

## **Georgia's Rose Revolution: Change or Repetition? Tension between State-Building and Modernization Projects\***

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The wave of Colour Revolutions, which started in Serbia in the year 2000, and spread to Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, has changed the existing concepts on how transformation would take form in countries exiting from “really existing socialism.” In the early years following the collapse of the Soviet state, the dominant concepts were that of “transition” or slow, top-down reforms that would transform the existing political systems from ruling-party dictatorships to parliamentary democracies, and planned economies to market-based ones. Yet in the late 1990s there was a growing fatigue and pessimism towards the basic thesis of transition: the transition paradigm was formulated as a reaction to the perceived causes of the Soviet failure: a totalitarian state which monopolized the political space proved itself unable to provide either economic well-being or political legitimacy. The task in the early 1990s was to shrink the state apparatus, to make space for a multi-party political pluralism. Even though some argued that the main objective of transition was to achieve democracy,<sup>1</sup> for transition theories and even more so for its translation into actual political choices the economic aspect of transition was perceived to be more immediate than the political one. Democracy needed a certain material context, and here too decreasing the role of the state was thought to liberate the market and provide material stability to the new democracies. It was necessary to create a new middle class by way of mass privatization of the former state properties to create a social demand for democracy. Those ideas reflected not only an ideological victory of the one side of the Cold War over the Eastern camp, but also very practical needs: the huge Soviet state sector was neither sustainable nor necessary after the fall of one-party rule, and it had to be radically transformed. At the time, this transition was thought to be an easy task: to take off the oppressing lid of the party-state and let democracy and market economies emerge naturally. Yet in the conception of transition there was a certain tension between the economic and political sides of the imagined reforms, between mass privatization with its dire social consequences of unemployment and fall in the standard of living, and the political goals of democratization where people who were being “restructured” were simultaneously promised to receive the

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right to change their rulers by casting their ballots. Would people who are threatened with job loss and lower living standards vote for the reformers? And in the event of a negative answer, how would the reforms proceed? Should economic reforms come before political ones; that is, first privatization and in a second stage freedom of political choice through parliamentary elections? These are some of the dilemma that the new republics of the Soviet Union and the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe were facing in the early 1990s. At the time, the answer was clear: the economy came first; it was more important to reform the economic sector, to privatize massively, and stabilize the economy as soon as possible. The economy came before politics, in the sense that restructuring of the property structure through mass privatization was supposed to create the material means for the creation of democracy. It was believed that once the middle class was created as a result of mass privatization, the democratic institutions, such as free elections, multi-party system, independent media, an active civil society, in a word, all the attributes of democracy, would evolve naturally.

A decade later the nature of the problem had already changed. The collapse of the USSR did not lead to Western-style democracies.<sup>2</sup> Even worse, the prospects in much of the post-Soviet space did not seem promising either. Countries outside the embrace of the EU had poor chances to advance towards the promised Western model of modernization. While only few states had chosen authoritarian, dictatorial regimes (Turkmenistan, Belarus), others seemed to find a new equilibrium which was neither identical to Western democracies nor resembled the former Soviet totalitarian or the contemporary authoritarian model. Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan had multi-party systems, organized competitive elections, had media diversity, and had a reasonably thriving NGO sector. Yet the opposition parties had no chance of gaining or exercising power, elections were manipulated to make sure the incumbent remained in power, and the authorities continuously harassed the opposition-leaning media or that which was out of its control through various means. These societies had reached a “grey zone” and developed into “hybrid regimes” with weak state administration, corrupt bureaucracies and businesses, and weak political opposition.<sup>3</sup>

In a milestone article in 2002, Thomas Carothers called on democracy practitioners and aid workers to drop the transition paradigm. During the 1990s both development agencies and NGOs had worked in post-Soviet Eurasia, on the assumption that undoing the totalitarian state through market reforms and democratization would bring East Europe and post-Soviet states into the club of Western states. Carothers argued that there was empirical evidence to argue that the assumption was not working, that the practice of elections often led to “façade democracy” or “pseudo-democracy,” which differed from the former authoritarian regimes, but was clearly not heading towards the democratic model. He also criticized the democracy promoters, saying that those societies were not only trying to foster their political system but also to build a functioning state: “In countries with existing but extremely weak states, the democracy-building efforts funded by donors usually neglected the issue of state-building,” he writes.<sup>4</sup> The focus had shifted from “privatizing” the state to let loose the

democratic spirit, into “state building.” Once again, this was a reaction to the needs of the times: the restructuring of the state had gone too far, and the space liberated was not filled by democracy but a combination of corrupt bureaucracy, ethnic conflicts, criminal groups, against a background of economic collapse and generalized impoverishment.

The wave of Colour Revolutions raised new hopes and revisited the old paradigms. Transition was a concept that avoided revolution and saw change as a succession of slow, elite-inspired reforms. Revolution has overthrown not only the old and corrupt regimes but also the theories of transition by resurrecting the political. The economic primacy over politics had long gone. Now, it was necessary to bring rapid political change to liberate the economic potential. A new, Western-educated and inspired young generation had to correct the failure of its previous generation, through (non-violent) revolutions. Yet could we call those dramatic political changes “revolutions”? The fact that in three out of four cases the revolutions were led by part of the elite rather than an opposition force led many to question whether we were witnessing a revolution, a revolt, or rather a palace coup. Could revolutions be non-violent? Others questioned whether revolutions sponsored from the outside could in fact advance the cause of democracy.<sup>5</sup>

A short period after the revolutions, the political systems in those countries—Serbia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan—were in a state of paralysis. The twin Serbian democratic parties had difficulties agreeing on a government; Ukrainian President Victor Yushenko, 10 months after the Orange Revolution separated from his revolutionary partner, the charismatic Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and when he called for the dissolution of his country’s parliament, dominated by his arch-rival Victor Yanukovich, only to face street demonstrations and tent cities very much like his own Orange Revolution, only this time under the blue banner; Kyrgyzstan was in yet another cycle of demonstrations after the so called “tandem” Bakyev-Kulov came to power following the revolution parted ways and the president, Kurmanbek Bakiev, and his former prime minister, Felix Kulov, were on opposite sides of the political divide, raising tensions to a level that could easily have ignited a civil war; civil war is equally a daily threat in Lebanon, home to another peaceful revolution, which continues to remain polarized between the government headed by Fouad Siniora representing a coalition of anti-Syrian forces, and the opposition that supports the then president Emil Lahoud composed mainly of Hizballah, the Amal Movement led by the speaker of the parliament Nebih Berri, and supporters of former army general Michel Aoun.

Georgia seems to be the only country where a Colour Revolution did not lead to political paralysis—at least for the period between January 2004, when Mikheil Saakashvili was elected president, and November 2007, when, four years after the Rose Revolution the Georgian opposition succeeded in mobilizing tens of thousands to express their rejection of Saakashvili’s monopoly of national politics.<sup>6</sup> For a period of four years Georgia had a unified leadership and a political monopoly. After the tragic death of Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania on 3 February 2005, President Saakashvili had complete

domination over his country's political scene. Compare this with Serbia where the two parties that came to power after the October 2000 revolution—the Democratic Party (DS) led by Zoran Djindjic and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) led by Vojislav Kostunica—opposed each other and blocked any substantial reform of the old regime. Similarly in Ukraine, 10 months after the Orange Revolution the conflict between the two leading figures of the revolution, President Viktor Yushchenko and his Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, exploded in the open. The “first fair, democratic elections in Ukraine,”<sup>7</sup> in the words of Yushchenko, plunged the country first into a political crisis and then brought his arch-rival Viktor Yanukovich into leading the government, and as a result Ukraine had no chance of passing any reform projects. The unity of post-revolution leadership in Georgia, and its near monopoly over politics, made radical changes possible, as will be discussed below.

While this paper does not aim to make a comparative study between the developments in Georgia after November 2003 and other Colour Revolutions, I will develop the specificity of the Georgian situation and make the case that what is happening in Georgia seems to be closer to the classic examples of revolutions than the stalemate in Serbia, Ukraine, or Kyrgyzstan. I will argue that the Rose Revolution was a political revolution similar to the other Colour Revolutions, yet it distinguishes itself by not stopping with the overthrow of the old regime and a project to reform the state but continuing to push for change of the elite in power by pushing for radical social-economic reforms. In this sense, the Rose Revolution distinguishes itself among the other Colour Revolutions, and could qualify as a “social” or “systemic revolution.” “Unlike purely political revolutions, systemic ones do not end with chasing away the old rulers. The post-revolutionary state faces the awesome task of large-scale social engineering, prompting the formation of a new social structure.”<sup>8</sup> To develop my argument I will look at the cultural context or the vision that drives the current political changes in Georgia, the concentration of power and the drive for radical change and social transformation, and will draw conclusions about the nature of the social engineering taking place. I will conclude by pointing to the contradictions between the state-building project and the social modernization project which is rooted in a neo-liberal vision in conflict with large sections of society, as a result of which Georgia could go through major upheavals and face serious risk of falling back and becoming a “failing state” once again if the current effort fails to yield results.

### **The Making of the Rose Revolution**

To understand the Rose Revolution and the material out of which it was made one has to look at the state of Georgia in the last years of Shevardnadze rule and its shortcomings. Shevardnadze, who had initially inspired hope of bringing stability, development and international recognition in the difficult days of 1992, by the last years of his

presidency came to symbolize the continuity of Soviet-era corruption, inefficacy, and stagnation. The Rose Revolution was a symbolic revolt against the legacy of Soviet rule and that of Shevardnadze—not Gorbachev's foreign minister but the Soviet ruler of Georgia—and continuity of the post-Soviet regime. To illustrate Shevardnadze's failures would need a long paper in itself. The Georgian leader was progressively losing control of the country, of Georgia's elite, and even of his own Citizens' Union (the party in power); increasingly, the public and some of the elite were dissatisfied with his performance. Although Shevardnadze had succeeded in bringing some stability to a country engulfed in the flames of civil war and plagued by separatist movements, and he succeeded in eliminating the private armies-cum criminal bands led by figures such as Tengiz Kitovani and Jaba Iosseliani, by the late 1990s he was losing control. He had created a system where he was the central power broker among a multitude of regional elites competing for power and resources, yet in the last two years he found it increasingly difficult to continue mediating between the quarrelling Georgian elites. Once again the country started sliding towards criminalization, with drug business and hostage taking developing, corruption blossoming, criminal gangs multiplying, and the state unable to face these challenges: in 2001 only five people were brought to justice on corruption charges, of which only two received sentences: to pay penalties of 100–150 lari.<sup>9</sup> The people who mobilized and led the Rose Revolution were not motivated by the fact that Shevardnadze was a dictator—he was not—nor because there were many restrictions on human rights and freedom of expression in Georgia. They were mainly fed up with the corrupt, inefficient, and rotten regime of Shevardnadze which was increasingly alienating itself from the reformist elements and becoming dependent on corrupt and criminal elements of the Georgian elites.

This failure looks even greater against the background of the expectations that the Georgian elite had developed following independence. For two centuries the Georgian elite looked to Russia as its path to modernization, and to join the advanced, civilized nations.<sup>10</sup> This idea was already eroding in Soviet times, starting with the de-Stalinization policies of Khrushchev, and was finally crushed on 9 April 1989 when Soviet troops attacked unarmed civilians gathered in the centre of the capital Tbilisi to demonstrate, killing 19 of them. The divorce with Russia was sealed as the Russian military played an active role in supporting the separatist forces in South Ossetia, especially in 1992, and in Abkhazia. Since then, for the Georgian elite the path to modernity has been through joining Western institutions such as NATO or the EU. Russia was synonymous with the Soviet past, with failure, with all that Georgia wanted to leave behind and move forward. After independence and the return of Shevardnadze to power, many in Georgia hoped that he would be the one to lead the country to the West. Yet Shevardnadze seemed to have lost momentum, and especially so after the April 2000 elections, notorious for having been badly organized and heavily rigged. By the late 1990s the states' monopoly of the use of force was being challenged again, and not only in the two secessionist regions of

South Ossetia and Abkhazia: Chechen fighters and Middle Eastern *ihadists* were increasingly active in the Pankisi Gorge, Georgian paramilitaries such as the White Legion and the Forest Brothers and other guerrilla groups were active in western Georgia and in the Gali region of Abkhazia, and enjoyed some support from within the Georgian Interior Ministry and simultaneously were involved in various cross-border trafficking. Sporadic mutiny within the army added to the sense of general insecurity. Various criminal gangs dominated neighbourhoods of the capital. Georgia, which had just moved from the brink of civil war to be recognized by the outside world as a “weak state,” was again moving towards the precipice of “failed state.” The last straw was the parliamentary elections of November 2003; Shevardnadze had lost his popularity and increasingly relied on Aslan Abashidze to maintain his game.<sup>11</sup> His move was anathema to a whole segment of Georgian society impatient to move forward with their country, and frustrated by a decade of political paralysis and lack of progress under the leadership of the “white fox.”

The background to the Rose Revolution is therefore a combination of reaction to Shevardnadze’s failure, to the decade-long consensus in Georgia of rejection of Soviet-Russian hegemony, and Western orientation as the only way to guarantee Georgian national independence and prosperity. Add to this the return of young Georgians who had received their education in Western universities since the collapse of the Soviet Union, returning home with new political ideas and values. This set of values adds up to a general culture shared by the young urban elites of Georgia about their vision concerning the future of their country: to become integrated with the Western club of nations. There was also an enemy figure: it was the corrupt, semi-criminal government of Shevardnadze and the old Soviet nomenklatura he represented which hindered Georgia from advancing towards its “destiny.” Armed with the latest political science theories fashionable among academic circles in the US as well as Europe, young Georgian students who later became key figures in Kmara or the National Movement considered that both corruption and inter-ethnic conflicts in Georgia were basically the result of the criminalized economy (based on corruption, smuggling and trafficking) that overlapped with Shevardnadze’s corrupt regime.<sup>12</sup> If Gamskhurdia’s coming to power was Georgia’s February Revolution, the Rose Revolution was its October.

Compared with Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, and even Serbia, Georgia’s “Rose Revolution” has been the most radical within the wave of non-violent change that has swept Eastern Europe in recent years. In the case of Georgia we have a coherent—albeit small—elite group which took over the state apparatus, concentrated power in its hands, and has the will and vision for social transformation: to bring all the changes necessary to detach Georgia from its Soviet past and to make it one of the Western nations. Such a project has a foreign policy component, such as joining Western-dominated international or regional organizations, but also an internal component: to modernize Georgia to bring it up to the level of the West. The modernization aspect has sometimes been a prerequisite to joining certain international organizations.



For example, military reform was presented as a necessary step to bring Georgia into NATO.<sup>13</sup> In order to realize its revolutionary potential, the Rose leadership has pushed for changes in two directions: on the one hand, it has embarked on in-depth reform within the Georgian state administration, and on the other it has challenged the regional status quo, with the aim of bringing breakaway territories back within the control of the central government.

These dynamics and rapidity of change—both internal and internationally—make the Rose Revolution in Georgia a “real” revolution, and one that goes beyond a simple exchange of one ruling elite with another.<sup>14</sup> And like any other revolution it exposes Georgian society both to the potential for change, modernization, and casting away past archaisms and remnants of Shevardnadze’s rule and also puts the country at risk: the danger of instability, of social upheavals, of inter-ethnic confrontation, and of becoming the focal point of proxy confrontation by the major powers whereby new international powers (the US, the EU) try to expand their influence while the old hegemonic power is desperately resisting in order to salvage the remnants of its influence over its former provinces, and specially over the gateway to the Caucasus, the Caspian area, and Central Asia, a region rich in natural resources.

To understand the political project carried by the Rose Revolution, it is easier to read the events through a state-building project rather than a democratization process. A new generation of young Georgian activists watched the integration of Eastern European and Baltic countries into Western structures such as the EU and NATO, and questioned why Georgia was so far away from those objectives, in spite of political declarations in that direction, at least since 1998. The conclusion was that the corrupt regime set up by Shevardnadze was unable, and after October 2001 events even unwilling, to move towards the necessary reforms in order to join the West. Fighting corruption became the banner under which the various opposition groups, notorious for their infighting, joined forces. In other words, the Rose Revolution aimed to fight corruption, reform the state bureaucracy, modernize the economy, and eventually raise the living standards of the population. It also aimed to bring security by reforming the police forces and building up an army. To join the West, Georgia needed an efficient state that could lead the country through the necessary reforms.

What, then, is the place of democracy in the Rose Revolution? For the leaders of the revolution, for the National Movement, democracy was important, as much as democracy was the identity marker of becoming part of the West. In this sense, democracy was an *external* attribute, a self-declared ideology that aligned Georgia with the West, rather than a certain political practice concerning the organization of the political sphere through competitive elections, and other *internal* attributes of democratic performance.

The Rose Revolution also contained a strong nationalistic undercurrent. Building a strong state often goes hand in hand with nationalist rhetoric. Minority groups in Georgia, who well remembered the nationalistic and xenophobic discourse dominant during the Gamsakhurdia period and who had found a *modus vivendi*

under Shevardnadze, feared losing their de facto autonomy as Saakashvili pushed for rebuilding the state once again. Therefore, the Rose Revolution, with its vast programme of propelling Georgia into modernity, contained in itself a number of contradictions and tensions, between political centralization and preserving its democratic credentials, between adhering to Western values and the risk of sliding back into populist nationalism, and between modernization and economic reforms.

Symbolic decisions are highly expressive: one of the first decisions taken after the revolution was to replace the national flag—the black, white and dark red flag (1990–2004) which was based on the model of the first Georgian republic (1918–1920)—with the flag of the National Movement, which is a large red cross covering a white sheet, and four smaller red crosses in the four corners, known as the “five-cross flag,” which was supposed to be a Middle Ages flag of Georgian monarchs. By adopting the flag of the National Movement as the flag of the Georgian state, the distinction between party and state has been blurred. In the days after the revolution, the new flag was displayed on government buildings next to the EU flag.<sup>15</sup> Saakashvili had the following to declare concerning his foreign policy priorities: Georgia “does not forget to regain its place in the European family, in the European civilization which it deserves but which was lost several centuries ago. As a country of ancient Christian civilization, we must regain this place.”<sup>16</sup>

While the main direction of Georgia’s Western orientation remained unchanged, and the country is very sensitive concerning its image and chances in the West, the political translation of this orientation kept changing after the Rose Revolution. Initially, integration with the West meant membership in the EU and NATO. But as time passed “the idea of integration with the EU is dropped, and now only NATO is left.”<sup>17</sup>

This urge to become Western is not shared by the whole population. Ghia Nodia defines the pro-Western drive of Georgia as an effort simultaneously to build a nation-state (what Nodia refers to as a “‘normal’ European nation”) and a liberal democracy.<sup>18</sup> There is a clear tension between nation building, the construction of a nation-state with its political institutions, and democratization, both in the European past and the more recent Georgian present. Nodia adds: “Saakashvili and his allies know that the gap between their liberal democratic modernization agenda and prevailing social practices in Georgia still makes them vulnerable to a nativist backlash. For this reason, they need to develop their own alternative version of nationalism.”<sup>19</sup>

Could we understand Saakashvili’s declarations on territorial unity, manipulation of national symbols, and anti-Russian rhetoric as being a smokescreen to ensure that he will not be outflanked by Georgian nationalists as he goes forward in his liberal-democratic project? Or should the nationalist-nativist backlash that Nodia describes be looked at within the Georgian nationalist discourse which could be found within the official discourse in Tbilisi, and not outside of it? In other words, both pro-liberal, reformist discourse as well as nationalist-nativist discourse coexists today in the consciousness and the discourse of the Georgian elite. This is not new; Zviad Gamsakhurdia himself embodied both the anti-Soviet dissident fighting or human



rights and simultaneously the Georgian nationalist who could not tolerate ethnic minorities in Georgia with more than individual rights, and even that! While Gamsakhurdia is rightly seen by many as a president who is responsible for the chaos of 1991 and whose policies antagonized ethnic minorities, led to armed clashes in South Ossetia, and triggered the civil war of 1991–1992, he is seen by others in Georgia as a national hero whose troubles were orchestrated by Moscow. Days after Saakashvili came to power, he declared 2004 the “year of Zviad Gamsakhurdia” and during a memorial service at Sion Cathedral broadcast by Georgian television, Saakashvili paid homage to the former president saying: “Within these walls, [Gamsakhurdia and his] generation dreamt of Georgia’s independence when others did not even dare thinking of such a thing,” he said. “Here lies their main merit.” Saakashvili then concluded by voicing the need to “consolidate the nation” and “end the division of Georgian society into rival camps.”<sup>20</sup> More recently, on 1 April 2007, the remains of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, whose rule brought chaos, civil war and ethnic tension to Georgia, were transported from Groznyy to Tbilisi for reburial during an official ceremony in which there was no place for a critical approach to the legacy of the first president. The official discourse gave no space to criticism, to revision of Gamsakhurdia’s historic record, nor of Georgian nationalism that had antagonized the ethnic minorities, and for which Georgia paid a high price.

The nationalist discourse is nevertheless tempered, controlled by the desire to become Western. The question remains open as to what direction Georgian politics could take if this quest to become Western fails to materialize. Yet the intrinsic tension between the drive by the new ruling elite for radical transformation of the political system, and nationalist sentiments among the population nurtured by official discourse as well as tensions in Ajaria (in 2004) and South Ossetia (2004 and since), Abkhazia, and with Russia (in 2006) is increasingly evident, and the question that many observers have is: can Georgia simultaneously move towards institutional reform and a liberal political system while raising the national question, or will it fall into another cycle of ethnic tension and violence? Dankwart Rustow had already articulated a clear answer to this question three decades earlier: “Democracy is a system of rule by temporary majorities. In order that rulers and policies may freely change, the boundaries must endure, the composition of the citizenry be continuous.”<sup>21</sup> Continuous uncertainty about the territory and the citizenry adds important pressure to a democratic system, and even more so to a system aiming at democracy. In Georgia, as in Serbia, the territorial issue has undermined the democratization issue. In Serbia, the ghost of Kosovo has haunted the political scene even after the peaceful separation of Serbia and Montenegro, a province that has much more geopolitical significance than the emotionally charged Kosovo. In Georgia, the uncertainty over borders and citizenry persists as South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain outside the reach of Tbilisi, and calls for regaining territorial integrity continue the uncertainty as to whether military operations will eventuate, and what turn Georgian–Russian relations might take.

The pro-Western policies of Georgia are coupled with the high expectations that the ruling elite in Georgia have towards the West. There is growing unease among the expatriate community in Georgia—whether diplomats or aid workers—that Georgia’s pro-Western orientation is coming with an insistent demand: that the West has to find solutions to Georgia’s problems, whether these problems are the territorial conflicts in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, the economic situation, or the state of the infrastructure. Such an attitude recalls Soviet-era clientalism, where Georgia exchanged loyalty to Moscow and its official Marxist-Leninist ideology for massive subsidies and economic support. Increasing criticism, often formulated in private discussions, says that Western support to Georgia is not about democracy and reforms, but about pipelines and geopolitical interests. Others criticize the fact that since the Rose Revolution, Western support for Georgia has shifted in nature, and has moved out of civil society, NGOs, and the independent media sector, and now concentrates on state programmes.

### **“One-Party Democracy”**

Another characteristic that distinguishes the Georgian case from the other Colour Revolutions is centralization of power. Saakashvili followed developments in Serbia closely, and tried to learn from the assassination of Zoran Djindjic and the failure of the Serbian revolution. As a result, and much before the tragic death of Zurab Zhvania, the prime minister of Georgia and Saakashvili’s former mentor, the latter tried and succeeded in concentrating power at the top of the Georgian state structure, that is in his own hands.

The most important shift in the political landscape in Georgia after the Rose Revolution has been the emergence of the National Movement Democrats (NMD) as a result of the merger of the National Movement, the Burjanadze-Democrats, and some elements of Kmara—creating the new party in power. As a result, the NMD has marginalized all competing political forces into irrelevance. In the words of one analyst, “the Rose Revolution has led to the scattering of political opposition and to the establishment of virtual single party rule.”<sup>22</sup> This consolidation of single-party rule was the result of several developments. First, the revolution led to the disintegration of the remnants of the Citizen’s Union of Georgia (CUG) that had regrouped around Shevardnadze into political marginalization following its humiliating defeat in November 2003–January 2004 and under heavy pressure by the new leadership in power, unlike in Serbia where the Radical Party succeeded in emerging from its defeat to pose a serious challenge to the Serb Democrats, and even to become the most popular party in the 2007 parliamentary elections. The same occurred in Ukraine where the Party of Regions of Victor Yanukovich, barely 10 months after its defeat, emerged as a major political force in September 2005, and in the March 2006 parliamentary elections collected more votes than any

other Ukrainian political formation. In Georgia there was no political formation to counterbalance the power of Saakashvili: the CUG, after the desertions of 2001, was no more than a party-state and had no chance of surviving without exercising state power, while former opposition groups who had distanced themselves from the popular mobilization of autumn 2003 found themselves outside the new political game.

The exit of the CUG from the Georgian political scene is a case of *déjà vu*: it is a reminder of the elimination of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's party after the *coup d'état* of January 1992 that, in turn, had eliminated the Georgian Communist Party. The outcome had a negative impact on the future democratic development of the country, since it eliminated the institutionalization of political competition, and has since led to a succession of political dominations.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the NMD's coming to power represents Georgia's third single-party rule since independence.

Second, the parliament in Georgia has come under the complete domination of the president, and fails to be an independent institution, and has no capacity to counterbalance presidential power. Moreover, a month after Saakashvili's electoral victory in January 2004, constitutional changes were pushed through hastily by the new president through which he increased presidential powers. Now, the president appoints the prime minister and the government, and dismisses the parliament if it twice rejects the budget he proposes.

Third, the reason for power concentration in post-Rose Revolution Georgia is the dramatic "migration" of activists such as NGOs, student associations, research institutes and independent media from civil society positions into high administrative positions, or into the parliament.<sup>24</sup> In a small country such as Georgia, this has led to the weakening of civil society, which does not have the human resources to continue its previous role of monitoring state activities. The remaining civil society actors have been reluctant to treat the new authorities as severely as they did the Shevardnadze administration, either because of sympathy with the discourse or policies of the new leadership, or even because former colleagues and friends are now in the government. In other words, civil society actors came to power with the revolutionary wave, and as a result weakened the pluralism and balance in Georgian politics. This "migration" has been coupled with a decrease in international donors and foundations to support good governance projects and the Georgian NGO sector, which had acted as the real opposition to power in Georgia under Shevardnadze.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, support by international development agencies to independent media is decreasing.<sup>26</sup> The already impoverished civil society sector is left with less international support today than it enjoyed previously, and it fails to perform its former function as a hybrid of watchdog and opposition platform.

Saakashvili's political choices further marginalized any role for the opposition, and further reinforced his rule. Just a few weeks after the Rose Revolution he pushed for presidential elections, which he won with an incredible 96% of the vote. Saakashvili's victory can be seen as part of contemporary Georgian political culture rather than a "revolution" or departure from previous norms: Zviad Gamsakhurdia had won

presidential elections with an impressive 86% of the vote in 1991, only months before he was overthrown in an armed rebellion in January 1992. Similarly, Eduard Shevardnadze won his first presidential election with 91% of the vote in October 1992 when he ran unchallenged, barely 13 months after the first Gamsakhurdia elections and days after Georgian military defeat in Gagra, in northern Abkhazia. Similarly, the October 2006 local elections took place against a background of shrewd manipulation by the Georgian leadership: on 28 August 2006, the Georgian president announced that he had signed a decree to move the dates of the local elections forward to 5 October, instead of December.<sup>27</sup> This gave the opposition no time to prepare for electoral competition. Moreover, on 27 September, that is a week before the voting, four Russian officers were arrested on espionage charges, and their public display successfully diverted attention from local issues—which should usually dominate local election campaigns—into the larger field of the “external enemy,” thereby reducing dissent. The results were impressive: the NMD again dominated the scene with 77% of the vote, the Republicans with 8.5%, and the Labour Party with 6.4%—hardly constituting a challenge to the party in power.

Levan Ramishvili is the head of the Liberty Institute. This NGO, which became known under the Shevardnadze administration as a group of young militants struggling for the rights of religious groups, freedom of expression, and against corruption of the bureaucracy played a key role in the Rose Revolution: it was the Liberty Institute that launched the Kmara movement, the foot-soldiers of the Rose Revolution. Ramishvili thinks that the Rose Revolution should be focused simultaneously on democratization and state building: “We have to keep the two objectives at the same time,” he said.<sup>28</sup> “This is about modernization of Georgia,” he added. While often the democratic achievements of the Saakashvili administration are put in doubt, those supporting the Rose Revolution underline that it fought corruption, increased tax receipts, strengthened state institutions such as the army, the police, and public administration, and embarked on vast reform projects in sectors such as education and the economy. “We have achieved a lot. According to all reports, Georgia today is the number one reformer in the world,” in the words of Giorgi Kandelaki, the presidential advisor on civic integration.<sup>29</sup> He continues: “Out of all the countries [...] where ‘colour revolutions’ took place Georgia is the only country that still has a government with strong mandate, a consolidated government where reforms are going on.”

Since 2003 Georgia has rapidly become a one-party-state political system. The ruling circles in Georgia think that given the country’s current historic development, i.e. “a poor democracy,” the only way to advance the current reform programme is through a “one-party-democracy,” such as that in South Africa after apartheid, or Georgia under Menshevik rule.<sup>30</sup> Political developments since 2004, and following the events of November 2007, do not suggest that the current leadership is working to depart from this one-party-state system anytime soon. For Marina Muskhelishvili, the last local elections showed that there is no opportunity for a change in power in Georgia through the electoral process:

The last elections [the local elections of 2006] were worse than the 2003 [parliamentary elections]. This means that there will be no change in government through elections . . . Revolutions are already part of our political system. Since the collapse of the USSR three governments were changed, all three in revolutions.<sup>31</sup>

## Radical Reforms

The concentration of power within the narrow confines of the NMD leadership permitted the Georgian leadership to carry out the reforms it projected. The most important transformation aimed at reducing corruption and raising the efficiency of the state administration. This fight against the former practices of the bureaucracy was so central that the Rose Revolution is sometimes labelled the “anti-corruption revolution.”<sup>32</sup>

Another important aspect of post-2003 Georgia is the reform of the police and military sectors. Both were deeply corrupted and inefficient, and probably the most visible symbol of state weakness under Shevardnadze: something no visitor to Georgia could avoid noticing. Months after the revolution, most of the police corps, that is some 15,000 officers, was fired.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the salaries of those who were retained and of new recruits were raised to 350–500 lari (€150–210) as another measure to limit corruption. The reform did not solve the problem of torture in prisons or mistreatment in custody, or the impunity of police officers.

The reform of the Georgian military is the most impressive achievement of the Rose Revolution. It is also revealing that so much effort and so many resources have been invested in the army, the symbol of state power but not of democracy. The Georgian military not only suffered from defeatism, especially after the loss of Sukhumi in 1993, but was underfunded and literally underfed. It lacked both equipment and men, with its numerical strength officially declared to be 20,000 men but the real figures not exceeding half that number. It suffered a series of mutinies by officers who had not receive their salaries for months.<sup>34</sup> Georgia's 1997 defence budget totalled 79 million Lari (about US\$52.7 million), but in 1998 it was reduced to 74 million lari (about US\$50.0 million). The weakness of the Georgian military was seen as a major problem by Western capitals, especially by the American administration after the September 2001 attacks. In April 2002 the US Defense Department announced a 20-month “Georgia Train and Equip Program” (GTEP), with a budget of US\$64 million, to reinforce the Georgian armed forces.<sup>35</sup> The immediate objective of the GTEP was to reinforce the Georgian army in order to enter the Pankisi Gorge, where Chechen rebels led by Ruslan Gelayev had created military bases, and through which Middle Eastern *mujahedeen* were moving volunteers and equipment into the North Caucasus—something that posed a serious concern to Western capitals after 9/11. The longer term US military cooperation with Georgia had wider objectives, such as the security of the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline, and the integration of Georgia into the NATO alliance. Yet it seems that Washington increasingly came to the

conclusion that such projects could not be realized as a result of state weakness in Georgia under Shevardnadze, and a radical change was necessary in order to move forward.

The situation changed radically after the revolution. First, the new authorities fired the top military officials and replaced them with young officers who had just graduated from various NATO schools. In 2006 the Georgian military budget was 513 million lari (US\$304 million), while in 2007 it rose to 957.8 million lari (US\$567 million).<sup>36</sup> That is over 10 times the official military budget for 1998. The restructuring of the army and the police comes with a more assertive policy not only at the level of Georgian policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia but also through ambitions to play a role at the international level. Foreign Minister Gela Bezhuashvili is on record as saying his country is ready to host parts of the US anti-missile shield. The defence minister, in his turn, announced plans to increase the number of Georgian military personnel serving in Iraq from 850 to 2,000 soldiers in the near future, which made the Georgian military contingent in Iraq the third most important, just after the US and the UK.<sup>37</sup>

As a result of such policies and the strong-handed crackdown on organized crime as well as symbols of the former regime, Georgia succeeded in increasing the state budget fourfold a year after the revolution, while its position on Transparency International's "Corruption Perception Index" fell from 124th in 2003 (out of 133!) to 79th four years later.<sup>38</sup> The education sector is another example where important reforms are evaluated as having positive results. Little was done to reform the education sector after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leading to a gradual degradation in the quality of education and the spread of corruption. "Major problems were university entrance exams, where bribes varied from 500 to 1500 dollars [. . .] Many in the education system thought that their role was to transfer national identity to the students, and not to teach them basic skills," according to Gigi Tevzadze, rector of Ilia Chavchavadze State University in Tbilisi and one of the architects of the education reform programme.<sup>39</sup> Reforms carried out since 2003 have introduced a national system of university entrance examination, the establishment of a national curriculum, introduction of new textbooks, and the introduction of a voucher system to focus better state support to education establishments. Many university professors were replaced by younger ones, often causing social dissatisfaction, resistance and street protests.

Many critics say that while the Saakashvili leadership has fought small-scale corruption, it did not eliminate it from the political sphere and simply pushed it higher up within the state hierarchy. Irakli Iashvili, a parliamentarian from the opposition group "New Rights" said that the new authorities do not respect private property: "Business is not protected against the government [. . .] In this country laws are not equal to all. Privatization process is not transparent. There is a [new] process of property redistribution."<sup>40</sup> In the summer of 2007, police-led seizures of property and evictions, often without prior warning, such as those relating to the Writers' Union or the state-owned Samashablo Publishing House,<sup>41</sup> led to speculation about redistribution



of property in the sector of real estate to insiders of the new regime. Other important deals lacking transparency and qualified as “suspicious” by independent observers were those relating to the privatization of the Georgian Railway Company, and the Tbilisi Water Company.<sup>42</sup>

### **A Strong State or a Democracy?**

The generation that gave rise to the Rose Revolution does not feel that Georgia is lacking in terms of democracy: they have long enjoyed freedom of expression, media diversity, political pluralism between power and opposition, NGOs with lavish support from the West, etc.<sup>43</sup> They, that is the new leadership that came to power in November 2003, feel that what Georgia is missing is a strong and efficient state, economic development, and territorial unification. Some even venture to consider that at the current stage of Georgia's historic development, civil liberties need to be sacrificed for the purpose of state building.

While before the November 2007 events it is difficult to pinpoint events marking a general degradation in civil liberties, the overall impression was that the space for political pluralism, media freedom, and civic dissent was shrinking. Nor did the ongoing reform reinforce fundamental rights and expand them. In the past, Georgia did enjoy fundamental freedoms such as freedom of information and religious rights, not because the state and society had developed institutions for political procedures, popular consultation, and respect for fundamental human and minority rights but because the state was too disorganized, chaotic and weak to impose a dictatorship. Therefore, while Georgia needed institutional reform and political pluralism to develop on the path of democracy, the reforms undertaken by Saakashvili did not empower citizens and civil society. Rather, they reinforced the state, which recovered the space that was left free under the old regime. The reforms in the military, police, taxation, in fighting corruption, the successful and not so successful attempts to bring various regions and autonomies of Georgia under the strict control of Tbilisi, and many similar examples show that many of the changes brought in by Saakashvili were not about more freedom for Georgia's citizens but a stronger, more efficient state. At times a stronger state can easily encroach on individual rights; such has been the case with the Georgian authorities, which have not shown much hesitation and very often have operated outside the existing legal framework.

The extra-legal behaviour of the Georgian authorities goes back to the Rose Revolution, which itself was an extra-constitutional change of legal power. This was immediately followed by the arrest and torture of politicians and government figures loyal to the old regime. An example is the case of Sul Khan Molashvili, the former chairman of the State Audit Agency and close ally of former President Shevardnadze, arrested in July 2004 and accused of corruption and misappropriating 3 million lari (US\$1.7 million). He suffered a heart attack under torture. After

treatment he was returned to jail once again.<sup>44</sup> Former Deputy Defence Minister Gia Vashakidze and his associates Eldar Gogberashvili and Benjamin Sanablidze were arrested by the police days after the revolution. Police tortured both men over a period of several days to force confessions from them.<sup>45</sup>

Both arrests and torture took on massive proportions in the months following the revolution. According to an Amnesty International report:

In the second half of 2004 human rights activists and the Ombudsman Sozar Subari published shocking statistics according to which over 1100 people had been subjected to torture or ill-treatment since the “Rose Revolution” in Tbilisi alone. Their efforts apparently succeeded in getting the issue of torture and ill-treatment on the government agenda.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, in the early years of the revolution, arrest and torture were one way of rapidly fulfilling tax collection and securing the state budget: Giga Bokeria, one of the leaders of the NMD and a former founder of Kmara, was quoted as saying that “arrests for alleged corruption must continue, particularly within (...) still corrupt government bureaucracy. Fear of arrest is the government’s main weapon.”<sup>47</sup> Such illegal practices, whereby people were suspected of wrongdoing, arrested, imprisoned, tortured and humiliated, and liberated only after paying the sum demanded by interior ministry officials, is a far cry from democratic values, the rule of law, and the separation of powers; some say it is closer to old Caucasian traditions of hostage taking and ransom taking.

One might have assumed that police pressure was the temporary practice of a new revolutionary government attempting to fill empty state treasury coffers. Yet two more recent cases have highlighted the impunity of high officials: one such example is the assassination of a former anti-drugs police officer, Gia Telia, and the brutal killing of a young banker, Sandro Girgvliani, after a dispute with the entourage of the wife of Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili. The Georgian leadership insists that the situation relating to prisons and police practices has improved dramatically. President Saakashvili is quoted as saying:

People are not being beaten anymore. There was this stereotype that said people were tortured in Georgia [...] Studies conducted nowadays by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch clearly show that in Georgia, not a single case of torture was encountered [this year]. There was not a single case of people being beaten in police [stations].<sup>48</sup>

But for Amnesty International South Caucasus researcher Anna Sunder-Plasmann such declarations are not helping solve the problem: “We think that these blunt denials that torture and ill-treatment are no longer a problem do not help at all,” she said. “Such statements could, [on the contrary], encourage police officers to torture and ill-treat [detainees] and could give the impression that they can get away with impunity. So, certainly, such statements are counterproductive.”<sup>49</sup> Lastly, the heavy-handed police repression of the demonstrations on 7 November 2007 reveals

that Georgia after the revolution failed to develop institutions that could mediate between the state and its citizenry. Interestingly, the 2007 opposition mobilization took place to fight Saakashvili's "corrupt" regime, just as the Rose Revolution was mobilized to fight the corruption of Shevardnadze's administration.

### **State Building, the Neo-liberal Project, and Cyclical History**

The least reported aspect of reform carried out under Saakashvili's leadership is in the socio-economic field. The tax code has been simplified, and import duties have been lifted except on agricultural products and certain construction materials; the labour code is "the most liberal in the world"; and reform of the education system aims to move the Georgian education system from its post-Soviet paralysis to a model similar to American education. Privatization has been re-launched, not of old Soviet factories or medium-sized enterprises, but of infrastructure and services such as hospitals.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, by 2010 all universities are planned to become private, not-for-profit entities, and their funding is to be a hybrid system of endowments, state vouchers, and private funding. The short-term effects of the massive privatization seem to have worsened the poverty in the country: in 2004 the official number of those living below the poverty line was 35.7% of the population, but by 2006 this figure had risen to 40%, according to official statistics.<sup>51</sup> The political effect seems to have been mass dissatisfaction that led tens of thousands to follow the opposition call and demonstrate in Tbilisi in November 2007.

Will this new-age shock therapy introduce the necessary changes to bring Georgia into modernity? According to Marina Muskhelishvili: "I do not know how much I could call it [the current reforms] a modernizing project. This is a neo-liberal project, but I do not think they would modernize the country. It does not meet the basic challenges of the country which are inequality and unemployment."<sup>52</sup> The most striking characteristic of the reform is its top-down approach, and the lack of consultation with the stakeholders. The reforms are not the result of social demand within Georgian society but are in accord with a revolutionary tradition; it is the vision of a small elite that wants to lead its primitive people to a better future.

The drive for change and "modernization" has created a fissure within Georgian society between a Westernized, English-speaking computer-proficient minority hooked to the globalizing economy, and that part of society that still retains the old value system, is educated and speaks Russian as a foreign language, and has localized economic activities.<sup>53</sup> Members of the Georgian elite have strong faith in their country, but not in their people: they do not accept their own people the way they are. They want to change it, reform it, and transform it based on a vision gained through access to the globalized new world and cyberspace, a culture and a location that is not shared by at least a large section of the Georgian population. An American journalist captured well what an influential Georgian intellectual thinks about the "ordinary" people:

The countryside is mostly Soviet riff-raff; you can't expect anything from them [...]. The Soviet Union left us all these leftovers, incapable of doing anything. [...] In this country, Bolsheviks were exterminating people who were active, and helping drunkards and incapable people. This was the Bolshevik principle: to filter up the worst people because it was easy to control them. [...] I don't want to sound merciless but the old generation deserves what they have. They were participating in this corrupt Soviet state, and now they have to pay for it. They will tell you "we had no other choice," and I understand that. But it happened. The government should help the people socially, but the government has no resources to help everyone whom the Soviet Union made incapable and impotent.<sup>54</sup>

In Georgia after Shevardnadze, very much as in Russia after Yeltsin, the state was in ruins, and there was a need to bring it back. This is what Saakashvili is doing—very much like Putin's project in Russia. "Young patriots [the Georgian state-sponsored youth movement] is very similar to Putin's 'Nashi', and both are means to control the independent student movements," states Marina Muskhelishvili. "Twenty years after the destruction of the Soviet Union I see we are doing a full cycle [...] party-state structures are being restored."<sup>55</sup> Yet there are fundamental differences between the two leaders: while Putin's ideal seems to be the greatness of the Soviet past, Saakashvili's model is the glamour of the West, and the promise to bring Georgia into the heart of Western civilization. For both Putin and Saakashvili, a strong state is based on a nationalist discourse combined with the image of a strong military that chases away foreign enemies and discovers internal plots. Yet Putin's path to a strong state passes through state domination over key economic sectors. Saakashvili seems to have adopted the opposite of Russia's state capitalism, by choosing an extreme neo-liberal version of the economic model.

Thus far, critics of the Georgian leadership have focused on the argument that in its efforts to bring about a more efficient state the Rose Revolution has disregarded democratic freedoms and the rule of law. One could even argue that current political reshuffling is not making assertive strides towards a new political model but is a repetition of previous cycles of elite rotation.<sup>56</sup> The Rose Revolution has initiated a real revolutionary process whose aim is the rapid transformation of Georgian society from its current "post-Soviet" status to the image of an East European or, more generally, Western model of democracy. As a true revolutionary movement, the Georgian leadership is imposing top-down reforms that are misunderstood by citizens who often lack basic information about the ongoing debates in downtown Tbilisi. Moreover, the hastily imposed policies seem more like "political experimentations" rather than "reform."<sup>57</sup> The "top-down" approach is endangering pro-democracy policies, while the haste in bringing change could endanger state-building efforts.

One could study revolutions as events marking a society's radical break from its past political culture. Another way of looking at revolutions is to study continuity in spite of the radical break—how old social relations, power structures, and customs are reproduced and survive in new forms. Is the Rose Revolution a radical

break with Georgia's past, an event that has triggered developments opening the way to modernity? "Georgia's democratic challenge is to make sure that November 2003 goes down in Georgian history textbooks as a 'revolution to end all revolutions,'" writes one analyst.<sup>58</sup> Or is Georgia going through a restructuring whereby a new generation is taking power and reproducing old relations under the guise of new forms? It is clear that for the leaders of the Rose Revolution and for their supporters their mission is revolutionary, and aims to radically transform their country and their society. Yet in this paper I have already hinted that one can see repetitive patterns in contemporary Georgian history that could make the Rose Revolution appear in keeping with its background, rather than an exceptional event that represents a break from a repetitive pattern. I have already mentioned that Saakashvili, like Shevardnadze before him and Gamsakhurdia earlier, was elected with 90%+ of the votes. Like his predecessors he reproduced a one-party "democracy" rather than allowing the opening up of the political sphere to competition. Even the fight against corruption is not a novelty in modern Georgian history: Shevardnadze came to power in Soviet Georgia in 1972 with a promise to rid the country of corruption and black market practices. Twenty-five thousand people were arrested for corruption when Shevardnadze was named Georgia's minister of the interior.<sup>59</sup> The reliance on foreign powers to solve one's problems—and the sympathy for the ideology of this foreign patron—is again not new: the peoples of the Caucasus, just like other colonial/post-colonial nations, know well how to adjust to the ideological sensitivities of the metropolis in exchange for subventions as well as political–military support: in the past it was necessary to be a Marxist-Leninist to enjoy Soviet subsidies, and today it is not difficult to convert to liberal democracy as financial assistance, power, or prestige comes this time from the West.

The existing tensions within the project of the Rose Revolution threaten to subvert its success. Whatever the results of the current developments, the Georgian case reframes the old questions in new ways. Yet the tension between Saakashvili's state-building project and his social programme could undermine Georgia's drive to modernization, weaken the state and its legitimacy, and open the door to future revolutionary projects and promises to achieve what the Rose Revolution started—and failed to deliver.

## NOTES

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1. On this argument see Nodia, "How Different are Postcommunist Transitions?," 15–29.
2. In Eastern Europe, this transition has been due largely to the pulling force of the EU, rather than a pushing force of indigenous forces.
3. Diamond, "Elections without Democracy," 21–35.
4. Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," 17.
5. Beissinger, "Promoting Democracy."

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6. The number of people who were mobilized in this demonstration is a subject of dispute: opposition figures talk about 100,000 people, official figures only 35,000, while a Reuters correspondent has estimated the demonstration size at 70,000. By any account, this was a landmark in Georgian politics. See Bahrapour, "Thousands Rally against Pro-Western President of Georgia."
7. Myers, "Ukraine's Deal Blow to Reformist Leadership."
8. Baumann, "A Revolution in the Theory of Revolutions?," 18.
9. *Civil Georgia*, "Expropriation and Return of Improperly Acquired Property to the State."
10. The influence of Russian political currents on Georgian political thought, including nationalist and social-democrat thought, is vividly narrated in a recent book. See Jones, *Socialism in Georgian Colors*.
11. Talbi, "Chevardnadze cherche des appuis en province."
12. I am grateful to Sabine Freizer for pointing this out to me.
13. The motivation for reform of the security sector, and the huge rise in defence spending, could also be explained by the wish of the Georgian authorities to recapture the secessionist regions, and impose territorial integrity.
14. Following the wave of non-violent revolutions from Serbia to Kyrgyzstan, there were a number of voices who questioned whether those events should qualify as "revolutions" or simply as *coups d'état*, or as revolts inspired by outside forces. See Steele, "Ukraine's Postmodern *coup d'état*"; Genté and Rouy, "Dans l'ombre des 'révolutions spontanées.'"
15. Chris Schuepp, "The Flag of Change."
16. Text of Mikheil Saakashvili's speech, broadcast by Georgian State Television Channel 1, Tbilisi, in Georgian, 25 January 2004; Moscow, 12 January 2004; English text by: BBC Monitoring, via Lexis-Nexis.
17. Author interview with Ivlian Khaindrava.
18. Nodia, "Georgia," 43.
19. *Ibid.*, 78.
20. Peuch, "Georgia: Leader Walks Thin Line."
21. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy," 351.
22. Borers, "After the 'revolution,'" 333.
23. Bunce, "Global Patterns and Postcommunist Dynamics," 610.
24. A few examples to illustrate: Zurab Chaberashvili was the director of the Fair Elections Foundation which monitored the controversial elections of 2003, and after the victory of the Rose Revolution he became the Mayor of Tbilisi and later Georgian envoy to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Giga Bokeria was a journalist and co-founder of the Liberty Institute, and a founder of Kmara; since 2004 he has been an MP and since 2005 he has been Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Anna Zhvania was a university researcher who worked in various international NGOs (she was a program officer at the Eurasia Foundation); after 2003 she became presidential advisor on social integration, and after September 2006 she became head of the Georgian intelligence services. A last example: Giorgi Ugulava, a former journalist (Iberia TV, Internews), and consultant to international NGOs, assumed high-level posts after the Rose Revolution, such as Deputy Security Minister in 2004, head of the Presidential Administration in 2005, and Mayor of Tbilisi in 2006.
25. Mitchell, "Democracy in Georgia since the Rose Revolution."
26. Anable, *The Role of Georgia's Media—and Western Aid—in the Rose Revolution*, 22–23.
27. Berekashvili, "Georgia."
28. Author interview with Levan Ramishvili, Tbilisi, 13 December 2006.
29. Author interview with Giorgi Kandelaki, Tbilisi, 13 December 2006.



30. Author interview with Levan Ramishvili.
31. Author interview with Marina Muskhelishvili, Tbilisi, 15 December 2006.
32. Scott, "Georgia's Anti-corruption Revolution."
33. Boda and Kakachia, "The Current Status of Police Reform in Georgia."
34. In October 1998, Akaki Eliava, a Georgian army colonel, led a mutiny of several hundred soldiers from the Senaki base, and started their march eastward equipped with 17 tanks. After reaching the outskirts of Kutaisi, negotiations started with the Tbilisi authorities, leading to a peaceful conclusion.
35. *Global Security*, "Georgia Train and Equip Program."
36. *Civil Georgia*, "2007 Defense Spending to Reach Almost GEL 1 Billion."
37. Cheterian, "Georgia's Arms Race"; Kramer, "Georgia Becomes an Unlikely U.S. Ally in Iraq."
38. See <[http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi)>.
39. Author interview with Gigi Tevzadze, Tbilisi, 15 May 2007.
40. Author interview with Irakli Iashvili, Tbilisi, 16 May 2007.
41. Rimple, "Property Rights Controversy."
42. Bzhalava and Verdzeuli, "Mystery Surrounds Georgian Railway Privatization"; Patsuria, "Privatizing Georgia's Railway."
43. The popular protests of November 2007 underline the fact that the Georgian population, unlike the Rose leadership, demands more democracy and especially political participation.
44. *Civil Georgia*, "Court Remanded Ex-Audit Chief."
45. US State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Georgia 2004*.
46. Amnesty International, "Georgia."
47. Paitchadze, IWPR, CRS no. 260, 4 November 2004.
48. Peuch, "Georgia: 'Culture of Impunity.'"
49. Ibid.
50. *Rustavi-2*, "70 State-Owned Hospitals Privatized."
51. Alkhazashvili, "Poverty Up in Georgia."
52. Author interview with Marina Muskhelishvili, Tbilisi, 15 December 2006.
53. Russian continues to be the second language of those segments of society aged over 40, as well as ethnic minorities (Russians, Armenians, Azeris) and a large part of the rural population.
54. Joshua Kucera, *Eurasia Insight*, 25 May 2007.
55. Author interview with Marina Muskhelishvili, Tbilisi, 14 May 2007.
56. Cheterian, "Relève de génération dans le sud du Caucase"; idem, "Révolutions en trompe-l'œil à l'Est."
57. In the words of Ivlian Khaindrava. Author interview, Tbilisi, 15 December 2006.
58. Nodia and Scholtbach, *The Political Landscape of Georgia*, 7.
59. Including 17,000 party members. See Jallot, *Chevrnadzé*, 44.

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## Interviews

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Author interview with Giorgi Kandelaki, former member of Kmara, Presidential Advisor on Social Integration, Tbilisi, 13 December 2006.

Author interview with Marina Muskhelishvili, Political Scientist, Tbilisi, 15 December 2006.

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Author interview with Marina Muskhelishvili, Tbilisi, 14 May 2007.

Author interview with Gigi Tevzadze, Rector of Ilia Chavchavadze State University in Tbilisi, Tbilisi, 15 May 2007.

Author interview with Irakli Iashvili, Parliamentarian and Member of "New Rights," Tbilisi, 16 May 2007.