely the same. There are definite improvements in terms of democratic governance, the reintegration of at least one territory (Adjara). Unfortunately, the way of solving problems and reaching results stayed more authoritarian than democratic in its nature. Such actions as continual violation of human rights, deprivation of the interests of minorities, suppression of the opposition, and restriction of independent media represent very familiar authoritarian approaches, implemented under the very “noble” excuse of “defending democracy”.

According to King (2004), there is a real danger here common to most transitional states with strong charismatic leaders, who believe that “they talk and act on behalf of people and really do not understand why they need to limit their power by constitutional
frames if their actions are directed for the welfare of people” (p. 20). So, what is then the main difference between Shevardnadze’s “democracy” and Saakashvili’s “democracy”? Here it is important to understand why the policies of leaders with such different political backgrounds (Saakashvili and Shevardnadze) tend to have similarities in terms of state-society relations. Taking into consideration the remark of Laurence Broers (2005) on the fact that most of the leaders of the Rose Revolution had experience of high office under the previous regime, it is legitimate to see the same pattern of “elite isolation” which actually caused the collapse of Shavardnadze’s regime. This is very well explained in his statement (Broers, 2005, p. 343):

The Rose Revolution was more a revolt than a revolution, perpetrated by a coalition between political groups protesting their exclusion from power, and civil society actors protesting the methods used to enforce that exclusion. Key to its success was the capture of ‘democracy’ as a symbol capable of presenting the opposition in a light appealing to Western observers. Beyond the reinvigoration of the nationalist symbolism to portray the previous administration as ‘neo-Soviet, the Rose Revolution did not constitute a novel ideological project, nor do the policy bearings of the new administration differ in substance from those of its predecessor – only the place of implementation.

A good example of this approach could be the policy of bringing back the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which cannot be called constructive, as King fairly states, ”federations, confederations, and various forms of limited sovereignty have never really been put on the table in Georgia”(p. 18). The similarity of both Shevardnadze’s and Saakashvili’s policies in solving the territorial integrity problem is that both of them inherited the situation with separatist regions from previous government, both put out their election promises the return of the regions and restoration of the Georgian territorial integrity with the support of the West (mostly USA), creating the
effective programs. However, the most effective measures “de facto” were the military operations, which actually almost ruined Shevardnadze’s image in 1994 and finally brought the country to a state of war under Saakashvili’s presidency in August 2008.

The main problem was the lack of a specially elaborated constructive approach. Over the years (more than a decade) the separatist regions were trying to regulate their own lives and order in these territories, in the first case at the expense of the weak and corrupted central government institutions in Shevardnadze’s Georgia, and in second case reacting to Saakashvili’s often inflexible and uncompromising position. A decade is a long time for this situation to continue, taking into consideration different issues, especially the fact of Russia's direct influence in the regions as well as the inability of the Georgian government to create any reasonable model involving some rational form of limited sovereignty for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The people of these territories became accustomed to functioning separately from the Georgian government, creating their own systems of government, or even re-creating old ones with the familiar guidance of Russia. That is why Charles King’s statement that ”before becoming a real democracy Georgia should become a real state” sounds quite legitimate (p. 13). By virtue of recent circumstances it is evident that that the Georgian government has serious problems in carrying out and combining these tasks.

*November 2007 Events*

The most evident proof of the discontent of the majority of the population with the current government and a active zeal of the new government to the democratic
policies to the extent of using ‘repressive-revolutionary’ methods, could be explored in the course of November 2007 events. For the reason of the very recent nature of events and obvious bias of the different local sources (under the condition of the complete control of media by government) I will rely here mostly on the data of independent international non-profit (non-governmental) organizations like Human Rights Watch, which provided a well developed report (of December 19, 2007) on the course of events as well as elaboration official recommendations to the Georgian Government - [www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print](http://www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print). The methodology used by Human Right Watch in its report contains on analyses of the interview conducted by professional researchers from Human Rights Watch with 35 witnesses and victims of the events including: “the police dispersal of demonstrators on Rustaveli Avenue, the police dispersal of demonstrators at Rike, the raid on Imedi television, and the dispersal of people outside of the Imedi television studios” (p.6). It is also pointed out that Human Rights Watch representatives met with the representatives of the Ministry of the Interior Affairs and received written responses to questions submitted to the Office of the Prosecutor general of Georgia.

In its report Human Rights Watch (2007) also uses the statement issued by the co-reporters for Georgia from the Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (presented in Georgia during the events), according to which:’ The measures taken in the last few days represent a huge step backwards from the aspiration to become a fully-fledged democratic state that respects the fundamental values of pluralistic democracy and human rights” (p.5).
So, what was the reason of the peaceful demonstrations during November 7, 2007, which brought around 50,000 people (the number close to the Rose Revolution demonstrations) and inspired them to stay during cold November nights sleeping on the steps of the Parliament building and even to go on hunger strikes? Except for the regular violations of the human rights mentioned in the first part of this Chapter and giving an extra legal credentials (non-officially) to law enforcement officers, it was the official decision of the Parliament (initiated by the President), which pushed representatives of the united opposition and citizens of the state to organize themselves into peaceful demonstrations to express their strong disagreement with governmental policies (Areshidze, 2007, p. 221). That decision was connected with the amendments introduced by Parliament in December 2006 (with presidential National Movement Party majority) to the constitution to “extend the term of the current Parliament and allow for simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of 2008”. ¹ Thus, opposition parties were against these unexpected amendments as they granted a significant advantage to the ruling presidential Party (National Movement). The hostile attitude of the President and representatives of the National Movement Party to the any criticism from the opposition side, refusal to treat the opposition with respect and unwillingness to even reach the constructive dialog and social consensus on reforms, exasperated the opposition’s patience. Moreover, noticing the obvious intent of the experienced Saakashvili in keeping the opposition highly fragmented, the main

opposition parties (nine of them) decided to unite and formed the United National Council for this purpose (www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print, p. 8). These parties were actually of very different agenda: some more focused on economic issues, some more focused on the failures to fulfill the promises of the Rose Revolution, some were against the continuous use of the unconstitutional methods by Saakashvili’s government, some against the violations of basic human rights and freedoms. However, all of them became united against the decline of democratic values and freedoms. The opposition's demands were: “the release of all political prisoners, altering the conditions under which the parliamentary elections would be contested, restoring constitutional checks and balances, curbing arbitrary police power, ending pressure against media, representing all the political parties on electoral commissions, and electing all MPs via party lists” (www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print, p. 9).

The events were developing with growing tensions in Fall 2007. One of the main catalysts of the events was the arrest of former Defense Minister and Interior Minister of Georgia, a close Saakashvili’s associate in his fight with corruption, Mr. Irakli Okruashvili, on September 27, 2007. Okruashvili was arrested just two days after he gave public statements in which he accused Saakashvili in corruption and also in request (from Okruashvili) to kill Badri Patarkatsishvili, an influential businessmen and media tycoon (owner of Imedi TV station), who also claimed to support the opposition with all his assets (for what he was exiled from the country), besides, Okruashvili accused Saakashvili in hiding the information about the mysterious death of Zurab Zhvania, the main member of “Triumvirate” of the Rose Revolution (Areshidze, 2007, p. 164).
Moreover, Okruashvili created his own opposition Party “For a United Georgia”, creating a dangerous situation for Saakashvili as a former ally. There is no doubt, that the situation was too familiar for Saakashvili, and he could not underestimate the dangers of the possible revolutionary events. After all, he was the leader of the opposition leaders who stormed (‘peacefully’) the Parliament building during November 2003 events. Besides, Saakashvili was not very original in his response to the situation, blaming as usual the “Hand of Kremlin” behind the opposition’s “Russian-backed coup attempt”, trying to support these claims with a secret record of phone conversations of the leaders of the opposition, recorded secretly (and illegally) by Georgian secret police (Areshidze, 2007).

However, the growing number of people joining the demonstrations or just supporting them was also indicator of dissatisfaction with the new governmental policies. The character of this movement was quite spontaneous as the opposition did not have enough opportunities and means to organize people in that situation. According to Mariam Lanskoy and Giorgi Areshidze (2008), the demonstrations showed that:

Georgians were angry that the anticorruption campaign was selective and politically motivated; that while petty corruption among ordinary civil servants was severely published, the political elite could commit crimes with impunity; that basic freedoms, such as freedom of expression, were being curtailed; and that the rules of political competition were unfair” (p. 162).

The dispersal of the demonstrations was made in a very violent and inhuman way. Most of hunger strikers were severely beaten and despised without any warning from police. Others were dispersed with the use of the teargas and rubber bullets against peaceful demonstrators. And when people began to run away from police, they were followed and beaten by rubber batons. Most of journalists were also beaten and their
cameras were confiscated to prevent them from taping the events. What was remarkable, that most of the leaders of the opposition were targeted and severely beaten (like Levan Gachechiladze and Giorgi Khaindrava), and some of them even kidnapped (in order not to allow people to protect them) and beaten somewhere else by police in masks ([www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print](http://www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print), p.25). One of the kidnapped was the leader of the opposition Koba Davitashvili, leader of the People's Party. According to Human Rights Watch information (2007), he was attacked by twenty men in civilian clothes (in black) when he tried to buy a sound system for the meeting in Rike, and then he was put into the van and taken outside the city. During the trip he was tortured and beaten as in his interview for Human Rights Watch later he described the situation (November 15, 2007):

*I actually wouldn't even call it a beating, but torture. They used all means possible Periodically one of them would make a phone call and let the person on the other side of the line listen to my groans of pain. The one holding the phone then seemed very happy to hear the response of the other side of the line to me groaning. Then they brought me to the Gory military hospital. The doctor who met me seemed well informed that I was coming.*

Afterwards, Davitashvili was kept at the Gori Military Hospital. He was not allowed to leave the hospital or make a phone call. With the help of somebody from the hospital he managed to make calls to the speaker of the Parliament, Nino Burjanadze, who helped him to leave the hospital ([www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print](http://www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print), p. 18)

All these events took place in the early morning. In order to support opposition and demonstrators more and more people began to arrive to the Rustaveli avenue in front of the Parliament, reaching the number of 5 000. The number of police forces also
increased due to arrival of the special forces troops dressed in black and in black ski
masks, most of them without any identification form. First they used the water cannons
against the first lines of the demonstrators, but without a significant effect. Most of
people stood with their hand up to show the peaceful intentions of the protests
(www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print, photos and videos). However, not
seeing the effect, the police began to use teargas and rubber bullets without any warning.
This coursed a big panic among demonstrators who tries to flee the place often
unsuccessfully. Many of them were attacked by police including former State Minister
Avtandil Jorbenadze, who was attacked by six law enforcement officers and beaten with
a big wooden stick. Photos shows that enforcement officers continued to beat him after
These attacks continued even after the most of the Rustaveli avenue was cleaned. Human
Rights Watch representatives witnessed many of the attacks and interviewed the victims,
most of whom told that there were not going to file their complains to any law
enforcement agencies because they did not trust the Georgian judiciary system. Among
beaten was also Georgia’s Ombudsman, Sozar Subari, who was there monitoring the
demonstration and police response. Law enforcement agents continued to beat him even
after he declared that he was an Ombudsman (Human Rights Watch interview with Sozar
Subari, Ombudsman of Georgia, Tbilisi, November 12, 2007).

Opposition leaders called people to gather in different place, Rike which is a large
open space convenient for large gatherings. Thousands of demonstrators who fled from
Rustaveli avenue went there and several thousands more came to demonstrate their
solidarity with the opposition and with the victims. However, the meeting had a spontaneous character, more like a reaction to what happened several hours before. People did not know what to do in this critical situation, including the opposition leaders. Soon several trucks with the police officers and soldiers arrived there and the same violent dispersal of the demonstrator happened, with the use of teargas and rubber bullets. Journalists and most of the people who tried to videotape or even to film on cell phone the events were attacked violently (www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print).

One of the last events which received a wide publicity was the attack on Imedi television station the same evening of November 2007, when without any warning and even without any court order or warrant, hundreds of special forces troops broke into the building of the Imedi TV station and “detained 300 Imedi staff members and several members of Parliament as well as representatives of civil society and human rights activists, preparing for an upcoming live broadcast” (www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print,p.31). Most of the people were ordered to lie down on the floor and do not move at the gun point of special forces troops in black masks. The anchors of the Imedi just have several minutes to broadcast that the station was raided, before most of the equipment was crushed by troops. But that was enough to make supporters as well as relatives of the Imedi staff to come to express their protests near the building of the TV station. They also were violently dispersed with teargas and rubber bullets. Because of the high numbers of complains and wide publicity, the Prosecutor office had to open an investigation concerning the violent physical abuse of the demonstrators, but at the end, according to Human Rights Report:” No law
enforcement officers have been charged in connection with the events on November 7 and none has been suspended pending the investigation” (www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print, p. 35).

At 10 pm on November 7th President Saakashvili announced the state of emergency in the country for two weeks, which suspended: “articles 24 (freedom of speech), 25 (freedom of assembly) and 33 (the right to strike of the Georgian constitution, and prohibited private television stations from broadcasting news programs” (www.hrw/en/reports/2007/12/19/crossing-line-print, p. 36).

The international reaction was very fast, and several important officials from foreign governments were sent to Georgia, such as EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby and the United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza. The United States strongly recommended to the Georgian government:” to lift the state of emergency and restore all media broadcast, as these are necessary steps to restore the democratic conditions for the election and referendum” (Georgia: Need for Restraint and Respect for Rule of Law”, US Department of State press statement, November 8, 2007, http://www.state.gov).

In his attempt to manage the critical situation President of Georgia called a snap presidential elections planned on January 5, 2008. What is remarkable, the election campaign headquarters of Michail Saakashvili was headed by the Minister of Interior Affairs of Georgia. Under the condition of the active pressure from the politicized security agencies and coercive structures in the elections, full control of media and oppressive measures against opposition the chances for victory for Saakashvili were quite
high (Areshidze G. & Lanskoy M., 2008). During the elections Saakashvili emphasized the integration of Georgia to NATO and Euro Union. Finally, Saakashvili won the elections with 53 percent of vote (Areshidze G. & Lanskoy M., 2008, p. 164). However, there were a lot of concerns connected with the spread of votes, as Saakashvili lost votes in Tbilisi, with his main support coming from ethnic minority regions which usually were strongly controlled by the local administration. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) report:” In 24 percent of the precincts that it observed in these areas, the vote-tally process was 'bad' or 'very bad', as there were widespread reports of various types of electoral irregularities – ranging from intimidation, to inaccurate vote lists and vote tallies, to failure to adjudicate complaints” (.Areshidze G. & Lanskoy M., 2008, p. 165). However, after the parallel vote tabulation was conducted, it showed 50.8 percent, what made international monitoring agencies to conclude that there was “no mass fraud” and the opposition leaders to state that there was “just enough fraud” for Saakashvili’s victory (Areshidze G. & Lanskoy M., 2008, p. 165).

**Conclusion**

The use of violent and aggressive measures against the protesters and the opposition proves that the main goal of these actions was to terrify and to punish the demonstrators as well as to prevent others from expressing their protests. The facts of targeting and attacking (but not arresting) the opposition leaders as well as journalists shows that this approach was not spontaneous, but well elaborated in advance. Moreover, such kind of spreading of fear is directed against any future protests. However, this
method is not new at all as it is familiar well enough from the experience of the totalitarian state. This is appropriate to mention here that according to the special annual report of the Ombudsmen (Public Defender) of Georgia Sozar Subari “Anatomy of the Human Rights Violations in Georgia”, the main problem of the political system in Georgia with its repressive nature is well expressed “the taking political decisions which often are in conflict with the existing laws” (2007). And the fear is the most effective instrument in realization of the repressive measures without objections, and usually in the name of the 'revolutionary' state interests. In this system the governmental officials therefore obey not the rule of law, but the orders from 'above', becoming the part of the system. Furthermore, since the courts in Georgia are not independent, being in full dependence from the Procurator Office and governmental officials, with the only function left – “to register officially and to notarize the decisions which were taken in the different places” (Subari, 2007). The more cynical in this case sounds the appeals not to stress these cases and often to cover the truth, as such picture of violations of human rights and civil liberties could become an obstacle for integration to NATO and European Union. Thus, such actions are creating the image, which unfortunately does not comply with reality. Here, Georgian government is not alone, as there are strong supporters of this progressive image.

The fact is that from the beginning the Rose Revolution was presented to the world as the great success, as the most demonstrative victory of the democracy in the post-soviet area. Citing Lincoln: “The Rose Revolution represented a victory not only for the Georgian people, but also for democracy globally” (p. 327). But was it really the case?
Lauren Broers (2005) poses a provocative, but legitimate question: If Georgian Rose Revolution is really a “success story” of democratic development in the post-Soviet era or it is just another myth created by the media to meet the agenda, and funding requirements, of the West's policy of “spreading democracy”? (p. 122)

Here comes to mind famous quote of Richard Pipes on Russian Revolution “Rebellions happen; revolutions are made.” Irakli Areshidze makes an interesting conclusions concerning this question. The starting point here was comparison with the Revolution in Serbia and overthrow of dictator - Milosevic. But was the figure of Shevardnadze really so similar to Milosevic, as well as the system of rule? If you asked this question in the middle of 90s, most of western representatives would identify Shevardnadze' s figure with progress and democracy. The open level of critique of Shevardnadze in mass media could not be conducted under the dictatorship at all. According to Irakli Areshidze (2007), the main problem – the fraud of elections did not go under the silent agreement and the data shows that most of the main opposition parties got their seats in the Parliament. (p. 302). Moreover, it was clear that Shevardnadze was not going to stay in office after 2005 because of the lost of the public support. Thus, if there was a chance to continue constitutional reforms and develop a pluralist political culture, had Georgia more chances for the consolidation of democracy? Was it necessary again to bring change through street demonstrations? According to Areshidze (2007) ,what finally happened was that: “Georgia ended up with the leader, who has faced virtually no opposition, has no limits to his power and was chosen more due to the image of a 'revolutionary hero'” (p. 303).
However, the post-revolutionary government are often blamed in the authoritarian styles of government and the lack of experience. Hopefully, the second term of Saakashvili will go in a less extreme mode. But this could happen just if the new government remember the value of democratic ideals they fought for in November 2003. Thus, the Georgian case shows that although transition to democracy in post-Soviet states is often problematic and very challenging, it could lead to positive and significant change, but it takes much more time and efforts than was expected initially and requires the commitment to democratic values from the new government.
References


**On-line sources:**


Appendix A: Georgian Chronics 1989-2006 (Lang, 2007)

1989, April 9 - A large pro-independence demonstration in Tbilisi is crushed by the Soviet troops leaving 20 people dead. As a result, the Communist regime in Georgia is dramatically discredited and pro-independence national movement takes political initiative.

1989, July 16 - There are skirmishes between the Georgian and the Abkhaz in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. The immediate trigger is the protest of the Abkhaz against the opening of a branch of Tbilisi University in Sukhumi, the general background – Georgian opposition to Abkhaz demands of increasing the level of autonomy of Abkhazia or seceding from Georgia.

1989, November 23 - First violent clashes take place between Georgian and Ossetian nationalist activists in the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast. The latter demand the increase of the level of autonomy of South Ossetia or joining the North Ossetian Republic in Russia, while the former oppose the existence of the Ossetian autonomy.

1990, October 28 - The Round Table, a nationalist coalition led by former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia, wins the multiparty parliamentary elections thus ending the Communist rule; in November, Gamsakhurdia becomes chairman of parliament.

1990, December 9 - Regional elections that are held in South Ossetia without an authorization from Tbilisi elect a new regional council which declares the creation of the South Ossetian Republic.


1991, March 31 - Referendum overwhelmingly supports independence of Georgia.


1991, May 26 - Gamsakhurdia is elected president by 87 per cent of vote.

1991, September - Elections to the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia are held based on a power-sharing agreement leading to the creation of a regional parliament that can only make principal decisions if the Georgian and Abkhaz groups of deputies come to an agreement.
1992, December 22 - Fighting erupts between government troops and opposition militias in downtown Tbilisi.

1992, January 6 - Gamsakhurdia flees and power is taken by the Military Council consisting of Tengiz Kitovani and Jaba Ioseliani, the leaders of the National Guard and Mkhedrioni.

1992, March - Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Communist leader of Georgia (1972-85) and the foreign minister of the Soviet Union (1985-90; 1991) returns to Georgia. He is appointed head of the newly created State Council.

1992, June 24 - In the Russian city of Dagomys, an agreement is reached on ceasefire in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, to be monitored by the three-partite Georgian-Ossetian-Russian peacekeeping force.

1992, August - After Georgian troops enter Abkhazia with a declared aim to protect the railway and highways, fighting erupts between them and local separatist forces.

1992, October - Parliamentary elections lead to the creation of Parliament with no clear majority party but generally supportive of Eduard Shevardnadze. In a separate vote, Shevardnadze is elected, uncontested, chairman of Parliament and head of state.

1993, May - Tengiz Kitovani and Jaba Ioseliani resigned from their formal positions in the government thus signifying the strengthening of Eduard Shevardnadze’s influence.

1993, September - The war in Abkhazia ends in the defeat of the Georgian forces. The ethnic Georgian population is being driven out of Abkhazia.

1993, October - After Georgian troops leave Abkhaizia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia’s supporters escalate their insurgency in western Georgia aiming to depose Eduard Shevardnadze’s government. Shevardnadze seeks military assistance from Russia and makes a statement on joining the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

1993, November - Supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia in western Georgia are defeated.

1993, November - Constituent assembly of the Citizens’ Union of Georgia, the new ruling party headed by Eduard Shevardnadze, is held in Tbilisi.
1993, December 31 - Zviad Gamsakhurdia was found dead in a village in western Georgia. The official version is suicide, though his supporters allege he was murdered.

1994, March - Georgian Parliament ratifies a decision to join the CIS.

1994, May 14 - A Russia-brokered ceasefire agreement is signed between the Georgian government and Abkhaz separatists. Russian troops serving under the aegis of the CIS troops become the peacekeeping force, with UN Observers Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) mandated to monitor the peacekeeping operation.

1994, September - A new program of economic reforms based on recommendations of the International Monetary Fund starts with liberalizing prices for bread, public transport and fuel.

1994, December 3 - Giorgi Chanturia, a popular leader of the National Democratic Party, is assassinated.

1995, January - Tengiz Kitovani is arrested while leading a group of armed volunteers, ostensibly to regain Abkhazia by force.

1995, August 24 - New Constitution is adopted that in the main follows the US model of separation of the executive and legislative powers, though with a somewhat greater role of the president.

1995, August 29 - Eduard Shevardnadze survives an assassination attempt. Igor Giorgadze, the minister of security with Russian connections, is charged with masterminding the attempt in cooperation with leaders of Mkhedrioni militia. Giorgadze flees to Russia, more than 200 members of Mkhedrioni are arrested. The paramilitary organization Mkhedrioni banned in September.

1995, September 15 - Georgia and Russia sign an agreement on four Russian military bases being stationed in Georgia for 25 years. There is an understanding that Georgian Parliament will only ratify the agreement if Russia helps Georgia solve the Abkhaz and South Ossetian issues. The agreement was never ratified.


1995, November 5 - Parliamentary and presidential elections are held. Shevardnadze is elected president, while his party – the Citizens' Union of Georgia – becomes the majority party in Parliament.

1998, February 9 - Shevardnadze survives another attempt on his life, this time blamed on supporters of former president Gamsakhurdia with Chechen connections.
1998, May - Fighting breaks out in Abkhazia’s Gali District. Abkhaz troops suppress Georgian guerilla groups, while the Georgian population that had returned to the district flees again.

1999, April - Georgia is admitted to the Council of Europe.

1999, October 31 - New parliamentary elections lead to even stronger majority of the Citizens’ Union in Parliament.

2000, April 9 - Shevardnadze is re-elected president.

2001 June/July - Russia hands over Vaziani military base to Georgia.

2001, October - A group of Chechen fighters fleeing the Chechnya traverse to Abkhazia and, with support from local Georgian paramilitaries, engage in short-term clashes with Abkhaz troops. The latter successfully drive out the intruders.

2001, October 30 - A raid of the Security Ministry forces on Rustavi-2, the most popular independent TV channel which was often critical of the Shevardnadze regime, leads to anti-government demonstrations. Zurab Zhvania, the reformist speaker of Parliament, resigns in solidarity with the protesters. Shevardnadze sacks the government but shortly reappoints everybody save for the two most powerful and popular ministers, those of internal affairs and security.

2001, September - Mikheil Saakashvili, the reformist minister of justice, resigns from the Shevardnadze government and starts the National Movement, strongly oppositional to the government.

2002, February - A US government representative says there are Al Qaida members in Pankisi.

2002, April - The USA launches its “Train and Equip” program to prepare Georgian troops for counter terrorist operations.

2002, June 2 - Local elections lead to humiliating defeat of the ruling party.

2002, November - Saakashvili becomes the chairman of the Tbilisi city council.

2002, September 11 - Russian President Vladimir Putin declares that Russia may invade Georgian unless it takes care of Chechen rebels that hide in Pankisi Gorge, which neighbors Chechnya.

2002, October - Georgia starts an anti-terrorist operation in Pankisi that leads to the re-establishment of state control over the area.
2003, May - Work begins on laying the Georgian section of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline that would take Caspian oil from Azerbaijan to the Mediterranean coast in Turkey.

2003, November 2 - Parliamentary elections are held with numerous irregularities noted by local and international observers. Large-scale protest demonstrations continue for three weeks and lead to the seizure of Parliament and the resignation of President Shevardnadze on November 23.

2004, January 4 - Mikheil Saakashvili is elected president with overwhelming support (96 percent of the vote) in snap elections that were considered free and fair by internal and international observers. Zurab Zhvania is appointed prime minister.

2004, March 28 - In the repeat partial parliamentary elections, the United National Movement (created on the basis of merger between Mikheil Saakashvili’s National Movement and the United Democrats led by Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Zhvania), gets 66 percent of the vote. The only other group to overcome the 7-percent threshold was the bloc of the New Right and Industrialist parties.

2004, May 6 - Mass protest rallies in the autonomous republic of Ajara, supported by the Tbilisi government, lead to ouster of Aslan Abashidze, an authoritarian ruler of Ajara.

2004, June - Georgia is admitted to the European Neighborhood Program (ENP).

2004, August - Tensions in South Ossetia lead to occasional fighting leaving more than 10 people dead.

2005, February 3 - Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania is found dead in an apartment in Tbilisi.

2005, May 9-10 US President George W. Bush visits Georgia proclaiming it the “beacon of democracy”.

2005, May - Agreement signed with Russia on the withdrawal of the remaining military bases to be completed by the end of 2008.

2006, September - Georgia enters Intensified Dialogue for membership in NATO.

2006, October 5 Municipal elections in Georgia lead to domination of United National Movement in all municipalities of Georgia.