

‘COLOR REVOLUTIONS’ IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE:  
THE CASE OF GEORGIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **‘COLOR REVOLUTIONS’ IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE: THE CASE OF GEORGIA**

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The objective of this thesis is to explain the dynamics bringing about the removal of the Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze from power through the ‘Rose Revolution’. Relying on an historical sociological approach, contrary to the society-centered and the state-centered studies in the literature on the ‘Rose Revolution’, this thesis argues that the coercive, administrative, extractive, distributive and regulative incapacitation of the Georgian state, which resulted in the loss of state autonomy vis-à-vis domestic and external political actors before the ‘Rose Revolution’, led to the removal of Shevardnadze. In fact, the society-centered studies, which exclusively focus exclusively on the political opposition, the NGOs and the mass media, fail to explain the dynamics of the ‘Rose Revolution’ since they neglect the role of the state. Likewise, the state-centered studies’ exclusive focus on the coercive aspect of the Georgian state capacity resulted in the insufficient explanation of the ‘Rose Revolution’ since they neglect

other aspects of state capacity such as administrative, extractive, distributive and regulative.

The thesis consists of six main chapters, introduction and conclusion. Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 3 explores the historical background. Chapter 4 examines the process leading up to the 'Rose Revolution'. Chapter 5 and 6 analyze the 'Rose Revolution' and its aftermath. Before the concluding chapter, Chapter 7 compares the Georgian case with the other seven post-Soviet cases.

Keywords: Georgia, the Rose Revolution, historical sociology, state capacity, state autonomy.

## ÖZ

### SOVYET SONRASI COĞRAFYA'DA RENKLİ DEVRİMLER: GÜRCİSTAN ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tezin amacı Gürcistan'da Devlet Başkanı Edward Şevardnadze'nin devrilmesi ile sonuçlanan Gül Devrimi'ni doğuran dinamikleri açıklamaktır. Tarihsel sosyoloji yaklaşımına dayanan bu tez, literatürdeki toplum-merkezcil ve devlet-merkezcil çalışmalardan farklı olarak, Gül Devrimi'ne giden süreçte Gürcü devletinin zorlayıcı, idari, gelir sağlayıcı ve dağıtıcı ve düzenleyici kapasitelerinin çöküşünün, rejim değişikliğini isteyen iç ve dış güçlere karşı devletin özerkliğini kaybetmesi sonucunu doğurarak, Şevardnadze'nin devrilmesine neden olduğunu savunmaktadır. Sadece siyasi muhalefete, sivil toplum kuruluşlarına ve medyaya odaklanan toplum-merkezcil çalışmalar devletin rolünü göz ardı ettiklerinden Gül Devrimi'nin dinamiklerini açıklayamamaktadırlar. Benzer şekilde, mevcut devlet-merkezcil yaklaşımların sadece Gürcü devletinin zorlayıcı kapasitesine odaklanmaları, idari, gelir sağlayıcı ve dağıtıcı ve düzenleyici devlet

kapasitelerine kayıtsız kaldıklarından Gü1 Devrimi'ni eksik açıklamalarına neden olmaktadır.

Tez, giriş ve sonucun dışında altı ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Bölüm 2 tezin kuramsal çerçevesini geliştirmektedir. Bölüm 3 tarihsel arka planı tartışmaktadır. Bölüm 4 'Gül Devrimi'ne giden süreci incelemektedir. Bölüm 5 ve 6 'Gül Devrimi'ni ve sonrasını analiz etmektedir. Sonuçtan önceki bölüm olan 7. Bölüm, Gürcistan'ı diğer Sovyet sonrası ülkelerle karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gürcistan, 'Gül Devrimi', tarihsel sosyoloji, devlet kapasitesi, devlet özerkliği.

To My Beloved Daughter, Zeynep Ceyda



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Three post-Soviet country leaders were removed from power through ‘color revolutions’ between 2003 and 2005. First, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze was removed from power through protests calling for his resignation following the allegedly fraudulent elections in 2003. The events have been called as the ‘Rose Revolution’. Afterwards, toppling of Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine in 2004 and Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan in 2005 were experienced. These ‘color revolutions’ have been referred as the ‘Orange Revolution’ and ‘Tulip Revolution’, respectively. While the removal of these leaders emboldened the oppositions in other post-Soviet countries, Kyrgyzstan proved to be the last case of ‘color revolutions’ in the post-Soviet space. The efforts to remove authoritarian leaders through protests proved to be abortive in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Russia and Uzbekistan. The incumbents countered the challenges coming from the society effectively in these countries. As a result, regime stability rather than change was observed.

Hardly any political development in the region has had a broad and serious impact on the post-Soviet space than the ‘color revolutions’. Alarmed by the fall of Shevardnadze, the presidents of other post-Soviet countries have taken various measures to ensure their survival. Since the pro-Western leaders, especially in Georgia and Ukraine, came to power as a result of the ‘color revolutions’, the rivalry between the United States (US) and Russia intensified. Moscow increased its efforts to prevent encirclement with pro-Western regimes coming to power through the color ‘revolutions’.

Due to its importance, the ‘color revolution’ phenomenon has turned out to be one of the most widely discussed issues by political scientists, policy makers

and the media. The students of regime trajectories set out to explain the causes of regime change or continuity in the face of the diffusion of ‘color revolutions’, the reasons behind the divergence of regime outcomes in different post-Soviet republics facing the same challenge and the nature of the regimes that have come to power after the ‘revolutions’.

### **1.1. Scope and Objective**

This study focuses on the dynamics shaping the regime trajectories in the post-Soviet space in the face of anti-regime demonstrations. More specifically, it explores the dynamics causing the removal of Shevardnadze from power in Georgia through the ‘Rose Revolution’. In addition to the in-depth analysis of the ‘Rose Revolution’, it also briefly discusses the processes leading to the ‘Orange Revolution’ and the ‘Tulip Revolution’ in Kyrgyzstan. Besides the dynamics bringing about regime changes in these countries, the study also briefly touches upon the reasons behind the regime stability in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and Uzbekistan despite the threats to the regime as well. Lastly, the study addresses whether the regime changes in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine resulted in democratization.

‘Color revolution’ is a key phrase that appears frequently in this study. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify what it really is to avoid ambiguity and misguidance. The phrases ‘color revolution’, ‘Rose Revolution’, ‘Orange Revolution’ and ‘Tulip Revolution’ are placed in quotation mark to indicate that the study does not view the events that brought about the fall of Shevardnadze, Kuchma and Akayev as real revolutions.

Although revolution has become a catchword in the literature to refer to the ruling elite changes in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, this study avoids approaching them as revolutions due to the differences of these phenomena from the earlier revolutions. In the literature, revolution is generally described in line with Samuel Huntington’s definition: “A revolution is a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and



policies.”<sup>1</sup> A very different picture emerges if one examines the Rose, Orange and Tulip ‘Revolutions’. Shevardnadze, Kuchma and Akayev were removed from power without violence. More importantly, these regime changes have not led to fundamental changes in the social and political structure. Among the three, the ‘Rose Revolution’ resulted in more intensive changes including the re-imposing control over previously uncontrolled areas, such as Adjara, or increasing power of the president at the expense of other branches. The governments that took power in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine dissolved in 5 years time and they did not have time for engineering wide scale changes. However, even the ‘Rose Revolution’ has remained short of introducing substantial changes in the class structures or the political institutions as in the case of French and Bolshevik Revolutions. The inappropriateness of considering the events in these countries as revolutions becomes more apparent when one takes into account that the elite that came to power through ‘color revolutions’ had once part of the regimes they removed from power. As a result, this study will consider the ‘color revolutions’ as only regime changes, i.e. replacements of incumbent governments with new ones.<sup>2</sup> It is also necessary to add that different from the majority of the studies in the literature, the study will approach these regime changes without democratization bias. To be more specific, ‘color revolutions’ are approached as the change of the holders of the state powers. A further examination will be carried out to see whether these regime changes helped democratization, authoritarianism or repetition of the governance practices of the old regime.

The objective of the study is to find an answer to the research question that what caused the regime change in Georgia through the ‘Rose Revolution’ in 2003. The study aims to provide a helpful analytical framework by moving beyond the examination of causes and the actors that appear decisive on the surface. To this end, it will engage in testing the explanatory framework used by both this study and other studies in the literature by including the examination of regime

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase ‘regime stability’ is used to refer to the survival of incumbents or to coming to power of new presidents when the old leaders continue to exercise power behind the scenes and/or the status quo is maintained. The phrase ‘regime trajectory’ will be used to refer to the courses that regimes follow over time, which can include both change and stability.

trajectories in other countries that faced similar challenges because of the diffusion of ‘color revolutions’ across the region. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the analysis of regime trajectories in other countries will be quite brief compared to Georgia. The study will only briefly examine the factors shaping regime trajectories in other post-Soviet countries to show that whereas the similarities with Shevardnadze’s Georgia brought about regime change, differences in terms of explanatory variables used in this study resulted in regime stability. In this way, the study aims to demonstrate that analytical framework used to explain the ‘Rose Revolution’ is effective and alternative approaches are inefficient in many ways.

For the brief comparative analysis, the dissertation chooses cases from the region that show significant variation. As Chapter 7 will demonstrate better, the countries selected show significant variation in terms of state capacity to monopolize power and control, to ensure compliance through coercion, to extract and distribute resources and regulate the behavior of individuals and groups and to resist external pressures for regime change. Moreover, the study also includes cases with different foreign policy orientations and different degrees of external support for the regimes in power. In this way, the study tests the strength of the main argument of the study developed on the basis of the case study of Georgia against the cases showing variance in terms of both the state capacity and regime trajectories.

Georgia is chosen as the main case to be examined because it is the first example of ‘color revolution’ phenomena in the post-Soviet space and it had important repercussions for the wider region both in terms of regime trajectories and international politics. The Georgian ‘Rose Revolution’ is not a huge event like the French or Bolshevik Revolution but like these revolutions, it has implications going beyond national boundaries in the post-Soviet region.

Before the ‘Revolution’, Georgia was only a small and little studied former Soviet Republic. The overthrow of Shevardnadze through a color ‘revolution’ and the nature of the post-‘Revolution’ regime attracted the attention of political scientists, leaders of other countries all around the world, especially in the post-Soviet region and the media. Whereas the ‘Rose Revolution’ served as a model to follow for the anti-regime forces in the rest of post-Soviet space, the autocrats set

out to strengthen their grip on power as they have attributed Shevardnadze's fall to his weakness. In another respect, the regime established in Georgia after the fall of the previous leadership started to be examined carefully in wide circles in an attempt to evaluate whether the 'color revolutions' in post-Soviet region can be regarded as a positive step for democratization. Saakashvili regime provides clues for whether the regimes created after the 'color revolutions' in the region will contribute to the entrenchment of democratic values and practices or authoritarianism. Lastly, the relations of the US and the European Union (EU) with Saakashvili have sent messages for the post-Soviet countries intending to forge closer relations with the West and Russia who opposes these relations. This is especially valid for the former Soviet republics desiring the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership. Relations between Tbilisi and the West also will influence the relations between the US, European countries and Russia.

## **1.2. Literature Review**

This section is devoted to exploring the existing studies on the 'Rose Revolution'. In the literature, three types of studies can be found: the studies that exclusively focus on the 'Rose Revolution', the ones that include the analysis of other color revolutions in post-Soviet space besides it and analyses that account for the dynamics that brought regime change and stability in countries that became the scene of anti-regime protests. This study will include all these three kinds of studies in the literature review that follows.

As far as the main explanatory variable used to account for the dynamics leading to the 'Rose Revolution' are concerned, two broad trends can be identified in the literature. Whereas some studies emphasize the role of societal dynamics in the 'Rose Revolution', other studies advocate that 'Rose Revolution' can be understood better by focusing on the dynamics associated with the state in Georgia rather the society. While the first group of the studies will be called as society-centered, the second group will be referred as state-centered in this study.

This section will shed light on the ascendancy of society-centered approaches with the unfolding of 'color revolutions' including the 'Rose Revolution', the reaction of the state-centered camp to society-centered studies

and the weaknesses of existing studies to suggest ways to overcome these weaknesses through an alternative approach to be offered in the next section.

The tendency to use either society or state-centered approach to explain regime trajectories can also be identified in the literature over post-Soviet political transition process.<sup>3</sup> Before the onset of the ‘color revolutions’, transitology approach was widely used to account for the political transition in the region. According to the transitologists, the appropriate way to understand transitions is to focus on the role of the elites and the interactions among them.<sup>4</sup> It is appropriate to consider this approach as state-centered since it has viewed the transition to be initiated by the divisions in the state elite rather than the societal mechanisms. In transitology societal mobilization was approached as a factor that can endanger rather than contribute to the successful transition by spoiling the pacts between the elites.

Mass mobilization in the context of the ‘color revolutions’, especially incumbent resignations in the face of mass protests following flawed elections led an increasing number of scholars to attack anti-mass mobilization stance of the transitology approach. When the faith in the power of the society received a boost with the unfolding of electoral protests and the regime changes that followed, the pendulum has swung towards society-centered explanations to political change in post-Soviet space. Mass mobilization spreading through regional diffusion, strength and unity of the opposition and media have come to be increasingly referred as keys to the success of the overthrow attempts.

As a prominent advocate of society-centered approach, Valerie Bunce underscored the role of diffusion mechanisms in stimulating mass mobilization against the incumbents and creating regime change in the wave of ‘color revolutions’. Together with Sharon L. Wolchik, Bunce argued that the activists which participated in earlier ‘color revolutions’ in Slovakia and Serbia both

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<sup>3</sup> In this study, the term ‘transition’ refers to as an open-ended process, not inevitably destined to arrive at establishment of a democratic system.

<sup>4</sup> This understanding is exemplified by Terry Lynn Karl, “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 11 (October 1990), pp. 1–21 and Terry Lynn Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter Karl, “Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe,” *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (May 1991), pp. 269–284.

inspired the Georgian activists in *Kmara* (Enough)<sup>5</sup> and shared their experiences and tactics with them. The impact of this diffusion proved to be highly important in the writers' opinion as the tactics that the young Georgian activist borrowed were instrumental in revealing the ineffectiveness of the corrupt and authoritarian Shevardnadze regime.<sup>6</sup>

As another member of the society-centered camp, Giorgi Kandelaki similarly put emphasis on the role that *Kmara* played in the 'Rose Revolution' as portraying it as an essential actor providing the mobilization of the Georgian society by combating the pervasive apathy.<sup>7</sup>

Before the 'color revolutions', Michael McFaul had focused on the balance of power between democrats and authoritarians to account for regime trajectories in post-Soviet region. After the 'color revolutions', he formulated a new framework, which was widely cited in the literature, to account for the regime changes in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. In his latter studies he emphasizes the importance of seven conditions for the success of 'color revolutions': a semi-autocratic regime, an unpopular incumbent, a united and organized opposition, an ability to quickly convince the public that voting results were falsified, an independent media to inform citizens about the vote fraud, an opposition capable of mobilizing tens of thousands of demonstrators to protest electoral fraud and divisions in the armed forces.<sup>8</sup>

His underscoring of common features that the countries that experience regime including Georgia shared needs thorough inquiry. It is necessary to examine whether the oppositions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan were as united as McFaul suggested in reality or the free media really existed in all three countries and played the roles discussed by the writer. Likewise, he does not

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<sup>5</sup> *Kmara* was the main anti-Shevardnadze youth group during the 'Rose Revolution'.

<sup>6</sup> Valerie Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Youth and Electoral Revolutions in Slovakia, Serbia, and Georgia", *SAIS Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer-Fall 2006), pp. 59, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, "Georgia's Rose Revolution: A Participant's Perspective", *Special Report*, No. 167, United States University of Peace (July 2006), pp. 5-8.

<sup>8</sup> Michael McFaul, "The Second Wave of Democratic Breakthroughs in the Post-Communist World: Comparing Serbia 2000, Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004, and Kyrgyzstan 2005", *Danyliw/Jacyk Working Papers*, No. 4 (Center for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, University of Toronto, 2005), pp. 3-4.

provide an effective explanation for why some countries survived in the face of weaker anti-regime mobilizations whereas others survived despite they confront stronger protests.

McFaul's studies also lack causal depth. He does not provide a theoretical framework to understand why the media function independently in some post-communist countries but not in others or why the international election observers were allowed to observe the elections in some post-Soviet states but blocked in some others. Moreover, he does not bother to explain why anti-regime mobilization was strong in some countries whereas it was weak in some others.

Mark R. Beissinger also joined the scholars who emphasize the role of opposition protests, or the societal factors to say it another way, in regime changes in the wave of 'color revolutions'. As in the case of Bunce and Wolchik, he attributes special importance to the role of diffusion in the spread of anti-regime mobilizations across the region. In "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions", he reveals this by arguing that the influence of the example can make up for domestic disadvantages in a country. According to him, the local groups can overcome difficulties in the area of collective action by making use of the experiences of the earlier successful 'revolutions'. He further underlined the role of regional diffusion by advocating that without the inspiration and experience drawn from the previous cases, there would be more cases of unsuccessful overthrow attempts or fewer efforts to remove incumbents through mass protests.<sup>9</sup> He states that the model that introduced by the Serbian 'Bulldozer Revolution' and followed by activists in other countries such as Georgia is marked by six elements: the use of stolen elections to mobilize the masses against the regime, foreign support for the local opposition movements, radical youth movements using unusual protest strategies, united opposition, massive electoral monitoring and wide-scale mobilization after the announcement of falsified election results.<sup>10</sup> As in the case of McFaul, Beissinger regards technical and financial support from the foreign

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<sup>9</sup> Mark R. Beissinger, "Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions", *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 2007), p. 260.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

governments, mainly the US government, as a critical factor in the strengthening of the anti-regime forces in the society besides cross-border sharing.

With his exclusive focus on the influence of the experiences created by the successful ‘revolutions’, Beissinger ignores that incumbents in the post-Soviet space also take lessons from the removal of their counterparts in other countries and strengthen state structures to avoid a similar fate. Moreover, as in the case of McFaul, the features shared by the countries experienced regime change, such as united opposition, are too easily generalized by Beissinger.

Michael Simecka gives another example of society-centered explanations for the ‘Rose Revolution’ in particular and the ‘color revolutions’ in general. In his article, Simecka underscores the utility of focusing on the dynamics of mobilization in the context of intraregional diffusion to understand regime changes in Georgia and Ukraine. Like Beissinger, he draws attention to the ways that the two youth movements in Georgia and Ukraine, *Kmara* and *Pora* (It’s Time), were inspired and trained by their Serbian counterpart *Otpor* (Resistance) activists.<sup>11</sup> As another common point with Beissinger, who advocated that diffusion can compensate for domestic structural disadvantages, he argues that diffusion can bring even a relatively underdeveloped civil society into action. What he ignores is the fact that although diffusion is really influential in mobilizing the society in post-Soviet world, effectiveness of the anti-regime mobilization is causing regime change varies from case to case and there is the need to shed light on the factors bringing about this variance.

Joshua A. Tucker is another writer that emphasizes the role of the society rather than the state in ‘color revolutions’, including the ‘Rose Revolution’. Due to the importance he attributed to the role of mass protests in the success of the ‘color revolutions’, he focuses on motivation of the masses to participate in the protest or collective action problem. In “Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Color Revolutions”, he focuses on why protestors choose to take to the streets following instances of electoral fraud in countries like Georgia which experienced regime change as a result of popular

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Simecka, “Diffusion and Civil Society Mobilization in Color Revolutions”, *Central and Eastern European Political Science Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1(2009), p. 3.

protest. He argues that the citizens, which had tolerated the abuses of the government, can rise against the incumbent regimes and say enough as in the case of Georgia following the fraudulent elections. For him, electoral fraud caused mass mobilization because it decreased the cost of participating into the protest and mass mobilization and increased the expected benefits.<sup>12</sup> He does not take into account that the 2003 elections, which led to the removal of Shevardnadze, was not the first fraudulent elections in Georgia and post-election protests failed to cause incumbent removals in some other post-Soviet countries. It is required to shed light on the factors that determine the success of mass protests.

Though less concerned with diffusion dynamics, Ghia Nodia also opted for explaining the regime change in Georgia by relying on society-centered explanations. In “Breaking the Mold of Powerlessness: The Meaning of Georgia’s Latest Revolution”, he argues that the success of the ‘Rose Revolution’ was centered on the strengthening of three major societal actors thanks to the permissive environment under Shevardnadze: the political opposition, the media and civil society organizations. Whereas the political opposition offered the leadership, media was influential in delegitimizing the regime and mobilizing the masses and the civil society prepared the ground through civic education and ensured the better organization of the protests during the ‘Revolution’.<sup>13</sup> Although societal forces played important roles in the ‘Rose Revolution’ in line with the argument of the author, it is necessary to take into account that the same forces failed to realize removal of Mikheil Saakashvili from power and the societal forces in other countries remained short of realizing regime change. It is required to find out what changed in post-‘Revolution’ Georgia and what brought about the failure of societal forces in other countries.

This exclusive preoccupation with societal factors soon led to the reaction of a limited number of scholars. As these writers drive attention to the role of state in shaping regime trajectories in the face of threats posed by the ‘color

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<sup>12</sup> Joshua A. Tucker, “Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Color Revolutions”, *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2007), p. 536.

<sup>13</sup> Ghia Nodia, “Breaking the Mold of Powerlessness: The Meaning of Georgia’s Latest Revolution” in Zurab Karumidze and James V. Wertsch *Enough! The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia 2003* (Nova Science Publishers, Inc.: 2005), p. 102.



revolutions’, they constitute the state-centered literature on the ‘color revolutions’ in general and the ‘Rose Revolution’, in particular.

As a pioneer of this approach, Mark N. Katz suggested paying close attention to coercive apparatus of the state. He argued that the degree of solidarity between the regime and the armed forces determined the outcomes of the overthrow attempts within the context of ‘color revolutions’. He considered the defections from the security forces to the opposition as a key factor for the success of the overthrow attempts and attributed the variance of political outcomes in the face of ‘color revolutions’ to the differences among post-Soviet countries in this respect.<sup>14</sup>

The studies by Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky also have an important place in the literature that developed in reaction to society-centered accounts on the ‘color revolutions’. In “The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War”, they underlined the need to understand why some regimes are less vulnerable to diffusion, the mass protests and foreign pressures than the others are.<sup>15</sup> In their opinion, the answer to this question lies in the differences in the coercive capacities of the state in question. They argue that coercive state capacity, which is centered on cohesion and scope, has often been more significant than the opposition strength in determining whether autocrats fall or remain in power. Whereas high degrees of cohesion enables the incumbents to carry on risky measures such as firing on large crowds thanks to compliance within the coercive apparatus, high scope allows the ruling elite to penetrate large parts of society through a well-trained coercive apparatus.<sup>16</sup>

Levitsky and Way point out that although Armenian ruling elite faced a fairly better mobilized opposition compared to Georgia since independence, it was able to sideline the challengers. Thanks to the effective coercive apparatus, which consists of police, military and Yekrapah Union of Karabagh Veterans and applies

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<sup>14</sup> Mark N. Katz, “Democratic Revolutions: Why Some Succeed, Why Others Fail”, *World Affairs*, Vol. 166, No. 3 (2004), pp. 163-170.

<sup>15</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, “The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 387.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

harsh measures including firing at the protestors, the protests were quickly repressed.<sup>17</sup> To the contrary, Shevardnadze regime dissolved in the face of relatively weak opposition protests due to suffering from a coercive apparatus lacking both cohesion and scope.<sup>18</sup> In their examination of the dynamics that brought the end of the Kuchma regime in Ukraine and the stability of the Lukashenko regime in Belarus despite the post-election protests, they also emphasize the role of the coercive state capacity as a source of regime stability. As for the case of Ukraine, they argue that Kuchma regime fell as a result of electoral protests because there was not a unifying point like an ideology or a victory over a common enemy that would provide cohesion in the armed forces. Although Ukrainian coercive apparatus had an extensive reach, this did not suffice to save the regime. In their analysis of Belarus, the writers argue that Lukashenko regime survived thanks to the extensive reach of the coercive apparatus.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, they fail to explain why high cohesion sufficed to bring regime stability in Belarus but not in Ukraine.

Although Levitsky and Way articulated their emphasis on the weakness of the coercive state apparatus in a more comprehensive and clear way than others, they were not alone in their underscoring of the role of lack of coercive capacity in bringing about fall of post-Soviet authoritarian incumbents. Lack of violence during the ‘Rose Revolution’ led many scholars to conclude that use of force was not experienced during the protests because Shevardnadze was not able to realize this. Lincoln Mitchell argues that although Shevardnadze announced that he resigned to avoid bloodshed, he kept away from using violence because “he was too weak to command use of force”.<sup>20</sup> Fairbanks also believes that avoiding of violence in the Rose ‘Revolution’ was due to the unavailability of coercive power. He argues that Shevardnadze most probably intended to use force but the armed

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>20</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution”, *Current History*, Vol. 103 (October 2004), p. 348.

forces did not obey his orders.<sup>21</sup> Hale seems to endorse this view since he underlines that Shevardnadze was not a tolerant leader but he lacked the necessary instruments to repress the anti-regime forces.<sup>22</sup>

As a response to arguments of these scholars that Shevardnadze avoided use of force due to the weakness of state coercive capacity at his disposal, Corry Welt suggested to reconsider the argument that Shevardnadze was a dictator and he would not have hesitated to cause violence if he had enough force. He points out that there is some evidence that Shevardnadze had still the control of some parts of the armed forces until the end. He emphasizes that it can be his choice to avoid use of force by declining to order these loyal forces to use force.<sup>23</sup> Thus, although both Way and Welt offer a state-centered account for the success of the 'Revolution' by underlining the importance of the non-use of force, whereas Way approaches the weakness of coercive apparatus as the main reason behind this, Welt attributes it to the unwillingness of Shevardnadze.

Before moving on to identifying the weaknesses of the existing state-centered literature further, it is necessary to assess their contributions in general. First of all, this literature showed that societal factors (mass mobilization within the context of regional diffusion and the coalition of media, civil society and the opposition, which were sometimes propped up by foreign governments) do not by themselves account for the real mechanisms bringing about regime changes in post-Soviet space. By bringing in the cases where the regimes survived despite the stronger protests compared to Georgia, these studies demonstrated that only under state weaknesses these revolutionary societal forces take effect.<sup>24</sup> Some members

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<sup>21</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 15, Number 2 (April 2004), p. 117.

<sup>22</sup> Henry E. Hale, "Democracy or Autocracy on the March? The Color Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 2006), p. 324

<sup>23</sup> Cory Welt, *Georgia: Causes of the Rose Revolution and Lessons for Democracy Assistance*, (Washington: United States Agency for International Development, 2005), pp. 11, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Lucan A. Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 59 and Menno Fenger, "The Diffusion of Revolutions: Comparing Recent Regime Turnovers in Five Post-Communist Countries", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2007), pp. 5-28.

of this camp argued that ‘revolutionaries seldom make revolutions but governments in power do and underlined that Shevardnadze and Akayev were removed from power not as a result of the unwavering efforts by the opposition but unwillingness on the part of state institutions to defend them.’<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, state-centered literature showed that the explanatory variables used by the society-centered analyses can not bear close examination, as they are not empirically grounded contrary to the perceptions of the scholars attributed great significance to them. Donnacha Ó Beacháin pointed out that during the ‘Rose Revolution’ and the ‘Tulip Revolution’, the opposition parties could not act in a coordinated way and their leaders could not agree on how to react to the elections results.<sup>26</sup> In this way, she refuted the assumptions of the scholars that approached the opposition unity as a pre-condition for the success of the attempts at regime change. Similarly, Scott Radnitz in “What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan” mentioned that an independent media did not exist in Akayev’s Kyrgyzstan and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) played only a marginal role in the ‘Tulip Revolution’.<sup>27</sup>

Lastly, this literature also contested the notion of linear historical progress inherent in the society-centered literature. Whereas the society-centered analyses approached the ‘color revolutions’ as democratic breakthroughs, state-centered studies draw attention to regression, stagnation, or multi-linear tracks of development observed in their aftermath.<sup>28</sup> This can be considered a significant

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<sup>25</sup> Donnacha Ó Beacháin, “Roses and Tulips: Dynamics of Regime Change in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 2-3(June-September 2009), p. 202.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>27</sup> Scott Radnitz, “What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2(April 2006), p. 138.

<sup>28</sup> For the examples of the studies which do not perceive the color Revolutions as inevitable democratic breakthroughs or draw attention to increasing authoritarianism in their wake please see Scott Radnitz, “What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2006), pp. 132-144, Mark N. Katz, “Revolutionary Change in Central Asia”, *World Affairs*, Vol. 168, No. 4 (Spring 2006), pp. 157-171, Lincoln A. Mitchell, “Democracy in Georgia since the Rose Revolution”, *Orbis*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Autumn 2006), pp. 669-676, Charles H. Fairbanks, “Revolution Reconsidered”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2007), pp., 42–57, Theodor Tudoroiu, “Rose, Orange, and Tulip: The Failed Post-Soviet Revolutions”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 40 (2007) pp. 315-342. Vicken Cheterian, “Georgia's Rose Revolution: Change or Repetition? Tension between State-Building and Modernization Projects”, *Nationalities*

progress because society-centered studies approached the events with enthusiasm and pictured them as democratic advances achieved by the democracy-thirsty post-Soviet societies.

The existing state-centered literature made great contributions to the understanding of the 'Rose Revolution' by drawing attention to the role of state, but it is still necessary to discuss their weaknesses. Levitsky and Way attribute great significance to the scope of the coercive state apparatus in keeping anti-regime movements under control but Armenia and Uzbekistan experienced strong protests although the regimes in these countries enjoy coercive apparatuses with the ability to infiltrate deeply into the society, or high scope in the conceptualization of these writers.

These writers also argue that solidarity bounds formed during the periods of war are critical for ensuring cohesion. According to them, the regimes with armed forces that had not won a military victory will be less likely to repress massive protests.<sup>29</sup> The successful suppression of opposition protests in countries like Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Saakashvili's Georgia demonstrate that military victory is not that important for repressing the anti-regime demonstrations.

In one of his recent studies Way acknowledged that Ukrainian coercive apparatus was better funded than its counterparts in Serbia, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan and did not experience wage arrears. Moreover, as he mentions, the Ukrainian coercive agency did not surrender easily and continued to guard the governmental buildings during 18-day continuous demonstrations.<sup>30</sup> In this way, his recent analysis shows that the analytical framework he developed earlier with

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*Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (September 2008), pp. 689 – 712 and Katya Kalandadze and Mitchell A. Orenstein, "Electoral Protests and Democratization Beyond the Color Revolutions", *Political Studies* Vol. 42 (2009), pp. 1403-1425.

<sup>29</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 396 and Lucan A. Way, "Debating the Color Revolutions: A Reply to My Critics", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> Lucan A. Way, "Debating the Color Revolutions: A Reply to My Critics", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 94 and 95.

Levitsky needs some improvement as Ukraine experienced regime change in spite of the strength of the coercive state apparatus.

Thus, considering political outcomes in other post-Soviet countries in the face of mass protests besides the ‘Rose Revolution’ reveals the problems inherent in existing state-centered literature on the regime change in Georgia. This is valid for both the studies highlighting the weakness of the coercive state capacity and the unwillingness of Shevardnadze to use force. Because of their exclusive focus on the non-use of force during the protests, the existing state-centered studies missed the real dynamics that made it impossible for the Shevardnadze regime to survive. This literature has made an important improvement over the society-centered one but their analytical framework need to be broadened.

It was the state breakdown in broader terms rather than the weaknesses of the coercive apparatus or unwillingness to use of force that made the Shevardnadze regime defenseless against the protestors. It does not make sense to discuss whether Shevardnadze had the control of enough loyal forces because at the time of protest the regime were facing problems going beyond the suppression of demonstrations. It was the incapacitation of the Georgian state in various fields in addition to the coercive weakness and the resulting loss of state autonomy that brought the end of regime. It is necessary to focus on the extreme weakness of the Georgian state created by incapacitation and lack of autonomy to understand the real dynamics behind the regime change in the country rather than focusing on the societal forces. Starting with the next section, this study will embark on this task.

### **1.3. Main Argument and Analytical Framework**

This study advocates moving beyond the society-centered and the existing state-centric approaches to understand the real mechanisms that cause ‘color revolutions’. Within this framework, the main argument of the study is that contrary to the society-centered analyses, which suggest that mobilization of the society through the diffusion of ‘color revolutions’ brought about the ‘Rose Revolution’, the coercive, administrative, extractive, distributive and regulative incapacitation of state (rather than merely coercive incapacitation as suggested by existing state-centered studies) resulted in the loss of state autonomy vis-à-vis domestic and external political actors before the ‘Revolution’ and led to the

removal of Shevardnadze. Society-centered approaches focus on the role of social forces to account for 'Revolution' but they fail to realize that the forces only exploited the power vacuum created by the breakdown of state. Looking from another perspective, lack of use of force during the events led many studies to focus on the weakness of the coercive state capacity, but at that time, the Shevardnadze regime was facing problems going beyond the suppression of the protests. Guided by this main argument, the study will examine the process preparing the loss of Georgian state autonomy towards the 'Rose Revolution'.

In some way, state-centered studies by Katz, Levitsky and Way can be considered a reintroduction of the analysis of a key historical sociologist, Theda Skocpol, to the study of the 'color revolutions'. Katz, Levitsky and Way like Skocpol before them focus on the state breakdown rather than social forces as the central dynamic accounting for the regime changes. However, the successors of Skocpol analyzing 'color revolutions' approach the state breakdown in a narrower sense than her. Their narrower focus makes it difficult to understand the real dynamics leading to the success of 'color revolutions' in their studies. This study advocates returning to the state-centered analysis that Skocpol provided within the framework of historical sociology to account for the 'Rose Revolution' effectively.

When the studies of Skocpol is examined it is seen than she conceives the state as a set of legal, administrative, extractive and coercive institutions and rather than merely as a coercive organ.<sup>31</sup> Whereas Skocpol argues that the fundamental cause of the social revolutions proved to be the incapacitation of legal, administrative, extractive and coercive machineries of the state, the latter group of studies exclusively focused on coercive organs of state. Due to their narrow focus on the weakness on the coercive state apparatus to explain the authoritarian removals in the region, existing state-centered studies remain short

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<sup>31</sup> For the examples of studies of Theda Skocpol that approach state in this way include "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (April 1976), pp. 175-210, "State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia, and China", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 1/2 (January-March 1979), pp. and "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research." in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3- 37.

of providing a comprehensive and guiding analytical framework. To provide a better account of the ‘color revolutions’ and to illuminate the weaknesses of existing approaches, the remainder of the section will provide a discussion on contributions of historical sociology to the study of regime trajectories and relations among state, society and international forces.

Choosing historical sociology as the main framework for analysis for ‘color revolutions’ is based on several grounds. First of all, it is related with the introduction of regime change as a subject matter to International Relations discipline (IR) by historical sociologists. The neo-realism, the dominant paradigm of the IR throughout the Cold War period, secured the exclusion of the study of the regime changes from the subject matter of the discipline.<sup>32</sup> The pioneer of the paradigm, Kenneth Waltz, ruled out theorizing about international relations by paying attention to the internal character of the units. He labeled the theories that tried to explain international politics by drawing insights from the what is going on inside the states as ‘reductionist’ and advocated that student of IR have to use ‘systemic’ theories. He supported the necessity of the systemic theories by arguing that international relations show regularity despite the variations in the character of its units (states). Thus, for him, it is not necessary to look inside the states to understand international relations; one has to focus on the systemic level instead.<sup>33</sup> Due to the dominance of neo-realism, IR was defined as a discipline interested in the (external) relations between the states. Since regime changes were considered as domestic phenomena, their study was avoided by the mainstream IR.<sup>34</sup>

Since the end of 1980s, new approaches to the study of IR started to be formulated by theorists as a result of the dissatisfaction with the positivist frameworks dominating the field. As the dominant Realist paradigm failed to explain the end of Cold War and the wide scale changes unleashed by it, scholars

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<sup>32</sup>Maryam H. Panah, “Social Revolution: The Elusive Emergence of an Agenda in International Relations”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 2002), p. 274.

<sup>33</sup> Fred Halliday, “Theorizing the International”, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (August 1989), p. 354.

<sup>34</sup> Maryam H. Panah, “Social Revolution: The Elusive Emergence of an Agenda in International Relations”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 2002), p. 274.



have turned to alternative theoretical frameworks offering novel perspectives on what constitutes the subject matter of the discipline and how it should be studied. Besides critical approaches, international political economy, feminist and environmentalist theorizing, historical sociology found a way in into the discipline in this environment.<sup>35</sup>

Historical sociology criticized the exclusive preoccupation with power politics prevalent in the field and contributed to the field by offering a theoretical perspective on state development and socio-political change.<sup>36</sup> Ahistorical Orthodox IR approached the historically produced structures, such as state and anarchy, as unchangeable and given by nature. By emphasizing structural continuity and repetition, the conventional IR theories reified them.<sup>37</sup> As a result, theories like neo-realism proved to be ineffective in accounting for change.<sup>38</sup> Historical sociology assigned great significance to the study of history because of its concern of problematizing and critically surveying the origins of the modern domestic and international institutions such as state and the anarchic system of states and tracking their change over time.<sup>39</sup>

Historical sociologists criticized the mainstream by pointing out that although the state is a central concept for this tradition, it is under-theorized. State is merely portrayed as a unitary actor that occupies a territorial space. Moreover, as they posit, conventional IR theories draw a clear boundary between domestic and international. For the realists, whereas the domestic realm is characterized by hierarchy, anarchy prevails in the latter. By contrast, historical sociologists view

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<sup>35</sup> Stephen Hobden, *International Relations and Historical Sociology: Breaking Down Boundaries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2 and Martin Shaw, "The Historical Transition of Our Times: The Question of Globality In Historical Sociology", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (March 2001), p. 286.

<sup>37</sup> George Lawson, "Historical Sociology in International Relations: Open Society, Research Programme and Vocation", *International Politics*, Vol. 44 (July 2007), p. 346.

<sup>38</sup> George Sørensen, "IR Theory after the Cold War", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 5 (1998), pp. 85, 86.

<sup>39</sup> John M. Hobson, "Debate: The 'Second Wave' of Weberian Historical Sociology - The Historical Sociology of the State and the State of Historical Sociology in International Relations", *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (April 1998), p. 286.

the state as a set of institutions competing for sources with other groups in the domestic realm as well as with other states in the international arena. It is not seen as a territorial and social totality. The state is taken as a historical structure which is in constant competition with society and external powers. Weberian historical sociologists have shown that the modern state is not a natural product of liberal social contract but the output of the competition of power centers vying for control over one another.<sup>40</sup>

Historical sociologist put forward that there are different sources of power (economic, military and ideological) and in all of these power domains there can be rivals to the state and emergence of alternative loyalties. In the economic realm, different power centers might comprise the authority of the state and increase their strength at the expense of state. Social power centers such as tribes, ethnic or religious groups can compete with the state for the allegiance of the citizens. Thus, domestic realm may not be in the hierarchical as alleged by the realists. The notions based on the Westphalian state system, which sees the state as an actor that established control over its territory once for all, may not be valid for all cases.<sup>41</sup>

To ground these arguments, historical sociologists refer to the situation in Middle Ages where spheres of jurisdictions overlapped and non-state actors provided public services or enjoyed coercive capacity. As they point out, medieval system was marked by a hybrid of anarchy and hierarchy and whether the actors operated under anarchy or hierarchy depended on the domain of action. For instance, before the establishment of feudal hierarchy, in political domain lords did not recognize a superior authority above them but respond to the papal calls for crusades.<sup>42</sup>

As sources of power and actors holding them are multiple, they interact and shape each other in complex ways. It does not make sense to view the actors and their capacities as wholly autonomous and self-constitutive. As in the case of

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>41</sup> Hendrik Spruyt, "Historical Sociology and Systems Theory in International Relations", *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1998), p. 344.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

domestic and international realms, which constantly interact and shape one another, the actors in different power realms interact and their interactions change one another.<sup>43</sup>

These insights of historical sociology are useful for the purposes of this study. As guided by historical sociologists such as Theda Skocpol, Michael Mann, Charles Tilly and Joel S. Migdal this study will approach state and society as in constant interaction and competition for power with each other. The notions of capacity and autonomy will be taken as multi-dimensional and an examination of capacities of both society and state in different power domains will be provided. Rather than focusing exclusively on the coercive power as the coercive state capacity-centric analyses on ‘color revolutions’ do, this study will focus on administrative, regulative, extractive and distributive components of state capacity besides the coercive dimension and explore how incapacitation of Georgian state in all these dimensions brought about the ousting of Shevardnadze. Moreover, the study will also examine how the power relations in one domain condition the interactions in other domain. For example, the study will explore how the capacities of state and societal actors in economic domain have conditioned their autonomy vis-à-vis each other competition areas like imposing control over territory and population and use of force. Other post-Soviet states will be compared and contrast with the state in Georgia to see whether they gained success in their struggle against competing power centers in the society and how their performance shaped the fate of regimes in power when they faced mass mobilization.

This study will also approach international and domestic realms as mutually constitutive. Approaching the state and society as well as domestic and international realms as mutually constitutive in *States and Social Revolutions* enabled Theda Skocpol to provide a guiding framework to understand revolutions. In contrast to the analyses of revolutions that exclusively focus domestic level causal mechanisms, Skocpol included both domestic and international factors that prepared them. In a way that is quite different from the traditional IR theories,

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<sup>43</sup> Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation States, 1760-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 725.

Skocpol showed how international realm shaped the domestic realm by creating pressures that contributed to the outbreak of revolutions. She also demonstrated how the domestic realm shaped the international by emphasizing that revolutions at home create inspirations and models that go beyond the boundaries of the revolutionary states.

Thus, Skocpol pointed out that societies and the state institutions are shaped by the international forces and they condition the international realm. With this analysis, she refuted the realist assumptions that picture the domestic and international realms as self-constitutive and clearly separated from each other. In line with her understanding, the study will approach the 'Rose Revolution' as a phenomenon in which international influences play important roles. It will examine how the diffusion of revolutionary ideas and international pressures that cause state breakdown contributed to the regime change in Georgia. However, the study will show that only when state is weak, which is best illustrated by the situation of Georgian state under Shevardnadze, diffusion of 'revolutions' yields results and society succeeds in bringing down the autocrats. The study will also show how domestic realm shapes the international realm by discussing how the 'Rose Revolution' affected the developments at the international level, by setting a model for the anti-regime forces in other post-Soviet countries and increasing the competition between the US and Russia in the region.

#### **1.4. Methodology**

This study employs case study method to show that it is necessary to focus on the state capacity and autonomy instead of the societal mobilization to account for the dynamics bringing about the 'color revolutions'.

As discussed, Georgia is chosen as the main case to be examined because the 'Rose Revolution' is the first example of 'color revolutions' in post-Soviet space and it has seriously affected the regional dynamics. There are also methodological reasons behind choosing Georgia as the main case. As will be discussed in detail, before the 'Revolution', Georgian state was very weak in all aspects of state capacity and this resulted in loss of autonomy vis-à-vis domestic and external anti-regime forces. Therefore, Georgia emerges as a perfect case to examine how different aspects of state weakness become instrumental in bringing

about regime change. Georgian experience is also useful for examining how changes in different components of state capacity can influence regime trajectories. Lastly, Georgian experience clearly shows how state weakness in various dimensions can lead the students of the regime trajectories to regard the societal actors as omnipotent.

It is also necessary to discuss the reasons for choosing Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan the countries to compare with Georgia. In its first years of independence, Azerbaijan followed a similar course of political trajectory with Georgia. Therefore, it makes sense to compare Azerbaijan with Georgia to find out what differences in the later stages of independence period led to the regime stability in Azerbaijan despite strong protests. Armenia also became the scene of strong protests-even stronger than the ones in Georgia. Therefore, the regime stability in Armenia is puzzling. Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are the two other countries that experienced regime change through the 'color revolutions' and it is necessary to examine whether the explanatory variables of the study can account for the dynamics bringing about regime change in these countries as well. Russia has become the leader of anti-revolutionary camp in the post-Soviet space due to strengthening of state in various domains. Thus, it is useful to compare it with Georgia to show how Russia's differences with Georgia with respect to different components of state capacity carried the country to this position.

Lastly, in overall, these countries are very different from each other and Georgia. Therefore, by including them in the comparative analysis, the study tests the analytical framework used to explain the 'Rose Revolution' in an effective way. Since a microcosm a post-Soviet world is constructed by including these seven countries with different features and different foreign policy orientations, countries with similar characteristics with them are not included in the scope comparative analysis. For example, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are not examined because examining Azerbaijan and Russia is sufficient for observing rentier state dynamics.

The study is mainly centered on qualitative techniques supported by quantitative data when the need be, especially while comparing the economic performance of the regimes under examination. The data used throughout this

study is drawn from both primary and secondary resources. Primary data for Georgia was mostly attained as a result of interviews with state officials, political analysts, academics, representatives of various NGOs and ordinary citizens made during the three visits to Tbilisi in November 2008, June 2009 and May 2010. Whenever possible, the information attained through interviews has been crosschecked with secondary resources. As another primary resource, the Georgian constitution has also proved to be important especially discussing the administrative structure of the Georgian state, the powers of the president, procedures to be followed in the case of cancelling elections and constitutional amendments under Saakashvili regime. The books, articles published in books and journals and the online copies of the Civil Georgia, the Georgian Times and the Georgian Messenger constitute the other resources used for collecting data for Georgia. Reports prepared by the Freedom House, Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group proved to be important sources for obtaining data for Georgia and other seven countries. Books, journals and newspapers were also widely utilized while conducting research for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

### **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

Having revisited the existing studies on the ‘color revolutions’ in this chapter, the second chapter will explore the theoretical foundations of the works examined here. First, the main assumptions of the society-centered approach to regime change will be examined. Second, the weaknesses of these approaches will be illuminated and the need to replace them with state-centered approaches will be highlighted. Third, the chapter will outline the main features of the state centered approach to be used in this study. Lastly, the chapter will focus on the concepts of state autonomy and capacity. It will discuss the different components of state capacity and clarify the mechanisms linking state strength and regime trajectories.

The third chapter will explore the history of Georgian statehood and the relations of Tbilisi with the minorities. It will shed light on the roots of weakness of the state in Georgia. The chapter will also discuss Gamsakhurdia’s and Shevardnadze’s policies that aggravated the existing problems.

The fourth chapter will first deal with the emergence of the cracks in the ruling elite and rise of reformers. While doing this, special attention will be devoted to how state weakness enabled the opposition to gain popularity both at home and abroad at the expense of the ruling elite. Then, the chapter will deal with the mobilization of Georgian society and the failure of the Shevardnadze regime to neutralize the challengers due to state weakness. Lastly, it will examine why Western support was so critical for the stability of Shevardnadze regime and how its suspension deteriorated the crisis faced by him.

The fifth chapter will examine the political atmosphere in the immediate period before the 2003 parliamentary elections, the parties and blocks that competed in the elections, the election fraud and the ensuing protests, the external reaction to the election results and the reasons behind the success of the 'Rose Revolution'. It will also explore the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the post-'Rose Revolution' Georgia. It will explore whether Saakashvili regime moved the country into a democratic or authoritarian road after fall of Shevardnadze. By doing this, it will test the strength of the literature that viewed the 'Rose Revolution' as a democratic breakthrough. The chapter will also examine the emergence of challenges to the stability of the Saakashvili regime and his way of dealing with these challenges. The chapter will devote special attention to attempts of Saakashvili to strengthen state capacity and autonomy. It will also examine how the new balances between the state and social forces have shaped the regime trajectory in the post-'Rose Revolution' Georgia.

The seventh chapter compares the regime trajectories in seven former Soviet republics that experienced mass mobilization within the context of 'color revolutions' with that of Georgia. The chapter will compare Georgia first with other South Caucasus Republics, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Then, the comparison will be extended to Central Asia by addressing Kyrgyz and Uzbek regime trajectories. Lastly, the regime outcomes in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia will be covered. These countries will be compared with Georgia on the basis of the different components of the state capacity and autonomy vis-à-vis social forces and external actors favoring regime change. The chapter will explore what these countries have in common with or different from Georgia that they experienced

regime change and stability in the face of challenges posed by the ‘color revolutions’. Besides the comparison along the explanatory variables, the chapter will also provide an examination of post-‘revolution’ political environments in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine to clarify whether these countries experienced democratization after the regime changes due to the strengthening of social forces as argued by society-centric literature.

The eighth chapter summarizes the findings of the study. It discusses how the findings of this thesis have revealed the weaknesses of the studies in the literature. It also shows that analytical framework of the study proved to be an effective tool for explaining the dynamics of the ‘Rose Revolution’.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter will lay out the theoretical framework to be used throughout this study. To this end, it will first address the theoretical underpinnings of the society- centered studies discussed in the literature review. After examining the main assumptions that society-centered approaches used to explain earlier cases of regime change, the chapter will discuss how the main analytical tools of the approach have been revived with the unfolding of ‘color revolutions’. Next, the chapter will deal with the inefficiencies of the society-centered approach and underline the necessity to replace it with a state-centered approach to illuminate the driving forces behind the ‘Rose Revolution’ in particular and regime change and stability in post-Soviet space in general. After that, the chapter will focus on the general features of the state-centered approach to be used in the study and suggest ways to account for regime change by using the historical sociology as the main analytical framework. Next, it will conceptualize state capacity and autonomy and discuss the different components of the state capacity.

#### **2.2. Society-Centered Approaches to Regime Change**

This section will deal with three society-centered theoretical traditions on regime change: modernization, political culture and diffusion perspectives. As will be seen, they are closely related to each other as they unite in their emphasis on the societal forces as the main driving forces of the regime change and progress bias. Modernization, political culture and diffusion perspectives constitute the main theoretical tradition that the recent society-centered studies on ‘color revolutions’ draw on. Therefore, this section will first discuss the main premises of modernization, political culture and diffusion perspectives with reference to pioneering studies and then move on to demonstrating how the earlier assumptions of the society-centered theoretical tradition have been revived by the recent society-centered studies on ‘color revolutions’.

Modernization perspective provided the first society-centered framework to explain regime change. It consists of the studies of the scholars who believe that economic development causes social change that in turn fosters democratization. This approach is first introduced by Daniel Lerner and Seymour Martin Lipset and further developed by writers such as Robert Dahl, Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi.

In “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy”, Lipset argued that economic development brings about increase in the level of wealth, industrialization, and urbanization and all these raise the chances for democracy.<sup>44</sup> Increased wealth improves both the social conditions of lower class and the political role of the middle class.<sup>45</sup> According to him, increased wealth makes the lower class less sympathetic to extremist ideologies. It also increases the size of middle class, which plays a mitigating role by rewarding moderate and democratic parties and punishing the extremist ones. Authoritarian state structures cannot tolerate these changes in class structures created by the process of economic development. The growth of a commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, increasing union activity among workers and the migration to the cities break the patron-client networks on which the incumbent regime relies on. Lastly, for Lipset, economic development plays an important role in the flourishing of civil society organizations. Economic development prepares the ground for the emergence of a large number of voluntary and autonomous social organizations, which not only provides a check on the government but also increases political participation and develop political skills. In Lipset’s own words “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the changes it will sustain democracy”.<sup>46</sup>

Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba pioneered the studies that linked democratic regime change to a distinctive political culture, to say it another way *Political Culture Perspective* on regime change. In *The Civic Culture*, the authors

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<sup>44</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy”, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53 (March 1959), p. 78.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

asserted that political culture shapes citizens' knowledge of the system, their feelings towards it and their judgment of it.<sup>47</sup> According to them, only a certain type of political culture - 'civic culture' - is conducive for democratic change because it is marked by "high frequency of political activity, exposure to communication, political discussion and concern with political affairs".<sup>48</sup>

Christian Welzel and Ronald Inglehart, the most enthusiastic representatives of political culture theory in recent times, underlined the importance of emancipative values of the masses for regime change. For them, if the masses place emphasis on human well-being, freedom and equality, they will more likely to involve in social movements aiming at attainment and expansion of democratic freedoms. Democratic values of the society play a vital role in bringing an end to the authoritarian rule and the establishment of democratic rule in their analysis.<sup>49</sup>

Thickened globalization and the third wave of democratization have led many scholars to revive the society-centered approaches on political change examined so far.<sup>50</sup> Globalization appeared as a force that has eliminated differences between the First, Second and the Third Worlds of the Cold War with its homogenizing effect. The growth of the middle class, dissemination of information to distant corners of the world thanks to new technology and diffusion of experiences gained in toppling dictators across different regions prompted many authors examine the political developments in former Soviet region through the lenses of society-centered approaches.<sup>51</sup>

The end of the Cold War was interpreted as an end not only to the ideological conflict between U.S. and the Soviet Union but also to all ideological

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<sup>47</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>49</sup> Christian Welzel and Ronald Inglehart, "Emancipative Values and Democracy: Response to Hadenius and Teorell", *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (September 2006), pp. 74-94.

<sup>50</sup> Frances Hagopian, "Political Development, Revisited", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 6-7 (2000), p. 882.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

conflicts. Regarding the collapse of the Soviet Union as the ultimate victory of democracy over authoritarianism, Francis Fukuyama argued that this triumph constituted the “end of the history” in the sense that it marked the “end point of mankind's ideological evolution” and the “final form of human government”.<sup>52</sup> Once democracy has emerged as triumphant, post-Soviet societies would embrace the democratic principles marking the Western world and the evolution of political development in the world history would be completed.

This euphoria led to giving up both state-centered and historically sensitive analytical frameworks (the frameworks that take change over time and across space into account).<sup>53</sup> Since the Lockean liberty was regarded to gain an ultimate victory over Hobbesian Leviathan illustrated by the collapse of Soviet Union, state-centered approaches to political change started to be considered as useless and outmoded. Now, it was the time to discuss the lessening of the state grip over society with the disappearance of Soviet police state, not to focus on how state shapes society. Moreover, as history had reached an end, democracy was viewed as something that could be crafted from scratch through constitutional reforms, shock-therapy market reforms and NGOs at any place regardless of local circumstances. The studies on the post-Soviet transformation representing the mainstream have tended to comprehend the process as the political and cultural convergence of the ex-communist societies with the West.<sup>54</sup> As noticed by some observers, this kind of a conceptualization of the post-Communist political development has been marked by a strong similarity with the assumptions of the classical modernization theory, which have been examined above.<sup>55</sup>

How would the values of Western world reach and start to democratize the former Soviet Union? The answer to this question has been provided by the diffusion perspective on political change. Diffusion perspective emphasizes

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<sup>52</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?”, *The National Interest*, Vol. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3-18.

<sup>53</sup> Ottorino Cappelli, “Pre-Modern State-Building in Post-Soviet Russia”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol., 24, No. 4 (2008), p. 532.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Blokker, “Post-Communist Modernization, Transition Studies, and Diversity in Europe”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 8, No. 4, (2005), p. 503.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 504.

external influences on the democratization process in a given country. Within the framework of this perspective, Laurence Whitehand underlined the importance of ‘consent’ and ‘contagion’ both of which function through ‘international demonstration effects’.<sup>56</sup> In consent, democratic norms are communicated from society to society and demands for democratic reforms from below are aimed to be generated in the countries living under authoritarian rule. Contagion means spread of experiences gained in the democratization process from one country to another. In similar line, Pravda draws attention to the significance of the external factors in democratization such as the diffusion of ideas across the boundaries through mass media and increased international activity for democracy through international organizations and NGOs.<sup>57</sup>

As seen, diffusion perspective is closely related to the society-centered perspectives discussed before. First, diffusion perspective is also society based as it highlights the forces of political change spreading from societies in the democratic countries to the ones living under authoritarian rule. Moreover, both perspectives underline the roles played societal actors such as opposition groups and media. Second, the modernization and diffusion perspectives share the notion of progress. Modernization perspective believes in the improvement of societies and political systems through economic growth, improved education and increased communication. In similar lines, diffusion perspective portrays the societies in the authoritarian world progressing toward democracy thanks to the diffusion of democratic ideals and practices from the democratic world. Diffusion perspectives draw attention to the homogenization of political cultures through progress in democratic direction.

Transnational NGO networks had already attracted a great deal of interest before the emergence of ‘color revolutions’ phenomena. In the post-Cold War period, these networks have been strengthened because of the proliferation of

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<sup>56</sup> Laurence Whitehand, “Three International Dimensions of Democratization”, Laurence Whitehand, *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 3-26.

<sup>57</sup> Alex Pravda, “Introduction” in Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda, *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe: Volume 2, International and Transnational Actors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 1-29.

human rights organizations and other NGOs and improved travel and communication opportunities. They have become increasingly active and involved in drawing attention in human rights abuses in various countries, lobbying Western governments to take action against authoritarian governments and to protect and strengthen domestic opposition groups.<sup>58</sup>

The activities of NGOs have received increased attention with the spread of ‘color revolutions’ across post-Soviet space. The significance of the financial and technical assistance to the Georgian civil society organizations such as Liberty Institute, *Kmara* and Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA) has been emphasized by many studies.<sup>59</sup> It has been underlined that Georgian NGOs attained financial means to carry out anti-regime activity thanks to the assistance provided by Freedom House, the George Soros Open Society Institute (OSI), the National Democratic Institute, the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the EU and the Council of Europe. This strengthening has been considered as valid for Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, which have also experienced regime change through ‘color revolutions’. Among these organizations, OSI has especially come to the limelight since different from other organizations, which carried out democratic assistance programs including civil society and party development, OSI involved in activities such as funding the trips of Georgian activists to Serbia and Serbian activists to Georgia.

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<sup>58</sup> Menno Fenger, “The Diffusion of Revolutions: Comparing Recent Regime Turnovers in Five Post-Communist Countries”, *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2007), p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Examples of studies which underscores the role of diffusion mechanisms in the Rose Revolution and other color revolutions include Welt Corry, *Georgia: Causes of the Rose Revolution and Lessons for Democracy Assistance* (Washington: United States Agency for International Development, 18 March 2005), James V. Wertsch, “Georgia as a Laboratory for Democracy”, *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 2005), pp. 519-536, McFaul Michael, “Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences on the Orange Revolution”, *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2007), pp. 45-83, Dan Jakopovich, “The 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia: A Case Study in High Politics and Rank-and-File Execution”, *Debate: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 2007), pp. 211-220, Laverty Nicklaus, “The Problem of Lasting Change: Civil Society and the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine”, *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2008), pp. 143-162 and Joerg Forbrig and Pavol Demes (eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009).

The studies abiding by the diffusion perspective emphasized the importance of practices such as election monitoring, peaceful tactics of resistance and rallies in bringing down incumbents. It has been argued that transnational NGO networks played indispensable role in the spread of these practices to the Post-soviet space, as sharing of experiences, training to civil society activists and diffusion of successful tactics enabled by these transnational networks.

The role of media in 'color revolutions' has been also attributed significance by the studies following diffusion perspective. The 'revolution' model highlighted by these perspectives included the raising awareness of the public, revealing corruption, communicating the need for change, spreading the news of discrepancy between the official and independent tabulation results to the public by independent media. Media has been pictured as a powerful force for change in post-Soviet space, which has informed and mobilized citizens and generated public support for regime change.<sup>60</sup>

### **2.3. Weaknesses of Society-Centered Approaches**

The main weakness of the society-centered approaches arises from their ignorance of the fact that grievances and mass mobilizations do not lead to regime changes in all cases. They neglect the mechanisms through which some states preempt and repress the challenges towards their rule. They miss the important point that not all states are vulnerable to overthrow through 'color revolutions'.

Society-centered approaches neglect that the mobilization of society as a result of discontent, improved education or economic power did not lead to regime change in all places experiencing these phenomena. Consequently, the studies that use their assumptions to account for 'color revolutions' ignore that increased awareness and demands for change in post-Soviet space brought by spread of revolutionary ideas and tactics have not sufficed to bring about unseating of incumbents in all post-Soviet countries. Contrary to the assumptions of this tradition, the presence of organized groups determined to take power, the

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<sup>60</sup> For the examples of studies emphasizing role of the mass media please see James. V. Wertsch, "Forces behind the Rose Revolution," in *Enough! The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia 2003*, ed. Z. Karumidze and J. V. Wertsch, 131–40 (New York: Nova Science, 2005). David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), pp. 7-43.

rise of the youth organizations and united oppositions proved to be inadequate to bring about removal of incumbents in some post-Soviet countries. Hence, it is clear that society-centered approaches remain short of accounting for variance of outcomes despite common causes. Therefore, there is the need for an alternative approach that illuminates how state institutions and practices can function to forestall the revolutionary social forces in some cases but not in others. Neglecting the mechanisms through which the state shapes the social forces impairs the society-centered approaches significantly.

In the society-centric analysis examined above state emerges as an entity without autonomy. It is not conceived as an entity acting to shape and control society to the extent that its power permits. Being one-sided, society-centered approaches fail to see that the success of the anti-regime societal forces is shaped by historical context in which state institutions and practices occupy a central place. They are exclusively preoccupied with social dynamics and actors. Being ahistorical, they ignore the specific circumstances of the different cases. As a result, they remain short of explaining variances in regime trajectories among countries facing the same challenges to their survival.

The criticisms of various state-centered analyses reveal the inefficiencies of society-centered accounts on 'revolutions' better from different viewpoints. Rentier state literature is a point in the case. This study uses the state-centered approach to regime trajectories provided by historical sociologists Skocpol, Migdal and Mann to account for the dynamics bringing about the 'Rose Revolution'. Rentier state approach is not the main approach to be used in this study. However, rentier state literature is still useful, as this study will compare Azerbaijan and Russia, which can be considered as rentier states, with Georgia. Moreover, this literature provides a good critique of the notion of the positive relation between wealth and democracy inherent in the society-centered approach. Rentier state literature is also state centered. Thus, using this literature does not contradict with the main analytical framework used in this study. Therefore, the following paragraphs will review rentier state literature to draw attention to the weaknesses of society-centered approach to regime trajectories.

The rentier state literature opposes positive correlation between wealth and democratization to such an extent that authors like Luciani and Beblawi remark



that for rentier states the only window of opportunity for democratization is opened when a fiscal crisis emerges due to the decline of the oil revenues.<sup>61</sup> According to this literature, oil wealth affects democratization process negatively in three ways that can be labeled as ‘rentier effect’, ‘repression effect’ and ‘modernization effect’.<sup>62</sup>

To start with explaining how ‘rentier effect’ works, Giacomo Luciani argues that when governments gain adequate revenues from oil sales, they tend to decrease the amounts of taxes or totally give up taxing their citizens and citizens demand less accountability and representation from their governments in turn. As a result, the ruling elites enjoy the opportunity of avoiding democratization as long as they have access to oil revenues.<sup>63</sup> This argument is based on ‘no taxation without representation’ principle, which dates back to political developments in colonial America.<sup>64</sup> In order to finance wars, the British monarchs taxed their subjects in American colonies. When colonists rejected paying taxes imposed on them without their consent, the king had to provide the taxpayers with some influence over government spending and tax rates. This paved the way for the emergence of representative government.

Taxation is only one of the dimensions of rentier effect; there are also the spending and group formation dimensions of it.<sup>65</sup> With regard to spending dimension, rentier state literature points out that oil wealth can be used for

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<sup>61</sup> Hazem Beblawi, “The Rentier State in the Arab World” and Giacomo Luciani, “Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework” in Giacomo Luciani and Hazem Beblawi (ed.), *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 49-63 and 63-83 respectively and Giacomo Luciani, “The Oil Rent: the Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratization ” in Ghassan Salame(ed.), *Democracy without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: IB Taruis, 1994), pp. 130-155.

<sup>62</sup> Michael L. Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?”, *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2001), pp. 332-337.

<sup>63</sup> Giacomo Luciani, “The Oil Rent: the Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratization ” in Ghassan Salame(ed.), *Democracy without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: IB Taruis, 1994), p. 134.

<sup>64</sup> Camilla Sandbakken, “The Limits to Democracy Posed by Oil Rentier States: The Cases of Algeria, Nigeria and Libya”, *Democratization*, Vol. 13, No 1 (February 2006), p. 137.

<sup>65</sup> Michael L. Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?”, *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2001), pp. 333-335.

spending programs that aim to reduce dissent and pressures for democracy.<sup>66</sup> Luciani mentions that when the state is in a position to buy consensus by distributing certain goods and services, it does not need to work hard for gaining democratic legitimation.<sup>67</sup> The government can purchase consent by spending oil revenues on education, health, social security, employment, infrastructure and investment in the private sector.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, authoritarian regimes also can ensure some degree of loyalty through patron-client networks that distribute various awards that oil revenues made possible. In return for this state patronage, members of these networks give up the right to demand political participation through direct democratic means. Instead, they operate within the expansive bureaucracy and other organs of the state.<sup>69</sup> In latter stages, those involved in these networks might resist democratization because transparency and accountability created by democratization will threaten their interest. Lastly, governments can also use oil revenues to buy off opposition and create cracks in the opposition block.

The third dimension of 'rentier effect', the group formation dimension, is not completely unrelated to spending dimension. Concerning this dimension, the literature argues that the rentier governments will use the oil revenues to prevent the formation of independent social groups that can demand political rights from the state.<sup>70</sup> By the means of payoffs, the government tries to satisfy the people with their lives and decrease the incentives to form associations and interest

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<sup>66</sup> Camilla Sandbakken, "The Limits to Democracy Posed by Oil Rentier States: The Cases of Algeria, Nigeria and Libya", *Democratization*, Vol. 13, No 1(February 2006), p. 138.

<sup>67</sup> Giacomo Luciani, "The Oil Rent: the Fiscal Crisis of the State and Democratization " in Ghassan Salame(ed.), *Democracy without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: IB Tauris, 1994), p. 132.

<sup>68</sup> Camilla Sandbakken, "The Limits to Democracy Posed by Oil Rentier States: The Cases of Algeria, Nigeria and Libya", *Democratization*, Vol. 13, No 1(February 2006), p. 138.

<sup>69</sup> Alexander A. Cooley, "Review Essay: Booms and Busts: Theorizing Institutional Formation and Change in Oil States", *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (Spring, 2001), p. 165, W. M. Corden, "Booming Sector and Dutch Disease Economics: Survey and Consolidation", *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 3, (Nov. 1984), p. 166.

<sup>70</sup> Michael L. Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?", *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2001), p. 334.

groups. Governments also deliberately destroy independent civil institutions while founding others supporting the political aims of the regime by using oil revenues.

To continue with ‘repression effect’, the literature argues that oil rich governments become able to increase repression in their countries by using oil revenues for building up internal security forces.<sup>71</sup>

To conclude with ‘modernization effect’, rentier state literature suggests that dependence on oil revenues obstructs the modernization of the country and in this way blocks the social changes that could have been instrumental in bringing about a democratic government.<sup>72</sup> Rent-based economic structure obstructs democratization by preventing changes in the class structure that are conducive to democratization. Rentier states do not have an independent middle class that can function as a source of opposition.<sup>73</sup> Since the middle class in the rentier states is directly dependent upon the resources granted by the state; it does not have the bargaining power against the ruling elite.<sup>74</sup> As another stumbling block to democratization in class structure, lack of productive activities in rentier states prevents the emergence of a labor class and labor unions.

Thus, contrary to what Lipset argued, the chances for democracy do not always increase as the country becomes wealthier. It is unwise to expect that economic development will always serve democratization through the mechanisms suggested by the modernization perspective. It is necessary to consider how the state uses the economic resources and how the interaction of state and society in the economic field condition regime trajectories.

Having discussed the weaknesses of one version of the society-centered approach to regime change, modernization perspective, the discussion now turns to another society-centered perspective, diffusion. Similar criticisms can be posed to the studies relying the diffusion perspective. However, it should be added that the effectiveness of the external pressures for regime change is not same for all

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.335.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 336-337.

<sup>73</sup> Camilla Sandbakken, “The Limits to Democracy Posed by Oil Rentier States: The Cases of Algeria, Nigeria and Libya”, *Democratization*, Vol. 13, No 1(February 2006), p. 139.

<sup>74</sup> Michael L. Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?”, *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2001), p. 336.

countries. For the countries prospects for deep integration to Western institutions like EU or NATO are remote, external pressures for removing authoritarian governments do not count much.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, not all incumbent regimes need the aid coming from international sources aiming regime change to the same degree because they either enjoy important degrees of economic resources of their own or they are able to find a counterweight against the external pressures for regime change by making alliances with states interested in regime stability. Consequently, some regimes are able to resist external pressures aiming at their removal successfully. Since society-centered approaches remains short of recognizing these points, this study will use an alternative theoretical perspective which emphasizes that state structures and actions play a central role in conditioning the vulnerability of authoritarian regimes to the pressures for regime change coming from outside.

Lastly, as Henry E. Hale in “Democracy or Democracy on the March? The Color Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism”, Graeme P. Herd in “Colorful Revolutions and the CIS: “Manufactured” versus “Managed” Democracy?”, Vitali Silitski in “Preempting Democracy: the Case of Belarus” and Thomas Carothers in “The Backlash against Democracy Promotion” note, the examples of regime changes in some countries can serve as a source of negative learning for the autocrats in other countries. The authoritarian leaders ruling the former Soviet republics that did not experience ‘color revolutions’ have come to attribute the success of overthrow attempt to the weaknesses of the ousted leaders. To escape the fate of their counterparts, they increased their grip over the state structures and cracked down on activists expressing dissent. They have also harassed and expelled Western based NGOs and prevented local NGOs from taking external financial help. Therefore, this study needs a theoretical perspective that will take negative learning as well as diffusion of tactics used in overthrowing incumbents into account and illuminate the reasons behind the ability of some regimes to effectively limit NGOs in their countries.

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.4. A State-Centered Approach to ‘Color Revolutions’

This study argues that to account for the dynamics bringing about regime change in Georgia through the ‘Rose Revolution’ and regime trajectories in other post-Soviet countries, it is necessary to use a state-centered analytical framework rather than a society-centered one. The ineffectiveness of the society-centered approaches and the need to replace them with state-centered analytical framework become obvious if one considers that societal forces such as mobilized masses, youth organizations or determined opposition parties could not succeed in removing incumbents when the state leaders took necessary steps for regime survival. Therefore, it is required to employ an analytical framework that sheds light on the ways that state structures and actions condition not only the success or failure but also the development of anti-regime movements.

This study will use a state-centered perspective that places the processes whereby the states shape the society and enable or constrain anti-regime activities. It will be shown that these processes are casually more important and decisive for the regime trajectories than the mechanism through which societal forces, including civil society, opposition party and media, influence political development.

It is important to emphasize that although this study will adopt a state-centered approach, it will still try to avoid one-sidedness. It will keep away from pushing society out while ‘bringing the state back in’ by approaching the states and societies permanently struggling with each other. ‘Bringing the state back in’ does not mean substituting society-deterministic approaches with state-deterministic approaches.<sup>76</sup> Rather, it means analyzing state and society in relation to each other. Thus, although this study uses a state-centered approach, it will examine the competition between state and societal forces in Georgia before the Rose Revolution and the roles that the societal forces (the opposition, the civil society and the media) played in the ‘Rose Revolution’. However, it will be shown that these societal forces were able to play these significant roles due to state weaknesses. Since the same societal forces could not act independently and

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<sup>76</sup> Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 20.

cause regime change in other post-Soviet countries where the state was strong, this study advocates using a state-centered rather than a society centered approach. Since state capacity and autonomy is the determining factor for the success of the overthrow attempts, it is necessary to use a state-centered approach to explain the dynamics of the 'Rose Revolution' in particular and mechanisms shaping regime trajectories in post-Soviet space in general.

As guided by the analysis of Michael Mann in *The Sources of Social Power*, this study takes the state and society as constantly interacting and competing with shaping each other. Mann provides the insight that the state deals with multiple, overlapping, interacting and often competing power networks in the society. Rather than viewing the states or the societal forces in isolation from the historical context, this study will explore how the state and society compete with each other and how they shape each other's actions and powers. State will not be taken as an arena of competition among the different groups in society. It also acts to shape the power and action of social groups including the anti-regime forces. Thus, contrary to how the society-centered approaches portray them, societal forces do not act independently of the state. The incapacitation of the Georgian state in various power domains led the society-centered studies to perceive societal actors as omnipotent and autonomous. This study will examine the important roles that the societal played in the Revolution but not without emphasizing that they were able to play these roles because of the weakness of the Georgian state and a state-centered analysis is required to illuminate the real dynamics preparing the strength of societal forces.

In the light of this discussion, the study will examine how power centers in the Georgian society compete with the state in various domains before and after the 'Rose Revolution' in the coming chapters. These power centers can be the leaders of ethnic groups or opposition leaders who try to gain the allegiance of the citizens or private actors seeking access to economic power. The state makes claims to monopolize power in various areas but it gains stateness to the degree that it consolidates its claims. It tries to monopolize use of violence, regulation of the activities of the citizens, extraction and deployment of resources and formation of relations with external forces. When state fails to strengthen its capacity in various areas at the expense of social forces and lose its autonomy vis-

à-vis them, these forces act to employ their independence and the capacity they enjoy to bring down the regime running the state.

A more detailed discussion on the ways that link state autonomy and capacity with the regime fates will be provided in the next section. Before concluding this section, it is also necessary to emphasize that the dynamics bringing about regime change cannot be fully understood without considering the impact of international environment. Since the domestic and international realms are inherently linked as the historical sociologists pointed out, domestic level forces cannot account for the regime outcomes on their own. To account for the 'Rose Revolution', one also has to examine how international forces affected the state and society in Georgia, more specifically how external forces served to the significant weakening of the regime in relation to anti-regime forces.

After these general points about the approach that the study will follow to analyze regime trajectories, the following sections will focus on the state autonomy and capacity as the main variables to be used in accounting for regime stability and change in the face of mass protests. The detailed discussion on these terms will complete the general principles put forward in this section and shed more light on the weaknesses of society-centered approaches on regime change by revealing the role of state.

#### **2.4.1. Conceptualizing State Autonomy and Capacity to Analyze Regime Trajectories**

Although the concepts of state autonomy and state capacity are closely related and mutually reinforcing as far as this study concerns, it is still necessary to recognize the differences between them and to examine the ways in which these two dimensions of stateness interact. In this study, state autonomy is defined as the ability of state to formulate interest and policies of its own, independent of or against the interests of different forces and groups in the society and international realm. State capacity is conceptualized as the state's ability to implement policies

to accomplish political, economic and social goals at home and abroad.<sup>77</sup> The study will show that as states, to be illustrated by the case of Georgia prior the 'Rose Revolution', lose their ability to achieve their goals and to act independently from societal and external forces, the regimes running these states lose their chances for survival against the anti-regime movements.

This kind of conceptualization of state autonomy and capacity is mainly based on elaborations of the neo-Weberian school, principally those of Theda Skocpol. Until the end of 1970s, the dominant view of the relations between state and society left no room for the possibility of state autonomy. The mainstream pluralist school, which comprises the society-centered views discussed above, assumed that the state policies were the result of interaction of rival societal groups. The Marxists critics of pluralism did not include the possibility of state autonomy, either. Rather, they questioned the pluralist view of the state as controlled by various groups and pictured state as the instrument of the dominant class. The milestone article of Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research", challenged this neglect of the autonomy of the state by Liberals and Marxists and outlined the main premises of the state-centered approach to regime trajectories.<sup>78</sup>

Skocpol defined the state capacity as "to implement official goals, especially over the actual or potential opposition of powerful social groups or in the face of recalcitrant socioeconomic circumstances." As her mentioning of the opposition of the social forces hints, state capacity is closely related with the state autonomy, which is defined as the ability to "formulate and pursue goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> This definition is based on the review of the statist literature provided by Karen Barkey and Sunita Parikh, 'Comparative Perspectives on the State', *International Review of Sociology*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1991), p.525.

<sup>78</sup> Samuel DeCanio, "Bringing the State Back In ....Again" , *Critical Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2 and 3(2000), p.140.

<sup>79</sup> Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research" in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 9.



Skocpol calls for taking the state seriously as a macrostructure rather than as an arena where societal forces fight one another. She underlined that state must be seen as a set of administrative, policing and coercive institutions headed by an executive authority (ruling elite). States primarily extract resources from society and use this to establish and sustain administrative, legal and coercive organizations. These organizations constitute the basis of state power and function within the context of domestic and international dynamics.<sup>80</sup>

By starting from the point that state has to be viewed as a set of organizations aiming to control territory and population in its jurisdiction in line with the Weberian tradition, Skocpol has made a critical contribution by highlighting state autonomy. She pointed out that state organs can not be viewed as the correspondence of the rivaling societal interest as in the case of liberalism or as an instrument of class rule or arena for class struggles as the Marxist theory does.<sup>81</sup> The state organs can not be expected to be under the complete control of the social forces, they are -at least potentially- autonomous to some degree. This means that state leaders may formulate and pursue goals that are not simply parallel to the interests or demands of the social groups or society, contrary to what different versions of liberal theories discussed above and Marxist approaches envisage.<sup>82</sup>

The degree of state autonomy change from case to case and this variance in the degree of state autonomy has important consequences for the regime trajectories. It is necessary to understand how domestic and international factors act to determine the degree of state autonomy in a given time to make sense of regime trajectories. As Skocpol notes, there are many factors shaping the degree of state autonomy:

The extranational orientations of states, the challenges they  
may face in maintaining domestic order and the

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<sup>80</sup> Theda Skocpol, "State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia, and China", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 1/2 (January-March 1979), p. 12.

<sup>81</sup> Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research" in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

organizational resources that collectivities of state officials may be able to draw on and deploy-all of these features of the state . . . can help to explain autonomous state action.<sup>83</sup>

D. Michael Shafer provided a similar conceptualization when he argued that “autonomy is the extent to which the state is not merely an arena for conflict but is distinct from non-state actors.” He also adds that autonomy is not enough on its own, states must also be able to act which requires capacity. As his discussion reveals, whereas state autonomy can be understood in relation to the societal actors, state capacity is both absolute and relative.<sup>84</sup> In absolute sense, resources that the state enjoys, natural endowments, human resources such as a high-qualified bureaucrats or monitoring capabilities, condition state capacity. State also can gain capacity through external ties such external financial help or money coming from diaspora. In relative sense, the interest, resource or capabilities of societal forces also shapes state capacity. For example, if strong non-state actors take the control of revenues coming from the natural endowments, state capacity will be undermined despite the presence of natural riches. On the other hand, the well-educated bureaucracy will weaken state capacity if state employers pursue their private aims and refuse to obey state leaders. Under extreme circumstances, where state lack autonomy completely, state capture creates total chaos and abyss as different power actors try to push state to different directions. Thus, although state autonomy and capacity are customarily referred as the attributes of the state, they are not only function of state organization and resources. State’s relations with the society and actors in the international realm, including the other states, international organizations and transnational networks of NGOs, also shape them. State, society and power centers in outside the domestic arena constantly interact to condition state autonomy and capacity.

In the state-centered literature over political and economic development, two distinct trends over the relationship between state autonomy and capacity can be discerned. The first approach views state’s relation to society in terms of

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> D. Michael Shafer, *Winners and Losers: How Sectors Shape the Developmental Prospects of States* (London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 6-7.

competition. In this first approach, which is represented by Skocpol, Migdal and Mann, when state defeats the power centers in the society, it develops autonomy and capacity and emerges as strong. Thus, state autonomy provides capacity. On the contrary, when state is defeated by the societal forces, it turns out to be dominated by the society and can not act independently and effectively. Lack of autonomy and ensuing lack of capacity create state weakness.

The second approach, which is represented by Peter B. Evans, approaches the relationship between state and society and its impact on state capacity in a different way. In this approach, state obtains capacity when they are not autonomous from the society but embedded in the society and acts in cooperation with it. In *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*, Evans argues that although 'predatory' Third World states are marked by an important degree of autonomy, their capacity to formulate effective development policies are quite limited. By contrast, Japanese and Korean states are marked by 'embedded autonomies', they enjoy professional quality and a high degree of internal cohesion besides being strongly tied to the business communities through informal networks. This provides them with additional information and capacity for policy implementation necessary for developmental states.<sup>85</sup>

This study adopts the first approach to the relationship between state autonomy and capacity because the study focuses on the issue of regime change and in this context state and society are opposed to each other. In this issue one cannot talk about state's gaining capacity by cooperating with the society. Whereas the regime holding the power tries to remain in power by using capacity at its disposal, the society tries to overthrow it through using the autonomy and capacity that have been wrested from the state. Since the aims of the social groups and the state elite clash, cooperation between them, or embedded autonomy, is out of question.

It is also necessary to add that this thesis does not only focus on state autonomy vis-à-vis the anti-regime forces in the society. It also considers the state autonomy vis-à-vis the external forces. Economic and military strength is an

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<sup>85</sup> Peter B. Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

important factor fostering state autonomy in this respect. If a state is capable in military and economic terms, it will not need external aid and thus the ruling elite will be less vulnerable to pressures coming from external forces favoring regime change. Under different circumstances, a state might be weak economically and militarily but if the ruling elite enjoys the support of an external force supporting the incumbent regime, this state will still be resistant to external pressures for regime change.<sup>86</sup>

Certainly, the state autonomy vis-à-vis external forces becomes important when external pressures for regime change really exists. In some cases, some external powers may have an interest in the maintenance of the regime and under these circumstances, they will support the ruling elite however authoritarian the regime is. Therefore, different from Levitsky and Way, this study will not automatically assume that Western powers support democratization of the authoritarian regimes. Rather, it will examine whether the external pressures for regime change really exists for each country under examination and then turn to exploring the state autonomy to resist such pressures.

Having clarified the study's view on the relation between state capacity and autonomy in this way, it is also necessary to add that this study adopts a conceptualization of state including both Weberian and Tocquevillian<sup>87</sup> elements. Its Weberian component provides that state organs (at least potentially) enjoy some degree of autonomy from the society (depending on the case under scrutiny) which enables that which formulate and pursue goals and policies which are distinct from and even against the demands of the society.

Whereas Weberian tradition is quite important for taking state autonomy into account, the Tocquevillian approach to the state make it possible to envisage that states as actors are important not only because of the ability of the state officials to act autonomously of the society but also due to the state's role in shaping the groups in the society.<sup>88</sup> Organizational arrangements and activities of

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<sup>86</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, "International Linkage and Democratization", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 3(July 2005), pp. 21-22.

<sup>87</sup> Theda Skocpol in "Bringing the State Back in: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research." in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 9.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

the groups in the society as well as the demands they made upon the state are shaped by the structures and activities of the state.<sup>89</sup> In the light of these points, the study will show how lack of state capacity enables anti-regime forces to gain strength and pursue their goals effectively. This point will be more comprehensible after the discussion of the different components of state capacity.

#### **2.4.2. Components of State Capacity**

Through its capacity to penetrate, control, distribute, reward and sanction, the state determines whether serious anti-regime activity at the mass and elite level will emerge and achieve success by conditioning the ‘political field’, which is defined by Pierre Bourdieu as a site in which political elites compete for the monopoly of the right to speak and act in the name of the citizens as well as for the monopoly of the legitimate use of political resources such as law, army, police, public finances.<sup>90</sup> State capacity is the main force shaping the ‘political field’ because in its competition with the opposition the incumbent leadership mobilizes state capacity to ensure its survival. The sanctions, material incentives, state services and legitimacy mechanisms are used by the leadership in its struggle for survival.<sup>91</sup>

Availability of these elements is determined by state capacity. State capacity is also an important determinant of state autonomy as state officials are most likely to achieve the aims independent of society when they have necessary means at their disposal including their survival. When state capacity is strong, the ruling elite will not have trouble in finding and employing mechanisms that will ensure its survival.

To the contrary, when the state lacks capacity, the ruling elite will be defenseless against the anti-regime activity and challengers of the incumbent regime will not experience hardship while toppling the incumbent leadership. In

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 181.

<sup>91</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 208.

the absence of state capacity the domestic and external actors find the opportunity to act without any constraint. The power vacuum created by state failure helps the anti-regime forces at home and abroad to a significant extent. Anti-regime forces exploit the political vacuum and replace the existing leadership. Thus, it is not appropriate to account for the regime outcomes by emphasizing opposition strength because the state capacity together with the effectiveness of the ruling elite in using it shapes the opposition's maneuver to act in a significant way.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, state capacity defines the opportunities enjoyed by and constraints placed on both the incumbent leadership and anti-regime forces. Drawing upon the recognition of the primary role of the state in political process, this study will integrate elites with the circumstances helping and limiting them by using state capacity as the main explanatory framework. Rather than taking state as given and focus on elites to explain divergence of political outcomes, this study will differentiate between state capacities of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan and explore how differences among them in term of state power brought about divergent regime outcomes in those countries.

In this respect, the study joins the attempts to 'bring the state back in' to the study of regime trajectories. This attempt gains special importance in post-Soviet context. As Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong pointed out, studies of post-Soviet transition suffers from the neglect or inefficient study of post-Communist state formation process.<sup>93</sup> Insistence on this neglect misguides students of post-Soviet transition because as Alexander J. Motyl points out the most critical challenge that non-Russian post-communist states face is state building not democratization.<sup>94</sup> States in the region first of all try to acquire ability to sustain themselves internally and internationally through acquiring coercive,

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<sup>92</sup> A similar argument can be found in Lucan A. Way, "Pigs, Wolves and the Evolution of Post-Soviet Competitive Authoritarianism, 1992-2005," *Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers*, No. 62 (June 2006), p. 52.

<sup>93</sup> Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong, "The Ignored Transition: Post-Communist State Development", *Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Working Paper*, Harvard University, March 2002.

<sup>94</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, "Soviet Legacies, Post-Soviet Transformations", *Freedom Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January/February 1997), pp. 50-59.

extractive, regulative, distributive and external capacities. Many scholars studying the subject ignore the fact that post-Soviet state structures are not similar to the ones in the Western developed world. Post-Soviet states are not fixed and consolidated entities; they are in the process of making and each country shows a different degree of success in the process of state building.

Two approaches mark the literature linking the state capacity with the regime outcomes. The first approach, represented by Guillermo O'Donnell together with Juan Linz and Alfred Stephan, links the survival of democracy rather than authoritarianism with the strength of state capacity. O'Donnell argues that state ability to maintain a relatively predictable normative order through effective enforcement of laws is required for the consolidation of democracy.<sup>95</sup> Linz and Stephan also includes state strength in what they regard as necessary conditions for democratic consolidation. Among their five conditions required for democratic consolidation- the rule of law to guarantee the exercise of citizenship, a usable state bureaucracy, an institutionalized economic society, an autonomous civil society and an autonomous political society-, the first two are associated with state capacity.<sup>96</sup>

The second approach recognizes that a weak state capacity can be stumbling block to the stability of the authoritarian regimes as well as the democratic ones.<sup>97</sup> In their understanding whereas state weakness becomes instrumental in the fall of regimes, state strength serves to the entrenchment of

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<sup>95</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries", *World Development*, Vol. 21, No. 8 (1993), pp. 1355-69.

<sup>96</sup> Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stephan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation – Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> For the examples of this approach please see Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Robin Luckham, "Democracy and the Military: An Epitaph for Frankenstein's Monster?" *Democratization* Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1996), pp. 1-16, Richard Snyder, "Path out of Sultanistic Regimes: Combining Structural and Voluntarist Perspectives" in Houchang E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz (eds.) *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 49-85, Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (January 2004), pp. 139-57 and Lucan A. Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave." *World Politics*, Vol. 57, 2 (January 2005), pp. 231-261.

regimes.<sup>98</sup> Theda Skocpol was a pioneer of this view as she discussed that anti-regime elites and masses overthrow the incumbent regimes as result of state weakness they did not create but rather exploit.<sup>99</sup> Her views are particularly important in the sense that she calls for paying closer attention to the incumbent's capacity to resist opposition attempts for regime change shaped by coercive state capacity rather than being exclusively preoccupied with the strength of the opposition.

The approaches linking state capacity fulfill an important function in the sense that they reveal the significance of state capacity for democracy. In the absence of state capacity to enforce law, the right of the citizens cannot be protected and one cannot talk about democracy under these conditions. However, there is also the need to recognize there are also the cases where the ruling elites use the state strength to repress citizens' rights in order to maintain their control over power. Since this study argues for moving beyond the exclusive preoccupation with democratization and consolidation of the democratic regimes, the second approach will abide by the second approach and pay more attention to the relation between state capacity and authoritarian regime trajectories.

In the literature, state capacity is generally defined as the ability to formulate and implement policies to achieve certain goals. Although this definition provides a good starting, this study needs a more comprehensive definition of the term. Since states have a very broad scope of activities and functions, state capacity is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Since the study is interested in the relation between different dimensions of state capacity and the regime trajectories, it is necessary to clarify these different dimensions.

Different components of state capacity that condition regime trajectories will be discussed in the remaining part of this section. However, before this, it is necessary to emphasize that since the study aims to remedy the inefficiencies of

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<sup>98</sup> Lucan A. Way, "Authoritarian Failure: How does State Weakness Strengthen Electoral Competition?" in Andreas Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism: Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), pp. 167-180.

<sup>99</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 17.



existing state-centered approaches in the literature on ‘color revolutions’, which are exclusively preoccupied with coercion, it will also consider the components of state capacity that helps state gain legitimacy. As pointed out by Antonio Gramsci, a regime needs to obtain the consent of the population to ensure its survival; blunt coercion is not sufficient by itself.<sup>100</sup> When regimes become able to legitimize itself by distributing economic resources of the state or other legitimacy mechanisms centering on identity, they encounter less difficulty in their struggle for survival. Main weakness of the coercion-centered analyses of the Levitsky and Way arises from this point. They cannot explain the emergence of serious anti-regime activity in countries like Armenia where the coercive state apparatus is quite strong. This study will take different components of the state capacity that help the regime to pre-empt the rise of societal discontent in the light of the guidance provided by Antonio Gramsci and Michael Mann, who draw attention to the different components of power as discussed in the introduction. Consequently, it will be showed that with the undermining of state capacity in dimensions, such as distribution, legitimacy of the regime will be harmed. On the other hand, the weakening of coercive capacity will damage its autonomy. Both of these will undermine the regime’s ability to survive as will be discussed in greater detail.

The capacity to monopolize power, control, allegiance and information is the broadest dimension of state capacity and will be used as the administrative capacity in this study. According to Weber, the essence of statehood is the ability of the central government to claim monopoly over the legitimate use of violence in the territory under its jurisdiction. Sovereign integrity and stable administrative-military control of the territory within its jurisdiction constitute the main precondition for any state’s ability to implement policies.<sup>101</sup>

Although Weber’s definition of state is one of the most frequently used definitions in social science, as Migdal argues, Weber characterizes an ideal-type

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<sup>100</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

<sup>101</sup> Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research” in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 16.

state in this definition and real states differ from each other in the degree they fit this ideal type.<sup>102</sup> In reality, as states prove to be incapable of monopolizing the legitimate use of violence, rival power centers emerge. As central government loses its control over some portions of state territory to these rival forces, the state becomes a failed one. When this happens, the state capacities in other areas to be discussed below suffer in parallel to the state inability to impose its authority over its territory.

Establishing state monopolies in other fields besides the monopoly over use of force has also an important role in conditioning the regime trajectories, although this is generally neglected. Monopoly over commanding loyalty of the citizens, controlling information and economic resources would provide the ruling elites with invaluable ability to remain in power. However, as in the case of monopoly over use of force, absolute monopoly over the fields discussed above cannot be easily attained. Rivals challenging state monopoly emerge and they undermine the ability of the ruling elite to remain in power. The higher the number of the rivals challenging state monopoly in these areas and the more effective they are, the less likely the ruling elite to maintain regime stability.

At this point, it is necessary to examine the rivals that challenge state monopoly and the state struggle with them. To start with, the rivals to state in the field of commanding loyalty, families, clans, patron-client networks, religious organizations, ethnic groups, domestic businesses and local governments compete with the state to ensure people's loyalty.<sup>103</sup> To block the attempts of these rivals, states try to centralize political power by replacing traditional power centers with a single national authority.<sup>104</sup> Through this process, the states became able to

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<sup>102</sup> Migdal Joel S., *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 19.

<sup>103</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems", *World Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (January 1965), pp. 183-214 and Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 50.

<sup>104</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

create a national culture and make citizens loyal and committed to the state authority.<sup>105</sup>

Since this study is concerned with the regime outcomes in post-Soviet space, the replacement of state with other autonomous centers vying for gaining the support of the population is of great importance.

Soviet period was marked by the intensive repression against the rival centers of power. However, some rival centers such as patron client networks functioned behind the scenes and compromised the state's monopolization of power. Paul B. Henze notes that most of the people living under the Soviet rule regarded Soviet authorities as enemies, which they had to cheat, manipulate and protect themselves as far as possible.<sup>106</sup> These people tended to use patronage networks to avoid the life styles imposed on them, to maintain a degree of freedom and to steal from this enemy. The patronage networks survived in the post-independence period defining the share of political and economic sources of the state.

In some cases, the patronage networks followed the clan divisions in the post-Soviet societies. Clan divisions proved to be an important asset for the Soviet policies based on divide and rule techniques. However, with the collapse of Soviet power, post-Soviet states started to experience hardship in forging a balance among different clans and ensuring the allegiance of citizens, which define their identity on the basis of the clans they belong to.

Soviet system also served to the creation and strengthening of other kind divisions that bode ill for imposing central state control in post-Soviet period. Bolsheviks was careful enough to drive the boundaries of the republics in a way that made it difficult to command loyalty from the population.<sup>107</sup> To this end, ethnically different populations were located within the boundaries of national republics. In some cases, ethnic groups were granted different degrees of

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<sup>105</sup> Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 36.

<sup>106</sup> Paul B. Henze, "Russia and the Caucasus", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 19 (April 1996), p. 392.

<sup>107</sup> William Fierman, "The Soviet Transformation of Central Asia", in William Fierman (ed.), *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation* (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: 1991), p. 17

autonomies under the national republic. In the matrioshka system of hierarchical power relations under Soviet system, Moscow was at the top, after it came the Soviet Socialist Republics, then Autonomous Republics and Autonomous Oblasts in descending order of self-rule. In the course of time, these autonomies developed indigenous elites and institutions, which compromised the control of the national republics. Autonomies also resulted in the strengthening of separate ethnic identity of the group enjoying it. In the post-Soviet period, successor states experienced difficulties in imposing central control over autonomous entities and most secessionist conflicts took the form of a conflict between the autonomous entities and the government of the republic it is situated as a result of Soviet boundary drawing.<sup>108</sup>

The post-Soviet states showed variation in their degree of success in the struggle against rival centers of power such as clans and autonomous entities. Since nation building is at a quite pre-mature stage and the societies are fragmented along various lines, the anti-regime enjoy the opportunity to mobilize some groups against the incumbent regime by emphasizing their differences. This study will examine the effectiveness of different leaderships in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine in this struggle and the impact of their level of success on regime outcomes. Special attention will be devoted to Georgia since it is the main case study and its degree of success will be compared with those of others.

Ensuring the loyalty of the groups with different identities is not the only side of establishing control over the population. The government also needs to rein the autonomy of the rival power centers at the local level comprised of local strongmen and state and party officials such as district leaders, state governors and local party leaders.<sup>109</sup> In the absence of effective control, these forces can function as anti-regime forces, they can use their budgetary discretion and the coercive capacity at their disposal for the aims that run counter the survival of the

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<sup>108</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus-Cases in Georgia* (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab, 2001).

<sup>109</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society. Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 88-90.

regime.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the ruling elites have to find ways of subordinating local elites to itself to prevent these forces from threatening regime stability. The incumbent leaders also try to restrain the autonomy of rival centers of economic power. Otherwise, these rival forces can engage in financing the activities of the anti-regime forces. Overall, the ruling elite will be more likely to preserve power as far as it reined in the autonomy of rival power centers in the economic field.

Besides establishing control over rival power centers trying to gain the loyalty of citizens, the ruling elite also has ensure state control over information to preserve its position. Through state control over media, the ruling elite can use the media as a propaganda machine for the regime and block the spread of information that can undermine the image of the regime in the eyes of the society, strengthen the opposition and contribute to the mobilization against the ruling elite.

In order to establish control over autonomous centers of power and media and gain the loyalty of the society, the ruling elite resort to the coercive and the economic state capacity (composed of extractive and distributive capacity). The rest of the section is devoted to exploring these dimensions of state capacity.

Coercive Capacity is required for both preserving national independence and maintaining domestic stability. Enhancing coercive capacity of state proved to be the important motive behind the establishment of modern states.<sup>111</sup> In order to finance war-making effort, states had to develop their extractive capacity. In their effort to extract revenues from society, rulers engaged in activities that eventually served to the emergence of treasuries, tax systems and regional administrations, i.e. modern state institutions.<sup>112</sup> Coercive capacity of state is mobilized by all leaders to maintain their rule but at varying degrees. Whereas the states that are able to legitimize their authority need less coercion to achieve compliance, those lacking this ability need to resort to coercion more.

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>111</sup> Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990-1992* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), p. 20.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Coercive state capacity is an important factor conditioning regime. It defines the state's ability to control and repress the anti-regime forces at two stages. At one stage, the ruling elite may employ 'low level' repression comprising surveillance, deportation, harassment, detention, occasional beatings and murders to frighten the citizens and discourage them from engaging in anti-regime activity.<sup>113</sup> These means are also instrumental in sidelining the rival elites within state and non-state organizations that are regarded as threatening to the regime stability. By using these, the state leaders can preempt the rise of rival centers of power and weaken or eliminate individuals and groups already challenging the ruling elite.<sup>114</sup> At the other stage, coercive capacity enables the ruling elite to suppress opposition protests by resorting to measures including the use of deadly force.<sup>115</sup>

The ruling elite needs a well-developed infrastructure and effective control over this infrastructure to enjoy strong coercive capacity. The coercive apparatus includes well-resourced military and police forces as well as an internal security apparatus bestowed with secret police and broad surveillance mechanisms (including measures such as telephone tapping). Other state institutions such as tax administration and judiciary can be also used to intimidate, control and punish media, private sector and opposition. The ruling elite also needs to establish strict control over these coercive state organs and ensure their loyalty to rely on them for regime stability.<sup>116</sup> Otherwise, they can side with the anti-regime forces against the regime or challenge the regime on their own as in the case of coup d'états.

Extractive capacity can be defined as the ability of the state to draw and direct material resources of the country. It is vital for fulfillment of tasks assigned

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<sup>113</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "Autocracy by Democratic Rules: The Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in the Post-Cold War Era", *Paper prepared for Presentation at the Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association*, 28-31 August 2002, Boston, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society. Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 80.

<sup>115</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "Autocracy by Democratic Rules: The Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in the Post-Cold War Era", *Paper prepared for Presentation at the Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association*, 28-31 August 2002, Boston, p. 8.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

to the state and implementation of policies to achieve the goals of the leadership. This capacity influences all other components of state capacity in a significant way. This led Esmund Burke to remark that the revenue of the state is the state as everything depends on it.<sup>117</sup>

The extractive capacities of states differ. As argued by Lewis W. Snyder there are three factors conditioning the extracting capacity of the state: 'general productivity' or 'the level of economic development', 'openness of economy' and 'resource endowment'.<sup>118</sup> As he argues if a state has a developed economy and a high productivity level, it will be able to raise high revenues. The states with natural resource endowments such as oil and export sector driven by it enjoy important advantages compared to states which mainly depend on taxes, because extraction activities like taxation is both more arduous and can lead to social resistance.

States with strong extractive capacities have a significant advantage for maintaining regime stability because they have the financial means to compete with anti-regime forces. They enjoy the resources to be used for strengthening the coercive state apparatus through paying the army and police with high salaries, buying the necessary arms and other devices such as those used in surveillance activities. These states will also be less vulnerable to the pressures for regime change coming from outside the country since they do not rely on external sources for financing their activities at home. States with strong extractive capacities will be also in an advantageous position to foster the distributive state capacity which is essential for gaining citizens support towards the regime as will discussed below.

Distributive capacity is the ability to provide infrastructure and services such as health and education, to supply credit, to pay salaries and pensions and to offer jobs. It is also necessary to include material benefits distributed through

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<sup>117</sup>Esmund Burke quoted in Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 122.

<sup>118</sup> Lewis W. Snyder, *Growth, Debt, and Politics: Economic Adjustment and the Political Performance of Developing Countries* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 6, 46, 66-67.

patron-client networks in the conceptualization of distribution.<sup>119</sup> The incumbent leaders can use distributive mechanisms such as material benefits, privileges or discriminatory tax policies enabled by economic strength and control over state resources to buy off potential challengers as well as ensuring the loyalty of the society en masse.<sup>120</sup>

The power of appointments at the disposal of the state leaders is a component of the distributive capacity that illustrates the link between distributive capacity and regime well. The leaders can appoint those who have strong personal loyalties to them (as a result of family regional, tribal, ethnic ties) to important positions in state institutions in order to pre-empt emergence of rival power centers in state institutions.<sup>121</sup> Appointment to state positions can also be used to co-opt those who might threaten the regime if they are not appeased and controlled by employing them in state institutions.<sup>122</sup>

In short, the state strength along this dimension contributes to regime survival by increasing the degree of social support towards leadership and incorporating potential challengers of the regime. The distributive capacity can also be used by the ruling elite to buy the support of key state organizations such as army and the police by paying them higher salaries. There is a close relationship between extractive capacity and distribution capacity since the revenues enable provision of state services and certain kinds of benefits.

Another dimension of the state capacity that is instrumental in preserving power is regulative capacity. One of the central aims of the state is the ability to formulate and enforce rules regulating people's behavior at the expense of other forms of social organizations coexist with the state such as clans and regional organizations. These rules include the laws, regulations, decrees and the like, which the ruling elite indicates that it was willing to enforce utilizing coercive

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<sup>119</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems", *World Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (January 1965), p. 198.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>121</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society. Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 75.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.



means at its disposal.<sup>123</sup> This dimension of capacity is important in the sense that it indicates the ability of the state to get people to do what the ruling elite desires. It may include changing the behavior of the society in line with the interest of the state leaders. In order to gain over the rival social organizations, the ruling elite needs to employ both coercive state capacity and supply rewards and other kinds of benefits using the distributive capacity.<sup>124</sup>

The ruling elite also needs the loyalty of the subordinates within the state organs to ensure extraction and use of revenues for the aims prescribed by the regime, regulation of citizens behavior in line with the ruling elite's needs and repression of anti-regime forces. This is what Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky labeled as cohesion in their articles "The Dynamics of Authoritarian Coercion after the Cold War". This study relies on this article while formulating the capacity to ensure compliance of different state institutions and of subordinates within those state organs.

When the state is strong along this dimension, the ruling elite will be able to make the subordinates in the police, military, local levels of government and tax organs to obey their orders even the controversial ones. They can realize the use of tax agencies to punish anti-regime forces, make the police to fire at protestors or governors to organize election fraud. In the case of extreme weakness along this dimension, subordinates turn the state organs to their personal fiefdoms and act in line with their personal interest rather than the needs of the ruling elite.<sup>125</sup>

The most vivid illustration of the dangers posed by the autonomous state organizations to the survival of the regime is provided the by the examples of coup d'états toppling incumbent regimes all over the world. As they illustrate, it is by no means enough to strengthen state capacities to maintain regime stability, the incumbents also need to establish strong control over the state institutions and the public sector employees. In order to strengthen its control over state's agencies,

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>125</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky "The Dynamics of Authoritarian Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 393.

the incumbent leaders can balance state agencies against one another or make use of state budgets to buy off the loyalty of important institutions and key officials by increasing their wages and providing them with other kind of prerogatives.<sup>126</sup>

Having clarified the different components of state capacity and the ways that these different components condition regime trajectories in this chapter, the study will examine how the weakness Georgian state in all the components discussed here brought about the regime change through the 'Rose Revolution' in the next chapters.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This study argued that to account for the dynamics bringing about regime change in Georgia through the 'Rose Revolution' and regime trajectories in other post-Soviet countries, it is necessary to use a state-centered analytical framework rather than a society-centered one. The ineffectiveness of the society-centered approaches and the need to replace them with state-centered analytical framework become obvious if one considers that societal forces such as mobilized masses, youth organizations or determined opposition parties could not succeed in removing incumbents when the state leaders took necessary steps for regime survival. Therefore, it is required to employ an analytical framework that sheds light on the ways that state structures and actions condition not only the success or failure but also the development of anti-regime movements.

Having revealed the inefficiencies of society based approaches, the study underlined the need to use a state-centered approach to understand the 'Rose Revolution' and other 'color revolutions'. It has been argued that state power is the main force shaping the opportunities enjoyed by or the constraints that limit the ruling and opposition elite in a given country. Strong states are defined by their ability to monopolize power, control, allegiance and information (administrative capacity), to draw and direct material resources (extractive capacity), to distribute state revenues to the society (distributive capacity), to regulate human activities (regulative capacity) and to ensure compliance of

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<sup>126</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society. Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 82- 83.

different state institutions and subordinates within them (cohesive capacity). These state capacities are interdependent to each other. The ruling elites enjoying these capacities are more likely to survive compared to those suffering from state weakness.

In the light of the discussion in this chapter, the study will examine how the Georgian state, society and international influences interacted in various power domains to bring about a regime change through the 'Rose Revolution'. It will examine how the interactions of these actors bring about incapacitation of the state in various areas resulting in loss of autonomy versus challengers at home and abroad. Afterwards, the study will compare Georgia with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia Ukraine and Uzbekistan on the basis on the explanatory variables provided in this chapter to see how their similarities and differences with Georgia shaped the regime outcomes in these countries.

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1. Introduction

As this study mainly aims to show that state weakness, both in terms of lack of capacity and autonomy, was the main reason behind the regime change through the ‘Rose Revolution’, it is necessary to examine how the post-Soviet Georgian state emerged as a failing state under Gamsakhurdia and transformed into only a weak one under Shevardnadze.<sup>127</sup> It is also necessary to extend the examination beyond the post-Soviet period since the roots of the weak Georgian state lie deeper than this era. Therefore, this chapter will first explore the legacies of pre-independence period as they play a significant role in conditioning Georgian state capacity in post-Soviet period. The emergence of Georgia as an independent state, the relations of center with minorities throughout the history, and the functioning of the state structures in the Soviet period will be examined. This will be followed by an exploring of nationalist mobilization in the country with the collapse of Soviet authority and Gamsakhurdia’s coming to the power. After discussing the Gamsakhurdia’s ouster and Shevardnadze’s return to power,

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<sup>127</sup> For the studies which picture Georgian state as a failing one under Gamsakhurdia and a weak one under Shevardnadze please see Ghia Nodia, “Dynamics and Sustainability of the Rose Revolution” in Senem Aydın and Michael Emerson, *Democratisation in the European Neighbourhood* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2005), pp. 38-53, Laurence Broers and Julian Broxup, “Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections”, *The London Information Networks on Conflicts and State Report*, January 2004, available at <http://www.links-london.org/pdf/Crisis%20and%20Renewal%20in%20Georgian%20Politics%20-20Jan%2004.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 10 January 2009), Mithat Çelikpala, “From a Failed State To A Weak One? Georgia And Turkish-Georgian Relations”, *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. 36 (2005), pp. 159-199, Robert Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 48, Jack A. Goldstone et al., “State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings” (Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2000) and Vicken Cheterian, “Georgia's Rose Revolution: Change or Repetition? Tension between State-Building and Modernization Projects”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 4(2008), p. 694.

the chapter will turn to examining Shevardnadze's policies that resulted in the establishment of relative stability and a corrupt regime in the country.

### **3.2. History of Georgian Statehood**

The ethnic groups what was to become the Georgian nation first appeared in the west of the country. After the collapse of the Hittite Empire because of the Assyrian invasion, escaping tribes moved to the territories what constitutes southwestern Georgia now. These fleeing tribes of Hittite Empire were mixed with the ethnic group in the west of the country to establish the Kingdom of Colchis in 600 BC. Other tribes of the Hittite empire later started to inhabit the east of the country and founded the Kingdom of Iberia around 300 BC. The geographical divisions that isolated the tribes living in contemporary Georgian land served to the emergence of the three distinct dialects in the prototype of Georgian language: Mingrelian/Laz in Western Georgia around the Black Sea, Svan in the northwestern mountainous region and Kartvelian in the eastern Kakheti and Kartli regions. Kartvelian afterwards became the sole Georgian literary language.<sup>128</sup>

Georgians call themselves as Kartveli and their land Sakartvelo 'the place of Georgians'. Sakartvelo was started to be used in the eleventh century, when the Georgian rulers were first able to establish a kingdom uniting the lands inhabited by Georgian speakers. However, this unity proved to be short-lived and for the most of the history Sakartvelo remained to be divided into mainly two parts: Western (Imereti) and Eastern Georgia (Kartli).<sup>129</sup> Before the conversion to Christianity around 330 AD, Zoroastrianism and the Greek creeds formed the main religious faiths among the people living in today's Georgia. Starting with the west of the country, Christianity quickly spread.<sup>130</sup>

Due to its location Georgia had been a subject of competition between different empires throughout its history and ruled successively by the Persians,

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<sup>128</sup> Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>129</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 3,4.

<sup>130</sup> Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of small Nations: The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), p. 13.

Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols and Ottomans until it was annexed by Tsarist Russia in 1801.<sup>131</sup> As a result of being exposed to intervention of rivaling empires and mountainous landscape, it was unusual for Georgian speaking lands to be united under a single political entity. Rather, these territories were marked by a loosely united linguistic and cultural identity.<sup>132</sup> Before gaining independence in 1991, there were only two short periods during which an independent Georgian state existed.

The first period of independent Georgian statehood falls between 1089 and 1220, when King David, ‘the rebuilder’, expelled the foreign armies from the territories inhabited by Kartvelian speaking people and established political unity.<sup>133</sup> This period is the cornerstone of the history of Georgian statehood because only after that point one can refer to Georgia as a political unit.<sup>134</sup> When the Mongolian invasions ended this first period of independent statehood, the region entered a period during which it was repeatedly divided and ruled by competing empires. In the absence of political unity, Georgians preserved their identity and common bonds thanks to their language, literature and Georgian Orthodox Church.<sup>135</sup> In 1783, feeling that his isolated kingdom could not stand against two Muslim enemies, King Erekle II requested help from Tsarist Russia against Turks and Iranians and signed a pact with Catherine the Great. However, rather than protecting Georgian independence, Russia annexed Georgia in 1801 and long period of Russian rule of Georgia began.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>132</sup> Giorgi Derlugian, “Georgia’s Return of the King”, *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper Series*, No. 22 (February 2004), p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Spyros Demetriou, “Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)birth of the Georgian State”, *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 865.

<sup>134</sup> Cyril Toumanoff, “Introduction to Christian Caucasian History, II: States and Dynasties of the Formative Period”, *Traditio* 17(1961), p. 2 quoted in Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 33.

<sup>135</sup> Darrell Slider, “Democratization in Georgia” in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 157.

<sup>136</sup> International Crisis Group, *Georgia: What Now*, Europe Report, No: 151(3 December 2003), p. 2.

The collapse of Tsarist rule in 1917 prepared the ground for the second period of Georgian independent statehood. Soon after the Soviet Russia left the World War I having signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with the Germans, Georgia established the Democratic Federative Republic of Transcaucasia together with Armenia and Azerbaijan in April 1918.<sup>137</sup> This republic lasted hardly a month. As a result of the disagreements among the three countries, including the different attitude towards the Ottoman advance into the region (the Armenians and Georgians were anxious whereas the Azeris welcomed them), the federation fell apart.<sup>138</sup> In March 1918 an independent Menshevik government was elected and Georgian independence was declared on 26 May 1918. This second period of Georgian independent statehood ended with Bolshevik Red Army invasion on 25 February 1921.<sup>139</sup>

Georgia was first forced to join Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federal Republic together with Armenia and Azerbaijan according to the Union Treaty of 1922, which established the Soviet Union. With the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federal Republic in 1936, Georgia became a Union Republic comprising smaller federal entities, two autonomous republics and one autonomous region, subordinated to it. With the higher constitutional status and the adoption of Khrushchev's decentralizing reforms, Georgian leadership became able to expand their control over the republic.<sup>140</sup> Even at the last days of Stalin's rule, regional elites and family circles were cutting across the lines of command from the center to the periphery although Moscow carried out occasional purges to curb such tendencies.<sup>141</sup>

When Khrushchev came to power after the death of Stalin, Georgians felt irritated by his criticisms of Stalin since the latter was of Georgian origin. When

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<sup>137</sup> Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle For Transcaucasia (1917-1921)*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951) p.105.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Vicki L. Hesli, *Governments and Politics in Russia and the Post-Soviet Region*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007) p. 346.

<sup>141</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 269.

no official ceremony was held in USSR on the third anniversary of the death of Stalin, Georgians held a demonstration in Tbilisi to protest against this and commemorate Stalin on 5 March 1956. For many, this event showed that Georgian nationalism was still strong after nearly forty years of Soviet rule.<sup>142</sup> Khrushchev showed no mercy towards this expression of Georgian nationalism. He ordered the army to open fire on demonstrators.<sup>143</sup> In the years following Tbilisi demonstrations, Moscow gave some concessions by relaxing its controls on cultural matters. More importantly, the local elite increased its power and authority in political and economic fields thanks to Khrushchev's policies of decentralization.<sup>144</sup>

After Khrushchev was removed from power in 1964, the ruling elite of the Soviet Union entered into a period of personnel stability and relaxation under Brezhnev. In a political atmosphere where the important control mechanisms such as civil society, free press and periodic elections did not exist, the loosening of central control resulted in increasing corruption.<sup>145</sup>

Corruption developed along both horizontal and vertical lines. Vertical political corruption reflected the hierarchical pyramid structure of the Communist Party. Vertical corruption encompassed patron-client relationships in which the superior provided security, job and other favors to subordinates in return for support, loyalty and work. In the case of horizontal corruption, exchanges of favors were done among political institutions of similar status and political power. Family and friendship relations strengthened these horizontal networks of corruption. Both types of corruption led to the embezzlement of state resources, created inequality in the society and shaped the behaviors of citizens so deeply that it was not possible to change them in post-Soviet period.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>145</sup> Georgi Derlugian, "Georgia's Return of the King", *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper Series*, No. 22 (February 2004), p. 7.

<sup>146</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 19, Number 1 (March 2006), p. 44.



Georgia was notorious for its high degree of corruption among other republics as its agricultural products and Black Sea resorts provided many opportunities for private enrichment.<sup>147</sup> Corruption and inefficiency became so rampant that in 1972 that Moscow appointed Eduard Shevardnadze as the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party to carry out anti-corruption campaigns in the republic.<sup>148</sup> Shevardnadze remained in that post until he became Soviet Foreign Minister in 1985.

During his rule, Shevardnadze opted for a conciliatory attitude towards Georgian nationalism and dissent. When riots erupted in Tbilisi in 1978 as a response to Moscow's decision that the national language of Georgia would be Russian, Shevardnadze tried to calm the crowd by addressing them in a stadium in a way that risked his own life rather than resorting to force.<sup>149</sup> This event constitutes an example of Shevardnadze's dislike of use of force as well as leaning of the Georgian society to protest against the state authorities.

When Moscow eventually came to retreat, Shevardnadze gained credit for saving the nation from bloodshed.<sup>150</sup> His successor, Patiashvili pursued a more confrontational approach towards dissent. As a result, the opposition was pushed underground and radicalized.<sup>151</sup> It is also necessary to underline that although Shevardnadze tolerated the mass protest and avoided using force against them, he did not give up pragmatism. By ordering the imprisonment of leading dissident figures including Gamsakhurdia, he showed his determination to punish anti-regime forces in Georgia and his loyalty to Moscow.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Georgi Derlugian, "Georgia's Return of the King", *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper Series*, No. 22 (February 2004), pp. 7-8.

<sup>148</sup> Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia ", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 159.

<sup>149</sup> Thomas Goltz, *Georgia Diary: a Chronicle of War and Political Chaos in the Post-Soviet Caucasus* (New York: Sharpe, 2006), p. 45.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Martina Huber, *State-Building in Georgia: Unfinished and at Risk?* (Netherlands Institute of International Relations, February 2004), p. 25.

<sup>152</sup> Georgi Derlugian, "Georgia's Return of the King", *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper Series*, No. 22 (February 2004), p. 9.

### 3.3. Relations with Minorities

Soviet rule both contributed to consolidation of Georgian nation and sowed the seeds of future secessionist demands. On the one hand, it defined the boundaries of the Georgian Republic; on the other hand, it granted different degrees of autonomies to three regions and made them less directly subject to Tbilisi's authority.<sup>153</sup> In the matrioshka system of hierarchical power relations under Soviet system, Moscow was at the top, after it Georgia came as a Soviet Socialist Republic, whereas Abkhazia and Adjara had the status of Autonomous Republic, South Ossetia ranked as an Autonomous Oblast.<sup>154</sup> This federal structure of the Soviet Union linked ethnicity, territory and administration in an attempt to win the support of different nationalities and consolidate the control of Moscow. It was believed that that the national awakening was just a transitional phase ultimately all ethnic differences within each state would disappear as different nationalities merge into one another in an international socialist culture.<sup>155</sup> Things did not work in this way in reality. The national identities strengthened as a result of Soviet structures and some ethnic groups confronted each other in armed struggles rather than moving closer and merge. Below, an examination of historical background of relations between Tbilisi and minorities together with a discussion on the role of Soviet federal structure in preparing the ground for emergence of conflicts between the center and autonomous entities are provided. The mobilization during perestroika and the eruption of armed conflicts will be later.

Georgians and Abkhaz lived in neighboring territories for centuries and there were periods when Abkhazia was under Georgian control and Abkhazian Kingdom ruled some parts of Georgia.<sup>156</sup> With the Russian conquest of the region

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<sup>153</sup> Kate Hamilton, Politics and the PRSP Approach: Georgia Case Study, *Overseas Development Institute Working Paper, No 239* (May 2004), p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)Birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (November 2002), p. 866.

<sup>155</sup> Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations: the Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London: Zed Books, 1994), p. 41.

<sup>156</sup> Liana Kvarchelia, "Georgia-Abkhazia Conflict: View from Abkhazia", *Democratizatsiya*, Vol. 6, No. 1(1998), p. 18.

in the second half of the nineteenth century, both Abkhazia and Georgia came under the control of Russian Empire. When Abkhazians were forced to leave because of their resistance to Tsarist rule, Georgians, Armenians and Russians settled in their places. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Abkhazia became a part of the Republic of Mountain Peoples. In 1918, the Mensheviks gained power in Georgia and claimed Abkhazia as a part of the Republic of Georgia. When the Bolsheviks took control of the whole of Transcaucasia in 1921, Abkhazia was declared the Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic, a titular national republic.<sup>157</sup>

Until 1931 Abkhazia was a Union Republic within USSR but in 1931 its status was downgraded to that of Autonomous Republic and it was incorporated into Georgia. From the perspective of Abkhaz, this started a period that was marked by injustices committed by Georgians against them.<sup>158</sup> It has been asserted that downgrading the status of Abkhazia from a Union Republic to an Autonomous Republic subordinated to Georgia enabled the Georgian authorities to pursue Georgianization in Abkhazia. Abkhaz also underscores that some of the Soviet leaders, such as Joseph Stalin and Lavrenti Beira, were of Georgian origin and asserts that this further facilitated Georgian repression. Abkhazians complained that the Georgians attempted to assimilate the relatively small Abkhazian community through education and cultural policies. They also accuse Georgians of changing the demographic structure of Abkhazia through immigration waves of Georgians, Armenians and Russians between 1939 and 1959.

In 1957, 1967 and 1977, Abkhazian cultural movements and some members of intelligentsia applied to Moscow and demanded Abkhazian integration into Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic instead of Georgia. Although Moscow rejected these demands each time, it responded by increasing the investment in Abkhazia and giving certain concessions to the Abkhaz. As a

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<sup>157</sup> Alexander Murinson, "The Secessions of Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabagh: the Roots and Patterns of Development of Post-Soviet Micro-Secessions in Transcaucasia, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 23, No: 1, p. 13.

<sup>158</sup> Bruno Coppieters, "Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, No. 1(2004), p. 63

result, Abkhaz gained overwhelming access to key political positions and economic resources of their autonomous republic. As a result, most ministers of the Abkhaz government were Abkhazian and Abkhaz controlled most of the local economy during the last days of the Soviet rule.<sup>159</sup>

Adjara turned out to be another autonomous entity that showed some resistance to obey Tbilisi's rule, albeit at a less intense degree than Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Part of the Ottoman Empire for 300 years, Adjara has always been a region away from the control of the Tbilisi. Tsarist Russia seized the control of the region in 1878. Adjara was reoccupied by Turks after World War I and became an autonomous republic within Soviet Georgia in 1921. In 1922, Adjara was subordinated to the Republic of Transcaucasia. When Georgia gained the Union Republic status in 1936, it was subordinated to Georgia. Although Adjarians are ethnically Georgian, they were converted to Islam during Ottoman rule and they were granted autonomous republic status within Georgia on the basis of this differentiation.<sup>160</sup> Although there is not a strong basis for a separate Adjarian identity, the attempts to act independently of Tbilisi gained strength mostly due to the Adjarian ruling elite interest in denying the central government control over local economic resources.<sup>161</sup>

The Ossetians are descended from the Alans, an ancient Indo-European people, who migrated to the Caucasus region starting in the sixth century AD, and arriving in today's South Ossetia around the eighteenth century. The Ossetians speak an Iranian language that is distinct from Georgian. They are divided religiously and geographically by the Caucasus Mountains. While North Ossetia in the Russian Federation populated mostly by Muslim Ossetians, South Ossetia is predominantly Christian.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 88.

<sup>160</sup> Monica D. Toft, *Multinationality, Regions and State-Building: The Failed Transition in Georgia*, *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Autumn 2001), p. 128.

<sup>161</sup> Jonathan Aves, *Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996), p. 41.

<sup>162</sup> John M. Cotter, "Cultural Security Dilemmas and Ethnic Conflict in Georgia", *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1999), p. 113.

The origins of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict can be traced back to 1918 and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Georgia whose territory comprised the area now known as South Ossetia.<sup>163</sup> A chain of Ossetian rebellions for independence took place between 1918 and 1920. In 1920 Georgian National Guards were sent to crush Soviet-supported revolts against the Tbilisi government, causing 5,000 dead according to the Ossetian sources. On 12 March 1922, Georgia became a member of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, and, on 20 April 1922, South Ossetia was renamed the South Ossetian Autonomous Region (oblast) subordinated to Tbilisi. On 30 December 1922, the Federation joined the Soviet Union. The Soviet Constitution of 5 December 1936 confirmed South Ossetia's autonomy within the newly founded Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).<sup>164</sup>

The grievances against Tbilisi further deepened under Soviet rule. South Ossetians resented the fact that they had only the status of an autonomous region in Georgia whereas north Ossetian had the status of autonomous republic in the Russian Federation. Many Georgians, conversely, thought that South Ossetia enjoyed benefits denied to them.<sup>165</sup> These grievances would lead to armed clashes with the lessening of Soviet authority as in the case of Abkhazia as will be discussed in the following sections.

As Georgia progressed towards independence, minorities increasingly became concerned that with independence Georgian authorities would toughen the policies favoring Georgians at the expense of minorities.<sup>166</sup> In the coming sections, it will be shown that Gamsakhurdia's exclusionary policies aggravated the tensions inherited from the past but it is also necessary to add that the emergence of conflicts between the minority regions and Tbilisi can also be

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<sup>163</sup> Marietta S Koenig,, "The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict" in Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE-Yearbook 2004*, No. 10, (Baden-Baden 2005), p. 254.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia", *Europe Report*, No. 159 (26 November 2004), p. 3.

<sup>166</sup> Liana Kvarchelia, "Georgia-Abkhazia Conflict: View from Abkhazia", *Democratizatsiya*, Vol. 6, No. 1(1998), p. 19.

attributed to interest of the ruling elite in these regions to maintain their position. The collapse of the Soviet system was a challenge for these elites because they knew that if the autonomous entities they run lost their autonomous status, they would lose their positions. As Gamsakhurdia attempted to abolish their autonomous status, they tended to defend their positions by asking for broader autonomy or by pursuing secessionism. Nationalism was used as an instrument by these elites to get the support of their constituencies and co-ethnics as in the case of South Ossetia. Once rallied the public behind the aim of strengthening autonomy or secession, they had more chance of preserving their power.<sup>167</sup>

### **3.4. Emergence of the Opposition Groups and the Rise of Gamsakhurdia**

As in the other parts of the Soviet Union, permissive political atmosphere created by Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost prepared the ground for the emergence of opposition groups in Georgia.<sup>168</sup> Initially, these groups had campaigned for relatively moderate aims like closing down the Soviet army artillery shooting range near the historical David Gareji monastery as well as the stopping the construction of the Transcaucasus railway for environmental reasons. However, by 1988, these protests gained nationalist character and started to advocate full sovereignty for Georgia.<sup>169</sup>

*Ilya Chavchavadze Society* was among the first opposition groups to be formed when repression started to be relieved. It was committed to the strengthening of Georgian sovereignty under the slogan 'Language, Religion and Fatherland'.<sup>170</sup> It emerged as a broad-based organization in October 1987 founded by former dissidents including Giorgi Chanturia, Irakli Tsereteli, Tamar

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<sup>167</sup> S. Neil MacFarlane, "Democratization, Nationalism and Regional Security in the Southern Caucasus", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1997), p. 410.

<sup>168</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 83.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>170</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994), p. 320.

Chkheidze, Merab Kostova and Zviad Gamsakhurdia.<sup>171</sup> Zviad Gamsakhurdia was a specialist in American literature and one of Georgia's most famous dissidents in the late Soviet period. He established the Georgian Initiative Group for Human Rights in 1974 and he transformed it into Georgian Helsinki Watch Group together with Merab Kostova in 1976. As a result of publishing journals critical of Soviet policies and campaign on the problems such as corruption in the Georgian Church, Russification and the dire situation of national monuments, he was arrested in 1977 to be released in June 1979 following his retraction on television. Once he was free, Gamsakhurdia continued his dissident activities and became the most important figures in Georgian nationalist movement. The death of Merab Kostova in a car accident in 1989 led to Gamsakhurdia's emergence as the most popular leader of the Georgian nationalist movement.<sup>172</sup>

In 1988, most of the radical leaders of the *Ilya Chavchavadze* Society left the group to form new organizations: Chanturia decided to revitalize his National Democratic Party, which he founded secretly in 1981, Tsereteli established National Independence Party and Gamsakhurdia and Kostova set up the society of Ilya the Righteous.<sup>173</sup> A political organization named Popular Front was also formed in Georgia during this time but it did not share much with the Popular Fronts in Baltics except for its names. As a result of disagreements among the leaders of the political organizations, the popular front was never able to unite opposition organizations as in the case of Baltics, rather it took the form of a weak party under the authoritarian leadership of Nodar Natadze and left the political arena in 1993.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 42, Christoph Zürcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars: Rebellion, Ethnic Conflict, and Nationhood in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), p. 118

<sup>172</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia: a Failed Democratic Transition" in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (ed.), *Nation and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 304.

<sup>173</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 119.

<sup>174</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 86.

In the atmosphere of strengthening nationalism, these organizations started to focus on issues like Georgian persecution under Soviet rule, distortion of Georgia's national history and imposition of Russian-Soviet rule.<sup>175</sup> All these groups unified on the goal of independence but they differed on the means to achieve independence. Whereas the radicals believed that the existing political structures represented the 'regime of occupation' and that any participation in them, including taking part in official elections, was morally and politically inappropriate, the moderates defended the idea that it was 'reasonable' to use the Soviet elected bodies as arenas for political struggle.<sup>176</sup> Realizing that they had no chance of defeating the Soviet authorities in an armed struggle for the moment, the moderates opted for peaceful acts of civil disobedience: strikes, rallies, hunger-strikes, sit-ins.<sup>177</sup> The opposition against the communist authorities was deeply divided, the different groups were viewing each other as enemy. Although they argued that they disagreed about the tactics to oppose the communists in power, in reality the discord was rooted in the competing ambitions of different leaders.<sup>178</sup>

By 1988 peaceful protests in Georgia demanding free legislative elections and declaration of independence became regular. On 9 April 1989, a demonstration was organized in Rustaveli Avenue to protest against Abkhazian requests from Moscow that their republic be granted the status of full union republic separate from Georgia. Demonstrations, which started with anti-Abkhazian slogans, soon gained a different orientation as the protestors started to raise their demands for full Georgian independence from Moscow.<sup>179</sup> This was

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<sup>175</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 119.

<sup>176</sup> Ghia Nodia, "Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia" in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB University Press, 1996), p. 75.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Ghia Nodia and Alvaro Pinto Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges And Prospects* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>179</sup> Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988-1994" in Bruno Coppieters, *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB Press, 1996), p. 41.



hardly surprising since Georgian nationalists were of the idea that Moscow played an important role in the emergence of Abkhazian separatism. For them, this issue was completely fabricated by Moscow to destabilize Georgia.<sup>180</sup>

Local authorities were alarmed by the protests and they applied to Moscow to impose martial law. Moscow was so alarmed by these protests that a paratroop division recently withdrawn from Afghanistan was ordered to disperse the protestors in an attempt to end this open revolt against Soviet rule.<sup>181</sup> As the Georgian police stand aside, Soviet troops used poisoned gas and sharpened shovels to disperse this rally, leaving twenty people dead and many injured.<sup>182</sup> Eduard Shevardnadze, then the Soviet Foreign Minister, emphasized that use of force against the crowd could not have been exercised if both the Georgian leadership and Moscow did not agreed to do so.<sup>183</sup>

This event once more highlighted that Georgian citizens do not lack a culture of reacting against what they did not approve and that it was the state reaction that conditioned the success of the protests. In the Soviet period, because of the availability of a strong coercive capacity and willingness on the part of government to use this capacity, the protests yielded no results other than the death of protestors.

This tragedy marked a watershed in Georgian political history in many respects. First of all, it contributed to further strengthening of nationalism among the Georgians.<sup>184</sup> After this incident, it became next to impossible to find someone

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<sup>180</sup> John M. Cotter, "Cultural Security Dilemmas and Ethnic Conflict in Georgia", *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1(1999), p. 118.

<sup>181</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 19.

<sup>182</sup> James Minahan, *The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2004), p. 245.

<sup>183</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 43.

<sup>184</sup> James Minahan, *The Former Soviet Union's Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2004), p. 245, Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 332, S. Neil MacFarlane, "Democratization, Nationalism and Regional Security in the Southern Caucasus ", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 32, No. 3(1997), p. 415, Henry E. Hale, "Independence and Integration in the Caspian Basin", *SAIS Review*, Winter-Spring 1999, p. 165.

who did not reach the conclusion that independence was the only option for the Georgian nation. Shocked by the reckless violence against their native people, even the local authorities gave up obstructing and repressing the activities of Georgian opposition groups.<sup>185</sup> Use of violence undermined legitimacy of the Georgian Communist Party and strengthened the hand of radicals, which ruled out continuing struggle within the existing power structures.<sup>186</sup> As another consequence, these events bewildered the efforts to create a popular front in Georgia similar to the ones in Baltic countries.<sup>187</sup> In the Baltic countries, whereas the opposition paid lip service to the policies of perestroika and avoided raising their demands for independence and end of communist rule overtly, the communist leadership provided the opposition with a significant degree of freedom to organize. In the Georgian case, quite the contrary, the 9 April tragedy showed that the opposition would not keep away from advocating independence openly and the Communist Party would not avoid using force against the opposition when it was challenged. As a result, it became apparent that conciliation, which constitutes the foundation of Baltic Popular Fronts, was difficult to take root in Georgian soil. Finally, the 9 April events contributed to the strengthening of paramilitary groups such as *Mkhedrioni* (Horseman).<sup>188</sup> Most of the people who were killed in the events were the young women and this created the feeling among the young Georgian men that it was the duty of them to organize and join volunteer forces to protect the defenseless Georgian people against the enemies. As a result, the members of the *Mkhedrioni* increased significantly after the events.

Moscow reacted to the events by replacing Jumber Patiashvili, the First Georgian Communist Party Secretary, with Givi Gumbaridze. Realizing that 9

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<sup>185</sup> Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, *New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc: 1993), p. 146.

<sup>186</sup> Susanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations: the Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp. 96-7.

<sup>187</sup> Jonathan Aves, "The Rise and Fall of the Georgian Nationalist Movement, 1987-1991" in *The Road to Post-Communism: Independent Political Movements in the Soviet Union, 1985-1991* (London: Pinter Pub Ltd, 1992), p. 162.

<sup>188</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 45.

April events damaged its prestige to a significant extent, the new communist leadership gave some concessions to the opposition groups. First, the leaders of opposition movement including Gamsakhurdia, who were arrested during 9 April events, were released in a short time.<sup>189</sup> Second, the communist leadership agreed to postpone elections to October and enacted a more liberal electoral law until the elections were held in line with opposition demands.<sup>190</sup> Thirdly, Georgian Supreme Soviet adopted a language law that made the use of Georgian compulsory in the public sector, a step that created anger in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Finally, the Georgian Parliament declared Georgian sovereignty in March 1990 and Gumberidze announced that they aim to restore Georgian independence. The communist leadership made these nationalist gestures to save face but it was too late. The opposition had already used the nationalist rhetoric to rally the public behind them and delegitimize the local Communist Party.<sup>191</sup>

As seen in the Abkhazian demands of secession from the Georgian SSR, with loosening of political controls in Gorbachev period, minority opposition movements were mobilized in parallel to Georgian national movement. These movements struggled for enhancing their autonomy under Georgian rule or cutting their links with Tbilisi completely.<sup>192</sup> The Abkhazian separatist movement surfaced after Tbilisi declared its intention to locate a branch of the Abkhazian State University under Tbilisi State University in the summer of 1989.<sup>193</sup> When the Abkhaz protested against this decision fourteen were killed and 500 were wounded on 15 and 16 July 1989. These protests were organized by *Aidgilara*

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<sup>189</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 90.

<sup>190</sup> Levent Gönenç, *Prospects for Constitutionalism in Post-communist Countries* (Nijhoff: the Hague, 2002), p. 185.

<sup>191</sup> S. Neil MacFarlane, "Democratization, Nationalism and Regional Security in the Southern Caucasus", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1997), p. 411.

<sup>192</sup> Bruno Coppieters, "Ethno-Federalism and Civic State-Building Policies: Perspectives on the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2(2001), p. 69.

<sup>193</sup> Alexander Murinson, "The Secessions of Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabagh: the Roots and Patterns of Development of Post-Soviet Micro-Secessions in Transcaucasia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 23, No. 1(March 2004), p. 21.

(Unity), which was formed with the loosening of political controls as a result of Gorbachev's policies. Abkhazians were not alone in their minority organization. Ossets formed their *Adamon Nykhas* (Popular Shrine)<sup>194</sup> while Armenians established Javakh.<sup>195</sup> Nationalist mobilization was also observed among the Azeris living in Georgia. Some groups tended to demand autonomy of the region and clashes occurred between Azeris and Georgians. The ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and Ossetia led to Georgian authorities to fear that similar developments would take place in Azeri inhabited provinces. However, when the calls for autonomy failed to attract wide support, the region was saved from the onset of other secessionist wars.<sup>196</sup>

The Abkhaz and Ossetian minorities became increasingly antagonized after the Georgian parliament strengthened the status of the Georgian language by declaring Georgian as the only official language in August 1989.<sup>197</sup> This action started 'war of laws' between Tbilisi and autonomous entities.<sup>198</sup> The legislative institutions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia proved to be a practical tool in this struggle. The South Ossetian Supreme Soviet responded by passing the language law, which made Ossetian the official language in South Ossetia. On 10 November 1989, the South Ossetian Regional Soviet applied to Georgian Supreme Soviet and the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union to upgrade the status of South Ossetia from autonomous region to autonomous republic. The Georgian Parliament revoked the decision of South Ossetian parliament in a day. On 23

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<sup>194</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia: a Failed Democratic Transition" in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (ed.), *Nation and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 296.

<sup>195</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus - Cases in Georgia* (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab, 2001), p. 270.

<sup>196</sup> Mamuka Komakhia, "Georgia's Azerbaijanis: Problems of Civilian Integration", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (2004) available at [http://www.cac.org/online/2004/journal\\_eng/cac-05/20.komeng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2004/journal_eng/cac-05/20.komeng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 14 January 2009)

<sup>197</sup> Achim Wennmann, "Renewed Armed Conflict in Georgia? Options for Peace Policy in a New Phase of Conflict Resolution", *Program for the Study of International Organizations Occasional Paper*, No. 3 (2006), p. 13.

<sup>198</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 91.

November 1989, 30,000 Georgian demonstrators went from Tbilisi to Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, to protest against this action. When the demonstrators were blocked by Soviet security forces, clashes erupted.<sup>199</sup> The Georgian Supreme Soviet quickly rejected South Ossetian demands and annulled its autonomous status totally.<sup>200</sup> This event was significant since it showed that Gamsakhurdia could mobilize high number of people when he wanted. It was also after this event that the leaders of the *Ademon Nykhas* started to form the first militia groups in South Ossetia.<sup>201</sup> On 25 August 1990, this time the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet declared Abkhazia an independent union republic within the USSR. The Abkhaz declaration was annulled by the Georgian Supreme Soviet promptly.<sup>202</sup>

This was the political situation in Georgia before the elections to the Supreme Soviet. As seen, it was quite tense. On the one hand, the April 9 tragedy strained the relations between the ruling elite and the opposition. On the other hand, strengthening minority demands for more autonomy were countered by rising Georgian nationalism. Growing antagonism in the society, exacerbated grievances of minorities together with strengthening of radicals would drive country to the chaos as will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.5. Brief Rule of Gamsakhurdia: War and Chaos**

On 28 October 1990 parliamentary elections were held in Georgia. Gamsakhurdia's Round Table-Free Georgia received 54 percent of the vote, followed by the Communist Party and the Popular Front, which received 30 percent and 2 percent of the votes respectively. While Round Table-Free Georgia won 155 seats, Communist Party gained 64 and Popular Front garnered 12 seats. Democratic Georgia, Rustaveli Block were able to get only 4 and 1 seats

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Monica D. Toft, "Multinationality, Regions and State-Building: the Failed Transition in Georgia", *The Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3(2001), p. 133.

<sup>201</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 91.

<sup>202</sup> Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988-1994" in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB Press, 1996), p. 42.

respectively.<sup>203</sup> Both the ruling Communist Party and the opposition parties advocated political pluralism and free market in their campaigns for the elections. This was the only common theme unifying the ruling Communist Party and the opposition. Even the Georgian Popular Front was no different from the other opposition parties in its call for end of Soviet rule and independence. The opposition also demanded guarantees of civil rights such as freedom of religion and media. More importantly, the opposition parties including Gamsakhurdia's the Round Table-Free Georgia Bloc called for laws that would strengthen the position of Georgian majority in the republic: laws improving the position of Georgian language, a new citizenship law with a narrower definition of citizenship and policies limiting immigration.<sup>204</sup> Different from other opposition parties, Gamsakhurdia advocated not only 'Georgia for the Georgians' but also a 'Georgia for Christian Georgians'.<sup>205</sup> Since the Georgian public opinion was highly radicalized on the eve of the elections, Gamsakhurdia's hardliner rhetoric carried him to power while Communist Party's failure to appeal to the nationalist sentiments about their fall.

Once in power Gamsakhurdia started to put his anti-Soviet and anti-minority rhetoric into practice. On 9 April 1991, on the second anniversary of violent suppression of rally in Tbilisi by Soviet troops, Georgian parliament declared Georgia's independence. This was followed by Gamsakhurdia's landslide victory in the first presidential elections, which were held on 26 May. While 87 percent of the electorate voted in favor of Gamsakhurdia, the non-Georgian populations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia boycotted these elections.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 176.

<sup>204</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia: a Failed Democratic Transition" in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (ed.), *Nation and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 297.

<sup>205</sup> Monica D. Toft, "Multinationality, Regions and State-Building: the Failed Transition in Georgia", *The Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2001), p. 135.

<sup>206</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 93.

Gamsakhurdia's anti-minority policies soon led to the outbreak of war in South Ossetia. In September 1990, South Ossetia demanded reunification with North Ossetia, an autonomous republic in the Russian SSR. On 11 December 1990, Supreme Soviet of Georgia responded by abolishing the South Ossetian autonomy. Gamsakhurdia defended this policy by claiming that the Ossetians had the right to self-determination only in territories that constituted the homeland of the Ossetian nation, namely in North Ossetia. South Ossetia, like Abkhazia and Adjara, was Georgian land and Georgians had the right to determine how these lands would be ruled.<sup>207</sup>

Moscow protested this move but Gamsakhurdia refused to backpedal. Georgia started a blockade of the region and Georgian police and paramilitary entered Tskinali on 6 January.<sup>208</sup> As South Ossetian militias resisted firmly, they were forced to withdraw to the heights surrounding the city. Economic blockade of the region continued to in the winter of 1991 and tense situation led to the renewal of clashes between the parties. In March 1991 Gamsakhurdia put forward his plan for solving the crisis, which offered nothing more than restoration of authority of Tbilisi and reducing the status of South Ossetia to that of 'cultural autonomy'.

Following this, South Ossetia overwhelmingly voted in favor of preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the referendum of 17 March 1991 and rejected participating in Gamsakhurdia's referendum on restoring Georgian independence of 31 March 1991. In an attempt to get the support of the Georgian public in the independence referendum, Gamsakhurdia ordered the newly formed National Guard to enter South Ossetia two days before the vote. National Guard had to retreat in the face of the Ossetian resistance and left another paramilitary group, *Merab Kostava Society*, in the area to continue fighting. Until the next escalation of conflict in September 1991, the level of fighting remained low.

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<sup>207</sup> Elizabeth Fuller, "Zviad Gamsakhurdia Proposes Abolition of Adzhar Autonomy", *Report on the USSR*, Vol. 2, No. 48 (1990), pp. 13-14.

<sup>208</sup> Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988-1994" in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB Press, 1996), p. 44.

Gamsakhurdia wanted to strengthen his position by gaining a striking victory in South Ossetia and ordered the National Guard to move to the region. However, since the region had no important resources to exploit, the National Guard did not obey Gamsakhurdia. Only some detachments loyal to him organized attacks but they were quickly repelled by stronger Ossetian forces.<sup>209</sup> The war in south Ossetia was the first civil war in Georgia and it prepared the ground for the onset of future wars in some ways. With the war in south Ossetia militias entered the political scene. Eventually they moved away from the state control and played the major role in the outbreak of civil war in December 1991 and the war in Abkhazia erupted in August 1992 as will be discussed later.<sup>210</sup>

After the parliamentary elections in October 1990, the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet started to disobey the orders coming from Tbilisi. It had declared Abkhazia an independent republic before the elections as discussed above. In violation of the Gamsakhurdia's ban, Abkhazia held the referendum on preservation of the union and 98.4 percent of the voters voted in favor of preserving the union in March 1991.<sup>211</sup> Despite these, Abkhazia did not immediately push for independence. To decrease the tension, Gamsakhurdia accepted the formation of the Abkhaz Parliament that gave greater representation to predominantly Abkhaz districts.<sup>212</sup> This conciliatory measure abated the tensions to some degree. Even while the war in South Ossetia was continuing, the Abkhaz applied to the Georgian State Council for a new Abkhaz-Georgian treaty on confederal relations. When the Georgian side failed to respond, the Abkhaz Parliament unilaterally decided to restore Abkhazian constitution of 1925 that declared Abkhazia a

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<sup>209</sup> Pavel K. Baev, "Civil Wars in Georgia: Corruption Breeds Violence" in Jan Koehler and Christoph Zürcher, *Potentials of Disorder* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 134-136.

<sup>210</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.92-93.

<sup>211</sup> Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988-1994" in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB Press, 1996), p. 42.

<sup>212</sup> Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 172.



sovereign state.<sup>213</sup> The relations between two sides were degenerated into war after Shevardnadze came to power as will be examined later.

Gamsakhurdia's ascendance in politics was also bad news for Adjars because he advocated not only Georgia for Georgians but also Georgia for Christian Georgians.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, he publicly discussed abolishing Adjara's autonomy. Threatened by this, Adjarians voted in favor of the Communist Party in contrast to the nationwide trend that led to the victory of Gamsakhurdia's Round Table-Free Georgia. After the elections, Gamsakhurdia took some steps to establish control over the region. Gamsakhurdia made the Supreme Soviet of Adjara to elect Aslan Abashidze as its chairman. Gamsakhurdia favored Abashidze because he believed that Abashidze would assist him in abolishing Adjara's autonomous status.<sup>215</sup>

Abashidze's chairmanship was quite controversial because new elections to that body had not yet been held and Abashidze was not even a member of the last Supreme Soviet at the time of election. When it was spread that Tbilisi was preparing to abolish the autonomous status through Abashidze, a riot erupted in Batumi on 22 April 1991.<sup>216</sup> They attempted to replace Abashidze with their own candidate, Iosif Khimshiashvili. Having survived an assassination attempt one week later, Abashidze ensured his re-election in the vote that took place on 23 June 1991 through making changes in election procedure.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 872.

<sup>214</sup> Monica D. Toft, "Multinationality, Regions and State-Building: the Failed Transition in Georgia", *The Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3(2001), p. 133.

<sup>215</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*, (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 58.

<sup>216</sup> Georgi Derluguian, "The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria before and since the Soviet Collapse" in Beverly Crawford and Ronnie D. Lipschutz (eds), *The Myths of Ethnic Conflict: Politics, Economics and Cultural Violence*, University of California International and Area Studies, Research Series No. 98(1998), p. 282.

<sup>217</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 59.

Taking advantage of the power struggle in Tbilisi between 1991 and 1993 Abashidze was able to consolidate his position.<sup>218</sup> He established his fiefdom in Adjara which was marked by authoritarian rule, violations of human rights and disregard of Tbilisi's authority. On the positive side, compared to the rest of Georgia, Adjara proved to be wealthier, more stable and safer.<sup>219</sup> While achieving this, Abashidze took the advantage of Batumi's position as an important Russian military asset and money coming from vacation hotels, tropical products and smuggling across the border with Turkey.<sup>220</sup> Besides having a military base in the town, Russian army also had a garrison in the border and the Russian navy will continue to use Batumi port until 2020. The presence of Russian forces provided Abashidze with the opportunity to defy Tbilisi authority. This was also in the interest of Moscow because it limits Georgian independence from Moscow.

### **3.6. 1991 Coup and the Ouster of Gamsakhurdia**

The victories of Gamsakhurdia in both the parliamentary and presidential elections emboldened him too much. He became increasingly authoritarian and uncompromising. He fired or imprisoned many of his former allies. He made use of violence and manipulation of law to get rid of his opponents.<sup>221</sup> As far as his increasing authoritarianism and alienating former allies concerned, Saakashvili can be regarded as acting in similar ways after resuming power. Furthermore, they were both emboldened by their sweeping electoral victories. Lastly, both experienced decreasing popularity when they behaved in an unwise way and tried to repress alternative voices.

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<sup>218</sup> Jonathan Aves, *Georgia: From Chaos to Stability?* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996), p. 41.

<sup>219</sup> Svante E. Cornell, *Autonomy and Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus - Cases in Georgia* (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab, 2001), p. 220.

<sup>220</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, "Party, Ideology and the Public World in the Former Soviet Space" in Arthur M. Meltzer, Jerry Einberger and M. Richard Zinman (eds.), *Politics at the End of the Century* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), p. 252.

<sup>221</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Adventurers or Commanders? Civil Military Relations in Georgia since Independence" in Costantine P. Danopoulos and Daniel Zirker, *Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet and Yugoslav Successor States* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), p. 41.

While Gamsakhurdia turning friends into enemies, paramilitary groups were growing in number and strength. This was followed by increasing violence in the form of bombings and other kind of attacks aiming at rival groups. The Soviet legacy of secret criminal networks, the shock of 9 April events, patriarchal character of the Georgian society which gives the men the responsibility to defend rest of society, the willingness to revitalize the voluntary military organizations (*lashkari*) of the 'golden age' played an important role in the proliferation of these groups and the increase in political violence.<sup>222</sup>

While Gamsakhurdia's popularity was decreasing and political violence was increasing in Georgia, the coup against Gorbachev took place on 19 August 1991 in Moscow. The coup was organized by conservatives that were unhappy with Gorbachev's reforms aiming at transforming USSR into a loose federation of states. Since Gamsakhurdia was allergic to Soviet authority and advocated Georgian independence passionately, it was natural to expect that Gamsakhurdia would condemn the coup quickly and vehemently.<sup>223</sup>

However, things did not work in this way. Most probably fearing that hardliners would become able to come to power and their victory in the coup would be followed by an attack on Georgia, Gamsakhurdia did not condemn the military coup and made the media to evaluate the event in a positive manner.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, he ordered the National Guard to give up its arms and subordinate itself to Georgian Ministry of Interior in line with Soviet military commander's demand.<sup>225</sup> Tengiz Kitovani, the leader of the National Guard, considered this act as betrayal. Instead of obeying Gamsakhurdia, he removed the National Guard to the outskirts of Tbilisi. Kitovani soon joined by Tengiz Singua who resigned from

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<sup>222</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 60.

<sup>223</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 24.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.* and Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 166.

<sup>225</sup> Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 166.

the post of prime minister to protest Gamsakhurdia's hesitation to condemn the August coup and other anti-Gamsakhurdia deputies. Opposition camp was strengthened further when Dzaba Ioseliani, the leader of *Mkhedrioni* who was jailed by Gamsakhurdia, escaped from prison and gave his support to Sigua and Kitovani.<sup>226</sup> Realizing that Gamsakhurdia's policies would undermine their political and economic power, these three leaders tried to find ways of getting rid of him.<sup>227</sup>

This opportunity rose on 22 December 1991 when Gamsakhurdia broke up an opposition demonstration and organizers of the protest appealed to Kitovani for protection. In response, Kitovani's National Guard and Ioseliani's *Mkhedrioni* came to Tbilisi and launched an attack on parliamentary building.<sup>228</sup> Fighting between government troops and opposition forces, which demanded the resignation of Gamsakhurdia, continued until 6 January 1992. On this date Gamsakhurdia gave up and fled first to Armenia and then to Chechnya with the hope that he could start a counterattack from there.<sup>229</sup>

As will be seen at the 'Rose Revolution' chapter, the way that Gamsakhurdia removed from the power and the instability emerged after his removal would prompt states like US, which have major stakes in the country's stability, to make preparations for post-Shevardnadze era by engaging with the opposition and spread the tactics of non-violence to the activists and the rest of society in an attempt to preempt post-Shevardnadze stability as his term was drawing to a close.

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<sup>226</sup> Susanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations: the Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London: Zed Books, 1994), p. 83.

<sup>227</sup> Edward G. Thomas, "When Sugar Cane Grows in the Snow: Ethno-Nationalist Politics and the Collapse of the Georgian State", *Undercurrent*, Vol. 3, No. 1(2006), p. 58.

<sup>228</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 24.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 25 and Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 56.

### 3.7. Gamsakhurdia's Legacy

Gamsakhurdia's style of governance, which was partially rooted in his personal characteristics and partially in the circumstances of the period he came to power, proved to be harmful for Georgian state. He was an idealist politician rather than a pragmatic political leader making frequent references to the historic mission of Georgia.<sup>230</sup> His intolerance towards different views and opposition resulted in the loss of former allies and making enemies.

Gamsakhurdia used the belligerent rhetoric against the minorities in order to increase his popularity in the eyes of the Georgian majority although he had previously claimed to share the liberal values.<sup>231</sup> Rather than entering into effective dialogue with the elites of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, he advocated 'Georgia for Georgians'.<sup>232</sup> Putting his rhetoric into practice, he encouraged Georgian immigration to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, appointed Georgian nationalists to key positions within the central and local governments without asking the opinion of the local elites and used paramilitary groups to establish control.<sup>233</sup>

Moreover, the existing rifts among various groups were deepened by post-Soviet Georgian presentation of the past. Georgian nationalists exclusively referred to the achievements of the Georgians in their glorious past in a way that leaves no room for historical narratives of the other ethnic groups.<sup>234</sup> Georgian

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<sup>230</sup> Interview with Koba Turmanidze (Country Director of Caucasus Research and Resource Center), Tbilisi, November 2008.

<sup>231</sup> Ghia Nodia, "Political Turmoil in Georgia and the Ethnic Policies of Zviad Gamsakhurdia" in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB University Pres, 1996), p. 77.

<sup>232</sup> Robert Hislop, "Ethnic Conflict And The Generosity Moment", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No. 1(1998), p. 143 and Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia from under Rubble", in Lowell Barrington (ed.) *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Post-communist States* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 258.

<sup>233</sup> Robert Hislop, "Ethnic Conflict And The Generosity Moment", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No. 1(1998), p. 143, Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), pp. 77 and 74 and Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)Birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 870.

<sup>234</sup> Barbara Christophe, "When is a Nation? Comparing Lithuania and Georgia", *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Autumn 2002), s. 157.

nationalist fixed a point in the history as the birth of their nation and in this way excluded the possibility that nation-building process in Georgia is in the making and denied the other ethnic groups the chance to take role in the making of the Georgian nation.<sup>235</sup> It started to be argued that Abkhaz did not have the right to establish states on the territories they are living today because they migrated to these lands as late as seventeenth century.<sup>236</sup> This kind of a presentation of past proved to be a factor obstructing the nation-building process aiming at unifying ethnic groups living in Georgia and building a functioning state. In addition to ethnic minorities, Gamsakhurdia also irritated Muslims Georgian living in Adjara with his Christianization program.<sup>237</sup>

When his antagonistic policies and lack of control over paramilitaries were added by Russian aid to secessionist movements, South Ossetia and Abkhazia emerged as de facto sovereign entities. The loss of these territories meant the failure of a key component of the Georgian state-building efforts, monopolizing control over territories under jurisdiction. The secessionist conflicts together with the civil war between Zviadists and anti-Zviadists left Georgia in ruins and dismembered.<sup>238</sup> Drawing lessons from his errors, his successors would use nationalism in a more pragmatic way as will be discussed.

Gamsakhurdia was never able to build up coercive state capacity to strengthen his position, an error that he paid dearly. Rather than maintaining monopoly of violence, he allowed the emergence of militias loyal to their leaders rather than himself. Besides leading to his removal from power, this mistake brought Georgia to the brink of disintegration. In addition to *Mkhedrioni* and the National Guard, the leading forces of the coup, other Georgian paramilitary groups, called as ‘brotherhoods’ were formed soon. Other ethnic groups did not remain untouched by the trend of mushrooming of paramilitary groups and

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<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>237</sup> Robert Hislop, “Ethnic Conflict And The Generosity Moment”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No. 1(1998), p. 143.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143

formed their own armed groups.<sup>239</sup> These groups pursued their own agenda rather than working for the strengthening of state. They replaced the state in certain regions by establishing their own fiefdoms.<sup>240</sup> On the eve of Shevardnadze's coming to the power, the country was in the form of a failed state as a result of lack of control over warlords and criminal chiefs.<sup>241</sup> Shevardnadze would have quite hard times while trying to subdue paramilitary formations inherited from Gamsakhurdia period. Already scarce economic resources would be used for sidelining these forces and lack of monopoly over force would result in outbreak of war in Abkhazia.<sup>242</sup>

Proliferation of paramilitary groups also resulted in increasing criminalization and breakdown of law and order.<sup>243</sup> Thugs attacked ordinary citizens, businessman, cars, busses, banks and organizations. Anything that could be turned into money was stolen from the state enterprises and sold as spare parts or junk metal. As the demand for the arms increased, the attacks against the Russian troops located in Georgia and police stations became common. Police patrolling stopped and the population remained defenseless in the face of attacks.<sup>244</sup> Tired of the chaos and insecurity of the Gamsakhurdia regime, the Georgian population embraced the return of Shevardnadze as he was seen as the symbol of the stability.

Gamsakhurdia's rule also proved to be disastrous for the economic capacity of Georgian state. Rather than focusing on daily management of the

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<sup>239</sup> Alexandre Kukhianidze, "Criminalization and Cross-Border Issues: The Case of Georgia", *Conference paper presented at the Workshop "Managing International and Inter-Agency Cooperation at the Border"*, Geneva, March 13-15 2003, p. 4.

<sup>240</sup> Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 875.

<sup>241</sup> Ghia Nodia and Álvaro Pinto Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges And Prospects* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p. 12.

<sup>242</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia: The Trauma of Statehood" in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (eds.) *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 525.

<sup>243</sup> Alexandre Kukhianidze, "Criminalization and Cross-Border Issues: The Case of Georgia", *Conference paper presented at the Managing International and Inter-Agency Cooperation at the Border workshop*, Geneva, March 13-15 2003, p. 4.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

country and pursuing pragmatic policies in the economic arena, he engaged in organizing a series of protests against Moscow that led to disruption of country's fundamental communication and trade links. By behaving in this way, Gamsakhurdia not only harmed communication and trade links but also eliminated the chances for opportunities, like low prices, that other former Soviet countries enjoyed.<sup>245</sup> Declaring independence without appreciating the degree to which Georgian economy was integrated into the all-union economy and accomplishing prerequisites of independence led to the deterioration of living standards and eventual decline in the popularity of leadership.<sup>246</sup>

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about breakdown of trade linkages and this led to shortages of grain, meat, sugar and other products that Georgia imported. Protests countrywide and clashes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia brought about a fall in both industrial and agricultural production. While industrial output decreased by two-third, agricultural product dropped by one half. Russia imposed a blockade on Georgia as a response to war in Abkhazia and this resulted in dearth of fuel, spare parts and raw materials. Persistent instability blocked the introduction of price reforms until March 1992, lagging one year behind the rest of former Soviet Union.<sup>247</sup>

When Gamsakhurdia came to power, he irritated the old managerial elite by labeling them as collaborators with the communist regime and tried to remove them. However, failing to find alternatives to them, he was forced to continue working with them. This situation created a tension and weakening efficiency in the ministries as the minister saw their personnel as collaborators whereas the subordinates saw their ministers as amateurs.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Nodar Khaduri, "Mistakes Made in Conducting Economic Reforms in Post-Communist Georgia", *Problems of Economic Transition*, vol. 48, No. 4, August 2005, p. 21.

<sup>246</sup> Valerian Dolidze, "The Regime and the Revolution in post-Soviet Georgia", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (2007) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal\\_eng/cac-02/03.doleng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal_eng/cac-02/03.doleng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 23 January 2008).

<sup>247</sup> Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations: the Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder* (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp. 74, 75.

<sup>248</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 89.



As briefly mentioned above, Gamsakhurdia also has responsibility in aggravating the relations with Russia due to his open anti-Russian rhetoric, support for the separatist demands of the president of the republic of Chechnya and refusal to condemn the failed coup attempt against Gorbachev.<sup>249</sup> Russia had difficulties with coming terms with independence of Georgia since it was against Russian interest in many respects.<sup>250</sup> Russia did not want Georgia to be a model for other former Soviet countries that wanted to move away from Russian sphere of influence. Georgia borders the north Caucasus, which is the most vulnerable and instable region of the Russian Federation. In order to keep the North Caucasus stable, Russia wanted to preserve its control over Georgia. Moreover, Russia has viewed as a gate for NATO influence to Central Asia, North and South Caucasus. Russia also has been aware of the fact that Azerbaijan needed Georgian territory to contact Turkey and Europe.<sup>251</sup> As a result, although it was possible to expect that Russia would use the opportunities to trouble Tbilisi even in the absence of the provocative steps of the Georgian leadership, Gamsakhurdia's confrontational policies exacerbated the anxieties of Moscow and hastened Russian interventions in a way that forced Georgia to struggle with many complex problems simultaneously in its early independence period.

### **3.8. Return of Shevardnadze**

After the removal of Gamsakhurdia, the Military Council headed by Kitovani, Ioseliani and Singua was established to rule the country. This was the last stage of the process of militarization of politics that started with arming of opposition groups in 1989.<sup>252</sup> However, soon the Military Council realized that it could not continue to rule the county for a long time. The civil war was not left

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<sup>249</sup> Melvin A. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 1997), p. 262.

<sup>250</sup> Interview with Temur Kekelidze (Deputy Political Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia), Tbilisi, 5 November 2008.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with Archil Gegeshidze (Former ambassador and senior fellow at Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), Tbilisi, 11 November 2008.

<sup>252</sup> Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 871.

behind as Gamsakhurdia was preparing to organize a military campaign against the new government in his home region in Western Georgia.<sup>253</sup> The war in Ossetia was continuing, the tension in Abkhazia was threatening to turn into war, minorities remained anxious about their future in Georgia, Russia was pressuring Tbilisi to join the Commonwealth of Independent States ( ) and to open Russian military bases in the country, the economy was in shambles and violence and criminal activity were out of control as discussed. In addition to these challenges, Singua, Kitovani also knew that they had to restore the image of Georgia in international arena. Gamsakhurdia harmed the image of country significantly as a result of the war in South Ossetia as the Western governments mostly held him responsible for outbreak of the war.<sup>254</sup> As coup organizers, these three leaders were aware that they do not have much chance to repair the damaged image of the country.<sup>255</sup>

As indicated, the legitimacy problem also forced the new power holders to turn over power.<sup>256</sup> The three coup leaders asserted that they removed Gamsakhurdia from power because he could not fight effectively against the separatist tendencies but it was meaningful that Gamsakhurdia was ousted after he took steps to curb their economic and political power.

Facing these challenges and lacking legitimacy, the Military Council concurred that Shevardnadze was endowed with skills, experience and international prestige necessary for solving these problems and enlisting the support of the society.<sup>257</sup> Shevardnadze was acceptable to different segments of the Georgian society for different reasons: for the communist nomenclatura he

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<sup>253</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 94.

<sup>254</sup> Bruno Coppieters, "Ethno-Federalism and Civic State-Building Policies: Perspectives on the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict", *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2001), p. 82.

<sup>255</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 69.

<sup>256</sup> Ronald G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 328.

<sup>257</sup> Irakli Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 26

was their former associate, for the democratic forces, he was the 'Berlin wall destroyer' and for the minorities he was much more suitable for the position since he was not expected to be as intolerant toward the minorities as Gamsakhurdia.<sup>258</sup> The West would also welcome Shevardnadze since he was known in the West as the Soviet Foreign Minister who played important roles in Germany's reunification and peaceful end of the Cold War.<sup>259</sup> Shevardnadze was also seen as the symbol of order and stability and the warlords, who were interested in attracting as much as foreign aid and investment as possible to enrich themselves, wanted to utilize his image. They realized that it would be more appropriate for them to rule the country behind the scenes rather than being directly in power.<sup>260</sup>

As a result, the Military Council invited Shevardnadze and appointed him the chairman of the State Council within days of his arrival in the early March.<sup>261</sup> Meanwhile, seventy parliamentarians met in Grozny to convene a rump parliament that declared the State Council an illegal entity and urged the population to support a campaign of civil disobedience.<sup>262</sup>

### **3.9. Attempts at Consolidating Authority: 1991-1995**

When Shevardnadze returned to power, the most urgent task he had to deal with was to end the war in South Ossetia. Under the pressure of Russia, in the form of secret military assistance to the Ossetian side and threatening signals sent such as attacks on Georgian villages, he was forced to consent to a ceasefire.<sup>263</sup> In

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<sup>258</sup> David Losaberidze, "The Problem of Nationalism in Georgia", *NATO Research Study* (June 1998) available at [www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/losaberi.pdf](http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/losaberi.pdf). (Lastly accessed on 24 January 2009), p. 10, Georgi Derluguian, op. cit (2004), p. 1.

<sup>259</sup> Eric A. Miller, "Smelling the Roses: Eduard Shevardnadze's End and Georgia's Future", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (March/April 2004), p. 12.

<sup>260</sup> Jesse Driscoll, "Inside the Leviathan: Coup-Proofing after State Failure", *Unpublished Working Paper*, Stanford University, 2008, p. 8.

<sup>261</sup> Ronald G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 328.

<sup>262</sup> Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, *New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc: 1993), p.154.

<sup>263</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 94.

July 1992, a tiny peacekeeping force consisting of mostly Russians and South Ossetians besides Georgians was deployed to monitor the ceasefire.<sup>264</sup>

As Shevardnadze managed to provide relative calm in South Ossetia, the conflict escalated in Abkhazia. The law of wars continuing between Sukhumi and Tbilisi turned into open warfare. In fact, Gamsakhurdia had previously reached a power-sharing agreement with Abkhazian leadership providing for the demarcation of the electoral districts along the ethnic lines.<sup>265</sup> However, the Abkhazian seizure of Abkhazian Interior Ministry building from the Georgians in July 1992 and declaration of independence by the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet in the following month increased the tensions tremendously in early Shevardnadze period.<sup>266</sup> In this tense environment, detachments of National Guard under the command of Kitovani entered and occupied Sukhumi on 14 August 1992 and justified this act by arguing that supporters of the Gamsakhurdia used Abkhazia as sanctuary from which to resist Georgian force. Although Kitovani tried to legitimate his attack in this way, it has been pointed out that he organized the move to establish control on Abkhazia and its beneficial economy.<sup>267</sup>

The war in Abkhazia, which erupted as a result of lack of monopoly over violence, had dramatic consequences over the newly created state. Georgian forces were driven out of Abkhazia with the help of local Russian military forces and volunteers from the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus by the autumn of 1993 and Zviadist forces revived their rebellion in Mingrelia seizing the opportunity.<sup>268</sup> Seeing that Georgia was on the brink of total collapse,

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<sup>264</sup> Melvin A. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 1997), p. 264.

<sup>265</sup> Christoph Zürcher, "Georgia's Time of Troubles" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 95.

<sup>266</sup> Ted Hopf, "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force: Russia's Great Power Identities and Military Intervention in Abkhazia", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31(2005), p. 229.

<sup>267</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 73.

<sup>268</sup> S. Neil Macfarlane, "On the Front Lines in the Near Abroad: the CIS and the OSCE in Georgia's Civil Wars", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No 3(1997), p. 522.

Shevardnadze choose the lesser of evils in October 1993: he bowed to the Russian demands that Georgia join the CIS and allow Russian military bases in Vaziani, Gudauta, Akhalkalaki and Batumi.<sup>269</sup> When Shevardnadze expressed his approval for Georgian membership to the CIS publicly in October 1993, Russia sent the Black Sea Fleet to help him in suppressing the Zviadist rebellion.<sup>270</sup> Gamsakhurdia was reported to commit suicide on 31 December 1993, after being encircled by Shevardnadze's forces.

With his death, the rebellion came to a halt.<sup>271</sup> However, Mingrelians had difficulty in accepting the removal of Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze's authority. As a result, Mingrelia served as a major base of opposition. It was the place from which Saakashvili started his three-kilometer long convoy of vehicles moving to Tbilisi to participate in the protests leading to Shevardnadze's removal.<sup>272</sup>

The withdrawal of Georgian troops in September 1993 and the Moscow Ceasefire Agreement of 14 May 1994 ended the war in Abkhazia. The ceasefire first started to be monitored by around 1,500 Russian-led peacekeeping troops under the aegis of the CIS. The UN Observer Mission to Georgia (UNOMIG) later involved in ceasefire monitoring. Negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhazian sides went on within the framework of Geneva Peace Process, chaired by the UN, facilitated by Russia, and observed by the OSCE and the 'Group of Friends' (USA, Germany, United Kingdom, France and Russia). De facto Abkhaz parliament elected Vladislav Ardzinba as the president in 1994, to be succeeded by Sergei Bagapsh in 2005.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Alexander Rondeli, "The Choice of Independent Georgia" in Gennady Chufrin (ed.), *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 202.

<sup>270</sup> Gulbaat Rtskhilzade, "State Sovereignty in Georgian Political Thinking and Practice", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (2007) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal\\_eng/cac-01/09.rtseng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal_eng/cac-01/09.rtseng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 9 September 2008).

<sup>271</sup> Melvin A. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 1997), p. 269.

<sup>272</sup> Mark R. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of the Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2007), p. 271 and Georgi Derluguian, op. cit. (2004), p. 2.

<sup>273</sup> Pamela Jawad, "Conflict Resolution through Democracy Promotion? The Role of the OSCE in Georgia", *Democratization*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (June 2008), p. 614.

Abkhazian conflict claimed up to 10,000 lives and departure of some 250,000 Georgians from region. In August 1993, United Nations Security Council issued the resolution 858 calling for compliance with ceasefire agreed 27 July 1993 and establishing UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Fighting continued until 14 May 1994. Negotiations between sides took place within Geneva Peace Process, chaired by UN, assisted by Russia and observed by OSCE.

As the war in Abkhazia was continuing, elections for a new parliament and the speaker of parliament having the effective powers of a president were held on October 11, 1992. Shevardnadze won 96 percent of the vote and gained some degree of legitimacy in this way.<sup>274</sup> Shevardnadze run unopposed for the position of speaker. To the contrary, the parliamentary elections were quite competitive since forty-two parties and four coalitions, which represented both independence movement and Soviet nomenclatura, participated.<sup>275</sup> Brought to the power by the invitation of coup leaders, Shevardnadze tried to increase his legitimacy by encouraging the participation of political parties in the parliamentary elections. Furthermore, since the political parties were quite weak at that time, Shevardnadze did not feel threatened by their existence.<sup>276</sup>

As a part of his effort to strengthen his rule, in 1993 Shevardnadze initiated the founding of a new party, the Citizens Union of Georgia (CUG). This was a broad-based political party including the leaders for the pro-independence movement, nomenclatura, Soviet regional, city and central apparatchiks, the intelligentsia, directors of the major economic enterprises and the Green Party, which kept a distance from the pro-independence movement during perestroika and seemed more willing to cooperate with the communist authorities.<sup>277</sup> The

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<sup>274</sup> Irakly Areshidze, op. cit.(2007), p. 33 and Ghia Nodia, "Dimensions of Insecurity" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, op. cit., p. 97 and Jaba Devdariani, op. cit.(2004), p. 92.

<sup>275</sup> Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 177.

<sup>276</sup> Valerian Dolidze, "Political Parties and Party Development in Georgia" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/06.doleng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/06.doleng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 11 September 2008).

<sup>277</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 35 and Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the

leader of the Greens Party, Zurab Zhvania, was elected the secretary general of the party in the constituent assembly on 19 November 1993 while Shevardnadze became the chairman.<sup>278</sup>

Shevardnadze became able to bought together Soviet nomenclatura, his supporters from various circles and disoriented political groups by the means of the CUG. In this way, he managed to constitute his own power base and freed himself from his commitments to those who initially brought him to power. The CUG became able to attract these different fractions because it promised its members certain privileges and power. In this sense, it resembled the Georgian branch of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as most members of the party sought membership to the party not because of their ideological commitment but due to their interest in successful careers.<sup>279</sup> While enlarging its membership by providing certain benefits to the Georgian political elite, the CUG at the same time increased its popularity in the eyes of the public opinion by putting emphasis on stability and getting rid of turmoil under the strong leadership of Shevardnadze.<sup>280</sup> Shevardnadze also tried to enlist the support of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic, religious and class-based identities behind the party and by creating an all-embracing image for the party. The use of the word 'citizen' in the name of the party is illustrative of Shevardnadze's efforts in this way.<sup>281</sup>

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Difficult (Re)birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 878.

<sup>278</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 85.

<sup>279</sup> Ivlian Haindrava, "Letter from Georgia: Looking Beyond Shevardnadze", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (January/February 2003), p. 23 and Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze, "Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New", in Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (ed.), *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Vienna and Geneva: Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defense and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), p. 202.

<sup>280</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 94.

<sup>281</sup> Valerian Dolidze, Valerian Dolidze, "Political Parties and Party Development in Georgia" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005) available at [http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/06.doleng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/06.doleng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 11 September 2008).

It is necessary to emphasize that Shevardnadze felt under serious restraint until the Zviadist rebellion was suppressed and paramilitaries were sidelined. He was highly vulnerable to the danger of coup d'état in the immediate period following his coming to power in March 1992.<sup>282</sup> As a result he behaved very carefully to distribute benefits among different power centers equally in order to not to antagonize them. For example, while the Ministry of Defense was given to the control of Kitovani, Ministry of Interior went to Ioseliani.<sup>283</sup>

Having retained these powers, Kitovani and Ioseliani started to pose even greater threats. They attacked Russian military bases in Georgia and threatened the Shevardnadze government with reprisal when he tried to bring them under his control. Moreover, as discussed, Kitovani's entering into Abkhazia with his troops resulted in a very costly war that could have been avoided if there were monopoly of violence.<sup>284</sup> These groups committed crimes such as rape and theft, pressured directors of enterprises to pay them and organized murders of politicians such as Gia Chanturia and several kidnappings besides an assassination attempt on Shevardnadze in 1995.<sup>285</sup>

The repression of Zviadist revolt came as a big relief. After this, Shevardnadze set out to sideline the competing paramilitaries by using them one another.<sup>286</sup> Shevardnadze used to crush the Zviadist uprising in Western Georgia in the fall of 1993. He then took the help of Ioseliani to get rid of Kitovani and then resorted to the help of former KGB generals to sideline Ioseliani.<sup>287</sup> Kitovani was arrested in 1994 for an attempted unofficial military incursion into Abkhazia

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<sup>282</sup> Aaron Belkin, *United We Stand? Divide and Conquer Politics and the Logic of International Hostility* (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), p. 102.

<sup>283</sup> Barbara Christophe, "Understanding Politics in Georgia", *DEMSTAR Research Report*, No. 22 (November 2004), p. 11.

<sup>284</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Georgia: The Trauma of Statehood" in Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (eds.) *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 525.

<sup>285</sup> Georgi Glonti, "Problems Associated with Organized Crime in Georgia", *Trends in Organized Crime*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Winter 2005), p. 70.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> Barbara Christophe, "Understanding Politics in Georgia", *DEMSTAR Research Report*, No. 22 (November 2004), p. 11.



and Ioseliani was arrested in 1995 on charges of high treason and involvement in an assassination attempt against the president that took place in August 1995.<sup>288</sup> Shevardnadze also tried to involve in created special armed units to reduce the threats posed by other armed structures. To this end, he formed the Government Guard in 1994, most likely to balance the threat posed by the Ministry of State Security.<sup>289</sup> Shevardnadze also fostered the rivalry between the army and the border guards to use these armed structures against one another to reduce the threats posed by these forces against him.<sup>290</sup> By the end of 1995, Shevardnadze consolidated coercive power by discarding these figures, making necessary appointments in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Defense and creating rivalries within the military forces to defuse potential coup threat. At the same time, he became able to restore law and order by dismantling major criminal structures.<sup>291</sup>

However, it can not still be argued that he was able to establish the state's monopoly over the means of coercion on the territory of the country as Abkhazia and Ossetia were out of the control of central government. Moreover, the central government's rule did not extend to Adjarian Autonomous Republic, the mountainous regions of Svaneti and Pankisi and Armenian region of Javakheti in which the local paramilitary group Javakh provided law and order, collected the taxes and protected the local population.<sup>292</sup>

Shevardnadze's attempts at strengthening his rule over the country did not only aim at getting rid of paramilitaries. He also took steps to increase his control over the parliament. Shevardnadze did not enjoy a reliable majority on the parliament to rely on when he was elected in 1992. As a result, he had to engage in coalition building. Members of the parliament were provided with lucrative

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<sup>288</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 95.

<sup>289</sup> Aaron Belkin, *United We Stand? Divide and Conquer Politics and the Logic of International Hostility* (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), p. 106.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 101-114.

<sup>291</sup> Ghia Nodia, "Dynamics of State-Building in Georgia", Caucasus and the Caspian Seminar Transcripts, Harvard University, 1996, available at <http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/BCSIA/> (Lastly accessed on September 2008).

<sup>292</sup> Spyros Demetriou, "Rising from the Ashes: the Difficult (Re)birth of the Georgian State", *Development and Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (2002), p. 879.

governmental posts at least one time for a certain period to secure their loyalty. Shevardnadze first placed his key allies in key ministries, which provided opportunities for making money. As a result, the minister worked like entrepreneurs in the areas under the competence of their ministries.

Shevardnadze also used state resources to prevent the outbreak of secessionist wars in the regions inhabited by Armenians and Azeris. Privileged access to state resources were granted to local strongman in these regions to this end. A general tendency to attribute power to persons instead of office holders emerged and this served to keep a limited number of families in key positions in ministries and in regional governments. Once attained their posts, families tried to entrench their positions by establishing extended patronage networks cutting across state agencies to avoid investigations and provide co-ordination of their profit making activities.<sup>293</sup>

Opposition party members in the parliament were also co-opted by granting them lucrative positions and opportunities in the state structures as a part of Shevardnadze alliance-building efforts. Having first replaced important members of the elite to the key ministries, Shevardnadze then resorted to rotation to prevent their emerging as the autonomous power centers to rival himself.<sup>294</sup>

Lucrative governmental posts did not constitute the only favor offered to allies by Shevardnadze. The president also granted the ownership of former state enterprises to the members of the ruling party to maintain their support. The CUG included administrative cadres and factory managers who used to run state enterprises when Shevardnadze served as the first secretary.<sup>295</sup> With the return of Shevardnadze to power in post-independence period, these people gained the control of enterprises they managed in the Soviet period due to dubious

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<sup>293</sup> Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze, "Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New", in Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (ed.), *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Vienna and Geneva: Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defense and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), p. 191.

<sup>294</sup> Barbara Christophe, "Understanding Politics in Georgia" *DEMSTAR Research Report*, No. 22 (November 2004), p. 8-9.

<sup>295</sup> Charles King, "Potemkin Democracy: Four Myths about Post-Soviet Georgia", *The National Interest*, No. 64 (Summer 2001) p. 96.

privatization process of the country. While the public was largely busy with the wars in Abkhazia and Ossetia and Zviadist uprising in Western Georgia, the former Soviet nomenclatura increased its grip on the economy of the country.<sup>296</sup> The continuity with the Soviet past both in terms of ruling elite and the ways of governance would increasingly antagonize the society and some members of the political elite and motivate them to ‘complete the unfinished revolution of 1991’ by removing the conservative Shevardnadze team and changing the way that the country was run.<sup>297</sup>

### **3.10. From Relative Stability to Decay: 1995-1999**

The year 1995 constitute a turning point for Shevardnadze since he managed to pacify the paramilitaries and established the CUG as his power base by the end of that year. After that point, he tried to use new tactics of survival in addition to alliance building discussed above. Creation of 5 percent barrier before the October 1995 elections was one of these new tactics utilized to weaken the opposition in the parliament and increase the influence of the CUG.<sup>298</sup> Thanks to this threshold and Georgia’s divided opposition, Shevardnadze became able to exclude many significant forces from the parliament. The parties denied representation in the parliament as a result of the threshold included communist parties (the United Communists, the Stalin Communist Party and the Communist Party of Georgia), supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia (parties including 21<sup>st</sup> Century, United Georgia and Way of Zviad), moderate opposition parties like the Union of Georgian Traditionalists and United Republicans and Nationalist parties

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<sup>296</sup> Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze, Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze, “Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New”, in Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (ed.), *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia’s Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Vienna and Geneva: Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defense and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), p. 199.

<sup>297</sup> Stephen F. Jones, “Adventurers or Commanders? Civil Military Relations in Georgia since Independence” in Costantine P. Danopoulos and Daniel Zirker, *Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet and Yugoslav Successor States* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), p. 38.

<sup>298</sup> Valerian Dolidze, “Political Parties and Party Development in Georgia” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/06.doleng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/06.doleng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 11 September 2008).

including National Independence Party and *Merab Kostava Society*.<sup>299</sup> Although the CUG was able to win only about 23 percent of the vote, it gained unlimited dominance in the legislature since 50 parties representing the 63 percent of the electorate remained outside the Parliament as they failed to clear 5 percent barrier. Only two other parties, the Revival Union of Abashidze and the National Democratic Party, which were known for their cooperative relations with Shevardnadze, were able to enter the Parliament.<sup>300</sup>

By the beginning of this period, Shevardnadze completed the integration of armed forces acting independently into the coercive apparatus of the Georgian state.<sup>301</sup> As a result of this success, the country was saved from the turmoil of the early 1990s but coup attempts still did not come to a halt. On 29 August 1995 a failed attempt to assassinate the president took place and on 9 February 1997, the attempt was repeated. These were followed by an armed revolt in Senaki battalion on 19 October 1998 and a failed coup attempt on 22 May 1999.<sup>302</sup>

After the years of hostile nationalism under Gamsakhurdia, the minorities of Georgia were glad to see the return of minority-friendly 'internationalist' values of the Soviet period with Shevardnadze. Despite being dramatically less threatening for the minorities, the national minority policy under Shevardnadze was not more than co-opting the leaders of the minorities while ignoring civic integration and minority rights. As a result, while the minorities enjoyed stability during this period as the rest of the population, active minority participation in political process remained quite limited.<sup>303</sup> This situation served to the

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<sup>299</sup> Darrell Slider, "Democratization in Georgia", Bruce Parrott and Karen Dawisha, *Conflict, Cleavage and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 182-185.

<sup>300</sup> Barbara Christophe, "Understanding Politics in Georgia" *Democracy, the State, and Administrative Reforms Research Report*, No. 22 (November 2004), p. 13.

<sup>301</sup> Robert Larson, "Georgian Search for Security: An Analysis of Georgia's National Security Structures and International Cooperation", *GFSIS Occasional Paper*, No. 1 (2003), p. 30.

<sup>302</sup> Levan Alapishvili, *The Civil-Military Relations And Democratic Control On Armed Forces In Caucasus Region - A Comparative Study* available at <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/alapishvili.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 9 September 2008).

<sup>303</sup> Laurence Broers and Julian Broxup, "Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections", *The London Information Networks on Conflicts and State Report*, January 2004, available at <http://www.links-london.org/pdf/Crisis%20>

entrenchment of the ghettoization of minorities and endorsement of informal practices of ethnic discrimination by the state in a way that made the prospects of future integration projects dimmer.<sup>304</sup>

Shevardnadze's policy on Abkhazia and Ossetia remained short of fulfilling expectations for restoration of Georgian territorial integrity. Being aware of the limits of the Georgian state, Shevardnadze pursued a face-saving policy under which he neither tried to restore control in conflict-ridden regions by military force nor conceded to compromise with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>305</sup> Within the framework of this policy, he relied on external powers' help to solve the problems in Georgia's favor. Lacking a more promising alternative, in 1994 he had to approve the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia and let Russia to acquire four military bases in the country hoping that Russia would quit supporting the secessionist forces.<sup>306</sup> In addition to the two secession conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Tbilisi lost control over Pankisi in 1999, a small area bordering Chechnya. As the war in Chechnya was continuing, thousands of Chechen refugees fleeing the war moved to this area, where a Kist population related to Chechens ethnically already lived. Since some of these Chechens were anti-Russian rebels, Russia came to allege that Tbilisi was helping the terrorists by providing refuge to them. In meantime, Pankisi turned into a center for illegal trade and kidnapping, which was completely out of Tbilisi's control.<sup>307</sup> In Javakh, the situation also worsened since 1999, due to continuing protests over economic hardship, power cuts and increasing rumors about the evacuating of Russian military base there.<sup>308</sup> Similarly, whereas the leader of Adjara, Abashidze, did not

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and%20Renewal%20in%20Georgian%20Politics%20-20Jan%2004.pdf (Lastly accessed on 10 January 2009).

<sup>304</sup> Laurence Broers, "Filling the Void: Ethnic Politics and Nationalities Policy in Post-Conflict Georgia", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (May 2008), p. 299.

<sup>305</sup> Dov Lynch, "Why Georgia Matters?", *Chaillot Papers*, No. 86 (February 2006), p. 20.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> Ghia Nodia and Álvaro Pinto Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges And Prospects* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p. 17.

<sup>308</sup> Archil Gegeshidze, "Conflict in Georgia: Religion and Ethnicity" in Pamela Kilpadi (ed.), *Islam and Tolerance in Wider Europe* (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 64.

pursue secessionism, he took the advantage of the weakness of the Georgian state to ignore the demands of Tbilisi to transfer taxes to the state budget and monopolized control over Batumi port and Sarp checkpoint to Turkey. Lastly, he pursued an independent foreign policy from Tbilisi remarked by his strong pro-Russian stance and links with the separatist governments in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>309</sup>

Georgia could start its post-Soviet economic reform process only after some degree of stability was provided with the ceasefires in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Between 1994 and 1998, the Shevardnadze administration introduced a series of reforms based on the 'Washington Consensus' to stabilize and liberalize the economy.<sup>310</sup> Georgians also experienced ephemeral economic recovery in this period. Economic development was given a start with the help of International Monetary Found (IMF) and the World Bank. *Lari* was introduced as the national currency in 1995 and kept relatively stable thanks to an IMF stabilization fund. Inflation has been reined in and GDP growth was resumed even though it was disrupted by the negative effects of Russia's August 1998 financial crisis. Moreover, Georgia adopted laws to realize economic reform. Lastly, Georgia managed as one of the key actors in the development and transport of Caspian oil and gas. This was a notable success on the part of Shevardnadze to make Georgia a part of this project since the country experienced instability arising from coup attempts and secessionist rebellions since becoming independent as discussed above.<sup>311</sup>

Initially Georgia emerged as one of the most successful countries among the former Soviet republics in increasing its gross domestic product as it achieved 11 per cent GDP growth in the year 1996 and 1997. The same years also saw the

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<sup>309</sup> Ghia Nodia and Álvaro Pinto Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges And Prospects* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p. 16.

<sup>310</sup> Marina Muskhelishvili and Anna Akhvlediani, "Democratization against the Background of Economic Transformation" in Democratization in Georgia: Economic Transformation and Social Security, *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance Discussion Paper*, No. 8 (May 2003), p. 10

<sup>311</sup> Archil Gegeshidze, "Georgia: In Quest of a Niche Strategy", *The Quarterly Journal*, No. 3 (September 2002), p. 5.

intensive legislative reform in the economic arena. Despite these achievements, including the stability of the *Lari*, the financial system and the market institutions of the country remained too weak to sustain the economic growth in the coming years. Since the economic growth rates and the stability of the currency were mostly achieved with the help of the credits of international organizations such as World Bank and IMF, they proved to be only temporary. Between 1998 and 2003, Georgian economy experienced stagnation as the economic growth only took place at a very slow rate (despite contributions of BTC pipeline project) and economic reforms came to a halt.<sup>312</sup>

The legislative basis for the economy established by the parliament did not match the actual ways of conducting business. Shevardnadze administration could not establish a reliable tax base to increase state revenue. More than 55 per cent of the economic activity remained hidden from the state and transactions and settlements took place outside the banking system.<sup>313</sup> Investor and consumer confidence could not be established.<sup>314</sup> As people tended to pay bribes to the state officials rather than paying their taxes and more economic activity moved to the realm of shadow economy, the state budget shrank every year and the state found it increasingly difficult to provide basic state services and pay the salaries and pensions.<sup>315</sup>

As a result, minimum wages and pensions became as low as \$20 and \$14 a month respectively and these were rarely paid on time. While a few in the private sector got rich enormously, most of the population lived below the poverty level. The wealth and resources were concentrated in Tbilisi, whereas regional governments did not have access to them. Thus, the economic system that

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<sup>312</sup> Marina Muskhelishvili and Anna Akhvlediani, "Democratization against the Background of Economic Transformation" in Democratization in Georgia: Economic Transformation and Social Security, *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance Discussion Paper*, No. 8 (May 2003), p. 11.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>314</sup> Interview with Mariam Gabunia (Head of the Department for Foreign Trade and International Economic Relations), Tbilisi, November 2008.

<sup>315</sup> Interview with David Darchiashvili (Parliamentarian and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration and the former executive director of Georgia Open Society Institute), Tbilisi, 19 June 2009.

Shevardnadze regime created proved to be good for only about 1 percent of Georgia's population.<sup>316</sup>

The unequal access of a small class in the economic resources in a society where 65 per cent of the population lived below poverty line served to the widening gap between the state and society.<sup>317</sup> In the clientelistic structure of Georgia, the family of Shevardnadze, the members of Shevardnadze native Guria region, the former communist nomenclatura and their family members enjoyed a disproportionate access to state positions and economic resources and their influence increased at the expense of rest of the society in the course of time. For example, 36 per cent of state officials in 1997 and 41 per cent in 1999 were from Shevardnadze's native Guria region although it has only 3 per cent of the population.<sup>318</sup>

As seen, Georgia had only quite limited economic resources and tried to improve state revenues with external financial aid. Economic reforms remained on the paper. In reality, Shevardnadze used the distributive state capacity in a way that favored a small group at the expense of rest of the society. This ineffective use of state capacity played an important role in the mobilizing the society against the regime as will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **3.11. Conclusion**

Georgia does not have a history that would constitute a reliable basis for the establishment of a strong state in post-Soviet period. As discussed, Georgia only experienced two brief periods as an independent state. The country hosted a quite heterogeneous population in ethnic terms. The Soviet policies increased the weakness of Georgian state by establishing autonomous administrative units, which undermined the authority of the center.

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<sup>316</sup> Irakli Z. Kakabadze, "Inside the Revolution of Roses", *The Institute of Multi-Track Diplomacy Occasional Paper*, No. 15 (March 2005), p. 4.

<sup>317</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Democracy from Below? Interest Groups in Georgian Society", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Spring 2000) p. 44.

<sup>318</sup> K. Kikabidze and D. Losaberidze, "Institutionalism and Clientelism in Georgia", *United Nations Development Programme Discussion Paper*, 2000, Tbilisi.



Georgia experienced an important degree of instability with the weakening of Soviet authority and the coming of independence. Gamsakhurdia's style of governance exacerbated the problems that Georgia inherited from the pre-independence period. With his provocative statements and exclusionary policies, Gamsakhurdia increased the anxieties of the minorities contributing to the outbreak of secessionist conflicts. Moreover, he antagonized Russia with his confrontational stance. His policies prepared the ground for the emergence of complex problems that would result in weakening of Georgian state in the independence period besides bringing about his own removal from power.

Shevardnadze tried to address the problems leading to Gamsakhurdia's fall after resuming power. At the beginning, his attempts at consolidating his own authority and power of Georgian state converged. He sidelined the militias, brought about a certain degree of stability with the ceasefires and economic recovery with attracting foreign help and investment. He established and strengthened the CUG as his power base and tried to tie the members of this party to himself by providing them with lucrative positions and reserving the right of appointment for himself. In this way, he took the role of balancer among different elites competing for power and economic resources.

However, starting with 1995, the system he established contributed to the weakening of the state. The increasing corruption started to eat state resources and deteriorate the economic hardship of the masses. As revenues declined further, the regions, whose leaders were provided with exclusive control over state resources, have turned into the personal fiefdoms of these local leaders and moved out of state control.

As will be seen in the next chapter, the fragile political system established by Shevardnadze would crumble when he could not sustain his role as the powerbroker with the rise of reformers and weakening of support for the government inside and outside country as a result of increasing corruption and state inefficiency in many areas.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE PRELUDE TO THE ‘ROSE REVOLUTION’**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter was devoted to the forming of internal and external balances by Shevardnadze to remain in power. This section will examine how these balances were unraveled in the process leading to the ‘Revolution’ bringing about the fall of Shevardnadze regime. The chapter will first deal with the emergence of the cracks in the ruling elite and rise of reformers. While doing this, special attention will be devoted to how state weakness and ineffective use of state resources enable the opposition to gain popularity both at home and abroad at the expense of Shevardnadze and conservatives around him. By underlining the importance of state weakness for the strengthening of societal forces, the chapter will underscore the necessity of using a state-centered approach to understand the mechanisms of the ‘Rose Revolution’. The chapter will also address how the Georgian society reacted to the exploitation of state resources by a small group around Shevardnadze and the ruling elite attempts at repressing dissent. Moreover, the impact of state weakness on the development of civil society and media will be explored. Lastly, it will examine why Western support was so critical for the stability of Shevardnadze regime and how its weakening deteriorated the crisis faced by him.

#### **4.2. Loss of Control over Political Elite**

In this section, the disagreements within the ruling elite and Shevardnadze’s loss of control over the political elite will be examined. The study will continue to examine the important political developments in Georgian political life like 1999 parliamentary elections and 2000 presidential elections as in the previous chapter. Since the period was marked by the power struggles, these developments will be explored from the perspective of the competition for power and Shevardnadze loss of control over rival political forces in line with the

character of the period. The section will trace the process in chronological order and focus on events such as the parliamentary, presidential and local elections as events signaling the beginning of end on the part of Shevardnadze regime.

#### **4.2.1. Emergence of Splits within the Ruling Elite**

The dispute between reformers and conservatives in the CUG was instrumental in bringing about the 'Rose Revolution' but this was hardly the first disagreement that Shevardnadze had to deal with. Earlier disagreements were experienced in the Parliament before but they were eventually solved or eventual splits from the CUG as a result of these earlier disagreements did not prove to be as grave as the one between the conservatives and reformist. However, they are still important in the sense that they illustrate that Shevardnadze did not enjoy autonomy vis-à-vis important actors and had to retreat in the face of their opposition and or face their defection.

The disagreements between Aslan Abashidze and Shevardnadze's camp provided such kind of examples. Abashidze's Union of Democratic Revival and CUG formed the majority in the Parliament following 1995 elections. Revival was far from acting as an opposition party. CUG and Revival competed as a joint block in 1996 elections to the Supreme Council of Adjara and gained 76 of 80 seats. However, soon problems between Shevardnadze and Abashidze emerged. In 1997, Abashidze reacted to a law draft that envisaged that the president would appoint the *gamgebelis* (head of local councils) in Adjara instead of him. The dispute was eventually solved when Shevardnadze backpedalled and Abashidze resumed the right to appoint the *gamgebelis*.<sup>319</sup>

Abashidze involved in one more dispute in the Parliament. In April 1998, he set out to form an anti-CUG block for 1999 elections due to his quarrels with Zhvania. However, before the elections, Shevardnadze convinced him to deliver Adjarian vote for CUG by promising to consolidate the autonomous status of Adjara by making necessary constitutional amendments.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 124.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Another disagreement within the CUG led Parliament Vice-Speaker Vakhtang Rcheulishvili to leave the CUG and from the Socialist Party in 1998. Rcheulishvili left the party to protest against the economic policies pursued by Shevardnadze. He hoped that he would be able to appeal to leftist electorate with his new party.<sup>321</sup> In addition to this, a group of young businessman, who financed CUG's elections campaign, left the CUG to protest against Zhvania's dominance of the legislature. In November 2000 they rebelled against Zhvania and demanded an investigation of budgetary shortcomings. When Shevardnadze and Zhvania declined to meet their demands, they left the CUG to found New Rights Party in June 2001.<sup>322</sup> Having dealt with these minor disputes, the fatal dispute in the CUG leading to the departure of reformers can now be dealt with.

#### **4.2.2. Rise of Reformers**

The leading figure of the fatal split in the CUG was Zurab Zhvania although Saakashvili attracted more attention than him due to his dominant role in the 'Rose Revolution'. Having been elected the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament in 1995, Zhvania saw his power to increase continuously in the coming years. After the 1995 elections, Zhvania found the opportunity to strengthen his position in the parliament because Shevardnadze left the running of the Parliament to him and intervened only at rare occasions.<sup>323</sup>

In the course of time, a division of labor between Shevardnadze and Zhvania developed which contributed to strengthening of the latter further. Whereas the former took on ensuring stability, the latter focused on reforms.<sup>324</sup> Under Zhvania's leadership the Georgian Parliament passed important new

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<sup>321</sup> Valerian Dolidze, "Political Parties and Party Development in Georgia" Central Asia and the Caucasus, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/06](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/06)(Lastly accessed on 5 April 2009).

<sup>322</sup> Irakly Areshidze, "Georgia's Mounting Opposition", *Eurasianet*, 21 January 2003, available at [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/eav012103\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/eav012103_pr.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 2 May 2009).

<sup>323</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 41.

<sup>324</sup> Ghia Nodia and Alvaro Pinto Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges And Prospects* (Delft: Eburon, 2006),p. 14.

legislation on the basis of the Western advice including the civil code, civil proceedings code, tax code and general administrative code.<sup>325</sup> Zhvania's role was also instrumental in adopting legislation that favored NGOs. Thanks to these achievements, Zhvania increased his popularity both at home among Georgian NGOs<sup>326</sup> and at abroad among Western states<sup>327</sup>, whereas Shevardnadze and his close associates which projected themselves as the symbol of stability experienced decreasing legitimacy inside and outside Georgia as a result of their failure to restore Georgian territorial integrity, widespread corruption and declining living standards.

In the immediate years following 1995, the relations between Shevardnadze and Zhvania were marked by harmony, which led many observers to think that the former was grooming the latter for to succeed him as president.<sup>328</sup> However, disagreements between the two most important actors in Georgian political system surfaced as early as 1998 and the emerging rift laid the ground for the 'Rose Revolution'. In July 1998, Zhvania mentioned that rampant corruption and lack of reform had brought the country to the brink of collapse and threatened to resign if effective measures to realize reform were not taken. To calm down Zhvania, Shevardnadze engineered the election of Mikheil Saakashvili, a Zhvania protégé, to the chairmanship of the CUG.<sup>329</sup> Being a young lawyer who studied at George Washington University, Saakashvili had been appointed chairman of the Committee of Constitutional, Legal Issues and the Rule of Law earlier with Zhvania's help again. He attracted attention due to his differences with ex-Soviet nomenclatura still in power that the Georgian citizens fed up with.<sup>330</sup> Some

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<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), 97.

<sup>327</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 41.

<sup>328</sup> Liz Fuller, "Georgia: A Look Back at Zurab Zhvania's Career", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 3 February 2005, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1057252.html> (Lastly accessed on 23 February 2009).

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>330</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: CUG Hopelessly Divided", *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 6 November 2001, available at [http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc\\_state=hen&s=o&o=p=crs&l=](http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state=hen&s=o&o=p=crs&l=)

observers interpreted the differences between the conservatives and the reformers as a ‘clash of generations’, which would lead to the removal of the former.<sup>331</sup>

Saakashvili’s rise to prominence launched a process that would result in the division of the CUG. Whereas the members of the party grouped around Saakashvili and Zhvania formed the reformist wing, the CUG members resisting Saakashvili’s reforms formed the conservative camp. As the chairman of the Committee of Constitutional, Legal Issues and the Rule of Law, Saakashvili led the preparation of the draft of the criminal procedures code, which would guarantee basic safeguards for the suspects and the witnesses.<sup>332</sup> The draft was adopted in the Parliament in 1997 but shortly after Georgia gained full membership in the Council of Europe the Parliament adopted more than 300 amendments that reversed the earlier progress.<sup>333</sup> This created tensions between the reformists and conservatives as the former believed that conservative Ministry of Internal Affairs, made the conservatives to amend the code by threatening not to support the CUG during the forthcoming 1999 parliamentary elections.<sup>334</sup>

#### **4.2.3. 1999 Parliamentary and 2000 Presidential Elections as Early Signs of Shevardnadze’s Weakening**

Georgia entered the 1999 parliamentary election period in this atmosphere of futile reform attempts by the reformist wing of the CUG.<sup>335</sup> Despite his inability to realize his reform agenda due to the resistance of conservatives in the

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<sup>331</sup> Interview with Kornely Kakachia (Director, School of Politics and International Relations, University of Georgia), 18 June 2009, Tbilisi.

<sup>332</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 125.

<sup>333</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Backtracking on Reform: Amendments Undermine Access to Justice”, *HRW Report*, Vol. 12, No. 11(October 2000), p. 4, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/g/Georgia/georgo00.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 5 February 2009).

<sup>334</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 125.

<sup>335</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 47.

Party, Zhvania continued to work for the CUG and organized election campaign of the Party.<sup>336</sup>

Different from the previous parliamentary elections campaign, the 1999 campaign focused on economic and social issues under the slogan of “from stability to prosperity”. This was in line with the changes in the Georgian public opinion. Although the voters remained concerned about the security and stability, they were not as anxious as before since Shevardnadze managed to introduce some degree of order, therefore the economic difficulties moved to the forefront. The government failed to pay pensions for several months, average monthly salaries were less than \$50 and electricity, water and heat supplies were at poor condition and the roads and schools needed improvement badly. Corruption acted as a hurdle for the economic development and the delivery of public services. The Russian financial crisis of 1998 deteriorated the economic situation further.<sup>337</sup> Under these circumstances, the CUG tried to appeal to the voters by promising a better future by the means of international projects like Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC).<sup>338</sup>

Since pre-election polls showed the declining popularity of CUG, the party members encouraged Shevardnadze’s active involvement in the election campaign to make use of his popularity.<sup>339</sup> Abashidze’s announcement that he would compete for presidency in upcoming April 2000 elections provided a further incentive. As a result, Shevardnadze traveled intensively around the country to increase his votes. He also went to Armenia with the hope that good relations with Yerevan would lead increasing support among Georgia’s Armenian population. To weaken the support for Abashidze’s Revival Party, he argued that this party

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<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48

<sup>337</sup> The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, “The October 31, 1999 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: A Pre-elections Report”, 29 October 1999.

<sup>338</sup> Ekaterine Gakhokidze, Georgia: Political Parties Before And After The Rose Revolution, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 2, No. 32(2005), pp. 60-67, available at [http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/07.gaxeng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/07.gaxeng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 5 February 2009).

<sup>339</sup> Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Report on Georgia’s Parliamentary Elections: October 1999, 20 October 1999, available at [http://www.csce.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=UserGroups.Home&ContentRecord\\_id=159&ContentType=G&ContentRecordType=G&UserGroup\\_id=3&Subaction=PressReleases&CFID=18849146&CFTOKEN=53](http://www.csce.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=UserGroups.Home&ContentRecord_id=159&ContentType=G&ContentRecordType=G&UserGroup_id=3&Subaction=PressReleases&CFID=18849146&CFTOKEN=53) (Lastly accessed on 2 February 2009), p. 1.

was backed by Russia and supporting Revival would mean helping a parliamentary coup.<sup>340</sup>

As a result of these efforts, Shevardnadze's CUG won the parliamentary majority in the elections, which were held on 31 October 1999, by receiving 41.75 per cent of the votes, whereas Abashidze's Revival came second with 25.65 votes. Industry Will Save Georgia became the only other party to pass the seven per cent threshold by gaining 7.8 of the votes.<sup>341</sup>

Having bolstered by his party's victory in parliamentary elections, Shevardnadze turned his attention to April 2000 presidential elections. Shevardnadze did not need to struggle hard to win because the other candidate, Jumber Patiashvili, who was a highly unpopular figure since it is widely known that he had some degree of responsibility in use of force against peaceful protestors during the 9 April Events.<sup>342</sup> According to the Central Election Commission, Shevardnadze gained 79.82 per cent of the votes whereas Patiashvili received only 16.66 per cent.<sup>343</sup>

Whereas the parliamentary and presidential elections before 1999 were considered by international observers as generally free and fair, the votes in 1999 and 2000 were regarded as more problematic.<sup>344</sup> The OSCE reported that intimidation and violence were observed during the pre-election period and on the election days. Moreover, the organization also drew attention to the fact that the election law let the ruling party to enjoy unfair influence in the election administration at all levels and some activities of the election administration was

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<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>341</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on the 31 October & 14 November 1999 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 7 February 2000), p. 28.

<sup>342</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 47

<sup>343</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 9 April 2000 Georgian Presidential Elections* (Warsaw, 9 June 2000), p. 24.

<sup>344</sup> Laurence Broers and Julian Broxup, "Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections", *The London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building Report*, January 2004



not transparent.<sup>345</sup> The 2000 presidential vote drew more criticisms due to local authorities' support for Shevardnadze's campaign, CUG control over electoral institutions, unsatisfactory electoral legislation and inaccurate voters' lists.<sup>346</sup>

The West expressed its support for Shevardnadze after the elections despite frauds due to their preference of stability over democracy.<sup>347</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, Shevardnadze played an important role in neutralizing the paramilitaries and establishing order, providing some degree of economic recovery, laying the foundations of a post-Soviet Georgian state by engineering the 1995 constitution, launching of the BTC pipeline project which would transport Azeri oil through Georgian territory and formulating a pro-Western policy. Although he was not able to restore territorial integrity and end corruption, the West tended to continue its support for him since they did have a better alternative to him at their disposal yet and he did not signal that he was ready to leave the presidency. Therefore, the West decided to wait until a new candidate that would serve their interest better and provide stability emerged and Shevardnadze completed his mission.

As in the case of other important political developments of this period, the competition among the conservative ruling elite and the reformist challengers marked the 2002 local elections. Zurab Zhvania and Levan Mamaladze, conservative governor of Kvemo Kartli region, competed for fielding candidates in the CUG's name. Mamaladze's supporters took the case to the court arguing that Zhvania, planning to field local candidates in CUG's name, did not have the right to do so since he had left the CUG. The court decided that Mamaladze's faction had the right to field candidates under the CUG's banner.<sup>348</sup> As a result,

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<sup>345</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on the 31 October & 14 November 1999 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 7 February 2000), p. 1.

<sup>346</sup> Laurence Broers and Julian Broxup, "Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections", *The London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building Report*, January 2004

<sup>347</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 50.

<sup>348</sup> Irakly Areshidze, "Georgian Local Elections will Reshape Country's Political Landscape", *Eurasianet*, 31 May 2002, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav053102.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav053102.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 4 February 2009).

Zhvania failed in his struggle to take the control of the CUG away from Shevardnadze supporters and he had to participate in 2002 local elections under the ticket of a minor political party.<sup>349</sup> After this event, the group in the CUG known as the Zhvania team followed their leader to leave the CUG. Zhvania and his associates they had to run under the name of Christian-Conservative Party (which later took the name of the United Democrats) in 2002 local elections as Zhvania failed in his struggle to take the control of the CUG away from Shevardnadze supporters.<sup>350</sup>

Compared to the previous elections, a wider range of opposition forces competed in the elections and they were tougher against the ruling party. This can be understood when their slogans are examined. Whereas the National Movement selected “Tbilisi without Shevardnadze” as its slogan; the Labor Party urged the nation to “Deprive the Plunderers of Power;” the Christian-Conservative Party (the Zhvania Team) chose “Show Them Your Power”. The Citizens’ Union used the rather weak slogan of “We Act at Your Bidding.” This time the nation was not easily duped: the people knew that the ruling party had failed to fulfill its promises of 1999. The Revival bloc tended to attack the other opposition parties rather than just focusing on the CUG with its slogan “While Others Promise—We Act!”. The bloc still did not have much power in Tbilisi even though it did its best to change the image of regional or ‘Batumi’ party. The parties get the following vote rates: the Labor Party, 25.50 percent; the National Movement, 23.75 percent; the New Right, 11.36 percent; the Christian-Conservative Party, 7.27 percent; Industry Will Save Georgia, 7.13 percent; and Revival, 6.34 percent.<sup>351</sup>

If court decision meant a victory for the Shevardnadze supporters, the vote itself proved to be a humiliating defeat for them. The results showed that the support for reformist was on the rise. Saakashvili won a sweeping victory in

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<sup>349</sup> Jaba Devdariani, “Opposition Leaders Seek Elusive Accord in Georgia”, Eurasianet, 29 January 2003, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav012903.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 2 February 2009).

<sup>350</sup> Ekaterine Gakhokidze, “Georgia: Political Parties Before And After The Rose Revolution”, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 2, No. 32(2005), pp. 60-67, available at [http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/07.gaxeng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/07.gaxeng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 5 February 2009).

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

Tbilisi's most important district whereas the CUG only received less than two percent of the vote.<sup>352</sup> As a result of the election, the opposition gained control over the Tbilisi municipality and Saakashvili was elected as chairman of Tbilisi city council. The election results were a complete humiliation for Shevardnadze's CUG as it failed to clear 4 per cent threshold and thus won no seats in the council.<sup>353</sup>

The election campaign was too fierce for a municipal vote and the parties' slogans did not revolve around city self-administration and the municipality.<sup>354</sup> As the parliamentary elections were approaching, opposition parties were preparing themselves for them and they considered the municipal elections as a rehearsal. They were not wrong. They would repeat their success in the coming parliamentary elections whereas the CUG re-experience defeat, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### **4.2.4. Deepening of the Rift in the CUG and the Departure of the Reformers**

Because of Georgian entry into Council of Europe in 1999, Zhvania's influence in Georgian politics grew as he was leading the negotiation process. This meant increasing reformist influence in Georgian politics.<sup>355</sup> Until the post-1999 election period, the influence of the reformers were mainly limited to legislative, they lacked executive posts. David Onopriashvili, who was appointed finance minister in 1998, was an exemption to this rule.<sup>356</sup> However, after the 1999 elections, this situation changed as Shevardnadze appointed members of

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<sup>352</sup> Gia Nodia and Álvaro Pinto Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges And Prospects* (Delft: Eburon, 2006), p.19.

<sup>353</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 174-175.

<sup>354</sup> Ekaterine Gakhokidze, "Georgia: Political Parties Before And After The Rose Revolution", *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 2, No. 32(2005), pp. 60-67, available at [http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/07.gaxeng.shtml](http://www.cac.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/07.gaxeng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 5 February 2009).

<sup>355</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 100.

<sup>356</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 117.

reformist camp to ministerial positions as a response to weakening support at home and at abroad.<sup>357</sup>

It can be argued that it was weakness of state capacity that forced Shevardnadze to behave in this way. Lacking economic capacity, he failed to satisfy needs of the citizens and limit discontent. Dependent on foreign aid, Shevardnadze was vulnerable to external pressures and lacked autonomy vis-à-vis external forces. Therefore, he tended to resort to reformers to alleviate concern both at home and abroad. In short, because of lack of economic and external state capacity, Shevardnadze was forced to appoint reformers to ministerial positions. Since 2001, the ruling party had been losing young members to the opposition. Those who remained were competing to succeed Shevardnadze inside the CUG. The prominent conservative leaders (the State Minister Avtandil Jorbenadze, the former governor of the Kvemo Kartli region, Levan Mamaladze and the mayor of Tbilisi, Ivane Zodelava) intensified their struggle to succeed Shevardnadze.<sup>358</sup>

Shevardnadze tried to balance the young reformists in the government with conservatives. While reformists Mikheil Machavariani and Zurab Nogaideli were appointed as Minister of Taxes and Minister of Finance respectively, conservative Ivane Ckhartishvili were appointed as the Minister of Economy. Kakha Tarmagadze assumed the position of Minister of Interior and Vakhtang Kutateladze was appointed as Security Minister to serve as counterweights to reformers in other ministries. Moreover, conservative Gia Meparavishvili was placed in the post of prosecutor general to balance ardent reformist Justice Minister, Mikheil Saakashvili.<sup>359</sup>

To the consternation of Shevardnadze, he could not avoid the confrontation between conservative and reformist wing of the Party and eventual split of the latter however hard he tried. In 1999 reformist wing intensified

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<sup>357</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Shevardnadze's Political Balancing Act", *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 1 May 2001, available at [http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc\\_state=hen&s=o&o=p=crs&l=EN&s=f&o=16180](http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state=hen&s=o&o=p=crs&l=EN&s=f&o=16180) (Lastly accessed on 29 January 2009).

<sup>358</sup> International Crisis Group, *Georgia: What Now*, Europe Report, No: 151(3 December 2003), p. 13.

<sup>359</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Georgia: Rise and Fall of the Façade Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 2004), p. 100.

confrontation by accusing conservative wing of corruption by using media. Mikheil Saakashvili came to the limelight due to his anti-corruption campaign.<sup>360</sup> The popularity of conservative Minister of Interior was undermined significantly as the allegations that he organized the incursions of Chechen-Georgians into Abkhazia found wide coverage in the media.<sup>361</sup>

The conflict between the Ministry of Interior and reformers intensified after Saakashvili's appointment as the Justice Minister in October 2000.<sup>362</sup> When control of the prison system passed from the Ministry of Interior to Justice Ministry, this transfer angered the corrupt personnel of the Ministry of Interior as this meant loss of illegal revenue coming from sources such as drug sales. When two prison breaks were experienced after he resumed control, Saakashvili accused the Ministry of Interior to organize these to discredit the Ministry of Justice.

By late summer the disagreement between the conservative and reformist wing brought about the first reformist resignations from the government. The resignation was triggered by reformist Finance Minister Zurab Nogaideli's submission of draft budget to Shevardnadze, which cut the funding of the power ministries under conservative control significantly. Shevardnadze rejected the draft of Nogaideli and accepted the one prepared by conservative Chkhartishvili, which maintained the power of conservatives and forced the reformist Ministry of Taxes and Revenue to collect higher taxes to supply conservative ministries. Unwilling to support conservative ministries with high tax revenues, the Minister of Taxes and Revenues, Mikheil Machavariani resigned on 15 August 2001.

Meanwhile Shevardnadze was trying hard to ease tensions by appeasing the reformers. In late summer 2001, he proposed making some constitutional amendments that would provide for the office of prime minister beside presidency and the prime minister would share the responsibility of running cabinet of ministers with the president. He also hinted that he was planning to nominate

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<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>362</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, International Crisis Group, "Georgia: What Now", *Europe Report*, No: 151(3 December 2003), p. 125.

Zhvania to the post of prime minister.<sup>363</sup> However, this proposal was sidelined as the conservatives felt threatened by it and reacted against it firmly.<sup>364</sup>

In the face of increasing discontent in the society and Shevardnadze's failure to fight against corruption and economic crisis, the opposition parties started to boycott parliamentary sessions in late summer. Zhvania publicized his grievances by writing an open letter to Shevardnadze on 28 August 2001 in which he accused the president of involvement in corruption and urged him to fire the corrupt ministers in the cabinet and remove his crooked associates. Shevardnadze did not make changes in the cabinet along with Zhvania's demands but resigned from the CUG chairmanship on 17 September 2001. With Shevardnadze's resignation Zhvania assumed the post of CUG chairmanship.<sup>365</sup>

The draft law on "Return of Ungrounded Property to the State", which was prepared by Saakashvili, also created significant tension between conservatives and the reformers in the cabinet. Reformers supported the anti corruption draft law, which would allow for the confiscation of the property of public officials origins of which can not be justified, whereas the conservatives opposed it.<sup>366</sup> Angered by attitude of conservatives, while talking about corruption during a cabinet meeting, he pointed towards Shevardnadze implying his complicity. This prompted the Foreign Minister, Irakli Menagharishvili, to intervene and urge him to behave properly.<sup>367</sup> However, he did not intend to

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<sup>363</sup> Zurab Tchiaberashvili, "The Georgian October Revolution", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 21 November 2001, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/162> (Lastly accessed on 19 November 2009).

<sup>364</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Shevardnadze Turns Back on Reform, Civil Georgia", 26 September 2001, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=253&search=Jaba Devdariani, Shevardnadze Turns Back on Reform](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=253&search=Jaba%20Devdariani,%20Shevardnadze%20Turns%20Back%20on%20Reform)(Lastly accessed on 19 October 2009)

<sup>365</sup> Zaal Anjaparidze, "Georgian Politicians Prepare for Post-Shevardnadze Era", *Prism*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 31 March 2002 available at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Bttnews%5D=20284&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=224](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bttnews%5D=20284&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=224) (Lastly accessed 5 May 2009).

<sup>366</sup> Kote Kemularia, *Reformers' Anti-Corruption Drive, Civil Georgia*, 18 January 2002 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=1049&search=reformers anti-corruption drive](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=1049&search=reformers%20anti-corruption%20drive) (Lastly accessed 11 May 2009).

<sup>367</sup> Justin Burke, "Georgian Justice Minister Accuses Cabinet Colleagues of Corruption, *Eurasianet*, 9 August 2001. <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/hypermail/200108/0029.html> (Lastly accessed on 7 May 2009).

behave ‘properly’, in another cabinet meeting on 9 August 2001 he distributed pictures of expensive villas alleging that they belonged to some ministers.<sup>368</sup>

Having been angered by the defeat of his reform bill due to conservative resistance, Saakashvili resigned from his post in the government by declaring “It’s impossible to work in a government full of corrupt ministers, who instead of leading the country out of a deep social-economic crisis, just defend their personal interests”.<sup>369</sup> By the time of his resignation he had enjoyed an important degree of popularity because as seen in the cabinet ministry incident he knew how to make headlines and he used the time he was in power in an effective way. On 22 September 2001, he established his own party, the National Movement for the Salvation of Georgia, which has been called the United National Movement (UNM) since 2002.<sup>370</sup>

Saakashvili expressed his alignment with the Republican Party, which was formed by the supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia under the leadership of Zviad Dzidziguri and several NGO’s.<sup>371</sup> Saakashvili continued his criticisms towards the conservatives in the government after he left the CUG to increase the popularity of his new party this time. Saakashvili this time was aided by the state’s inability to restore control in Abkhazia. In the context of increasing tensions in Abkhazia, Saakashvili accused the Minister of Interior Tarmagadze of deliberately worsening the situation in the region to prompt declaration of state of war and eventually take over power.<sup>372</sup> The tensions between the reformists and

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<sup>368</sup> Profile: Mikheil Saakashvili, *BBC News*, 25 January 2004 available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3231852.stm> (Lastly accessed 9 May 2009).

<sup>369</sup> Dimitri Bit-Suleiman, “Domestic Discord Hampers Georgia”, *Eurasianet*, 1 October 2001”, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav100101a.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 4 May 2009).

<sup>370</sup> Valerian Dolidze, “Political Parties and Party Development in Georgia” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/06](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/06).

<sup>371</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 57.

<sup>372</sup> “Ministries Weekly Review, September 22-29, 2001”, *Civil Georgia*, 2 October 2001 (Lastly accessed on 19 April 2009).

conservatives would play an important role in the outbreak of Rustavi-2<sup>373</sup> crisis, which will be explored next.

#### **4.3. Citizen's Mobilization against Shevardnadze: Rustavi-2 Crisis**

Reformers' accusations against the conservative camp in the CUG revealed the extent of decay in the system that Shevardnadze established. Despite the appearance of stability identified with Shevardnadze on the surface, the political system was rotting from within.<sup>374</sup> Corruption, an important feature of continuity provided by Shevardnadze, came to drain state resources, which could have been used for economic development and satisfying citizen needs. This created deep grievances among the population already tired of dealing with economic difficulties. When corruption was combined with state ineffectiveness to impose control over the elite and the media, mass mobilization against the regime was experienced.

People interviewed during the completion of this study generally agreed that Shevardnadze was not a corrupt person himself but he was surrounded by corrupt associates. This brings mind to the question why he let corruption to reach such a rampant level in his country. This question becomes more pressing when one thinks that corruption was the key factor mobilizing the society against the regime ending up with the removal of Shevardnadze. The answer lays in the inability of Shevardnadze to impose state control over the elite and the latter's capacity to act autonomously.

As discussed in the historical background, Shevardnadze's struggle against corruption started long before the independence period. Sent to Georgia to fight corruption by Moscow in Soviet period, Shevardnadze soon realized how deep the problem was entrenched and gave up his initial aim.<sup>375</sup> He would experience the

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<sup>373</sup> Rustavi-2 was the independent television station, which was marked by critical stance against Shevardnadze before the 'Rose Revolution'.

<sup>374</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 2006), p. 40.

<sup>375</sup> Ghia Nodia, "The Dynamics and Sustainability of the Rose Revolution" in Michael Emerson and Senem Aydın (eds.), *Democratisation in the European Neighbourhood* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2005), p. 49.



same problem when he returned to power as the president of independent Georgia. Now instead of Moscow, Western donors were pressuring him but he was again powerless. Faced with deep state weakness, he engineered the creation of democratic constitution and institutions to give the impression of a democratic regime. However, in reality, he mediated between clashing corrupt interest to keep the system stable.<sup>376</sup>

It is necessary to make the relation between Georgian state weakness and the increasing corruption as this study attributes special importance to the role of state weakness in bringing about the fall of Shevardnadze regime. As discussed, Shevardnadze took over a state struggling with many daunting tasks at the same time. As a small state with limited resources and a powerful neighbor aiming to restore control over the country, Georgia came to the brink of dismemberment as a result two secessionist wars and a civil war. In this dangerous environment, Shevardnadze resorted to the networks he had become familiar with during the Soviet period.

The party Shevardnadze formed to consolidate his authority, the CUG, was mainly composed of administrative cadres, security officials and factory bosses who were in power during the 1970's when Shevardnadze was running the country. Some parts of the administrative cadres like the former factory bosses were turned into the new entrepreneur class of the post-Soviet Georgia by taking over the state enterprises they had previously run thanks to the dubious privation process. In this way, Soviet era elites maintain their power in the country's economy in post Soviet era.<sup>377</sup> Other parts of the former communist nomenclatura who regained important positions in state institutions after Shevardnadze came to power continued to run the affairs as in the Soviet period with one difference: instead of Moscow, state officials were exploiting the Western donors for enriching themselves. In this way, Shevardnadze established a state in which ruling party and economic structure fused into one another. Shevardnadze's party, the CUG, became an instrument for seizing the state rather than strengthening

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<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>377</sup> Charles King, "Potemkin Democracy: Four Myths about Post-Soviet Georgia", *The National Interest*, No. 64 (Summer 2001), p. 96.

it.<sup>378</sup> Due to its heavy role in the state structure, it came to be associated with different aspects of state failure and this prepared its end.

The growing dissatisfaction with Shevardnadze's rule first gave some minor signals. The lack of willingness on the part of the Georgian citizens to participate in April 2000 elections was such a signal. The Georgian society did not care to participate in the elections since they did not want to support Shevardnadze with their votes. As a result, the election turnout was in fact low but the ruling elite managed to mask it with ballot box stuffing.<sup>379</sup> The citizens would continue to express their discontent by organizing street demonstrations. Immense embezzlement in the energy sector led to the routine power cuts which prompted the citizens in the capital to organize demonstrations. Rampant corruption in the higher education system mobilized the students against the regime.<sup>380</sup>

As the people found ways to avoid paying taxes exploiting corruption, they caused the already limited state revenues to decline further. As dominant clans monopolized the use of economic resources, distributive state capacity became increasingly ineffective. As a result, more than 50 percent of the population started to live below the poverty line. The salaries and pensions ranged between €15 and €23 and €7 and €12 respectively and the government frequently failed to pay even these limited amounts. Unemployment surpassed 40 percent in the cities while the external debt amounted to more than half of the country's GDP.<sup>381</sup> All these economic problems became instrumental in increasingly mobilizing the society against the regime.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>379</sup> Zurab Tchiaberashvili, "The Georgian October Revolution", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 21 November 2001, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/162> (Lastly accessed on 19 November 2009).

<sup>380</sup> David Aprasidze, "The Bureaucratic-Patrimonial State in Georgia: Has The "Roses Revolution" Given It a New Lease of Life?", *Central Asia and the Caucasus (online)*, Vol. 1, No. 25 (2004), available at [www.ca-c.org/online/2004/journal\\_eng/.../05.apreng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2004/journal_eng/.../05.apreng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 19 April 2009).

<sup>381</sup> Martina Huber, *State-Building in Georgia: Unfinished and at Risk?* (Netherlands: Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', February 2004), p. 12.

<sup>382</sup> David Aprasidze, "The Bureaucratic-Patrimonial State in Georgia: Has The Roses Revolution Given It a New Lease of Life?", *Central Asia and the Caucasus (online)*, Vol. 1, No. 25 (2004),

As another dimension of corruption, power ministries were heavily involved in illegal activities under Shevardnadze. Giorgi Baramidze, which became the Ministry of Interior after the 'Rose Revolution', mentioned that Ministry of Interior under Shevardnadze took part in drug business, weapons smuggling, extortion and kidnapping.<sup>383</sup> One of the ministers of interior served under Shevardnadze, Narchemashvili, publicly accepted that his ministry had been involved in criminal activities in Pankisi like smuggling and upsurge.<sup>384</sup> The police became notorious for its involvement in the activities it had to control besides taking bribes.<sup>385</sup> Thus, rather than providing security, Ministry of Interior became a source of threat for Georgian society. Corruption once more became a hurdle for the provision of a basic state service like security and served to undermine the legitimacy of the ruling elite significantly ending up in protests.

Since the government could not exercise effective control over the media, the society could learn the wrongdoings of these state agencies quickly. Since the state was too weak to do this, the media spread the anti-regime sentiment easily. The Rustavi-2 crisis, partly caused by what the media publicized about dirty deals in Pankisi, illustrates this point well. In the fall of 2001, the Chechen fighters in Pankisi infiltrated into the Kodori Gorge, the only part of Abkhazia which had remained under the control of Georgia by then. From Kodori, they carried out a brief attack into Abkhazia. The Georgian Interior and Security ministries tried to hide this but foreign press together with the Georgian media unveiled the incident. It has been discussed that these two power ministries helped the Chechens to reach the region. The news about the event added to the earlier newspaper articles and television programs about corruption that police and other security organs involved in and the allegations that famous journalist Georgia Sanaia was

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available at [www.ca-c.org/online/2004/journal\\_eng/.../05.apreng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2004/journal_eng/.../05.apreng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 19 April 2009).

<sup>383</sup> Ken Stier, "Behind A Desk, Georgian Official Promises War On Corruption", *Eurasianet*, 19 December 2003 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/recaps/articles/eav121903.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 10 April 2009).

<sup>384</sup> Robert Larson, "Georgian Search for Security: An Analysis of Georgia's National Security Structures and International Cooperation", *GFSIS Occasional Paper*, No. 1(2003), p. 23.

<sup>385</sup> Charles King "Potemkin Democracy: Four Myths about Post-Soviet Georgia", *The National Interest*, No. 64 (Summer 2001), p. 101.

murdered because he had reached important information about the misdeeds of the law enforcement organs. The allegations concerning Kodori Gorge incident were too much for the Ministry of the Interior. He first threatened the journalists publicly.<sup>386</sup>

These were followed by Rustavi-2 crisis. The crisis began when officials from the Security Ministry attempted to attack the TV station on 31 October 2001, allegedly, to disclose tax evasion.<sup>387</sup> The station had been accusing the some members of ruling elite, including Shevardnadze, of corruption and other kind of abuses such as kidnapping, murder and drug trade.<sup>388</sup> State Security Minister Vakhtang Kutateladze and Minister of Internal Affairs Kakha Targamadze, prominent figures in the conservative camp of the CUG, became the main targets of the criticisms and channel provided the details of racketeering and mismanagement of state property carried out by these ministries.<sup>389</sup> Motivated by the fears that the raid constituted the beginning of a governmental campaign against free speech thousands of people poured to the streets to protest against the government.<sup>390</sup> Zurab Zhvania expressed his support for the protests and described the raid as ‘a clear act of political score-settling and political persecution’.<sup>391</sup>

While the protestors demanded the resignation of Ministers of Defense, Interior, Security and Prosecutor General, Shevardnadze sided with these

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<sup>386</sup> David Darchiashvili, Power structures in Georgia, in Power Structures, The Weak State Syndrome and Corruption in Georgia, IDEA Building Democracy in Georgia Discussion Paper 5 (May 2003) p. 15.

<sup>387</sup> “Protests Highlight the Urgent Need for Clean Government in Georgia”, *Transparency International Press Releases*, 12 November 2001, available at [http://www.transparency.org/news\\_room/latest\\_news/press\\_releases/2001/2001\\_11\\_12\\_georgia](http://www.transparency.org/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2001/2001_11_12_georgia) (Lastly accessed on 22 April 2009).

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>389</sup> Jaba Devdariani, “Protests in Georgia Expose Lack of Public Trust in Government”, *Civil Georgia*, 5 November 2001, available at [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=592](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=592) (Lastly accessed on 22 April 2009).

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>391</sup> “Free Speech Fears after Georgia TV Raid”, *BBC*, 31 October 2001, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1629517.stm> (Lastly accessed on 22 April 2009).

ministers by announcing that their removal would cause his own resignation.<sup>392</sup> As the crisis reached a deadlock, Zurab Zhvania, Speaker of the Parliament, expressed that he would resign if Shevardnadze promised to fire Interior Minister Tarmagadze. Since Tarmagadze had a central place in conservative camp, Shevardnadze opted for firing the cabinet entirely.<sup>393</sup> This move made him the only person possessing executive power in the country.<sup>394</sup> Zhvania resigned from the post of speaker of parliament to form his own party, United Democrats (UD), with 22 MP who joined him. UD became the biggest faction in the parliament with this number. Nino Burjanadze, who would join the opposition in the Summer of 2003, replaced him as Speaker of the Parliament.<sup>395</sup> It can be argued that Burjanadze was a clear winner of the Rustavi-2 crisis because with gaining the position of speaker of the parliament she was placed at the center of the Georgian politics although she had not enjoyed a prominent position before.<sup>396</sup>

As a result of the crisis, Shevardnadze lost the last remaining prominent reformer, Zhvania, in his camp. Shevardnadze proved to behave incompetently when he had to choose between the reformers and the conservatives. Although he fired the cabinet entirely, it has been clearly understood that he took the side of the conservatives. The balance he managed between the conservatives and reformers unraveled completely with this crisis. At home and abroad, it became obvious that he surrendered to the camp which wanted to restore the status quo for their self interest. This was clearly beginning of the end as the crushing defeat of the CUG in 2002 local elections would show.

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<sup>392</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Protests in Georgia Expose Lack of Public Trust in Government", *Civil Georgia*, 5 November 2001, available at [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=592](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=592) (Lastly accessed on 22 April 2009).

<sup>393</sup> Zurab Tchiaberashvili, "The Georgian October Revolution", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 21 November 2001, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/162> (Lastly accessed on 19 November 2009).

<sup>394</sup> Paul Goble, Caucasus: Analysis From Washington -- What Next in Georgia?, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2 November 2001, available at [www.rferl.org/content/article/1097885.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1097885.html) (Lastly accessed on 4 February 2009).

<sup>395</sup> Lincoln A Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 37.

<sup>396</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 61.

Rustavi-2 crisis shows that when the state fails to satisfy the needs of the society and to curb corruption, society rises against the regime. Thus, state weakness emerges as a mechanisms preparing societal mobilization.

#### **4.4. The Rise of Civil Society and the Media against the State**

This section examines the development of civil society and independent media in Georgia because of state weaknesses in various dimensions including economic limitations, ineffectiveness in monopolizing control over state territory and ensuing vulnerability to external pressures. It also pays attention to the ineffectiveness of coercive state capacity in bringing these rival forces under control.

The emergence of civil society in Georgia can be dated back to the post-Stalinist Soviet period. Despite the fact that universities and unions were under state control, they hosted embryonic elements of civil society. These elements found some opportunity to raise, albeit a very limited degree of, criticisms against the Soviet authorities thanks to the Khrushchev's attempts at developing the 'human face' of the Soviet state. These groups performed an essential role in the events of 1978, when demonstrations were organized to defend the official status of the Georgian language.<sup>397</sup>

With the lessening of repression during perestroika and glasnost these informal groups came to enjoy more freedom and influence. These groups took the lead in organizing demonstrations expressing the rising anti-Soviet and nationalist sentiments in the society. However, when radicalization of Georgian society gave way to eruption of secessionist wars and rise of paramilitary forces, Georgian civil society retreated.<sup>398</sup> Only with the neutralization of paramilitary groups, signing of ceasefires and restoration of some degree of state authority

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<sup>397</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki and Giorgi Meladze, "Enough! Kmara and the Rose Revolution in Georgia" in Joerg Forbrig and Pavol Demes (eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009), p. 105.

<sup>398</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 143.

after 1995, a suitable environment for NGO growth was established.<sup>399</sup> Since the NGO development was an important feature of window dressing necessary for receiving international aid by the Georgian state, a proliferation of NGO's were observed starting with the mid-1990s.<sup>400</sup> The weakness of Georgian economic capacity served to the flourishing of NGOs in another way. For most of the well-educated and English speaking Georgians the best option seemed to work in the Western-financed NGO sector.<sup>401</sup> Otherwise, they either faced the threat of unemployment as the most of the positions were occupied by the members of the patronage members or had to content with very low wage jobs. Whereas the salaries in the government sector were as low as \$25, they could reach to \$500-600 in the NGO sector.<sup>402</sup>

It was not only the weakness of economic capacity of Georgian state that paved the way for the emergence of a favorable environment for anti-regime forces including the NGOs as a result of Western pressures. The Georgian state was also weak in terms of monopolizing control over the territories within its borders. This weakness exaggerated the need for Western help. Shevardnadze's hopes about restoring control over the secessionist territories, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, with Western help as a counterweight against the Russia illustrates this need well.

Although Shevardnadze's expectations about these secessionist territories were not materialized, he managed to get US support when Pankisi Gorge went out of Tbilisi control and Russia threatened Georgia with intervention. Complaining that Pankisi had become a safe haven for Chechen separatists and other Islamic radicals since the first Chechen war (1994-1996), Russia forced

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<sup>399</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3(September 2005), p. 338.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> Interviews with Mariam Gabunia (Head of the Department for Foreign Trade and International Economic Relations) and Ghia Nodia (Director, Ilia Chavchavadze State University School of Caucasus Studies and the Former Ministry of Education), Tbilisi, 7 November 2008 and 22 June 2009 respectively.

<sup>402</sup> Interview with Simon Papuashvili (Human Rights Lawyer, Human Rights Center), Tbilisi, 22 June 2009.

Tbilisi to let Russian military to conduct operations in the region.<sup>403</sup> Russian anxieties over Pankisi increased as the Georgian press broadcasted news about the alliance of Georgian government with Chechen and Ingush fighters against Moscow.<sup>404</sup> Shevardnadze was against the Russian involvement and only felt relieved when US sent its military advisers to Georgia and conduct joint US-Georgian operations in the region. Thanks to US help, Shevardnadze managed to decrease Russian tensions about the Chechens in Pankisi and to shift the burden of explaining who should involve militarily in the Pankisi to Washington.<sup>405</sup>

Three legislations became especially instrumental in bringing about the strengthening of the Georgian NGOs. The first was a tax law, which was passed in 1996 due the successful lobbying of some NGOs. The law created the favorable legal environment for strengthening of the third sector in financial means by providing significant tax exemptions to the financial support that the NGOs got.<sup>406</sup> Georgia's Civil Code, which was passed in 1997, was a product of this half-hearted democratization arising from Western pressures. The Code provided for simple registration of NGOs. The courts had the right to suspend or forbid NGO activities for calling for the violent overthrow of the political regime, violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, propagating war and provoking hatred on ethnic, regional, religious, or social grounds but no such case experienced during Shevardnadze period.<sup>407</sup> The General Administrative Code, which stipulated that all information in state bodies had to be made public, proved to be another helping factor for the Georgian NGOs. Using this code, civil society

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<sup>403</sup> Ariel Cohen, "Moscow, Washington and Tbilisi Wrestle with Instability in the Pankisi Gorge," *Eurasianet*, 19 February 2002, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav021902.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 4 February 2009).

<sup>404</sup> Aleksandr Chigorin, "The Georgian Test", *International Affairs*, No. 5, Vol. 50(2004), p. 128.

<sup>405</sup> Georgi Derluguian, "Georgia's Return of the King", *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper Series*, No. 22 (February 2004). p. 13.

<sup>406</sup> Interview with Simon Papuashvili, Tbilisi, 22 June 2009.

<sup>407</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2003 Georgia Report available at [http://www.freedomhouse.org/template\\_fm?page=47&nit=206&year=2003](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template_fm?page=47&nit=206&year=2003) (Lastly accessed on 9 May 2009).



organizations and journalists revealed the misconducts of the officials and sparked public debate.<sup>408</sup>

Since the elite around Shevardnadze belonging to the Soviet tradition did not favor the participation of civil society into the political process, the emergence of the reformist elite that supported civil society became critical for the development of NGOs.<sup>409</sup> The reformist elite, which rightly regarded the NGOs as potential allies, assisted NGOs significantly. As discussed before Zhvania's support became instrumental in passing the Civil Code, which was in favor of NGOs. He also provided the election of three representatives of the NGO sector to the Parliament on the CUG list. Ardent reformist Saakashvili also played an important role in drafting the Code as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for the Constitution, Legal Issues and Legal Reform.<sup>410</sup> Another reformist, Minister of Finance Zurab Nogaideli, resisted the attempts of Shevardnadze to control internationally funded NGO activity by arguing that he was acting against democracy.<sup>411</sup>

Thanks to the permissive environment and support of the reformist wing, NGOs lobbied for promoting rule of law, human rights and freedom of information and improving legislation. Prominent among them were GYLA, the Liberty Institute and International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED).<sup>412</sup> Lacking domestic sources of funding, foreign donors were vital for the Georgian NGOs. Between 1995 and 2000, the U.S. government supplied

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<sup>408</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki and Giorgi Meladze, "Enough! *Kmara* and the Rose Revolution in Georgia" in Joerg Forbrig and Pavol Demes (eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009) p. 103.

<sup>409</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Democracy from Below? Interest Groups in Georgian Society", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1(Spring 2000), p. 47.

<sup>410</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 145.

<sup>411</sup> Ken Stier, "Finance Minister's Firing Damages Anti-Corruption Efforts in Georgia", *Eurasianet*, 6 May 2001, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav050602.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 16 April 2009)

<sup>412</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 146.

Georgia with a direct aid surpassing US\$ 700 million. The U.S. provided Georgia with civic and democracy building programs through USAID, the National Democratic Institute of International Affairs (NDI), the World Bank, the Eurasia Foundation and numerous smaller institutes like the Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS) and Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC).

The OSI was another major donor for the Georgian NGOs.<sup>413</sup> Soros first came to Georgia to help Shevardnadze in improving governance but he was angered by the president's indifference to corruption and shifted his financial aid to Georgian NGOs.<sup>414</sup> The EU also joined the US in providing credit. The EU contributed €420 million in addition to contributions from separate states directly or indirectly through NGOs.<sup>415</sup> Almost all of the civil society leaders who played important roles in the 'Rose Revolution' such as David Usupashvili from IRIS, Ghia Nodia from the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CPIDD), Zurab Tchiabarashvili from ISFED Kaha Lomania from OSI, Giga Brokeria and Levan Ramishvili from the Liberty Institute, the leadership of *Kmara*-worked for the organizations financed by the US government and U.S.-based OSI funded by George Soros.<sup>416</sup>

This foreign aid both in financial terms and in the field of training became instrumental in providing Georgian NGOs with capacity to challenge and monitor the government.<sup>417</sup> Without this help, Georgian NGO would not be able to play the roles before and during the 'Rose Revolution' because it would lack the organizational and financial capacity and the ability to resist governmental pressures.

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<sup>413</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No 1 (March 2006), p. 41.

<sup>414</sup> Interview with Archil Gegeshidze, Tbilisi, 13 November 2008.

<sup>415</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No 1 (March 2006), p. 41.

<sup>416</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 117.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.4. Loss of State Autonomy vis-à-vis Social Forces

At the beginning, the values that the NGO tried to advance did not mean much for ordinary Georgians and only a small group of elites living mainly in the capital was interested in their agenda. Therefore, it can be argued that at the beginning, the NGOs had not constituted a real bridge between state and society, representing the interests of the masses. The Georgian society in general did not pay much attention to the democratization agenda of the third sector.<sup>418</sup> The public in general was preoccupied low living standards, the ineffectiveness of the state in many areas including the control over territories and corruption. Political participation was approached with suspicion. For the people in general joining a political party or campaigning for it could only be done for personal material self-interest.

However, starting with 2001, the NGO campaigns against corruption and abuse of power by ruling elite attracted the attention of the masses and motivated them to take side with the NGOs and mobilize against the ruling elite.<sup>419</sup> The Rustavi-2 Crisis was an important case illustrating mobilization of the masses against the corruption and attempts at repression by the ruling elite. A student groups which would latter come together to form The *Kmara* youth civic organization, which would play an important role in the ‘Rose Revolution’ as will be seen, took the lead in organizing the events during the Rustavi-2 Crisis.<sup>420</sup> *Kmara* originated in 2000, when a student group formed self-government at Tbilisi State University. The group struggled for the reform of the education system, which was marked by declining standards and increasing bribery since Shevardnadze’s coming to power. With time, the group came to the conclusion that reform of the education system would not be realized unless the ruling elite was removed from power. During the protests against government’s raid against

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<sup>418</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 147.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 148.

<sup>420</sup> Dan Jakopovich, “The 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia: A Case Study in High Politics and Rank-and-File Execution”, *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 2007), p. 214.

the Rustavi-2 channel, a second student group called the Student Movement for Georgia was formed with the similar aims with the first group. The two groups were united to form *Kmara* in early 2003.

*Kmara*'s organization as a loose and decentralized network of local and regional cells made its repression difficult. It was financed by the Freedom House, the OSI, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Republican Institute (IRI), USAID, the EU and the Council of Europe.<sup>421</sup> OSI pursued a more aggressive strategy than the US government. While the US government provided money for more democratic assistance programs including civil society development, party development and coalition building, Soros funding the trips of Georgian activists to Serbia and Serbian activists to Georgia.<sup>422</sup>

Liberty Institute, GYLA and the Association for Law and Public Education (ALPE) also helped *Kmara* in other important ways. Liberty Institute performed important functions such as coordinating relations of NGOs with the opposition, providing contacts with NGOs outside the country as well as the local ones. The coming of Serbian activists to Georgia and the training of Georgian activists in Serbia were realized thanks to the network that Liberty Institute provided.<sup>423</sup> Liberty Institute also trained the activists. Levan Ramishvili informed that they were using the internet to download information on successful tactics used by NGOs all over the world; they were adapting these to the Georgian circumstances and sharing them with activists. The activists were trained on election monitoring, peaceful tactics of resistance, how to behave if they were arrested, how to communicate with the media, how to organize and how to make a rally attractive to the people.<sup>424</sup> Besides Liberty Institute, GYLA provided legal

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<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>422</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 124.

<sup>423</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki and Giorgi Meladze, "Enough! *Kmara* and the Rose Revolution in Georgia" in Joerg Forbrig and Pavol Demes (eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009), p. 106.

<sup>424</sup> Interview with Levan Ramishvili (The Founder and Director of the Liberty Institute), Tbilisi, 24 June 2009.

services for the activists, whereas ALPE involved in training and public awareness-raising activities on issues such as fair elections, police brutality and corruption.<sup>425</sup>

As a result of both the financial and organizational aid it received from outside, *Kmara*'s activities aiming at spreading anti Shevardnadze fever gained momentum. *Kmara* activist made things fun by organizing concerts and using graffiti.<sup>426</sup> These tactics were useful in mobilizing the Georgian society, which was distrustful of political participation, against the regime. By using fun activities, *Kmara* was able to attract the disinterested groups. Use of daily jokes or graffiti caused the citizens to view the government as ridiculous and this also led to increasing activism.<sup>427</sup> Furthermore, *Kmara* attracted attention the failures of the government leading to problems in everyday life by collecting money for the charities and cleaning the rubbish from the streets.<sup>428</sup> Overall, use of these tactics made the repression of the organization's activities difficult as they differed from an ordinary demonstration by sometimes taking the form of a carnival, a charity activity or simply humor.<sup>429</sup>

The freedom and influence enjoyed by alternative voices was not limited to the NGOs, the media also made use of it. The country's extensive freedom of information law was an important component of media-friendly environment. The repeal of libel from the penal code in 1999 proved to be another positive

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<sup>425</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki and Giorgi Meladze, "Enough! *Kmara* and the Rose Revolution in Georgia" in Joerg Forbrig and Pavol Demes (eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy: Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009), p. 106.

<sup>426</sup> Natalia Antelava, "How to Stage a Revolution", BBC, 4 December 2003 available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3288547.stm> (Lastly accessed on 9 September 2009).

<sup>427</sup> Nicklaus Laverty, "The Problem of Lasting Change: Civil Society and the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2008), p. 148.

<sup>428</sup> Natalia Antelava, "How to Stage a Revolution", BBC, 4 December 2003 available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3288547.stm> (Lastly accessed on 9 September 2009).

<sup>429</sup> Nicklaus Laverty, "The Problem of Lasting Change: Civil Society and the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2008), p. 148.

development.<sup>430</sup> Making use of the freedom mainly created by the international pressures on the Georgian state, many newspapers and journals critical of the government proliferated in post-independence period.<sup>431</sup> Eight independent newspapers, which controlled the 60-70 percent of the Georgian market, came together under an Association of the Free Press and struggled against the government campaigns like the 1995-96 special tax on newspapers effectively.<sup>432</sup> The Association also forced the government to sign a contract with newspaper and NGO representatives that promised police reform and more dialogue after police beatings of journalists from the Liberty Institute in September 1998.<sup>433</sup>

Despite these successes and the cooperation with the reformers and the NGOs, the press still could not have wide-ranging appeal in the country because majority of the Georgian citizens could not afford to buy newspapers and journals.<sup>434</sup> Under these conditions, TV stations as a source of information gained importance. There were mainly seven TV channels that enjoyed the capacity to shape public opinion.<sup>435</sup> These were the Channel-1, Adjara TV, Imedi TV, Mze, Iberia, TV 9 and Rustavi-2. Channel 1 was the state television favoring the government in its programs. However, it was not completely closed for the opposition views and NGOs. Adjara TV belonged to Abashidze who forced the channel only promote his political agenda. TV Imedi belonged to the richest Georgian businessman, Badri Patarkacishvili. The channel usually kept a neutral profile in the process towards the 2003 elections but regarded as a potential ally of Shevardnadze. Mze was established by the oligarchs close to Shevardnadze and

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<sup>430</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 12.

<sup>431</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Democracy from Below? Interest Groups in Georgian Society", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1(Spring 2000), p. 58.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>434</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 14.

<sup>435</sup> For these channels please see David Usupashvili, "An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004", in *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, p. 94.

expected to support Shevardnadze. Iberia belonged to a businessman and MP link with Abashidze and was under his influence. Channel 9 was established by another Georgian millionaire and tried to keep its neutrality.

Among these TV channels Rustavi-2 was the most popular one. The channel, which started as a local channel in Rustavi, developed in time to become a national channel.<sup>436</sup> It broadcasted programs like 60 minutes, which discussed the governmental corruption on the basis of the investigations carried out by the channel and the Western backed NGO's that had close links with the channel. By doing this, it widely publicized what some Georgian already knew and gossip about. It also showed that the government could and should be held accountable for its actions. Moreover, Rustavi-2 gave the reformist opposition figures like Zhvania and Saakashvili and the NGOs the opportunity to make themselves known, raise their criticism against the government and gain credibility.<sup>437</sup> Rustavi-2 would play a critical during the 'Rose Revolution' but its contributions discussed so far were no less important.

The attacks against the independent opposition media outlets and critical journalists were also intensified.<sup>438</sup> As discussed in the previous section, outspoken critic Rustavi-2 was raided by security officials to reveal alleged tax evasions. Moreover, the murder of the Rustavi-2 journalist Georgy Sanaya was regarded to be motivated by his investigations of ties between Georgian government officials and Chechen separatists.<sup>439</sup> The Liberty Institute was also affected by the reprisals against the anti-Shevardnadze forces. 15 unknown men

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<sup>436</sup> Interview with Ketu Khutishvili (Chair, George Soros Open Society Institute, Georgia), Tbilisi, 13 November 2008.

<sup>437</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 19.

<sup>438</sup> Marina Kokashvili, "The Role of the Media in Georgia's Transition to Democracy", in Eden Cole and Philipp H Fluri (eds.), *From Revolution to Reform. Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Wien: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces ,2005), p. 223.

<sup>439</sup> Freedom House, *Countries at the Crossroads 2004 Georgia Report*, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=1&ccrcountry=47&section=47&crpage=5> (Lastly accessed on 12 April 2009).

raided its office and Ramishvili was beaten up.<sup>440</sup> In addition to increasing violence against NGOs, legislation strengthening the libel provisions in the Criminal Code, extending the maximum imprisonment for libel and insult to five years was enacted.<sup>441</sup> Finally, as a reaction to the rumors that foreign aid was being used for to finance campaigns against him, Shevardnadze set out to make foreign funding that NGOs received transparent.<sup>442</sup> In April 2002 he compared the activities of NGOs with those of terrorist organizations in a public statement and urged for greater financial control of NGOs, most of which were funded by foreign donors. His warnings seemed to yield and in February 2003, the Ministry of Security prepared a draft law “On the Suspension of Activities, Liquidation and Banning of Extremist Organizations under Foreign Control ”.<sup>443</sup>

However, Shevardnadze’s attempts at curtailing NGO and media freedom proved to be futile, even counterproductive. The NGOs engaged in self-defense and resorted to the donor governments to press the Georgian government to withdraw the restrictive drafts.<sup>444</sup> As a result when Shevardnadze discussed the issue of placing strict governmental control over NGOs during his Washington visit, he received a cold reply.<sup>445</sup> In the case of the attack against the Liberty Institute mentioned above, Germany stood in defense of the NGOs and

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<sup>440</sup> Hugh Pope, “Pro-West Leaders in Georgia Push Shevardnadze out”, *Wall Street Journal*, 24 November 2003 available at [http://www.liberty.ge/geo/page.php?genre\\_id=13&section\\_id=4&news\\_id=25&from=cat\\_news](http://www.liberty.ge/geo/page.php?genre_id=13&section_id=4&news_id=25&from=cat_news) (Lastly accessed on 12 April 2009).

<sup>441</sup> Laurence Broers, “After the ‘Revolution’: Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia”, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 339.

<sup>442</sup> Civil Georgia, President’s Briefing, 27 September 2001 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=262&search=Saakashvili NGO](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=262&search=Saakashvili%20NGO) (Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>443</sup> Pamela Jawad, “Diversity, Conflict, and State Failure: Chances and Challenges for Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution”, *Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (December 2006), p. 27.

<sup>444</sup> “Government Pressure Triggers Renewed Civil Activism”, *Civil Georgia*, 26 February 2003, available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=2828> (Lastly accessed on 18 August 2009).

<sup>445</sup> Jaba Devdariani, “Civil Society Builds Terror in Shevardnadze's Mind”, *Civil Georgia*, 9 May 2002 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=1813&search=Civil Society Builds Terror in Shevardnadze's Mind](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=1813&search=Civil%20Society%20Builds%20Terror%20in%20Shevardnadze's%20Mind) (Lastly accessed on 28 April 2009).



Shevardnadze was forced to send a state minister to deliver a visit to the Institute after German ambassador visited the Institute to express support.<sup>446</sup>

As the Georgian state lacked autonomy vis-à-vis this Western powers, it was forced to withdraw the draft.<sup>447</sup> To make the matters worse, the government alarmed the NGOs with this draft and made them to strengthen their organizational capacity and solidarity. The governmental campaign against the independent media outlets that posed threats to the ruling elite did not deliver the desired results either. As seen in Rustavi-2 case the attack on the channel increased the grievances of the masses and culminated in mass protests, which were regarded by rehearsal of the 'Rose Revolution', which would take place two years latter.<sup>448</sup> The government did not use force and protests ended only after Shevardnadze dismissed the entire cabinet. The channel maintained its critical stance and raised its status in the public opinion.<sup>449</sup>

The intensive preparation for the 2003 elections by the NGOs and the media, increasing foreign financial support to them and the important roles they played during the 'Rose Revolution' are important indicators of government's inability to neutralize anti-government forces. The ISFED and the GYLA recruited approximately 2300 and 500 observers respectively, besides the observer missions provided by the International Election Observation Mission and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. ISFED was able to provide both a long-term and short-term observer mission in Adjara in 2003 parliamentary elections for the first time. As in the case of emergence of NGOs, foreign funding was vital for the provision of observation missions. While the US provided \$3 million for election activity, the rest of international community

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<sup>446</sup> Hugh Pope, "Pro-West Leaders in Georgia Push Shevardnadze out", *Wall Street Journal*, 24 November 2003 available at [http://www.liberty.ge/geo/page.php?genre\\_id=13&section\\_id=4&news\\_id=25&from=cat\\_news](http://www.liberty.ge/geo/page.php?genre_id=13&section_id=4&news_id=25&from=cat_news) (Lastly accessed on 12 April 2009).

<sup>447</sup> "Government Pressure Triggers Renewed Civil Activism", *Civil Georgia*, 26 February 2003, available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=2828> (Lastly accessed on 18 August 2009).

<sup>448</sup> Ghia Nodia, "Dynamics and Sustainability of the Rose Revolution" in Senem Aydın and Michael Emerson, *Democratisation in the European Neighbourhood* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2005), p. 43.

<sup>449</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 19.

granted \$1 million. This money was used for training domestic observers, funding exit polls and a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) that proved to be instrumental in revealing the electoral fraud and discrediting the official results.<sup>450</sup>

Therefore, external help to Georgian NGOs played a critical role in the fall of Shevardnadze but the ruling elite, an important part of which planned to engage in electoral fraud, failed to block the foreign assistance to NGOs because of inability to resist external pressures, in other words external state capacity. It seems that the external forces favoring change of ruling elite in Georgia gave high importance to election monitoring due to their conviction that the CUG had no chance to remain in power once the fair elections held and the vulnerability of Georgia eased their efforts. The aid coming to the anti regime forces were continuously shifting balance towards the challengers because while close associates of Shevardnadze had used the money coming from the US, World Bank and IMF to enrich themselves and eventually lost it as a result of their abuse, the NGO sector was using it effectively to strengthen anti-Shevardnadze movement.

As a result, the Georgian NGOs and media played critical roles both in the process leading to the 'Revolution' and during the 'Revolution'. First of all, both forces served to enhance public awareness about the failures of ruling elite. They also revealed the electoral fraud by monitoring the elections and organizing exit polls. Furthermore, media made the electoral fraud known by broadcasting the discrepancy between official results and exit polls.<sup>451</sup> NGOs and media also performed an important function by spreading the democratic values to the public through training programs, seminars, publications and TV programs.<sup>452</sup>

These two forces also became instrumental in bringing about a non-violent overthrow. The Georgian NGOs and their Western allies also had some plans to employ if the ruling elite resorted to electoral fraud to remain in power despite intensive election monitoring. The OSI provided Saakashvili and the members of

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<sup>450</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 341.

<sup>451</sup> Tina Gogheliani and Heiko Nowak, "Revolution and Civil Society: Theoretical Framework" in George Khutsishvili (ed.), *Civil Society and the Rose Revolution in Georgia* (Tbilisi: International Center on Conflict and Negotiation, 2007), p. 38.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

*Kmara* and Liberty Institute with money to go to Serbia to meet with the *Otpor* activists who played important roles in the toppling of Milosevic after the fraudulent elections in 2000. These activists received training from their Serbian counterparts in the methods and tactics of non-violent resistance like blocking of streets, painting anti-Shevardnadze slogans on public buildings<sup>453</sup> and use of humor against the ruling elite.<sup>454</sup> The importance of *Otpor* as a model to follow is illustrated by adoption of the logo of the *Otpor* by *Kmara*.<sup>455</sup>

Training in the methods of nonviolent resistance was not limited to these activists. Georgian media played a critical role in spreading this training to the masses. In ten days before the elections, Rustavi-2 Channel broadcast the documentary *Bringing Down a Dictator*, which describes how the Serbs carried out non-violent resistance to remove Milosevic, several times.<sup>456</sup> The channel also showed a documentary on Mahatma Gandhi only 6 days before the elections to communicate the message that non-violent resistance is the right from of resistance against the ruling elite.<sup>457</sup>

#### **4.5. Vulnerability of the State to External Pressures**

Shift of Western support from the government to the anti-regime forces proved to be an important factor in the success of the overthrow attempt against Shevardnadze as will be discussed. However, before moving on to explaining how and why the West gave up supporting Shevardnadze regime, it is necessary to explain why the Western support was indispensable for Shevardnadze and why he could not replace it with Russian support, as the ruling elite of some post-Soviet republics have done to remain in power. In other words, the section

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<sup>453</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 15, Number 2 (April 2004), p. 115, Stephen F. Jones, op. cit. (March 2006), p. 42.

<sup>454</sup> Hugh Pope, op. cit.

<sup>455</sup> Mark R. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of the Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions", *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2007), p. 262.

<sup>456</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 19.

<sup>457</sup> Irakli Z. Kakabadze, Inside the Revolution of Roses, *The Institute of Multi-Track Diplomacy Occasional Paper*, No. 15 (March 2005), p. 7.

first deals with the reasons behind Georgian state weakness to resist Western pressures under Shevardnadze.

Georgian weakness to resist Western pressures for regime change is rooted in the limitations of the state in many fields including economy and security as well as the problems between Tbilisi and Moscow. Besides the grievances which go back a long way in history such as Russian exploitation of Georgian help request for bringing the country under Tsarist rule, there are more recent sources of distrust like the brutal repression of popular protest in Tbilisi in 1989 by Soviet troops. It won't be an exaggeration to argue that Georgia emerged as the most independent minded of the post-Soviet republics. It was the first to leave the Soviet Union and relations between Tbilisi and Moscow have been burdened by troubles by then.<sup>458</sup>

As Lepingwell notes Georgia stands for the worst case of Russian involvement in the 'Near Abroad'.<sup>459</sup> Preserving Russian presence in Georgia became a high priority for the Russian military when it became clear that the Soviet Union would collapse. Georgian territory hosted various military bases and the Headquarters of the Transcaucasus Army Group of the Soviet Army. As a result, the military involved in destabilization of the Gamskhurdia regime, by providing training and arms to the Abkhaz and Ossetians besides supporting anti-Gamskhurdia militias eventually overthrew him in the course of the civil war at the end of 1991.<sup>460</sup>

It is necessary to emphasize that there were additional reasons behind the Russian interest in maintaining influence in Georgia. The country constitutes a bridge linking the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea and is essential for control of the Caspian energy resources and the BTC Pipeline. The country's geographic

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<sup>458</sup> Ronald. D. Asmus (ed.), *Next Steps in Forging a Euroatlantic Strategy for the Wider Black Sea* (Washington: German Marshall Fund, 2006), p. 37.

<sup>459</sup> John W. R. Lepingwell, "The Russian Military and Security Policy in the Near Abroad", *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 3(Autumn 1994), p. 75.

<sup>460</sup> Dennis Samut, "Love and Hate in Russian-Georgian Relations", *Helsinki Monitor* 2003, No. 1(2003), p.30.

location is also vital for the NATO's control of the Black Sea region and Washington's aims in the Middle East.<sup>461</sup>

These kinds of Russian pressures compelled Shevardnadze to join the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1993, which was viewed as an instrument for Russia to maintain its influence in post-Soviet space, and allow Russian military bases on Georgian soils for 25 years in 1994.<sup>462</sup>

Shevardnadze survived assassination attempts in 1995 and 1998. The timing of the first attempt was particularly meaningful as Shevardnadze was on the way to the signing of a new constitution, an important step for consolidation of authority of the state. Moreover, it was soon revealed that the person behind the attempt was the Security Minister whose appointment was desired by Moscow. The minister also enjoyed the Russian protection after the attempt. The Georgian security authorities claimed that the second assassination attempt was also masterminded by the Russians.<sup>463</sup>

The outbreak of Second Chechen War in September 1999 created additional tensions to the relations between two countries. Chechen fighters, criminals and Al Qaeda terrorists infiltrated into the Pankisi along with the refugees due to weak Georgian control over the territory. Whereas Russians demanded a free hand to eliminate the rebels, the Georgian government denied Moscow the opportunity to violate its territory fearing that it would provide the Moscow with another foothold in Georgia.<sup>464</sup>

The Russian subversive measure against Georgia would also continue in new forms in the coming years including Russian hard demands for gas and electric payments, cuts in energy supplies, unilateral delay of the agreed withdrawal of Russian troops and evacuating bases and introduction of

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<sup>461</sup> Ivars Indans, "Relations of Russia and Georgia: Developments and Future Prospects", *Baltic Security and Defence Review*, Vol. 9 (2007), p. 132.

<sup>462</sup> Alexander Rondeli, Gennady Chufrin (ed.), *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 198.

<sup>463</sup> Dennis Samut, "Love and Hate in Russian-Georgian Relations", *Helsinki Monitor*, No. 1(2003), p. 31.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

discriminatory visa regime on the country.<sup>465</sup> The Georgian public opinion would also remain to be anti-Russian as a result of the Russian intervention into Georgia and Moscow's policies in the Soviet period have been viewed as the main source of difficulties the country experienced.

Thus, the Russian pressures to the Tbilisi go to the very heart of the Georgian state by threatening its integrity, well-being and independence. As a result, Georgia has desperately needed Western help as a counterweight to its malign neighbor. In 1994, Georgia joined the NATO Partnership for Peace Program, which initiated its relations with the NATO. In the same year, Shevardnadze and other state officials visited the US and established first links with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which would be the biggest donors of the Georgian governments for the years to come.<sup>466</sup>

Given the degree of Western support and prestige that Shevardnadze had enjoyed initially, it was very difficult to predict that he would be left alone eventually. As discussed before Shevardnadze enjoyed high prestige in the West due to his roles in ending the Cold War peacefully and the unification of Germany. Latter, he strengthened this positive image due to his role in establishing a degree of stability in Georgia after the turbulent years of Gamsakhurdia. BTC Pipeline Project reinforced the importance of Shevardnadze as the symbol of stability for Georgia as stability was an important requirement for the maintenance of the project. Washington also backed Shevardnadze because he acted in line with the American interest in the foreign policy arena.<sup>467</sup> For instance, he did not hesitate to express his support for Washington after September 11 and Iraq invasion. There were also strong personal ties between the high-ranking American statesman and Shevardnadze. The Georgian president frequently referred the former Secretary of State James Baker, the Bushes and

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<sup>465</sup> Pavel Baev, "Russia Refocuses its Policies in the Southern Caucasus", *Harvard University Caspian Studies Program Working Paper Series*, No. 1(July 2001), p. 9.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>467</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 345.

other important American officials as his friends. This also served as a source of support for Shevardnadze in the US.<sup>468</sup>

Shevardnadze also managed to maintain the Western support for him until the beginning of 2000s by painting a picture of flourishing democracy in Georgia. As discussed before, Shevardnadze let the development of free media and vibrant civil society. Moreover, he also provided the reformers with important positions in the parliament and appointed them to ministerial positions after 1999 parliamentary election as a result of mounting domestic and international discontent. As result of these developments, he managed to attract foreign financial help to his government. The first financial aid came from IMF and the World Bank, which provided Georgia with \$206 million. This was followed by Germany, which granted DM 50 million.<sup>469</sup> By 1997 the foreign grants and credits came to constitute 57 percent of the state budget.<sup>470</sup> Georgia became the largest per capita recipient of US aid in the world after Israel. It received approximately \$778 million between 1992-2000, which is about five times more than what Azerbaijan received, although Azerbaijan has five times larger population than Georgia.<sup>471</sup>

Among other Western powers, US involvement in Georgia has been massive. Since the US financial had been discussed before, it is also necessary to add that being unable to resist the pressures of Russia on its own as a weak state, Georgia has always needed the US as a counterweight to its large and malignant neighbor. The importance of the US in this respect becomes more apparent when one considers the help of Us to Georgia during Pankisi Gorge crisis discussed above. In response to Tbilisi's request for assistance in improving Georgian counter terrorism capabilities, Washington initiated the Georgia Train and Equip

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<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>469</sup> It can be argued that Shevardnadze contribution to the fall of Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany played a role in motivating Germany to grant aid to Germany. This once more shows that Shevardnadze's reputation was instrumental in ensuring the money Georgia needed.

<sup>470</sup> Barbara Christophe, "Understanding Politics in Georgia" *DEMSTAR Research Report*, No. 22 (November 2004), p. 10.

<sup>471</sup> Dan Jakopovich, "The 2003 "Rose Revolution" in Georgia: A Case Study in High Politics and Rank-and-File Execution", *Debate: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 2007), p. 213.

Program. Within the framework of this program, Georgia was provided with \$64 million military aid and Georgian army was strengthened though the establishment anti-terrorist force of 2,000 troops with US help.<sup>472</sup> This was an important relief for Georgia at that as Tbilisi wanted to prevent Russian infiltration into the region but too weak to solve the problem on its own. Thus, although the US has not always satisfied the expectations of Georgia, significant degree of the US involvement and Georgian need for the US help provided this state with leverage to influence while it made Georgia vulnerable to the US pressures.

#### **4.6. Suspension of Western Support to Shevardnadze**

The Western support to Shevardnadze continued as long as he managed to keep the balance between the reformers and conservatives, masked the corruption and acted in the interest of the West. However, as he sided with the conservatives against the reformers and revealed his preference with the Rustavi-2 crisis, the legitimacy of Shevardnadze for the West weakened significantly. The reformers' departure of the government and Shevardnadze's increasing reliance on corrupt faction remaining in the CUG put the regime's ability to strengthen Georgian state into serious doubt. Despite the amount of financial aid given to Georgia and increasing foreign investment flow to the country thanks to BTC, the economic development remained unsatisfactory as this money went to the pockets of the Shevardnadze's corrupt clique and Georgia ranked behind all CIS countries on the Transparency International Corruption Rating.<sup>473</sup> The raid against Western-funded NGOs increased the discontent towards Shevardnadze and led to intensification of efforts to weaken the chances for CUG's ensuring parliamentary majority in the forthcoming elections. The raid against the Liberty Institute, which was mentioned in the previous section, is a case in the point. After the incident, Soros stated that:

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<sup>472</sup> Eric A. Miller, "Smelling the Roses: Eduard Shevardnadze's End and Georgia's Future", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 2 ( March/April 2004), p. 13.

<sup>473</sup> Mark Ames, "How and Why Shevardnadze Feels Betrayed by US: Georgia in the Crunch", *The eXile - Moscow-Based Alternative Newspaper*, 20 November 2003, available at <http://www.rense.com/general45/bet.htm> (Lastly accessed on 17 October 2009).



It is necessary to mobilize civil society in order to assure free and fair elections because there are many forces that are determined to falsify or to prevent the elections being free and fair. This is what we did in Slovakia at the time of Meciar, in Croatia at the time of Tadjman and in Yugoslavia at the time of Milosevic.<sup>474</sup>

Meanwhile, starting with 2001 Zhvania and Saakashvili started a campaign to undermine the prestige of Shevardnadze internationally although they were still working with Shevardnadze at home.<sup>475</sup> Realizing that Shevardnadze's positive image in the West undermined their chances of coming to power, they set out to show the West that Shevardnadze's rule was detrimental to Georgian development and Western interest. Within the framework of anti-Shevardnadze campaign, Washington Post published an article by Peter Baker titled "A Hero to the West, a Villain at Home" which included several quotations from a close associate of Saakashvili, Vano Merabishvili. In these quotations, Merabishvili mentioned that Shevardnadze is heavily involved in corruption and against reform. He also underlined that the President is very tired and incapable of continue his job.<sup>476</sup>

Following this, American professor Charles King wrote an article titled as "Potemkin Democracy: Four Myths about Post-Soviet Georgia" in National Interest. The article drew attention to the fraud in 1999 and 2000 elections and the problematic nature of American aid to Georgia due to misappropriation of the funds by the ruling elite. He also emphasized that although Shevardnadze appointed the reformers to the ministerial positions, ministries with real power like the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of State Security and Ministry of State Property remained in the hands of conservatives.<sup>477</sup> While making the research for the article, he mainly interviewed with the English speaking elite in Tbilisi

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<sup>474</sup> Mark MacKinnon, "Foreign Press about Georgia, Georgian Revolt Carried the Mark of Soros, *The Globe and Mail*, 27 November 2003 available at <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1029727/posts> (Lastly accessed on 30 January 2009).

<sup>475</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 58.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>477</sup> Charles King, "Potemkin Democracy: Four Myths about Post-Soviet Georgia", *The National Interest*, No. 64 (Summer 2001), p. 97.

which conditioned his understanding and presentation of Georgian politics.<sup>478</sup> With their pro-Western image, good language skills and familiarity with democratic jargon, these elites were able to communicate the message that they were pushing for the reforms which would serve the interests of Georgia and that Shevardnadze and his close associates were responsible for the defeat of their attempts.<sup>479</sup>

It was also in this atmosphere that Soros met Saakashvili in 2000 and praised his efforts at curbing corruption as the Justice Minister. Thus, while the relations between Soros and Shevardnadze were deteriorating leading to the President's denouncing of Soros' activity in Georgia as interference in internal affairs, the ties between the reformers like Saakashvili and Soros, whose name is heavily associated with 'color revolutions' in post-Soviet space, were strengthening.<sup>480</sup> Although Shevardnadze sensed the threat that Soros posed for the survival of his rule, he could not stave off this danger because of the vulnerability of Georgia to external pressures, i.e. the weakness of Georgian state.

The failure to improve state effectiveness despite foreign aid and the anti-Shevardnadze campaign of the reformers led the donors of Georgia, especially the US, to attribute the weakness of Georgian state not to the particular problems that this state faced like transition from planned to market economy, meddling of Russia and eruption of secessionist conflicts but to the poor performance of Shevardnadze and his close associates which were preoccupied with enriching themselves.<sup>481</sup> Corruption increasingly came to shape their ideas of the country and its ruling elite. The states that have high stakes in the BTC project like the US needed to ensure the stability of the country by getting a clear answer to who

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<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>479</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 50.

<sup>480</sup> Mark Mackinnon, "Foreign Press about Georgia, Georgia Revolt Carried the Mark of Soros, From Wednesday's London Globe and Mail", *Georgian Times*, 27 November 2003.

<sup>481</sup> Bruno Coppieters, "Locating Georgian Security" in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold (eds.), *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 341.

would succeed Shevardnadze for the security of the pipeline.<sup>482</sup> Shevardnadze, already 75 years old, was no longer associated with stability but with rampant corruption which were detrimental to the development and stability of the country. Western states needed a new pro-Western leader determined to strengthen Georgian state and provide stability. Thus, while supporting Saakashvili the West was mainly concerned with stability rather than democratic change.<sup>483</sup>

This provides the perspective to understand the efforts of multinational organizations (UNDP, the OSCE, the EU and the Council of Europe), foreign governments (the USA, Germany and the Netherlands) and the private foundations like the OSI before and during the 'Revolution'.<sup>484</sup> The West wanted to see the pro-Western reformist elements in the Georgian opposition to gain influence in the Parliament at the expense of ruling conservatives in the forthcoming elections. Western capitals was aware of the fact that the ruling party would face a defeat in a fair election given the dramatic decline in his popularity last years, mass protests against him and the high degree of supports towards the opposition in 2002 local elections. Therefore, the West spent intensive effort to deter the ruling elite from fraud by fielding crowded election observer teams, organizing exit polls and PVTs.<sup>485</sup>

High-level US government officials and politicians visited Georgia several times in election preparation process to bring about free and fair elections.<sup>486</sup> For example, former State Secretary James Baker tried to create a non-partisan

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<sup>482</sup> Barbara Christophe, "Understanding Politics in Georgia", *DEMSTAR Research Report*, No. 22 (November 2004), p. 28.

<sup>483</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, "Georgia's Rose Revolution: a Participant's Perspective", *U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report*, No. 16 7(2006), p. 18.

<sup>484</sup> David Usupashvili, "An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004", in International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: IDEA, 2004), p. 96.

<sup>485</sup> Corry Welt, "Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers*, No. 67 (September 2006), p. 35-39.

<sup>486</sup> David Usupashvili, "An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004", in International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: IDEA, 2004), p. 96.

Central Election Commission (CEC) by formulating a ten-point plan.<sup>487</sup> Then President George W. Bush sent a letter to Shevardnadze in which he urged his Georgian counterpart to provide the opportunity for the younger generation to come to power.<sup>488</sup> OSCE mission to Georgia involved in the process of selection of the chairperson of the CEC.<sup>489</sup>

However, the West also prepared for the election fraud even in the case of high degree monitoring. Given the instability and violence following the removal of Gamsakhurdia, the West tried to preempt violence and instability by training the activists in the tactics of non-violence. This explains the organizations of trips to Serbia by SOROS organization and the broadcasting of documentaries emphasize non-violent resistance.

In the light of this background, it is also easier to appreciate the meaning of appointment of Miles as US ambassador to Georgia.<sup>490</sup> He had served as the chief of mission (effectively ambassador) to Yugoslavia between 1996 and 1999, in a period leading towards Milosevic's removal from power. During his term, he forged close contacts with Serbian opposition and after he left the country Milosevic was ousted by American-supported opposition in 2000 after the flawed elections leading to mass protests. This time he was in Georgia to manage a nonviolent transfer of power from Shevardnadze to the younger reformers.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Corry Welt, "Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers*, No. 67(September 2006), p. 37.

<sup>488</sup> Ivlian Haindrava, "Georgia: Through Elections to the 'Rose Revolution' ", in International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: IDEA, 2004), p. 106.

<sup>489</sup> David Usupashvili, "An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004", in International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: IDEA, 2004), p. 96.

<sup>490</sup> Mark Ames, op. cit. and Dan Jakopovich, "The 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia: A Case Study in High Politics and Rank and File Execution", *Debatte*, Vol. 15, No 2 (August 2007), p.214.

<sup>491</sup> Dragan Plavsic, "Manufactured Revolutions?", *International Socialism: A Quarterly Journal of Revolutionary Socialism*, Issue 107(27 June 2007), available at <http://www.isj.org.uk/index.php4?id=122issue=107>(Lastly accessed on 2 January 2009).

Miles provide further support for his mission in Georgia in his Senate confirmation hearings in Washington:

President Shevardnadze will retire in 2005. As you well know, three years is the blink of an eye in the world of politics. A top priority of U.S. policy on Georgia during this critical period will be to help Georgian political leaders and Georgian society to prepare for a peaceful and democratic transition of power in 2005.<sup>492</sup>

The energy deals with Russia a few months before the 2003 elections added to the Western concerns about the Shevardnadze government. In late July, it was discovered that the government had signed a secret agreement with Gazprom, Russia's state owned gas company, on 1 July. Following this, it has been declared that Unified Energy Systems Nordic, the Russian electricity group, had obtained 75 per cent of the shares of the Tbilisi electricity generator, Telasi.<sup>493</sup> With these agreements, Russia secured its role as the supplier and distributor of gas to Georgia for the next 25 years and gained a dominant position in the electricity market.<sup>494</sup>

The US was quick to express its uneasiness about the agreements. Although Washington regretted that the American electricity company was replaced by a Russian one, it was more anxious about the Gazprom deal. The US government's concerns centered on the potential impact of the gas agreement on Shah Deniz gas pipeline project which would transport Azeri gas to Turkey via Georgia. Washington emphasized that support for any alternative gas pipeline would be destructive for Shah Deniz and urged the Shevardnadze government do nothing that would weaken the potential of East-West energy corridor. To stave off the tension, Shevardnadze stressed that the agreement would not harm its west corridor but the concerns raised that the pipelines running from Russia to Adjara, which Gazprom undertook to renew according to the agreement, could be

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<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>493</sup> Dima bit-Suleiman, "Georgia: Russian Hands on the Switches", *Transitions Online*, 11 August 2003 available at <http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=e8897da5-ccc4-11d7-91f3-0b4a60532&articleId=e8897dab-ccc4-11d7-91f3-0000b4a60532> (Lastly accessed on 2 January 2009).

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*

extended to Turkey to rival Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline.<sup>495</sup> The opposition criticized the government bitterly as in the case of corruption by arguing that Russia would use these agreements to restore its control on Georgia and the agendas of the Western powers and the opposition coincided once more. Moreover, these agreements revealed the unreliability of Shevardnadze as a strategic partner.<sup>496</sup>

When the inability of the Shevardnadze government was combined with the rapprochement with Russia, the Western states and institutions wasted no time for suspending their financial aid to the government and increase their support to the opposition, which frequently attacked government due to corruption. A USAID report, (Foreign Aid in the National Interest: Promoting Freedom, Security and Opportunity), which was released in January 2003, was a harbinger of aid cut to the government in the future . In the report it was stated that development programs would be no longer channeled towards easing human misery but would be devoted to “encouraging democratic reforms”.<sup>497</sup>

The World Bank was the first to suspend its financial aid to Georgian government. In the summer of 2003 it suspended its social and energy-industry programs citing concerns over corruption.<sup>498</sup> This was followed by the European Union. On 23 September 2003, in Georgia Country Strategy Paper the European Commission underlined that more than ten years of EU assistance to Georgia did not create the expected results and Georgian government was not committed to reform. The commission declared that hereafter assistance would be provided ‘only if and insofar’ as the Georgian government assumed convincing reform measures.<sup>499</sup> Only one day latter, US State Department stated that it would make a

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<sup>495</sup> Dan Jakopovich, “The 2003 “Rose Revolution” in Georgia: A Case Study in High Politics and Rank-and-File Execution”, *Debatte: Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 2007), p. 214.

<sup>497</sup> Jacob Levich, “When NGOs Attack: Implications of the Coup in Georgia”, *Counter Punch*, 7/6 December 2003 available at <http://www.counterpunch.org/levich12062003.html> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

<sup>498</sup> Varlam Tchkuaseli, “West Piles Pressures on Georgia Ahead of Elections”, *Eurasianet*, 19 October 2003. <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp101903.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 18 April 2009).

<sup>499</sup> European Commission, *Georgia Country Strategy Paper, 2003–2006* (Brussels: European Commission, 23 September 2003),p .3.

high but undetermined aid cut to Georgia. The only detail provided by the US decision was that Washington would suspend \$34 million to be used for renovating hydroelectric and other energy-related projects. This led some observers to conclude that this cut was a response to the Shevardnadze government's deal with Russian electricity company.<sup>500</sup> It has been argued that Shevardnadze and the small clan around him decided that it was in their interest to sell the shares of the electricity company to the Russians to gain more money however this proved to be counter-productive for their survival. The energy deals led the American to think that they were losing Georgia to the Russians and to increase their support towards the pro-Western Georgian opposition who sharply criticized the energy deals with the Russians.<sup>501</sup> After the US, the IMF also announced that it would suspend its programs in Georgia as a response to government's failure to curb corruption.<sup>502</sup> Since withdrawal of the international support for Shevardnadze occurred shortly before the elections and as the corruption was cited as the main reason, the position of pro-presidential block weakened significantly in comparison with the reformist opposition as they had been frequently attacking the government due to corruption.

#### 4.7. Conclusion

This chapter examined the dynamics that prepared the end of Shevardnadze regime. It showed that Shevardnadze failed to obstruct the rise of anti-regime forces in the society due to state weakness. As Shevardnadze provided a small group around him with power over state resources without establishing control over them, state revenues contracted considerably and the regime failed to meet even basic needs of the citizens. As a result, the society was mobilized

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<sup>500</sup> Natalia Antelava, "United States Cuts Development Aid to Georgia", *Eurasianet*, 29 September 2003, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav092903.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 17 April 2009).

<sup>501</sup> Mark Ames, "How and Why Shevardnadze Feels Betrayed by US: Georgia In The Crunch", *The eXile - Moscow-Based Alternative Newspaper*, 20 November 2003, available at <http://www.rense.com/general45/bet.htm> (Lastly accessed on 17 October 2009).

<sup>502</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 335.

against the regime and Shevardnadze could not effectively repress the anti-regime mobilization before it had reached the level leading to the 'Rose Revolution' due to weakness of the coercive apparatus and vulnerability to external pressures. Seeing that external aid served nothing more than feeding the small group around Shevardnadze and the corruption reached an extent threatening the viability of the Georgian state, Western community suspended its assistance to the Shevardnadze leadership.

While cutting aid, the West was basically interested in the stability rather than the democratization of Georgia in contrast to the assumptions of the external perspectives on democratization. Instability of the country, which would be caused by poor management of Shevardnadze, would strengthen the hand of Russia in the region and put the BTC pipeline in danger. Therefore, the West forged relations with anti-regime forces in the country in an attempt to provide a relatively smooth transition to post-Shevardnadze era.

Shevardnadze realized that the Western help to these forces would undermine the regime stability but he could not block it because the state lacked the autonomy vis-à-vis Western powers. As a result, while the anti-regime forces significantly grew in power at the expense of the ruling elite thanks to external financial assistance, the state was deprived of external aid.

Having provided the context in which the removal of Shevardnadze took place in this way, the next section will examine the events that are called as the 'Rose Revolution' by putting these events in the context provided here.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE 'ROSE REVOLUTION'

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore how the dynamics discussed in the previous chapter created the 'Rose Revolution' and served to the success of the overthrow attempt. To this end, firstly, the political environment immediately before the elections will be discussed by devoting special attention to electoral violations and fraud. Secondly, the 22-day protests leading to the resignation of Shevardnadze will be examined. Afterwards, the reasons behind the success of the 'Rose Revolution' will be discussed with an emphasis on the reasons preparing for the helplessness of Shevardnadze against his challengers. It will be showed that since the Georgia state lack capacity and autonomy vis-à-vis the domestic and external political actors at the time of the protests, Shevardnadze had to resign. While doing this, other explanations focusing on the strength of the protests, defection in the armed forces, opposition unity and media will be revisited. Lastly, the presidential and parliamentary elections following the 'Rose Revolution', which provided Saakashvili and the UNM with dominance over political life of the country, will be explored.

#### 5.2. The Pre-Election Political Atmosphere: Political Parties and Major Lines of Disagreements

As the 2003 parliamentary elections approached, it was obvious that the country was entering into a critical turning point. Since Shevardnadze had declared that he would not attempt to run for presidency in forthcoming 2005 elections, these elections would show which political party would put forward the strongest presidential candidate in 2005.<sup>503</sup> The anti-regime forces attributed special importance to the elections. They were anxious that the elections would be

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<sup>503</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 44.

marked with fraud to deliver a victory for the CUG. They feared that Shevardnadze would use these elections to prepare his successor for power by creating an illusionary success for the ruling party in the elections.<sup>504</sup> Before the 'Rose Revolution', these forces could not anticipate that the protests would result in the removal of Shevardnadze from power since they were parliamentary rather than presidential elections. Anti-regime forces had considered the protests a preparation for the coming 2005 presidential elections. After the 'Revolution', a key activist, Levan Ramishvili pointed out that, for them, 'Revolution' was accidental not planned.<sup>505</sup>

Alarmed by the defections and results of local elections discussed in the previous chapter, the ruling party engaged in rebuilding its power-base to ensure survival before the 2 November 2003 parliamentary elections. Deprived of many of its former allies due to the splits, the CUG came to rely on only two groups: old Soviet nomenclatura still serving in the party and younger powerbrokers in the regions enriching themselves by abusing their positions in local government. Both groups were tied to the CUG apparatus through the patronage networks Shevardnadze entrenched after returning to power in 1992.

Being aware of the fact that it cannot stand on its own, the CUG also choose to make alliances with some opposition parties under the name of For a New Georgia (FNG). These parties cannot be deemed genuine opposition, as they were loyal to Shevardnadze in reality.<sup>506</sup> Besides the CUG, the election block FNG included the Citizens' Union of Georgia (led by State Minister Avtandil Jorbenadze), Socialists Party (led by Vakhtang Rcheulishvili), National-Democratic Party (led by Irina Sarishvili-Chanturia), Green Party of Georgia (led by Giorgi Gachechiladze), Christian-Democratic Union (led by former State Minister Vazha Lortkipanidze), Abkhazia's Liberation Party (led by head of Abkhaz government-in-exile Tamaz Nadareishvili), Strong Regions-Strong

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<sup>504</sup> Interview with Levan Ramishvili, Tbilisi, 26 June 2009.

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>506</sup> Cory Welt, "Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers*, No. 67 (September 2006), p. 9.

Georgia (led by businessman Merab Samadashvili), Transporters' Hall (led by Omekhi Darjania) and Georgia in First Place-Language, Motherland, Religion (led by Guram Sharadze).<sup>507</sup>

The coalition partners of the CUG had a very low profile for the Georgian people, as they were highly associated with corruption rather than any success to count on. Commenting on the CUG's coalition partners Nino Burjanadze declared that

He gathered around him people, who were corrupt, people who had no authority among Georgians, people who were hated by Georgians. It was really unbelievable how President Shevardnadze could surround himself with such people, but it was his choice I absolutely can't explain it.<sup>508</sup>

Shevardnadze came to ally with these discredited political groups because these were only parties that had an interest in the preservation of the status quo. The remaining parties distanced themselves from Shevardnadze because they believed that their political future would be harmed if they sided with Shevardnadze and it had much more brighter changes outside his camp. Shevardnadze did not have much to offer to keep them with him and they were not willing to contend with what he could provide. Moreover, he did not employ the coercive state capacity to punish the defectors to set examples for the potential ones and these also served to the emergence of increasing rifts in the ruling elite.

All Shevardnadze did was to use financial and human resources of the state, however limited they are, in favor of the FNG Block in the election campaign. This took a number of forms.<sup>509</sup> Local government offices were used

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<sup>507</sup> Hans Dieset, Georgia: Parliamentary Elections November 2003, *the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights Report*, No.7 (2004), p. 3.

<sup>508</sup> Nino Burjanadze quoted in Zurab Karumidze and James V. Wertsch, "Enough!": *The Rose Revolution in The Republic of Georgia, 2003* (New York: Nova Science, 2005), p. 45.

<sup>509</sup> For the different ways that the state capacity is used by the FNG Block please see Broers Laurence and Broxup Julian, Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections, *The London Information Networks on Conflicts and State Report*, January 2004, available at <http://www.links-london.org/pdf/Crisis%20and%20Renewal%20in%20Georgian%20Politics%20-20Jan%202004.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 10 January 2009).

as the campaign headquarters. In violation of the law, regional governors functioned as campaign managers. The mass mobilization of police personnel to vote in close-run majoritarian constituencies rather than their constituencies of residence was also observed. As for the use of economic state capacity, increased transfers from the central budget to the majoritarian constituencies where FNG was fielding candidates were observed. Moreover, the government also devoted more resources to finance social security payments and basic state services such as electricity and road maintenance in regions where FNG was fielding candidates.<sup>510</sup> However, the efforts to provide basic state services regularly just before the elections were hardly sufficient as the citizens were quite angry with the government, which used the already limited economic capacity of state to self-enrichment rather than satisfying citizen need. Being aware of this discontent in the society, ruling elite resorted to election fraud in order to make up for the low degree of support for them and remain in power as will be discussed.

For a New Georgia Block was opposed by four election blocks, some of which had emerged as a result of splitting of the CUG, and two parties, the Labor Party of Georgia and Democratic Union of Revival Party. The four blocks were the National Movement Block, the Burjanadze-Democrats Block, the New Rights Block and The Industry Will Save Georgia Block.<sup>511</sup> Before 2003 elections there were only two significant forces competing in the elections, the CUG and the Revival. Revival could hardly be regarded as an alternative to the CUG as its tendency to support the CUG after Abashidze's behind-the-scenes agreements with Shevardnadze. However, this situation changed dramatically as a result of breaking apart of the CUG and the rise of real challengers in 2003 elections. Some of the opposition blocks included politicians who gained experience in running the country by involving in both legislative and executive activity. Moreover, they

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze, "Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New", in Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (ed.), *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Vienna and Geneva: Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defense and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), pp. 202-203.

gained reputation as new generation politicians, in contrast with the corrupted former Soviet nomenclatura still in power, with pro-Western orientation.<sup>512</sup> As a result, before the elections both the Georgian public opinion and the West knew that there were new alternatives to replace Shevardnadze.

The opposition parties failed to oppose the “For a New Georgia” as a single united opposition block mainly due to the problems and rivalries among the leaders of the main opposition political parties. The leaders such as Saakashvili, Zhvania, Gamkrelidze and Burjanadze were too ambitious to be willing to struggle under the framework of a unified opposition block. Some opposition leaders aspired to become president in elections to be held in 2005 and they saw each other as rivals rather than partners. Some of the opposition leaders had worked together in the CUG, which had been the scene of political intrigues. Therefore, their experience of working together in the CUG harmed the trust among these leaders. Leaders such as Saakashvili furthermore did not want to ally with Zhvania’s Party as he aimed to keep the image of his party completely clean, in contrast to Zhvania who had been accused of dirty political actions including the falsification of previous elections.<sup>513</sup>

Saakashvili’s UNM constituted the main component of the National Movement Block (NMB). Besides Saakashvili’s party the block also included Union of National Forces of Georgia, which was formed by supporters of former president Zviad Gamsakhurdia under the leadership of Zviad Dzidziguri and Davit Berdzenishvili’s Republican Party.<sup>514</sup>

Mikheil Saakashvili was the leader of the party and during the ‘Rose Revolution’ he would emerge as the leader of the opposition and his steps as the leader of the opposition would prove to be decisive for the success for the overthrow attempt. Compared to Zhvania and Gamkrelidze, the two other party

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<sup>512</sup> Ivlian Haindrava, “Georgia: Through Elections to the ‘Rose Revolution’ ”, in *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), 2004), p. 107.

<sup>513</sup> David Usupashvili, “An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004”, in *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, 2004), p. 84.

<sup>514</sup> Hans Dieset, Georgia: Parliamentary Elections November 2003, *the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights Report*, No. 7 (2004), p. 3.

leaders broken from the CUG, Saakashvili enjoyed the widest appeal to the poor and rural electorate, which constitutes the majority of the Georgian voters.<sup>515</sup> New Rights Party of Gamkrelidze enjoyed little support among this electorate due to its dubious relationship with Shevardnadze and connections with rich business community. Zhvania's popularity was also limited to a narrow part of the population, Tbilisi electorate. Saakashvili's rigorous election campaign added to this popularity as he and other NMB leaders travelled across the whole country and met with different segments of the society to convey their message.<sup>516</sup> The NMB's election campaign covered the regions where opposition activity were met with harsher reaction than the rest of Georgia such as the Autonomous Republic of Adjara and the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. On 26 September, Saakashvili's visit to Bolnisi, which is in Kvemo Kartli, led to fighting between the supporters of NMB and FNG. On 23 October National Movement rally in Batumi was widely dispersed and the party's offices were raided. The next day, the candidate of the NMB was seriously beaten up by Abashidze's supporters in front of the television cameras.<sup>517</sup> All these events boosted the image of NMB as a real opposition block since it showed its determination to carry out its election campaign in the face of use of force against it.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 51.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>517</sup> "Opposition Bloc Leader was Brutally Beaten", *Caucasian Knot*, 27 October 2003 available at [http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/search?category\\_id=4&pg=2&region\\_id=25](http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/search?category_id=4&pg=2&region_id=25) (Lastly accessed on 8 April 2009).

<sup>518</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 182.

The New Rights Block was another election block that consisted of New Rights, which was led by Davit Gamkrelidze and the Neo-Liberal Party under the leadership of Revaz Shashvishvili and Vakhtang Khmaladze. The latter party joined the New Rights to form the block on 5 September 2003 after consultations over unification with Burjanadze-Democrats election block failed.<sup>526</sup> The party had an important economic power since it was led by two of the leading Georgian businessmen: David Gamkrelidze, the head and founder of insurance giant Aldagi, and Levan Gachechiladze, the head of a flourishing export company of Georgian wine and spirits.<sup>527</sup>

The Industry Will Save Georgia Block comprised the political movement Industry Will Save Georgia Party of Gogi Topadze, and Sportive Georgia, led by Roman Rurua.<sup>528</sup> As argued the block emerged because of a disagreement between Zhvania and Topadze and it had a 14-member faction in the parliament

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<sup>519</sup> Hans Dieset, Georgia: Parliamentary Elections November 2003, *the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights Report*, No.7 (2004), p. 4.

<sup>520</sup> Johanna Petersson, "Interview with Georgian Acting President Nino Burjanadze", *Central Asia and Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 3 December 2003, available at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/1694> (Lastly accessed on 8 April 2009).

<sup>521</sup> Q&A with Nino Burjanadze, *Civil Georgia*, 22 July 2003, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=4615&search=Q&A with Nino Burjanadze](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=4615&search=Q&A%20with%20Nino%20Burjanadze) (Lastly accessed on 8 April 2009).

<sup>522</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia: What Now", *Europe Report*, No. 151 (3 December 2003), p. 7.

<sup>523</sup> Dimitri bit-Suleiman, "Georgia: Russian Hands on the Switches", *Transitions Online*, 11 August 2003 available at <http://www.cceol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=e8897da5-ccc4-11d7-91f3-0b4a60532&articleId=e8897dab-ccc4-11d7-91f3-0000b4a60532> (Lastly accessed on 2 January 2009).

<sup>524</sup> International Crisis Group, *Georgia: What Now*, Europe Report, No: 151(3 December 2003), p. 7.

<sup>525</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 52.

<sup>526</sup> "Two Opposition Parties Unite", *Civil Georgia*, 5 September 2003, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=4886&search=Two Opposition Parties Unite](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=4886&search=Two%20Opposition%20Parties%20Unite) (Lastly accessed on 5 April 2009).

<sup>527</sup> Hans Dieset, Georgia: Parliamentary Elections November 2003, *the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights Report*, No. 7 (2004), p. 5.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

before the 2003 elections. The block was not considered a real opposition block since it always acted with the CUG. The party had an interest in the preservation of status quo as the chairman of the party and his close associates controlled one of the country's few big businesses, the beer producing. This played a role in motivating the party's alliance with the government against the opposition's proposals and lack of willingness to participate in anti-regime protest.

Democratic Revival Party was another dubious opposition party since its leader had a record of making secret deals with Shevardnadze in the elections. Although Adjara constituted the power base of the party and its popularity was quite low in the rest of the country, Revival became able to win seats in the parliament at each parliamentary election since 1995 by taking 95 percent of the votes in Adjara and clearing the 7 per cent barrier in this way. Since this percentage is quite high, it was widely suspected that the elections in Adjara were free and fair. Abashidze centered his election campaign on his success at saving Adjara from the civil wars and economic collapse that rest of Georgia experienced. The Revival Union had quite tense relations with other opposition parties, especially with Mikheil Saakashvili's National Movement and the Burjanadze-Democrats election alliance. They accused the Revival Union, together with the For a New Georgia, for blocking the composition of CEC on parity basis. The problems would deepen in the course of the 'Rose Revolution'.<sup>529</sup>

The Labor Party of Georgia, a socialist party, competed in the election on its own, without allying itself other parties to form an election block. In the parliamentary elections of 1999, it failed to pass the 7 percent threshold only by a narrow margin. It has fiercely criticized the CUG's failure to solve economic and social problems of the country, it increased its votes as the continued economic hardship motivated the people to vote for the leftist parties.<sup>530</sup> By branding the

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<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>530</sup> Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze, "Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New", in Philipp H. Fluri and Eden Cole (ed.), *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform* (Vienna and Geneva: Bureau for Security Policy at the Austrian Ministry of Defense and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), p. 205.



parties founded by Saakashvili, Zhvania and Burjanadze as the “new CUG”, Natalashvili refused to consider them as real opposition and emphasized that his party had never been the part of the CUG and corruption associated with this party. However, the party’s strength was downplayed by the fact that Natelashvili brought in some former Communist Party leaders that were largely unpopular with the Georgian public. Furthermore, Natelashvili did not have any appeal to the West as he did not even speak English and lacked the contact that the other opposition leaders enjoyed.<sup>531</sup>

The tactical errors during the ‘Rose Revolution’ undermined the position of the Labor, although it came the second in 2002 local elections. Together with the New Right, Labor Party refused to participate in the protests and showed its willingness to come to terms with Shevardnadze. These steps harmed the popularity of these two political forces seriously and both lost an important share of their electorate. As a result, whereas Labor could not pass 7 per cent threshold in 28 March 2004 parliamentary elections, the New Right together with Industry Will Save Georgia barely passed it.<sup>532</sup> Having introduced the main parties and election blocks in this way, the remainder of the section will deal with the main bones of contention among them before the election.

Since the 1999 parliamentary and 2000 presidential elections were marked by considerable election fraud and falsification which helped the Shevardnadze team to remain in power, Georgian opposition and international actors focused on the preparation of a new electoral code for the November 2003 parliamentary elections as early as the end of 2002 in an attempt to prevent reoccurrence of fraud.<sup>533</sup> Thus, the Georgian opposition parties were faced with a dual challenge: ensuring the fairness of the elections and winning them. As increasing the votes

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<sup>531</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 49.

<sup>532</sup> Ivlian Haindrava, “Georgia: Through Elections to the Rose Revolution”, in *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), 2004), p. 107 and Valerian Dolidze, “Political Parties and Party Development in Georgia” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal\\_eng/cac-02/06](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2005/journal_eng/cac-02/06), p. 54.

<sup>533</sup> David Usupashvili, “An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004”, in *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, 2004), p. 77.

through effective campaign would not mean much as far as the ruling party manipulated the results, the opposition paid due attention to the fairness of the elections.<sup>534</sup> Georgian citizens also feared election fraud as they were fed up with the CUG, which was heavily associated with corruption. International community also was preoccupied with ensuring fair elections because it did not want to see its funds go to the pockets of the members of the patronage network of the CUG anymore and prevent instability that the electoral fraud would lead.

The composition of the Central Election Commission gained importance in the struggle between government and opposition factions due to potential of the Commission to manipulate election results. By making certain changes in the election administrative system beginning with the early 1990s, the ruling group managed to ensure a decision-making majority at all levels of the election commission system and it blocked the attempts to change it. When the issue reached an impasse and the setting of a new election commission was delayed as a result, 14 countries' ambassadors to Georgia met with leaders of parliamentary factions and expressed their anxiety.<sup>535</sup> Thus, although there was an important degree of domestic and international pressures on the government, all changes proposed to prepare grounds free and fair elections were blocked. This can be attributed to the resistance of the close circle of the Shevardnadze, rather than himself, to hold free and fair elections. Shevardnadze was unable to prevent them from organizing fraud because he did not enjoy enough control over them, as the examination of his failure to block blatant fraud engineered by Abashidze will make more apparent.

Making an alliance with Revival and the Industrialists' Union, the presidentialist block became able to reject the Baker formula on the second vote in the parliament and adopted an alternative composition for the CEC. On the basis of the new model, Revival and Industrialists' Union, 'opposition' parties famous for their tendency to make secret deals with the government, received five seats in the CEC. These five members plus five members appointed by the president

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<sup>534</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 44.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

meant that presidential bloc would have a majority of two-thirds of the votes ensuring full control over the election administration process.<sup>536</sup>

The efforts of the OSCE, Council of Europe, the Georgian opposition and civil society organizations to ensure the appointment of a broadly acceptable candidate also failed. After intensive consultations with the opposition and OSCE, Shevardnadze appointed Nana Devdariani, the least acceptable option from the opposition's point of view, as the chairperson of the CEC. The opposition was disappointed by the appointment because she was the leader of the Socialist Party, a member of the pro-presidential alliance for 2003 parliamentary elections, between 1999 and 2000 before being elected ombudsperson.<sup>537</sup>

Civil society organizations also attached high importance to the composition of the CEC. Illustrative of this attitude, in June 2003, *Kmara* and other groups organized wide-spread demonstrations to demand that the CEC be reformed to enable more independent supervision. When it became apparent that the authorities would not bow to their pressures, local NGOs shifted their attention to reveal fraud once it occurred.<sup>538</sup> Donor organizations and states together with Georgian opposition parties and NGOs also tried hard to ensure preparation of accurate voter lists. Baker pressured the Georgian authorities to publish voter lists in early September but his recommendations went to deaf ears and the lists were only published in early October.<sup>539</sup> When the list was published, it became apparent that it was marked by serious anomalies and errors. The number of voters registered in several districts differed greatly from the ones in the previous elections. The lists prepared for Tbilisi were particularly problematic as the number of the voters declared by the CEC in five of the ten districts was 50 per cent higher than the ones declared for the previous elections. A 22 per cent increase in voter

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<sup>536</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 79-80.

<sup>537</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia: What Now", *Europe Report*, No. 151(3 December 2003), p. 9.

<sup>538</sup> Nicklaus Laverty, "The Problem of Lasting Change: Civil Society and the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2008), p. 148.

<sup>539</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia: What Now", *Europe Report*, No. 151 (3 December 2003), p. 10.

numbers in Kvemo Kartli was also distressing due to the regions' record of serious violations in previous elections. In contrast, two regions, Imereti and Guria, lost 27 per cent and 23 per cent of their voters compared to 2002. The unexplained decrease was most striking in Kutaisi where 38 per cent of voters disappeared from lists. The voter lists of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara was also subject to controversy as the election authorities of Adjara rejected to submit its voter list before the legal deadline by arguing that Central Election Committee had not published its own voter list yet.<sup>540</sup> When the lists were finally submitted, it was revealed that Adjarian authorities claimed an increase of 22 per cent compared to 2000 figures.<sup>541</sup> As a result, all across the country, there was the danger that many eligible voters could be deprived of their rights to vote and inflated and deflated numbers could be used to artificially increase the votes of the ruling party or reduce those cast for the opposition respectively.<sup>542</sup>

The opposition parties, NGOs and the election observers criticized the lists sharply. They complained that the names of nearly 600,000, who were dead, appeared on the list whereas 30 percent of the eligible voters remained excluded on the eve of the November 2 parliamentary elections.<sup>543</sup> Opposition parties asserted that the deficiencies were politically motivated as districts in which they expected to gather high votes were the worst affected areas.<sup>544</sup> Despite consistent

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<sup>540</sup> Broers Laurence and Broxup Julian, Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections, *The London Information Networks on Conflicts and State Report*, January 2004, available at <http://www.links-london.org/pdf/Crisis%20and%20Renewal%20in%20Georgian%20Politics%20-20Jan%2004.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 10 January 2009).

<sup>541</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 2 November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 4 January 2004), p. 11.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>543</sup> Giorgi Sepashvili, "Mess in Voter Lists", *Civil Georgia*, 10 October 2003, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=5288&search=Mess in Voter Lists](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=5288&search=Mess%20in%20Voter%20Lists) (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

<sup>544</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 2 November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 4 January 2004), p. 10.

complaints from the affected opposition parties, the CEC refused to meet their requests to replace official data with the one prepared by NGO activists.<sup>545</sup>

Failing to achieve what desired about composition of the election commission, voter's lists and to head of the commission to ensure the fairness of the elections, the anti-regime forces at home and abroad, focused on election monitoring rigorously to reveal the election fraud, which the government effectively prepared the ground for by defeating opposition forces. As for the West, the ODIHR established a strong election mission for the 2003 parliamentary elections composed of 12 full time staff, 20 long- term observers who began to work two months before the elections initially focusing on election preparations and 400 short-term observers which would work few days before the election as well as the election day.<sup>546</sup> In addition, domestic election observers engaged in monitoring effort to disclose fraud. The most important election-monitoring group was the ISFED, which had observed the previous elections and gained prestige as a result of its impartial and accurate evaluations. ISFED was to be supported by some other domestic groups including the GYLA, which was funded by USAID like the ISFED. ISFED dispatched observers to whole parts of the county including the region such as Adjara where it was quite hard to observe the vote as a result of the repression of the Abashidze administration. In Adjara, the ISFED received extra-funding to employ election monitors from Russia and Ukraine, countries which had close relations with Abashidze, to overcome the problem of intimidation of monitors by the authorities. Besides election monitoring, ISFED would perform a critical function by implementing PVT. Although PVT had played no role in revealing the types of violations such as bribery, multiple voting and police intimidation, it was instrumental for determining if fraud had occurred in the phase of vote counting. To implement PVT, ISFED sent observers to a large number of polling stations to count the votes cast. Then vote numbers for each

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<sup>545</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 2 November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 4 January 2004), p. 10.

<sup>546</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 44.

part were entered into the database and they were compared with official figures when the CEC declared the results.<sup>547</sup>

### 5.3. The Elections

After months of campaigning, agreements among different parties to unify under the banner of an election block, use of administrative sources for the CUG and Revival and preparing the ground for fraud by defeating the proposals of the opposition and the international community, Georgia finally went to the polls on 2 November 2003. Voting was also marked by numerous irregularities and serious violations as the election commissions at different levels were trying hard to ensure a parliamentary majority for the presidential block.<sup>548</sup> This section is devoted to the examination of different kinds of anomalies and fraud that marked the elections.

Observers noted that in most parts of the Tbilisi and some other isolated areas around the county, bad voter lists, incompetence and low level harassment made it impossible to consider the elections as satisfactory. In Tbilisi and Kutaisi, the second populous city where the Burjanadze-Democrats Block was expected to win high votes, the polls opened late. However, there were even much worse places. Violence, multiple voting and voter intimidation was pervasive in Kvemo Kartli Adjara, for the favor of FNG and the Democratic Revival, respectively. In Kvemo Kartli, armed thugs burst into the polling stations and threatened the voters.<sup>549</sup> Widespread multiple voting, presence of security forces and government officials at polling stations to intimidate the voters, fraudulent counting pro-Abashidze media coverage were already expected in Adjara but there was even more than that. An election observer was arrested at a polling station and this frightened many other observers and some of them left the region. Moreover, in front of Batumi's largest polling station, one of Abashidze's former bodyguards

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<sup>547</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 44.

<sup>548</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 2004), pp. 115, 116.

<sup>549</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia's Rose Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 58.

was shot down. Everybody understood that Abashidze was behind the event and voters and election observers were frightened by it.<sup>550</sup>

OSCE also reported serious violations including ballot stuffing, bussing of voters from one station to another, use of pre-marked ballots, multiple voting, destruction of ballot boxes and attempts to influence voters.<sup>551</sup>

After the voting ended the observers continued with observing the tabulation of election results and reported several Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) and District Election Commissions (DECs) disregarded the correct counting procedures and directly involved in manipulating election results mostly, but not completely, for the benefit of the FNG Block and the Revival. The OSCE/ODIHR resorted the following specific faults:

- Completing or amending PEC protocols at DEC premises rather than at the polling station as required by law (Tkibuli, Tsalenjikha, Isani, Tskaltubo and Samtredia) or simply rejecting to send protocols to the DEC (Kutaisi and Vani),
- Fabricating protocols in both majoritarian and proportional contests, sometimes with vastly inflated turnout figures (Gardabani, Marneuli, Khelvachauri and Batumi), the existence of different protocols with differing results for the same PEC (Nadzaladevi and (Vani) and signing of blank protocols by some PECs (Marneuli, Vani and Dusheti),
- Failing to store election material securely (Gldani, Baghdadi, Kutaisi, Lanchkuti, Batumi, Kobuleti and Khulo),
- The presence of unauthorized persons in DEC premises including police, who in a few cases were influencing the work of the DEC (Gurjaani, Dedoplistskaro, Dusheti, Tsalka, Chiatura and Zugdidi), interference in the work of the DEC (Samgori, throughout Kvemo Kartli and in Khashuri) and intimidation of DEC members and observers (Rustavi),
- Manipulation of the turnout figure after election day downwards by the DEC to ensure that the top scoring candidate avoided a second round run-off (Liakhvi) and manipulation of the number of votes received by a leading candidate upwards to avoid a second round contest (Lagodekhi),

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<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>551</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Election Observation Mission Final Report on 2 November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 4 January 2004), p. 17.

- Ignoring official election complaints (Bolnisi, Samgori, Rustavi, Marneuli Gardabani, Khashuri and Mtatsminda),
- Tolerating fraudulently completed ballots (Samgori), misleading observers about the number of complaints and court appeals (Abasha) and negotiating results rather than basing these on protocols (Samgori and Kutaisi),
- Failure by some DEC's to display protocols as required by law,
- The failure by 18 PECs located out-of-country to submit original protocols to the DEC.<sup>552</sup>

It is necessary to emphasize that the fraud was more serious in Adjara, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. In Adjara, the number of votes claimed for the Abashidze's Revival was even more than the number of the registered voters.<sup>553</sup> This does mean that even without fraud the Revival party would not win elections in Adjara, but that the inflation of number of votes of Revival artificially increased its national influence. Similarly, in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli very high vote rates were claimed for the presidential block, repeating the trend of 1999 and 2000 elections. As the case of Adjarian vote, the FNG was able to gain majority in these regions without fraud but fraud played an important role in exaggerating contribution of these regions to the pro-governmental vote nationwide.<sup>554</sup>

In the face of these irregularities and violations, the overall assessment of the domestic and international monitoring organizations proved to be negative. Bruce George, Special Coordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, leading the Short-Term Observation Mission stated that "these elections have, regrettably, been insufficient to enhance the credibility of either the electoral or the democratic process". Similarly, Julian Peel Yates, who is heading the Long -Term Observation Mission of the OSCE, declared that "The irregularities and delays in the voting process on polling day reflect a lack of collective political will and

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<sup>552</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Election Observation Mission Final Report on 2 November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections*, Warsaw, 4 January 2004, p. 19.

<sup>553</sup> Charles Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 15, Number 2 (April 2004), pp. 115, 116.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.



administrative capacity for the conduct of the elections.” Tom Cox, Head of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly’s Delegation stated that

We believe that the people of this country are entitled to a better-run election system and protection of the right to vote, as sadly was not apparent yesterday. Urgent attention must be paid to training presiding election officials and addressing shortcomings in the system.

Thus, although there was a lot of pressure on Shevardnadze to carry out free and fair elections, he failed to satisfy the expectations in this way. As regards to why he failed to respond to the pressures, I agree with Corry Welt that he became the victim of his close associates and Abashidze who were determined to remain in power at any cost.<sup>555</sup> Although Shevardnadze was seen as a symbol of stability, this stability was fragile at best since the president’s authority was compromised by rivaling power centers around him. He only acted as a balancer between these actors and groups; he was not able to take them under his control. The fraud in the 2003 parliamentary election despite the pressures on Shevardnadze stemmed from his weakness to control power centers as a result of lack of state capacity to be used to bring them under full control. Besides the corrupt clique in the CUG, who would lose their vested interest in the case of fair elections, Abashidze had played important roles in the election fraud. Given the fact that the elections were parliamentary rather than presidential, Shevardnadze could have continued to rule the country until 2005 even the CUG had lost in the elections. However, this would be fatal for his close associates in the CUG and Abashidze who feared that free elections would strengthen reformist forces in the parliament who were planning to curb their power. As other local elites grouped around Shevardnadze against the reformers, Abashidze was happy with Shevardnadze’s style of governance since he left the running of the territories to them and did not intervene much.<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> Corry Welt, *Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia’s Rose Revolution, Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers*, No. 67 (September 2006), p. 53.

<sup>556</sup> Charles King, “A Rose among Thorns”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 2 (March/April 2004), available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/59706/charles-king/a-rose-among-thorns-georgia-makes-good> (Lastly accessed on 12 October 2008).

Besides being vulnerable to the pressures of different clans, Shevardnadze was in a weak position against Abashidze. He made some attempts to increase his control on powerful circles but he had to backpedal in the face of reactions of the rival power centers in the country. For example, before the assassination attempt against him in 1999, Shevardnadze was taking some steps to curb corruption which harmed the interest of clans but it was observed that he retreated after the attempt on his life.<sup>557</sup> It has also been discussed that Abashidze was threatening Shevardnadze with Adjarian secession to make the president acquiesce to inflating of figures for Revival in Adjaria.<sup>558</sup> In the light of this it can be argued state weakness proved to be a factor bringing about election fraud. Since Georgian state was not able to exercise authority in all areas within its defined borders including Adjaria, Shevardnadze was forced to bow to the pressures of Abashidze. Otherwise, he would be forced to deal with Adjarian secessionism and its negative impacts on other territories which could have followed the Adjarian example. As a result, massive fraud took place in the elections although Shevardnadze would be in a better position to survive if he had been able to prevent it. Before the elections Shevardnadze admitted that FNG could simply lose the elections and signaled his readiness to work with the opposition in that case.<sup>559</sup>

Notorious election fraud in Adjaria was particularly disturbing. If Revival was claimed to receive a vote amount close to PVT figures (ten per cent instead of 19 percent), it would have been more difficult and less pressing for the opposition parties to challenge the official results.<sup>560</sup> As seen in Table 1, in that case, the

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<sup>557</sup> Interviews with Koba Turmanidze and Alexander Rondeli (President, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), Tbilisi, 12 November 2008.

<sup>558</sup> The issue that Abashidze was threatening Shevardnadze was raised by Corry Welt, "Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers*, No. 67 (September 2006), p. 54 and Zeyno Baran quoted in Jaba Devdariani, "Developing Abashidze, Georgia's President Raises Stakes", Eurasianet, 14 November 2003 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav111403.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

<sup>559</sup> Corry Welt, *Georgia: Causes of the Rose Revolution and Lessons for Democracy Assistance* (Washington: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 18 March 2005), p. 5.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

allegations of fraud would mainly focus on 8,5 per cent difference between the official figures (18.1 per cent) and PVT results (26.6 per cent) since the United Democrats had an official result of 8.8 per cent which was near to their PVT results (10.2 per cent). Without an inflated percentage for Revival, a National Movement that officially came in second place to FNG was likely to still form a parliamentary majority with the Democrats and the New Rights Party. The fraud outside Adjara deprived the National Movement of its highly symbolic first-place victory, but it did not end the possibility of forming a parliamentary majority for the National Movement. As a result, opposition demonstrations gained momentum only after the results of Adjarian elections were announced. Whereas only a few thousand demonstrators gathered in Rustaveli on November 4 and 5, more than twenty thousand demonstrators came out to protest on November 8, two days after Adjara's official results were announced.<sup>561</sup>

Inflation of figures for Revival as well as the CUG was experienced in the previous elections but in 2003 election fraud was exposed very easily. The difference between the official results published by the CEC and the findings of the PVT (organized by ISFED together with National Democratic Institute) and the exit poll (jointly funded by the OSI Georgia Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, the British Council and Rustavi-2) became instrumental in revealing fraud. The table below provides a comparison of different figures given by the Central Election Commission (Official Results), PVT and the exit poll.<sup>562</sup>

Table 1: Results of the Parliamentary Elections of 2 November 2003

Party/ Block	Official Results	Exit Poll Results	PVT Results
For a New Georgia (Shevardnadze)	21.32%	19%	18.92%

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>562</sup> The official and PVT results are compiled from *Election Observation Mission Final Report on 2 November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 4 January 2004), p. 20. The exit poll results are compiled from Dan Seršen, "Chaotic Election Day in Georgia Produces Contradictory Results", *Eurasianet*, 3 November 2003 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav110303.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

Revival Union (Abashidze)	18.84%	9%	8.13%
National Movement(Saakashvili)	18.08%	26.4%	26.26%
Labor Party	12.04%	17.5%	17.36%
Burjanadze-Democrats	8.79%	10.4%	10.15%
New Right	7.35%	7%	7.99%

#### 5.4. The Protests

After the CEC announced the initial results, a relatively small number of Georgian citizens started to protest against the results published by the Georgian authorities. Starting with November 3, protestors gathered every evening at Freedom Square. The government initially chose to ignore the protests since the number of the protestors remained small.<sup>563</sup> On 4 November, the United Movement Block of Saakashvili, the Burjanadze-Democrats Block and Ertoba block under the leadership of Patiashvili declared the establishment of a Resistance Front which aimed at mobilizing popular protest against the electoral fraud and to force Shevardnadze and the government to resign.<sup>564</sup>

With the arrival of Adjarian votes on 6 November the election results were finally determined. The discrepancy between the exit polls and PVT, on the one hand, and official results, on the other hand, led to uninterrupted protests in front of the parliament organized by the National Movement and Burjanadze-Democrats.<sup>565</sup> The election results from the Adjara played a special role in motivating the protestors because they were blatantly fraudulent. The number of votes that Abashidze reported that his party had received in the elections was at least a third more than Adjara's total population.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, *Georgia's Rose Revolution: a Participant's Perspective*, *U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report No. 167*(2006), p. 4.

<sup>564</sup>“Chess, Poker, Or Roulette?”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 12 November 2003 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1341839.html>(Lastly accessed on 3 April 2009).

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>566</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 157.

Within days, Patiashvili, whose block failed to clear the 7 percent threshold in the elections according to the official results, left the Resistance Front by alleging that Burjanadze-democrats block engaged in secret deals with Shevardnadze to share parliamentary seats. Although remained in the Front, Saakashvili and Burjanadze-Democrats had different demands. Whereas the former urged the authorities to acknowledge opposition victory, the latter demanded new elections and announced that they would boycott the parliament.<sup>567</sup>

In the face of continuing protests, Shevardnadze decided to meet with Saakashvili, Burjanadze and Zhvania on 9 November. However, the meeting served to nothing other than intensifying the confrontation between president and the opposition leaders as Shevardnadze denied the electoral fraud and rejected the opposition demands to cancel the election results.<sup>568</sup> Tensions in the Freedom Square rose parallel to the rising confrontation between the president and the opposition and the government employed ten thousand armed policeman and soldiers to guard its headquarters on Ingorakya Street, which is close to Freedom Square. Having recognized the threat of violence, the opposition leaders announced to the crowd that they would give a weekend break to the protest during which they would establish a non-violent Civic Disobedience Committee. The Civic Disobedience Committee was set up on November on with the participation of film directors, writers, lawyers and civil society activists like Giga Brokeria and David Zurabishvili of the Liberty Institute. In the coming five days, the Committee visited universities, organizations and regions to persuade the population that the government should agree to leave for the benefit of the country. In the meantime, Saakashvili went to Western Georgia to ensure the participation of the regions' inhabitants into the protests in Tbilisi. He gained success in mobilizing the people there because Zviad Gamsakhurdia was from this

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<sup>567</sup> "Chess, Poker, Or Roulette?", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 12 November 2003 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1341839.html> (Lastly accessed on 3 April 2009).

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*

region and its inhabitant had grievances with Shevardnadze because of he resorted to harsh measures to sideline Gamsakhurdia's supporters in the past.<sup>569</sup>

While Saakashvili was trying to mobilize people outside Tbilisi in this way, Shevardnadze resorted to Abashidze's help to ensure the support of the Azeri population of Kvemo Kartli and Armenian inhabitants of Samtskhe-Javakheti. Abashidze went to Baku and Yerevan as the envoy of Shevardnadze to convince Aliyev and Kocharian that only Shevardnadze could protect minorities and the opposition would act against minority interest once in power. In this way Shevardnadze tries to preempt the minorities' granting of support towards the opposition.<sup>570</sup> Shevardnadze's reliance on Abashidze's help and his consent to falsification of election in Adjara sent shock waves through Georgia.<sup>571</sup> Since Abashidze was closely linked with Georgia, it was raised that Shevardnadze was trying to move closer towards Russia to ensure his survival. Second, people could not bear to see Shevardnadze treating Abashidze, who was viewed as a despot by most of the Georgians, like his boss. As a result, even the people who did not support the protests and hated Saakashvili got angry with Shevardnadze.

The efforts of pro-government forces were not limited to this. When the opposition supporters left the Freedom Square for the announced weekend break, the pro-government demonstrators, which were composed of Revival, Industrialist and For a New Georgia supporters, took their place. They tried to stay until the parliament convened in order to block opposition demonstrations but this situation increased the likely hood of confrontation between two sides.<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Irakli Z. Kakabadze, Inside the Revolution of Roses, *The Institute of Multi-Track Diplomacy Occasional Paper*, No. 15(March 2005), p. 6.

<sup>570</sup> Jaba Devdariani, "Developing Abashidze, Georgia's President Raises Stakes", Eurasianet, 14 November 2003 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav111403.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

<sup>571</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 141.

<sup>572</sup> Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Georgia: Shevardnadze Regains Confidence As Supporters Come Out In Force", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 18 November 2003 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1105036.html> and "Shevardnadze's Resignation Resolves Constitutional Deadlock", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 24 November 2003 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1341840.html> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

Shevardnadze felt the pressures of Western countries on him increasingly as the opposition protests prolonged and danger of instability became more apparent. The US State Department Officials and the US Ambassador in Tbilisi, Richard Miles, over and over again declared that they hoped that the Georgian authorities and the opposition would peacefully and democratically resolve the dispute over who won the election.<sup>573</sup> After the CEC publicized the official results on 18 November, the US government issued strong criticisms.<sup>574</sup> U.S. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli stated that:

The United States concurs with the OSCE's assessment that inaccuracies in the voter list lessened voter confidence. Some progress was made in increasing transparency, although Ajara and Kvemo Kartli were clearly sources of massive fraud. The failure to provide an accurate, timely and transparent count of the vote overshadowed the progress made in some other areas. The parallel vote tally conducted by the National Democratic Institute and supported by reputable exit polls, which we believe to be the best available gauge of the will of the voters, differs significantly from the results released by the Central Election Commission. These discrepancies reveal an extensive manipulation of the count.<sup>575</sup>

With this statement, the US for the first time accused the ruling elite of a former Soviet Republic with rigging the vote. Washington in this way provided a strong support for the claims of the opposition. This reaction stood in stark contrast to Washington's congratulations to Ilham Aliyev after the flawed elections in Azerbaijan one month before, after which the Azeri opposition organized protests to be only harshly repressed.<sup>576</sup> US reactions were not only

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<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>574</sup> "Pressure Builds on Shevardnadze as Georgian Crisis Boils", *Eurasianet*, 21 November 2003 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112103a.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

<sup>575</sup> Adam Ereli quoted in "U.S. Urges Investigation of "Massive Fraud" in Georgia Election", *America.gov*, 21 November 2003, available at <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/November20031121163417samohjt0.5727808.html> (Lastly accessed on 29 March 2009).

<sup>576</sup> Cory Welt, *Georgia: Causes of the Rose Revolution and Lessons for Democracy Assistance* (Washington: United States Agency for International Development), 18 March 2005), p. 10.

limited to expressing grievances about the irregularities and fraud. Between 2 and 22 November 2003, the US ambassador to Georgia conducted numerous futile negotiations between the government and opposition. US government's taking side with the opposition angered Shevardnadze. When the Shevardnadze's conversation with the US president was interrupted suddenly, the Georgian side reported that this occurred due to technical problems but Americans understood that Shevardnadze did not want to talk with them as a result of his anger created by US support to opposition after the elections.<sup>577</sup> Though annoying for Shevardnadze, US attitude was hardly surprising given the context of weakening of support for him versus the strengthening of relations with the opposition.

Despite the pressures from within and without, Shevardnadze ruled out cancelling election results in his usual weekly radio speech on 17 November. He stated that he was going to convene the first session of the new parliament in the time period defined by the constitution, which was 20 twenty days following the ballot. He emphasized that only acting on the basis of the guidelines provided by the constitution would save Georgia from plunging in to chaos. Following this statement, Saakashvili set out to directing the protestors he mobilized throughout the country to Tbilisi to demand resignation of Shevardnadze and prevent the new parliament from convening. On 22 November, 20,000 to 30,000 opposition supporters gathered at Freedom Square demanding Shevardnadze's resignation and elections for a new parliament and president.<sup>578</sup>

For the opposition it was vital to prevent the convening of the first session of the parliament, because the new parliamentary speaker would be elected. In this case, the opposition would lose the opportunity because the parliament would chose a pro-government speaker and this person would be the acting president even if Shevardnadze resigned. If the then parliamentary speaker, Nino

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<sup>577</sup> David Usupashvili, "An Analysis of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia: a Case Study, November 2003-March 2004", in *Election Assessment in the South Caucasus (2003-2004)* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (IDEA), 2004), p. 96.

<sup>578</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Caucasus Report*, Vol. 6, No. 41 (24 November 2003), available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1341840.html>.



Burjanadze, had been replaced with a pro-government figure, there would be no merit in Shevardnadze's resignation.<sup>579</sup>

Shevardnadze started his opening speech but could not manage to finish. Led by Saakashvili, protestors stormed into the main chamber and prevented the president from swearing in front of the new MPs. Saakashvili started shouting "resign, get out from here" while handing a rose to Shevardnadze. The president did not give up easily by responding "No matter however they try to impede me I will get my message across the parliament" to Saakashvili.<sup>580</sup> When some opposition supporters approached Shevardnadze his bodyguards removed him outside the parliament. Following this, Saakashvili declared the parliament as void and the parliamentary speaker Nino Burjanadze as the acting president. Shevardnadze described the act as a coup and declared state of emergency.<sup>581</sup>

Although Saakashvili came to the forefront due to his bursting into the parliament and forcing Shevardnadze to resign, there were moments when Saakashvili did not know what to do in the face of Shevardnadze insistence on not leaving power. It was at these critical moments civil society activists motivated Saakashvili to hold on and enter into the parliament.<sup>582</sup> When this is added by the civil society's role in mobilizing people, coordinating large number of peoples and preventing them from involving in violence, the indispensability of the Georgian civil society for the success of the 'Revolution' becomes more apparent. As stated by Shevardnadze after the 'Revolution', it was humiliating for the regime to see that civil society organizations became able to collect approximately one million signatures demanding the resignation of the president and these was a

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<sup>579</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Current History*, October 2004, p. 344.

<sup>580</sup> Sopho Gorgodze and Allison Ekberg, "Shevardnadze Resigns in the War of Roses", *The Messenger*, 24 November 2003.

<sup>581</sup> Shevardnadze Strives to Retain Support of Security, *Eurasianet*, 23 November 2003 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav112303.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 7 April 2009)

<sup>582</sup> Interview with Ketil Khutisisvili, Tbilisi, 14 November 2008.

more convincing expression of the opposition than a few groups and politicians getting up in arms.<sup>583</sup>

The media also played a critical role during the 'Revolution'. The existence of pro-opposition channels besides those favoring the ruling elite like Channel 1 and Abashidze's Adjara TV also performed an important function by informing the public, especially those living in other cities than Tbilisi, about the events and urging the people to join the protests.<sup>584</sup> Rustavi-2 was instrumental in revealing the election fraud by broadcasting the results of exit polls.<sup>585</sup> Motivated by the repression attempts of Shevardnadze leadership (illustrated by the raid against the channel culminating in the Rustavi-2 crisis discussed above), Rustavi-2 provided an opposition-biased coverage of the events during the protests. This included the astute use of camera angles, showing the same crowd from different locations to give the impression of wider participation in the protests and showing the removal of helmets by the security forces to give the image of the defection of security forces to the opposition side.<sup>586</sup> Later on, the channels like Imedi and Mze, which had provided a moderate support for Shevardnadze team before, started to provide an objective coverage of the events<sup>587</sup> but their role was not significant as Rustavi-2. The channel functioned as a 'megaphone' calling for change in the process leading to the 'Revolution' and for participation in the protests during the 'Revolution'.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, Georgia's Rose Revolution: a Participant's Perspective, *U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report No. 167*(2006), p. 4.

<sup>584</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 12.

<sup>585</sup> Hugh Pope, "Pro-West Leaders in Georgia Push Shevardnadze out", *Wall Street Journal*, 24 November 2003 available at [http://www.liberty.ge/geo/page.php?genre\\_id=13&section\\_id=4&news\\_id=25&from=cat\\_news](http://www.liberty.ge/geo/page.php?genre_id=13&section_id=4&news_id=25&from=cat_news)(Lastly accessed on 12 April 2009).

<sup>586</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3(September 2005), p. 342.

<sup>587</sup> David Anable, "The Role of Georgia's Media- and Western Aid- in the Rose Revolution", *Harvard International Journal of Press Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3(2006), p. 19.

<sup>588</sup> Interview with Alexander Rodeli, Tbilisi, 12 November 2008.

However, the failures of the regime were the real motives making people come to the Rustaveli Avenue to protest. George Khutsishvili mentions that he saw a mother carrying a 25 days-old baby in her arms during the protests who did not leave protests area till the late evening. He also tells that when he asked her whether she was not afraid to make her baby to catch cold, he was answered that her house was even colder than the protest area and she knew that it was the fault of the government.<sup>589</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that unless the Georgian society fed up with the ruling elite due to corruption and failure to provide basic state services, the campaigns of civil society and opposition leaders such as Saakashvili would not be that successful at mobilizing people against the regime.

### **5.5. Explaining the Success of the ‘Rose Revolution’**

So far, the study has discussed how the Georgian state’s inability to satisfy the needs of the society and vulnerability to external pressures caused the strengthening of the media, civil society and the opposition. By doing this, the study has tried to show that it is not sufficient to focus on the societal actors and weakness of the coercive state apparatus at the time of the protests to explain the dynamics of the ‘Rose Revolution’. This section will continue to reveal the ineffectiveness of the existing studies on the event by underlining the role of administrative incapacitation (illustrated by lack of control over Abashidze) and lack of autonomy against Western powers in causing regime change besides coercive weakness. It will be underscored that the problems that Shevardnadze regime faced were beyond the inability to suppress the protests, as state authority was in complete disarray.

Shevardnadze was in a desperate situation when he faced the obstinacy of the protestors and the spread of events to wide audiences as a result of media coverage. State weakness already set the scene as he could neither pre-empt the emergence of strong protests nor prevent them getting stronger through mobilization of media and civil society organizations. He could not prevent these

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<sup>589</sup> Rusudan Mshvidobadze and George Nizharadze, “Methodology and Hypotheses”, in George Khutsishvili (ed.), *Civil Society and the Rose Revolution in Georgia* (Tbilisi: International Center on Conflict and Negotiation, 2007), pp. 20-21.

developments because he had lacked the means to do so due to incapacitation of the state in many areas.

The close circle of Shevardnadze pressed him to declare state of emergency as they were determined to remain in power to avoid loss of power and interest. Different from Shevardnadze, they were willing to use force to preserve their positions.<sup>590</sup> Ministry of Interior Koba Narchemashvili is a case in the point since he encouraged the president to declare state of emergency.<sup>591</sup> Burjanadze also supported this conviction when she argued that she thought Shevardnadze would “never give an order to use violence” but that she “was not sure about those surrounding him”.<sup>592</sup>

However, the ruling elite could not gain it desired with declaring state of emergency due to the cracks in the security structure. As a sign of split in the security structure, the secretary of the National Security Council, Tedo Japaridze appeared on TV to urge the president to cancel the fraudulent elections and fire the people involved in the fraud.<sup>593</sup> The Minister of Defense, David Tevzadze, declared that his ministry would not enforce the state of emergency. The Tbilisi Police chief announced that he would obey the orders of Nino Burjanadze as acting president instead of those of Shevardnadze.<sup>594</sup> There were also the rumors that Saakashvili had a secret agreement with Minister of State Security Valeri Khaburdzania to provide an unlocked entry in the parliament. Mass joining of security forces to the opposition forces was also experienced during the ‘Revolution’. Some army battalions participated in the protests in their uniforms. The opposition leaders announced their participation loudly and urged the crowd

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<sup>590</sup> Interview with Alexander Rondeli, Tbilisi, 12 November 2008.

<sup>591</sup> Zurab K’arumize and James W. Wertsch, “*Enough!*”: *The Rose Revolution in The Republic of Georgia, 2003* (New York: Nova Science, 2005), p. 18.

<sup>592</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution: A Participant’s Perspective”, *Special Report*, No. 167, United States University of Peace (July 2006), p. 20.

<sup>593</sup> Zurab K’arumize and James W. Wertsch, “*Enough!*”: *The Rose Revolution in The Republic of Georgia, 2003* (New York: Nova Science, 2005), p. 13.

<sup>594</sup> Rebecca S. Katz, *The Georgian Regime Crisis of 2003-2004* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2006), p. 165.

to welcome them to strengthen the morale of the protestors.<sup>595</sup> Thus, the loss of state control over the coercive apparatus proved to be one of the forces preparing the end of Shevardnadze's rule.

These cracks in the security structure led many scholars writing on the 'Rose Revolution' to conclude that 'Rose Revolution' reached success because Shevardnadze was not able to repress the protests through use of force. Mitchell argues that although Shevardnadze announced that he had resigned to avoid bloodshed, he had kept away from using violence because "he was too weak to command use of force".<sup>596</sup> Fairbanks also believes that avoiding of violence in the 'Rose Revolution' was due to the unavailability of coercive power. He argues that the President most probably intended to use force but the armed forces did not obey his orders.<sup>597</sup> Hale seems to endorse this view since he underlines that Shevardnadze was not a tolerant leader but he lacked the necessary instruments to repress the anti-regime forces.<sup>598</sup> Similarly, L. A. Way and S. Levitsky argue that Shevardnadze was ousted from power as a result of modest protests because of the weakness of the coercive apparatus of the state.<sup>599</sup>

In addition to the studies that discuss that Shevardnadze was removed from power because he did not enjoy strong coercive capacity, there are also the analysis that argue that despite frictions, Shevardnadze still had enough force to suppress the protest but he avoided this because of his unwillingness to cause violence. Welt discusses that the internal troops and police were ready to act on the President's order and would undertake all necessary measures under the state

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<sup>595</sup> Interview with Nika Chitadze (President of the International and Security Research Center), Tbilisi, 10 November 2008.

<sup>596</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Current History*, October 2004, p. 348.

<sup>597</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 2004), p. 117.

<sup>598</sup> Henry E. Hale, 'Democracy or Autocracy on the March? The Color Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 2006), p. 324

<sup>599</sup> L.A. Way and S. Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Authoritarian Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), pp. 399-400.

of emergency.<sup>600</sup> Kandelaki also points out that “the risk of violence was still clear with no news from a number of Special Forces units loyal to the president”.<sup>601</sup> There are also studies quoting Shevardnadze’s statements emphasizing that he still had enough force:

The opposition claimed that they were the ones who actually controlled the military and special police forces,” even if this were true it would not mean that they were in control of 100% of them. Enough troops would still remain to implement the emergency decree.<sup>602</sup>

Given the fact that Shevardnadze faced ‘undersized’ protests<sup>603</sup> rather than insurmountable numbers, one can tend to think that he could have been able to pacify the protests if he had resorted to force. Since the overthrow attempt became successful, after the ‘Rose Revolution’ it is often neglected that the protests were not that high in number and sustained.<sup>604</sup> The protests took place in the 21 days period between the elections and the resignation of Shevardnadze and on ten of those days (November 3, 6-7 and 15-21) there were not serious protests. On eight days, November 4-5 and November 8-13, the number of the protestors was not more than 5,000. The first major protest-reaching at least 20,000 demonstrators-took place on 14 November. The next important protest was on November 22 and culminated in the entrance of protestors into the parliament with Saakashvili. This demonstration continued after the resignation of Shevardnadze by taking the form of celebration. The pre-resignation protest rally number is estimated to be between

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<sup>600</sup> Cory Welt, *Georgia: Causes of the Rose Revolution and Lessons for Democracy Assistance* (Washington: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 18 March 2005), p. 11.

<sup>601</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, *Georgia’s Rose Revolution: a Participant’s Perspective*, *U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report No. 167* (2006), p. 20.

<sup>602</sup> Zurab K’arumize and James W. Wertsch, *Enough!”: The Rose Revolution in The Republic of Georgia, 2003* (New York: Nova Science, 2005), p. 30.

<sup>603</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution”, *Current History*, October 2004, p. 345.

<sup>604</sup> Cory Welt, *Georgia’s Rose Revolution: from Regime Weakness to Regime Collapse*, *Center for Strategic and International Studies Working Paper*, 28 December 2006, p. 14.

20,000 and 100,000.<sup>605</sup> Even those who regard these numbers as insurmountable for the regime should consider that the protestors were unarmed and if Shevardnadze had chosen to resort to force before the protests reached that numbers, he could have suppressed them through violent means.

Although one cannot know for sure what would happen if Shevardnadze had resorted to force, it is necessary to consider that the real mechanisms bringing the end of Shevardnadze go beyond the inability to suppress protests. It has to be considered that even if the protests has been suppressed by using the armed forces loyal to Shevardnadze, the regime would not be able to re-establish order as the state authority was in complete disarray. Opposition parties and the civil society organizations were completely out of control and acting autonomously. As illustrated by Shevardnadze's inability to prevent Abashidze from organizing massive election fraud in Adjara, the state was unable to control the administrative units in its jurisdiction. Besides South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which were completely beyond the center's control, regions like Adjara and Javakheti turned into personal fiefdoms of their rulers. State also lacked control over the economic resources necessary for implementing policies. Whereas the state resources were being exploited by private actors due to uncontrolled corruption, the state was left without revenues. This resulted in loss of autonomy on the part of the state as well as mobilization of the society due to economic hardship.

To the consternation of Shevardnadze, the anti-regime forces exploited the power vacuum in an effective way. Thanks to the inability of the state to control them, opposition parties and local NGOs forged relations with foreign governments, most notably the US, and transnational NGO networks. This resulted in their strengthening at the expense of the state. Whereas the state lost foreign sources of financial support, foreign actors like Soros shifted their support to the civil society and opposition parties. Moreover, due to the government's inability to restrain the activities of transnational networks, they became able to take training from civil activists, which participated in other 'color revolutions'.

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<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.* and CNN.com, "Saakashvili Bids to Lead Georgia," November 26, 2003 available at <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/11/26/georgia.candidate/index.htm> (Lastly accessed on 16 August 2009)

When Shevardnadze realized that he did not have the chance to restore state autonomy, he had no other choice but resign.

Some observers trying to account for the 'Rose Revolution' focus on the non-use of force to explain the success of the overthrow attempt by ignoring that there were other ways to survive for Shevardnadze other than the violent repression of protestors. As pointed out by Jonathan Wheatley, Shevardnadze could have opted for canceling the elections and holding new vote before the protestors became radicalized and demand his own resignation.<sup>606</sup> However, seeing that he lacked the means to re-establish order due to the state weakness, he admitted defeat.

Having emphasized that loss of state autonomy in broader terms, rather than the mere weakness of coercive capacity, was the real force bringing down Shevardnadze, it is also necessary revisit the explanations which attribute the success of the 'Rose Revolution' to societal factors.

The impact of opposition unity, which was regarded as a highly important factor for the overthrow attempt as writers such as McFaul, is a point in the case.<sup>607</sup> It is necessary to point out that the unity of opposition is exaggerated because as discussed the opposition could not unite before the elections mostly as a result of personal rivalries. Although Burjanadze-Democrats and UNM were united eventually, New Right and the Labor Party did not join them. On 4 November Davit Gamkrelidze, the leader of New Rights, declared that the New Rights would fight for their votes at the district election commissions and not in the streets.<sup>608</sup> The next day, the leader of the Labor Party, Shalva Natelashvili followed him by

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<sup>606</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 189.

<sup>607</sup> Michael McFaul, "Transitions from Post-Communism", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 16, Number 3 (July 2005), p. 9

<sup>608</sup> Davit Gamkrelidze quoted in "Post-Election Developments of November 3-12", *Eurasianet*, available at [http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/articles/GeorgianElectionUpdate\\_Eng1.pdf](http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/articles/GeorgianElectionUpdate_Eng1.pdf). (Lastly accessed on 30 March 2009).



stating that the Labor Party would not defend its votes by participating in the 'bloody fight'.<sup>609</sup>

Although United Democrats joined the rallies held by the UNM beginning with 9 November, Burjanadze and Zhvania behaved in a more cautious way than Saakashvili and they seemed to be willing to compromise and allow Shevardnadze to remain in power in return for repeating the elections.<sup>610</sup> The siding of New Right with the CUG was especially important because when the New Right decided to join the first session of the Parliament, the quorum necessary for convening the Parliament was formed. This prompted Saakashvili to burst into the Parliament rather than wait for the Constitutional Court's decision to annul the elections completely or any other alternative solution to the crisis through constitutional means.<sup>611</sup> Therefore, in some sense, the opposition division rather than unity paved the way for the unfolding of the events leading to the resignation of Shevardnadze.

Lastly, it is also necessary to discuss the role of Russian mediation. Although Shevardnadze was hated in Russia due to his role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, compared to the opposition leaders he was less threatening to the Russian interest. For Moscow it was preferable to keep Georgia weak, unstable and divided under Shevardnadze's leadership. Coming of an opposition leader to the power which would attempt to restore control over secessionist territories and strengthen the Georgian state through reforms would be a blow to the Russian aims in the region. There were also the rumors that Russia was planning to make pro-Russian Abashidze to succeed Shevardnadze therefore it

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<sup>609</sup> Shalva Natelashvili quoted in "Post-Election Developments of November 3-12", *Eurasianet*, available at [http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/articles/GeorgianElectionUpdate\\_Eng1.pdf](http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/articles/GeorgianElectionUpdate_Eng1.pdf). (Lastly accessed on 30 March 2009).

<sup>610</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 187.

<sup>611</sup> Irakly Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2007), p. 180.

tended to support Shevardnadze temporarily to prepare the ground for transfer of power to Abashidze.<sup>612</sup>

Russia offered some degree of support to Shevardnadze during the events. During a telephone conversation Putin praised Shevardnadze by saying “you, as always, are acting bravely and correctly”.<sup>613</sup> However, in the face of the non-stop protest Moscow came to the conclusion that the status quo was unsustainable like Shevardnadze. Having understood that change was imminent, the Russian leadership set out to courting the Georgian opposition to decrease the anti-Russian sentiment and brought about favorable behavior for Russia in the future. As a result, Russian Foreign Minister went to Tbilisi to mediate the negotiations between the three opposition leaders and Shevardnadze, which culminated in resignation of the latter on 23 November.<sup>614</sup>

## **5.6. Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 2004**

The days following the resignation of Shevardnadze were marked by the power sharing deals among the main powers realized the ‘Revolution’. When an agreement was reached on 26 November, acting president Burjanadze announced that the National Movement and the Burjanadze Democrats had decided to support a single candidate, Mikheil Saakashvili, in the forthcoming presidential elections.<sup>615</sup> This means that the power sharing among the trio of the ‘Revolution’ granted presidency to Saakashvili in line with his role in the ‘Revolution’ and popularity. Burjanadze would continue to hold the position of Speaker of the Parliament until she broke with Saakashvili in 2008. Zurab Zhvania became the State Minister until the post of Prime Ministry was created as a result of the

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<sup>612</sup> Stephen Blank, “Georgia’s Revolution: Russia’s Sour Grapes”, *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 3 December 2003, available at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/1690> (Lastly accessed on 7 April 2009).

<sup>613</sup> Zurab K’arumize and James W. Wertsch, “Enough!”: *The Rose Revolution in The Republic of Georgia, 2003* (New York: Nova Science, 2005), p. 11.

<sup>614</sup> Jaba Devdariani, “Russia’s Guarded Watchfulness”, *Civil Georgia*, 29 November 2003 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=5701&search=Russia’s Guarded Watchfulness](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=5701&search=Russia’s%20Guarded%20Watchfulness) (Lastly accessed on 7 April 2009).

<sup>615</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union* (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p. 193.

constitutional amendments passed by the Parliament on 5 February 2004. Although these amendments were criticized as the molding the constitution in line with the wills of the three leaders, the amendments went into force completing the realization of contract between the key leaders of the 'Revolution'.<sup>616</sup>

Presidential elections were announced to be held on 4 January 2004 in accordance with the constitution, which stipulated that in the case of the president's death or resignation, new presidential elections were to be held within 45 days. The election was important in the sense that it was viewed as a test for the commitment of the leaders of the 'Rose Revolution' to the democratic election process as well as a referendum on the 'Rose Revolution' and Mikheil Saakashvili.<sup>617</sup>

Although 13 candidates initially registered as presidential candidates, on the elections only six candidates ran for the presidency besides Saakashvili. Among these six candidates Temuri Shashiashvili was the former governor of Imereti, Rion Liparteliani was the chairman of the David the Builder Society, Kartlos Gharibashvili was the head of the Lawyers' Union and Zurab Kelekhashvili was the chairman of the Mdzleveli Society. The organizations that presented their candidates were small NGOs that did not actively participated in the 'Rose Revolution'. The opposition parties including the Union of Traditionalists, the Labor Party, the Socialist Party and Industry Will Save Georgia fell short of presenting their own candidates after the weakening they had suffered due to their lack of support to the 'Rose Revolution'.<sup>618</sup>

While Tbilisi was experiencing the 'Rose Revolution', Abashidze imposed state of emergency in Adjara. The Union of Democratic Revival proclaimed the elections as unconstitutional and the Adjarian authorities declined to register the voters until the end of the December. Abashidze was eventually persuaded by Tbilisi, the Assembly of the Council of Europe and the US government to

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<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>617</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 4 January 2004 Georgian Extraordinary Presidential Election*, (Warsaw, 28 February 2004), pp. 3,4.

<sup>618</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia, 2004", *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 24(2005), p. 305-306.

participate in the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections. In a short while after the elections, Abashidze would re-impose the state of emergence as a reaction to protests organized by *Kmara* in Batumi.<sup>619</sup>

OSCE noted serious improvements in the elections compared to the previous elections in several respects including the registration of the voters and the count and tabulation process in addition to efforts to increase the participation of national minorities in the elections.<sup>620</sup> Despite these improvements, disproportionate use of state resources for the election campaign of Saakashvili and dominance of Saakashvili in the electronic and print media were also reported.<sup>621</sup>

After all these discussions and the election campaign, the elections were held on 4 January 2004. Saakashvili gained a landslide victory by receiving the 96.3 percent of the vote. There was a huge gap between the votes of Saakashvili and those of his nearest rival, Teimuraz Shashiashvili. Whereas Shashiashvili got only 1.9 per cent of the votes, Roin Liparteliani and Zaza Sikharulidze both got 0.3 per cent of the votes, followed by Kartlos Gharibashvili and Zurab Kelekhashvili got 0.2 and 0.1 respectively.<sup>622</sup>

Following the presidential elections, the parliamentary elections were held on 28 March 2004. As the Supreme Court annulled the results of the proportional component (150 out of 235 seats), the 85 seats elected by simple majoritarian component remained to be untouched. The parties that led the November events – the National Movement and the Burjanadze–Democrats – consolidated power by joining forces. The Citizens Union of Georgia, the former ruling party, left the political scene. The opposition also tried to consolidate power by forming

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<sup>619</sup> Molly Corso, “Story : Ajaria Searches for a Fresh Start”, *Eurasianet*, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/georgia/ajaria/story.html> (Lastly accessed on 9 September 2009).

<sup>620</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 4 January 2004 Georgian Extraordinary Presidential Election*, (Warsaw: 28 February 2004), pp. 1,2.

<sup>621</sup> Final Report on 4 January 2004 Georgian Extraordinary Presidential Election, 28 February 2004, pp. 2 and 13.

<sup>622</sup> Georgian Central Election Commission, Final results of the Presidential Elections 2004 available at [http://www.cec.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=13&info\\_id=429](http://www.cec.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=13&info_id=429) (Lastly accessed on 16 July 2010 )

electoral blocs: the New Rights formed a coalition with Industry Will Save Georgia, whereas the National Democratic Party united with the Traditionalists.<sup>623</sup> The elections were a landslide victory for the National Movement-Democrats block as it got 66.2 per cent of the votes and won 135 seats. It was followed by Rightist Opposition-Industrialists-Novas Bloc, which took 7.6 per cent of the votes and won 15 seats. The remaining Blocks failed to clear 7 per cent threshold and enter the Parliament.<sup>624</sup>

The international election observers generally assessed the parliamentary elections in a quite positive tone with the Council of European Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE reported improvements in the same areas with the 2004 presidential elections. However, they also raised their concerns about the election results, which provided the National Movement-Democratic Block with a clear dominance in the Parliament, stating that lack of diverse views in the parliament bode ill for meaningful debates.<sup>625</sup> As in the case of presidential elections, repression of opposition and media were considered as serious impediments to the holding democratic elections in the region.<sup>626</sup>

## 5.7. Conclusion

This chapter showed that the ruling elite of Georgia employed election fraud to remain in power when it faced societal discontent due to poor state performance. It has been discussed that the fraud in Adjarian vote was rampant and became instrumental in mobilizing the protests. It has also been emphasized that inability of the state to impose control over local administrations, or administrative incapacitation, was the reason bringing about Abashidze provoking

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<sup>623</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Statement of the Preliminary Findings and Conclusions on the 28 March 2004 Repeat Parliamentary Elections*, Tbilisi, 29 March 2004, p. 3.

<sup>624</sup> Georgian Central Election Commission, Final protocol of the Parliamentary Elections 2004 available at [http://www.cec.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=13&info\\_id=462](http://www.cec.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=13&info_id=462) (Lastly accessed on 16 July 2010 )

<sup>625</sup> Giga Chikladze, "Saakashvili Cheered, Opponents Disgruntled by Georgia's Parliamentary Election Results", Eurasianet, 29 March 2004 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032904.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 9 September 2009).

<sup>626</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Statement of the Preliminary Findings and Conclusions on the 28 March 2004 Repeat Parliamentary Elections*, Tbilisi, 29 March 2004, p. 7.

actions. Since Shevardnadze feared Adjarian secessionism, he could not prevent Abashidze from blatantly inflating the votes of the revival to the extent that the votes exceeded the number of registered voters. Once extensive fraud was realized, the masses, already fed up with the Shevardnadze regime's poor performance in many areas, did not wait long to pour to the streets.

Due to the lack of state autonomy in relation to external powers, NGOs and media, which had been strengthened through foreign aid, experienced no difficulty revealing the fraud. The exit polls and PVT conducted by NGOs revealed the inflation of figures for the CUG and the media urged the people to participate in the protests by publicizing the discrepancy between the official and exit poll and PVT figures. The Georgia society joined forces with the NGOs and opposition parties to protest Shevardnadze regime's attempt at preserving power through fraud. Western powers and institutions, which had been disillusioned with the regime, harshly criticized the election fraud in a way emboldening the opposition leaders and protestors.

The chapter substantiated the need to go beyond both the narrow focus on the weakness of coercive apparatus and strength of the societal actors such as opposition, civil society and media to account for the success of the 'Rose Revolution'. It has been discussed that the problems that Shevardnadze faced at the time of protest went far beyond the inability to suppress the demonstrations. The state was in complete disarray. State lacked autonomy in relation to various political actors in various fields. The societal actors, whose significance for the success of 'Revolution' exploited this environment to unseat Shevardnadze. As declared by some civil society leaders after the 'Revolution', at the beginning they did not act with the aim of changing regime. However, the thanks to highly permissive atmosphere, Shevardnadze was ousted even through modest protest and without the real opposition unity as discussed.

The chapter lastly discussed that enjoying immense popularity both at home and abroad as the harsh critic of the Shevardnadze regime and the leader of the 'Rose Revolution', Saakashvili gained a sweeping victory in pre-term 5 January 2004 presidential elections and his party gained dominance in the legislature in 28 March 2004 parliamentary elections.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **POST-‘ROSE REVOLUTION’ REGIME TRAJECTORY**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

Saakashvili took over a dysfunctional state with a malign and strong neighbor enjoying strong potential to destabilize Georgia. He inherited daunting problems including rampant corruption, weak economy, separatist territories, regions controlled nominally at best and feeble and under-disciplined coercive state apparatus.

Given these pressing problems, Saakashvili has hardly made democratization his number one priority. This chapter will prove that increasing authoritarianism has marked the post-‘Rose Revolution’ by examining strengthening executive power at the expense of other branches and weakening of civil society and media. The chapter will also shed light on the attempts of Saakashvili team to strengthen the Georgian state. In addition, it will also explore the challenges to the stability of the Saakashvili regime and the way that the leadership dealt with these challenges. Before concluding, reasons behind Saakashvili’s survival despite the disturbances that the opposition protests, South Ossetian crisis of 2008 and important defections in the ruling elite created will be discussed.

#### **6.2. Saakashvili’s Strategy of Strengthening of State Autonomy**

Saakashvili has not fulfilled the democratization promises of the ‘Revolution’; in fact, in many respects, increasing authoritarianism marks the post- ‘Revolution’ Georgian politics. Saakashvili became able to realize what Shevardnadze, especially at his late term, desired to do. In the words of the researcher and civil society activist Paata Zakareichvili: “Shevardnadze tried to diminish the role of the Parliament; Saakashvili did it. Shevardnadze tried to

control the local administrations and failed; Saakashvili did it. Shevardnadze dreamed of controlling the media and could not; Saakashvili does.”<sup>627</sup>

This section will explore the state of check of balances among state powers under the new regime. The constitutional amendments realized after Saakashvili took power served to significant strengthening of the executive<sup>628</sup> at the expense of the parliament, which led one prominent scholar to argue that Saakashvili replaced the ‘superpresidentialism’ of Shevardnadze era with ‘hyperpresidentialism’.<sup>629</sup> First of all the president gained the right to disband the parliament but the parliament was not given any extra power to compensate for this loss of power. The changes created the post of prime minister besides the president but placed it under the control of the president. Under the new circumstances, if the parliament declines to approve the presidential candidate for prime minister three times, the president can dissolve the parliament and appoint a prime minister by decree. Furthermore, the president must approve all the ministers in the cabinet and directly appoints ministers of defense and internal affairs,<sup>630</sup> which provides him with significant control over coercive capacity of the state. The president also gained greater power over the budget and the judiciary. Under the new system, the prime minister prepares the budget and submits it to the president, and the president presents it to the parliament if he approves it. If the parliament rejects the budget three times, the president can dissolve the parliament.<sup>631</sup> Before the changes that were made in February 2004,

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<sup>627</sup> David Zane Mairowitz, “The Rose Revolution Shows its Thorns”, *The Progressive*, October 2005, p. 35.

<sup>628</sup> Stephen F. Jones, “The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 19, Number 1 (March 2006)op. cit.(March 2006), p. 34.

<sup>629</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution”, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 15, Number 2 (April 2004), p. 118.

<sup>630</sup> Miriam Lansky and Giorgi Areshidze, “Georgia’s Year of Turmoil”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (October 2008), p. 160.

<sup>631</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution”, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 15, Number 2 (April 2004), p. 118.



the president could not dissolve the parliament and needed to get parliamentary approval when appointing ministers and adopting the budget.<sup>632</sup>

Since the steps enhancing the president's power were realized in a very rapid way while democratic reforms promised before Saakashvili's coming to power were postponed, commitment of Saakashvili to democratization came under serious doubt. In fact, these constitutional amendments were first proposed in 1998 under Shevardnadze but could not reach the parliament as the reformist wing of the CUG opposed them calling the proposals as an attempt to make Georgia a fully-fledged authoritarian state. Quite contrary to his earlier attitude towards the changes as a member of reformist camp, within the three months he came to power Saakashvili submitted the changes to the Parliament skipping the required one month consideration phase by arguing that the draft had already been subject to public discussion during Shevardnadze's presidency. By behaving in this way, Saakashvili tended to disregard his initial attitude and the outcome of public discussions under Shevardnadze.<sup>633</sup>

Another controversial step was taken in December 2006 when the Parliament extended the term of standing parliament from April to October-December 2008 citing the security problems that would result from coinciding elections in Russia and Georgia in April 2008. The ruling party argued that the amendment was necessary to prevent Russian interference in Georgia's election process. The opposition criticized this step vigorously and revoking this change and the holding parliamentary elections on time became one of the main demands raised during the opposition protest in November 2007.<sup>634</sup>

The government's attempts at increasing executive control have not been limited to enhancing executive power over the parliament. The government endeavors have also targeted the judiciary independence by its use of carrots and

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<sup>632</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2008 Georgia Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2008&country=7398> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>633</sup> Transparency International Georgia, "Division of Authority in Georgia", October 2006, p. 2

<sup>634</sup> "Controversial Constitutional Amendments Passed", *Civil Georgia*, 27 December 2006 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14376&search=Controversial Constitutional Amendments Passed](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14376&search=Controversial%20Constitutional%20Amendments%20Passed). (Lastly accessed on 12 April 2009).

sticks.<sup>635</sup> It has been argued that the government has tried to bring judges under control through the practice of ‘disciplinary cases’. The judges removed from their positions drew attention to the fact that they had been sacked on the basis of the allegations of misconduct and abuse of position after they rejected to bow to the pressures of the government. As for the carrots, the president has ordered the sale of lands to Supreme Court judges at prices that were seriously cheaper than their market value.<sup>636</sup> In the light of this evidence, it has been argued that Saakashvili, who gained reputation thanks to his determination to reform Georgian judiciary when he served as the justice minister, came to take steps to curb the independency of judiciary once he has become president.<sup>637</sup>

In addition to increased presidential power, different from the Shevardnadze period, NGOs and the media can no longer provide an effective check on the executive power as they are weakened significantly.<sup>638</sup> Revolutionary euphoria gave way to disillusionment when it has been realized that Saakashvili team would not be able to realize the goals of the ‘Revolution’ including the end of corruption, establishment of rule of law, restoring territorial integrity and improving economic conditions in the near future.<sup>639</sup> The disappointment with Saakashvili was also a product of increasing authoritarianism under Saakashvili who started off with the promise of democratization.<sup>640</sup>

As disillusionment with Saakashvili increased, cracks in the ruling elite grouped around Saakashvili surfaced. In fact the split in the ruling elite was experienced in a very short time. The Republicans and the followers of Davitashvili

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<sup>635</sup> Anna Dolidze, “Inside Crack: Crisis in Georgia”, *National Interest*, 7 November 2007 available at [www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=16066](http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=16066) (Lastly accessed on 5 April 2009).

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>637</sup> Zaal Anjaparidze, “Judges Allege that Saakashvili’s Team is Purging Georgia’s Judicial Bench” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 2, No. 228 (8 December 2005), available at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=31193](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=31193) (Lastly accessed 5 April 2009).

<sup>638</sup> Stephen F. Jones, “The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 19, Number 1 (March 2006), p. 34.

<sup>639</sup> Andre de Nesnera, “Russia-Georgia Relations Remain Tense”, *Voice of America*, 10 October 2007 available at <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-10-voa57.cfm?moddate=2007-10-10> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*

and Dzidguri proved to be the first group to leave the National Movement as a result of on the basis of the allegations that the elections in Adjara were manipulated.<sup>641</sup> Another important crack in the ruling elite came with the dismissal of the Foreign Minister Salome Zourabichvili on the basis of the accusations of mismanagement, lack of coordination with ambassadors and nepotism at the ministry.<sup>642</sup> Zourabichvili rejected the accusations and asserted that she was sacked because her attempts to curb corruption in various embassies harmed the interest of some circles.<sup>643</sup> She later joined the opposition by forming her party which is called “Georgia’s Way” on 12 March 2006.

The death of Zurab Zhvania, member of the ‘Rose Revolution’ trio and the then prime minister, under doubtful circumstances in February 2005 left Saakashvili without his wisest ally who prevented him from taking too radical steps.<sup>644</sup> Although the authorities announced that he has dies as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas leakage, his family and some opposition politicians challenged the official accounts by arguing that he might have been killed because Saakashvili felt threatened by his popularity and power.<sup>645</sup> After the death of Zhvania, Saakashvili moved most of Zhvania’s close associates from power. This was followed by Saakashvili’s dismissal of Georgy Haindrava, one of the key allies of Saakashvili during the ‘Rose Revolution’, on 21 July as a result

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<sup>641</sup> Iury Sulaberidze, “The Nature of Political Splits: the Rose Revolution”, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (2007) available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal\\_eng/cac-01/07.suleng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal_eng/cac-01/07.suleng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 17 January 2009).

<sup>642</sup> “Zourabichvili Gears up for Politics”, *Civil Georgia*, 20 October 2005 available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=11010> (Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>643</sup> “Sacked Foreign Minister Speaks out against the Parliament”, *Civil Georgia*, 20 October 2005, available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=11001&search=Sacked Foreign Minister Speaks out against the Parliament> (Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>644</sup> Ruben Zarbalyan, “Georgia’s Scarface: The Rise And Fall Of Saakashvili”, *Russia Today*, 11 July 2008 available at [http://russiatoday.com/Politics/2008-11-07/Georgia\\_s\\_Scarface\\_the\\_rise\\_and\\_fall\\_of\\_Saakashvili.html](http://russiatoday.com/Politics/2008-11-07/Georgia_s_Scarface_the_rise_and_fall_of_Saakashvili.html) (Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>645</sup> “Was the Former Georgian PM Murdered”, *Global Research*, 7 February 2009 available at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=12199> (Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

of the minister's criticism of use of force to solve conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.<sup>646</sup>

However, the bigger uproar was caused when former Defense Minister Irakli Okruashvili left the government in late 2006. Okruashvili advocated a harder line on the separatist territories and resigned when Saakashvili downgraded his position from the Minister of Defense to Minister of Economics. It has been argued that Okruashvili came to enjoy increasing popularity as a result of his stance on restoring territorial sovereignty over particularly South Ossetia and Saakashvili, who felt threatening by his increasing popularity and ambition to become president, forced him to resign.<sup>647</sup> Okruashvili was arrested on corruption charges on 27 September 2007, after he accused Saakashvili of corruption and ordering the murder of business tycoon Badri Patarkatsishvili in a televised speech. It was meaningful that corruption charges were raised against him he declared his opposition to Saakashvili.<sup>648</sup> Okruashvili was released after his retracted his accusations against Saakashvili on TV. However, speaking from Germany on 5 November, he stated that the retraction was coerced.<sup>649</sup>

Okruashvili's arrest started protests with the gathering of demonstrators in front of the parliament on 28 September, which would be followed by others in November 2008 and in the spring of 2009. All protests were held to demand the resignation of Saakashvili. Thus, the protests in 2007 went beyond denouncing the arrest of Okruashvili. The protestors were expressing their anger against the selective and politically driven anticorruption campaign under Saakashvili, the impunity that the ruling elite enjoyed when they involved in illegal acts and the

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<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>647</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia: Sliding towards Authoritarianism?", *Europe Report*, No. 189 (19 December 2007), p. 3

<sup>648</sup> Jonathan Wheatley and Christoph Zurcher, "On the Origin and Consolidation of Hybrid Regimes: *The State of Democracy in the Caucasus*", *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (July 2008), p. 25.

<sup>649</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2008 Georgia Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2008&country=7398> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

restriction of freedom of expression.<sup>650</sup> In this sense the protests raised the public demand for independent investigation and greater government accountability.<sup>651</sup>

There were also other reasons behind the protests. Okruashvili's statements were very important in the sense that they gave expression to the discontent and disappointment that had been steadily mounting in the Georgian society for the last two years. For some segments of the society, some reforms of Saakashvili very highly unpopular.<sup>652</sup> Fired police officers, civil servants who found themselves unemployed as a result of government downsizing, the older generation who was unable to adjust themselves to the modernization under Saakashvili, parts of the academia who lost bribes coming from university entrance exams when Saakashvili reformed the exam process were looking for an opportunity to express their grievances.<sup>653</sup> Criminal networks, Orthodox Church and the oligarchs who seen their role diminished under the new regime also supported the protests. These dissatisfied segments of the society would also attend the future protests in 2008 and 2009 to be discussed below.

Later the protests culminated in a united opposition movement, when on 29 September ten opposition parties formed the National Council of the United Public Movement. Through October, the opposition leaders travelled around the country to mobilize the people for the demonstrations to be held on 2 November. As a result, reminiscent of the process leading to the 'Rose Revolution', a long convoy of cars arrived in Tbilisi on November 1 and protestors started to take up their positions in front of the parliament. When the protests started on 2 November, 10-party opposition coalition declared that until the government met their four demands, the protest would continue. The opposition called for the resignation of Saakashvili and the early parliamentary elections in April, reform

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<sup>650</sup> Miriam Lansky and Giorgi Areshidze, "Georgia's Year of Turmoil", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (October 2008), p. 160.

<sup>651</sup> Georgia: Sliding towards Authoritarianism?, *International Crisis Group Europe Report*, No. 189, 19 December 2007, p. 3.

<sup>652</sup> Interviews with Kornely Kakachia and Ghia Nodia, Tbilisi, 18 and 22 June 2009 respectively.

<sup>653</sup> Ky Krauthamer, Jeremy Druker and Timothy Spence, "Our Take: Georgia's Wilted Rose", *Transitions Online*, 20 November 2007 available at [www.ceeol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=e639b57c](http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=e639b57c) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009) and interview with Kornely Kakachia 18 June 2009.

of the election system to include opposition members in electoral committees, the introduction of first-past-the-post parliamentary representation and release of political prisoners.<sup>654</sup>

When the demonstrators poured into the streets of Tbilisi to demand Saakashvili's resignation and early parliamentary elections, police used tear gas, water cannons, baton charges and rubber bullets to disperse them.<sup>655</sup> Police did not hesitate to use excessive force against peaceful demonstrators<sup>656</sup> and 508 people were injured in the events.<sup>657</sup> On 8 November Saakashvili declared a state of emergency all over the country and a ban on news programs on all private television stations for 15 days. This made the government-controlled Georgian Public Broadcaster as the only station to broadcast news.<sup>658</sup> Following this, heavily armed special troops attacked the private television station Imedi, which had been providing pro-opposition coverage of the events, expelled its staff and damaged much of the channel's equipment.<sup>659</sup> After the events, the government denied excessive use of force against the protestors alleging that the police used its legitimate right to disperse illegal demonstrations and accused the demonstrations of starting violence against the police. According to the government allegations, protests were part of the Russian-supported overthrow

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<sup>654</sup> Molly Corso, "Georgia: Protesters Pledge Continuous Demonstrations", *Eurasianet*, 2 November 2007 available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/.../eav110207.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/.../eav110207.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>655</sup> "508 People Injured in Unrests – Ministry", *Civil Georgia*, 8 November 2005, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16237&search=508 People Injured in Unrests – Ministry](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16237&search=508%20People%20Injured%20in%20Unrests%20-%20Ministry) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>656</sup> Crossing the Line: Georgia's Violent Dispersal of Protesters and Raid on Imedi Television, *Human Rights Watch Report*, Volume 19, No. 8(D) (December 2007) and Georgia: Sliding towards Authoritarianism?, *International Crisis Group Europe Report*, No. 189, 19 December 2007.

<sup>657</sup> "508 People Injured in Unrests – Ministry", *Civil Georgia*, 8 November 2005, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16237&search=508 People Injured in Unrests – Ministry](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16237&search=508%20People%20Injured%20in%20Unrests%20-%20Ministry) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>658</sup> "Emergency Rule in Georgia", News Coverage Curtailed, *Civil Georgia*, 8 November 2007, available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16239&search=Emergency Rule in Georgia, News Coverage Curtailed](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16239&search=Emergency%20Rule%20in%20Georgia%20News%20Coverage%20Curtailed) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>659</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Crossing the Line: Georgia's Violent Dispersal of Protestors and Raid on Imedi Television", *HRW Report*, Volume 19, No. 8(D) (December 2007).

attempt in which Imedi played an active role.<sup>660</sup> Several opposition members, including the presidential candidate and the owner of the Imedi TV, Badri Patarkatsishvili were accused of spying for Russia and criminal charges were filled against them.<sup>661</sup>

Although the government did not avoid using force due to his determination to remain in power and strengthening of the coercive capacity after the 'Revolution' by Saakashvili, it eventually backpedaled. This can be explained by the vulnerability of the Georgian state to external pressures. Western envoys had been sent to country to pressure Saakashvili to lift state of emergency and media restrictions. The envoys included important names such as the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby and former European Parliament President Josep Borrel Fontelles.<sup>662</sup> It was vital for the Saakashvili leadership to restore their image to maintain the Western funding it desperately needs. Furthermore, the NATO Bucharest Summit was approaching, Saakashvili was aware that he needed to improve the situation receive a Membership Action Plan, the last step for applicant countries before completing the NATO membership process. Since the NATO membership, which would provide protection against Russia, was the number one priority for the ruling elite, Saakashvili decided that it was not meaningful to insist on violent repression of opposition although he showed his willingness to use force at the beginning.

As a result, Saakashvili called for the snap presidential elections to be held on 5 January 2008 as well as a parallel referendum on the date of the parliamentary elections. He then resigned in line with the Georgian constitution. The presidency was taken over by the Parliamentary Speaker Nino Burjanadze. Saakashvili also accepted opposition demands for changing the electoral law to

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<sup>660</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Crossing the Line: Georgia's Violent Dispersal of Protestors and Raid on Imedi Television", *HRW Report*, Volume 19, No. 8(D)(December 2007).

<sup>661</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2008 Georgia Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2008&country=7398> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>662</sup> Antoine Blua, "Western Envoys in Tbilisi to Urge End of Emergency Measures", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 11 November 2007 available at [www.rferl.org/content/article/1079110.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079110.html)

enable opposition representation in election commission.<sup>663</sup> Moreover, Saakashvili tried to improve his legitimacy by announcing that he would replace the Prime Minister with Zurab Noghaidei with Lado Gurgenidze because it was Noghaidei who insisted on use of force.<sup>664</sup> Four days after Saakashvili's announcement of snap elections, the opposition coalition declared Levan Gachechiladze as its united candidate against Saakashvili. Georgian Labor Party, which was not included in the opposition coalition, named its leader Shalva Natelashvili as its candidate.<sup>665</sup>

Although Saakashvili eventually accepted opposition demands, it can be argued that this acceptance came as a result of some calculations as well as the external pressures discussed above. It has been argued that Saakashvili did this in order to deny the opposition the opportunity to campaign for the elections. Since the opposition media outlets such as Imedi have been damaged and restrictions imposed upon them, the opposition would have difficulty to find independent media coverage.<sup>666</sup>

The election campaign following Saakashvili's announcement of snap elections was marked by several violations. As a result of the restrictions discussed above, Saakashvili enjoyed wider and favorable coverage in the media whereas the opposition was deprived of these advantages. Several opposition parties also complained about the persecution and intimidation of their supporters and the attacks against their offices. Moreover, Saakashvili used the distributive state capacity to buy the support of the electorate. To this end, he provided cheap credits, cancelled electricity and gas arrears and distributed cheap laptops to the

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<sup>663</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2008 Georgia Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2008&country=7398> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>664</sup> "Georgia Lifts State of Emergency, New President Nominated", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 16 November 2007, available at [www.rferl.org/content/article/1079141.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079141.html) (Lastly accessed on 10 October 2009).

<sup>665</sup> "Georgia: Opposition Names Entrepreneur as Presidential Candidate", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079119.html> (Lastly accessed on 10 October 2009).

<sup>666</sup> Liz Fuller, "Georgian Preterm Presidential Election A Concession Or Calculated Risk?", *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, 15 November 2007, available at [www.rferl.org/content/article/1079137.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079137.html) (Lastly accessed on 10 October 2009).



poor children.<sup>667</sup> Saakashvili's use of the distributive state capacity to preserve power was also evident in the government's distribution of vouchers for utilities and medical supplies to the pensioner groups. By using the state budget. Recipient of the vouchers were sometimes asked whether they would vote for Saakashvili and demanded to sign documents confirming their support for him. Furthermore, distribution of tractors to the farmers in many parts of the country was observed as the elections neared.<sup>668</sup>

Moreover, active participation of civil servants in the election campaign of Saakashvili was reported.<sup>669</sup> The regime did not face difficulty in ensuring the participation of public workers in the campaigns of the national movement as working in state institutions went hand in hand with loyalty to the party.<sup>670</sup> Thus, it can be argued that Saakashvili used the increased state capacity to control the civil servants to maintain regime stability.

After all this intensive use of state capacity to maintain power by Saakashvili regime, the elections were held on 5 January 2008. Whereas Saakashvili got the 53.47 per cent of the votes, Gachechiladze received 25.69 per cent. Arkadi Patarkatsishvili came third with 7.1 per cent and followed by Shalva Natelashvili (6.49 per cent) and David Gamkrelidze (4.02 per cent.). The remaining candidates' votes were below one per cent.<sup>671</sup>

The international community deemed the elections as free and fair. OSCE and the US government bestowed its support behind Saakashvili by passing positive assessments on the elections although the opposition challenged the

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<sup>667</sup> Anna Dolidze, "Voices from Afar: Georgia's Choice", *National Interest*, 7 January 2008 available at <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=16604> (Lastly accessed on 10 October 2009).

<sup>668</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 5 January 2008 Extraordinary Presidential Election* (Warsaw, 4 March 2008), p. 12.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>670</sup> Marina Muskhelishvili and Gia Jorjoliani, "Georgia's Ongoing Struggle for a Better Future Continued: Democracy Promotion through Civil Society Development", *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (August 2009), p. 697.

<sup>671</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 5 January 2008 Extraordinary Presidential Election* (Warsaw, 4 March 2008), p. 12.

results and organized demonstrations.<sup>672</sup> The results showed that Saakashvili's votes were slightly over the 50 per cent plus one vote required for avoiding a second round. Under these circumstances, international election monitors assurances that there were no major violations in the elections did not mean much as even minor inflation of Saakashvili's votes would provide him with an unfair victory over the opposition.<sup>673</sup> Saakashvili managed to resume power by inaugurating on 20 January 2008 while thousands of opposition protestors were demanding a second round a few kilometers away.<sup>674</sup>

Having won the presidential elections, the regime engaged in preparations for the May 2008 parliamentary elections. The campaign for parliamentary elections was also marked by the use of state capacity for the victory of the ruling UNM party. To start with, the use of coercive capacity, some opposition activists who worked as state employees were threatened with dismissal if they did not campaign for the ruling party. Other opposition activists were warned that they would be arrested if they did not stop working for the opposition. In some cases, these activists suspended their activities. In other occasions, people who had relatives in pre-trial detention were told that they would see their relatives released if they convince certain numbers of people to vote for UNM.<sup>675</sup> The regime resorted to the distributive state capacity too. Cash and material goods were provided to encourage people to vote for Saakashvili's party.<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> Georgia's President Faces Old Challenges, *Radio Voice of America*, 25 January 2008 available at <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-01/2008-01-24-voa4.cfm?CFID=304735638&CFTOKEN=14702423&jsessionid=00305682c134a9d3a61ef5869124c7370475> (Lastly accessed on 10 October 2009).

<sup>673</sup> Liz Fuller, "One Year After Reelection, Georgian President Faces Multiple Challenges", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 4 January 2009, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp010409.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 22 May June 2009).

<sup>674</sup> Elizabeth Owen and Giorgi Lomsadze, "New President for Georgia but No Peace with the Opposition", *Eurasianet*, 21 January 2008 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/geovote08/news/012108.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 10 October 2009)

<sup>675</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 21 May 2008 Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 9 September 2008), p. 12.

<sup>676</sup> Analysis: Georgian Opposition Sounds Alarm Over Parliamentary Elections, *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, 19 May 2009 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1117511.html> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

As discussed, post-‘Rose Revolution’ Georgia experienced the ruling regime’s increasing control over media. When the leading media outlets came to be owned by the figures close to the ruling elite, media independence was harmed. As a result, almost all TV channels devoted wider and favorable coverage to the ruling elite compared to the opposition during the campaign period. For instance, four main TV channels broadcasted government activities in a way going beyond the need to inform the public about these issues. Moreover, the media devoted extensive coverage to ceremonies such as openings of new bus lines, roads or factories to activities such as the distribution of vouchers, computers or other gifts. This kind of broadcasts benefited the UNM campaign in an indirect way.<sup>677</sup>

Having enjoyed all these advantages compared to the opposition as a result of control over state resources, the ruling UNM gained a clear dominance in the parliament by taking 59.18 per cent of the votes and 119 seats while its nearest rival, United Opposition, gained only 17.73 per cent of the votes and 17 mandates. They were followed by the Christian-Democrats, which received 8.66 per cent of the votes and 6 seats, Shalva Natelashvili’s Georgian Labor Party, which gained 7.44 per cent of the votes and 6 seats and Georgian Republican Party, which got 3.78 per cent and 2 seats. The other parties failed to gain any seats.<sup>678</sup>

After the elections, the international observers enlisted their support behind Saakashvili by passing positive assessments for the elections. They stated that the elections reflected the democratic potential of Georgia, although some problems observed in the presidential elections in January remained to be solved.<sup>679</sup> However, the opposition was far from satisfied. It questioned the margin of UNM victory alleging that widespread fraud and intimidation took

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<sup>677</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Final Report on 21 May 2008 Parliamentary Elections* (Warsaw, 9 September 2008), p. 12

<sup>678</sup> [http://www.cec.gov.ge/files/oldFiles/summirizingprotocol\\_ENG4.doc](http://www.cec.gov.ge/files/oldFiles/summirizingprotocol_ENG4.doc)

<sup>679</sup> Liz Fuller, “Analysis: Is Georgian Opposition Still force to be Reckoned with”, Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 30 May 2008, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1144521.html> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

place.<sup>680</sup> Several hundreds of protestors met outside the Parliament to protest the election results starting with 26 May.<sup>681</sup>

The opposition called for its supporters to gather in front of the Parliament on 8 June to prevent the new Parliament from convening as in the case of the 'Rose Revolution'. After the opposition announced this schedule, the regime decided to get the jump on opposition plans by convening the Parliament on 7 June. When 8 June arrived, there were only a few hundred protests in front of the Parliament and they did not prevent the New MPs from entering into the Parliament. Still the government placed 19 busses of riot police and two water canons in nearby streets signaling both its readiness and capacity to use coercive state apparatus. At the end of the day, the new Parliament managed to convene unlike the one elected as a result of the 2003 parliamentary elections.<sup>682</sup> Although Saakashvili overcame this crisis in this way, his sense of relief would not last long as he would face another big challenge with the outbreak of the South Ossetian War as will be discussed in the following section.

### **6.3. Alignment with the NATO and the US: An Effective Instrument to Strengthen State Autonomy?**

In addition to the increases in presidential powers to strengthen state autonomy, Saakashvili also has counted on the US support and integration into transatlantic structures, most notably the NATO, to strengthen his position against both his rivals at home and Russia. This section is devoted to exploring to what extent he has succeeded in achieving this aim.

Georgia officially launched diplomatic relations with NATO in 1992 through joining NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. In 1994, Georgia

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<sup>680</sup> Mikheil Vignansky, "Georgian President Hails Poll Victory," *Institute of War and Peace Reporting*, available at [http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=344751&apc\\_state=henh](http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=344751&apc_state=henh) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>681</sup> "Protesters Gathered Outside Parliament", *Civil Georgia*, 7 June 2008 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18493&search=Protesters Gathered Outside Parliament](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=18493&search=Protesters+Gathered+Outside+Parliament) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>682</sup> Giorgi Lomsadze, "Georgia: Government Outmaneuvers Opposition with Parliament's Kick-off Session", *Eurasianet*, 9 June 2008 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav060908b.shtml> (lastly accessed on 9 October 2009).

moved further and joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program.<sup>683</sup> Georgia tried to discourage Russian aggression through aligning with the NATO and the US and use them as a to balance the perceived threats from Russia. As Georgia has gone into trouble with Russia since independence more than any other post-Soviet republic, it has emerged as the most determined country to join the NATO.<sup>684</sup>

Georgia embarked on a NATO-sponsored internal defense reform program, the Partnership Action and Review Process, in 1999. After the outbreak of Pankisi Crisis in 2002, which has been discussed earlier, the US give counterterrorism training to Georgian security forces as part of the Georgia Train and Equip Program. This provided extensive professional small-unit training to the Georgian military as well as increased opportunities for Georgian officers to attend Western military institutions. However, the Georgian army remained to be quite weak as illustrated by poor payment, abusive treatment, and miserable barracks standards. The presence of a higher paid, US-trained elements even led to considerable friction within the army.<sup>685</sup>

Since the 'Rose Revolution', the Saakashvili administration has launched an ambitious defense reform program to professionalize the Georgian armed forces and implement NATO doctrine and management processes.<sup>686</sup> Among other reasons, Saakashvili wanted to strengthen the army to restore the Georgian territorial integrity. The pro-Western Georgian leader set eventual NATO accession as an important priority and received substantial aid to reform the country's armed forces to the alliance's standards.<sup>687</sup> After a doubling of the

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<sup>683</sup> Travis L. Bounds and Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Georgian Membership in NATO: Policy Implications of the Bucharest Summit", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1(2009), p. 23.

<sup>684</sup> Alberto Priego, "NATO cooperation towards South Caucasus", *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No.1 (Winter 2008), p.4.

<sup>685</sup> Geoffrey Wright, "Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3(2009), p. 19.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>687</sup> Giorgi Kvelashvili, "Saakashvili Visits Washington: Georgia's Concerns and Contributions", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 7, No. 69 (9 April 2010), available at [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=36252&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=70e14a14c9](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36252&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=70e14a14c9).

defense budget in the first year following the 'Rose Revolution', the government has kept on making dramatic increases in military expenditures in the coming years.<sup>688</sup>

It can be argued that despite high expectations and increases in the military expenditures, Saakashvili's policy of gaining autonomy vis-à-vis challengers at home and Russia has largely backfired. When the Georgian army suffered a humiliating defeat against the Russian forces in the South Ossetian crisis of 2008, the Saakashvili administration has experienced loss of popularity to some extent.<sup>689</sup> The foreign policy orientations of the government, especially the harsh rhetoric employed against Russia became the target of fierce opposition criticisms.<sup>690</sup> In a short while after the war, the government announced a new reform program in a spur-of-the-moment state of the nation speech coinciding with a meeting of NATO's North Atlantic Council in Tbilisi. Saakashvili declared the launch of a 'new wave of democratic reforms' to improve check and balances, strengthen judicial independence and increase media freedom. Later that month, in his speech at the United Nations, Saakashvili promised to implement the new democratic initiatives of this 'second Rose Revolution'.<sup>691</sup> It can be argued that by pursuing a pragmatic policy, Saakashvili backpedalled and decreased his tone of authoritarianism to remain in power, at least in rhetoric

Aligning with NATO to gain autonomy against Russia has not delivered what Saakashvili expected either. If Georgia gets its NATO membership, Tbilisi

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<sup>688</sup> Margarita Antidze, "Georgia to Increase Troop Numbers and Army Budget," *International Herald Tribune*, 14 July 2008.

<sup>689</sup> The loss of popularity for Saakashvili government was still less than expected. Survey data from Georgia clearly indicates a strengthening of public support for the government following the conflict. This is especially valid for polling data from late 2008—the immediate period following the war—when the public was united around the president. Following opinion surveys show that the government has lost some ground as that sense of unity has gradually weakened, although not dramatically. For the public surveys please visit [http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2009%20April%201%20Survey%20of%20Georgian%20Public%20Opinion,%20February%2021-March%203,%202009\(1\).pdf](http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2009%20April%201%20Survey%20of%20Georgian%20Public%20Opinion,%20February%2021-March%203,%202009(1).pdf).

<sup>690</sup> Svante E. Cornell and Niklas Nilsson, "Georgian Politics since the August 2008 War", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 17, No. 3(Summer 2009), p. 258.

<sup>691</sup> Cory Welt, "Still Staging Democracy: Contestation and Conciliation in Postwar Georgia", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 17, No. 3(Summer 2009), p. 210.

would invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty to appeal to its allies to defend it whenever Russia attacks the border area. For this reason, Georgia-NATO cooperation and, overall, its NATO membership has been a thorny issue within the Atlantic Alliance itself. The government has worked hard in the way to NATO membership, carrying out an ambitious Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), being part of the Intensified Dialogue and working on the approval of its Membership Action Plan.<sup>692</sup> Georgia expected to be granted NATO's Membership Action Plan status, which constitutes the first step for eventual membership, in Bucharest in April 2008.

However, despite the strong support of the US, Tbilisi fell short of gaining MAP status mainly due to the opposition of seven members, led by Germany and France, which have consistently argued that the country was not ready for MAP and granting MAP to it at this state would certainly antagonize Russia.<sup>693</sup> Moscow has gained a sense of relief as a result this hesitation and interpreted the decision as a freedom granted to it to act as it wished in its backyard. Once Russia recognized that the West would not act against it as a united force, it did not see a reason to avoid the policies that would escalate the conflict in South Ossetia.<sup>694</sup> Moreover, the image of a reforming and increasingly capable Georgian military has been dramatically impaired when Georgian forces quickly defeated by the in the August 2008 South Ossetian War.<sup>695</sup> With the invasion of Georgia, Russia has sent a clear message, not only to Georgia but also to other independent minded post-Soviet states that it was back to its sphere of interest and it would not let the states in the region to act autonomously. Georgia's provoking Western stance exacerbated the tensions with Russia in the process leading to the 2008

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<sup>692</sup> Geoffrey Wright, "Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3(2009), p. 19.

<sup>693</sup> Travis L. Bounds and Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Georgian Membership in NATO: Policy Implications of the Bucharest Summit", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1(2009), p. 23.

<sup>694</sup> Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya: Azerbaycan, Ermenistan, Gürcistan Türkiye, Rusya, İran ve ABD'nin Kafkasya Politikaları* (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, 2009), p. 191.

<sup>695</sup> Geoffrey Wright, "Defense Reform and the Caucasus: Challenges of Institutional Reform during Unresolved Conflict" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 3(2009), p. 22.

Ossetian crisis but US support to Georgia remained short of preventing the Georgian defeat at the hand Russian forces and Moscow's recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>696</sup>

Having shown that Saakashvili's hopes to increase autonomy with the help of the NATO have been largely dashed in this way, it is also necessary to examine whether he improved state autonomy, especially against social forces at home, with the US help. After the 'Rose Revolution', Georgia was treated as the poster child of the American democracy promotion by the Bush administration. On 9 May 2005, Bush flew to Tbilisi and referred Georgia as a model for democracy movements around the world in his address in Tbilisi's Freedom Square.<sup>697</sup> The 'Rose Revolution' was portrayed as having made Georgia democratic in a short period of time rather than as a leadership change brought by state weakness.

After the 'Revolution', the increasing significance of the Georgian government for Washington has been observed clearly in U.S. policy, which quickly moved away from supporting the development of democratic institutions and Georgian civil society to directly supporting the Georgian government.<sup>698</sup> Aid and projects for fostering diverse political parties, promoting media freedom and

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<sup>696</sup> Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya: Azerbaycan, Ermenistan, Gürcistan Türkiye, Rusya, İran ve ABD'nin Kafkasya Politikaları* (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, 2009), p. 190.

<sup>697</sup> Arthur Bonner, "Georgian Losses And Russia's Gain", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 4(Winter 2008), p. 84.

<sup>698</sup> Different from the US government and the Georgian Diaspora in the US, which have supported Saakashvili (For the support of Georgian Diaspora in US for Saakashvili please see "Georgian Diaspora in the US supports Mikheil Saakashvili in the Election", *The Messenger*, 13 December 2007 ), Russia and The Georgian Diaspora in Russia has emerged as a source of support for the opposition("Georgian Diaspora condemns Saakashvili", *Russia Today*, 23 August 2008 available at <http://engforum.pravda.ru/showthread.php?223455-Georgian-diaspora-condemns-Saakashvili>, "Georgian opposition intends to create 'Georgian lobby' in Russia", *RIA Novosti*, 22 April 2010). Former Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, People's Party leader Koba Davitashvili, Conservative Party leader Kakha Kukava, and the former prime minister and current opposition member Zurab Noghaidei visited Russia and met with the members of Georgian Diaspora in Russia several times after they have broken up with Sakkashvili.( More Georgian Opposition Leaders Visit Russia, *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, 23 April 2010 available at [http://www.rferl.org/content/More\\_Georgian\\_Opposition\\_Leaders\\_Visit\\_Russia/2022663.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/More_Georgian_Opposition_Leaders_Visit_Russia/2022663.html)). Saakashvili has reacted to this situation by declaring that any opposition leader who travels to Moscow to meet with Russian leaders is a traitor and should be held criminally responsible.( "Georgian Opposition Leader Says No Need To Fear Russian Attack", *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, 5 March 2010 available at [http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian\\_Opposition\\_LeaderSays\\_No\\_Need\\_To\\_Fear\\_Russian\\_Attack/1975878.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian_Opposition_LeaderSays_No_Need_To_Fear_Russian_Attack/1975878.html) ).



strengthening civil society were cut back, whereas supporting the government's state-building efforts became a U.S. priority. Washington maintained its support towards the Georgian government even as the authoritarian tendencies of the new administration became increasingly clear.<sup>699</sup> In a clear contrast to the diffusion perspectives' portrayal of US as a democracy promoter, the Bush administration backed Georgian government due to its interest in the region. As discussed above, despite the fierce repression of November protests and restriction of media freedom, the US government avoided public and harsh criticisms. Through its continued support, Washington tried to strengthen Georgia against Russia and ensure the security of the BTC pipeline. Saakashvili counted on US support strengthen its autonomy against challengers at home and Russia in an environment where the European powers became increasingly critical of his growing dictatorial tendencies and turned to be unwilling to back his NATO aspirations. The US was almost indifferent to increasing authoritarianism under Saakashvili to ensure the stability in the country and maintain the European support for Saakashvili regime against the aggression of Russia.<sup>700</sup>

After Saakashvili came to the power, the US no longer acted as an honest broker in the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Instead of behaving neutrally and trying to find a compromise solution, Washington increasingly emphasized the importance of the Georgian territorial integrity. Unwavering US support helped the Georgian government maintain its hardliner position on the issue and encouraged it in the process leading to the South Ossetian crisis.<sup>701</sup> However, when the crisis erupted Saakashvili was not supported by the US as much as he expected. Georgia was alone when the Russian forces wander freely in the Georgia territory to which the US expressed its commitment in prior to the crisis. US support remained limited to sending three warships to deliver relief supplies

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<sup>699</sup> Alexander Cooley and Lincoln A. Mitchell, "No Way to Treat Our Friends: Recasting Recent U.S.-Georgian Relations", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 29.

<sup>700</sup> Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya: Azerbaycan, Ermenistan, Gürcistan Türkiye, Rusya, İran ve ABD'nin Kafkasya Politikaları* (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, 2009), p. 191.

<sup>701</sup> Alexander Cooley and Lincoln A. Mitchell, "No Way to Treat Our Friends: Recasting Recent U.S.-Georgian Relations", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 32.

ostensibly and to prevent Russia from going to far. In September, Washington added an aid package valued at \$1.1 billion to help Georgia recover from destruction of the South Ossetian war.<sup>702</sup>

To sum up, whereas the Georgian state has been strengthened at the expense of media and civil society and gained autonomy against these forces thanks to US policies, US encouragement proved to be influential in pushing the government to respond to the Russian provocation without restraint and caution.

#### **6.4. Increasing State Control over Social Forces: Weakening of Civil Society and Media**

Contrary to his earlier emphasis on democracy, Saakashvili administration has come to regard dissent as treason and he has not hesitated to use harsh reaction against the expression of discontent.<sup>703</sup> Having come to power with the help of civil society and media, Saakashvili knows what these forces can do if they are not constrained, therefore his attitude toward them has been tougher than Shevardnadze, who could not appreciate the danger that they posed to his survival before it was too late.<sup>704</sup> In a preemptive manner, the ruling party reined in the previous autonomy of almost all civil society organizations: universities, sport organizations and professional unions. Even the leadership of student self-government in the universities, which played an important role in the mobilization against the Shevardnadze regime as discussed, has gone to the control of the National Movement supporters.<sup>705</sup>

Since Saakashvili team proved to be more intolerant toward the dissent, NGO's that applied the methods that were previously used against the Shevardnadze in post-'Rose Revolution' period faced more serious reprisals under

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<sup>702</sup> Arthur Bonner, "Georgian Losses And Russia's Gain", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 2008), p. 84.

<sup>703</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3(September 2005), p. 345.

<sup>704</sup> Interview with Zaur Khalilov (Director, The Civic Integration Foundation), Interview, Tbilisi, 6 November 2008.

<sup>705</sup> Marina Muskhelishvili and Gia Jorjoliani, "Georgia's Ongoing Struggle for a Better Future Continued: Democracy Promotion through Civil Society Development", *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (August 2009), p. 696.

the current administration. For example, when the Institute of Equality tended to work in cooperation with the opposition parties in a way reminiscent of the tactics of the NGO's before and during the 'Rose Revolution', some of its activists had to pay this with 30 days in prison.<sup>706</sup> All these factors have constrained the power of NGO's to monitor and hold Saakashvili administration accountable. It has been frequently mentioned that the 'Rose Revolution' resulted in the weakening of the Georgian civil society because an important part of the civil society activists moved to the government posts after the 'Revolution'.<sup>707</sup> After the 'Revolution' the Institute of Freedom experienced the rise of some of its prominent members to the highest posts in the country: Giga Bokeria became the Deputy Foreign Minister and the de facto parliamentary majority leader; Givi Targamadze started to head the parliamentary Committee for Defense and Security; Gigi Ugulava is the mayor of Tbilisi; Ivan Merabishvili became the minister of the interior, Sozar Subari is ombudsman since the 'Revolution', Tamara Kintsurashvili is general director of public TV and radio and Alexander Lomaia, former director of the Soros Foundation-Georgia branch, first rose the post of Secretary of Georgia's Security Council then became Georgia's UN envoy. In addition to these top positions, many members of the third sector became MPs.<sup>708</sup> These transfer to the ranks of the government first of all led to the loss of leadership and experience gained in the process leading to the 'Revolution'.<sup>709</sup> This shift to governmental sector also served to harm the image of civil society in the eyes of the Georgian

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<sup>706</sup> Beka Chedia, Georgia: Devalued Public Capital and the Third Sector at the Crossroads, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 50, 2008 available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-02-eng/08.shtml>(Lastly accessed on 13 April 2009)

<sup>707</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3(September 2005), p. 345, Beka Chedia, Georgia: Devalued Public Capital and the Third Sector at the Crossroads, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 50, 2008 available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-02-eng/08.shtml>(Lastly accessed on 13 April 2009) and Nicklaus Laverty, , "The Problem of Lasting Change: Civil Society and the Color Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Volume 16, Number 2 (Spring 2008), p.154.

<sup>708</sup> Beka Chedia, Georgia: Devalued Public Capital and the Third Sector at the Crossroads, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 50, 2008 available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-02-eng/08.shtml>(Lastly accessed on 13 April 2009)

<sup>709</sup> Interview with David Darchiashvili (Parliamentarian and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration and the Former Executive Director of Georgia Open Society Institute), Tbilisi, 19 June 2009.

society. The people have come to think that what the activists participating in the 'Revolution' really aimed at was coming to power rather than improvement of freedom when they have seen that former members of the civil society did not turn to be true to the promises of the 'Revolution' once in power.<sup>710</sup>

The decrease in the foreign funding to the civil society is another reason behind the weakening of the third sector. After the 'Revolution' donor community shifted their attention from civil society building to strengthening of the state capacity. After the 'Revolution' George Soros declared that he would not maintain his support towards the Georgian NGOs. He underlined that after the 'Revolution' it was more important to support the Georgian government; for a while, the ministers received their wages from the Soros Fund.<sup>711</sup> As a result, the civil society experienced a significant fall in the financial help it had received before. In a poor country like Georgia where the civil society cannot find domestic sources of funding, the shift of money to the government has led to the significant weakening of the NGOs. With this move, the donors reversed the process leading to the fall of Shevardnadze. Whereas the international community strengthened the NGOs at the expense of the government previously, now it has been serving to the opposite process with the shift of money.

Apart from weakening the financial power of the civil society, this situation also harmed the solidarity between the NGO that had existed before the 'Revolution' as competition over the foreign funding increased with the decrease in the foreign aid.<sup>712</sup> It has been argued that since Saakashvili administration is more powerful, organized and efficient than the Shevardnadze regime, the NGOs find it difficult to compete with it.<sup>713</sup> Since the Shevardnadze administration was more disorganized and less competent than the Saakashvili's team, the civil society was able to find a way to shape the decisions and policies. Now

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<sup>710</sup> Interview with Ketik Khutsishvili. (Chair, George Soros Open Society Institute, Georgia), Interview, Tbilisi, 13 November 2008.

<sup>711</sup> Beka Chedia, Georgia: Devalued Public Capital and the Third Sector at the Crossroads, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 50, 2008 available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-02-eng/08.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 13 April 2009).

<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>713</sup> Interview with Ghia Nodia, Tbilisi, 22 June 2009.

Saakashvili ignores the advices of the NGOs because he relies on his own team rather than NGO leaders. As a consequence, NGOs now resent that they are not as influential as before.<sup>714</sup>

Georgian media lost the influence it had enjoyed before too. The most obvious example of this is the Rustavi-2. The channel was owned by Erosi Kitsmarishvili previously but when he fell into disagreement with the former prime minister Zhvania, he was forced to give up his ownership of the TV company and leave Georgia. The next owner of the channel was businessman Kibar Khalvashi, who had close relations with the Interior Minister of the time and number two of the regime Irakli Okruashvili. After Okruashvili was forced to resign, the ownership of the Rustavi-2 once again changed. The Company is now owned by a new figure, who enjoys the support of the government.<sup>715</sup> The owner of the Mze television station also changed after the 'Revolution'; the brother of Georgian foreign minister Gela Bezhushvili became the owner. Through these measures the government tried to establish centralized control over private television channels.<sup>716</sup>

The government pressure on the media has not remained limited to this. Two television channels, Iberia and the Ninth Channel, were closed shortly after the 'Revolution', two of the country's widely watched political talk shows were taken off air and the outlets formerly known for their criticisms tended to opt for self-censorship to avoid problems with the government. Some channels that are critical of the government experienced financial investigations interpreted as veiled warnings not to go too far.<sup>717</sup> Imedi channel continued to give air time to

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<sup>714</sup> Interview with David Darchiashvili and Levan Ramishvili, Tbilisi, 19 and 25 June 2009 respectively.

<sup>715</sup> Zaal Anjaparidze, "Georgian Media Mogul Forced out of Business", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 15 October 2004, available at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=27000](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=27000) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009) and "Rustavi 2 TV Changes Hands", *Civil Georgia*, 20 November 2006 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14127&search=Rustavi 2 TV Changes Hands](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14127&search=Rustavi%20TV%20Changes%20Hands) (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

<sup>716</sup> Beka Chedia, Georgia: Devalued Public Capital and the Third Sector at the Crossroads, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 50, 2008 available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-02-eng/08.shtm> (Lastly accessed on 13 April 2009).

<sup>717</sup> Laurence Broers, "After the 'Revolution': Civil Society and the Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Georgia", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (September 2005), p. 345.

opposition leaders and to broadcast programs criticizing government as the owner of the channel, Badri Patarkatsishvili, sold the channel's controlling set of shares to world-known media magnate Rupert Murdoch to save it from being sold to pro-government businessman or from being closed down.<sup>718</sup> However, it would still be subjected to government pressures and its broadcasts would be suspended as will be discussed in the section focusing to the November 2007 protests.

## 6.5. Improving Economic Capacity

Having resumed power in June 2004 as the Georgia's Minister of Economy, Kakha Bendukidze, initiated a comprehensive economic program aiming at curbing corruption, reform of the taxes and customs, privatization of state-owned assets and natural resources and improvements in the labor market.<sup>719</sup> This chapter is devoted to examining the degree of success of the Saakashvili's administration in strengthening the capacity of the state in economic terms.

Decreasing petty corruption is one of the frequently cited achievements of Saakashvili administration after the 'Revolution'. Since petty corruption was mostly about taking bribes from the citizens for basic services like issuing a passport or registering the sale of properties, its curtailment positively affected the Georgian citizens en masse. The traffic police, whose practices of stopping the drivers frequently to demand bribes constituted a notorious example of corruption under Shevardnadze, have been reformed and the practice came to a halt.<sup>720</sup> The salaries of new patrol police have been increased significantly to keep them away from taking bribes.<sup>721</sup> Saakashvili administration anticorruption program also

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<sup>718</sup> Beka Chedia, Georgia: Devalued Public Capital and the Third Sector at the Crossroads, *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 50, 2008 available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2008-02-eng/08.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 13 April 2009).

<sup>719</sup> Jonathan Kulick and Temuri Yakobashvili, "Georgia and the Wider Black Sea" in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), pp. 35, 36.

<sup>720</sup> Julia Tsepilava, "Georgia: Roses and Thorns", *Merrill Lynch*, 26 February 2008, p. 3, Devi Khechinashvili, *Georgia After the Rose Revolution: An Opportunity Lost?*, (Washington: Center for International Private Enterprise), 31 October 2005, p. 2

<sup>721</sup> Nina Dadalauri, *Political Corruption: the Case of Georgia*, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center Caucasus Office, November 2005, p. 12.

aimed at ending the corruption in the education system. The introduction of national university entrance exams in 2005 to prevent bribes and patronage amid the harsh debate and resistance has proved to be an important step taken in this respect.<sup>722</sup>

Despite these successes at curbing petty corruption, it has been argued that under the Saakashvili administration the corruption at the highest level is continuing.<sup>723</sup> Having resumed power, the Saakashvili government initiated the purge and the arrests of high-ranking officials served in Shevardnadze administration including those of the former Minister of Energy (alleged of misappropriating \$ 6 million while in power), chief of Georgian Railway, former head of the Chamber of Control, the owner of the cell-phone company MGT Georgia and the former president of the Georgian Football Association.<sup>724</sup> However, high-level corruption was reproduced by the Saakashvili team. It has been asserted that Saakashvili team grants important businesses to their relatives and it violates public procurement laws.<sup>725</sup> It has also been underscored that after the 'Revolution' regional or local governors forced the businessmen to hand over shares to them.<sup>726</sup> As will be discussed, the corruption at the highest level would be revealed as the splits in the ruling elite intensified and caused public protests. Against the criticisms that corruption is still an important problem for Georgia, the analysts like Ghia Nodia hold that before the 'Revolution' corruption was the 'rule of the game', people would not be felt disappointed when they had come across it. The fact that now it is approached as an unusual thing by the society and

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<sup>722</sup> "President Says Education Reform to Boost Social Justice", *Civil Georgia*, 25 September 2005, available at [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=10823](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=10823) (Lastly accessed on 30 March 2009)

<sup>723</sup> Interview with Vladimer Papava (Minister of Economy of Georgia between 1994-2000 and a Senior Fellow at Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), Tbilisi, 12 November 2008 and D. Chipashvili, *After the Rose Revolution - Trends of Economic Development and Its Impact on Georgia*, CEE Bankwatch Network, March 2007, p. 6.

<sup>724</sup> Nina Dadalauri, *Political Corruption: the Case of Georgia*, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center Caucasus Office, November 2005, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>725</sup> Interview with Interview with Vladimer Papava (Minister of Economy of Georgia between 1994-2000 and a Senior Fellow at Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), Tbilisi, 12 November 2008

<sup>726</sup> David Chipashvili, *After the Rose Revolution - Trends of Economic Development and Its Impact on Georgia*, CEE Bankwatch Network, March 2007, p. 6.

it has been decreased compared to past indicate the success of the new administration. As he argues, it is not possible to totally eradicate corruption from a country where it is so deeply entrenched.<sup>727</sup>

There has been significant growth in state revenues in the immediate period after the 'Rose Revolution' due to improvements in the tax collection, decreasing corruption, restoration of authority over Adjara and increasing external financial aid. Original targets for tax revenues had to be revised upward twice in 2004 because of the boom in tax collection. During that year, tax revenues doubled the 2003 levels. As a result, the government became able to finance its expanses in several sectors (paying salaries, increasing military spending) and was able to double monthly pensions. More businesses, especially medium and large-scale enterprises, have been moved out of the shadow economy due to the improvements in the enforcement of tax laws.<sup>728</sup> The government also discovered some new sources of non-tax revenues. For instance, as a part of the fight against corruption, the government introduced 'voluntary payment for ransom' or the return of illegally gained money to state budget as a precondition for the release of oligarchs from prison and this also contributed to the rise of state revenues. For example, Gia Jokhtaberidze (son-in-law of Shevardnadze) paid \$15 million for his release.<sup>729</sup> However, the government was not able to rely on such returns for a long time since they were only temporary.<sup>730</sup> Restoration of authority over Adjara also brought about increased state revenues.<sup>731</sup> First, an important increase in the customs fees has been experienced as a result of government's taking control over

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<sup>727</sup> Interview with Ghia Nodia, (Director, Ilia Chavchavadze State University School of Caucasus Studies and the Former Ministry of Education), Interview, Tbilisi, 22 June 2009.

<sup>728</sup> James V. Wertsch, "Georgia as a Laboratory for Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 2005), pp. 522, 523.

<sup>729</sup> Sergey Smirnov, "The Economy of 'Rose' Georgia: Flowering or Fading?" ,*Central Asia and the Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 43 (2007), available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2007-01-eng/13.pr.smieng.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>730</sup> Vladimer Papava, "Georgia's Macroeconomic Situation Before and After the Rose Revolution", *Problems of Economic Transition*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (August 2005), p. 16.

<sup>731</sup> James V. Wertsch, "Georgia as a Laboratory for Democracy", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 2005), pp. 522, 523.



the region. Second, after Abashidze's removal from power, his property, estimated at \$100 million, was confiscated and went into the state budget.<sup>732</sup>

Finally, state revenues have increased with expanding external assistance. As discussed, international donors cut financial aid to Shevardnadze as they had come to the realization that their money served nothing more than feeding the corrupt inner circle of the president. This situation changed when Saakashvili came to power as he showed his determination to restart the reforms demanded by the Western donor community and stalled by Shevardnadze leadership.<sup>733</sup> In 2006 World Bank listed Georgia as the leading reformer in the world and it has remained one of the top ten reformers around the globe in 2007 and 2008. Georgia gained this place in the list because Saakashvili has made it significantly easier to start up business by clearing up formalities, improved tax and customs systems and realized important reforms in the finance sector.<sup>734</sup> The year that Saakashvili came to power saw increase of foreign aid to Georgia by 2.5 times, from \$48 million in 2003 to \$124 million in 2004.<sup>735</sup> Today, the Georgian state officials are not only proud of the increase in the external financial aid to Georgia in the aftermath of the 'Revolution' but they also emphasize that they shape the Western donor organizations and use the revenues in line with the needs of the Georgian state. They assert that they are different from Shevardnadze administration in which the rulers were simply interested in attracting as much money as possible to enrich themselves.<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> Sergey Smirnov, "The Economy of 'Rose' Georgia: Flowering or Fading?" ,*Central Asia and the Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 43 (2007), available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2007-01-eng/13.pr.smieng.shtml>(Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>733</sup> Pamela Jawad, "Diversity, Conflict, and State Failure: Chances and Challenges for Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution", *Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper*, Vol. 30, No. 3(December 2006), p.32.

<sup>734</sup> Jesse David Tatum, "Democratic Transition In Georgia: Post-Rose Revolution Internal Pressures on Leadership", *Caucasian Review Of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2(Spring 2009), pp. 156-171.

<sup>735</sup> Sergey Smirnov, "The Economy of 'Rose' Georgia: Flowering or Fading?" ,*Central Asia and the Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 43 (2007)., available at <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/2007-01-eng/13.pr.smieng.shtml>(Lastly accessed on 9 April 2009).

<sup>736</sup> Interview with Mariam Gabunia (Head of the Department for Foreign Trade and International Economic Relations), Interview, Tbilisi, November 2008.

The benefits of these improvements in the economic capacity have not been shared equally and some of the reforms have only served to deteriorate unemployment and the poverty.<sup>737</sup> Half of the population lives below the poverty line, with 17 percent in extreme poverty and unemployment has an upward trend.<sup>738</sup> The new Labor Code of Georgia, which was regarded by the government and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) as one of the brightest accomplishments of Saakashvili administration, resulted in lowering firing costs to some of the lowest levels in the world and was strongly criticized by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Labor Organization (ILO).<sup>739</sup> However, it is also necessary to add that many of these reforms covered only some specific areas such as finance and energy and most of the increased revenue went to the armed forces. Most of the reforms were realized to increase cooperation with organizations such as World Bank and IMF and to attain eventual membership in NATO. As a result, they have remained short of addressing many problems that the society faced and deteriorated some others.<sup>740</sup>

The overflow of foreign investment has fueled inflation (officially eleven percent in 2007, but widely regarded by economists as higher), with wages and pensions were not improved enough to compensate for the price increases.<sup>741</sup> People complain that their living standards were not improving fast enough as the government has been dramatically increasing the military budget instead of wages

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<sup>737</sup> Jonathan Kulick and Temuri Yakobashvili, , Jonathan Kulick and Temuri Yakobashvili, "Georgia and the Wider Black Sea" in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), p. 35.

<sup>738</sup> David Chipashvili, *After the Rose Revolution - Trends of Economic Development and Its Impact on Georgia*, CEE Bankwatch Network, March 2007, p. 3.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>740</sup> Jesse David Tatum, op. cit., p. 168 and Claire Bigg and Daisy Sindelar, "Georgia: After Crackdown on Protests: President Calls Early Polls", 8 November 2008 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079100.html>(lastly Accessed 9 February 2009).

<sup>741</sup> Jonathan Kulick and Temuri Yakobashvili, "Georgia and the Wider Black Sea" in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), pp. 35, 36.

and pensions.<sup>742</sup> Thanks to the reforms in energy sector, Georgian population was provided with full electricity supply in the winter of 2006-2007 for the first time in post-independence period.<sup>743</sup> However, higher prices for gas had to be paid as a result of Saakashvili's confrontation with Moscow. Moreover, privatization has not reached to vital infrastructure; including gas-pipeline networks, the national railway, electricity-generation and distribution assets, and the Tbilisi water company.<sup>744</sup>

The August 2008 war and the global economic crisis have resulted in a number of significant blows to growth and stability, including a deterioration in investor and consumer confidence, contraction of liquidity in the banking system, infrastructure damage, and increased numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Economic growth, estimated at 2.1 percent in 2008, represents a sharp slowdown from rapid growth in excess of 9 percent during the preceding four years. The economy contracted by 3.2 percent during the second half of 2008.<sup>745</sup> In the donors' conference, which was held on 22 October 2008 in Brussels, 38 countries and fifteen international organizations promised more than \$4.5 billion over a three-year period – \$2 billion indirect aid, the rest via low-interest loans. While the Georgian government can use this external financial funding to satisfy some urgent needs of the society and make some critical investments, it will have hard time in restoring international investor confidence in Georgia.<sup>746</sup> Recovering consumer confidence would be another daunting task to tackle with. When the effects of global crisis have been combined with those of the August War the

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<sup>742</sup> Factbox: Georgia's Saakashvili Divides Country, *Reuters*, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSL0235425420071107> (Lastly accessed on 2 May 2009).

<sup>743</sup> Interview with Vladimer Papava, (Minister of Economy of Georgia between 1994-2000 and a Senior Fellow at Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), Interview, Tbilisi, 12 November 2008.

<sup>744</sup> Jonathan Kulick and Temuri Yakobashvili, "Georgia and the Wider Black Sea" in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (eds.), *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), p. 37.

<sup>745</sup> World Bank, 2009 Georgia Brief, available at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/CAEXT/GEORGIAEXTN/0,,menuPK:301755~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:301746,00.html> (Lastly accessed on 8 May 2009).

<sup>746</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia: The Risks of Winter", *Europe Briefing*, No. 51 (26 November 2008), p. 10.

situation has become complicated. Together with the discontent over loosing jobs as a result of government downsizing and dismissal of personal in the framework of restructuring and fight against corruption, the uneasiness about the economic difficulties will prepare the ground for the emergence of spring protests in 2009.

#### **6.6. Extending State Control over Territory**

As discussed in the historical background, Georgia has experienced more difficulty in establishing its control over the territory under its jurisdiction in post-independence period. Apart from the breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, there are those parts of the country that Shevardnadze had left to the control of local leaders such as the southern regions inhabited by Armenian and Azeri minorities and Adjara, which had been controlled by authoritarian leader Aslan Abashidze. This section is devoted to the efforts of post-‘Rose Revolution’ ruling elite to extend control over these problematic areas except for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These territories will be dealt within the framework of the August War in line with the sequential order.

To start with Adjara, tensions in the region flared after Saakashvili set out ending the fiefdom of Abashidze in the region immediately after coming to power. As discussed Abashidze was keen to hold on to power and supported Shevardnadze against Saakashvili with the fear that the latter would attempt to end his rule in Adjara. Instead of trying to enter into dialogue with Saakashvili, Abashidze refused to pay taxes and duties despite Tbilisi’s insistence on the issue and blocked Saakashvili’s entrance into the region on 15 March 2004. The crisis went deeper when forces loyal to Abashidze blew up two bridges and partly dismantled the railway linking the region with Georgia proper. Tbilisi reacted to this by imposing an economic blockade against Adjara, putting its forces on alert and issuing an ultimatum for Abashidze to dissolve the paramilitary forces under his control and submit to the central government’s rule.<sup>747</sup> The local autocrat’s position became increasingly unsustainable as the opposition protests demanding his resignation gained momentum and some of his important allies in the cabinet

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<sup>747</sup> Pamela Jawad, “Diversity, Conflict, and State Failure: Chances and Challenges for Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution”, *Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (December 2006), p. 7.

and the security forces allied with the demonstrations.<sup>748</sup> Moreover, Russia also withdrew its support for Abashidze, as it did not want to risk the recently emerged reconciliation between Moscow and Tbilisi in immediate post-‘Rose Revolution’ period. Moreover, it was difficult to support Abashidze, as Adjara does not border Russia.<sup>749</sup> Washington was also pressuring Moscow to suspend its support for Abashidze.<sup>750</sup> As a result, Moscow declined to intervene in support of Abashidze and declared that the Russian military forces stationed at the Batumi military base were ordered to maintain neutrality.<sup>751</sup>

When Abashidze and his close circle fled to Moscow as a result of Russian mediation, Saakashvili scored a success in the first test case for his administration.<sup>752</sup> He then proceeded to change the constitution and pass the Law on the Status of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara (July 2004). As a result, the central government re-established the control of Tbilisi over the area and seriously reduced the powers of the government of the autonomous republic.<sup>753</sup>

However, as will be discussed Saakashvili would experience a humiliating defeat when he attempted to repeat his success in Abkhazia and South Ossetia due to the different character of the conflicts in these territories. First of all, as opposed Adjara whose inhabitants differed from rest of Georgia in terms of religion, the secessionist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have an ethnic component. Some experts did not even consider the problems between Tbilisi and

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<sup>748</sup> International Crisis Group, “Saakashvili’s Ajara Success: Repeatable Elsewhere in Georgia?”, *Europe Briefing*, 18 August 2004, p. 7

<sup>749</sup> Interview with Alexander Rondeli, (President, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies), Interview, Tbilisi, 12 November 2008.

<sup>750</sup> Saakashvili’s Ajara Success: Repeatable Elsewhere in Georgia?, *International Crisis Group Europe Briefing*, 18 August 2004, p. 9.

<sup>751</sup> “Russia Reaffirms Neutrality”, *Civil Georgia*, 16 May 2004 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=6451&search=Russia Reaffirms Neutrality](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=6451&search=Russia+Reaffirms+Neutrality) (Lastly accessed on 5 April 2009).

<sup>752</sup> Pamela Jawad, “Diversity, Conflict, and State Failure: Chances and Challenges for Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution”, *Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (December 2006). p. 7.

<sup>753</sup> Katya Kalandadze, Populism vs Democratization: The Georgian Rose Revolution, *Democratic Governance in Central and Eastern Europe Conference Paper*, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, 7 April 2006, available at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/Programs/ces/Kalandadze.doc> (Lastly accessed on 25 March 2009).

Batumi within the framework of secession, they emphasize that the conflict revolved around the control over the economic resources of the region. Moreover, Russia has a higher security interest in Ossetian and Abkhaz cases.<sup>754</sup> Lastly, as the resolution of Adjarian problem was realized in the context of a thaw between Tbilisi and Moscow in post-‘Rose Revolution’ period, the relations between the two parties would get more strained in the process leading to the August War due to Georgia’s insistence on NATO integration and Russia’s use of Kosovo’s independence as a pretext to recognize secessionist territories in Georgia.

Saakashvili’s mistakes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and their consequences will be dealt with in greater detail latter but before ending this session it is necessary to examine Saakashvili’s attempts at improving central control over Javakheti (mainly populated by Armenians) and Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti and Shida Kartli (Azeri-populated regions of the country). During Shevardnadze’s time, Soviet ways of managing relations between the center and the minority-populated areas were mainly kept intact. Shevardnadze and his close circle were afraid to touch those sensitive issues; they preferred to let the dogs sleep. The economic resources were given the control over clan leaders and their extended families in return for raising the support of local populations for the incumbent leadership.<sup>755</sup> The ruling elite did not bother to carry out policies for the civic integration of the minorities. For example, no effort was made to teach the minorities the Georgian. The Shevardnadze administration did not attempt to reform the education system to ensure the integration of minorities. The textbooks of the schools at the minority regions came from Azerbaijan and Armenia, as Shevardnadze team did not press Armenian and Azeri textbooks in Georgia. As a result, the minorities came to develop different orientations as textbooks came

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<sup>754</sup> Pamela Jawad, “Diversity, Conflict, and State Failure: Chances and Challenges for Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution”, *Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (December 2006), p. 12 and James V. Wertsch, James V. Wertsch, “Georgia as a Laboratory for Democracy”, *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 2005), p. 526.

<sup>755</sup> Interview with Eka Metzeveli, Research Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Tbilisi, 11 November and Interview with Zaur Khalilov (Director, The Civic Integration Foundation), Interview, Tbilisi, 6 November 2008.

from the outside of Georgia.<sup>756</sup> Saakashvili initiated the writing of minority textbooks in Georgia. Moreover, he started the policy of teaching Georgian as the second language at minority schools, before him Russian was taught as the second language. He also took steps to teach government officials in minority regions Georgian.<sup>757</sup>

These policies on minority issues started to change when Saakashvili came to power. During Shevardnadze period there was an unwritten agreement between the ruling elite in Tbilisi and clan leaders in minority regions. While Shevardnadze gave the local leaders free hand over the use of local resources, the local leaders remained loyal to the center in return for control over local resources. Saakashvili broke this agreement.<sup>758</sup> Saakashvili increased and transformed the interactions between the local and central governments. Today minority governments have more say in the decision making process and the central government has more control over the enforcement of decisions and the use of resources by the local government compared to the Shevardnadze period. Saakashvili carried the decision making process to the official level. Clientelistic networks lost the power that they had enjoyed in minority-related issues during Shevardnadze period.<sup>759</sup>

Saakashvili was the first post-independence Georgian leader to emphasize the necessity of integrating the minorities. Since Gamsakhurdia advocated the policy 'Georgia for the Georgians', integration of the minorities was out of question for him. Shevardnadze took some steps for the representation of minorities but they remained nominal. For example during Shevardnadze period, there were 14 MPs representing the minorities in the parliament but only one of them spoke Georgian. Therefore, they could not participate in the discussions in the parliament. Different from the previous leaders, Saakashvili started to use the

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<sup>756</sup> Interview with Eka Metzeveli, Research Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Tbilisi

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>758</sup> Interview with Zaur Khalilov (Director, The Civic Integration Foundation), Interview, Tbilisi, 6 November 2008.

<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*

rhetoric of civic integration. For instance, he stated that he was all Armenian, Azeri and Georgian at the same time.<sup>760</sup> However, Jonathan Wheatley points out that the government still gives priority to Georgian national symbols and this is illustrated by the emphasis on the Georgian language as the main basis for the national integration. Therefore, for him the government does not go beyond replacing the previous policy of exclusion with that of assimilation, as there have been no attempts to devise less ethnically biased symbols for new identity.<sup>761</sup>

Saakashvili also resorted to economic measures to ensure the support of the minority populations in the region and increased state control over minority regions. Compared to Azeri-populated regions, the economic situation is worse in Armenian populated Javakh and new administration's policies to improve minority economic conditions mostly targeted Javakh. To address the unemployment problem of the population a new jean factory in the region has been opened. Armenians had also complained about the bad infrastructure in the region and the government started the project of rehabilitation of Tbilisi-Akhalkalaki road both to improve the infrastructure and curb unemployment in the region by employing the local population.<sup>762</sup>

The closing of Russian military base in Akhalkalaki proved to be a very thorny issue as the base was vied as a guarantee of defense against neighboring Turkey and a source of employment for the Armenian population.<sup>763</sup> Saakashvili government tried to abate the concerns of the Armenians by the means of providing new economic opportunities that will be discussed below and campaigns were carried out to change the image of the NATO in the eyes of the

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<sup>760</sup> Interview with Eka Metzeveli, Research Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Tbilisi.

<sup>761</sup> Jonathan Wheatley quoted in Johanna Popjanevski and Niklas Nilsson, National Minorities and the State in Georgia, *The Silk Road Studies Program Conference Report*, Uppsala University, 29 June 2006, p. 12 available at [www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/.../0608Georgia\\_Minorities.pdf](http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/.../0608Georgia_Minorities.pdf) (Lastly accessed on 20 May 2009).

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>763</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, Obstacles Impeding the Regional Integration of the Javakheti Region of Georgia, *European Center for Minority Issues Working Paper*, No. 22 (September 2004), pp. 28, 29.



Armenians which equated the NATO involvement in the region with Turkish encroachment against the Armenian population of the region.<sup>764</sup>

### **6.7. The Road to War: Saakashvili's Policies towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia**

After the signature of 1994 ceasefire and separation of forces agreement (Moscow Agreement), peace negotiations led by the UN (the Geneva Peace Process) and Russia could not bring about the settlement of the Abkhazian problem. The tensions escalated especially in the Gali region in 1998 and in the Kodori Valley in 2001.<sup>765</sup>

After coming to power, Saakashvili frequently emphasized that Georgia's territorial integrity was his utmost goal and he promised to reintegrate Abkhazia by 2009. He assured that Georgians displaced by the conflict that would be able to return to their homes. He offered the Abkhaz 'greatest possible autonomy', without the right to secession, based on the creation of a 'new, joint-state model of ethnic and civil cooperation'.<sup>766</sup> Temur Yakobashvili, Minister of State for Reintegration of Georgia, also tried to include the Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey in the new process and take the help of Turkey to convince the Abkhaz diaspora to accept a solution to the issue within the framework for Georgian territorial integrity. However, Abkhaz diaspora opposed the initiative by declaring that they did not believe in the sincerity of the Georgian side.<sup>767</sup> The Abkhaz Diaspora reacted to the Saakashvili's goal of the re-imposing control over Abkhazia and Ossetia fiercely.<sup>768</sup> After Shevardnadze cautious stance, the Georgian Diaspora as well as their compatriots in break-away regions and Georgia were alarmed by

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<sup>764</sup> Interview with Eka Metzeveli, Research Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Tbilisi.

<sup>765</sup> International Crisis Group, "Abkhazia: Ways Forward", *Europe Report*, No. 179 (18 January 2007), p. 1

<sup>766</sup> International Crisis Group, "Abkhazia Today", *Europe Report* No. 176 (15 September 2006), p. 2.

<sup>767</sup> "Gürcistan'ın Diasporaya Sızma Çabası Beyhude", *Ajans Kafkas*, 1 April 2008.

<sup>768</sup> Özdemir Özbay, *Dünden Bugüne Abhazya in Abhazya ve Güney Osetya Gerçeği*, pp. 19-20 available at [http://www.nartajans.net/nuke/Stories\\_Archive-sa-show\\_month-year-2009-month-02-month\\_1-Subat.htm](http://www.nartajans.net/nuke/Stories_Archive-sa-show_month-year-2009-month-02-month_1-Subat.htm).

Saakashvili's temper. Saakashvili was viewed as a chauvinist and an impulsive politician who posed a threat to the stability of the region as well as the religious and ethnic minorities in the country. Saakashvili's adoption of the five-cross flag has been deemed as the sign of his disregard for the minorities and widely criticized.<sup>769</sup> The negotiations between Georgia and Abkhazia came to a halt with the Georgian military operation in the Kodori Valley in 2006.<sup>770</sup> Saakashvili, who was keen to secure a NATO Membership Action Plan for Georgia, came up with new initiatives immediately before the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April. According to the plan proposed by Saakashvili, the post of Georgian vice president would be created and given to an Abkhaz official, who would have veto power over legislation affecting the region. Abkhazia would also be given control over some government ministries. A free economic zone would also be established in Gali and Ochamchire, two districts left devastated by the war. The Abkhaz side rejected the proposal. Russia then intensified its ties with Sukhumi, unilaterally lifted trade sanctions that the CIS imposed following the 1992-94 war and increased the size of its peacekeeping force in the region.<sup>771</sup> The 1992 "Agreement on the Principles of the Settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict between Georgia and Russia" produced a ceasefire and a Joint Control Commission (JCC), with the participation of Georgian, Russian, North and South Ossetian representatives, plus participation from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). After ceasefire was signed in South Ossetia, no major military confrontation was experienced between the sides although Tbilisi could not restore its authority over Ossetia. Although the peace process remained frozen, Georgians and Ossetians involved in exchanges like illegal trade. This situation changed when Saakashvili came to power with the ambition of restoring

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<sup>769</sup> This evaluation is based on the survey of the following Diaspora websites and forums: <http://www.abhazyam.com/>, <http://www.abhazdernegi.org>, <http://www.kafkasfederasyonu.org/>, <http://www.ajanskafkas.com/>, <http://www.kafkasevi.com>.

<sup>770</sup> Kamer Kasım, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Kafkasya* (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu Yayınları, 2009), p. 69.

<sup>771</sup> "Abkhazia: Rumors Of Peace Amid Drums Of War", *Eurasianet*, 23 May 2008 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp052408.shtml>.

the territorial integrity of Georgia.<sup>772</sup> In order to return South Ossetia to Georgian control, Saakashvili pursued a double-track strategy. On the one hand, a comprehensive anti-smuggling campaign was carried out to deprive the de facto President of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoity, of the economic basis of his rule. On the other hand, the government distributed substantial rehabilitation and development aid to the Georgian-controlled areas of South Ossetia to increase the attractiveness of Georgian rule for the South Ossetians.<sup>773</sup>

In this sense, the distributive state capacity was employed to gain the support of South Ossetians and coercive capacity was used to eliminate the illegal trade. However, to the consternation of Saakashvili, his strategy to employ both state capacities proved to be counterproductive. As many South Ossetians lived on illegal trade, when Saakashvili attacked their survival base they increased their degree of support for Kokoity. The anti-smuggling effort led to increasing Georgian Interior Ministry troop presence in the region and resulted in escalating tension. The tense situation eventually gave way to armed clashes, which came to a halt with a fragile ceasefire in August 2004.<sup>774</sup>

In March 2007, Georgian villages in Kodori Gorge, part of Abkhazia under Georgian control, were bombed, whereas in July there was a missile attack in the part of South Ossetia controlled by Georgia. In both incidents, Georgia and independent observers accused Russia, although the latter denied the charges. In another military confrontation in Abkhazia in August, two Russian servicemen were killed by Georgian police forces. In November, four Russian diplomats in Tbilisi were forced out for spying.<sup>775</sup> As a result of escalating tensions, Moscow withdrew its diplomats from Tbilisi and threatened with postponing evacuation of

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<sup>772</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia's South Ossetia Conflict: Make Haste Slowly", *Europe Report*, No. 183 (7 June 2007), p. 1.

<sup>773</sup> Pamela Jawad, "Diversity, Conflict, and State Failure: Chances and Challenges for Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the Rose Revolution", *Cornell University Peace Studies Program Occasional Paper*, Vol. 30, No. 3(December 2006), p.12.

<sup>774</sup> International Crisis Group, "Georgia's South Ossetia Conflict: Make Haste Slowly", *Europe Report*, No. 183(7 June 2007), p. 1.

<sup>775</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2008 Georgia Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2008&country=7398> (Lastly accessed on 20 October 2009).

the military bases in the country. Moreover, Russia started to deport Georgians from Russia, close Georgian companies and cut air and road links with Georgia as a reaction.<sup>776</sup>

In an attempt to change the status quo without use of force, Tbilisi since November 2006 has supported an alternative de facto South Ossetian administration led by Dmitri Sanakoev, an Ossetian and former prime minister of the secessionist South Ossetian region, who supported autonomy for South Ossetia within Georgia rather than independence. It was hoped that Sanakoev could persuade South Ossetians that a federal relationship with Georgia was better than an encircled and tiny South Ossetia under Russian domination.<sup>777</sup>

In July 2007, Saakashvili established a state commission on determination of the autonomous status of South Ossetia. Although Ossetian representatives from Sanakoev's administration joined the commission, the separatist administration in Tskhinvali boycotted it.<sup>778</sup> As a result the commission's attempts at creating a specific model of South Ossetian autonomy within Georgia yielded no results.

## **6.8. The Georgian Defeat in the 2008 Ossetian War**

While accounting for the reasons behind the August War in 2008, Georgian officials emphasized that the Georgia did its best to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict, but nobody showed up in the South Ossetian side.<sup>779</sup> According to the Georgian side, Russia saved no effort to prevent the strengthening of Georgia and NATO integration with imposing bans on Georgian goods, distributing passports to the populations of break-away regions and increasing the price of gas. When seeing that all these had not deterred Georgia,

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<sup>776</sup> Ivars Indans, "Relations of Russia and Georgia: Developments and Future Prospects", *Baltic Security and Defense Review*, Vol. 9(2007), pp. 131,132.

<sup>777</sup> Stephen F. Jones, "Clash in the Caucasus: Georgia, Russia, and the Fate of South Ossetia", *Origins*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (November 2008) available at <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/origins/print.Cfm?articleid=20> (Lastly accessed On 20 October 2009).

<sup>778</sup> Ibid.

<sup>779</sup> Interview with Temur Kekelidze (Deputy Political Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia), Tbilisi, 5 November 2008.

Russia resorted to military force. This was the reason behind the South Ossetian provocations including the shelling of Georgian villages in the past months before the crisis and Russia's swift reaction to Georgian operations starting on 7 August.<sup>780</sup>

The tensions reached the boiling point in early August 2008, when, following almost a week of clashes between Georgian troops and separatist forces, Georgia launched a full air and ground attack on South Ossetia. Although Tbilisi was reported to gain the control of Tskhinvali initially, Georgian forces proved to be helpless when Russia responded by sending thousands of troops to South Ossetia and launching bombing attacks on Georgian targets.<sup>781</sup> On 8 August, Abkhaz forces joined the fighting to end Georgian control over Kodori Gorge expelling 3,000 ethnic Georgians from the region.<sup>782</sup> Within days, Russian troops forced Georgian troops out of both Abkhazia and South Ossetia and then advanced deep into Georgia.<sup>783</sup>

Russia only pulled its forces back towards South Ossetia and Abkhazia after a six-point cease-fire agreement mediated by French President Nicolas Sarkozy was signed on 15-16 August. The agreement mainly called for both sides to withdraw their troops to their pre-crisis positions.<sup>784</sup> Since Russia maintained the control of a buffer zone on the breakaway republics' borders after the agreement, the US and France to accused Moscow of failing to keep its promises under ceasefire.<sup>785</sup> While both the EU and the US strongly condemned Russia's

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<sup>780</sup> Interview with Temur Kekelidze (Deputy Political Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia), Tbilisi, 5 November 2008.

<sup>781</sup> "Conflict Regions", *BBC Georgia Country Profile*, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3261059.stm> (Lastly accessed on 5 May 2009).

<sup>782</sup> International Crisis Group, "Russia vs Georgia: The Fallout", *Europe Report*, No. 195 (22 August 2008), p. 3.

<sup>783</sup> The Georgian Diaspora in Europe and US started a campaign to draw attention of the Western public opinion to what they condemn as Russian aggression with the onset of the war. They continued the campaign with "Everyone Against Putin" initiative.

<sup>784</sup> International Crisis Group, "Russia vs Georgia: The Fallout", *Europe Report*, No. 195 (22 August 2008), p. 3.

<sup>785</sup> "Conflict Regions", *BBC Georgia Country Profile*, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3261059.stm> (Lastly accessed on 5 May 2009).

‘disproportionate’ response, President Medvedev announced Russia’s formal recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on 26 August; Georgia officially severed diplomatic ties with Russia on 2 September.<sup>786</sup>

The Russian side tried to justify its action by claiming that they intervened to protect the Russian citizens.<sup>787</sup> The Georgian side emphasized that the Ossetian forces were shelling the Georgian villages and they had to react to defend themselves. Interior Ministry Spokesperson Shota Utiashvili states that if they had not moved their forces, the war might not have started on the 7<sup>th</sup> but on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>. According to them, the war was unavoidable.<sup>788</sup> The Georgian officials drew attention to the fact that the August War was the biggest military operation that Russia carried out beyond its boundaries since the invasion of Afghanistan and it was not possible to perform it without preparing for it.<sup>789</sup> In similar way, political analyst Alexander Rondeli points out that Russia provided more arms to the Abkhaz and South Ossetian forces, sent its railway troops to the region to repair the railways to be used during the conduct of the operation and moved its paratroops and heavy artillery to the region soon after the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008. He also stressed that Georgia will be in a more difficult situation if the Georgian Army had let the Russian Army to advance more instead of reacting to them.<sup>790</sup>

Whoever was responsible for starting it, the South Ossetian War of August 2008 had serious impact on the region and on Georgian political environment as will be discussed in the next section. The war caused vast structural damage and many refugees are unable to return home. Casualty figures are not definite,

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<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>787</sup> The South Ossetians gained Russian citizenship when Moscow distributed Russian passports to the population of the region through the policy called passportatization.

<sup>788</sup> Daisy Sindelar and Marina Vashakmadze, “Rising Star Says Georgian President is Fundamentally Misguided”, Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, 5 January 2009, available at [http://www.rferl.org/content/Rising\\_Star\\_Says\\_Georgian\\_President\\_Fundamentally\\_Misguided/1366704.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Rising_Star_Says_Georgian_President_Fundamentally_Misguided/1366704.html)(Lastly accessed on 15 April 2009).

<sup>789</sup> Interview with Temur Kekelidze (Deputy Political Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia), Tbilisi, 5 November 2008.

<sup>790</sup> Interview with Alexander Rondeli, Tbilisi, 12 November 2008.

although Russia claimed 133 civilians and 64 Russian soldiers were killed, while Georgia says that their dead number amounted to several hundreds.<sup>791</sup>

As of 2010, the tense situation around the administrative borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia continues to raise concern.<sup>792</sup> Some Russian troop withdrawal from Georgia was observed in September 2008 but 7,600 troops did remain in the two contested territories. Russia still has troops in the Georgian village of Perevi, the Akhagori region and the Kodori Valley, in violation of the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreements of August and September. The EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) became operational on 1 October to contribute to the stability in the region through patrolling in former "buffer zones" around conflict areas. However, Russia blocks the access of EU monitors to Abkhazia and S. Ossetia. The two regions ratified a treaty of "Cooperation and Friendship" with Russia on 24 September and 2 October respectively, agreeing to opening of Russian military bases in both regions.<sup>793</sup>

## **6.9. Intensified Pressures after the August War**

The defeat in the August War intensified the criticisms of the opposition against Saakashvili and motivated more Saakashvili allies to join to opposition. The defeat showed that Georgia is still quite weak despite all the allegations of Saakashvili to the opposite. Moreover, as pointed out by Archil Gegeshidze, while the use of force during the November protest brought the commitment of the Saakashvili team to the democratic ideals of the 'Rose Revolution' into question, the loss of territories during the August War led the Georgians to think that the losses under Saakashvili came to overweigh the gains.<sup>794</sup>

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<sup>791</sup> <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/key-issues/war-in-georgia.aspx>

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> "Regions and Territories: South Ossetia", *BBC*, 30 September 2009, available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country\\_profiles/3797729.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/3797729.stm) (Lastly accessed on 29 October 2009 ).

<sup>794</sup> Archil Gegeshidze quoted in Daisy Sindelar, "Is the Bloom off the Rose in Georgia?", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 23 November 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/Insight/articles/pp112308>.

It can be argued that when one considers the shelling of Georgian villages Saakashvili had the right to defend the Georgian territory, therefore he had the right to start the military operation. However, given the extreme weaknesses of the Georgian army against the Russian army, Saakashvili started a war that Georgia was bound to lose and the ensuing defeat put him under increased pressures as he was accused of failing to manage the crisis carefully enough to avoid providing Russia with the opportunity it sought for expanding its influence in the region. Moreover, it revealed the weakness of the Georgian army in a way that putting Georgian NATO membership into more serious doubt.<sup>795</sup>

After the war Russia declared Saakashvili, whose strong pro-Western stance was irritating Moscow, as a political corpse. This led some analysts to argue that Russia could have invaded Tbilisi and unseat Saakashvili but avoided it since occupation would be costly. Rather, Russia opted for letting the Saakashvili regime collapse as a result of the discontent and hardship caused by the war.<sup>796</sup>

The pressures Russia counted on started to rise in a short time. Although the opposition-government relations during the August War and its immediate aftermath were marked by unity, this did not last more than one month. On September 17, three founding members of the United Opposition Movement-the Conservative Party, the People's Party and the former opposition presidential candidate Levan Gachechiladze-urged the government to hold early elections, and to dismiss the heads of Georgia's so-called "power ministries," the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defense. The humiliating defeat in the August War strengthened the hand of the opposition significantly as it served to weaken the support of Saakashvili. After the crisis, even some former allies defined their position against President Mikheil Saakashvili.<sup>797</sup> Burjanadze, who had left the

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<sup>795</sup> Liz Fuller, "One Year After Reelection, Georgian President Faces Multiple Challenges", Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, 4 January 2009, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp010409.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 22 May June 2009).

<sup>796</sup> Jose Miguel Alonso Trabanco, "Regime Change: Georgia's Revolution Fades to Black", Global Research, 25 May 2009 available at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=ALO20090525&articleId=13728> (Lastly accessed on 12 June 2009).

<sup>797</sup> Molly Corso, "Georgia: Opposition Takes On Saakashvili In Tbilisi", *Eurasianet*, 23 September 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav092308a.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 20 April 2009).



ruling party when she could not achieve putting more of her supporters on the party list, also used the August War to define his position against Saakashvili. Having emphasized the August War occurred after she had left the ruling party, Burjanadze announced the formation of her new opposition party, Democratic Movement-United Georgia. She declared the restoration of image seriously harmed by Saakashvili's increasing authoritarianism and missteps leading to the Ossetian crisis as the main priority of her party.<sup>798</sup>

Another Saakashvili ally, Alasania, resigned as Georgia's ambassador to the United Nations on 4 December 2008. Besides repeating the criticisms of ex-Parliamentary Speaker Nino Burjanadze and ex-Prime Minister Zurab Noghaidei that the government moved away from its dedication to democratic values, Alasania cited Saakashvili's mistakes in the August War. He asserted that Saakashvili ignored the conflict resolution measures and overestimated the military capacities Georgia and his "unilateral, chaotic and non-institutional" actions caused Georgia to fall into Russian trap.<sup>799</sup>

The opposition came together on 27 March 2009 to organize joint protest rallies to begin on 9 April to call for Saakashvili's resignation with their Manifesto of Unity. Eight parties has raised similar demands one month before but, this time, the opposition alliance was enlarged as the as the Alliance for Georgia, uniting New Rights Party, Republican Party and a political team of Irakli Alasania, has joined it. In addition to the parties in the Alliance for Georgia, the Manifesto of Unity was joined by the following parties: Alliance for Freedom (uniting Party of Freedom; Party of Women for Justice and Equality; Traditionalists and Party of Future); Conservative Party (led by Kakha Kukava and Zviad Dzidziguri); Democratic Movement-United Georgia (led by Nino Burjanadze); Georgia's Way (led by Salome Zourabichvili); Industrialists Party (led by Zurab Tkemaladze and beer magnate Gogi Topadze); Movement for United Georgia (led by ex-defense minister Irakli Okruashvili); Party of

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<sup>798</sup> Molly Corso, "Rose Revolution Leader Joins Opposition, Establishes New Party", *Eurasianet*, 26 November 2008 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav112608.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 20 April 2009).

<sup>799</sup> Giorgi Lomsadze, "Georgia: Another Saakashvili Friend Turns Foe", *Eurasia Insight*, 26 December 2008, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav122608.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav122608.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 20 April 2009).

People (led by Koba Davitashvili). Levan Gachechiladze, a former opposition presidential candidate, has joined the document as an individual politician.<sup>800</sup>

As seen, the opposition has been united against Saakashvili after the August 2008 crisis. However, they could not oust him from power contrary to the assumptions of McFaul who emphasizes the importance of opposition unity for the success of regime change attempts. The following section will discuss that Saakashvili's survival despite the opposition unity can be attributed to his strengthening and effective use of various dimensions of the state capacity and continuing Western support in line with the theoretical guidelines put forward by this dissertation.

#### **6.10. State Autonomy and Post-‘Revolution’ Regime Trajectory**

This section will focus on the how the changing balances in state-society relations and the relative autonomies have shaped the regime trajectory in post-‘Revolution’ period.

The August War increased Georgian society's enmity against Russia. Although the opposition accuses Saakashvili for the war, after years of Russian rule, the Georgians identify Russia with aggression, oppression and exploitation. Thus, when Moscow declared that they want Saakashvili to be removed from power, people increased their support towards him.<sup>801</sup> Since the opposition demanded the resignation of Saakashvili like Russia, the population approached the opposition demands with suspicion. The people interview on the issue widely aired their suspicion that Georgian opposition was supported by Russia secretly. Moreover, the opposition parties have been demanding Saakashvili's resignation since November 2008 but they do not provide a clear program about how it will rule the country after his removal.<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>800</sup> 13 Parties Agree to Jointly Organize Protest Rallies, *Civil Georgia*, 27 March 2009 available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=20625>(Lastly accessed on 12 May 2009)

<sup>801</sup> Interview with Kornely Kakachia, (Director, School of Politics and International Relations, University of Georgia), Interview, Tbilisi, 18 June 2009.

<sup>802</sup> Interview with Kornely Kakachia (Director, School of Politics and International Relations, University of Georgia), Interview, Tbilisi, 18 June 2009.and Lili Di Puppò, “Out in the Street, Out of Power”, *Transitions Online*, 10 November 2008 available at

This lack of program is a reflection of the poor nature of political parties in Georgia. The parties are not based on agendas and principles but on their leaders. The loyalty to the leader is the indispensable condition for a party member and most of the parties are based on the quarrels between different party leaders.<sup>803</sup> The citizens are used to this phenomena, when asked how they view the defections in the ruling elite after the 'Rose Revolution', they generally answered that the former aides of Saakashvili break with him because they were not satisfied with the share of power Saakashvili provided them with. Their convictions cannot be regarded baseless given the fact that the real problems between Burjanadze and Saakashvili emerged when the former found the number of her supporters placed on the party list not enough

The strengthening of the coercive state capacity is one of the most important dimensions of reforms under Saakashvili administration for the aims of this study. According to the public surveys, among the public institutions that have undergone reform in the post-'Rose Revolution' period, the police have been reformed in the most effective way.<sup>804</sup> Within the framework of reforms, the Ministry of State Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs were merged in order to eliminate coordination problems between the two institutions and to make more effective use of the resources allocated from the state budget.<sup>805</sup>

As discussed in the introduction, paying good salaries to the police is a measure widely resorted to by the ruling elite to ensure the support of coercive apparatus against the opposition. If one examines the situation in post-

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<http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=294&NrSection=4&NrArticle=20189> (Lastly accessed on 8 October 2009).

<sup>803</sup> Interview with Ghia Nodia, (Director, Ilia Chavchavadze State University School of Caucasus Studies and the Former Ministry of Education), Interview, Tbilisi, 22 June 2009.

<sup>804</sup> "Ministry of Best Reforms Guarding Saakashvili's Regime", *Georgia Times*, 5 May 2009 available at <http://www.georgiatimes.info/en/articles/11847.html> (Lastly accessed on 9 October 2009).

<sup>805</sup> "Reforms at the Ministry of the Internal Affairs", Website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at <http://www.police.ge/en/Reforms.aspx> (Lastly accessed on 9 October 2009).

'Revolution' Georgia, it is observed that whereas the average salary is \$50-60, a policeman is paid \$500-\$600 a month.<sup>806</sup>

Besides strengthening the coercive capacity in this way, Saakashvili learned to use it in a more rational way in the course of time. He used disproportionate force to repress November 2007 protests but during Spring 2009 protests he acted in a patient way. Having seen that use of force during the former protests undermined his image in the West and being aware that losing Western support would decrease his chances of survival, he responded to the latter protests in a different way. He took a conciliatory line by making some promises of improvement including the reform of Central Election Commission, public broadcaster and judiciary. It was particularly striking that Saakashvili made these promises just before the US Vice President's visit to Georgia.<sup>807</sup> This proved to be blow to the opposition because they hoped that he would overreact and this would bring about his demise.<sup>808</sup>

Saakashvili still enjoys Western support. For the West, his removal was hardly desirable given the fact that he was strongly pro-Western and members of opposition were suspected to be supported by Russia. Under these circumstances, one cannot expect the West to support the Georgian opposition against Saakashvili. At this point, it is appropriate to raise the argument put forward by opposition leader David Usupashvili that Saakashvili's main success has been his ability turn the 2008 war to his benefit in international arena. By emphasizing that criticizing him strengthens the hand of Russia, Saakashvili made the Western community to support him regardless of his increasing authoritarianism.<sup>809</sup>

As discussed, under Shevardnadze civil society was strong and state was weak. After the 'Rose Revolution', Saakashvili increased state power at the

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<sup>806</sup> Avtandil Kavtoradze, "Police Regime in Georgia and Georgians in Russia", *Strategic Culture Foundation*, 20 August 2008, available at <http://en.fondsk.ru/article.php?id=1566> (Lastly accessed on 9 October 2009).

<sup>807</sup> Saakashvili Pledges More Democratic Reforms, *Civil Georgia*, 21 July 2009 available at [http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21262&search=polic saakashvili reform](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21262&search=polic%20saakashvili%20reform) (lastly accessed on 10 October 2009).

<sup>808</sup> Interview with Ghia Nodia, (Director, Ilia Chavchavadze State University School of Caucasus Studies and the Former Ministry of Education), Interview, Tbilisi, 22 June 2009.

<sup>809</sup> Molly Corso and Temo Bardzimashvili, "Still Here", *Transitions Online*, 10 August 2009.

expense of the NGO sector through using coercive state capacity. Moreover, the anti-regime NGOs do not have the appeal to the society that they had during Shevardnadze era since they had an agenda that does not reflect the Georgian reality. They have a list of priorities to be addressed but politics is a different from these maximalist NGOs envisage. Georgia is quite young as a modern state. It was a colony of Russia before and functioned as a feudal entity under Shevardnadze. The process of modern state building only gained momentum with the coming power of Saakashvili.<sup>810</sup> The disappearance between the demands of NGOs and necessities of real world politics is recognized by an important part of the society and this reduces the support towards anti-regime NGOs. When this was added by transfer of external financial support to the government, anti-regime NGOs saw both internal and external supports towards them significantly weakened.

Moreover, Saakashvili used the distributive state capacity in an effective way to maintain regime stability. As discussed, Saakashvili before the elections engaged in ensuring the loyalty of the population by providing certain benefits. His use of state capacity was not limited to this. He took important steps to improve infrastructure in the regions and this served to increasing his popularity.<sup>811</sup> When this was added by the increasing control over media, compared to Shevardnadze, Saakashvili faced less criticism that would undermine his popularity in the eyes of the society.

## **6.11. Conclusion**

This chapter showed that the 'Rose Revolution' resulted in increasing authoritarianism in Georgia contrary to the assumptions of the society-centered approaches. With Saakashvili's coming to power, the pluralism of the Shevardnadze era, which was mostly created by the state weakness, has turned out to wane. Saakashvili reversed the process leading to the 'Rose Revolution' by

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<sup>810</sup> Interview with David Darchiashvili, (Parliamentarian and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on European Integration and the Former Executive Director of Georgia Open Society Institute), Interview, Tbilisi, 19 June 2009.

<sup>811</sup> Interview with Kornely Kakachia, (Director, School of Politics and International Relations, University of Georgia), Interview, Tbilisi, 18 June 2009.

strengthening the state at the expense of opposition, civil society and the media. The new leadership has turned out to be more intolerant towards dissent. Anti-regime forces have experienced significant difficulty in shaping the political process in the post-‘Revolution’ period as a result of strengthening of state capacity in various dimensions and increasing intolerance. Saakashvili also proved to be untrue to the promises he gave before the ‘revolution’ by increasing the power of the executive at the expense of legislative and judiciary once resumed power.

Given the deep state weakness that the Georgia was facing, strengthening of the state rather than democratization was the main priority of Saakashvili. In this area, the new administration showed mixed success. An important increase in state revenues was experienced in the immediate ‘Revolution’ period due to improvements in the tax collection, decreasing corruption, restoration of authority over Adjara and increasing external financial aid. While distributing these improved revenues, Saakashvili tended to favor the police and military. He aimed to ensure support of coercive apparatus against the opposition and strengthen the army to restore Georgian territorial integrity by devoting more resources to them.

Disappointment with Saakashvili due to increasing authoritarianism, limited economic success, uneven distribution of increased state revenues, side-effects of reforms and the defeat in South Ossetian War of August 2008 resulted in opposition protest in November 2007 and the autumn of 2008 and the spring of 2009. The government proved to be ready to force against the protestors and able to repress the protests thanks to strengthened coercive apparatus. However, since the Georgian state remained vulnerable to Western pressures, Saakashvili avoided use of force during the protests in 2008 and 2009. Continuing societal and Western support accompanied by the effective use of state capacity has resulted in the survival of Saakashvili regime despite the split in the ‘Rose Revolution’ elite and increasing opposition protest after the last South Ossetian crisis.

## CHAPTER 7

### COMPARING GEORGIA WITH OTHER POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES

#### 7.1. Introduction

This chapter compares the regime trajectories in seven former Soviet republics with that of Georgia. The chapter will compare Georgia first with other South Caucasus Republics, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Then, the comparison will be extended to Central Asia, bringing Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan under examination. Lastly, regime outcomes in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia will be compared with the regime change in Georgia. These countries will be compared on the basis of the explanatory variables suggested in the theoretical chapter: the state capacity at various domains and the state autonomy vis-à-vis the societal and external actors favoring regime change. Besides the comparison along the explanatory variables, the chapter will also provide an examination of post-‘revolution’ political environments in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine to clarify whether these countries experienced democratization after the regime changes due to the strengthening of social forces as argued by society-centric literature.

#### 7.2. Armenia

Armenia does not have a good election record. The country held five presidential elections since independence and only the 1991 election is considered to have met international standards for free and fair elections. Although the following four elections since then were marked by fraud and followed by mass protests by the opposition, the official winners of the elections managed to resume power.<sup>812</sup> The events that followed the 19 February 2008 elections were

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<sup>812</sup> Policy Forum Armenia, *Armenia’s 2008 Presidential Elections: Selected Issues and Analysis*, July 2008, p. 33 available at [www.pf-armenia.org/fileadmin/pfa.../PFA\\_Election\\_Report--FINAL.pdf](http://www.pf-armenia.org/fileadmin/pfa.../PFA_Election_Report--FINAL.pdf).

particularly similar to those that ended up with the fall of the Shevardnadze regime in Georgia. After the government declared that its candidate, Prime Minister Serzh Sarkisian, won the elections against the main opposition candidate, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, the eleven day long protests were held in Yerevan.<sup>813</sup>

40,000 people (the number of the protesters was higher than Georgia) protested the alleged election fraud in Armenia.<sup>814</sup> However, the regime stability rather than regime change proved to be the result. This section will explore the causes of divergence of regime outcomes in Georgia and Armenia by focusing on the state capacity, autonomy and the effectiveness of the ruling elite in using these to maintain regime stability.

The outcome of the 2008 elections can be considered as a classical example of regime stability rather than change because like Kocharian, Sarkisian is from Karabagh and expected to continue the dominance of Karabakh Clan in the country.<sup>815</sup> The most apparent cause of regime stability in Armenia seems to be the readiness of the Armenian ruling elite to resort to force unlike Shevardnadze. After February 2008 elections, the police violently crushed the protests leaving eight persons dead and dozens injured according to the official account. Outgoing President Robert Kocharian imposed a state of emergency for 20 days, a wave of arrests was carried out and the media came under serious

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<sup>813</sup> According to the official election results Sarkisian (member of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia) received the 52.8 percent of the votes followed by Ter-Petrosian (the leader of Country of Law Party) with 21.5 per cent, by the candidate of the Rule of Law Party with 16.7 per cent and the candidate of Armenian Revolutionary Front (Dashnaksutiun) with 6.2 percent. There were five other candidates who took nearly one per cent or less. For details please see International Crisis Group, "Armenia: Picking up the Pieces", *Europe Briefing*, No. 48, (8 April 2008), p. 2.

<sup>814</sup> Iryna Chupryna, "Not Quite a Color Revolution in Armenia", *Democratization Policy Council Analyst*, No. 1 (26 March 2008) available at <http://democratizationpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/dpc-analyst-no-1-25-mar-2008.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 26 May 2009) and Armenia: Picking up the Pieces, p. 3.

<sup>815</sup> Rovshan Ibrahimov, "Color Revolutions and the Political Turmoil in Armenia", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 15 March 2008, available at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/53476/color-revolutions-and-the-political-turmoil-in-armenia.html> (Lastly accessed on 26 May 2009).



restriction.<sup>816</sup> Unlike Shevardnadze's unwillingness to use force, Kocharian overreacted to the opposition protests due to state autonomy he enjoyed.<sup>817</sup>

Hence, although Armenian ruling elite faced even stronger protests compared to Shevardnadze, the regime survived in a way that cast serious doubt on the explanatory power of the society-centric approaches. The remainder of the section will discuss reasons preparing for societal mobilization and its allure to bring the end of the ruling regime.

Like Georgia, Armenia has no natural resource to extract rents from. Armenia experienced military conflict in its early independence years too. Moreover, Yerevan was excluded from the BTC project, which has increased state revenues in Georgia, due to its problems with Baku. Lastly, its border with Turkey was sealed since 1993 as a result of Ankara's reaction to Armenian occupation of Azeri territories. Therefore, Armenia is expected to be weaker than Georgia in economic terms, which is not good news for the regime stability in the country.

Notwithstanding these problems, Armenia has emerged as one of the seven former Soviet republics that restored the 1989 GDP level by 2005. Between 2001-2006, the country recorded double-digit growth rates.<sup>818</sup> In 1992, the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita was \$320 in Armenia and \$500 in Georgia. However, since 2002 Armenia has recorded higher GNI per capita figures than Georgia each year.<sup>819</sup> The higher state revenue of Armenia has its origins in the cash transfers from Armenian Diaspora, especially those in the US and Europe.

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<sup>816</sup> Iryna Chupryna, "Not Quite a Color Revolution in Armenia", *Democratization Policy Council Analyst*, No. 1 (26 March 2008) available at <http://democratizationpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/dpc-analyst-no-1-25-mar-2008.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 26 May 2009).

<sup>817</sup> "Analyst: Georgian Revolution Holds no Lessons for Armenia: Q&A with Richard Giragosian", *Civil Georgia*, 15 April 2004, available at [www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=6692](http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=6692) (Lastly accessed on 23 October 2009).

<sup>818</sup> Haroutiun Khachatryan, "Armenia: Economic Challenges During The Change Of Guard", *Central Asia And The Caucasus Journal of Social and Political Studies*, No. 2, Vol. 44 (2007), available at [http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal\\_eng/cac-02/13.hacheng.shtml](http://www.ca-c.org/online/2007/journal_eng/cac-02/13.hacheng.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 25 May 2009).

<sup>819</sup> The data used for comparing Georgia and Armenia was compiled using World Bank figures between 1991 and 2000, which can be found at the web site of the World Bank.

The Diaspora also made important contributions to the country's infrastructure and key sectors such as construction.<sup>820</sup>

As discussed, the effective use of state capacity by the ruling elite to strengthen state autonomy is critical for the regime stability. This includes the use of state resources to strengthen coercive state apparatus to remain in power even in the face of mass mobilization.

When the use of state resources by the Armenian rule elite is examined, it is observed that most of the benefits resulting from economic growth go to a small group, Karabakh Clan, as a result of the corrupt and oligarch-dominated economic system.<sup>821</sup> The dominance of Karabakh Clan in Armenian economy and politics can be dated back to the era of Ter-Petrosian. In order to consolidate his power against the rival forces, he brought figures like Kocharian and Sarkisian from Karabakh and inserted them in important positions. Once in power, Kocharian and Sarkisian placed 1,500 people from Karabagh to Armenia, especially to Yerevan and provided them with influence in important spheres of businesses.<sup>822</sup>

The abuse of power and corruption leading to the disproportionate enrichment of the Karabakh clan proved to be the major source of discontent, which mobilized some parts of the society against the regime.<sup>823</sup> During his election campaign, Ter-Petrosian highlighted the disproportionate power of the Karabakh Clan and apologized for bringing Kocharian Sarkisian to power during his presidency. Compared to Georgia, Armenia has a more homogenized population in ethnic terms. Therefore, the state capacity to monopolize allegiance is stronger in Armenia. However, despite its comparative advantage in ensuring allegiance, the mobilization against the regime was stronger in Armenia than in Georgia. Since the independence, compared to Georgia, there were more frequent

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<sup>820</sup> Brian Whitmore, "Armenia: Crisis Spotlights Karabakh Clan", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 5 March 2008, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079586.html> (Lastly accessed on 12 April 2009).

<sup>821</sup> Ibid.

<sup>822</sup> Vahan Ishkhanyan, "Internal Bleeding: Crisis has Turned "Armenians" against "Karabakhis", *Armenianow*, 28 March 2008, available at <http://www.armenianow.com/?action=viewArticle&IID=1180&CID=2867&AID=2922&lng=eng> (lastly accessed on 19 September 2009).

<sup>823</sup> Aghavni Karakhanian "Political Culture & Democracy Building: The Case of Armenia", *Conflict Studies Research Center Political Culture Case Studies*, March 2003, p. 7.

protests in Armenia. The participation in these protests were also stronger compared to Georgia.<sup>824</sup> This means that Armenian ruling elite could not use its comparative advantage in monopolizing allegiance in an effective way due to its favoring of the Karabagh clan at the expense of the mainland Armenians.

This strong mobilization against the regime would have resulted in regime change if the Armenian ruling elite had not enjoyed state capacity and autonomy at the time of the protests. Actually, initially, Armenia used to be similar to Georgia in terms of lack of control over the armed forces. As Georgia, Armenia experienced the breakdown of state control over military forces between 1989-1990 as a result of the war in Karabakh.<sup>825</sup> The Armenian state lost its control over the conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh as paramilitary units, which functioned autonomously from the state under the command of different Armenian generals, came to dominate the military action in the conflict zone.<sup>826</sup> As far as the rise of paramilitary forces independent of the state are concerned, Armenia's situation in the immediate independence period was quite similar to that of Georgia. However, different from Georgia, Levon Ter-Petrosian government achieved the unification of these forces into the national army quickly.<sup>827</sup> The Karabakh war provided the ruling elite with a well funded, powerful and experienced coercive apparatus to pacify the well-mobilized opposition.<sup>828</sup> The ruling elite made effective use of the state sources in the sense that it fed the coercive apparatus in a generous way to ensure their loyalty and gain autonomy against societal pressures.

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<sup>824</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Dynamics of Authoritarian Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 401.

<sup>825</sup> Lucan A. Way, "Pigs, Wolves and the Evolution of Post-Soviet Competitive Authoritarianism, 1992-2005", Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers, Number 62 (June 2006), p. 41

<sup>826</sup> Richard Giragosian, *Repositioning Armenian Security and Foreign Policy within a Region at risk*, Armenian International Policy Research Group, Working Paper No. 06/07, March 2006.

<sup>827</sup> Lucan A. Way, "Pigs, Wolves and the Evolution of Post-Soviet Competitive Authoritarianism, 1992-2005", Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law Working Papers, No. 62 (June 2006), p. 41.

<sup>828</sup> Lucan A. Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 63.

The strengthening of Armenian coercive capacity parallel to the increasing militarization enhanced the chances for authoritarian survival significantly as the military forces undertook the role of the defender of the regime.<sup>829</sup> Besides the army and the police, the Union of Karabakh Veterans took part in blocking access to the sensitive state buildings, closing the offices of opposition parties and chasing protesters. As a result, the government succeeded in suppressing strong opposition protests. The suppression of protests of approximately 35,000 demonstrations was experienced after the flawed elections in 2003 and 2004. Recently, the same coalition of armed forces violently suppressed the rallies in which thousands of citizens participated.<sup>830</sup>

In comparison to Shevardnadze, the Armenian ruling elite also enjoyed a stronger control over different state institutions and regional governments. The procuracy, the police, the national security service and the military were directly subordinate to Kocharian, who did not waste any efforts to pass power to his close associates. Law enforcement agencies also turned out to be practical tools in the hands of the ruling elite with the police frequently arresting anti-regime activists.

<sup>831</sup>

Several oligarchs, who are granted various kinds of benefits such as preferential treatment in the privatization process avoiding tax and custom duties and lucrative licenses for importing commodities like fuel, also provided important support for Kocharian-Sarkisian administrations in turn. These people enjoy strong influence over the regional officials in the places where they run their business activities. They use their patronage links to ensure loyalty of these officials to the regime.<sup>832</sup> Moreover, through the patronage links, certain economic benefits are supplied and informal sanctions are applied to make the

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<sup>829</sup> Giragosian Richard, *Repositioning Armenian Security and Foreign Policy within a Region at Risk*, Armenian International Policy Research Group Working Paper, No. 06/07 (March 2006).

<sup>830</sup> Armenia's 2008 Presidential Elections: Selected Issues and Analysis, p. 5.

<sup>831</sup> Freedom House, *Countries at the Crossroads 2006 Armenia Report*, available at [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=7&ccrpage=31&ccrcountry=109](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=7&ccrpage=31&ccrcountry=109) (Lastly accessed on 5 May 2009).

<sup>832</sup> International Crisis Group, *Armenia: Picking up the Pieces*, *Europe Briefing* No. 48(8 April 2008), p. 8.

people vote for the regime. The strict control over courts prevents them from cancelling the results of fraudulent elections. To sum up, the patronage links are effectively used as a mechanism of control.<sup>833</sup>

Ter-Petrosian candidacy led to the speculations that the US might back him against Sarkisian in the elections. Some suspected that the US would provide support for Ter-Petrosian in the hope that he would follow a pro-Western line and weaken Russia's influence in the Caucasus.<sup>834</sup> While all these speculations aired the discussions about a 'color revolution' in Armenia, both Western and Russian monitors avoided criticisms after the elections. Moreover, after the elections the US government indicated its endorsement of the incumbent authorities as Bryza, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of state, referred to Sarkisian as a special leader with visions supported by Washington.<sup>835</sup> The support of Armenian diaspora to Sarkisian due to his hardliner stance on Karabakh issue also strengthened him against the anti-regime forces in the Armenian society.<sup>836</sup> Thus, it can be argued that Armenia was not under strong external pressures for regime change as Shevardnadze's Georgia.

It is also necessary to add that Armenia would have been less vulnerable to the pressures for regime change if the West had exerted them because Russia would provide a strong counterweight against them. Russia dominates major sectors of the Armenian economy, such as energy, communications and railroads.<sup>837</sup> Armenia is Russia's key ally in the Caucasus and plays an important

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<sup>833</sup> Vahe Sahakyan and Arthur Atanesyan, "Democratization in Armenia: Some Trends of Political Culture and Behavior", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 350.

<sup>834</sup> "Azerbaijani Politicians Mull Implications Of Ter-Petrossian Comeback In Armenia", *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, 26 October 2007, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1347671.html> (Lastly accessed on 10 September 2009).

<sup>835</sup> Sergei Blagov, Armenia Seeks Stronger Ties With Russia, Eurasianet, 27 March 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/armenia08/news/030608.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 19 September 2008).

<sup>836</sup> Kamer Kasım, "19 Şubat 2008 Ermenistan Devlet Başkanlığı Seçimleri", *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları*, Vol. 5 (2008), p. 196.

<sup>837</sup> Haroutiun Khachatrian, "Armenia: Does Russia's \$500 Million Loan Come With Strings Attached for Yerevan?", Eurasianet, 17 February 2009 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav021709a.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 19 September 2009).

role in Iranian-Russian cooperation due to its location.<sup>838</sup> Given this importance, it won't be an exaggeration to argue that in the case of a US-engineered regime change attempt in Armenia, Russia would do its best to prevent it in order to avoid losing its control over the country. Moscow showed its strong support for Sarkisian with Russian Prime Minister's visit to him before the elections.<sup>839</sup> Russia has a strong leverage in the country. Armenian dependence on Russia grew in the fields of security and economy since Yerevan increasingly relied on Russian help in its struggle against Azerbaijan and the closure of Turkish borders which isolated Yerevan.

Thus, the Armenian ruling elite had a clear advantage compared to Shevardnadze: strong state capacity and autonomy vis-à-vis the anti-regime forces. This difference from Georgia has led to regime stability in Armenia. Whereas Shevardnadze regime increasingly lost its control over anti-regime forces after 1995, the opposite trend has been observed in Armenia. The ruling regime effectively denied financial resources to anti-regime forces and used them in the service of regime stability. In this way, on the one hand, the regime weakened the anti-regime forces by establishing an economic system dominated by pro-regime Karabagh clan and on the other hand it gained autonomy vis-à-vis them by strengthening the coercive apparatus through effective use of economic capacity of the state. Armenian ruling elite also enjoyed stronger administrative capacity compared to Shevardnadze as the regime has exercised stronger control over different state institutions and regional governments. This also proved to be an important blow to the autonomy of the anti-regime forces at different levels of state administration in stark contrast to the unlimited freedom of their Georgian counterparts. Lastly, the Armenian ruling elite was not exposed to the external pressures for regime change. The support of Russia and Diaspora for the incumbents strengthened their hands significantly. As a result, in line with the

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<sup>838</sup> "Armenia: Russia's Strengthening Hand", *Stratfor*, 19 February 2008 available at [http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/111141/analysis/armenia\\_russias\\_strengthening\\_hand](http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/111141/analysis/armenia_russias_strengthening_hand) (Lastly accessed on 23 September 2009)

<sup>839</sup> Kamer Kasım, "19 Şubat 2008 Ermenistan Devlet Başkanlığı Seçimleri", *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları*, Vol. 5 (2008), p. 193.

main argument of the study, Armenia did not experience regime change despite stronger protests thanks to the effective use of state capacity and autonomy.

### **7.3. Azerbaijan**

In their early years of the independence, Azerbaijan and Georgia were marked by similarities. Both states suffered from secessionist wars and lost control over some parts of their territories as a result of military defeats. Both experienced the return of former Communist Party bosses to power as presidents after the chaotic years under nationalist regimes. Both were exposed to the Russian pressures to restore control over their territories and tended to seek Western support as a counterweight. Both bestowed their support behind Western-backed Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan pipeline project and benefited from it significantly.

Despite these similarities, whereas Heydar Aliyev was able to pass power to his son, Ilham, when he fell ill in 2003 and Ilham Aliyev remained in power despite the opposition protests following 2003 presidential and 2005 parliamentary elections, Shevardnadze was removed from power as a result of similar protests.<sup>840</sup> This section compares and contrasts two countries in terms of state capacity and autonomy in relation to internal and external anti-regime forces to account for this variance.

After gaining independence, Azerbaijan was mired in a deep economic crisis like Georgia. The reasons behind this recession were familiar for the students of post-Soviet transition: collapse of the Union economy, political instability and ethnic conflict. Although the GDP decline in Azerbaijan was at a lower degree compared to Georgia, which experienced 78 per cent declined between 1991 and 1996, the output decreased more than 60 per cent. Like Gamsakhurdia, Azerbaijan's Elchibey was successful at gaining the support of the

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<sup>840</sup> Aliyev won a second term as a result of October 2008 presidential elections by taking 89 percent of the votes according to the official figures. Emphasizing media restrictions and use of state resources by the YAP, the opposition boycotted the elections (Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2009 Azerbaijan Country Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7560> (Lastly accessed on 30 August 2009). On 18 March 2009, controversial amendments to Azerbaijan's constitution, including the lifting term limits on Aliyev have been approved through a referendum. (Mina Muradova, "Azerbaijan: Taking a Step toward Monarchy", Eurasianet, 19 March 2009 available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav031909.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 5 September 2009).

masses but he lacked the skills to manage a country. Like Gamsakhurdia's regime, Elchibey's rule could not last long because of his provocative foreign policy lacking pragmatism, internal instability and economic collapse.<sup>841</sup>

The conditions for stability and economic recovery were realized only after Heydar Aliyev came to power in 1993. Aliyev was the First Secretary of Communist Party of Azerbaijan between 1969 and 1981. He returned to power by utilizing a military coup against Elchibey organized by Colonel Huseynov. He then got rid of his rivals and strengthened his authority. Having achieved a cease-fire in Karabakh in 1993 and signed 'The Contract of the Century' with multinational oil companies in 1994, Aliyev laid the grounds of a system that would enable him maintain regime stability and even pass power to his son after he left.<sup>842</sup>

Led by the developments in the oil and gas sector, the economy started to recover after 1995. Between 1996 and 2002 the annual growth rate was 8 percent on average.<sup>843</sup> The rates were more impressive for the years between 2003 and 2008, as average annual growth rate reached 20 percent and the poverty was more than halved.<sup>844</sup> Thus, Aliyev regime enjoyed a significant advantage in extractive state capacity compared to Shevardnadze.

Thanks to the oil rents, the regime is able to continue some welfare practices of the Soviet period such as providing free health care and education, subsidizing staple foods. In this way, the regime became able to buy the support of the population.<sup>845</sup> Ilham Aliyev used State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ) to finance various infrastructural projects such as constructing water pipeline from

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<sup>841</sup> Fuad Aliyev, "From Stabilization to Marketization: The Political Economy of Reforms in Azerbaijan", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Fall 2008), pp. 171, 172.

<sup>842</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>843</sup> The growth rates between 1996 and 2002 are compiled by using the Azerbaijan Country reports of the World Bank over these years.

<sup>844</sup> World Bank, 2009 Azerbaijan Country Brief available at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/AZERBAIJANEXTN/0,,menuPK:301923~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:301914,00.html> (Lastly accessed on 14 September 2009).

<sup>845</sup> Anja Franke, Andrea Gawrich and Gurban Alakbarov, "Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as Post-Soviet Rentier States: Resource Incomes and Autocracy as a Double 'Curse' in Post-Soviet Regimes", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 1(2009), p. 127.



the Oguz/Gabala area to Baku and Samur-Absheron canal. Moreover, the oil revenues were used for providing accommodation for refugees and improving their living conditions, financing Azerbaijani students' education abroad and making up for the increase in the number of civil servants and their salaries.<sup>846</sup> Whereas the unpaid state employees with already low salaries were mobilized against the Shevardnadze regime, in Azerbaijan the government forced the well-paid civil servants to participate in pro-regime meetings.<sup>847</sup> Moreover, with the help of oil revenues, Aliyevs have been able to portray themselves as guarantors after the turbulent Popular Front days.<sup>848</sup> Because of the state strength, the opposition has difficulty in gaining the support of the masses.

Aliyevs have been also quite effective in monopolizing state control over revenues unlike Shevardnadze who provided a small group with exclusive leverage over the state revenues. Azerbaijan oil revenues and the president's tight control over these resources enabled Aliyevs to distribute patronage to the members of the ruling elite, mostly coming from Yeraz and Nakhcevan clans.<sup>849</sup> Privatization would have harmed the link between the state leaders and the patron-client networks and weakened the dominance of the Yeraz and Nakhcevan elite in the country. However, State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) has ensured that state maintains exclusive control over oil revenues.<sup>850</sup>

In contrast to the Shevardnadze's failure to keep the CUG united, Heydar Aliyev showed success in holding the ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP)

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<sup>846</sup> Farid Guliyev, "Oil Wealth, Patrimonialism, and the Failure of Democracy in Azerbaijan", *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No. 2 (2009), p. 5.

<sup>847</sup> Leila Alieva, "Azerbaijan's Frustrating Elections", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 17, Number 2 (April 2006), p. 151.

<sup>848</sup> Rainer Freitag-Wirminhaus, "Prospects for Armenia and Azerbaijan between Eurasia and the Middle East" in Daniel Hamilton and Gerhard Mangott (Eds.), *The Wider Black Sea in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (Washington: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University; Vienna : Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation, 2008), p. 79.

<sup>849</sup> Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), p. 31.

<sup>850</sup> Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal, "Prelude to the Resource Curse: Explaining Oil and Gas Development Strategies", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (May 2001), p. 386.

together mostly thanks to oil revenues. The elite have used party loyalty as the requirement to reach jobs and other kinds of benefits enabled by state revenues mostly coming from oil. Whereas the unpaid state employees with already low salaries were mobilized against the Shevardnadze regime, in Azerbaijan the government forced the well-paid civil servants to participate in pro-regime meetings.<sup>851</sup> The appointments to key state positions are distributed according to patronage ties. The rents led to the development of resistance to regime change on the part of the bureaucracy for the fear that it would result in loss of the positions and criminal prosecution for embezzlement and corruption.<sup>852</sup> Since the bureaucracy and economic elite feels that their positions, wealth and security depend on their relations with the Aliyevs, they don't have room for maneuver.<sup>853</sup>

Since Heydar Aliyev did not let the private sector to control the most important state revenue, the Azeri opposition has experienced significant hardship in finding alternative sources of money at home. To make the matters worse, Azeri opposition has also had difficulty in receiving external financial help unlike the Georgian opposition.

On 20 September 1994, Heydar Aliyev created an important basis for stability of his regime by forging a strong link with the West through signing the 'Contract of the Century'.<sup>854</sup> The ruling elite of Azerbaijan has allied itself with Western investors and governments with this agreement.<sup>855</sup> Consequently, despite irregularities in October 2003 presidential elections, foreign oil companies, and even foreign governments, tended to support Ilham Aliyev, especially after receiving assurances that all contacts and commitments made under Heydar

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<sup>851</sup> Leila Alieva, "Azerbaijan's Frustrating Elections", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 17, Number 2 (April 2006), p. 151.

<sup>852</sup> Sabine Freizer, "Dynasty and Democracy in Azerbaijan: a Warning for Central Asia?", 8 December 2003, available at [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net) (Lastly accessed on 23 May 2009), p.4.

<sup>853</sup> Mehmet Dikkaya ve Adem Çaylak, "Haydar Aliyev Döneminde Azerbaycan'ın Ekonomik ve Politik Dönüşümü:Fırsatlar ve Sorunlar", *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (2008), p. 149.

<sup>854</sup> Shannon O'Lear, "Azerbaijan's Resource Wealth: Political Legitimacy and Public Opinion", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 173, No. 3(September 2007), p. 212.

<sup>855</sup> Oksan Bayulgen, "Foreign Investment, Oil Curse, and Democratization: A Comparison of Azerbaijan and Russia", *Business and Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2005), p. 29.

Aliyev would continue to be honored by his son.<sup>856</sup> Western oil investors believe that they have to get on well with Aliyev family to do business in Azerbaijan. As a result they promptly accept, even support the dictatorship in Azerbaijan.<sup>857</sup>

Moreover, in Azerbaijan, the Western powers avoided supporting the opposition as their coming to power might lead to uncertainty and instability. They were already satisfied with the Aliyev regime and accustomed to its way of doing things. So, they avoided supporting anti-regime forces. In Georgia, by contrast, they saw maintenance of Shevardnadze regime against their interest and supported the opposition and the NGOs as a result.

In this respect, the situation is just the opposite of Shevardnadze's Georgia. In Azerbaijan state enjoys high revenues and distributes them to the political elite, the society and to armed forces to buy their loyalty and the anti-regime forces have quite limited resources. By contrast, in Georgia, the state could not prevent siphoning of already limited state revenues by private actors and the strengthening of opposition through external aid.

The Aliyev regime also enjoys an important degree of state monopoly over information in stark contrast to Shevardnadze regime, which suffered undermining of regime's credibility and anti-regime mobilization by independent media. The regime creates obstacles for opposition media thanks to state ownership of printing and distribution facilities. Between October 2003 and January 2004, state printing press did not service six opposition papers. In the process leading to the 2003 elections, heavy fines were imposed on the newspapers associated with main opposition parties, Musavat, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party and the Azerbaijan Popular Front Party.<sup>858</sup> The broadcast media is also under the control of the regime since various television stations are owned

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<sup>856</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>857</sup> Daniel Heradstveit, Democratic Development in Azerbaijan and the Role of Western Oil Industry, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2001), p. 264-265.

<sup>858</sup> International Crisis Group, "Azerbaijan's 2005 Elections: Lost Opportunity", *Europe Briefing*, No. 40, November 2005, p. 5.

by Aliyev's relatives or by people linked to the regime. Moreover, the channels are also open to attacks by the regime on their assets.<sup>859</sup>

Azerbaijani society is marked by strong opposition culture.<sup>860</sup> As a result, anti-regime movements attempted at changing the regime despite these limitations but they have failed in the face of effective precautions taken by the state authorities contrary to the assumptions of the political culture perspective. Aliyev regime showed its readiness to use force and other forms of repression on several occasions different from Shevardnadze regime thanks to state autonomy. The judiciary is submissive to the executive and arbitrary arrest and detention are usual for the opposition. Police abuse during arrest and interrogation reportedly remains commonplace, with torture sometimes being used to extract confessions.<sup>861</sup> The regime proved to be particularly harsh against the demonstrators protesting electoral fraud. The Azeri police used force to disperse the opposition rallies following 15 October 2003 fraudulent presidential elections causing four persons die. This was followed by a wave of arrests. Several hundred protestors arrested were released latter, but several others including seven important opposition leaders were sentenced to jail. Moreover, the regime banned the holding of rallies by the opposition.<sup>862</sup>

Motivated by the successes of the Georgian and Ukrainian youth movements, Azeri youth established organizations such as *Yeni Fikir* (New Idea) and *YOX* (NO) supporting opposition in the rallies. However, Aliyev Regime's reaction against them has been more ruthless. The regime used its control over the media and state organs of coercion and surveillance to weaken these

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<sup>859</sup> John A. Gould and Carl Sickner, "Making Market Democracies? The Contingent Loyalties of Post-Privatization Elites in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Serbia", *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 15, No. 5(December 2008), p. 755.

<sup>860</sup> Mehmet Dikkaya ve Adem Çaylak, "Haydar Aliyev Döneminde Azerbaycan'ın Ekonomik ve Politik Dönüşümü:Fırsatlar ve Sorunlar", *Orta Asya ve Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (2008), p. 143.

<sup>861</sup> Freedom House, 2009 Azerbaijan Country Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009> (Lastly accessed on 23 June 2010).

<sup>862</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Crushing Dissent: Repression, Violence, and Azerbaijan's Election", *Human Rights Watch Report 16*, No. 1(January 2004), available at [www.hrw.org/reports/2004/azerbaijan0104/](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/azerbaijan0104/) (Lastly accessed on 13 September 2009).

organizations. Before the 2005 parliamentary elections, the Azerbaijani television broadcasted videotape of a meeting between the leader of the Yeni Fikir, Ruslan Bashirli, and the two Georgians. Later, the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan announced that these two Georgians were members of the Armenian Intelligence Service trying to destabilize Azerbaijan. When the leader of the Popular Front, Ali Kerimli, stated that the regime was fabricating this material to discredit Yeni Fikir, the government came to accuse the Popular Front of collaborating with the Armenian Intelligence Service as well. This was followed by the arrest of important opposition activists, including Bashirli, who was not released even after the dust of the parliamentary elections settled.<sup>863</sup>

Whereas Ilham Aliyev was considered weak by many observers when he came to power, he enhanced his autonomy by repressing his potential rivals before 2005 parliamentary elections. First, Minister of National Security Namik Abbasov, was fired without a clear explanation. Eldar Makhmudov, who replaced Abbasov, carried out large-scale personnel changes in the ministry installing his former police colleagues in important positions. However, the most striking purges were experienced on the eve of the 2005 parliamentary elections. This time the targets were Farhad Aliyev, the Minister of Economic Development, and Ali Insanov, the Minister of Health. Whereas Farhad Aliyev's attempts at weakening monopolies were considered as threatening, Insanov fell into disagreement with the members of the close circle of the president. Both were arrested on the basis of the charges that they were preparing a coup against the president in collaboration with the exiled leader of Azerbaijan Democratic Party, Rasul Guliyev, who was planning to return the country. Guliyev could not return to Azerbaijan as he was detained by Ukrainian authorities on the request of Azerbaijan. Many activists waiting for him in the airport were also detained with the charges that they were planning to hold protests to overthrow the president. Many state officials were also arrested for financing the coup attempt.<sup>864</sup> Thus, in contrast to Georgia's opposition elites like Saakashvili and Zhvania who defected to the opposition, in

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<sup>863</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>864</sup> International Crisis Group, "Azerbaijan's 2005 Elections: Lost Opportunity" *Europe Briefing*, No. 40 (21 November 2005), pp. 9, 10.

Azerbaijan, even potential defectors were harshly punished and sidelined before the elections with president's resort to coercive state capacity.

It is also necessary to shed light on the strength of the coercive capacity of the state and the effectiveness of the ruling elite to impose control on it. Since Heydar Aliyev's two predecessors had been toppled as a result of military mutinies, he avoided making the army a strong and unified force. Whereas he limited the strengthening of the army, he systematically improved the internal troops and other law enforcement organs. Ilham Aliyev changed this policy by strengthening the army besides the Special State Protection Service and National Guard by providing more funds compared to his father. However, he still keeps the military divided to ensure that no power ministry can pose a real danger to his rule.<sup>865</sup> In addition, the regime tries to maintain the support of security forces by keeping them well-paid thanks to the oil rents.<sup>866</sup> Thus, in contrast to Shevardnadze, Aliyevs showed the determination to use force to hold on to power and unlike Georgian armed forces, which were paid poorly at best, the personnel of the Azerbaijani coercive apparatus are well paid.

In Azerbaijan, contrary to the assumptions of the modernization perspective of the democratization theory, increased wealth served to the stability of the authoritarian Aliyev regime. In line with the guidelines provided by the rentier state literature, increased oil revenues helped the regime to prevent the emergence of an independent middle class (the 'modernization effect' of oil rents conceptualized by Ross), to buy the support of the society through patronage and welfare policies, to strengthen the coercive apparatus through oil revenues (repression effect) and divide the opposition by creating groups which work for the regime (group formation effect).

#### **7.4. Kyrgyzstan**

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<sup>865</sup> Azerbaijan: Defence Sector Management and Reform, *International Crisis Group Europe Briefing*, No. 50( 29 October 2008, pp. 2 and 11.

<sup>866</sup> Anja Franke, Andrea Gawrich and Gurban Alakbarov, "Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as Post-Soviet Rentier States: Resource Incomes and Autocracy as a Double 'Curse' in Post-Soviet Regimes", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 1(2009), pp. 127-128.

In 1991, Askar Akayev was elected as the first president of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan to be re-elected in 1995 and 2000. When constitutional court ruled that the period starting with 2000 elections was his second and last term in power, the prospect for regime change in Kyrgyzstan emerged. Akayev furthered this situation by announcing that he would not seek a way to run for presidency in 2005 elections.<sup>867</sup>

As in Georgia's 'Rose Revolution', the 'Tulip Revolution' was sparked by electoral fraud in the parliamentary rather than the presidential elections although discontent was mounting for a long time. The 27 February and 13 March 2005 elections resulted in the filling of the parliament with the members of the close circle of Akayev, including several members of his family, at the expense of opposition candidates. It was striking that the opposition was only able to get 6 out of 75 seats in the Parliament.<sup>868</sup>

The OSCE severely criticized the elections by referring to the disqualification of the candidates and the use of administrative resources for the pro-presidential candidates. Different from Georgia and contrary to the generalizations of McFaul on countries experienced 'color revolutions', media was not free in the Kyrgyz case. The broadcast of US- sponsored Kyrgyz-language Radio *Azatlyk* (Liberty) was stopped, the pro-opposition "MSN" newspaper was attacked and popular Internet resources were blocked.<sup>869</sup> Thus, the Kyrgyz media did not play the role that the Georgian media played in the 'Rose Revolution' by mobilizing the masses and revealing election fraud.<sup>870</sup>

The protests first started in the southern city of Jalalabad, instead of the capital city as in the case of the 'Rose Revolution', and, then, reached to Osh and

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<sup>867</sup> Bruce Pannier, "Rethinking Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution", Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, 25 August 2009, available at [http://www.rferl.org/content/Rethinking\\_KyrgyzstansTulip\\_Revolution/1807335.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Rethinking_KyrgyzstansTulip_Revolution/1807335.html) (Lastly accessed on 10 September 2009).

<sup>868</sup> Joshua A. Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Color Revolutions", *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3(September 2007), p. 538.

<sup>869</sup> Aya Telekova, "Kyrgyz Government's Control Slips, Creating Dangers and Opportunities", Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst, 23 March 2005 available at <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/2897/print> (Lastly accessed on 23 September 2009).

<sup>870</sup> Donnacha Ó Beacháin, "Roses and Tulips: Dynamics of Regime Change in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan", *Journal of Communist and Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 2&3 (2009), pp. 204, 205.

to Bishkek in two weeks time. The protests in Bishkek, in which 30,000 protestors participated, culminated in the escape of Akayev to Russia and his eventual resignation on 4 April 2005.<sup>871</sup> This was followed by presidential election on July 10, which carried opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev to power with nearly 90 percent of the votes. The parliament elected through the fraudulent elections was allowed to serve as a result of the pacts among the main opposition leaders. To avoid another north-south conflict, the northern leader Felix Kulov agreed to cede the presidency to the southern leader Bakiyev in return for the position of prime minister and the promise to realize constitutional reforms that would relocate important degree of the presidential powers to the Prime Minister.<sup>872</sup>

Having briefly introduced the ‘Tulip Revolution’, the remainder of the section will compare Shevardnadze’s Georgia with Akayev’s Kyrgyzstan to show that Kyrgyzstan was quite similar to Georgia in the sense that state lacked capacity and autonomy and this similarity became influential in producing the similar regime outcome, removal of the incumbent through a ‘color revolution’. After emphasizing the role of state weakness in the ‘Tulip Revolution’, the section will move on to another feature common to these countries: lack of democratization in post-‘Revolution’ period. Lastly, the section will briefly discuss how Bakiyev’s failure at strengthening state capacity and autonomy resulted in his fall.

To start with extractive and distributive capacity, on the surface, Kyrgyzstan emerged as the most liberal and willing country to initiate economic reforms among other Central Asian republics. It was the first to realize major economic reforms including moving out of the ruble zone and introducing a national currency besides liberalizing all exports, tariffs and customs. In 1995, it had a freely convertible currency, became the first member of the Common

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<sup>871</sup> Joshua A. Tucker, “Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Color Revolutions”, *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (September 2007), p. 538.

<sup>872</sup> Hale Henry, “Democracy or Autocracy on the March? The Color Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 2006), p. 316.



Wealth of Independent states to join the World Trade Organization and to initiate a privatization program.<sup>873</sup>

However, beneath the surface there were many problems. Rather than liberalism, economic authoritarianism marked the country. In reality, only partial reform was carried out and the gains resulting from this partial reform were distributed to a small group.<sup>874</sup> At the beginning, Akayev used privatization program to distribute lucrative assets to the most influential elites to ensure their support. However, as most of these elites proved to be incapable of running these assets in an effective way, the country's industry suffered. Most tried to re-sell what they seized through privatization program in search for cash. As a response, Akayev reestablished control over country's industry by inserting family members in company boards.<sup>875</sup>

As Akayev and his close circle monopolized political and economic power, the masses saw their economic situation deteriorate. Many Kyrgyz had survived on just \$25 per month and the government frequently failed to pay the wages. The public resentment, created by the government's failure to address economic hardship, was hardened when a pro-opposition newspaper revealed the extent of Akayev's riches and the immense network of businesses linked with the president and his family.<sup>876</sup> Kyrgyz economic state capacity was already too weak to provide the ruling elite with resources to gain the allegiances of the citizens with providing certain services and satisfying certain needs. Akayev leadership made it even more inefficient due to the unfair distribution of public resources. As a result, the have-nots in the Kyrgyz society lost their patience towards the ruling elite on the eve of the 'Revolution'. The business elite, which could have been an important source of support for the ruling elite, was also alienated by heavy

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<sup>873</sup> Johan Engvall, "Kyrgyzstan: Anatomy of a State", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 54, No. 4( July/August 2007), p. 36.

<sup>874</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>875</sup> Rafis Abazov, "The Parliamentary Election in Kyrgyzstan, February/March 2005", *Electoral Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 530.

<sup>876</sup> David Gullette, "Akayev's Legacy in Kyrgyzstan Proving Difficult to Overcome", *Eurasianet*, 10 May 2005, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/.../eav051005a.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/.../eav051005a.shtml) (Lastly accessed on 2 October 2009)

involvement of the president's family in business at the expense of their exclusion.<sup>877</sup> The president's wife, Meiram Akayeva, his son-in-law and his oldest son became particular targets of criticisms for exploiting state resources.<sup>878</sup>

This picture helps one to understand the reasons for the unpopularity of Akayev but it cannot still illuminate why the protests leading to the 'Tulip Revolution' first started in the southern parts of the country. Like the people in the rest of the country, the southerners were irritated by Akayev's family's role in politics and economy and hurt by the economic hardship. However, there was something extra associated with the south that led these people to rise against Akayev first. The worse deprivation that the southern clans suffered compared to the northern clans and the inability of the state to monopolize allegiance of the population were the reasons explaining the situation.

North-South division and rivalry characterizes the Kyrgyz society. Whereas the division can be traced to the presence of the mountain chain that isolates southern and northern parts from each other, Soviet policies that distributed political and economic resources along northern-southern lines strengthened the rivalries between the two sides. The kinship-based identities developed on the basis of the north-south division and has become so important that Kyrgyz lacked national unity and they often defined themselves as members of tribes and the clan comprising their tribe.<sup>879</sup> Rather than the state, the loyalties of Kyrgyz lay with families, tribes and clans as the state could not win over these social power centers in its struggle for winning allegiance.

Akayev had initially showed some success at managing this rivalry although he did not provide a fair share of resources of the state. Starting with independence, whereas Akayev treated the northern clans -the Kemin, Aitmatov,

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<sup>877</sup> International Crisis Group, "Political Transition in Kyrgyzstan: Problems and Prospects", *Asia Report*, No. 81, 11 August 2004.

<sup>878</sup> Anders Åslund, "Economic Reform After the Revolution in the Kyrgyz Republic", *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 2005), p. 477.

<sup>879</sup> Ainura Elebayeva, Nurbek Omuraliev, Rafis Abazov, "The Shifting Identities and Loyalties in Kyrgyzstan: The Evidence from the Field", *Nationalities Paper*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2000), p. 343 and Eugene Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan: The Politics of Demographic and Economic Frustration", in Ian Bremmer & Ray Taras (eds.), *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 635.

and Sarygulov clans and especially his wife's clan- generously, he provided the southern ones with just enough resources to prevent them from rebelling. In addition to attaining key positions in the government, northern clan members seized major state assets through the privatization process of the early 1990s. However, in the face of the shrinking resources, Akayev found it more difficult to continue even his limited supply to southern clans and came to exclude them increasingly from the share of the economic and political resources.<sup>880</sup>

Anxieties of southern clans increased after September 11 as Akayev devoted the new resources coming from the US base deal to his closest clan members including his son, his son-in-law and their family members. The grievances of economically and politically excluded southern clans resulted in the outbreak of the protests in the January 2002 in Aksy.<sup>881</sup> The protests were sparked by the arrest of Azimbek Beknazarov, an important southern leader, who had severely criticized the border agreement that Akayev concluded with China on the basis of abuse of power charges. During the events, six protesters were killed when the police opened fire.<sup>882</sup>

The events which took place in Aksy can be considered as the Rustavi-2 Crisis of Kyrgyzstan or rehearsal for the 'Tulip Revolution'. First, the protests revealed the extent of weaknesses of the state in some regions and emboldened the opposition significantly as the ruling elite was panicked because of small-scale local protests. Second, the protestors were familiarized with techniques like blocking the roads and seizing government buildings to be reapplied in the Tulip 'Revolution'. Third, the police felt irritated when the government initiated trials against some policemen due to use of force. This undermined the solidarity between the ruling elite and security forces and made them unwilling to use force against anti-government protestors. In other words, the crisis weakened the

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<sup>880</sup> Alisher Khamidov, "Kyrgyzstan: Organized Opposition and Civil Unrest", Eurasianet, 16 December 2002, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/.../eav121602.shtm](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/.../eav121602.shtm) (Lastly accessed on 2 October 2009).

<sup>881</sup> Kathleen Collins, "The Logic of Clan Politics Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories", *World Politics*, Vol. 56 (January 2004), p. 250.

<sup>882</sup> Reto Weyermann, A Silk Road to Democracy?, *FAST Country Risk Profile Kyrgyzstan*, February 2005, p. 8

coercive capacity of Kyrgyz state. Lastly, the events also caused an important split in the ruling elite since the then prime minister Kurmanbek Bakiyev, another important southern elite remaining in the government, was forced to resign and pushed to the opposition in an attempt to pacify the protestors and solve the crisis.<sup>883</sup>

This increasing deprivation of southern regions explains the outbreak of the protests in the south of the country but it is also necessary to emphasize that some prominent members of the northern elites also participated in the Tulip 'Revolution'. This can again be explained by the ineffective use of the distributive state capacity by Akayev. He could have used state resources to keep the key figures within his camp and prevent their alienation, but he acted to the contrary. First, he took steps to exclude potential rivals from the government. This included northern elites such as Feliks Kulov and Rosa Otunbayeva. Kulov was initially a strong ally of Akayev and served as Minister of National Security and Interior. Doubtful of the loyalty of Kulov, Akayev downgraded him to the position of the Mayor of Bishkek. Kulov responded by resigning and establishing *Ar-Namus* (Honor) Party to oppose Akayev in 2000 parliamentary and presidential elections. Akayev's response to defection proved to be harsher than that of Shevardnadze. Kulov was given a seven-year prison term on the basis of power abuse charges.<sup>884</sup>

This would be followed by defection of Otunbayeva who served as the Foreign Minister in Akayev administration. Otunbayeva joined the opposition by forming *Ata-Jurt* (Fatherland) Party after she fell into disagreement with Akayev, who felt threatened by her increasing popularity. She was prevented from becoming a candidate for the 2005 parliamentary election on the basis of a law requiring MP candidates to have resided in the country for five years before the elections. When Otunbayeva failed to satisfy this requirement as a former ambassador, the way was cleared for the daughter of Akayev, who was competing

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883 David Lewis, "The Dynamics of Regime Change: Domestic and International Factors in the Tulip Revolution", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 3(2008), pp. 267-268.

884 Alisher Khamidov, "Kyrgyzstan: Organized Opposition and Civil Unrest", *Eurasianet*, 16 December 2002, available at [www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/.../eav121602.shtm](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/.../eav121602.shtm) (Lastly accessed on 2 October 2009).

in the electoral district Otunbayeva was planning to compete.<sup>885</sup> These defections would serve as a significant blow to the stability of Akayev regime as these three leaders would form the trio of the 'Tulip Revolution'.<sup>886</sup>

Thus, compared to Shevardnadze, Akayev made more effective use of the coercive state capacity to exclude threatening elites from the political process. He also engineered reduction in the number of seats in the parliament from 105 to 75 in order to decrease the chances for the opposition figures to enter into the legislature and make it easy for his family to control the parliament after he stepped down. As a result of this, many important members of the political elite save for the closest circle of Akayev would be left out of the parliament.<sup>887</sup>

However, another dimension of state weakness brought about the latter's fall. In Kyrgyzstan, the state was incapable of monopolizing allegiance. Allegiance in the country came to follow kinship ties. As a result, the demonstrations began in the southern regions when more than a dozen of candidates, who either lost the elections or barred from election, mobilized their villagers, relatives, friends to protest the results. First opposition protests were taking place in an isolated form. However, beginning with early March candidates like Bakiyev, Otunbayeva and Beknazarov started to coordinate the protests with the framework of People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan.<sup>888</sup> As a result, the supporters of candidates who initially held local protests and occupied local government building began to march to Bishkek.<sup>889</sup> On March 24, a group of protestors stormed into the government building in Bishkek causing Akayev to

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885 Alexei Makarkin, "An Orange-Tinged Revolt", *Russia In Global Affairs*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (April-June 2005), p. 108 and Alisher Khamidov "For Kyrgyz President, The Parliamentary Vote is a Family Affair", Eurasianet, 10 February 2005, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav021005.shtml> (Lastly accessed on 20 May 2008).

886 Alexei Makarkin, "An Orange-Tinged Revolt", *Russia In Global Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April-June 2005), p. 108.

887 International Crisis Group, "Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution", *Asia Report*, No. 97, (4 May 2005), p. 1.

888 Alisher Khamidov, "Kyrgyzstan's Revolutionary Youth: Between State and Opposition," *SAIS Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer-Fall 2006), p. 88.

889 Shairbek Juraev, "The Tulip Revolution and Beyond", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 3-4 (September 2008) p.261.

flee Russia. Whereas NGOs played no role in the initial local protests, the members of youth *KelKel* (Renaissance) organization, played a minor role in Bishkek protests.<sup>890</sup>

Kyrgyz state lacked the capacity to resist external pressures for regime change as in the case of Georgia. As a result, the regime could not block foreign help going to opposition leaders such as Otunbayeva. Akayev was equally helpless in the face of the USAID's financial support to 170 anti-regime NGOs. The examples of the 'Rose Revolution' and 'Orange Revolution' motivated the Kyrgyz elite and foreign help provided the anti-regime NGOs with more resources and new political tactics. However, Kyrgyz NGOs and opposition parties did not play the decisive role that they played in Georgia, since the mobilization in Kyrgyz case took place along kinship-based ties as discussed.<sup>891</sup>

It does not make sense to argue that Akayev was against use of force given the fact that use of force during the Aksy events led to eight deaths. It seems more logical to argue that Akayev regime fell as a result of loss of state autonomy in broader terms. Towards the 'Revolution', Akayev government lost its control over the southern regions. By distributing already limited state resources to his family members, Akayev made it impossible to gain the support of critical groups such as the security forces and political elite. To the contrary, Akayev alienated the elite by denying them political and economic resources. Since the local leaders, rather than the state enjoyed the loyalty of the different groups in the society, masses mobilized as a reaction to the exclusion of their leaders. Different from the Georgian case, the police began to beat the protestors but the protestors swept past the security forces and managed to burst into the White House in a little while.<sup>892</sup> Lacking autonomy against the social forces due to incapacitation of the state, Akayev had to give in.

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890 *Ibid* and Scott Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2 ( April 2006), p. 138.

891 David Lewis, "The Dynamics of Regime Change: Domestic and International Factors in the Tulip Revolution", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 3(2008), p. 274.

892 Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution, p. 8 and Alisher Khamidov, op. cit. (Summer-Fall 2006), p. 88.

Since the ‘Tulip Revolution’ was quite different from the ‘Rose and Orange Revolutions’, it is not easy to explain the three ‘revolutions’ by using a common theoretical framework. It is particularly difficult to account for it by using the tools suggested by McFaul and Levitsky and Way. Contrary to what is suggested by McFaul, an independent media did not exist and the NGOs played only a marginal role.<sup>893</sup> Levitsky and Way’s emphasis on the weakness of coercive capacity is guiding when accounting for the easy fall of presidential palace but their analysis is still inefficient in illuminating the factors which motivated the masses to rise against Akayev and the problems that went beyond the suppression of the protests. As will be seen, the theoretical framework of this study will provide a more guiding and comprehensive tool by illuminating the Akayev’s failure to preempt and repress the challenges to the regime stability due to state weakness in various dimensions and the resulting loss of state autonomy.

As in the case of Georgia, the post-‘Revolution’ Kyrgyzstan has been marked by increasing authoritarianism rather than democratization. International election observers passed negative assessments on the presidential elections on 23 July 2009, which carried Bakiyev to presidency for the second time, referring to ballot stuffing, intimidation of candidates and media bias.<sup>894</sup> Moreover, Bakiyev placed his brothers in important positions in government and business.<sup>895</sup> Although media independence had improved in the immediate period following the ‘Revolution’, the Bakiyev regime increased its pressures in the subsequent years. Examples of intensified repression include the confiscation of print runs of opposition newspapers during anti-government protests in April 2007 and raid against the independent newspaper De Facto after publishing an article critical of the president’s nephew and blocking of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

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<sup>893</sup> Scott Radnitz, “What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2006), p. 138.

<sup>894</sup> Dilip Hiro, “Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution Wilts”, *Guardian*, 24 July 2009 available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/24/kyrgyzstan-election-tulip-democracy> (Lastly accessed on 2 October 2009).

<sup>895</sup> Rethinking Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution”, *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 25 August 2009, available at [http://www.rferl.org/content/Rethinking\\_Kyrgyzstans\\_Tulip\\_Revolution/1807335.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Rethinking_Kyrgyzstans_Tulip_Revolution/1807335.html) (Lastly accessed on 10 September 2009).

broadcasts by state authorities. Starting with 2007, the government also increased restrictions on freedom of assembly and activities of NGOs.<sup>896</sup>

As Bakiyev permitted the Pentagon to use the air base near Bishkek for one more year, compared to Bush, the Obama administration proved to be less willing to criticize the Bakiyev regime.<sup>897</sup> This provides further support for the argument of the study that Western powers should not be regarded as external forces supporting democratization in a given country but rather as actors treating the regimes in accordance with their interest.

Bakiyev was not able to strengthen state capacity and autonomy enough and this prepared his end. Bakiyev regime mismanaged and abused the economic resources. As the Bakiyev family established control over the most profitable economic state resources, the masses experienced more economic hardship and deprivation.<sup>898</sup> The son of Bakiyev, Maxim, came to the limelight due to his hold over the political system and lucrative businesses. The most lucrative state companies like electricity distribution company Severelektro and the largest phone company Kyrgyztelekom were privatized at very low prices. When these privatizations were followed by price increases, the peoples' belief that government was doing it best to exploit them was reinforced.<sup>899</sup> Thus, the government failed to strengthen the state capacity to satisfy the needs of the society and gain their loyalty in this way.

To make the matters worse for Bakiyev, the weak Kyrgyz state also lacked autonomy vis-a-vis the external forces. It has been argued that Moscow's frustration with Bakiyev's regime, which remained short of evacuating the US military base in the country despite the earlier promises, led Kremlin to use the

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<sup>896</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2009 Kyrgyzstan Report, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7641> (Lastly accessed on 20 November 2009).

<sup>897</sup> Dilip Hiro, "Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution Wilts", Guardian, 24 July 2009 available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/24/kyrgyzstan-election-tulip-democracy> (Lastly accessed on 2 October 2009).

<sup>898</sup> Annette Bohr, Revolution in Kyrgyzstan – Again, *Chatham House Russia and Eurasia Programme Paper*, March 2010, p. 2.

<sup>899</sup> International Crisis Group, Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses, *Asia Briefing*, No. 102 (27 April 2010), p. 7.



Russian mass media to run a negative campaign against Bakiyev.<sup>900</sup> When the Russian media, which has important power in Kyrgyzstan, started to criticize corruption under Bakiyev regime, the state weakness deprived Bakiyev of the opportunity to prevent these broadcasts. Consequently, Bakiyev had to flee the country and resign in the face of protests that started on 7 April 2010 and the armed forces failed to suppress due to weakness of coercive apparatus of the state.

#### **7.4. Uzbekistan**

Andijon, the Uzbek city situated in the Fergana Valley known for economic hardship and unemployment as well as the government's frequent repression of Islamic groups, became the scene of popular protests and violent government crackdown in May 2005. On May 10 and 11, shortly after the 'Tulip Revolution', the family members and the supporters of 23 local businessmen held demonstrations in Andijon to protest against their jailing. The situation went out of control when armed protestors attacked a police station, army barracks and the local prison releasing 23 businessmen and as well as hundreds of other prisoners. Following this, on 13 May, Uzbek security forces opened fire against demonstrations including women and children, who gathered in the city center to protest against government's heavy-handed involvement in political and economic affairs. Whereas the Uzbek government claimed that the number of deaths was 180, international NGOs like International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch asserted that the death figure was as high as 700 or 800.<sup>901</sup>

This violent repression illustrates the main mechanisms behind the survival of the regime ruling the country since independence. The incident showed the willingness and ability of Karimov to use coercive state apparatus to remain in power. It is a good indicator of government's readiness to use force

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<sup>900</sup> Erica Marat, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 7, No. 63 (1 April 2010) available at [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=36226&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=5f81ad077b](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36226&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=5f81ad077b) (Lastly accessed on 5 July 2010).

<sup>901</sup> The account of the event is based on the following reports: International Crisis Group, "Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising," *Asia Briefing* No. 38 (May 2005), Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain: The Andijon Massacre, May 13, 2005," *HRW Report* 17, No. 5 (D) (June 2005), <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/uzbekistan0605/> (Lastly accessed on 2 August 2009), Human Rights Watch, "Burying the Truth: Uzbekistan Rewrites the Story of the Andijon Massacre," *HRW Report* 17, no. 6 (D) (September 2005), <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/uzbekistan0905> (Lastly accessed on 2 August 2009).

because Karimov ordered the armed forces to fire against peaceful protestors gathered in the city center, including women and children. The death toll is 180 even by the official accounts. The incident also demonstrates the strength of Uzbek coercive state capacity. Different from the Georgian case, in Andijon uprising there were armed insurgents besides peaceful protestors in the city center and the government was able to repress both. Lastly, the security forces obeyed Karimov when he ordered to fire at the civilians and this was also a mark of the strength of the coercive state capacity the regime enjoyed. This strength of the coercive power is an important factor that ensured state autonomy. Nevertheless, other mechanisms also acted to bring about state autonomy in Uzbekistan and ensuing regime stability. This section will provide an examination of these factors.

The protests in Andijon were by no means the first case of mobilization against the regime. For instance, in March 2003, thousands of students protested the firing of a popular university rector and these protest triggered broader demonstrations on the poor condition of the Uzbek higher education system. These protests were similar to the ones in Georgian universities discussed before. Mobilization against the regime was not limited to the university students. In November 2004 thousands of people in Fergana Valley protested against the taxation and trade policies of the government. These were followed by similar protest in the rest of the Fergana Valley and in southern Uzbekistan. In April 2005, this time the farmers protested against the regional government's confiscation of small private agricultural plots.<sup>902</sup>

As in the case of Georgia, the socio-economic hardship was important source of the grievances motivating the mobilization against the regime. Compared to the post- 2000 period, the Uzbek economy scored better in the 1990s. Uzbekistan reached its pre-independence GDP level sooner than eleven other former Soviet Republics. This positive state of affairs was result of some factors that were not always directly linked to the successful policies of the government. First of all, Uzbekistan did not experience secessionist conflicts or

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<sup>902</sup> Fiona Hill and Kevin Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution: Reaction to Andijon", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Summer 2006), p. 114.

the civil war that Georgia suffered from.<sup>903</sup> Moreover, the country enjoys energy self-sufficiency and availability of export goods such as cotton and gold. Karimov tried to avoid the disturbances that would result from the post-Soviet economic transformation by doing little to change the economy's dependence on cotton in Soviet period. However, the agricultural and natural resource sectors have not been able to keep pace with increasing Uzbek population and the unemployment increased. Lastly, the country has not been able to attract new foreign investment due to lack of necessary government policies. Consequently, the living standards have declined since 2000 for the whole society apart from a small and privileged group.<sup>904</sup>

Uzbekistan now emerges as one of the two post-Soviet States included in the World Bank list of "low-income countries under stress" which are regarded as highly ineffective in poverty reduction. The other state is Tajikistan, which was devastated by the civil war. Even Kyrgyzstan, which lacks Uzbekistan's energy self-sufficiency and valuable export items, is not included in the list.<sup>905</sup> In the face of government's ineffectiveness to satisfy the needs of the population, the society tried to find alternative ways of survival. It has been argued that what triggered the protest in Andijon was the state's attempt at controlling autonomous structures that assist people in their daily struggle to survive by providing credit.<sup>906</sup>

Another source disturbance for Karimov regime is the threat that the clans pose. So far, Karimov was inept at using clans against each other and preserve the fragile balance among them. Ministers coming from different clans are switched regularly to prevent them from becoming too strong. In this way, Karimov tries to maintain state autonomy vis-à-vis different clans and avoid Georgian type defections that can bring the end of the regime. Two strongest clans, Samarkand and Tashkent are balanced against each other in two coercive state organs, the

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<sup>903</sup> Martin C. Spechler, "Human Rights in Central Eurasia: the Unexpected Sides of Economic Growth and Authoritarian Rule", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 56, No. 2, (March/April 2009), p. 4.

<sup>904</sup> Fiona Hill and Kevin Jones, "Fear of Democracy or Revolution: Reaction to Andijon", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3(Summer 2006), p. 113.

<sup>905</sup> Tihomir Loza and Gardner Ku, "The Failed Autocrat", *Transitions Online*, 7 March 2005.

<sup>906</sup> Abdujalil Abdurasulov, "The Legitimacy Thing", *Transitions Online*, 20 February 2007.

National Security Service and the Interior Ministry. In the past, Karimov dismissed the powerful clan figures such as Ismail Jurabekov, Zakir Almatov, Qodir Gulomov and Timur Alimov to prevent them from challenging him as Zhvania and Saakashvili did in Georgia.<sup>907</sup>

Thus, the stability of the regime has been threatened by the discontent in the society and rival elites in Uzbekistan as in the case of Georgia. It seems that the economic state capacity did not help Karimov to block the emergence of tensions leading to incumbent overthrows in other countries. However, it does not mean that Karimov did not use the economic capacity of the state to remain in power. It is necessary to emphasize that he used the scarce economic resources for strengthening the coercive state capacity. The success in maintaining regime stability lies in the strength of coercive apparatus. The government has strict control over main export commodities of the country. Karimov uses these revenues not to satisfy citizen needs but to sustain its allies in the security services to strengthen state autonomy.<sup>908</sup>

Karimov has built a strong security force, which from time to time pursued enemies of the regime in the neighboring countries.<sup>909</sup> The Uzbek National Security Service, which is charged with guarding the regime against opposition threats, directly reports to the president. It is trained and equipped better than the armed forces of the Ministry of Defense. A long-time regime loyalist heads the organization and its strength deters many oppositionists.<sup>910</sup> To further strengthen

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<sup>907</sup> For Karimov's clan policy please see Kathleen Collins, *Clans, Pacts, and Politics: Understanding Regime Transition in Central Asia* (Doctoral Dissertation: Stanford University, December 1999), p. 348-9, "Uzbekistan: Karimov Appears to Have Political Clans Firmly in Hand," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 31 August 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/08/970cdfca-adb7-4c9c-856b-526cef00273b.html> (Lastly accessed on 3 August 2009) and Gulnoza Saidazimova, "Uzbekistan: Islam Karimov vs. the Clans", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 23 April 2005 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1058611.html> (Lastly accessed on 3 August 2009).

<sup>908</sup> International Crisis Group, "Uzbekistan: Europe's Sanctions Matter", *Asia Briefing*, No. 54 ( 6 November 2006), p. 1.

<sup>909</sup> Kathleen Collins, "The Logic of Clan Politics Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories", *World Politics*, Vol. 56 (January 2004), p. 253.

<sup>910</sup> Rustam Burnashev and Irina Chernykh, "Changes in Uzbekistan's Military Policy after the Andijan Events," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2007), p. 71 and Jim Nichol, "Uzbekistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests", *CRS Report for Congress*, 2 May 2005, p. 4.

his position, Karimov also established an elite Presidential Security Service. Although little known about this force, it is believed to be well trained and equipped.<sup>911</sup>

Before the onset of ‘color revolutions’, Karimov regarded the attempts at his life and Islamic insurgency rather than protests as the main threats to regime. After 1999 attempt at his life, he embarked in further strengthening of the coercive apparatus and used the incident as a pretext to crack down on both secular and Islamic opposition.<sup>912</sup> After the regimes changes starting with Georgia, he came to focus on the protests and the NGOs. Civil disobedience has been swiftly punished and the regime has used the media to publicize harsh cases of punishments to deter future attempts.<sup>913</sup> Uzbek human rights defenders have been denied permission when they attempted to travel abroad to participate in the meetings organized by human rights organizations. The authorities also harassed many civil activists.<sup>914</sup>

The repression went further than this. Soon after the ‘Rose Revolution’, the Uzbek government established strict control over Uzbek NGOs’ foreign funding through a law requiring them to deposit funds in government-controlled banks. Following this, the government closed down most of the Western-based and local NGOs that work on democracy and governance related issues.<sup>915</sup> Thus, unlike Shevardnadze who could not block the financial help going to the NGOs and their ensuing strengthening at the expense of the state, Karimov regime managed to restrain external help to the NGOs in Uzbekistan.

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<sup>911</sup> Kathleen Collins, *Clans, Pacts, and Politics: Understanding Regime Transition in Central Asia* (Doctoral Dissertation: Stanford University, December 1999), pp. 274-5.

<sup>912</sup> Kathleen Collins, “Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia”, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 13, Number 3 (July 2002), p. 150.

<sup>913</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2009 Uzbekistan Country Report* available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7731> (Lastly accessed on 7 August 2009).

<sup>914</sup> Archana Pyati, “Karimov’s War: Human Rights Defenders and Counterterrorism in Uzbekistan”, *Human Rights Defenders and Counterterrorism Series*, No. 3 (2005), p. 12.

<sup>915</sup> Carl Gershman and Michael Allen, “New Threats to Freedom: The Assault on Democracy Assistance”, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 17, No. 2 (April 2006), p. 42.

Karimov regime also proved to be more effective in monopolizing dissemination of information compared to Shevardnadze regime. The regime controls the press through its ownership of printing and distribution facilities and the major TV channels. Although official censorship was abolished in 2001, self-censorship is the rule as the people fear harsh reprisal in the case of publishing a critical material. The government also cracked down on the independent foreign media outlets especially after Andijon events. In December 2005, for instance, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was forced to close its Tashkent bureau. The government also blocks critical websites. Murder of journalist Alisher Saipov, a critic of the Uzbek regime, in Kyrgyzstan in October 2007 has been also interpreted as a step to silence voices posing their criticisms from abroad.<sup>916</sup>

In contrast to Shevardnadze, Karimov enjoys strict control over governance at all levels. In Uzbek system of governance, the governors at the regional and Tashkent city level are appointed directly by the president and can be replaced at his will. Similarly, *hakims* (governors) at the regional level appoint and dismiss *hakims* at the district and city levels. In that way, a strong degree of personal loyalty is engendered within the system.<sup>917</sup> It has been argued that Karimov has preferred to place loyal subordinates in strategic points like Samarkand, Fergana Valley and Tashkent.<sup>918</sup> Besides placing loyal governors in strategic positions, Karimov regularly rotates them to prevent them from building their own power bases and eventually challenging the president.<sup>919</sup> The president's attempts to strengthen his authoritarian rule can also be observed at the *mahalla* (neighborhood) level. The chairman of *mahalla*, *aksakal* (the prominent and respectful elder), is elected by popular vote and his salary is paid by the central government. Although the government has especially emphasized that the

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<sup>916</sup> Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2008 Uzbekistan Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2008&country=7517> (Lastly accessed on 8 August 2009).

<sup>917</sup> Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>918</sup> Roger D. Kangas, "Uzbekistan: Amir Temur Revisited" in Sally N. Cummings, *Power and Change in Central Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 137.

<sup>919</sup> *Ibid.*

*mahalla* system serves as a means to offer assistance to families, it has been also used to extend the centralized control in each locality. *Aksakals*, for example, are supposed to report the activities of ‘suspicious individuals’ to the center.<sup>920</sup>

After independence, the US and the other Western states, to some extent, linked the provision of financial aid to the newly independent states to the issue of democratization in those countries and proved to be more willing to respond to the needs of less authoritarian states in the region rather than the blatantly repressive ones like Uzbekistan.<sup>921</sup> Aware of the fact that Uzbekistan’s poor human rights and democratization record were harming the efforts to gain greater access to development aid and to increase foreign investment, in mid-1996 Tashkent launched a campaign to improve its tarnished image.<sup>922</sup> This included granting permission to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Soros Foundation’s Open Institute and Human Rights Watch/Helsinki to open their offices in Tashkent in this year and releasing some political prisoners before Karimov’s visit to US in 1996.

Western governments continued to criticize the Karimov regime due to its frequent repression of opposition as these were only face-saving policies. However, the September 11 events provided the regime with a golden opportunity thanks to the increased importance of Uzbekistan in the US operations in Afghanistan. Especially after the 2001 agreement that granted the US basing rights in Khanabad air base, the Western governments muted their criticisms against the regime and Karimov got the help of the US to crush the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) linked to the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.<sup>923</sup> Moreover, the US provided the government with significant

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<sup>920</sup> Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road* (Singapore: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 32.

<sup>921</sup> John Anderson, *The International Politics of Central Asia* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 192.

<sup>922</sup> Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998), p. 17.

<sup>923</sup> Shahram Akbarzadeh, “Uzbekistan and the United States: Friends or Foes?”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14, No. 1(Spring 2007), p. 115.

financial help which were used in strengthening the coercive capacity of Uzbek state and to bolster economy.<sup>924</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that the US aid served to the prolonging of the Karimov regime by strengthening it in many respects.

Many observers evaluating the close relations between Tashkent and Washington came to assert that the US interest in the country went beyond conducting operations in Afghanistan. While they had been arguing that the US favored close relations with the Uzbek leader to gain a foothold in Central Asia to perpetuate its influence and control in the region, the honeymoon period came to a halt with the outbreak of Andijon events.<sup>925</sup> Although the US reaction to Andijon events remained more reserved compared to the EU, Washington's call for independent investigation of the events raised Karimov's anxiety about the continuity of his regime.<sup>926</sup> The invitation of Russian experts to investigate the events instead of Western experts was a harbinger of Karimov's upcoming alignment with Russia against the West. Karimov came to see the US as a liability rather than an asset for the stability of his regime. He accused the US authorities of supporting the demonstrations in Andijon as an attempt to realize a new 'color revolution' in Uzbekistan. At this point the availability of Russia as an alternative source of external support for the regime proved to be valuable for Karimov. He joined forces with Russia and China under the umbrella of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which functions as a counterweight against the US influence in the region, and these three parties passed a SCO resolution on 6 July 2006 asking for the withdrawal of the US from Central Asia. This was followed by an Uzbek notice to the US to evict the K-2 base and subsequent US withdrawal.<sup>927</sup> To sum up, it can be argued that since independence Karimov has cleverly used the sources of external support for the regime survival and shifted sides when it was necessary for the needs of the regime stability. As a result, the

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<sup>924</sup> For the details of US financial aid please see Alexander Cooley, "U.S. Bases and Democratization in Central Asia", *Orbis*. Vol. 52, No. 1 (Winter 2008), pp. 72, 73.

<sup>925</sup> Sedat Laçiner, "Hazar Enerji Kaynakları Ve Enerji-Siyaset İlişkisi", *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları*, Vol. 1, No 1 (2006), p. 58.

<sup>926</sup> Alexander Cooley, "U.S. Bases and Democratization in Central Asia", *Orbis*. Vol. 52, No. 1 (Winter 2008), p. 77.

<sup>927</sup> Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Uzbekistan and the United States: Friends or Foes?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 2007), p. 114.



Karimov Regime proved to be resistant to the external pressures for regime change different from the Shevardnadze Regime. Thanks to its autonomy vis-à-vis the external anti-regime forces, the Uzbek dictator became able to paralyze the foreign-based NGOs without difficulty.

### 7.5. Ukraine

The ‘Orange Revolution’ in Ukraine in 2004 followed a similar course with the ‘Rose Revolution’. The opposition candidate, Victor Yushenko, was announced to have lost the presidential elections to the president Kuchma’s hand-picked successor and Russia’s preferred candidate, Viktor Yanukovich. Ukrainian citizens held rallies to protest against the vote fraud. As in the case of Georgia, the outgoing president Kuchma avoided use of force and a rerun was ordered which carried Yushenko to presidency with 52 percent of the vote against Yanukovich on 26 December 2004.<sup>928</sup>

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine also faced economic hardship albeit at a smaller degree than Georgia since the country did not experience the political instability that Georgia suffered from. By 1999, output had fallen to less than 40% of the 1991 level.<sup>929</sup>

As in the case of Shevardnadze, Kuchma gave the economic resources of the state to the control of some oligarchs. The economy was dominated by three oligarchic groups: Rinat Ahkmedov’s Systems Capital Management (a huge metallurgical conglomerate based in Donetsk), Victor Pinchuk’s Interpipe (a company specializing in high value steel products based in Dnipropetrovsk) and the joint group of Hrihoriy Surkis and Viktor Medvedchuk (the Kyiv based group controlled regional electricity distribution companies as well as three biggest

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<sup>928</sup>For a more detailed account of the events please see Vicki Hesli, “The Orange Revolution: 2004 Presidential Election(s) in Ukraine,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2006), p. 173 and Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine’s Orange Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).

<sup>929</sup>CIA, Ukraine Factbook, available at [//www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html) (Lastly accessed on 6 September 2009).

television channels in the country).<sup>930</sup> These groups had close connections with the president, benefited from wide government privileges like tax cuts and access to lucrative energy resources and had power over many important officials, including those serving in the law enforcement.<sup>931</sup>

There was a symbiotic relationship between Kuchma and these oligarchs. In return for the privileges he provided, Kuchma demanded the loyalty and the support of these oligarchs to remain in power. For example, Victor Pinchuk (who is also the son-in-law of Kuchma) and Victor Medvedchuk were given the control of channels, which represent the important portion of the news market to assure pro-Kuchma coverage of the events. As a result, although most of the electronic media was privatized in 1995, the government came to maintain its control over the media outlets through oligarchs.<sup>932</sup> There were also other ways that the oligarchs provided the incumbent with critical help. Workers working in the factories controlled by pro-regime oligarchs were mobilized to participate in pro-regime demonstrations, vote for Kuchma and engineer events to draw attention to the threats that opposition activity posed.<sup>933</sup> The pro-regime oligarchs also contributed to the vote fraud by distributing money to ensure the cooperation of polling stations officials.<sup>934</sup> There were reports that each of the half of the 33,000 polling stations in the county received \$5,000 or more.<sup>935</sup>

However, the oligarchic system of Kuchma also carried the seeds of its own destruction. When the economic disturbances caused by the fall of the union were added by the exploitation of state resources by oligarchs, the country came

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<sup>930</sup> Anders Aslund, "The Ancien Regime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs" in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), pp. 17-18.

<sup>931</sup> Anders Aslund, . "The Ancien Regime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs" in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>932</sup> Lucan A. Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 2005), p. 132.

<sup>933</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>934</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Authoritarian Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 403.

<sup>935</sup> For these reports please see *Ibid.*

to the verge of external default. Against this background, the oligarchs (the owners of conglomerates with close links to the president) felt the need to restore the credit worthiness of the state to sustain their revenues and avoid the losses that Russian oligarchs experienced as a result of the financial crash in August 1998.<sup>936</sup>

Since the Ukrainian state was weak in terms of extracting necessary revenues, the ruling elite needed external credit. In order to restore creditworthiness of the state and improve economy, oligarchs made Kuchma to appoint Victor Yushchenko, who had done good job as the president of Ukraine's Central Bank, as the prime minister. This constituted the beginning of the end for the ruling elite grouped around Kuchma as the opposition would unite behind Yushchenko in 2004 elections. Having assumed power, Yushchenko appointed Yulia Tymoshenko, who would also play a significant role in the 'Orange Revolution', as the deputy prime minister for energy. Yushchenko improved Ukrainian state capacity significantly by 2000 by raising state revenues and reducing foreign debt.<sup>937</sup> He also became able to reimburse wages and pensions. Since he became too popular with his achievements and threatened the interest of the oligarchs in the energy sector with his reforms aiming to restore the creditworthiness of the state, he was fired soon.<sup>938</sup>

Although the economic capacity of Ukrainian state performed well in the process leading to the elections as a result of Yushchenko's efforts and a 12 percent increase in GDP was experienced between 2003 and 2004, Kuchma could not turn this into an election success for his designated successor.<sup>939</sup> This was related with the rampant corruption in the country. As Ukraine ranked 122 with Nigeria and Sudan on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index

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<sup>936</sup> Anders Aslund, "The Economic Policy of Ukraine after the Orange Revolution", *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 46, No. 5(2005), p. 328.

<sup>937</sup> Anders Aslund, . "The Ancien Régime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs," in Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), p. 14.

<sup>938</sup> Hans van Zon, "Why the Orange Revolution Succeeded", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2005), p. 375.

<sup>939</sup> Anders Aslund, "The Ancien Régime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs," in Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), p. 14.

in 2004, Ukrainian citizens experienced deteriorating life standards and degrading public services.<sup>940</sup> Because of private actors' control over state revenues, the regime could not use the strengthening of the extractive state capacity for its survival.

When this was added by the withdrawal of support by the small and medium- sized businesses and oligarchs that had been excluded as Kuchma came to rely increasingly on a smaller group of oligarchs, it became difficult for him to pass power to Yanukovich.<sup>941</sup> Even Rinat Akhmedov, once a strong supporter of Kuchma, decided to shift its support to Yushchenko when Kuchma increasingly favored the oligarchs in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>942</sup> Kuchma's nomination of Victor Yanukovich as his successor marked a tipping point in his increasing favoring of Donetsk region. This made political elite representing the Western Ukrainian regions and the competing businessman coming from other regions became increasingly anxious due to their fear of further exclusion.<sup>943</sup>

Kuchma Regime's alienation of elites due to his ineffective use of state's resources yielded serious results. When Yulia Timoshenko acted against the interest of the energy oligarchs, she was removed from power and put into prison on the basis of charges of smuggling of gas between 1995 and 1997. The regime paid it dearly as Timoshenko would become the second leader of the 'Orange Revolution' after Yushchenko. As in the case of Shevardnadze, Kuchma failed to monopolize economic resources as the opposition enjoyed external financial help as will be discussed and Ukraine's oligarchs divided in terms of their support for the regime. Whereas some oligarchs devoted financial resources to Yanukovich's

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<sup>940</sup> Hans van Zon, "Why the Orange Revolution Succeeded", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2005), p. 375.

<sup>941</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>942</sup> Lucan A. Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 2005), pp. 131-45. p. 138.

<sup>943</sup> Henry Hale, "Democracy or Autocracy on the March? The Color Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (September 2006), p. 309.

campaign, some others tended to back Yuschenko as a reaction to Kuchma's unfair distribution of economic resources.<sup>944</sup>

The excluded elites also served to break the state monopoly of information. The regime tried to control media through selective law enforcement, state ownership of key outlets, intimidation of journalists and *Temnyki* (daily bulleting sent to the major news outlets giving instructions on what and how to cover).<sup>945</sup> However, some independent media outlets still existed and they proliferated during the 2004 election campaign as a result of defection of oligarchs. In 2003, Poroshenko, a powerful oligarch who supported Yuschenko, gained the control of a small TV and transformed it into Channel 5, which provided the opposition with the opportunity to reach the public.<sup>946</sup> As in the case of Shevardnadze's Georgia, the states inability to monopolize information contributed to the weakening of the ruling elite at the expense of the opposition.

As this discussion indicates, pre-'Revolution' Ukraine shared many features with Georgia before the 'Rose Revolution'. Both states were weak with regard to extractive capacity and Shevardnadze and Kuchma used these resources ineffectively in the sense that their favoring of small groups at the expense of the rest of the society led to the alienation of the excluded elites and deprived society, which would join forces in toppling the incumbent regime.

The mounting discontent in the society soon led to a significant popular uprising as in the case of Georgia. When it was revealed that Kuchma had a role in the murder of the Georgiy Gongagadze, a famous critic of Kuchma, a broad anti-regime movement called "Ukraine without Kuchma" was formed. For months, street protests demanding the resignation of Kuchma were organized. During these protests, the government avoided resorting to direct coercion but

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<sup>944</sup> Anders Aslund, "The Ancien Régime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs," in Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), pp. 9–28.

<sup>945</sup> Paul D'Anieri, "Limits of Machine Politics," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2005), pp. 235-238.

<sup>946</sup> Olena Prytula, "The Ukrainian Media Rebellion" in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 118-119.

took various measures to restrain the protests.<sup>947</sup> These demonstrations can be deemed as the rehearsal of the 'Orange Revolution' to come. In this sense, it was similar to Rustavi-2 Crisis in Georgia and Aksy Crisis in Kyrgyzstan.

Georgia and Ukraine were also similar in the sense that in both countries the presidents avoided use of force against the protestors. Kuchma maintained full control of the coercive apparatus of the state even after two weeks of protests. Despite minor divisions, none of the major military or law enforcement divisions defected to the opposition and the central election commission was still controlled by the officials loyal to the regime and declared Yanukovich's victory.<sup>948</sup> Ukrainian State Security Service also proved its loyalty to the regime as the opposition leader Yushchenko suffered dioxin poisoning after having dinner with the head of this institution.<sup>949</sup>

Given this strength of coercive apparatus, it is again necessary to move beyond the narrow focus on the coercive state capacity to understand 'revolutions'. Thus, although Kuchma was involved in cases of violence like the murder Gongadze and could still count on the loyalty of the significant part of the coercive apparatus, he avoided use of force because the problems he faced were not limited to the protests. As discussed, prior to the 'Revolution' he lost state control over the important oligarchs of the country. Some important oligarchs defected to the opposition and contributed to opposition campaign significantly.

Lack of autonomy against external forces also played a part in the 'Revolution'. In the battle for the Ukrainian presidency between Yushchenko and Yanukovych, each party tried to enlist the support of external allies in an attempt to shift the balance in his favor. The presidential candidates did not experience much difficulty in ensuring these allies. Yanukovych was overtly and violently supported by Russia, whereas the European Union, the US, Poland and Lithuania

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<sup>947</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>948</sup> Serhiy Kudelia, "Revolutionary Bargain: The Unmaking of Ukraine's Autocracy through Pacting", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2007), pp. 93, 94.

<sup>949</sup> For the details of the poisoning event please see Vicli Hesli, op .cit., p. 170.

bestowed their support behind Yushchenko albeit in a more restrained fashion compared to Moscow.<sup>950</sup>

Like Georgia under Shevardnadze, Kuchma's Ukraine lacked capacity to resist Western pressures for regime change. As discussed, Ukraine needed the Western financial aid like Georgia due to state weakness and this constituted a reason for inability of Ukraine to stand firm. As another source of state inability to resist Western pressures, Kuchma and his team believed that Ukraine was a Western country deserving membership in Western institutions. The Ukrainian membership into the World Trade organization and the NATO remained as high priorities during the Kuchma period.<sup>951</sup>

Due to state weakness along this dimension, Kuchma could not block the external aid to anti-regime forces as in the case of Shevardnadze. International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute, which are widely known for the students of the 'Rose Revolution', tried to increase the effectiveness of the Ukrainian parliament through the training of the parliamentarians to provide a check against the executive branch.<sup>952</sup> However, the most important contribution of the West to the 'Orange Revolution' took the form of long-term support to voters' rights groups, think tanks, youth groups, and other civil activist organizations and media organizations that would play central roles in monitoring, conducting PVTs and exit polls and disseminating information about voters' rights.<sup>953</sup> Furthermore, several journalists, who provided pro-opposition coverage and contributed to the civil resistance, were supported by Western Donor Programs, most notably by the USAID, another important institution of the 'Rose Revolution'. Lastly, National Endowment for Democracy granted important support to *Ukrainska Pravda*, which performed an important function in the

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<sup>950</sup> Paul D'Anieri, "Limits of Machine Politics," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2005), p. 246.

<sup>951</sup> Michael McFaul, "Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences on the Orange Revolution", *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2007), p. 66.

<sup>952</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>953</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

‘Revolution’.<sup>954</sup> As a result, Western powers weakened the state’s monopoly over information and helped to discredit Kuchma regime and increase the popularity of the opposition.

Against this Western support to the opposition, Putin backed Yanukovich by contributing \$300 million to his election campaign and sending his political team which provided the political technologies (the anti-‘color revolution’ measures) and dirty tricks (such as explosions and poisoning of Yushenko) widely used in run up to the election to manipulate the voting and intimidate the opposition.<sup>955</sup>

Despite its intensive intervention, Russia failed to prevent the coming to the power of pro-US and pro-NATO Yushenko. To the consternation of Putin, Russian support to Yanukovich strengthened the hand of the opposition. Putin’s help served to unite Ukrainian nationalists, liberals and socialists against Moscow and its preferred candidate.<sup>956</sup> The Ukrainian society feared that Yanukovich’s victory would bring about submission to Russia. This concern led to the electorate in the east of the country, which voted for Kuchma in the previous elections and supposed to support Yanukovich in 2004 elections, to vote heavily for Yushenko, which was supposed to receive only the votes of the Western electorate.<sup>957</sup> Thus, Russian support to Yanukovich resulted in the weakening of his natural support base. As discussed, external powers can bring about both strengthening and weakening of state capacity. Although Moscow aimed at strengthening the state capacity that the Kuchma regime enjoyed to contribute its stability, its strategies backfired as Russian support weakened the regime’s capacity to ensure allegiance of the population.

Post- ‘Revolution’ developments showed that the ‘Orange Revolution’ Coalition was coalition of anti-Kuchma forces united in their desire to come to

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<sup>954</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>955</sup> Paul. D’Anieri, “Limits of Machine Politics,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2005), p.246.

<sup>956</sup> Hans van Zon, “Why the Orange Revolution Succeeded”, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2005), p. 383.

<sup>957</sup> Paul. D’Anieri, “Limits of Machine Politics,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2005), p.246



power rather than their determination to advance democracy. Shortly after Yushchenko assumed power, the disagreements between the main members of the Orange coalition came to the surface. In September 2005, Yushchenko dismissed Tymoshenko and Poroshenko due to the policy incoherence and inertia of the past nine months. In July 2006, this time the third main member of the coalition, Socialist Party leader Olexandr Moroz, defected from the coalition and joined forces with the Party Regions and the Communists when he had not been granted the post of speaker of the parliament. When the Communists led by Moroz and the Party of Regions under Yanukovych joined forces, they gained parliamentary majority. Having gained this advantage, Yanukovych returned to power as prime minister in August 2006.<sup>958</sup>

The continuity with the pre-‘Orange Revolution’ politics did not remain limited to the return of the Kuchma associates to power. Just like Georgia, where the charges of corruption reemerged when former defense minister Irakli Okruashvili accused Saakashvili of money laundering and abuse of power, in Ukraine corruption made headlines when the head of the presidential secretariat and the head of President Viktor Yushchenko’s 2004 election campaign, Oleksandr Zinchenko, accused the president’s team of corruption.<sup>959</sup> The examination of reports of the institutions such as Freedom House between 2004-2008 substantiate these allegations as there have been no improvements in the corruption ratings of the country since the ‘Revolution’.<sup>960</sup>

The limits on the media, albeit at a lesser degree, constitute another element of continuity with Kuchma’s Ukraine and similarity with Saakashvili’s Georgia. Beginning with late 2008, the broadcasts of Russia’s most influential televisions, which from the main source of information especially in the south, east and the center of the country, have been banned. Moreover, the control over

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<sup>958</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, “Ukraine at the Crossroads”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Autumn 2007), pp. 47, 48.

<sup>959</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Georgia and Ukraine: Similar Revolutions, Different Trajectories”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 4, No. 211(12 November 2007) available at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=33161](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33161) (Lastly accessed on 14 May 2009).

<sup>960</sup> Freedom house, Nations in transit 2008 Ukraine report, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=47&nit=472&year=2008> (Lastly accessed on 20 November 2009).

the print media is maintained through ownership of newspapers by wealthy figures who at the same time enjoy influence in the political realm.<sup>961</sup>

## 7.6. Belarus

Belarus held its third presidential elections on 19 March 2006. The vote, as the previous two ones, was declared to be won by incumbent Alexander Lukashenko by the election authorities. Neither the United States, nor the EU, nor the OSCE recognized the elections as free and fair and the opposition held several days of protests. It can be argued that the anti-regime followed the model of the 'Rose Revolution' even better than their counterparts in Kyrgyzstan. Leaving aside differences, the Belarusian opposition united behind a single candidate, Alyaksandr Milinkevich. The *Zubr* (Bison), the Belarussian equivalent of the Georgian *Kmara*, avoided violence and used humor like the *Kmara* of Georgia.<sup>962</sup> However, these efforts delivered nothing more than the eight-day delay in the inauguration of Lukashenko for a third term.<sup>963</sup> This section is devoted to exploring why the anti-regime forces became unsuccessful in ousting Lukashenko despite the fact that they followed the tactics that the Georgian opposition adopted during the 'Rose Revolution'.

Lukashenko's prevention of electoral 'revolution' in his country came as a result of his combination of economic and coercive capacity of the state as well as Russian counterweight to the Western pressures for regime change. Since these mechanisms provided him with enough leverage to remain in power, Lukashenko has seen no need to party to function as his powerbase. Instead, he has built the state apparatus around the loyalty to himself.<sup>964</sup> This section will examine first the

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<sup>961</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2009 Ukraine Report, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2009&country=7726> (Lastly accessed on 20 November 2009).

<sup>962</sup> Lucan Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 59.

<sup>963</sup> David R. Marples, "Color Revolutions: The Belarus Case", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), pp. 352.

<sup>964</sup> Vladimir Gel'man, "Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire? Post-Soviet Regime Changes in Comparative Perspective", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1998), p.170.

use of economic capacity of the state by the incumbent to prevent the emergence of anti-regime activities and then move to the examination of Lukashenko's reliance on coercive capacity both to preempt and repress challenges to his rule.

For Lukashenko state of the economy is an important source of enlisting the support of the citizens. In contrast to the Shevardnadze's Georgia, pensions and salaries are paid on the time, there is no unemployment problem and the inflation has been brought under control. Corruption exists in Belarus but it is concealed from the public in an effective way as the media is under strict control of the regime.<sup>965</sup> Thus, Lukashenko regime's success at establishing control over media in contrast to Shevardnadze is another important factor in keeping the discontent against the government limited. Because of favorable economic conditions and control over alternative sources of information, Lukashenko is able to portray himself as the provider of economic stability. During the 2006 elections, if limited access of the opposition to the media and its unfavorable coverage was one source of the lack of popular support towards the opposition, Milinkevich's strong pro-Western and pro-market election campaign was another. Since most of the population has been happy with the stability provided by the Soviet-style authoritarian incumbent regime, they avoided supporting the opposition leader who offered nothing more than the uncertainty to be caused by the reform process.<sup>966</sup>

Compared to Shevardnadze, Lukashenko showed significant success in monopolizing economic power. In Belarus, the state not only owns large companies but also supplements the budget by imposing different types of fines. Besides increasing the state revenues, these fines provide the regime with an important mechanism of control. As a result, whereas the regime enjoy high revenues, it is difficult for the opposition to take financial help from private sectors to organize anti-regime movements, as state exercises strict control over

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<sup>965</sup>David R. Marples, "Color Revolutions: The Belarus Case", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 360.

<sup>966</sup>Nerijus Prekevicius, "One President, Three Challengers," *Eurozine*, 11 May 2006 available at <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2006-05-11-prekevicius-en.html> (Lastly accessed on 20 June 2009).

them.<sup>967</sup> Since the state is the main employer thanks to its control over the 80 percent of the economy and the people are hired on short-term contracts, the regime enjoys the opportunity to fire people if they engage in anti-regime activity. To make the matters worse, it is quite difficult to find a new job once you lose your post in the government sector since the private sector is undeveloped.<sup>968</sup>

Thus, as the 2006 presidential elections were approaching, the rivals of Lukashenko had limited chances of winning against him due to economic growth and social stability experienced under his rule.<sup>969</sup> Moreover, as discussed Lukashenko's tight grip on the economy acted as a strong brake for the anti-regime activity. Lukashenko did not regard these hurdles for the anti-regime activity enough and strengthened and increasingly employed surveillance and coercive capacity of state as a result of the panic caused by the 'color revolutions'. Below, an examination of the use of surveillance and coercive state capacity by the regime to survive is provided.

Lukashenko is known for having high number of informants in all important population centers. By the means of this extensive security apparatus, which infiltrates all levels of the society, the regime is able to monitor opposition and limit dissent.<sup>970</sup> The regime is also developing new techniques of electronic suppression including mobile truck-mounted communication-jamming services.<sup>971</sup> As a result of the repressive measures against the media, including depriving opposition of media outlets, Belarus has come to be ranked among the most seriously censored countries in the world.<sup>972</sup> Thus, in contrast to Shevardnadze, Lukashenko has enjoyed near state monopoly over information.

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<sup>967</sup>Pavel Usov, 'Neo-authoritarian Political Regime in the Republic of Belarus', *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, No. 21( 2008), p. 103.

<sup>968</sup> Lucan Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3(July 2008), p. 65.

<sup>969</sup> Vitali Silitski, "Revolution of the Sprit", *Transitions Online*, 27 March 2006.

<sup>970</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky op. cit.(2006), p. 407.

<sup>971</sup> Michael Fiszer, "Belarus Tests New SIGINT, Electronic Attack," *Journal of Electronic Defense* 29, No. 1 (2006), pp. 31-32.

<sup>972</sup>"CPJ Report Lists 10 Most Censored Countries", *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, 2 May 2006 available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1068100.html> (Lastly accessed on 10 June 2009).

Way and Levitsky argued that although the Lukashenko regime enjoys coercive state capacity with extensive reach as a result of presence of agents at every level, it is weak when it comes to ensure the loyalty of subordinates in the coercive apparatus as illustrated by the meeting of the Leanid Yerin, the head of the KGB with protestors following the flawed referendum and parliamentary elections in 2004.<sup>973</sup> The writers saw this as a weakness of the regime to be exploited by the challengers but Lukashenko conducts purges among the high-ranking officials to get rid of the threatening ones and maintain state autonomy. For example, Yerin was removed from his post after the incident and replaced with a reliable figure. Moreover, the Prosecutor-General Victor Sheiman was appointed as the head of presidential administration with a clear authorization to consolidate the unity in the command structure to avoid situations such as the Yerin's showing sympathy for the demonstrations.<sup>974</sup> This reaction of the regime indicates that the regime punishes the defectors quickly and takes necessary steps to keep the coercion structure as united. Thus, in stark contrast to Georgia, Belarus had a strong coercive state capacity in terms of both scope and coercion.

Lukashenko's fight against opposition has been also marked by his willingness to use harsh methods when it was deemed necessary unlike Shevardnadze. The police law was amended to grant the president the right to make police use firearms in peacetime to enhance coercive capacity to suppress demonstrations. The president threatened that "any attempt to destabilize the situation will be met with drastic action. We will wring the necks of those who are actually doing it and those who are instigating these acts."<sup>975</sup>

When the opposition held rallies to protest against official presidential election results, which granted Lukashenko over 80 per cent votes, on 24-25

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<sup>973</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Authoritarian Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 407.

<sup>974</sup> Mikheil Kechaqmadze, "Anti- Revolutionary Measures of the Post-Soviet Regimes", *Political Analyses and Commentaries*, Policy Documentation Center available at [http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00004060/01/kechaqmadze\\_anti-Revolutionary.pdf](http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00004060/01/kechaqmadze_anti-Revolutionary.pdf) (Lastly accessed on 2 August 2009).

<sup>975</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "Bringing down Europe's last Ex-Soviet Dictator," *New York Times*, 26 February 2006 available at [www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/magazine/26belarus.htm](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/magazine/26belarus.htm) (Lastly accessed on 23 June 2009).

March 2006, the police forcefully dispersed them by beating, using tear gas and stunning with percussion grenades. Moreover, hundreds of protestors were detained.<sup>976</sup> The regime has been particularly vicious against the leaders of the civil society organizations and opposition. One of the leaders of Zubr, the Belarussian counterpart of Georgia's *Kmara* was sentenced to three-year prison for his role in organizing the protests.<sup>977</sup> Alexander Kozulin, a key opposition leader and a presidential candidate against Lukashenko, was sentenced to five and a half years in prison citing his actions in the protest as a reason.<sup>978</sup>

The legal ground for this repression was prepared in late 2005, when the upper house of the parliament approved a bill introducing harsh penalties for activities regarded as provoking 'revolution'. According to article 193-1, "Illegal organization of activity of a public union, fund, or participation in the activity thereof" provides for imprisonment for a term of up to two years, whereas article 369-1 "Discrediting of the Republic of Belarus", i.e. supplying a foreign state, foreign or international organisation with false information on the political, economic, social, military or international status of the Republic of Belarus, legal status of citizens in the Republic of Belarus, which discredits the Republic of Belarus or its authorities, provides for imprisonment for a term of up to five years.<sup>979</sup> Training opposition activists and taking help from foreign governments and international organizations are also punished with prison sentences.<sup>980</sup>

Unlike Shevardnadze's Georgia, Lukashenko's Belarus has the capacity to resist external pressures for regime change. Belarus is a clear example showing how the availability of a counterweight against external pressures for regime

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<sup>976</sup> Yuri Zarakhovich, Belarus: 'They Knocked my Husband down and Dragged him away', *Times*, 25 March 2006 available at <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1176933,00.html> (Lastly accessed on 23 June 2009).

<sup>977</sup> David R. Marples, "Color Revolutions: The Belarus Case", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 360.

<sup>978</sup> "Belarus Opposition Leader Jailed", *BBC*, 14 July 2006, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Europe/5178714.stm> (Lastly accessed on 12 June 2009).

<sup>979</sup> Pavel Usov, "Neo-authoritarian Political Regime in the Republic of Belarus", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, No. 21 (2008), p. 104.

<sup>980</sup> Carl Gershman and Michael Allen, "New Threats to Freedom: The Assault On Democracy Assistance", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 17, No. 2 (April 2006), p. 43.

change contributes to the regime stability. After the parliamentary elections and the referendum on lifting term limits on the president in October 2004 and the presidential elections in 2006 Western inter-governmental organizations, NGO's and the governments expressed that they consider the votes are illegitimate. However, Moscow put its support behind the official election results, declared the elections free and fair and denounced Western criticisms. Kremlin also criticized the US for imposing sanctions against Belarus under Belarus Democracy Act. Ukrainian, Georgian and Western governments were accused of intervening in Belarus' internal affairs.<sup>981</sup>

Russian support to Lukashenko's regime was not just limited to rhetoric. Russia played an important role in the economic stability that Belarus enjoyed under Lukashenko and thus it helped the survival of the incumbent leadership greatly. Russia wrote off most of Belarus' debt and supported the government with its cheap oil and gas exports. This had an important positive effect on the standard of living in the country and sustained Belarusian industry.<sup>982</sup> The regime used this issue for the campaign for 2006 presidential elections by emphasizing that in contrast to the Ukraine where gas price was expected to rise five times, it would not change in Belarus.<sup>983</sup>

Furthermore, Belarusian businessmen have been permitted to use barter instead of hard currency in their transactions with their Russian partners and this enabled the country to export more than it could have if barter was not allowed. Russia also provided Belarus with a loan reaching to \$200 million which constituted nearly 20 per cent of the its GDP. This Russian financial support to the country has made up for the lack of Western aid arising from Belarusian authoritarianism. Russian compensation also reaches to the security field. In the face of the Western unwillingness to include Belarus in NATO, Russia

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<sup>981</sup> Thomas Ambrosio, "Insulating Russia from a Color Revolution: How the Kremlin Resists Regional Democratic Trends", *Democratization*, Volume 14, No. 2 (April 2007), p. 242.

<sup>982</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>983</sup> David Marples, "Color Revolutions: The Belarus Case", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39 (2006), p. 359.

strengthened its military alliance with Minsk to ease the country's strategic isolation.<sup>984</sup>

## 7.7. Russia

After the December 2007 parliamentary elections, which were marked by the sweeping victory of ruling United Russia Party, President Vladimir Putin declared his intention to remain in power as prime minister, working with his handpicked successor as president, Dmitry Medvedev. Although foreign observers and opposition parties declared that the elections were unfair, the election results were accepted without big protest.<sup>985</sup> While Medvedev won the March 2008 presidential elections with 70 per cent of the votes, it has been widely accepted that Putin would retain real power for himself.<sup>986</sup> In this way, Putin successfully overcame the succession problem since the constitution does not allow a third consecutive term and maintained regime stability. While in neighboring Georgia protests toppled Shevardnadze, Russians watched Putin to crack down on the independent voices in the country and pass power to Medvedev silently without organizing meaningful protest. This section is devoted to examining in what aspects Russia differed from Georgia that the result proved to be regime stability rather than change when the opportunity for the change emerged.

Yeltsin's situation before March 2000 elections, which carried Putin to the presidency, was similar to that of Shevardnadze before 2003 parliamentary elections. The financial crisis of 1998 worsened the economic debacle of the Russian society and even brought the country into a situation where it could not service International Monetary Fund (IMF) debt.<sup>987</sup> Moreover, Yeltsin came to be

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<sup>984</sup> Thomas Ambrosio, "Insulating Russia from a Color Revolution: How the Kremlin Resists Regional Democratic Trends", *Democratization*, Volume 14, No. 2 ( April 2007), p. 242.

<sup>985</sup> Thomas Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*, (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), p. 197.

<sup>986</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2009 Russia Country Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=7689&year=2009> (Lastly accessed on 7 November 2009).

<sup>987</sup> John P. Willerton, Mikheil Beznosov and Martin Carrier, "Addressing the Challenges of Russia's Failing State: The Legacy of Gorbachev and the Promise of Putin", *Democratizatsiya*, Vol. 13, No. 2(Spring 2005), p. 225.



increasingly charged with corruption as he gave the economic capacity of the state to the service of the oligarchs to ensure their support. As in the case of Shevardnadze, Yeltsin's popularity plummeted as he failed to satisfy the needs of the population in economic terms. Against the background of dwindling popularity of Yeltsin, Yevgeny Primakov, who served as Yeltsin's prime minister from September 1998 until he was sacked in May 1999, gained strength as he promised curbing the corruption, punishing corrupt officials and oligarchs and restoring Russia's lost pride. The ruling elite felt threatened by the rise of Primakov, as they feared to find themselves in jail when he came to power.<sup>988</sup>

To prevent reprisals that result from the Primakov coming to power, Yeltsin devised a solution. He sacked his government and replaced his prime minister with Federal Security Service (FSB) head, Vladimir Putin. Although Putin's rise to the position of prime ministry was interpreted as a step on the way to presidency, Putin did not enjoy much popularity by then.<sup>989</sup> To address this problem, the Kremlin put its entire force behind him. The press and televisions controlled by Kremlin and its allies worked as the propaganda machine for Putin. Second, the outbreak of Second Chechen War and apartment bombings allegedly organized by Chechens played into the hands of Putin as his tough statements and decisive actions increased his popularity significantly.<sup>990</sup>

Thanks to these, Putin was elected president in March 2000 to win a second term four years later. Once in power, Putin set out to reverse the state weakness under Yeltsin. After the economic collapse experienced under Yeltsin, Russian economy showed a sustainable recovery since 1999. This was brought by the combination of the sharp increase in the world price of oil and gas, Russian arm sales and increased price competitiveness of Russian exports caused by the ruble devaluation in 1998. This increased economic capacity of the Russian state helped Putin in blocking a regime change in two ways. First, unlike Yeltsin and

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<sup>988</sup> Brian Whitmore, "Russia: Ghosts Of 1999 Haunt Presidential Succession", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 9 August 2007, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078057.html> (Lastly accessed on 4 June 2009).

<sup>989</sup> Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's Choice* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 19 and 20.

<sup>990</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21

Shevardnadze, who both lost popularity when state was too weak to pay salaries, pensions and satisfy other kinds of citizens' need, Putin enjoyed growing support towards him in the society as the state started to deliver what the citizens expected of it in economic terms with the increase in state revenues.<sup>991</sup> Although Russia's economic recovery came as a result of economic reforms initiated in Yeltsin's era and the increased state revenues as a result of increasing oil prices and arm sales, this increasing popularity has helped him to maintain regime stability. In contrast to the opposition parties in Georgia, which enjoyed the opportunity to criticize the Shevardnadze regime harshly due to economic debacle in the country, Russian opposition did not have the chance to attack the regime from the economic front in the face of economic improvements. Second, demand for Russian energy, defense and industrial goods has not only created economic growth but also provided Russian with leverage in international relations.<sup>992</sup> When Russia eliminated its public foreign debt and currency reserves exceeded \$450 billion, becoming the third largest in the world after China and Japan, Putin obviously felt less vulnerable against the Western pressures.<sup>993</sup>

Therefore, while Shevardnadze and Yeltsin were dependent on IMF and Western states for credits and thus vulnerable to pressures coming from them, Putin effectively resisted the external pressures for regime change at home and even created mechanisms to counter 'color revolutions' in the 'near abroad'. Although Kremlin has sought to limit the foreign NGOs in the country for a long time, the efforts to this end intensified after the 'Rose Revolution'. Putin publicly accused foreign and domestic NGOs of serving the interest of foreign powers in May 2004. This was followed by his declaration in July 2005 that Russia would not permit the foreign financing of economic activity. In November 2006, a bill seriously limiting the foreign NGOs operating on Russian territory was introduced. This bill has required the foreign NGOs register as Russian entities

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<sup>991</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests", *Congressional Research Service Report*, 6 October 2008, p. 10

<sup>992</sup> Celeste A. Wallander, "Russian Transimperialism and Its Implications", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Spring 2007), p. 109.

<sup>993</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests", *Congressional Research Service Report*, 6 October 2008, p. 9.

and subjected them to harsh financial and legal controls. After the bill, it became next to impossible for foreign NGOs to operate in Russia effectively. The NGOs that played important roles in the 'Rose Revolution' such as National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute were among the first targets of the enforcement of the NGO law.<sup>994</sup>

Putin also used Russian state capacity to resist external pressures against OSCE, which played an important role in 'color revolutions' by revealing the vote frauds through its reports, immediately after the 'Rose Revolution'. In 2005, Russia blocked the OSCE budget for a few months, insisting on more restrictions on the activities of the human rights office. In the same year, at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Ljubljana, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov harshly criticized the office by asserting that its activities took a form that member states cannot tolerate. Russia demanded that OSCE election observation missions close. In the face of Russian pressures, OSCE opted for a lower profile. It started to put more emphasis on the improvements while toning down its criticisms.<sup>995</sup> Russian authorities also created so many hurdles for election observers from the OSCE that they decided not to monitor 2008 elections.<sup>996</sup> Besides the support provided for the authoritarian incumbents in Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine and Uzbekistan as discussed, Russia also started to lead the efforts of discrediting regime change, fostering norms and values in support of regime survival and providing alternative election monitoring within Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>997</sup>

The results of 2007 and 2008 elections were only responded by minor protests, which pale in comparison to those bringing about resignation of

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<sup>994</sup> Thomas Ambrosio, "Insulating Russia from a Colour Revolution: How the Kremlin Resists Regional Democratic Trends", *Democratization*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 2007), p. 238.

<sup>995</sup> Dumitru Minzarari, "False Hope", *Transitions Online*, 4 December 2008, available at <http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/article.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=298&NrSection=2&NrArticle=20236> (Lastly accessed on 5 September 2009).

<sup>996</sup> Freedom House, Nations in Transit, 2008 Russia Country Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=47&nit=465&year=2008> (Lastly accessed on 7 September 2009).

<sup>997</sup> Thomas Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), p. 184.

Shevardnadze in Georgia. As well as the improved economy and resistance to external pressures discussed above, strong coercive apparatus coupled with use of force, monopolization of revenues and control over the government at all levels also account for the political apathy in Russian society. As a former KGB intelligence officer, Putin continued management style of the Soviet regime. During his presidency, *siloviki* (men of secret service, army and militia) came to occupy one third of the high positions, including economic decision-making.<sup>998</sup> Moreover, in line with the repression effect that the rentier state literature offered, Putin used oil revenues to create a well-paid and well-trained coercive apparatus, which proved to be invaluable in deterring and repressing dissent.<sup>999</sup> Thus, the repression effect suggested by the rentier state literature has been at work in Russia. Moreover, different from Shevardnadze, Putin swiftly reacted to the opposition protests before they went out of control. For instance, in prior to the 2007 elections, the riot police frequently broke up anti-regime protests beating demonstrators with truncheons and detaining dozens of them.<sup>1000</sup> In other cases, the police simply prevented the opposition activists from holding a rally against Putin.<sup>1001</sup> Moreover, the regime also uses the pro-Kremlin groups like *Nashi* (Ours) to counter anti-regime mobilization besides the police. Whereas the government provided the *Nashi* with funds, the police trained its activists so that they can prevent and counter opposition demonstrations effectively.<sup>1002</sup> It seems that Putin has effectively used the oil rents to create alternative movements to divide societal mobilization as suggested by rentier state literature's the group

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<sup>998</sup> Marlene Laruelle "After Putin? Russia's Presidential Elections", *Origins*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (30 June 2008 ), available at <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/origins/print.cfm?articleid=8> (Lastly accessed on 20 September 2009).

<sup>999</sup> Luncan A. Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 65, 66.

<sup>1000</sup> "Russian Police Crack Down on Anti-Kremlin Demonstration" , *FOXNews*, 4 March 2007 available at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,256398,00.html> (Lastly accessed on 24 September 2009).

<sup>1001</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2009 Russia Country Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7689> (Lastly accessed 8 July 2010).

<sup>1002</sup> Ibid.

formation dimension of rentier effect. As a consequence, when faced with a strong coercive apparatus coupled with Putin's readiness to use force, it was difficult for the Russian opposition to mobilize against the regime and achieve their demands through protests as in the case of Georgia.

Putin's regime maintenance efforts have been also helped by increased state capacity in terms of monopolizing control, economic power and information. Unlike Shevardnadze, who only exercised nominal control over the regional governments, Putin significantly increased his grip on them by creating seven "super regions", centralization of budget and abolishing elections for regional heads of government. Furthermore, he also diminished the power of Federation Council and the chances for its use as a tool for regional lobbying against the center.<sup>1003</sup> Putin also increased control over the regional elite by inserting *siloviki* in regional administration bodies.<sup>1004</sup> Another positive development in this respect is temporary end to the Chechen conflict. Although armed militants continue to organize sporadic attacks of resistance in Chechnya and surrounding republics, Putin has become able to bring about relative tranquility by bestowing Kadirov, who is submissive to Moscow, with authority to control the situation.<sup>1005</sup>

Yeltsin was dependent on the owners and managers of Russia's largest corporations (generally called as oligarchs). To maintain power, he relied on the favorable media coverage and material resources provided by these powerful actors.<sup>1006</sup> In return for their support, the oligarchs enjoyed broad autonomy under Yeltsin. This situation started to change with Putin's presidency as he reined in the wide independence that these business elite previously had enjoyed. Having resumed power, Putin set out to redefine the rules of the game. Under the new

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<sup>1003</sup> Cameron Ross, "Federalism and Authoritarianism under Putin", *Democratizatsiya*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Summer 2005) p. 355

<sup>1004</sup> Nikolay Petrov, "Quid Russian Democracy" in Michael Emerson and Senem Aydın (eds) *Democratisation in the European Neighbourhood* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2005), p. 66.

<sup>1005</sup> Marlene Laruelle, "After Putin? Russia's Presidential Elections", *Origins*, Vol. 1, No. 6(30 June 2008), available at <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/origins/print.cfm?articleid=8> (Lastly accessed on 20 September 2009).

<sup>1006</sup> Henry E. Hale, "Regime Cycles. Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia", *World Politics*, Vol. 58, No. (October 2005), p. 145.

conditions, the business elite has maintained some privileges as long as they don't act contrary to the wishes of Putin and avoid criticizing the president. The businessmen who violated this rule faced harsh punishment.<sup>1007</sup> Gusinsky, Berezovsky and Khodorkovsky are well-known examples. Gusinsky and Berezovsky were sent into exile abroad and deprived of control of their assets. Khodorkovsky, the CEO of Yukos (then the world's fourth largest oil company) faced a similar fate when he criticized some policies of Putin, financed opposition parties and implied that he would enter into politics. He was arrested in October 2003 on the basis of tax evasion and prosecutors then froze \$ 12 billion worth Yukos stock. His arrest was seen as a step taken to neutralize an emerging opponent and to show the other oligarchs what their defection could lead to.<sup>1008</sup> Having limited the domestic sources of funding that could be used for financing opposition activity, Putin regime also blocked foreign funding as discussed above.

Under Putin the Russian media was deprived of whatever degree of freedom it had before. During the 1990s NTV was able to criticize the government.<sup>1009</sup> Interpreting relative media freedom as a threat to the regime stability, Putin cracked down on independent media having assumed power. Several media organizations have found their previous autonomy highly curtailed as they faced persistent financial difficulties created by the state and pressures from government and media companies with links to the government. The state and the local governments have seized the partial or full ownership of two-thirds of country's 2,500 television channels. Furthermore, the government indirectly controls private broadcasting companies through partial ownership of numerous commercial structures. Through ownership of national and important regional television and radio stations, the regime has been able to block broadcasting information it has regarded menacing. Furthermore, pro-government corporations have gained the ownership of more than 40 percent of newspapers and other

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<sup>1007</sup>Graeme Gill, "A New Turn to Authoritarian Rule in Russia", *Democratization*, Volume 13, No. 1(February 2006), pp. 71, 72.

<sup>1008</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, "Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests", *Congressional Research Service Report*, 6 October 2008, p. 8.

<sup>1009</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2005 Russia Country Report* available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005>.

periodicals.<sup>1010</sup> The regime also limited the foreign media aiming to reach the Russians. The government removed BBC from FM dial in August 2008 and has been pressuring Russian partners of the Radio Liberty to stop radio broadcasting.<sup>1011</sup> Internet has not been saved from the interference of the regime. Many opposition parties and activists accused the authorities of using various types of cyber-warfare to block their sites. Pro-regime entrepreneurs started to buy blogging sites like Live Journal causing fears that they would limit free speech. Moreover, the government is also known for establishing pro-regime web sites and bloggers.<sup>1012</sup> Thus, as a result of economic might of the state and resistance to external pressures, Putin's regime and its extension under Medvedev was able to deny the citizens alternative sources of information in stark contrast to Shevardnadze regime.

## 7.8. Conclusion

This chapter showed that contrary to the assumptions of the society-centered approaches, societal mobilization has not sufficed to bring about regime change in post-Soviet space when the regimes enjoy state strength. Weakness of the economic state capacity or misuse of it -illustrated by rampant degree of corruption- emerged as an important factor shaping the formation of anti-regime movements in the cases under scrutiny. By examining the mechanisms that led to the rise of strong anti-regime movements in countries like Armenia and Uzbekistan despite the strength of coercive apparatuses, the chapter attempted to fill the void in the literature left by the coercion-centered approaches, which could not go beyond accounting for the repression of protests by regimes enjoying coercive capacity. The study discussed that whereas the weakness of distributive capacity and ensuing failure to satisfy citizens needs in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine played important role for the rise of anti-regime

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<sup>1010</sup> Murad Tangiev, "Political Leadership and Transnational Democracy", *Peace, Conflict and Development*, Vol. 11, No. 11(November 2007), p. 13.

<sup>1011</sup> Freedom House, Nations in Transit 2008 Russia Country Report available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=47&nit=465&year=2008> (Lastly accessed On 21 July 2010 )

<sup>1012</sup> *Ibid.*

movements, strength of the coercive apparatus as well as state control over social forces led to the failure of removal attempts. As the chapter showed, the availability and effective use of economic capacity served to the weakening of anti-regime movements as the masses were more satisfied by the regime and splits in the opposition ranks were created through cooptation and coercive apparatuses were fostered by generous state revenues. The strength of the economic capacity in countries including Russia and Azerbaijan provided the ruling regimes with significant advantages against the anti-regime forces.

Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine have turned to be similar to Georgia in terms of loss of state capacity and autonomy prior to the 'color revolutions' in these countries. In Kyrgyzstan, the state experienced significant hardship in obtaining the allegiance of the society as a result of the clan divisions. This weakness was exacerbated by Akayev's policies that gave the resources of the state to the control of his family members. Under these circumstances, deprived society rebelled against the regime to protest against the exclusion of the local leaders to whom they were loyal instead of the state. The Akayev Regime was unable to suppress the protests due to the weakness of the coercive capacity but the problems that the regime faced went beyond that as the state authority was in complete disarray. As discussed, in the case of Ukraine, the state was strong in coercive dimension but it lost control over oligarchs in the process leading towards the Orange 'Revolution' and this served to the strengthening of opposition forces by providing media outlets and financial support. Russian support to Yanukovich strengthened the hand of the opposition in a counterproductive way and contributed to the weakening of the legitimacy of the regime.

The chapter also demonstrated that the diffusion mechanisms brought about regime change in post-Soviet space as far as the state capacity and autonomy permitted. In countries such as Azerbaijan and Russia, where the state enjoyed autonomy against external forces, transnational NGO networks proved to be ineffective. In countries such as Belarus, Uzbekistan and Armenia, the incumbents isolated themselves from the external pressures for regime change by finding alternative sources of external support. Russian support helped Lukashenko, Karimov and Sarkisian significantly in their struggle against anti-regime forces. Russia even has become able to limit diffusion mechanisms in the



international arena by creating alternative election observer missions and creating platforms to foster alternative values besides providing alternative sources of external support to incumbents.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study has accounted for the dynamics of the ‘Rose Revolution’. The existing studies on the ‘color revolutions’ in general and the ‘Rose Revolution’ in particular have yet to provide a satisfactory explanation for the dynamics bringing about the success and failure of anti-regime movements in overthrowing the incumbents in the post-Soviet region.

The literature review shows that two distinct approaches can be identified in the literature on the ‘Rose Revolution’. Whereas some studies emphasize the role of societal forces (societal mobilization, political opposition, NGOs and mass media) in the ‘Rose Revolution’, other studies argue that ‘Rose Revolution’ can be understood better by focusing on the Georgian state dynamics than the society itself. While the first group of the studies has been called society-centered, the second group has been referred as state-centered in this study.

The main weakness of the society-centered approaches arises from their ignoring that grievances and mass mobilizations do not lead to regime changes in all cases. They neglect the mechanisms through which some states pre-empt and repress challenges to their authority. They fail to recognize that not all regimes are vulnerable to overthrow through ‘color revolutions’. Contrary to the assumptions of society-centered tradition, the presence of organized groups determined to take power, the rise of youth organizations and united oppositions have not been sufficient to unseat incumbents in all post-Soviet countries. Thus, society-centered studies have remained short of explaining varying outcomes despite common causes. Therefore, there is need for an alternative approach that illuminates how state institutions and practices forestall revolutionary social forces in some cases but not in others. Neglecting mechanisms through which the state shapes social forces has impaired society-centered approaches significantly.

This thesis has demonstrated that although state-centered explanations offered a significant improvement over society-centered accounts, it is necessary to go beyond existing state-centered studies to understand the dynamics causing regime changes through ‘color revolutions’. To understand dynamics leading to ‘color revolutions’, state-centered studies urged focusing on state weakness rather than societal forces. However, they approached state weakness in a narrow sense. This study has showed that due to their exclusive focus on weakness on the coercive state apparatus, existing state-centered studies have failed to provide comprehensive and guiding analytical framework to explain the authoritarian removals in the region.

This study argued that to explain dynamics causing regime change in Georgia through the ‘Rose Revolution’ and shaping regime trajectories in other post-Soviet countries, it is necessary to use a state-centered analytical framework rather than a society-centered one. This thesis has demonstrated that it is required to focus on state capacity and state autonomy to understand regime trajectories. In order to address inefficiencies of society-centered and state-centered studies in the literature, this thesis returned to the state-centered analysis of regime trajectories provided by historical sociologists including Skocpol, Migdal and Mann. In the light of the guidance provided by these scholars, the state and the society are considered as constantly competing with each other. Moreover, state capacity and autonomy are conceptualized as multi-dimensional terms.

State capacity is conceptualized along coercive, administrative, extractive, distributive, regulative and cohesive dimensions. Coercive capacity refers to the ability to preempt and repress challengers by surveillance, deportation, harassment, detention and force. Administrative capacity is defined as the ability to monopolize power, control, allegiance and information within the borders of the state. The extractive capacity refers to the ability to draw and direct material resources. The ability to distribute state revenues to the society is termed as the distributive capacity. Lastly, while regulative capacity is conceptualized as ability to regulate human activities, cohesive capacity is defined as the ability to ensure compliance of different state institutions and subordinates within them. It has been argued that through its capacity to control, extract, distribute, reward and sanction, regulate and repress, the state conditions whether serious anti-regime activity at

the elite and mass level will emerge and achieve success. When the state's capacity in these respects are undermined seriously, the state loses its autonomy vis-à-vis both domestic and external anti-regime forces. State incapacitation and loss of autonomy lay the groundwork for regime change.

Relying on a historical sociological approach, this study mainly argues that contrary to society-centered and state-centered studies in the literature on the 'Rose Revolution', the coercive, administrative, extractive, distributive and regulative incapacitation of the Georgian state, which resulted in the loss of state autonomy vis-à-vis domestic and external political actors before the 'Rose Revolution', led to the removal of Shevardnadze. Society-centered approaches focused on the role of social forces to account for 'revolutions' but they failed to realize that these forces only exploited the power vacuum created by the breakdown of state. Looking from another perspective, lack of use of force during the events led many studies to focus on weakness of the coercive state capacity, but at that time, the Shevardnadze regime was facing problems beyond the suppression of the protests. This study opted for a state-centered approach that considers other aspects of state capacity besides coercive one to provide a better analytical framework.

After developing the theoretical framework, the study has moved on to examine how the Georgian state, society and international actors interacted in various power domains to cause regime change through the 'Rose Revolution'. It has examined how the interactions of these actors created the incapacitation of the Georgian state in various areas resulting in loss of autonomy versus challengers at home and abroad. Afterwards, the study has compared Georgia with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia Ukraine and Uzbekistan on the basis on the explanatory variables provided in theoretical chapter to see how their similarities and differences with Georgia shaped the regime trajectories in these countries.

The study has searched for the origins of the Georgian state weaknesses in Georgian history. It has been discussed that since there were only two very brief period of independent Georgian statehood, Georgia could not count on its past experiences when it became independent with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Due to its location, Georgia was a subject of competition between different empires throughout its history. It was ruled successively by the Persians,

Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols and Ottomans until it was annexed by Tsarist Russia in 1801. This started the long period of Russian rule only ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Soviet rule of Georgia both contributed to consolidation of the Georgian nation and sowed the seeds of future secessionist demands on the center. On the one hand, it defined the boundaries of the Georgian Republic and contributed to its strengthening as a separate entity. On the other hand, it granted different degrees of autonomy to Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara and compromised Tbilisi's authority over them. The heterogeneous ethnic compositions of the population and autonomies have constituted important brakes on the Georgian state's ability to monopolize allegiance in the post-Soviet period.

With loosening of political controls in the Gorbachev period, minority opposition movements were mobilized in parallel to Georgian national movement. The first president of Georgia, Gamsakhurdia, exacerbated the problems of the weak Georgian state with his anti-Russian and anti-minority policies. When his antagonistic policies and lack of control over paramilitaries were added by Russian aid to secessionist movements, South Ossetia and Abkhazia emerged as de facto sovereign entities.

The loss of these territories meant the failure of a key component of Georgian state-building efforts: monopolizing control over territories under its jurisdiction. The secessionist conflicts together with the civil war between Zviadists and anti-Zviadists left Georgia in ruins and brought it to the edge of collapse. When Shevardnadze returned to power, the war in Ossetia was continuing, the tension in Abkhazia was threatening to turn into war. Armenian and Azeri minorities were quite anxious about their future in Georgia. Russia was pressuring Tbilisi to join the Commonwealth of Independent States and to open of Russian military bases in the country. The economy was also in shambles and violence and criminal activity were rampant.

Upon his return to power, Shevardnadze managed to provide relative calm through signing a ceasefire in South Ossetia. However, soon the conflict escalated in Abkhazia and Zviadist forces revived their rebellion in Mingrelia. Shevardnadze had to bow to Russian demands to suppress the Zviadist rebellion and bring about a ceasefire in Abkhazia on 14 May 1994. Then, he set out to

consolidate power through sidelining the paramilitaries and founding a ruling party, the Citizens Union of Georgia.

Although Shevardnadze provided an important degree of stability with these steps, the regime that he established was quite fragile since it was not backed by strong state capacity. Besides the lack of administrative capacity as illustrated by the failure to impose control over state territory, Shevardnadze did not enjoy a strong extractive capacity, as Georgia does not have natural resource endowments or developed industry.

The regime was not able to build a reliable tax base, either. At the time of the 'Rose Revolution', the state's revenue share of the GDP was the lowest in Georgia compared to other states examined in this study. The regime was clearly unsuccessful at monopolizing control over economic resources. Shevardnadze granted a small group of people (family members, people coming from his native region, elites in Azeri and Armenian regions and Adjara and the former nomenclatura) exclusive rights over state resources in return for their support. Members of this small group established their personal fiefdoms in the ministries, regions and enterprises. The state was weak with regard to cohesive capacity, as Shevardnadze exerted almost no control over them. Because of siphoning of state resources by this small group, the state revenues in GDP in post-2000 period turned out to be lower than that between 1995 and 2000 despite the revenues coming from the BTC project. Material resources at the disposal of the regime declined further when foreign donors such as World Bank and the US government suspended their financial aid to the government in run-up to the 'Rose Revolution'.

Shevardnadze's distribution of state revenues proved to be highly unreasonable for the future of his regime, as he alienated the masses and some part of the ruling elite with his favoring of the small group discussed above. As this group exploited limited state resources for their self-enrichment, the government found it increasingly difficult to pay salaries of civil servants and to provide basic services such as healthcare and education. Corruption in the energy sector resulted in frequent power cuts whereas it became ordinary for the citizens to pay bribes to the police. The unpaid salaries, corruption in the education system

and blackouts mobilized the civil servants, students and other deprived parts of the population against the regime.

Meanwhile, the opposition effectively utilized the discontent in the society to gain strength against the regime. While Saakashvili increased his popularity by harshly criticizing the corruption and citing the conservatives' involvement in it, Zhvania distanced himself from the weakening conservatives by resigning from his post as parliamentary speaker during the Rustavi-2 crisis. They would be afterwards joined by Burjanadze to form the trio of 'Rose Revolution'. This situation provided support for the argument of the study that societal forces including opposition can only gain power and popularity to challenge the regime with the weakening of the state. If the Shevardnadze regime had enjoyed a stronger extractive capacity to extract more revenues and if it had used available revenues in a more effective way to satisfy the populace, the opposition would have experienced difficulty in gaining society's support. Thus, one can only understand the power and the autonomy of the societal forces by using a state-centered analytical framework, which highlights the role of state weakness in the strengthening of societal forces.

Besides mobilizing the masses against the regime, Shevardnadze regime's ineffective use of material resources of the state also led to withdrawal of external support of Shevardnadze. Initially, Shevardnadze enjoyed high prestige in the West due to his role in ending the Cold War peacefully and the unification of Germany. Later, he consolidated his positive image due to his role in establishing a degree of stability in Georgia after the turbulent years of Gamsakhurdia. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Project reinforced the importance of Shevardnadze as the symbol of stability, since stability was indispensable for the continuation of the project.

For these reasons, the West initially provided the Shevardnadze regime with significant financial support. By 1997, the foreign grants and credits came to constitute more than half of the state budget. Georgia became the largest per capita recipient of US aid in the world after Israel. Besides US, Germany, the IMF and World Bank proved to be important foreign donors for Georgia.

However, this foreign support was not used in an effective way by Shevardnadze. Despite the amount of financial aid given to Georgia and

increasing foreign investment in the country thanks to BTC, the economic development remained unsatisfactory, as this money went to the pockets of the Shevardnadze's corrupt clique. For the West, it was striking that Georgia ranked behind all CIS countries on the Transparency International Corruption Rating. As a result, when the reformers left the government and Shevardnadze came to rely increasingly on corrupt faction remaining in the CUG, the Western community came to the conclusion that it was not reasonable to continue to support the incumbent regime. Shevardnadze, already 75 years old, was no longer associated with stability but with rampant corruption, which was detrimental to the development and stability of the country. Western states needed a new pro-Western leadership determined to strengthen Georgian state and provide stability.

Under these conditions, the campaign of the opposition figures to undermine the image of the Shevardnadze regime in the West yielded results. When the inability of Shevardnadze government was combined with the rapprochement with Russia, the Western states and institutions did not wait to suspend their financial aid to the government and increase their support to the opposition. The West wanted to see the pro-Western reformist elements in the Georgian opposition to gain influence in the parliament at the expense of ruling conservatives in the forthcoming elections. While the relations between the Shevardnadze Regime and Western governments, NGOs and institutions deteriorated seriously, the opposition and anti-regime local NGOs forged close links with these external forces. In line with the main argument of the thesis, Shevardnadze regime could not block the strengthening of ties between anti-regime forces and the external actors because it lacked capacity and autonomy. Whereas the state lost foreign sources of financial support, foreign actors like Soros shifted its support to the civil society and opposition parties. Moreover, due to government inability to restrain the activities of transnational networks, they became able to take training from civil activists, which participated in other 'color revolutions'.

Having examined the state incapacitation and loss of autonomy vis-à-vis the domestic and external anti-regime forces before the 'Rose Revolution', the study has explored how the societal forces exploited the power vacuum to overthrow Shevardnadze regime through the 'Rose Revolution'. It has been shown that since



the Shevardnadze regime was facing problems beyond suppression of protests at the time of the 'Rose Revolution', the studies that focus on the lack of use of force during the protest to account for the success of the overthrow attempt are inefficient at best. By relying on a multi-dimensional conceptualization of state autonomy, the study demonstrated that Shevardnadze lacked the means to re-establish order even had the protests been suppressed. Opposition parties and the civil society organizations were completely out of control and acting autonomously. As illustrated by Shevardnadze's inability to prevent Abashidze from organizing massive election fraud in Adjara, the state lacked administrative and cohesive capacity. Besides the South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which were completely beyond center's control, regions like Adjara and Javakheti turned into personal fiefdoms of their rulers. State also lacked the financial means to implement its policies. The Georgia state lacked the revenues to strengthen and gain the support of the coercive forces, to gain the loyalty of the society and state personnel and to incorporate elements of opposition by providing certain benefits to them. To sum up, the state authority was in total disarray and anti-regime forces were acting in an unrestrained way thanks to state weaknesses in many aspects. When Shevardnadze realized that he did not have the chance to restore state authority, he had no other choice but resign.

Having emphasized that loss of state capacity and autonomy in broad terms rather than weakness of coercive capacity was the real force bringing down Shevardnadze, the thesis revisited the study that have attributed the success of the 'Revolution' to societal factors. It has been pointed out that the unity of opposition is exaggerated because the opposition could not unite before the elections mostly as a result of personal rivalries. Although Burjanadze-Democrats and UNM were united eventually, New Right and the Labor Party did not join them. Although United Democrats joined the rallies held by the UNM beginning with 9 November, Burjanadze and Zhvania behaved in a more cautious way than Saakashvili and seemed to be willing to allow Shevardnadze to remain power in return for repeating the elections. The siding of New Right with the CUG was especially important because when New Right decided to join the first session of the parliament with the CUG, the quorum that is necessary for convening parliament was formed. This prompted Saakashvili to burst into parliament rather

than wait for the Constitutional Court's decision to annul the elections completely or any other alternative solution to the crisis through constitutional means. Therefore, in some sense, the division of the opposition rather than its unity paved the way for the unfolding of the events leading to the resignation of Shevardnadze.

By examining the post-'Revolution' Georgian politics, the study showed that the 'Rose Revolution' resulted in increasing authoritarianism rather than democratization contrary to the assumptions of the scholars interpreted the regime change as a democratic breakthrough. With Saakashvili's coming to power, the pluralism of the Shevardnadze era, which was mostly created by the state weakness, has turned out to wane. Saakashvili reversed the process leading to the 'Rose Revolution' by strengthening the state at the expense of opposition, civil society and the media. Saakashvili also proved to be untrue to the promises he gave before the 'Revolution' by increasing the power of the executive at the expense of legislative and judiciary. The new leadership has proved to be more intolerant towards the dissent. Anti-regime forces have experienced significant difficulty in shaping the political process in the post-'Revolution' period because of the strengthening of state capacity and autonomy.

Given the deep state weakness that the Georgia was facing, strengthening of the state rather than democratization proved to be the main priority of Saakashvili. In this area, the new administration showed mixed success. An important increase in state revenues was experienced in the immediate 'Revolution' period due to improvements in the tax collection, decreasing corruption, restoration of authority over Adjara and increasing external financial aid. While distributing these improved revenues, Saakashvili tended to favor the police and military in order to ensure their support against the opposition and strengthen the army to restore Georgian territorial integrity.

Disappointment with Saakashvili due to increasing authoritarianism, limited economic success, uneven distribution of increased state revenues, side effects of reforms and the defeat in South Ossetian War of August 2008 resulted in opposition protests in November 2007 and the autumn of 2008 and in the spring of 2009. The government was ready to force against the protestors and able to repress the protests thanks to strengthened coercive apparatus. However, since the

Georgian state remained vulnerable to Western pressures, Saakashvili avoided use of force during the protests in 2008 and 2009. Continuing societal support, albeit not as strong as before, and Western support accompanied by the effectiveness of using state capacity have resulted in the survival of Saakashvili regime despite the splits in the 'Rose Revolution' elite and increasing opposition protest after the last South Ossetia crisis.

After the in-depth analysis of Georgian regime trajectory, the study compared Georgia with Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia Ukraine and Uzbekistan on the basis on the explanatory variables provided in the theoretical framework to see how their similarities and differences with Georgia shaped the regime outcomes in these countries in the face of diffusion of 'color revolutions'.

The comparative analysis showed that the state capacity and autonomy rather than the strength of the social forces determined the fates of regimes when post-Soviet autocrats faced mass protests. The post-Soviet states where the ruling elite enjoyed strong extractive capacity and used these revenues in an effective way proved to be less vulnerable to the anti-regime mobilization. Comparative analysis demonstrated that the post-Soviet societies whose needs are more effectively satisfied by the regime proved to be less likely to engage in anti-regime activity.

In states like Azerbaijan and Russia, where the ruling elite enjoyed lucrative state revenues thanks to oil, the regimes had more chances to survive compared to Georgia, which suffered from weak extractive capacity. The state revenues in both states are used to finance big projects, improve infrastructure and pay good salaries to the state employees. The distributive state capacity, which is empowered by the high state revenues, has been also used to tie the elites to the regime through providing certain material benefits to them. The situation in Azerbaijan and Russia provided evidence for the assumptions of the rentier state theory rather than the society-centered modernization perspective, which regards increased wealth as conducive for democratization. In line with the rentier effect that the rentier state literature offers, the regimes in Azerbaijan and Russia spent the oil revenues to gain the support of the society. Moreover, the regimes in Azerbaijan and Russia used the oil revenues to block the emergence of

independent middle classes in their countries in a way that conforms what the rentier state discussed within the framework of modernization effect. Lastly, in line with the repression effect suggested by this literature, Aliyev and Putin Regimes used the oil revenues to strengthen the coercive state capacities and gain the loyalty of armed forces with higher salaries. Consequently, since Aliyevs in Azerbaijan and Putin in Russia enjoyed stronger extractive and distributive capacities, they faced less discontent and therefore less anti-regime mobilization. More importantly, as these regimes built strong coercive apparatus and strengthened state autonomy, they did not experience hardship in repressing anti-regime protests when they erupt.

By contrast, in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the Akayev and Karimov regimes could not preempt emergence of anti-regime movements by gaining the support of the society through using state revenues as they suffered from weak extractive capacity like Shevardnadze's Georgia. Compared to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan has a stronger extractive and distributive capacity thanks to extensive cotton production. When this relative strength was added by Karimov's strategy of devoting important part of state revenues to the coercive apparatus to gain the support of the armed forces against anti-regime forces and to strengthen coercive state capacity, the result proved to be regime stability amid strong protests and bloodshed. As the state enjoyed strong administrative capacity, the revolts did not spread to the other parts of the country.

Akayev regime did not enjoy strong extractive and distributive state capacity. Akayev made matters worse by giving the state resources to the control of his family members and failing to strengthen the coercive apparatus by allocating available revenues to the armed forces. Moreover, when the anti-regime protests erupted in the country the regime was suffering from collapse of state authority in broader terms in addition to the weakness of the coercive apparatus as in the case of Georgia. The regime had alienated the population living in the south of the country with its distribution policies favoring northern clans at the expense of southern clans. As a result the protest first started in the south of the country and reached to the capital in a short time. As in the case of Shevardnadze, Akayev had to give up as his regime lacked the means to restore state authority. When

Bakiyev, which replaced Akayev, also failed to establish state authority, rising discontent caused another regime change in the country in 2010.

Although the Lukashenko's regime in Belarus has not enjoyed a strong extractive capacity, Lukashenko still managed to improve the state revenues at his disposal and make effective use of them to remain in power in stark contrast to Shevardnadze. First of all, Lukashenko developed good relations with Russia. As a result, he secured important degree of financial aid and favorable gas prices unlike its Georgian counterpart, who lacked this opportunity due to the problematic relations with Moscow. As a result of this external support and avoidance of policies that would result in economic disturbance, Belarusian President ensured support of the society through providing economic stability. The Lukashenko regime regularly paid salaries and pensions different from Shevardnadze regime, which lost the support of the society when he failed to offer these.

The thesis has also showed that the state capacity to monopolize economic power is instrumental in restraining anti-regime activity and thus bringing about regime survival. In countries like Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia and Uzbekistan, where the presidents became able to monopolize revenue and deny the opposition sources of financial support different from Shevardnadze, it became possible to ensure regime stability as anti-regime forces lacked necessary financial means whereas the ruling elite mobilized the state resources under its strict control for the survival of the regime. In these countries since the private sector is quite underdeveloped compared the state sector, people has avoided opposition activity to prevent losing their jobs in the state sector. In countries like Ukraine, where the state lost its monopoly over revenues, the alternative economic power centers provided support for the opposition activity.

The state monopoly over print and electronic media also proved to be important for regime maintenance in the face of the 'color revolutions'. In countries like Ukraine, where the opposition found the opportunity to discredit the incumbent regime and reach to the masses by using media in a way similar to Shevardnadze's Georgia, it became difficult to prevent the mobilization of the society against the regime.

Kyrgyzstan proved to be the most important case study for illustrating the importance of state monopoly over allegiance for regime survival. As discussed, the Kyrgyz society was divided along north-south axis and the clans of the north and south of the country competed for the control of the economic and political resources of the country. Akayev had to manage a fragile balance among these competing clans to ensure regime continuity. As Akayev started to exclude the southern clans from the share of resources increasingly, he paved the ground for the rise of these clans against the state authorities. Akayev aggravated the allegiance crisis that the regime faced by increasing his family's control over the state resources at the expense of the rest of the other elites and the society en masse. As Akayev took steps to establish the dominance of his family members over the parliament to transfer power to them after his removal, the supporters of the excluded elites rebelled against the regime. The clan members of the excluded elites played important roles in the 'Tulip Revolution' by initiating the protests first in the countryside and then marching to the capital to storm the presidential palace.

The examination of abortive regime change attempts in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Uzbekistan showed the limitations of society-centered approaches clearly. The regime survival in Armenia despite the strong anti-regime mobilization showed that the explanatory factors offered by this study, rather than the opposition and NGO strength emphasized by society-centered studies in the literature, provide effective account for the post-Soviet regime outcomes. The survival of Karimov regime despite the Andijon protests, which resulted in the death of over 100 demonstrators, confirmed that state strength and autonomy provides the regime with effective instruments for survival.

The thesis also revealed the ineffectiveness of diffusion perspectives on 'color revolutions' by showing that regime change in other countries can serve as a source of negative learning. It is necessary to take into account that the autocrats in the post-Soviet space increased their grip on the power and engaged in more ruthless measures when they saw the autocrats in other post-Soviet republics ousted from power through popular protests. The comparison of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus Russia and Uzbekistan with Georgia has demonstrated that some post-Soviet regimes are quite resistant to the regime change through 'color

revolutions'. The survival of the regimes in these countries despite the mass mobilization in the context of the diffusion of 'color revolutions' showed that it is necessary to focus on state capacity and autonomy to account for regime outcomes. It has been illustrated that when the state has administrative, coercive, extractive, distributive and cohesive capacity, it will have autonomy vis-à-vis external forces supporting regime change. Thus, diffusion mechanisms can affect the regime trajectory in a country to the degree that the state in question let them. The study has also showed that external dynamics contributed to the regime change and continuity by weakening or strengthening the different components of state capacities that the incumbents utilize for survival.

Among the cases examined, Putin's Russia has emerged as the most resistant country to external pressures for regime change in the form of diffusion of 'color revolutions' as a result of its considerable improvement in state capacity in 2000's. In stark contrast to Yeltsin period, in Putin period Russia gained resistance against the Western pressures mainly thanks to increased state revenues coming from oil and arm sales. As a result, when the anti-regime forces such as Western-based NGOs tried to help the opposition and local NGOs, Putin had the capacity to sideline them, as Russia was not vulnerable to the pressures of the Western governments and institutions. Furthermore, Russia, which is afraid of being encircled by pro-Western regimes coming to the power as a result of the 'color revolutions' as in the case of Saakashvili regime, provided important degree of financial, military and diplomatic support to other post-Soviet authoritarian incumbents. Russia also led the efforts aiming at increasing resistance against the diffusion of 'revolutions' in the framework of pro-Russian cooperation platforms such as the CIS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The study demonstrated that Russia provided an important degree of support for the incumbents in Armenia, Belarus and Uzbekistan in their struggle to remain in power in the face of the 'color revolution' threat. Different from Georgia, Armenia and Belarus preserved their dependence on Moscow in the post-Soviet period in many areas including economy and military, with Armenia starting to take some steps to reduce dependence on Russia by forging closer relations with the West recently. Although Uzbekistan tried to enhance its independence from Russia previously with forging some limited links with the

West initially, Karimov moved closer to Russia after the Andijon events. As a result, for these three post-Soviet countries Russian support has constituted an important degree of counter weight against Western pressures. Without Russian support, these states would not have autonomy vis-a-vis external actors supporting regime change.

Different from Armenia, Belarus and Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan has not counted on the Russian support to ensure regime stability because in stark contrast to Shevardnadze regime, Aliyev regime has not been exposed to consistent Western criticisms. Moreover, Aliyev regime enjoyed strong state capacity and this decreased the need for Western support. In Azerbaijan the West viewed the continuity of Aliyev regime as favorable for the future of the project. Accordingly, the Western community avoided harsh criticisms against the Aliyev regime although the repression in Azerbaijan was more serious compared to Shevardnadze's Georgia. By pointing out lack of Western pressures for regime change in Azerbaijan despite authoritarianism, the study confirmed that while formulating its policies towards the post-Soviet regimes, the West acts on the basis of its self-interest rather than democratization concerns.

Kuchma's Ukraine also lacked the capacity to resist Western pressures for regime change like Shevardnadze's Georgia since Kuchma desired his country's integration into Western institutions and needed Western financial assistance since the extractive state capacity was not strong enough. Therefore, the incumbent leadership could not prevent the strengthening of anti-regime forces (the opposition parties, NGOs and independent media) through external aid. Rather than providing a counterweight against the Western pressures for regime change, in Ukraine Russian support for Yanukovich during his election campaign served to weaken the chances for regime continuity. Since the Ukrainian electorate feared that Yanukovich would intensify Ukraine's dependence on Russia in return for the support of Moscow support for him, the regions that were supposed to vote for him shifted their support to Yushenko.

Lastly, Kyrgyzstan under Akayev also lacked the state capacity to resist external pressures for regime change like Georgia during Shevardnadze's presidency. Akayev, like Shevardnadze, had to give the image of a democratic regime in order to maintain external financial help to his county, which he badly



needed. As a result, Kyrgyz NGOs and independent media enjoyed Western help. However, as discussed, Western-supported NGOs played only a marginal role in the 'Tulip Revolution'. By drawing attention to this, the study underlined the weaknesses of the studies that emphasized the role of Western-supported NGOs in 'color revolutions'.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMARY

#### SOVYET SONRASI COĞRAFYA'DA RENKLİ DEVRİMLER: GÜRCİSTAN ÖRNEĞİ

##### 1.Giriş

Gül Devrimi 2 Kasım 2003'de Gürcistan'da yapılan parlamento seçimlerinden ardından gerçekleşmiştir. Çok sayıda gözlemcinin izlediği seçimleri Edward Şevardnadze'nin desteklediği 'Yeni Gürcistan İçin' ve Aslan Abaşidze'nin 'Gürcistan Demokratik Uyanış Birliği' Blokları'nın kazandığı ilan edilince, Miheil Saakaşvili'nin başını çektiği muhalefet hile yapıldığı gerekçesiyle seçim sonuçlarını tanımamış ve geniş katılımlı protesto gösterileri düzenlemiştir. Gösterilere ve baskılara çok fazla direnemeyen Şevardnadze 23 Kasım'da cumhurbaşkanlığı görevinden istifa etmiş ve yerine 5 Ocak 2004'de yapılan seçimleri ezici bir çoğunlukla kazanan Saakaşvili getirilmiştir.<sup>1013</sup>

##### 2. Amaç, Kapsam ve Yöntem

Bu tezin amacı Gül Devrimi'ni doğuran dinamikleri açıklamaktır. Çalışma, ilk bakışta önemli gibi görünen dinamiklere odaklanan bir yaklaşımın ötesine giderek, kapsamlı ve gerçekten yol gösterici bir analitik çerçeve sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, tez, Gül Devrimi'nin dinamiklerini derinlemesine analiz ettikten sonra, Gürcistan'ı kullanılan temel açıklayıcı değişkenler açısından diğer Sovyet ardılı ülkelerle karşılaştırmıştır. Karşılaştırmalı analizin amacı, Gürcistan'a benzer dinamiklerin görüldüğü ülkelerin de Gürcistan gibi rejim

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<sup>1013</sup> Freedom House, 2007 Yılı Gürcistan Ülke Raporu, [http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007final/nit-georgia-web.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007final/nit-georgia-web.pdf)

değişikliği yaşadığını, Gürcistan'dan farklı dinamiklere sahip ülkelerde ise, rejim karşıtı gösterilere rağmen, rejim devamlılığı yaşanıldığını göstermektedir.

Gül Devriminin temel inceleme konusu olarak seçilmesi bazı nedenlere dayanmaktadır. Öncelikle, Gül Devrimi, eski Sovyet coğrafyasında gerçekleşen ilk renkli devrimdir. Bu yönüyle Gül Devrimi bir yandan bölgedeki diğer ülkelerdeki rejim karşıtı hareketler için örnek oluştururken, diğer taraftan da Sovyet sonrası coğrafyadaki devlet başkanlarını alarma geçirerek, Şevardnadze ile aynı kaderi yaşamamak için çeşitli önlemler almaya itmiştir. Gül Devrimi'nin bölgedeki ülkelerin iç siyasetindeki bu etkisinin yanı sıra, uluslararası dinamikleri şekillendiren etkileri de olmuştur. Gül Devrimi ile batı yanlısı Saakaşvili'nin başa gelmesi, Rusya'yı oldukça tedirgin etmiştir. Renkli devrimler sonucu başa gelen batı yanlısı liderlerle yönetilen ülkelerle çevrenmek ve bölgedeki nüfuzunu kaybetmek Moskova'nın kâbusu haline gelmiştir. Rusya, bunu engellenmek için Batıya, özellikle Amerika Birleşik Devletlerine karşı daha sertleşmiş, bölgede iki taraf arasındaki rekabet daha da kızışmıştır. Kısacası, Gül Devrimi bölgede hem iç hem de dış dinamikleri etkileyen önemli bir olaydır.

Yöntem açısından bakıldığında ise, Gül Devrimi'nden önceki Gürcü Devleti'nin tezin tanımladığı devlet kapasitesinin her alanında zayıf olduğu görülür. Bu nedenle, Gül Devrimi, devlet kapasitesinin değişik alanlardaki zayıflığının rejimin geleceğini nasıl tehlikeye düşürdüğünü ve toplumsal aktörlerin güçlenmesine nasıl zemin hazırladığını ayrıntılarıyla gösteren bir örnek olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Karşılaştırma analiz için Sovyet ardılı ülkeler seçilirken mümkün olan en fazla çeşitlilik sağlanması çalışılmıştır. Küçük bir Sovyet sonrası dünya kurabilmek için devlet olarak güçleri, etnik yapıları, ekonomik kaynakları ve dış politikadaki yönelimleri birbirinden farklılık gösteren ülkeler seçilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu yolla, Gürcistan'da Gül Devrimi yoluyla gerçekleşen rejim değişikliğini açıklamak için kullanılan kuramsal çerçevenin diğer Sovyet ardılı ülkelerdeki rejimlerin gelişim süreçlerini açıklayıp açıklayamadığı etkin olarak test edilmiştir. Kimi Sovyet sonrası ülkelerin neden Gürcistan'daki gibi rejim karşıtı gösterilere sahne olurken rejim değişikliği yaşamadığı araştırılarak, toplum-merkezcil çalışmalar tarafından Gül Devriminde önemi vurgulanan

toplumsal güçlerin bu tezin öne sürdüğü gibi ancak devletin çeşitli alanlarda zayıflaması neticesinde etkinlik gösterdiği ortay koyulmuştur.

Bu bağlamda, Azerbaycan, Belarus, Ermenistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Ukrayna ve Rusya karşılaştırmalı analiz için seçilen ülkeler olmuştur. Azerbaycan, tıpkı Gürcistan gibi, bağımsızlığının ilk yıllarında çalkantılı bir dönem yaşamıştır. Önceleri Gürcistan gibi ayrılıkçı çatışmalar, ekonomik çöküş ve Rusya ile problemler yaşayan Azerbaycan'ın daha sonra bu ülkeden oldukça farklılaştığı ve seçim sonrası güçlü iktidar karşıtı gösterilere rağmen rejim değişikliği yaşamadığı görülür. Petrol gelirleri sayesinde Gürcistan'dan farklı olarak gittikçe güçlenen Azerbaycan, devletin gelir sağlama ve dağıtma kapasitesinin rejimi kaderini belirlemedeki rolünü gösteren bir örnektir. Ermenistan ise, Gürcistan'dan daha şiddetli gösterilere sahne olmasına rağmen rejim değişikliği yerine devamlılığı yaşamıştır. Gürcistan'ın aksine Rusya ile sıkı ilişkiler kuran yönelen ve güçlü rejim aleyhtarı gösterileri her seferinde etkin bir şekilde bastıran Ermenistan, Rusya ile ilişkilerin eski Sovyet coğrafyasında devletin zor gücüyle beraber rejimlerin kaderini nasıl belirlediğini anlama imkanı sunmaktadır. Bu nedenle Ermenistan incelenmesi gereken ilginç bir örnektir. Kırgızistan ve Ukrayna ise Gürcistan gibi renkli devrimler sonucu rejim değişikliği yaşadıklarından, Gül Devrimi'ni açıklamakta kullanılan analitik çerçevenin bu ülkelerdeki rejim değişikliğini açıklayıp açıklayamadığını incelemek gerekmektedir. Rusya ise eski Sovyet coğrafyasında renkli devrimlerin yayılmasına karşı yürütülen mücadelenin lideri olmuştur. Büyüklüğü, Sovyet sonrası coğrafyadaki önemi ve Gürcistan'dan farklılığı nedeniyle Rusya, bu çalışmada kullanılan kavramsal çerçevenin etkinliğinin test edilmesi açısından önemli bir ülkedir. Belarus ve Özbekistan ise fazla büyük ve güçlü devletler olmadıkları halde bu ülkelerdeki iktidarlar rejim karşıtı hareketler başarısızlığa uğramışlardır. Bu iki ülke bu nedenle nispeten daha zayıf Sovyet sonrası ülkelerde rejim devamlılığını sağlayan dinamikleri ortaya çıkarmak açısından önemlidir ve tezin araştırma kapsamına dahil edilmiştir.

Tez hazırlanırken hem birincil hem de ikincil kaynaklara başvurulmuştur. Birincil kaynaklar, yalnızca Gürcistan için kullanılmıştır. Kasım 2008, Haziran 2009 ve Mayıs 2010'da, devlet görevlileri, siyasi analist, akademisyen ve çeşitli sivil toplum kuruluşu üyeleriyle Tiflis'de yapılan mülakatlar birincil kaynakları

oluşturmaktadır. Kitaplar, çeşitli dergilerdeki ve kitaplardaki makaleler, raporlar ve gazete yazıları hem Gürcistan hem de diğer yedi ülke için kullanılan ikincil kaynakları oluşturmaktadır.

### 3. Literatür Taraması

Özel olarak Gül Devrimi, genel olarak da, renkli devrimleri açıklamaya çalışan literatür incelendiğinde iki temel yaklaşımla karşılaşılmaktadır. Bu iki temel yaklaşım tezde toplum merkezci-yaklaşım ve devlet-merkezci yaklaşım olarak adlandırılmıştır. Toplum-merkezci yaklaşımı kullanan çalışmalar, Gül Devrimi'ni de kapsayan renkli devrimler yoluyla gerçekleşen rejim değişikliklerinde sivil toplum kuruluşları, medya, muhalefet gibi aktörlerin önemini vurgulamışlardır. Devlet merkezci yaklaşımı kullanan çalışmalar ise, renkli devrim olgusunun toplumla ilgili dinamiklere değil de, devletle ilgili dinamiklerle daha iyi açıklanabileceğini savunmuşlardır. Bu bölümde önce renkli devrimlerle birlikte yükselişe geçen toplum merkezci çalışmalar, daha sonra ise bunlara tepki olarak ortaya çıkan devlet-merkezci yaklaşımlar incelenecektir. Ayrıca, her iki yaklaşımı kullanan çalışmaların da zayıflıklarına değinilecektir.

Renkli devrimler kapsamında toplumun yönetimdeki rejimlere karşı ayaklanması ve özellikle de kimi devlet başkanlarının seçimlere hile karıştırıldığı iddiasıyla düzenlenen rejim karşıtı gösteriler nedeniyle görevlerinden istifa etmeleri, birçok yazarı rejim değişikliklerinde toplumsal güçlerin önemini vurgulamaya yöneltmiştir. Renkli devrimlerin birbiri ardından patlak vermesinden önce de eski Sovyet coğrafyasındaki rejimler için toplumsal güçlerin önemini vurgulayan Valerie Bunce, devrimlerle birlikte bu yöndeki çabasını arttırmıştır. Bunce Sharon L. Wolchik ile birlikte, renkli devrimlerde daha önceki başarılı rejim değişikliği girişimlerinde kullanılan tekniklerinin toplumdan topluma yayılmasının önemini vurgulamışlardır. Yazarlar, Gürcistan'daki *Kmara* (Yeter) isimli gençlik hareketinin üyelerinin Sırbistan ve Slovakya'daki renkli devrimlere katılan aktivistler tarafından eğitilmesinin Gül Devrimi'ne önemli katkılar yaptığını savunmaktadırlar. Yazarlar, *Kmara* üyelerinin diğer devrimlerdeki aktivistlerden aldıkları taktiklerin, Şevardnadze yönetimin başarısızlığını ve

yoğlaşmışlığını ortaya çıkarıp, toplumu rejime karşı harekete geçirmesinde çok önemli role sahip olduğuna dikkat çekmektedirler.<sup>1014</sup> Toplum-merkezcil grubun bir üyesi olan Giorgi Kandelaki de aynı şekilde *Kmara*'nın uyguladığı taktiklerle toplumdaki siyasi meselelere karşı ilgisizliği kırarak toplumun rejime karşı harekete geçmesinde önemli rol oynadığını vurgulamıştır.<sup>1015</sup>

Renkli devrimlerden önce eski komünist bloğu ülkelerde rejimi şekillendiren dinamikleri aydınlatabilmek için demokratik ve otoriter kuvvetler arasındaki güç dengesine odaklanmanın gerektiğini savunan Michael McFaul, bu devrimlerden sonra literatürde sıklıkla referans verilen yeni bir analitik çerçeve üretmiştir. Yeni çalışmalarında McFaul renkli devrimlerde 7 koşulun önemini vurgulamaya başladı. Ona göre, tam olarak baskıcı olmayan bir rejim, halk arasındaki desteğini yitirmiş bir devlet başkanı, güç birliği etmiş ve iyi organize olmuş bir muhalefet, muhalefetin kamu oyunu seçimlere hile karıştırıldığına ikna edebilme imkanı, kamu oyunu seçim hilesi konusunda bilgilendirecek medya, on binlerce kişiyi harekete geçirebilecek bir muhalefet ve silahlı kuvvetler içinde bölünme rejim değişikliklerini yaratan koşullardı.<sup>1016</sup>

Yazar, bu koşulların tümünün rejim değişikliğine sahne olan Gürcistan, Kırgızistan ve Ukrayna'da gerçekte var olup olmadığını ciddi bir şekilde incelemiyordu. Oysaki daha dikkatli bir inceleme Gürcistan'da muhalefetin sanıldığı kadar birliktelik içinde hareket etmediğini ortaya koyacaktı. Aynı şekilde, Mcfaul önemini vurguladığı bağımsız medya ya da muhalefetin kitleleri harekete geçirme gücünün neden bazı Sovyet ardılı ülkelere olup bazılarında olmadığını araştırmıyordu.

Mark R. Beissinger da renkli devrimlerde toplumsal güçlerin rolünü vurgulamıştır. O da, Bunce ve Wolchik gibi, bu devrimlerin dinamiklerini açıklayabilmek için rejim karşıtı hareketlerin toplumdan topluma yayılma

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<sup>1014</sup> Valerie Bunce ve Sharon L. Wolchik, "Youth and Electoral Revolutions in Slovakia, Serbia, and Georgia", *SAIS Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Yaz- Sonbahar 2006), s. 59, 60.

<sup>1015</sup> Giorgi Kandelaki, "Georgia's Rose Revolution: A Participant's Perspective", *Special Report*, No. 167, United States University of Peace (Temmuz 2006), s. 5-8.

<sup>1016</sup> Michael McFaul, "The Second Wave of Democratic Breakthroughs in the Post-Communist World: Comparing Serbia 2000, Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004, and Kyrgyzstan 2005", *Danyliw/Jacyk Working Papers*, No. 4, Center for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, University of Toronto (2005), s. 3-4.



mekanizmalarını mercek altına almaktadır. Beissinger için bu yayılma mekanizmaları o derece önemlidir ki, bu mekanizmaların varlığı, yerel olumsuzlukların etkinliğini kırabilir. Yazar Sırbistan'daki Buldozer Devrimiyle ortaya çıkan rejim değişikliği modelinde 6 unsurun varlığına dikkat çekmektedir. Seçim hilesinin kitleleri harekete geçirmek için kullanılması, alışla gelmişin dışında protesto taktikleri kullanan gençlik hareketleri, yerel muhalefetin dış güçler tarafından desteklenmesi, kapsamlı seçim gözlemciliği faaliyeti, birlik içinde hareket eden muhalefet ve seçim sonuçlarının açıklanmasıyla toplumun kısa süre içinde rejime karşı harekete geçmesi yazarın önemini vurguladığı koşullardır.<sup>1017</sup> Ancak bu yazar da, McFaul örneğinde olduğu gibi, neden bazı Sovyet ardılı ülkelerde kapsamlı seçim gözlemciliği faaliyetinin yürütülüp bazılarında yürütülemediğini, gençlik hareketlerinin neden bölgedeki her ülkede aynı etkinliği gösteremediğini ya da kısacası neden yayılma mekanizmalarının her ülkeyi aynı şekilde etkilemediğini sorgulamamıştır.

Şimdiye kadar incelenen çalışmaların Gül Devrimi'ni ve diğer renkli devrimleri yalnızca toplumsal aktörlerin rollerine odaklanarak açıklamaya çalışmaları çok geçmeden bazı yazarların tepkisine neden oldu. Toplum-merkezcil literatüre tepki olarak nispeten daha az sayıda da olsa devlet-merkezcil çalışmalar üretilmeye başlandı.

Renkli devrimlerin devlet-merkezcil analizinin öncüsü olan Mark N. Katz, devletin zor gücünün rejim değişikliği ve devamlılığında oynadığı role dikkat çekmiştir. Katz, Sovyet sonrası coğrafyada baştaki yönetimler rejim karşıtı hareketlerle karşılaştıklarında, sonucu belirleyen ana etmenin rejim ve silahlı kuvvetler arasında ilişkiler olduğunu savunur. Yazar, iktidardakiler ve silahlı kuvvetler arasında işbirliği olduğu zaman rejim aleyhtarı gösterilerin bastırıldığını, aksi taktirde rejim değişikliği yaşandığını öne sürmektedir.<sup>1018</sup>

Lucan A. Way ve Steven Levitsky'nin çalışmalarının da devletin rolünü vurgulayan literatürde önemli bir yeri vardır. Bu yazarlar çalışmalarında bazı

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<sup>1017</sup> Mark R. Beissinger, "Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Buldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions", *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 2007), s. 260.

<sup>1018</sup> Mark N. Katz, "Democratic Revolutions: Why Some Succeed, Why Others Fail", *World Affairs*, Cilt 166, No. 3 (2004), s. 163-170.

rejimlerin renkli devrimlerin yayılması karşısında savunmasız duruşuna karşı diğerlerinin rejim değişikliğine oldukça direnç gösterdiğine dikkat çekmektedirler. Onlara göre bu farklılığı hazırlayan temel etmen devletin zor gücünün kapasitesidir. Yazarlar devletin zor gücünün iki boyutu olduğunu savunmaktadırlar: genişlik ve bağlılık. Zor gücünün genişliği, rejimin iyi eğitilmiş kalabalık istihbarat ve kolluk kuvvetleri sayesinde topluma sızmasına, müdahale etmesine ve onu isteği yönde şekillendirmesine imkân sağlar. Bağlılık boyutu ise, rejimin kendisine bağlı silahlı personeli sayesinde göstericilere ateş açmak gibi, kolay kolay başvurulamayacak, riskli yöntemleri uygulamasına olanak sağlar. Her iki açıdan da kuvvetli olan zor gücüne sahip rejimler, hem rejim karşıtı hareketlerin fazla güçlenmesini engeller, hem de rejime aleyhtarı gösterileri kolaylıkla bastırır.<sup>1019</sup>

Bu bağlamda, Levitsky ve Way, Ermenistan'ın bağımsızlığından beri Gürcistan'a kıyasla daha geniş katılımlı protesto gösterilerine sahne olmasına rağmen, iktidardakilerin bu gösterileri kolaylıkla bastırıp, rejim değişikliğini önlediğine dikkat çekmektedirler. Yazarlara göre, Ermenistan ve Gürcistan arasındaki bu farklılığı hazırlayan ana etmen, Gürcistan'da devletin zor gücünün zayıflığına karşı, Ermenistan'da devletin zor gücünün hem genişlik hem de bağlılık açısından kuvvetli olmasıdır.<sup>1020</sup>

Levitsky ve Way'in yanı sıra birçok yazar da Gül Devrimi ile Şevardnadze'nin devrilmesinde devletin zor gücünün zayıflığının önemini vurgulamaktadırlar. Protestolar sırasında göstericilere karşı güç kullanılmaması çok sayıda araştırmacıyı Şevardnadze'nin devletin zor gücünün zayıflığı nedeniyle bundan uzak durduğunu öne sürmeye sevk etmiştir. Lincoln Mitchell, Şevardnadze'nin kan dökmekten kaçınmak için göstericilere karşı güç kullanmadığını iddia etmesine rağmen, bunu gerçekleştiremeyecek kadar zayıf olduğu için güç kullanımından geri durduğunu öne sürmüştür.<sup>1021</sup> Charles H.

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<sup>1019</sup> Lucan A. Way and Steven Levitsky, "The Dynamics of Autocratic Coercion after the Cold War", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Cilt 39 (2006), s. 387.

<sup>1020</sup> A.g.e., s. 402..

<sup>1021</sup> Lincoln Mitchell, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Current History*, Cilt 103 (Ekim 2004), s. 348.

Fairbanks da Gül Devrimi sırasında güç kullanımından kaçınılmasını devletin zayıflığının buna imkân tanımamasına bağlamaktadır. Şevardnadze'nin göstericilere karşı güç kullanmaya çalıştığını, ancak silahlı kuvvetlerin onun talimatlarını yerine getirmediğini iddia etmektedir.<sup>1022</sup> Hale de Şevardnadze'nin hoşgörü sahibi bir lider olmadığını ancak gösterileri bastırmak için gereken araçlara sahip olmadığı için güç kullanımdan geri durduğunu belirtmektedir.<sup>1023</sup>

Literatürde var olan bu yaygın görüşün aksine Cory Welt, Gül Devrimi sırasında göstericiler karşı güç kullanılmamasını devletin zayıflığına değil devlet başkanı Şevardnadze'nin isteksizliğine bağlamaktadır. Welt, Şevardnadze'nin bir diktatör olmadığını ve olaylar sırasında silahlı kuvvetlerin önemli bir bölümünü kontrol etmesine rağmen elindeki gücü kullanmamayı tercih etmediğini ileri sürmektedir.<sup>1024</sup> Kısacası hem Welt hem de yukarıda çalışmalarına değinilen yazarlar Gül Devrimine devlet merkezci açıklamak getirmekte, olaylar sırasında devletin zor gücünün kullanılmamasının rejim değişikliğini getirdiğini savunmaktadırlar. Ancak, Welt dışındaki yazarlar güç kullanılmasını devletin zor gücünün zayıflığına bağlarken, Welt bunu Şevardnadze'nin kan dökmekten kaçınmasına bağlamaktadır.

Devlet-merkezci çalışmalar toplumsal dinamiklerin (toplumun renkli devrimlerin yayılması sürecinde devlete karşı ayaklanmasının ve çoğu zaman batılı güçler tarafından desteklenen medya, muhalefet ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarının faaliyetlerinin) rejim değişikliklerini açıklamak için tek başına yeterli olmadıklarını göstermektedirler. Gürcistan'dan daha güçlü rejim karşıtı gösterilere sahne olan ancak devletin müdahalesi sonucu rejim değişikliği yerine devamlılığı görülen Sovyet sonrası ülkelerin analiz kapsamına alınması, toplumsal güçlerin ancak devletin zayıf olduğu durumlarda rejim değişikliğini

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<sup>1022</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Journal of Democracy*, Cilt 15, No. 2 (April 2004), s. 117.

<sup>1023</sup> Henry E. Hale, "Democracy or Autocracy on the March? The Color Revolutions as Normal Dynamics of Patronal Presidentialism", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Cilt 39, No. 3 (September 2006), s. 324

<sup>1024</sup> Cory Welt, *Georgia: Causes of the Rose Revolution and Lessons for Democracy Assistance*, (Washington: Unites States Agency for International Development, 2005), pp. 11, 12.

gerçekleştirebildiklerini göstermiştir.<sup>1025</sup> Bu noktadan hareketle kimi devlet-merkezcil yazarlar, devrimci kuvvetlerin devrimi gerçekleştirmediklerini, gerçekte rejim değişikliğini yaratanların iktidardakiler olduğunun altını çizmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda, Gürcistan ve Kırgızistan'da Şevardnadze ve Akayev'in toplumsal güçlerin kararlı faaliyetleri sonucunda değil de, devlet kurumlarının onları savunmaması neticesinde alaşağı edildiklerinin altı çizilmektedir.<sup>1026</sup>

Devlet-merkezcil çalışmalar, aynı zamanda toplum merkezcil çalışmalar tarafından renkli devrimleri açıklamak için kullanılan unsurların daha dikkatli bir inceleme sonucunda açıklayıcı güçlerini kaybettiklerini göstermektedir. Donnacha Ó Beacháin, Gül Devrimi ve Lale Devrimi sırasında muhalefetin muhalefet liderleri arasındaki anlaşmazlıklar sonucu birlikte hareket edemediklerine dikkat çekmektedir.<sup>1027</sup> Yazar, bu şekilde, rejim değişikliklerinde muhalefetin birliğinin önemini vurgulayan çalışmaların zayıflığı göz önüne sermektedir. Benzer şekilde, Scott Radnitz, Lale Devrimi'nin dinamiklerini açıkladığı çalışmasında, Akayev dönemindeki Kırgızistan'da bağımsız medyanın olmadığını, rejim karşıtı ayaklanmaların çıkmasına medyanın katkıda bulunmadığını ve yine toplum-merkezcil çalışmalar tarafından önemi vurgulanan sivil toplum kuruluşlarının Lale Devrimi'nde çok sınırlı roller üstlendiklerini göstermektedir.<sup>1028</sup>

Devlet-merkezcil yaklaşımların literatüre diğer bir katkısı da toplum-merkezcil çalışmalardaki tarihsel ilerleme kavramını tartışmaya açmaları olmuştur. Devlet-merkezcil çalışmalar, toplum-merkezcil çalışmaların aksine renkli devrimler sonrasında mutlaka demokratik ilerleme görülmeyeceğini, yeni

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<sup>1025</sup> Lucan A. Way, "The Real Causes of Color Revolutions", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 2008), p. 59 and Menno Fenger, "The Diffusion of Revolutions: Comparing Recent Regime Turnovers in Five Post-Communist Countries", *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Cilt 15, No. 1 (2007), pp. 5-28.

<sup>1026</sup> Donnacha Ó Beacháin, "Roses and Tulips: Dynamics of Regime Change in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Cilt 25, No. 2-3 (Haziran-Eylül 2009), p. 202.

<sup>1027</sup> A.g.e., s. 199.

<sup>1028</sup> Scott Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2006), p. 138.

yönetimin yerine geçtiği iktidarın otoriter siyasetini devam ettirebileceğini hatta daha da otoriter olabileceğini göstermişlerdir.<sup>1029</sup>

Devlet-merkezcil çalışmalar Gül Devrimi'ni de kapsayan renkli devrimler sürecinde devletin rolüne dikkat çekerek literatüre çok önemli katkılar yapmışlardır. Ancak yine de mevcut devlet-merkezcil çalışmalar devlete çok dar kapsamlı yaklaşımları nedeniyle Gül devrimini ve diğer renkli devrimleri doğuran dinamikleri yeterince aydınlatamamaktırlar. Bu çalışmaların temel zayıflığı renkli devrimleri açıklarken devletin sadece zor gücüne odaklanmalarıdır. Bu nedenle mevcut devlet-merkezcil çalışmalar Sovyet sonrası coğrafyadaki rejimlerin izledikleri yolları açıklamakta kimi zaman yetersiz kalmaktadırlar. Örneğin, Levitsky ve Way devletin zor gücünün toplumun değişik katmanlarına müdahale edebilmesinin rejim karşıtı hareketleri kontrol etmede ve tehlikeli boyutlara ulaşmasını engellemede çok önemli rolünün olduğunu tartışmaktadırlar. Ancak bu analitik çerçeve ile bakıldığında, devletin zor gücünün Ermenistan ve Özbekistan'da bu açıdan kuvvetli olmasına rağmen neden güçlü rejim karşıtı gösterilerle karşılaşıldığını anlamak mümkün değildir. Yine, bu yazarların bakış açısıyla bakıldığında, Ukrayna'da silahlı güçlerin 18 gün süren rejim karşıtı gösteriler boyunca devlet binalarını koruyup rejimin arkasında durmalarına rağmen neden sonuçta rejim değişikliği yaşandığını anlamak zordur.

Eski Sovyet coğrafyasında rejim değişikliklerini ve devamlılıklarını sadece devletin zor gücüne yoğunlaşarak açıklamaya çalışan mevcut devlet-merkezcil çalışmaların bu yetersizlikleri devlete ve devletin renkli devrimlerdeki rolüne daha geniş bir bakış açısını gerektirmiştir. Takip edilen bölümde anlatılacağı gibi, bu tez, devlet kapasitesine daha geniş açıyla bakarak Gül

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<sup>1029</sup> Bu çalışmaların örnekleri için bakınız Scott Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?", *Journal of Democracy*, Cilt 17, No. 2 ( Nisan 2006), s. 132-144, Mark N. Katz, "Revolutionary Change in Central Asia", *World Affairs*, Cilt 168, No. 4 (Bahar 2006), s. 157-171, Lincoln A. Mitchell, "Democracy in Georgia since the Rose Revolution" , *Orbis*, Cilt 50, No. 4 (Sonbahar 2006), s. 669-676, Charles H. Fairbanks, "Revolution Reconsidered", *Journal of Democracy*, Cilt 18, No. 1(2007), s. 42-57, Theodor Tudoroiu, "Rose, Orange, and Tulip: The Failed Post-Soviet Revolutions", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Cilt 40 (2007) s. 315-342. Vicken Cheterian, "Georgia's Rose Revolution: Change or Repetition? Tension between State-Building and Modernization Projects", *Nationalities Papers*, Cilt 36, No. 4 (September 2008), s. 689-712 and Katya Kalandadze and Mitchell A. Orenstein, "Electoral Protests and Democratization Beyond the Color Revolutions", *Political Studies*, Cilt 42(2009), s. 1403-1425.

Devrimini doğuran dinamikleri daha etkin bir şekilde açıklamıştır ve renkli devrimler konusundaki literatüre önemli bir katkı sağlamıştır.

#### 4. Kuramsal Çerçeve ve Temel Tez

Bu tez, literatürdeki toplum-merkezcil ve devlet-merkezcil çalışmalardan farklı olarak, Gül Devrimi'ne giden süreçte Gürcü devletinin zorlayıcı, idari, gelir sağlayıcı ve dağıtıcı ve düzenleyici kapasitelerinin çöküşünün, rejim değişikliğini isteyen iç ve dış güçlere karşı devletin özerkliğini kaybetmesi sonucunu doğurarak, Şevardnadze'nin devrilmesine neden olduğunu savunmaktadır. Sadece siyasi muhalefete, sivil toplum kuruluşlarına ve medyaya odaklanan toplum-merkezcil çalışmalar devletin rolünü göz ardı ettiklerinden Gül Devrimi'nin dinamiklerini açıklayamamaktadırlar. Benzer şekilde, mevcut devlet-merkezcil yaklaşımların sadece Gürcü devletinin zorlayıcı kapasitesine odaklanmaları ve idari, gelir sağlayıcı ve dağıtıcı ve düzenleyici devlet kapasitelerine kayıtsız kalmaları Gül Devrimi'ni eksik açıklamalarına neden olmaktadır.

Bu tez, Gül Devrimi'ni etkin bir biçimde açıklayabilmek için, tarihsel sosyoloji kuramı içinde Theda Skocpol'ın öncülük ettiği devlet-merkezcil rejim analizi çerçevesini kullanmıştır. Yine literatürdeki eksikliklerden hareketle, devlet ve toplum arasındaki ilişkileri ve devlet gücünü çok boyutlu olarak değerlendirebilmek için Skocpol'un analizinin yanı sıra, Joel Migdal ve Michael Mann'ın sağladığı analitik araçlara başvurulmuştur.

Skocpol'un rejim analizleri incelendiğinde, yazarın devleti sadece zorlayıcı bir organ olarak görmek yerine, hukuki, idari, gelir sağlayıcı ve zorlayıcı kurumlar bütünü olarak tanımladığı görülür.<sup>1030</sup> Ayrıca yazar devletin her zaman toplumsal güçlerin kontrolünde olmadığını, devletlerin toplumsal güçlerden bağımsız hareket etme (özerklik) potansiyeline sahip aktörler olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda yazar, devrimleri hazırlayan temel nedenin

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<sup>1030</sup> Theda Skocpol'un devlete geniş bakış açısı getiren çalışmalarının örnekleri için bakınız "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Cilt 18, No. 2 (Nisan 1976), s. 175-210 ve "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research" in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), s. 3-37.

devrime giden süreçte hukuki, idari, gelir sağlayıcı ve zorlayıcı devlet organlarının çöküşüyle devlet özerkliğinin yok olması olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Bununla bağlantılı olarak Michael Mann de devletin ve toplumun birbirinden bağımsız olarak incelenmesine karşı duruş sergilemektedir. Mann, devletin birçok değişik alanda kendisiyle rekabet eden birçok toplumsal güç merkeziyle mücadele içinde olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.<sup>1031</sup> Skocpol ve Mann'in sunduğu bu analitik çerçeve ışığında, bu tez de toplum ve devletin Gül Devrimi'ne giden süreçte birbiriyle nasıl rekabet ettiğini incelemiştir. Devlete sadece toplumsal güçlerin birbiriyle mücadele ettiği bir yapı olarak değil de, gücü elverdiğince toplumsal güçlere müdahale edip onları şekillendiren bir aktör olarak yaklaşılmıştır. Sovyet sonrası rejimlerin analizi yapılırken, toplumsal güçlerin, toplum-merkezcil çalışmaların onlara yaklaşımının aksine, devletten çoğu kez bağımsız hareket edemediği bilinciyle yola çıkılmıştır. Gül Devrimi'ni doğuran dinamiklerin analizinde ise, bu yazarların sunduğu kuramsal çerçeve ışığında, toplumsal güçlerin bağımsız hareket edebilmesinin ardında Gürcü devletinin değişik alanlardaki gücünü ve sonuç olarak da özerkliğinin kaybetmesinin yattığının altı çizilmiştir. Renkli devrimlerin yayılması sürecinde birçok Sovyet ardılı ülkede rejim karşıtı ayaklamamalar görülmesine rağmen sadece devletin gücünü ve özerkliğini kaybettiği ülkelerde rejim değişikliklerini görülmesi, bu çalışmada devlete geniş açıdan bakan ve rejimin kaderinin belirlenmesinde devletin rolüne ağırlık veren Mann ve Skocpol'un sunduğu analitik çerçevenin kullanılmasını anlamlı kılmıştır.

Tarihsel sosyoloji, rejim değişikliklerinde devletin rolünü vurgulaması ve devlete daha geniş açıdan bakmayı sağlamasının yanı sıra, iç ve dış dinamikler arasındaki ilişkilere yaklaşımı açısından da bu çalışmada kullanılacak temel kuramsal çerçeve olarak seçilmiştir. Soğuk savaş yılları boyunca egemen olan neo-realizmin tersine tarihsel sosyoloji, rejim değişiklikleri gibi devletlerin sınırları içinde gerçekleşen olguları da Uluslararası İlişkiler Disiplini'nin çalışma konusu içine almanın gerekliliğini savunur. Tarihsel Sosyoloji klasik Uluslararası İlişkiler yaklaşımlarındaki kesin iç-dış ayırımına karşı çıkmaktadır. Örneğin,

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<sup>1031</sup> Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Cilt. 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation States, 1760-1914*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), s. 725.

Skocpol *Devlet ve Sosyal Devrimler* isimli eserinde, dış dinamiklerin devrimle ilgili fikirlerin uluslararası arenada yayılması ve devletin kapasitesinin dış etkiler tarafından şekillendirilmesiyle yoluyla içteki dinamikleri etkilediğini ve rejim değişikliğine zemin hazırladığını göstermektedir. Yazar, yine bir ülkenin sınırları içinde yaşanan devrimlerin diğer ülkelerdeki rejim karşıtı hareketlere model oluşturarak dış dinamikleri nasıl şekillendirdiğini göstermektedir. Yazar bu yolla devletin içindeki ve dışındaki dinamiklerin birbirini nasıl etilediğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Tarihsel sosyologlar ayrıca, devleti hazır verilmiş ve değişmeyen bir aktör olarak görmek yerine, tarih içinde değişen ve toplum ile etkileşimi yoluyla şekillenen bir yapı olarak anlamının gerekliliğini savunmaktadırlar.<sup>1032</sup> Tez, tarihsel sosyoloji kuramının sunduğu bu analitik çerçeve ışığında Gürcü toplumunu devletine sürekli rekabet eden yapılar olarak yaklaşmış bu aktörlerin birbirini nasıl şekillendirdiğini incelemiştir.

## 5. Gül Devrimi

Bu tez Gürcü devletine tarihsel bir yapı olarak yaklaşmış ve tarih içinde devlet ve toplumun birbiriyle nasıl rekabet ettiğini incelemiştir. Gürcü devletinin zayıf oluşunun tarihsel arka planı incelendiğinde, Gürcistan'ın tarih boyunca büyük imparatorlukların rekabet alanı olduğu ve sadece çok kısa iki dönem boyunca bağımsız olduğu görülmüştür. Bugünkü Gürcistan topraklarında 1801 yılında Rusya hâkimiyet kurana kadar, Persler, Bizanslılar, Araplar, Moğollar ve Osmanlılar hüküm sürmüşlerdir. 1801 yılında Rusya'nın Gürcistan topraklarını ilhak etmesiyle, 1991 yılına kadar sürecek Rus hâkimiyeti başlamıştır.

Sovyet döneminin Gürcü devleti üzerinde önemli etkileri olmuştur. Sovyet sistemi, bir yandan Gürcü devletinin sınırlarını çizerek bir siyasi birim olarak ortaya çıkmasına önemli bir katkı yaparken, diğer yandan da Gürcistan içinde çeşitli özerk yapılar oluşturarak merkezin otoritesini zayıflatmış ve bağımsızlık sonrası ayrılıkçı hareketlerin oluşmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Gorbaçov

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<sup>1032</sup> John M. Hobson, "Debate: The 'Second Wave' of Weberian Historical Sociology - The Historical Sociology of the State and the State of Historical Sociology in International Relations", *Review of International Political Economy*, Cilt 5, No. 2 (Nisan 1998), s. 287.



döneminde Moskova'nın otoritesinin zayıflamasıyla birlikte, hem Gürcü milliyetçiliği hem de değişik azınlıkların milliyetçi hareketleri güç kazanmıştır. Devlet Başkanı Zviad Gamsakhurdia'nın aylıkçılığı körükleyen politikalarının da etkisiyle, önce Güney Osetya'da sonra da Abazya'da silahlı çatışmalar patlak vermiştir. Gürcü devletin zayıflığına Rusya'nın ayrılıkçı güçler verdiği destek eklenince Abazya ve Güney Osetya fiiliyatta bağımsız devletler olarak ortaya çıkmışlardır.

Gamsakhurdia'nın pragmatizmden yoksun politikaları hem ülkeyi derin karışıklığa sürüklemiş, hem de bu liderin kendi sonunu hazırlamıştır. Askeri darbe sonucu alaşağı edilen Gamsakhurdia'nın yerine Şevardnadze geçmiştir. Şevardnadze döneminde ülke yıkılmakta olan devlet durumundan ancak zayıf devlet durumuna geçebilmiştir.<sup>1033</sup> Şevardnadze iktidara geldikten sonra silahlı güçleri devlet kontrolü altına almış, Abazya ve Güney Osetya'da ateşkes sağlamış, Rusya'nın baskıları sonucu Birleşik Devletler Topluluğuna girilmiş ve dış desteklerin de katkısıyla ekonomide görece düzelme sağlamıştır. Tez Şevardnadze'nin, tüm bu adımlarla ülkede istikrarı sağlamayı başardığını ancak bu istikrarın çok kırılgan bir zemin üzerine kurulu olduğunu göstermiştir.

Şevardnadze'nin kurduğu Vatandaşların Gürcistan Birliği Partisi Şevardnadze'nin kurduğu sistemin temel taşlarından biri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu parti, çok değişik güç merkezlerini içinde barındırıyordu. Sovyet dönemindeki yönetici sınıf, partiye mali destek sağlayan işadamları ve reformist güçler bir süre partide birlikte var olabildi. Ancak Şevardnadze'nin kurduğu sistem içten içe kendini tüketiyordu. Kimi elitler başında oldukları devlet kurumlarını ve yönetim birimlerini kendi derebeylikleri haline getirdiler, Şevardnadze bu yapıları kontrol

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<sup>1033</sup> Ghia Nodia, "Dynamics and Sustainability of the Rose Revolution" in Senem Aydın and Michael Emerson, *Democratisation in the European Neighbourhood* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2005), s. 38-53, Laurence Broers and Julian Broxup, "Crisis and Renewal in Georgian Politics: The 2003 Parliamentary Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections", *The London Information Networks on Conflicts and State Report*, Ocak 2004, available at <http://www.links-london.org/pdf/Crisis%20and%20Renewal%20in%20Georgian%20Politics%20-20Jan%2004.pdf> (Lastly accessed on 10 January 2009), Mithat Çelikpala, "From a Failed State To A Weak One? Georgia And Turkish-Georgian Relations", *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. 36 (2005), s. 159-199, Robert Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), s. 48, Jack A. Goldstone et al., "State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings" (Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2000) and Vicken Cheterian, "Georgia's Rose Revolution: Change or Repetition? Tension between State-Building and Modernization Projects", *Nationalities Papers*, Cilt. 36, No. 4(2008), s. 694.

edemiyordu. Devlet Abazya ve Güney Osetya'nın fiiliyattaki bağımsızlığını kabul etmek zorunda kalmıştı. Dahası, Ermeni ve Azeri bölgeleri ve Acarya'da yerel yöneticiler başlarına buyruk davranabiliyordu, devletin zayıflığı nedeniyle bu bölgelerde tam kontrol sağlanamıyordu. Kısacası devlet otoritesi çöküş içindeydi.

Yolsuzluk had safhaya ulaşmıştı; devletin zaten sınırlı olan gelirleri toplumun ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak ve devlet kurumlarını güçlendirmek yerine, küçük bir grubun şahsi menfaatleri için kullanılıyordu. Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan Projesi'nin sağladığı gelirlere rağmen devlet gelirleri yolsuzluk nedeniyle düşüş gösteriyordu. Halk giderek fakirleşiyordu, devlet maaşları ödeyemez, temel hizmetleri veremez duruma gelmişti. Bu durum hem halkın hem de siyasi elitin bir kısmının Şevardnadze'den uzaklaşmasına neden oldu. Devlet küçük bir grubun oyuncağı haline gelmişti, bu güçler karşısında hareket serbestisine sahip değildi.

Şevardnadze dış güçlere karşı da özerkliğe sahip değildi. Devlet, hem askeri hem de ekonomik açıdan zayıf olduğu için Şevardnadze dış politikada Rusya'ya karşı batılı güçlerin desteğine ihtiyaç duyuyordu. Dahası, Şevardnadze sistemi ayakta tutmak için batılı devletler ve uluslar arası kuruluşlardan gelen mali desteğe muhtaçtı. Ancak Gül Devrimi,'ne giden süreçte bu kurumlar ve devletler ülkedeki yolsuzluk nedeniyle Şevardnadze yönetimine mali yardımları kestiler. Bu gürcü devletin daha da zayıflamasına neden oldu.

Tez Gürcistan'da devletin zayıflığını bu şekilde ortaya koyduktan sonra, rejim karşıtı toplumsal güçler devletin bu zayıflığı sayesinde nasıl güçlendiğini inceledi. Görüldü ki, Şevardnadze'ye yönelik halk desteği gitgide azalıp, O'na tepkili olan elit işbaşına geçmenin yollarını ararken, Şevardnadze karşıtı sivil toplum örgütleri Açık Toplum Enstitüsü ve Milli Demokratik Enstitü gibi Amerikan kökenli kuruluşlardan hem maddi destek almakta, hem de kansız devrim konusunda eğitilmekteydiler. IMF artan yolsuzluk ve mevcut problemleri çözmek için harcanması gereken kaynakların şahsi çıkarlar için kullanılmasını neden göstererek yardımı kesmeye karar verirken, Amerika gibi ülkeler Saakaşvili'nin liderliğini yaptığı muhalefete yaklaşıyordu. Batı, Şevardnadze'nin ülkede istikrarı ve ekonomik kalkınmayı sağlayamadığını görmüş, miadını dolduran Şevardnadze yerine reformist ve batı yanlısı muhalefeti desteklemeye başlamıştı.

Tez, işte böylesi bir ortamda toplum-merkezcil çalışmalar tarafından Gül Devrimi'nin gerçek mimarları olarak görülen toplumsal güçlerin hareket serbestisi

elde edip güçlendiğini gösterdi. Muhalefet devletin halkın ihtiyaçlarını karşılamada gösterdiği zayıflık sonucu Şevardnadze yönetimini eleştirip halkın desteğini kazanma fırsatına kavuştu. Yine devlet dış güçlere karşı zayıf olduğu için Şevardnadze yönetimi Batılı hükümet ve Soros'un başkallığını yaptığı Açık Toplum Enstitüsü gibi kuruluşların yerel sivil toplum kuruluşlarını ve muhalefeti destekleyip rejim karşısında güç kazanmasını engelleyemedi.

Rejim karşıtı toplumsal güçler devletin zayıflığından doğan bu boşluğu değerlendirerek sonunda 2003 yılında Gül Devrimi yoluyla Şevardnadze rejimini alaşağı ettiler. Şevardnadze rejimi çeşitli alanlarda devletin gücünün zayıflığı ve devlet otoritesinin çöküşüyle pençeleşirken 2 Kasım 2003 tarihinde parlamento seçimleri yapıldı. Şevardnadze'nin desteklediği "Yeni Gürcistan İçin" ve Abaşidze'nin "Gürcistan Demokratik Uyanış Birliği" partileri, Saakaşvili'nin "Birleşik Ulusal Hareket"i ve parlamento başkanı Nino Burjanadze ile eski parlamento başkanı Zurab Zhvania'nın "Burjanadze-Demokratlar" partisine karşı yarıştı. 2 Kasım 2003 tarihinde yapılan parlamento seçimleri, ulusal ve uluslararası gözlemciler tarafından izlendi. Hükümet "Yeni Gürcistan İçin" Partisi'nin seçimleri kazandığını açıkladı. Muhalefet seçimlere hile karıştırıldığı gerekçesiyle seçim sonuçlarını tanımadı ve protesto gösteriler düzenlendi. Şevardnadze göstericilere karşı güç kullanmadı ve baskılara çok fazla direnemeyerek 23 Kasım devlet başkanlığı görevinden istifa etti. Saakaşvili Ocak 2004'de yapılan seçimleri ezici bir çoğunlukla kazandı.<sup>1034</sup>

Tez tüm bu olayların analizini yaparken, devletin çeşitli alanlardaki güç kaybı nedeniyle iç ve dıştaki rejim karşıtı güçlere karşı özerkliğini kaybetmesinin rejim değişikliğine sebep olan temel neden olduğunu gösterdi. Şevardnadze seçimlere hile karıştırılmasını devletin çeşitli kademelerdeki aktörleri kontrol edememesi nedeniyle engelleyemedi. Seçimlerde yapılan yolsuzluklar, devletin kontrol edemediği medya ve sivil toplum kuruluşları tarafından rotaya çıkarıldı. Zaten rejime tepkili olan halk ayakladığında devlet otoritesi ciddi anlamda çöküş içinde idi, devlet toplumsal aktörlerin bağımsız şekilde hareket etmesini engellenemiyordu. Devletin zor gücünün protestoları bastırıp bastıramayacağı da

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<sup>1034</sup> Freedom House, 2007 Yılı Gürcistan Ülke Raporu, [http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007final/nit-georgia-web.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007final/nit-georgia-web.pdf)

tam olarak bilinemiyordu. Ancak protestolar bastırılrsa bile Şevardnadze kontrolü tekrar sağlayamayacağını anladığından görevinde istifa etmek zorunda kaldı.

Saakaşvili göreve gelince yüksek öğretim, bakanlıklar ve güvenlik kuvvetleri gibi kurumlarda yolsuzluğa karşı etkili bir mücadele yürütmeye başladı. Göreve geldiği ilk günlerde demokrasi havarisi olarak gösterilen bu lider, sivil toplum örgütlerinin ve medyanın özgürlüklerini kısıtladı; yürütme erkinin de yetkilerini genişleterek otoriter yönetim tarzını pekiştirdi.<sup>1035</sup> Saakaşvili yönetime geldikten sonra Şevardnadze'nin düşüşüne neden olan süreci devlet kurumlarını toplumsal güçler karşısında güçlendirerek tersine çevirdi. Devletin güçlenmesi sonucu muhalefet ve sivil toplum kuruluşları gibi toplumsal güçler Şevardnadze döneminde sahip oldukları etkinliği gösteremediler. Saakaşvili döneminde birçok kereler rejim karşıtı gösteriler düzenlense de, Saakaşvili ülkeyi yönetmeye devam etti. Gül Devrimi sonrasındaki Gürcistan'daki siyasi ortamın bu analizi ile tez, devletin gücünün baştaki rejimin kaderini belirlemede belirgin rol oynadığını, toplumsal güçlerin ancak devletin zayıf olduğu durumlarda etkinlik kazanıp rejim değişikliğini gerçekleştirebildiklerini gösterdi.

## 6. Karşılaştırmalı Analiz

Tezin Azerbaycan, Belarus, Ermenistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Rusya ve Ukrayna'yı devlet kapasitesi ve özerkliği bakımından Gürcistan ile karşılaştıran karşılaştırmalı analizi de rejimin kaderini belirleyen temel etmenin devletin çeşitli alanlardaki gücü ve iç ve dış güçlere karşı bağımsızlığı olduğunu göstermiştir. Dahası karşılaştırmalı analiz, toplumsal güçlerin devletin güçlü olduğu durumlarda etkinlik gösteremeyip rejim değişikliğini gerçekleştiremediğini ortaya koymuştur

Gürcistan'ın aksine bağımsızlık sonrası dönemde oldukça güçlenen Rus devlet kapasitesi ve özerkliği sayesinde Putin rejimi Rusya'da rejim karşıtı güçlerin karşısında oldukça sağlam durmuştur. Rejim bir yandan artan devlet gelirleri sayesinde ekonomi durumu iyileştirerek toplumun desteğini kazanmış, diğer yandan da yine bu gelirler sayesinde devletin zor gücünü kuvvetlendirmiştir. Yeltsin zamanında Çeçenistan'daki yenilgi yüzünden zayıf görünen devletin topraklarını

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<sup>1035</sup> Lincoln A. Mitchell, "Democracy in Georgia Since the Rose Revolution", Orbis, Cilt: 50, No: 4(Sonbahar 2006), s. 672-73.

kontrol etme yeteneđi, yani idari kapasitesi, Putin zamanında devlet sınırları içinde merkezin sıkı kontrolünü sađlayan adımlar atılması sayesinde oldukça güçlenmiştir. Yine artan devlet gelirleri sayesinde batıya muhtaç olmaktan kurtulan Rusya, hem renkli devrimlerdeki rolleriyle bilinen Batı kaynaklı sivil toplum kuruluşlarının faaliyetlerini etkin bir biçimde sınırlamış; hem de Sovyet sonrası coğrafyada renkli devrimlerin yayılmasına karşı yürütölen çabalara öncölük etmiştir. Rus devletinin ciddi bir biçimde güçlenmesi ve özerklik kazanması sonucunda diđer renkli devrimlerde önemli roller oynayan toplumsal güçler ve dış kuvvetler, Rusya’da hiçbir etkinlik gösterememişlerdir. Bunun sonucunda da Putin görev süresi bitiminde Medvedev’in iktidara gelmesini kolaylıkla sađlamış ve kendisi de perde arkasında öлкеyi yönetmeye devam etmiştir.

Azerbaycan’da ise Karabađ yenilgisinin ardından düzenlenen darbeyi takiben iktidara gelen Haydar Aliyev, Mart 1994’de Ermenistan ile ateşkes imzaladı ve öлкеde istikrarı büyük ölçüde sađladı, ancak kurduđu otoriter düzen de demokratikleşme sürecini büyük ölçüde sekteye uğrattı.<sup>1036</sup> Aliyev öłkenin iki önemli klanı olan Nahçıvan ve Yeraz klanlarını birbirine karşı kullanarak kendi konumunu sađlamlaştırdı ve parlamento ve yargının denetiminden neredeyse bağımsız bir biçimde öлкеyi yönetmeye koyuldu. Petrol gelirleri muhalefeti ve toplumda yönetime duyulan hoşnutsuzlukları bastırmak için kullanıldı. Haydar Aliyev tekelleştirme konusunda o derece ileri gitti ki, ölümünden önce devlet başkanlığı koltuđuna ođlu İlham Aliyev’i oturtmayı bile başardı.

Azerbaycan’da Gül Devrimi’nin başarısından cesaret alan muhalefet, 2005 yılındaki parlamento seçimlerden sonra Aliyev’in zaferini tanımadıđını açıklayarak çok sayıda protesto gösterisi düzenlemiştir. Ancak, Şevardnadze’nin akıbetine uğramak istemeyen Aliyev güvenlik güçlerini kullanarak bu gösterileri sert bir şekilde bastırmıştır. 1990’lı yılların başında Halk Cephesinin öлкеyi yönettiđi dönemdeki istikrarsızlıđı gayet iyi hatırlayan ve Aliyev’lerin zamanında hayat standartlarının iyileştiđini gören halk muhalefete beklenen desteđi vermedi. Ayrıca, geniş petrol kaynakları sahip Azerbaycan ile ilişkilerini bozmak istemeyen ve öлкеde sađlanacak istikrarı demokrasiye yeđ tutan Batı, Aliyev’e fazla baskı yapmaktan kaçınmıştır. Durum böyle olunca Aliyev’in partisi Yeni Azerbaycan

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<sup>1036</sup> Svante E. Cornell, “Democratization Falters in Azerbaijan”, *Journal of Democracy*, Cilt 12, No 2, 2001, s. 119.

Parlamento çoğunluğunu yeniden elde etti. 2008 yılında yapılan seçimler ise seçim yasalarının demokratik olmadığı ve mevcut iktidarı kayırmak için hazırlandığı gerekçesiyle muhalefet tarafından boykot edildi ve Aliyev ezici bir çoğunlukla yeniden devlet başkanlığı koltuğuna oturdu. Kısacası, devlet güçlü ve özerk olduğu için toplumsal güçler Azerbaycan’da da başarıya ulaşamadı.

Koçaryan 2003 yılında uluslararası gözlemciler tarafından hile karıştırıldığı dile getirilen seçimler sonucu yeniden devlet başkanı seçildi. 19 Şubat 2008 devlet başkanlığı seçimlerini yeniden aday olma şansı bulunmayan Koçaryan tarafından desteklenen Serj Sarkisyan hükümetin Karabağ politikasını sert bir şekilde eleştiren Ter Petrosyan’a karşı kazandı. Gürcistan’da olduğu gibi Ermenistan’da da 2003 ve 2008’deki seçimlerin ardından muhalefet seçimlere hile karıştırıldığı nedeniyle geniş katılımlı protestolar düzenledi. Ancak, Gürcistan’dan farklı olarak Ermenistan’da göstericiler iyi eğitilmiş ve sert yöntemler kullanmaktan geri durmayan güvenlik kuvvetleri ile karşı karşıya geldi. Ayrıca, Şevardnadze’nin aksine Ermenistan’daki iktidar devlet otoritesinin çöküşüyle pençeleşmediğinden, devletin zor gücünü yerinden olmamak için kullanma iradesini gösterdi. Dahası, Ermenistan rejim değişikliği konusunda Gürcistan kadar dış baskıya maruz kalmadı. Sovyetler Birliği’nin dağılması ile birlikte Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan aksine Ermenistan Rusya ile göbek bağı ile bağlı kalmaya devam etti. Rusya Ermenistan’da askeri üsler kurdu, Karabağ meselesinde Ermeni tarafına desteğini esirgemedi ve bu ülkenin enerji tedarikçisi rolünü üstlendi. Tüm bu bağlantılar sayesinde Ermenistan üzerinde geniş nüfusa sahip olan Rusya, batılı güçlerin ülkede etkinlik kazanmasını engelledi. Bu nedenle Ermenistan muhalefeti iktidarı devirmek yolunda Batıdan gelecek destekten mahrum kaldı.

Özbekistan ve Belarus’da da her ne kadar iktidardaki rejimler renkli devrimlerin yayılmasıyla tehdit altına girse de devletin gücü ve özerkliği sayesinde rejim karşıtı hareketler başarıyla bastırıldı. Her iki devletin de Rusya ile yaklaşması sonucu iki ülkede de iktidardaki güçler rejim değişikliği yönündeki dış baskılara karşı direnç kazandı. Bu nedenle Batı kaynaklı sivil toplum kuruluşları hiçbir etki gösteremedi. Buna bir de söz konusu devletlerin silahlı kuvvetlerinin gücü eklenince, rejim karşıtı gösterilere rağmen her iki ülkede de rejim devamlılığı sağlandı.

Ukrayna ve Kırgızistan'da ise devletlerin renkli devrimlere giden süreçte güçsüzleşip iç ve dıştaki rejim karşıtı güçlere karşı özerkliğini kaybettiği görüldü. Kırgızistan'da, diğer incelenen ülkelerin aksine, rejim değişikliğinde rol oynayan temel toplumsal aktörler bölgelerindeki liderlerini destekleyen vatandaşlar oldu. Bu vatandaşlar, kendileri ile aynı klanlardan gelen liderlerinin seçimde kaybedişini protesto etmek için Lale Devrimi'ne katılırken, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının çok kısıtlı roller oynadı. Ukrayna'da ise devletin zayıflayıp özerkliğini kaybetmesi sonucu toplumsal güçler dış yardımların da etkisiyle de güçlenip, iktidara karşı ayaklandı. Devlet Gürcistan'da olduğu gibi Ukrayna'da da protestolara giden süreçte gücünü ve özerkliğini kaybettiği için, silahlı kuvvetlerin protestolar boyunca iktidardaki güçleri korumaya devam etmesi rejim devamlılığını sağlamaya yetmedi. Yeniden yapılan seçimlerin muhalefeti iktidara taşınmasıyla, Turuncu Devrim yoluyla Ukrayna'da rejim değişikliği yaşandı.

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