

Master thesis topic European Governance



Democratization in Georgia: what role for the EU?

an analysis of the democratization process of Georgia and the influence of EU policies



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1. Introduction

On 4 January 2004, historical Presidential Elections took place in Georgia, which led to the victory of Mikheil Saakashvili. Just months before in November 2003, in what was later dubbed as the ‘‘Rose Revolution’’, he had successfully led demonstrations to call for new and fair elections, as the Parliamentary Elections of that month were characterized by widespread fraud. The EU High Representative of that time, Javier Solana, considered the elections as an important step in the democratic progress of Georgia, and assured Georgia support in achieving stability, democracy and prosperity (European External Action Service, 2004a). At the same time, the EU Commission President at that time, Romani Prodi, stated Georgia had an opportunity to leave the past behind and build a better future with a clear commitment to democracy and the rule of law, pledging the EU would do all in its power to assist Georgia towards that better future (European External Action Service, 2004b). At the end of that month, President Mikheil Saakashvili made his ambitions clear and stated the following:

Georgia is the country of unique culture. We are not only old Europeans, we are the very first Europeans, and therefore Georgia holds special place in European civilization. Georgia should serve as a paragon for democracy where all citizens are equal before the law, where every citizen will have an equal opportunity for the pursuit of success and realization of his or her possibilities. (Civil Georgia, 2004)

Just months later, as enlargement of the EU took place to the East, Georgia became part of the EU’s new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), as the ties and cooperation between Georgia and the EU increased and attempts were made to expand the success of the enlargement policies, and promote democratization further east. All this would make one conclude Georgia was a perfect candidate for successful democratization, due to the dedication and commitment on both sides. Georgia has often been hailed as such as well, as it is considered as one of the most ambitious candidates of the ENP policy, which was expanded later with the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009. Recently, European Council President Donald Tusk even referred to Georgia as a frontrunner (European Council, 2015).

However, despite all the hopeful rhetoric and commitment on both sides, Georgia remains either a hybrid regime according to Freedom House (2016) or a defective democracy according to the Bertelsmann Stiftung (2016). Democratic progress has been very limited, as Georgia has shown to be a tough case, also when it comes to developing appropriate policies

to foster democratization. In this thesis Georgia's democratization process will be traced, of which I will focus on the role of the EU. In particular, I will look at the role the ENP and EaP policies of the EU have played since 2004 until 2015. Doing so, I want to estimate what the exact influence has been in the democratization process, and to explain in general why democratic progress has been so limited.

My research question, therefore, will be the following:

1. What has been the role of the EU and its European Neighbourhood and Eastern Partnership policies in Georgia with regards to the democratization process in the time period of 2004-2015?

To estimate what the exact contribution has been of the EU and its policies to the democratization of Georgia a step-by-step analysis has to be made. First of all, it is important to look at how Georgia's democratization process has fared in general. A second step would be to analyze the potential factors and actors that are explanatory of this process, based on the theory that I will discuss later. The final step will be to determine the influence of the EU, based on the findings gathered in the first two steps. Therefore, I will have the following sub-questions for my research:

1.1. How has Georgia's democratization process fared between 2004-2015?

1.2. Which factors and actors have had influence on Georgia's democratization process and to which extent?

1.3. What has been the actual influence of the European Union on Georgia's democratization process?

How I seek to answer my research question will be further elaborated on in chapter 4. Before doing so, I will first of all give some basic background information in the following chapter 2 on the EU's ENP and EaP policies. Subsequently, I will lay out my theoretical framework in chapter 3, which will be the foundation of my research, and is relevant for my research design that will follow afterward in chapter 4. In chapter 5, I will analyze the democratization period between 2004-2015. Afterwards, I will analyze possible explanations in chapter 6 and estimate the role of the EU. My final conclusions and recommendations will be presented in chapter 8.

The goal of this extensive analysis is to provide more insights in the democratization process of Georgia, and to estimate what role the EU has played and can play in the future. Applying it on one specific case allows more in-depth analysis to understand this complex process and these aspects. Such a deeper study has not been pursued that often. Many studies and analyses study the influence the EU has in general such as Börzel et al. (2009), Duke (2011), Haukkala (2008), Howorth (2015), Vachudova (2005) or what role Russia plays, which Ambrosio & Vandrovec (2013), Börzel (2016), Delcour & Wolczuk (2015), Dragneva & Wolczuk (2012), Dzvelishvili (2015) and Nodia (2014) have looked at.

However, these studies focus on what influence these actors have in general, and do not clearly specify their influence on the democratization process in particular. Other studies such as those by Boonstra & Shapovalova (2010), Börzel (2016), Grzegorz (2015), Kelley (2006), Korosteleva, (2011), Popescu & Wilson (2009) study the EU's ENP and EaP policies more specifically, yet again do not focus primarily on democratization. Studies by Aliyev (2016), Freyburg et al. (2015), Lavenex & Schimmelfennig (2011) and Sasse (2013) do, but they focus mostly on just a few aspects of democratization, and do not have a clear focus on Georgia.

There is an overload of studies on Georgia's democratization process such as those by Berglund (2014), Berglund (2015), Broers (2005), Devdariani (2004a), Cheterian (2008), King (2001), Fairbanks (2004), Fairbanks (2007), Fairbanks (2013), Mitchell (2006; 2009) and Nodia (2005a; 2005b). However, while evaluating Georgia's democratization process, they take just a few aspects of this process into consideration and either don't or insufficiently focus on the EU policies. Studies by Kochoradze (2012), Nilsson & Silander (2016) and Pokleba (2016) do, but look at a limited amount of democratization aspects. Pawad (2005) in the end does take a lot more factors into consideration such as socio-economic and historic ones, but is outdated and does not look at the concrete influence of the EU's policies.

This study aims to expand current knowledge on Georgia's democratization process and go beyond what earlier studies have done. Several endogenous and exogenous factors of Georgia's democratization process will be looked at, which will be elaborated on later. In the end, the goal is to provide a more extensive analysis of Georgia's complicated democratization process. Doing so, the role of both Russia and the EU with its ENP and EaP

policies will be analyzed. This will also learn us more about the limitations the EU and its policies have in fostering democratization in countries beyond its direct neighborhood and with complicated legacies such as Georgia, despite their pro-Western orientations, in which a wide array of factors play a role. The following chapters will shed more light on how this will be realized.

2. The EU's ENP and EaP policies

In this section, I will briefly cover the historical background of the EU's democratization efforts, before providing basic information about the ENP and EaP policies of the EU. Doing so, I will explain the differences between the more general ENP policy that covers a wide array of countries, and the EaP, as part of the ENP that covers a smaller set of countries for which the EU has a niche approach.

The role of the EU when it comes to promoting democratization abroad was not so straightforward before the 90s. Although it did play a role in the democratization of Greece, Spain and Portugal in the 70s, it did so implicitly and informally through enlargement (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011: 885-886). This changed, however after the end of the Cold War and the downfall of the Soviet Union. The EU increasingly sought and established ties with its partners in the East of Europe, which wanted to leave their communist and soviet legacy behind, and move closer to the West. External democracy promotion became a core aim of the European Union following the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 (Ibid.). The subsequent enlargements to Eastern Europe in 2004 and 2007 were a key success of this ambition. It was even considered as the strongest structural foreign policy of the EU (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2015: 44-45). The ENP and EaP policies can be seen as some form of continuation of this ambition.

The ENP and EaP policies of the EU date back to 2004 and 2009. It was initiated especially because of the – approaching – historical enlargements, and would not have been brought about in this format otherwise (Kelley, 2006: 31). This is also reflected in the fact most former enlargement officials worked for this policy later. The created formats also used a lot of the language of the enlargement documents¹ (Kelley, 2006: 32-33). The European Neighbourhood policy is aimed at dealing with its (new) neighbours. It is focused on both the east and south, and includes countries from Northern Africa, the Middle East as well as Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The ENP is basically the umbrella policy of the Eastern Partnership that was later launched in 2009. The ENP was launched in May 2004, in anticipation of the approaching enlargements (European Commission, 2003a: 3) and became operational in 2004. The ENP aims at establishing a so-called “ring of friends” (Ibid.: 4) and

¹ Kelley (2006: 33) found that even the names of old candidate member states sometimes even showed up in the new ENP documents accidentally, symbolizing the strong link between the two policies.

is based on the rule of law, human rights and democracy (European Commission, 2016a; European External Action Service, 2016a). While it was suggested these values were central from the onset, for example by Kelley (2006: 31), these values were not mentioned that often in the initial communication on the policy in 2003, as stability and economic prosperity were mentioned more (European Commission, 2003a). In the end, they were firmly anchored in the strategy paper of 2004 (European Commission, 2004a).

Democratization was eventually a big part of cooperation that was pursued with the first 7 partner countries through the ENP format (Kelley, 2006: 33). As stated on the official pages of the policy, cooperation is aimed at building democratic, socially equitable and inclusive societies for which it will offer economic integration with the EU, increased mobility of people, financial assistance and technical cooperation in order to comply with EU standards (European External Action Service, 2016a; European Commission, 2016a). It strives as well to improve economic development, governance, security and migration (European Commission, 2016a). Cooperation is mostly bilateral, thus between one EaP country and the EU. This means that despite the common framework for a wide array of countries, the policy aims at making tailor made arrangements per country, and has a differentiated approach (European Commission, 2004a: 8; European Commission, 2016a). This also implies that the closer the country wants to move to the EU, the more it will get in return (Kelley, 2006: 30). This differentiated individual approach is realized with the so-called “ENP Action Plans” or “Association Agenda’s” that are tailor-made and on which most of the bilateral cooperation and funding is based on (European Commission, 2016a).

While 80% of these agreements are about other fields of cooperation, democracy related political reforms, institutionalization, the rule of law, free media, liberal rights as well as how elections should be conducted that are all essential for democratization are prioritized (Kelley, 2006: 33). A primary focus of the policy is strengthening civil society, which is mentioned as a key element of the ENP in order to foster democratic change (European Commission, 2016a). Political conditionality as with the enlargement policies is essential in the ENP, and the amount of funding, receiving access to the EU’s internal market and cooperation in this regard is based on the commitment of the country to reform in order to come closer to the EU’s values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, although gradually on a step by step basis, and not through imposing (Kelley, 2006: 35; European Commission, 2003a: 4; European Commission, 2004a: 8). One crucial aspect of the ENP policy is that despite the

initial communication on the policy suggested EU membership would be open to certain members (European Commission, 2003a: 5), EU membership is for now ruled out (Kelley, 2006: 36-37 & 41). As the prospect of EU membership is not included and fewer rewards are offered, it is also considered as a “diluted” version of the enlargement policy (Kelley, 2006: 37) or “enlargement-light” (Popescu & Wilson, 2009: 12).

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched in May 2009. It is part of the ENP, but more of a niche as it focuses on the 6 neighbor countries in the East: Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as the eastern dimension of the ENP (Council of the European Union, 2009: 6). It was initiated because the broader ENP policy did not distinguish the closer eastern neighbors from others like those in North-Africa in the Middle-East, as they differed hugely in terms of ambitions (Popescu & Wilson, 2009: 14). Key actors at the time that initiated the policy were former Polish foreign minister Sikorski and former Swedish foreign minister Bildt (Council of the European Union, 2009). Enlargement was again mentioned as one of the key drivers to bring about this new niche policy of the EU, as illustrated by the following remark:

“Successive enlargements have brought Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus closer to the EU and, therefore, their security, stability and prosperity increasingly impact upon those of the EU and vice-versa.” (European Commission, 2016b; European External Action Service, 2016b).

The policy just like the ENP highlights core values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights (Council of the European Union, 2009: 5; European Commission, 2016b; European External Action Service, 2016b). The policy is meant as complementary and aims to establish a more ambitious partnership between the EU and the EaP countries. This is again based on differentiation depending on the ambitions of the individual country (Council of the European Union, 2009: 5). With this eastern dimension of the EaP, it emphasizes to give more attention to these countries through special EaP Summits every 2 years, and more rewards through prospects for visa liberalization, Association Agreements (AAs), Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) and institution building programs focused on realizing those (Council of the European Union, 2009: 6-7). Frameworks such as the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum were established during the next EaP Summit in Warsaw in 2011, to foster relations between civil society and national governments on discussing EU

related reforms (Council of the European Union, 2011: 2 & 7). Despite these improvements and increased commitment by the EU, some consider the EaP substantially not so far away from the ENP (Korosteleva, 2011: 244). Some state it was the most the ENP could offer (Boonstra & Shapovalova, 2011: 3). It was also not received as enthusiastically by some of the EaP states that are more ambitious (Korosteleva, 2011: 252). However, it was an increase in commitment compared to the former ENP, and the level of cooperation depends on the commitment of both parties, leaving much room for differentiation between countries nonetheless.

3. Theory

In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical backbone of my thesis that will be crucial for my research design and the subsequent substantive chapters on the democratization process of Georgia. First of all, I will give a broad explanation of the notion democracy, what it entails, and when a country could be considered democratic or not, including under which conditions. After this, I will explore theories on democratization. I will look at endogenous explanations such as modernization, civil society, political society and the legacy of a country. I will also look at exogenous explanations, such as the geopolitical environment and the role of external actors that either foster or withhold democratization, and could potentially compete. The role of the EU in all of this is multi-sided. While it is an external actor, it can also affect the domestic situation of a country. As an external actor it influences democratization with positive and negative incentives through political conditionality. I will also focus on EU policies, and how they relate to the democratization process.

3.1. Definitions

First of all, let's start with a clear definition of democracy. Different definitions of democracy are out there. As it is important in this thesis to look at what brings about democracy, it is relevant to look as well what this final stage of democracy that could be reached actually means, because the concept of democracy is contested, and different definitions could lead to different research works and possible different results (Coppedge, 2012: 11).

Looking at the historical origins, the word in any case comes from the two Greek words of *demos* (people) and *krato* (rule). When looking at current definitions, the Oxford English Dictionary comes up with a narrow definition and considers democracy as “a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives”². It assumes in a narrow way how the population is supposed to have influence and seems to focus mostly on representative democracy. Another definition by the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy looks at democracy in a broader sense, and considers it as “a method of group decision making characterized by a kind of equality among the participants at an essential stage of the collective decision making”³.

² <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/democracy>

³ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/democracy/>

Several political scientists have come up with definitions as well. One of them is Held (1996; 2006), who considers democracy as a government form in which the people decide, in contrary to elites in monarchies or aristocracies. It furthermore implies a political community in which there is some kind of political equality among the people (Held, 1996; 2006). He seems to simply define what democracy is not, before describing it in a narrow sense of a political community in which there is equality.

A second political scientist that has come up with a broader notion of democracy is Seymour Martin Lipset (1960), who considers democracy as something that takes place in a complex society, and includes a political system that provides constitutional opportunities for changing the government, as well as a social mechanism to make it possible for most people possible to have influence on important decisions by choosing candidates that run for a public office (Dahl et al., 2003: 56; Lipset, 1960). While it assumes representative democracy as well, according to the second part of the definition, it nonetheless looks at democracy in a broader perspective, as it speaks of both a political system that provides opportunities as well as social mechanisms such as electives to have influence.

3.2. Concepts

The last remarks about democracy bring us to the next part, as democracy has different characteristics, which also differ based on the concept of democracy that is chosen. Different scholars now use or assume characteristics of democracy. A broad literature review could be made of this, as illustrated for example by Held (1996; 2006) that came up with 12 models of democracy, along with a total of 72 characteristics! (Coppedge, 2012: 16-17; Held, 1996; Held 2006) This is what we call a thick version of democracy, with dozens of characteristics, although often interrelated to each other. It contrasts with more thin concepts of democracy, in which merely a few more clear-cut characteristics are assigned to democracy (Coppedge, 2012: 14-17).

An example of a thinner concept is that of Coppedge (2012). He based it on Linz's (1975) concept of what a democracy is not, an authoritarian regime, as the mirror of a democratic regime, with relevant characteristics such as the selection of leaders through elections, the degree of pluralism, the nature of participation, the ideological mind-set of the leaders and the degree to which the political system was politicized (Linz, 1975; Coppedge, 2012: 19).

Coppedge, however, excludes the institutionalization aspect as well as the ideological mind-set aspect.

Another relatively thin concept of democracy with regards to characteristics is the concept of Polyarchy by Dahl (1971), which is about the fairness of elections and who lists the following relevant aspects: universal suffrage, most citizens are eligible for public office, political leaders are allowed to compete for votes, elections are free and fair, citizens are free to create and participate in political parties and other organizations, citizens can freely express themselves on political topics, diverse sources of information on politics are available and government policies are formed based on votes and other expressions of preference (Coppedge, 2012: 21; Dahl, 1971). However, it is criticized for not including aspects like the rule of law and judicial independence (ibid.).

While thinner definitions are easier to operationalize, possible important aspects could be neglected, which would lead to a possible overestimation of the democratic credentials of a country, or even make a false judgement. This is referred to as a trade-off between validity and extension, although adding a characteristic to a concept only makes it more valid when it is actually a relevant one (Coppedge, 2012: 17). However, aspects such as the rule of law, an independent judiciary, institutionalization, and having an active civil society are excluded (Coppedge, 2012: 21-22; Lewis, 2012: 16-20).

Schmitter & Karl (1991) emphasize the need of including institutionalization and civil society as well. According to their definition, institutionalization refers to whether the system of democracy and its patterns are habitually known, practiced and accepted by its users, preferably laid down in strong laws backed by a constitution, in order to prevent easily reversing it (Haynes, 2012: 2; Schmitter & Karl, 1991: 103). Party systems are in this regard often considered as essential to the institutionalization of a democracy and consolidate it (Haynes, 2012: 5). Sustainable political parties enhance democratic consolidation, by containing strong individuals in party structures (Haynes, 2012: 5). Civil society refers to non-governmental organizations that are a link between society and the state, which help maintain a check on power and help foster the interests of society (Haynes, 2012: 4; Schmitter & Karl: 105).

The rule of law is also often stressed as important for a democracy (Diamond et al., 1995). It is about whether basic political rights and civil liberties are guaranteed, and the power of the state against its citizens is constrained, both by an independent judiciary (O'Donnel, 2004). Corruption in this regard can be considered as a proxy of a failing rule of law, and used as such by Freedom House and Transparency International for example. The EU has assigned some characteristics to democracy as well, for example when it comes to the rough demands that the EU sets for new member states to be able to join the EU. These so called Copenhagen Criteria were established in 1993, and mention the rule of law, institutionalization – stable institutions – and civil society as vital to democracy, implying the EU follows a thicker concept of democracy. This becomes clear when we filter out the economic requirements, as well as the commitment to political, economic and monetary union: *‘Membership requires.. stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities..’* (European Council, 1993).

Although not directly linked to the ENP and EaP policies, it was hinted before such criteria should be applied in these (Hillion, 2004: 14; Kelley, 2006: 33). As explained in chapter 2, both the ENP and its eastern dimension the EaP emphasize democracy, having a strong civil society, human rights and the rule of law. Important to note is that different definitions of democracy and characteristics could lead to different outcomes in research, something which has to be emphasized as well in this thesis. The choice for a more thin or thick concept of democracy is essential when it comes to results of the research, especially as thick concepts of democracy are often linked to qualitative research while thinner concepts are linked to quantitative research (Coppedge, 2012: 22-23). An overview of the characteristics of thin and thick concepts of democracy can be found in Box 3.0.

Box 3.0: Aspects of thin and thick concepts of democracy

	Thin concept	Thick concept
Usage	More adaptable	More complex to use
Trade-off	Less extension	More validity
Research design	Often quantitative	Often qualitative
Measurement	Easier to measure	More difficult to measure
Amount of factors	Few	Many

For my thesis I will make use of a thicker concept of democracy, that includes both the polyarchy concept of Dahl (1971) which already covers whether elections are held in a fair way – what I will refer to simply as “fair elections” – and whether there are sufficient

information sources available and accessible, what I will consider as whether there is information access in general, which also includes press freedom. These are factors which many organizations such as Reporters Without Borders and Freedom House also focus on. Furthermore, I will widen my concept with the rule of law, institutionalization as well as civil society, factors which I all consider as relevant, and based on the used literature. Therefore, the following aspects I will use: fair elections, rule of law, information access, institutionalization and civil society. From now onwards, I will refer to these democracy characteristics as FRIIC.

3.3 Explanations of democratization

With regards to democratization – the transition of a regime to a more democratic one (Lehoucq, 2012: 273) – there are different ideas about what brings about such developments, and what could foster a process that leads towards the end stage of democracy that has been elaborated on so far. Vanhanen (2003: 21) has said in this regard that many theories even contradict each other. Overviews of explanations when it comes to democratization have been made for example by Vanhanen (2003), Geddes (2007), Robert et al. (2003) and Haynes (2012).

In this thesis, I will explore some endogenous exogenous theories on democratization. For exogenous factors, we have to look at outside forces that can alter the democratization process of a country in either a positive or negative way. The role of the West and the EU in particular is important here, as Western donors have been heavily involved when it comes to promoting democratization in Georgia. Other actors could have their influence as well on the process, such as Russia for example. In this regard, the geopolitical context is important as well to determine their influence. With regards to endogenous factors, we have to look at forces inside the country that – could – bring about positive change when it comes to the democratization process. One crucial factor which we look at is modernization. Other explanatory endogenous factors such as political society, civil society and the legacy of a country, which are more case-specific, will be looked at as well.

The EU in this theoretical framework is an exogenous factor. With its policies as an external actor it attempts to influence the democratization process. At the same time it affects endogenous factors, as its economic policies could also lead to more modernization (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011: 891). Furthermore, its policies could also strengthen civil society.

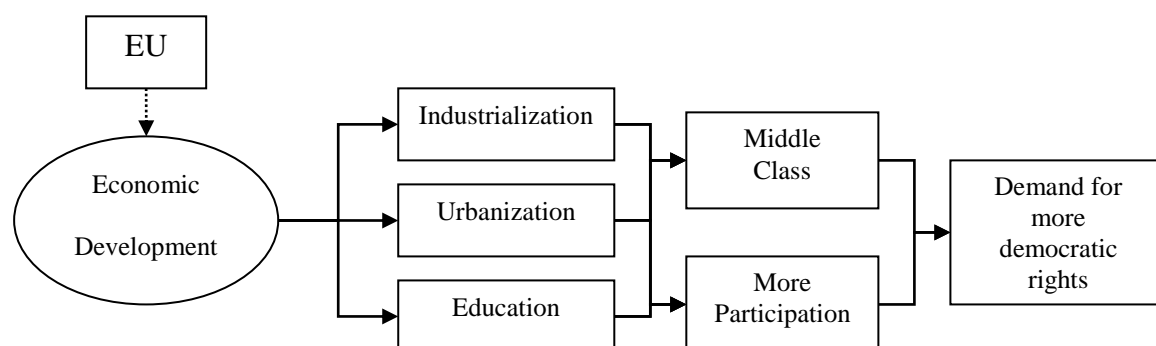
In any case, the effects of the EU policies – both when it comes to exogenous and endogenous factors – have to be extracted in my research, isolating other plausible causes, which makes it a difficult exercise to estimate its exact effect. Therefore, I will use several theories and use a more qualitative research design.

3.3.1 Endogenous factors

I will now focus on the endogenous explanatory factors of democratization. One such explanation of democratization is the modernization theory. It was initially launched by Seymour Lipset (1959). The theory assumes democracy is linked to economic progress and development. It implies that if a country progresses economically it is more likely it will transition to a democratic regime (Lipset, 1959; Lerner, 1968). According to the theory, economic development brings about industrialization and urbanisation, which in turn leads to more literacy, education, diversity in occupations and media participation. This modernization brings about democracy as the participant society develops due to this and a middle class emerges that demands more political rights (Lipset, 1959, Lerner, 1968; Geddes, 2007: 318-319).

When it comes to the EU, it is supposed to effect modernization as the EU's policies focus on improving trade relations, providing financial assistance and investment it may lead to more economic development as well. The EU could therefore promote democratization indirectly as well by enhancing economic development (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011: 891-892). A display of this can be found in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1.: Modernization



Another theory that is partly linked to modernization theory and supports some of its implications is the theory that capitalism leads to democracy. The focus is, however, on

changing power relations. While it has to do with economic development, as such is supposed to follow from capitalism, the emphasis is more on the economic model that changes power relations as former monopolies that can be sources of accumulating political power are broken up (Vanhanen, 2003: 9 Rueschemeyer et al., 1992). Power relations determine whether democracy can come about, and capitalism is what changes the balance of power in a country. Industrialization, for example, empowers the lower class, and makes it more difficult for political elites to neglect them. In turn, they can challenge the upper class that holds most of the power (ibid.)

Some critiques on its universal application have been made, due to the existence of high-GDP countries that are undemocratic and the existence of low-GDP countries that are democratic⁴. Apart from that it is said the Human Development Index (HDI) in contrary to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) provides a stronger explanatory variable, which looks at more indicators⁵ of well-being (ibid.). However, this is more an amendment to the theory.

More serious critique has been mounted as well. Przeworski et al. (2000) has downplayed the importance of economic development and that it only helps prevent democratic breakdown⁶ (ibid.). There are many exceptions to the rule, and perhaps different endogenous explanations such as the political legacy of a country when it comes to its past history, cultural tradition, social structure, international political climate and specific institutional framework (Vanhanen, 2003: 17; Przeworski et al., 2000). Haynes (2012), van Hanen (2003), Lewis (2012) and Przeworski et al. (2000) also mention a few additional factors that can contribute to democratization, such as having a strong civil society and a political society with a strong party system (Haynes, 2012: 3-6). Therefore, while there is general agreement that economic development does play a role, there is disagreement on how much it can impact democratization, and more factors have to be looked at.

⁴ Poor but democratic India is often mentioned, as well as undemocratic rich oil states (Vanhanen 2003, 8; Diamond & Marks, 1992). However, the modernization theory does not imply strong economies are always more democratic. Many resource-rich countries can have a high GDP, but did not experience the economic development the theory refers to, as it does not come along with a certain amount of freedom for citizens versus the government. It could be rather the opposite, especially if the resources are state-owned and only profit mostly the elites on top that consolidate their power and their grip on society (Ross, 2011).

⁵ According to UNDP, the HDI takes into consideration life expectancy, schooling and gross national income: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

⁶ Nonetheless, Przeworski's et al. (2000) study was later criticized as a second reading showed it did show some relation between economic development and democratization, exposed by Boix and Stokes (2003).

Civil Society is one of those factors. It can play a role by limiting the political space of governments, by functioning as a counterweight. It can do so by criticizing the government. It can be instrumental as well in bringing about democratic change, and prevent potential totalitarian tendencies, by providing pressure from below (Haynes, 2012: 3). Their influence is stronger if they link up with representative political parties (Ibid.). In many Central- and Eastern European countries, civil society played a role in undermining the former communist regimes and bringing about democracy (Haynes, 2012: 4). Pro-democracy actors in both political and civil society are important in this regard (Haynes, 2012: 6). A lot depends on the strength of civil society. It can be undermined by ideological and class cleavages. Furthermore, it also depends on social capital – the amount of trust – as well as on economic development, since civil society usually tends to be strong in those countries that have high levels of urbanization and industrialization (Haynes, 2012: 4). Thus suggests a link with modernization.

Political society is important as well. Solid political parties, electoral rules, alliances and leadership can be essential for a democracy. They can be a check on the power of authoritarian individuals, by containing them in clear party structures that prevent the personalization of politics (Haynes, 2012: 5). They are essential as well for peaceful and democratic transfers for power, as they compete for power in a defined political arena (Haynes, 2012: 5). In this regard, it is important political society agrees on basic norms for a democratic regime and that they compete with each on policy disagreements through political parties, interest groups and movements. A super-presidential system with centralization of power on the other hand, would undermine this (Kitschelt, 2001: 72).

When it comes to legacy, it is difficult to state general aspects that are relevant for democratization, as each individual country has their own unique historical experience. Some aspects have been mentioned in the literature. Lewis (2012) highlighted that state borders need to be well defined, including territorial integrity, before a democratic regime can emerge and root⁷ (Lewis, 2012: 15). Important is also whether the country has had prior experienced with democracy in the past (Linz and Stepan (1996). The Communist legacy, as emphasized by Lewis (2012) and Kitschelt (2001), is important as well⁸. With regards to society, it is

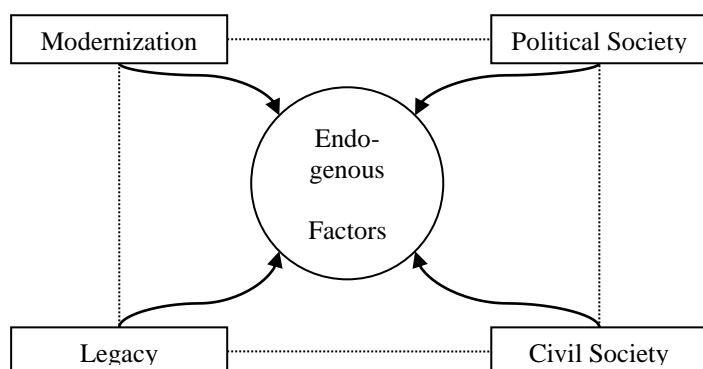
⁷ In this regard, the Balkans have been mentioned, because the conflict between nationalities in the former Yugoslav federation was never solved, and posed problems following its break-up, and hindered democratization.

⁸ Institutions the communist legacy left were not democratic, and more considered as power instruments.

important as well whether it had patrimonial characteristics – e.g. centralization of power in one power and a mixture of the public and private sector – and whether there have been general norms such as the rule of law. The ethnic composition in a country is also often regarded as important, and whether there are attempts by different ethnic groups to pursue autonomy⁹ (Kitschelt, 2001: 70-71) and even more if they do so violently¹⁰.

In the end, we conclude that there are several endogenous factors which can explain a democratization process. Modernization is the most known and dominant one, however, scholars have agreed to some extent that case-specific factors such as the legacy of the country, political society and existing civil society play a role as well. Therefore, civil society is both a characteristic of democracy and an explanatory factor for democratization. The same applies to political society. The endogenous factors are put together in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2.: Endogenous factors



3.3.2. Exogenous factors

Different authors mention the importance of exogenous factors as well such as the geopolitical climate and environment, as well as the specific international institutional framework (Vanhanen, 2003: 17; Przeworski et al., 2000). External or exogenous factors have played a more significant role when it comes to democratization, especially since the end of the Cold War, as it matters for a country whether there is an outside power interfering with the democratization process in the country considered (Hayes 2012, 6). In this regard, geopolitical shifts can be important, as the post-cold war context was favourable for

⁹ Democracy-building is difficult if there are multiple “nations” in one state, and even impossible in case one or several of them are militant, for whatever reason, be it oppression or being led by aggressive nationalist leaders (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 29-36).

¹⁰ A military conflict in the country itself between groupings, can hinder democratization. Long term peace-building in this case would be needed, before democratization can take place (Grimm & Merkel, 2008)

democracy in Central and Eastern European countries (Lehoucq, 2012: 280-281). The influence of foreign actors on the political process of a country has become stronger on average. Increased globalization since the 90s has made countries more dependent on each other as well (Haynes, 2012; 7). Another factor is that countries can no longer play out Western and Communist (Geddes, 2007: 331). How external actors influence countries has been analyzed by Way & Levitsky (2005), with their ideas of linkage and leverage, which they applied on countries in the post-Cold War era. The influence an external actor can have is dependent on leverage: the extent to which countries are vulnerable to external pressure, and linkage: the density of ties these countries had with Western countries. (Way & Levitsky, 2007: 50-51). The density of linkage has 5 dimensions: economic, intergovernmental, social, communication, civil society and geographical proximity. An overview of those can be found in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1: Dimensions of linkage (Way & Levitsky, 2007: 53)

Dimension	Examples
Economic linkage	Volume of trade, investment and credit.
Intergovernmental linkage	Ties to western governments and participation in western-led alliance, treaties and international organizations.
Social linkage	Flows of people across borders, including migration, tourism, refugees, and diaspora communities.
Information linkage	Flow of information, including cross-border telecommunications, internet connections, degree of western radio and television penetration and coverage.
Civil society linkage	Local ties to western-based non-governmental organizations, international religious groups and party organizations and other transnational networks.
Geographic proximity	Closeness in geography to Western Europe or the United States.

These dimensions determine how closely linked the countries are, and what potential there is for leverage. Leverage itself depends on the military and economic strength of a country, the existence of competing foreign policy issues inside the country that tries to exert influence, and whether there are alternative sources available that could provide economical or military assistance, so-called “black knights” (Way & Levitsky, 2007: 51). An overview of the different leverage factors can be found in Box 3.2¹¹.

¹¹ In the given overview, the first factor of economic and military strength is split up, as they could vary heavily, something I will illustrate later. Therefore, 4 factors are provided in this overview (Way & Levitsky’s sum up consists of 3 factors)

Box 3.2. Strength of leverage (Way & Levitsky, 2007)

Factors	Examples
Economic strength	Aid withdrawal, trade sanctions
Military strength	Threat of military force
Competing foreign policy issues	Securing energy resources, e.g. oil, gas
Black knight	Alternative power providing financial/military support

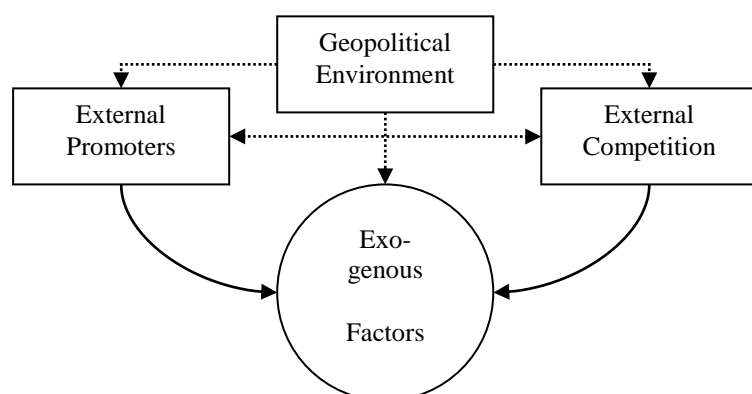
Leverage also depends on the political conditionality imposed. This conditionality can be positive or negative, and includes carrots and sticks: rewards and sanctions. Authoritarian countries were punished in some cases with such sticks, while those countries that were making advances in democracy were granted rewards (Haynes, 2012: 7; Youngs, 2012: 287-288).

In case of rewards, monetary assistance can be provided, but also non-monetary assistance such as providing expertise to promote democratization efforts related strengthening the rule of law or improving electoral processes, legislation, political institutions, civil-military relations and civil society (Haynes, 2012: 7-8). Way & Levitsky (2005) mention membership in the case of the EU.

When it comes to sanctions, we can think of withholding aid, trade sanctions, diplomatic persuasion, or even military force (Levitsky & Way, 2007: 382). This also depends on the vulnerability to external pressure of the country, and here is again where the five dimensions of leverage become relevant. A military weak country could be leveraged for example with military power. This could include security guarantees or favourable arms deals. Aid-dependent countries can be leveraged with economic power on the other hand, such as by withholding aid or promising additional aid (ibid.: 382-383).

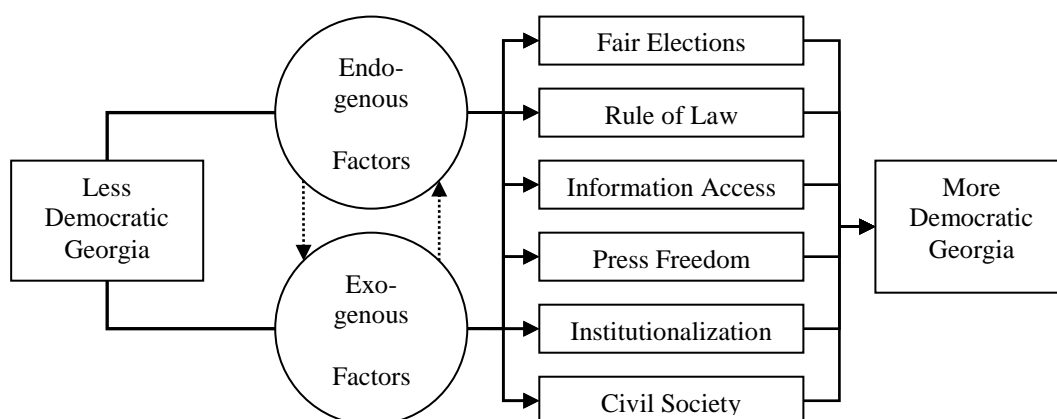
These differences in leverage and linkage explain why some post-communist countries were easier to influence than others (Way & Levitsky, 2007; Levitsky & Way, 2006). Additionally, leverage is also dependent on the presence and the strength of a competitor, and whether there is division either inside the country or inside the alliance that seeks to leverage (Way & Levitsky, 2007: 383). In the end, we can visualize the interaction of different external actors in a given geopolitical context in a model of exogenous factors, which is given in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3.: Exogenous factors



Democracy promoters such as the EU are one piece of the exogenous factors, while Russia can be considered as an external competitor that undermines the EU's efforts. As mentioned, the geopolitical environment matters as well, which determines the potential of both. Important to note, as stated in the introduction of this chapter, is that these factors do not have their own effects isolated from one another, and rather intertwine and interact with each other, and exact such interaction determine an outcome (Haynes 2012, 3). When it comes to the role of the EU, I assume it influences the democratization process, as an exogenous factor. Apart from that, I also assume it influences endogenous factors since it has an impact on modernization. In the end, I come up with a theoretical model on how endogenous and exogenous factors influence the democratization process, which can be seen in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4.: Theoretical Model



4. Research design

In this section, I will explain how I will exactly conduct my research on the democratization process in Georgia and the role of the EU's policies. First of all, my choice for Georgia as a case study will be elaborated on. Second, I will provide my hypotheses as well, based on the theoretical model of figure 3.4. The research method I have chosen for my research is process tracing, which I will explain. I will explain as well why I choose the 2004-2015 time period. In the following section, I will state how I intend to operationalize my research. Next, I will elaborate on the sources I will use for my research for data gathering, which include in-depth interviews with experts.

4.1. Georgia as the *most likely case*

Georgia is chosen as a case study because the EU's policies are assumed to have most influence on its democratization path. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Georgia has also been considered several times as the “frontrunner” of the EU's neighbourhood policies, such as by European Council President Donald Tusk in July 2015 (European Council, 2015). Some have stated Georgia basically has no viable alternative (Kochoradze, 2012). Reasons for this are mostly historical and geopolitical. When it comes to history, Georgia's flirtations with the EU to move closer are historically determined according to a lot of Georgians, and Georgia's path towards the EU should be more considered as a return to Europe¹² (Karumidze et al., 2015). While geography hinders Georgia's path on the one hand (Khaindrava, 2015: 51), geopolitical and security motivations condemn it to the EU.

Integration in EU structures is considered as a guarantee of security from their big northern neighbour (Karumidze et al., 2015: 8; Jones, 2013: 245). Democratization and modernization could also help solve problems with its separatist regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Khaindrava 2015: 49). Therefore, due to these reasons, Georgia can be considered as a *most likely case* (Seawright & Gerring, 2008) for the EU's ENP and EaP policies to have an effect on, as commitment to the EU's demands is expected to be the highest. For this, Georgia is also an interesting case to test whether the EU and its policies can and have influenced

¹² Georgia has Greco-Romanian Christian roots for example – having been influenced by key developments such as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Georgians therefore dominantly consider themselves European rather than Eurasian or even Caucasian (Khaindrava, 2015: 51; Gigineishvili, 2015: 106-109 & 116).

Georgia. If it did not, it would make it more likely the influence of the EU is limited in other less ambitious EaP and ENP countries as well.

4.2. Hypotheses

As stated in the introduction, I will look at endogenous and exogenous explanations. I will make use of a thicker concept of democracy, FRIIC, which includes fair elections, the rule of law, information access, institutionalization as well as civil society. Endogenous and exogenous factors – as *independent variables* – that each explains democratization. The FRIIC democracy characteristics are in the next column – the *dependent variables* – which we seek to explain. The EU in this regard can be considered as both an *independent variable* and a *moderating variable* as it has both direct effect on the FRIIC characteristics of democracy – the *dependent variables*, as well as indirect effect by fostering the modernization process, one of the *dependent variables*. In the end, my theoretical model implies a set of assumptions, which can be formulated in hypotheses:

1. *Endogenous factors have led to an increase in the FRIIC democracy characteristics in Georgia.*
2. *Exogenous factors have led to an increase in the FRIIC characteristics of democracy in Georgia.*
3. *The EU's policies – as part of exogenous factors – have led to an increase in the FRIIC characteristics of democracy in Georgia.*
4. *The EU's policies have influenced endogenous factors positively.*

In this case, the latest hypothesis is only of much relevance for my research if it has been confirmed first that hypothesis 1 is true. I will explain in the following section how I will check these hypotheses with the chosen method of process tracing.

4.3. Research method

I intend to make a so-called in-depth analysis of Georgia by making use of process tracing. The variant of process tracing I will be using is the explaining-outcome variant, which is case-centric. Doing so, I focus on one particular case that I seek to explain in a pragmatic way, making use of different theories, but as well looking at the specific aspects of the case (Beach & Pedersen, 2013: 9 & 12-13). In contrast to a theory-centric process tracing, it does not assume that one dominant theory brings about change, such as the modernization theory, but

that there are rather more theories. Theories, in this case, are instruments to help build an explanation for a case (Beach & Pedersen, 2013: 19). By looking at different mechanisms, I seek to explain what role the EU has played in Georgia's democratization process. I assume the EU's policies on their own have a direct effect on democratization, while it indirectly affects this process by influencing the endogenous factors. By including many different, alternative or additional explanations I want to extract the effect the EU has. Doing so, I see endogenous and exogenous factors as potential *causal mechanisms* that have brought the outcome of democratization through increasing the FRIIC democracy characteristics.

The democratization process in the time period 2004-2015 will be analyzed. Doing so, as stated, I will attempt to derive what the exact impact has been of the EU's ENP and EaP policies. This starting year of 2004 is shortly after the Rose Revolution of November 2003, which led to the victory of Mikheil Saakashvili on 4 January 2004, and the victory of his United National Movement (UNM) party during the Parliamentary Elections of 28 March 2004. A pro-Western government followed. That same year on 1 May 2004, the EU was also expanded to the East, bringing Georgia closer to the EU. Furthermore, barely a few weeks later, the ENP policy was launched on 12 May. Importantly: after the Rose Revolution, the state-building took a fast pace, something which will be explained later. The analysis will stop at the end of 2015.

The general focus will be on long-term developments and which independent variables – endogenous and exogenous – during these processes determined a more positive or negative outcome, to which extent and how. Although democratization has to be looked at as a long-term process, certain moments such as elections are often a showing of whether the long-term developments bring about results, such as fair and good elections as well as certain events such as protests or a military conflict. These could be some sort of test of a better functioning democracy, most notably the elections. This is also important to make a causal inference. While process tracing is mostly aimed events and situations that develop over time, it can not be understood if important events or situations are not described that have lasting effects and impact on the democratization process. A close-up has to be made of specific moments, because to characterize a process, key steps have to be characterized as well (Collier, 2010: 824).

The goal is to provide a sufficient explanation (Beach & Pedersen, 2013: 92), when it comes to which extent endogenous and exogenous factors have had influence, from which the effect of the EU's policies have to be extracted. In any case, as it is a case-centric design, the results of the research will mostly say something about the case of Georgia itself. As Georgia is expected to be a most likely case, it is hard to use these specific findings and apply them in a similar way on other cases. However, if the EU's policies would have no effect on a most likely case, the chance is even less it will have effect on other cases. There are advantages as well, since rich detail can be provided and multiple perspectives (Coppedge, 2012: 116). The case-study of Georgia also allows comparison of different time periods of Georgia. Doing so, a better judgment can be made whether there is more democracy in time period A compared to B, and which factors were relevant, instead of comparing it to a country with its own unique aspects (Coppedge, 2012: 118-124). This does imply that no generalization can be made to apply on other cases. On the other hand, while not being able to come up with a generalization, or confirm one, they could disconfirm a generalization if it is not applicable on the case studied (Coppedge, 2012: 124-125). In any case, it would leave food for thought and could set the stage for further research for the other cases when it comes to their democratization processes (Beach & Pedersen, 2013: 92).

4.4. Operationalization, data and sources

As stated in the theory part, a broader concept of democracy is used based on the FRIIC characteristics of fair elections, the rule of law, information access, institutionalization and civil society. Three different kinds of sources have been used: international indexes, secondary sources and interviews. It is summarized in Box 4.1. how the characteristics have been operationalized, and which data and sources have been used.

Box 4.1.: Measuring FRIIC

Variable	Explanation¹³	How to measure?
Fair Elections	Extent to which elections have been held fair and free in the sense that everyone was allowed to vote, as well as capable to vote. The choice should be free, and everyone should be able to stand as candidate. Sufficient information should be provided on each political party, their candidates and ideas.	* Monitoring reports of elections by the OECD. * Nations in Transit Index * Transformation Index * Secondary sources * Interviews
Rule of Law	Extent to which sufficient laws are in force that protect basic rights of people, guaranteed by an independent judiciary. Laws are properly enforced and abided by. Nobody stands above the law and corruption levels are sufficiently low.	* Corruption Perceptions Index * Transformation Index * Secondary sources

¹³ Based on my theory chapter

		* Interviews
Information Access	Extent to which citizens in general can have access to sufficient sources of information, whether it comes to the media that also has to be free and be able to display a plurality of views without favouring one or just a few political parties but also to the government that has to be transparent in order for both citizens and organizations to evaluate them.	* Nations in Transit Index * World Press Freedom Index * Secondary sources * Interviews
Institutionalization	Extent to which democracy is consolidated and anchored in law and institutions in a functioning checks and balances system, making it difficult to reverse it.	* Nations in Transit Index * Transformation Index * Secondary sources * Interviews
Civil Society	Extent to which civil society organizations (actively) take part in society, socially or politically, providing an extra check on the government that both advises and evaluates policies.	* Nations in Transit Index * Transformation Index * Secondary sources * Interviews

Since a case-centric process analysis is conducted in my research, within-case inferences are made, in which empirical data is collected from the case observed, that infer – parts of a – causal mechanism (Beach & Pedersen, 2013: 69). To determine progress, the progress reports and indexes of Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, Transparency International, Bertelsmann Stiftung and the OECD have been used. Secondary sources have been used as well. Additionally, reports that have been made by the European Commission about Georgia have been used. Furthermore, actual wording and content used by politicians and government officials as well as official government declarations of Georgia and the EU are used. Interviews have been conducted as well with experts that are involved with the democratization process of Georgia and if applicable with the ENP and EaP policies of the EU. These interviews have been conducted with (former) government officials from Georgia, people from NGOs and diplomats, that have all been involved in the democratization process of Georgia somehow, and most them, have been involved with the EU's policies as well. An overview of these interviews can be found in Box 4.2.

Box 4.2.: Overview of interviews held

Date	Location	Name	Function & Organization
06-05-2016	Tbilisi, Georgia	Sergi Kapanadze	Director, GRASS (NGO) Former Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgian Government
08-05-2016	Tbilisi, Georgia	Kornely Kakachia	Director, Georgian Institute of Politics (NGO) Professor at Tbilisi State University
10-05-2016	N/A	Anonymous	Dutch Diplomats, N/A
10-05-2016	Tbilisi, Georgia	Erekle Urushadze	Program Manager, Transparency International
10-05-2016	N/A	Anonymous	UN Diplomat, N/A
10-05-2016	N/A	Anonymous	Polish Diplomat, N/A
10-05-2016	Tbilisi, Georgia	Sopio Samushia	Acting Deputy Head of Department at the Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European & Euro-Atlantic Integration

Interviews have been held with both people working at NGOs, a government official and different diplomats. Such input by experts that have experienced the democratization process from close, have made it more practical to estimate the kind of effect the EU's policies have had, directly or indirectly. Especially since some are expected to have more favourable views of the EU's policies while others are expected to have a more neutral or sceptic position.

All interviews lasted between 1-2 hours depending on the availability of the interviewed, and all but one were recorded, as the UN diplomat preferred not to be recorded, while the other diplomats agreed with being recorded, as long as it would not be published. All the others had no problems with any aspect of the interview format and style. When it comes to the exact format of the interview, each of them has been asked about the democratization developments of Georgia since 2004, as well as about the EU's policies. General questions were asked as well about what would exactly drive Georgia to commit to democratization reforms the EU would like to see, in order to derive whether more endogenous or exogenous factors have explanatory power of the democratization process in Georgia. Structure wise, the interview format is divided into 10 sections. After introduction questions about the person that is being interviewed, general questions are asked about the EU, as well as the role of Russia in Georgia's democratization process.

Furthermore, questions have been asked related to each of the FRIIC characteristics. The questions are posed clearly, but as said divided into sections. The interviews have been conducted in a flexible manner, and depending on the person with whom the interview is held, questions were either answered shorter or longer. As not all experts were directly involved with the EU's policies, such as the Dutch diplomats, specific questions about the ENP and EaP policies are sometimes left out. Furthermore, some of the interviewed have been listed as anonymous on their request¹⁴. When it comes to progressing the interviews, the statements by the interviewed will be summarized rather than written down. Bold statements or quotes are specifically mentioned word by word with quotation marks. The exact interview format can be consulted in section 9.1. of Chapter 9.

¹⁴ The diplomats I interviewed choose to keep their details anonymous as much as possible, because of possible neutrality concerns. Furthermore, the UN diplomat choose not to be recorded.

5. Georgia's democratization process

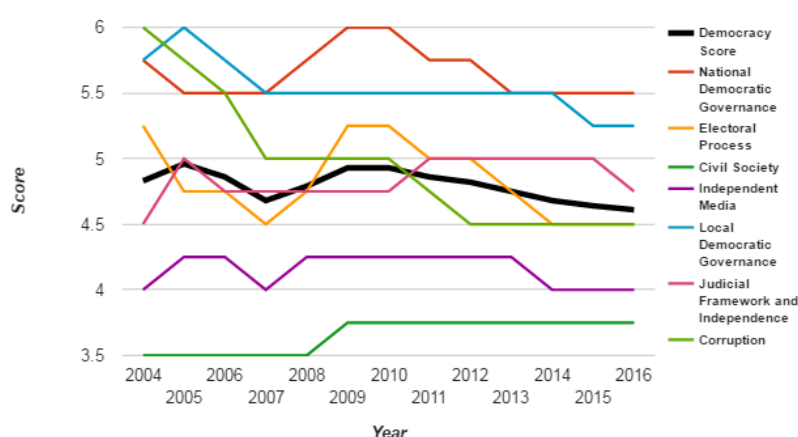
In this chapter, the answer to the first sub-question will be given with regards to how the democratization process has fared in Georgia from 2004 until 2015. We will first look at the general trends, before looking at each of the FRIIC characteristics of democracy individually. As stated, we will start off in 2004, the year in which the leader of the Rose Revolution, Mikheil Saakashvili, was elected as President, and after which the EU and Georgia sought closer ties.

5.1. General trends

A short sketch of the democratic developments in Georgia from 2004-2015 will be provided in this paragraph. Doing so, we will first look at The Nations in Transit Index by Freedom House, which looks at variables similar to FRIIC. It makes reports yearly over the past year. It measures democracy by looking at the stability and institutionalization of democratic institutions on national and local level, the electoral process, civil society, independent media, the judicial framework and independence of the judiciary and corruption¹⁵. Each factor is measured with democratic score from 1 as the most positive score to 7 as the worst score. An overview of these democratic developments according to this index between the begin of 2004 and 2016 can be seen in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1.: Democratic Developments Georgia 2004-2016

(Source: Nations in Transit Index)



The black line that goes down to a lower level shows democracy on average has improved since 2004, although slightly: from 4.83 in 2004 to 4.61 at the end of 2015. An initial

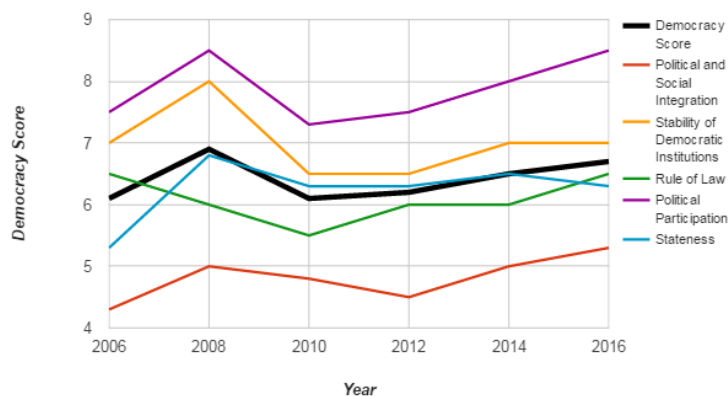
¹⁵ More information on the methodology of the Nations in Transit Index by Freedom House can be found here: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit-methodology>

backslide does take place during the transition of the regime change before making progress afterwards between 2005-2007. More remarkable is a negative trend in 2008-2009, as scores go up again before declining slowly afterwards. The score of 4.68 in 2007 is only matched again in 2014. When we take a closer look, however, at the individual aspects, we can witness that it is mostly corruption, democratic governance and the electoral process that have improved, while other factors such as the judiciary, the media and civil society have worsened or stayed the same. The differences between these factors require deeper investigation. In any case, Georgia has always been considered as a ‘hybrid regime’ according to the index.

According to another index, the Transformation Index of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, Georgia is still a defective democracy. The index has also covered Georgia’s democratic developments since 2004 and makes reports every 2 years, of which the report of 2006 covers the period of February 2003 until January 2005 while the last report of 2016 covers the period of February 2013 until January 2015. To some extent like the FRIIC characteristics and the Nations in Transit Index, it also focuses on factors such as the rule of law, media freedom, civil society, institutionalization and fair elections, but leaves out corruption, and emphasizes state powers more as well¹⁶. An overview of the democratic developments can be found in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2.: Democratic Developments Georgia 2006-2016

(Source: Transformation Index)



In the case of the Transformation Index, a score number of 1 up to 10 is used, which in this case means that 1 is the worst and 10 is the best score. As seen in the figure we can see some similarities, when it comes to the upswing up to 2008 and the backslide afterwards. The backslide is stronger in this Index. We will look into this in more detail later. In general, it

¹⁶ More information on the methodology of the Transformation Index by Bertelmann Stiftung can be found here: <http://www.bti-project.org/en/index/methodology/>

does come to the conclusion just like the Nation in Transit Index that democracy on average improved since 2003-2004: from 6.1 to 6.7, although democracy was supposed to be stronger at the start of 2008, with a score of 6.9, before plunging to 6.1 in 2010.

Based on the indexes, we can therefore conclude that on average it seems democracy has improved since 2004, when Mikheil Saakashvili and the UNM party that were more focused on the West took over, although there was a backslide right away following the regime change in 2004 and once again in 2008/2009, before improving again. We will now take a closer look at each of the FRIIC democracy characteristics. I will analyze each factor individually, and will also use additional sources such as secondary sources and the interviews I have held for my research with experts on the democratization process.

5.2.1. Fair Elections

One of the vital FRIIC components of democracy I assume is whether there are fair elections. As stated in the theory part, this factor covers whether elections are being held fair and free in the sense that everyone is allowed to vote, and whether there is sufficient choice without restrictions for parties and candidates to get elected. The Nations in Transit Index by Freedom House and the Transformation Index by Bertelsmann Stiftung can again provide a quick overview of the developments over time of whether elections have become fairer or not. We can see those developments in Figure 5.3. and 5.4.

Figure 5.3.: Electoral Process 2004-2016
(Source: Nations in Transit Index)

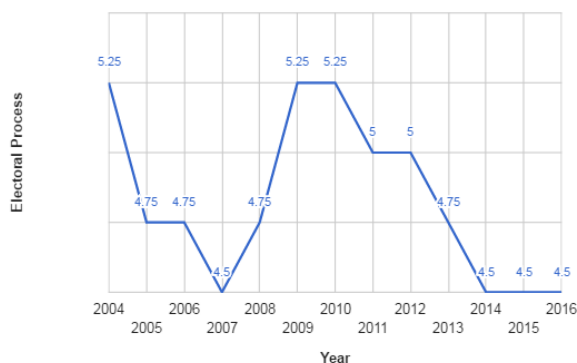
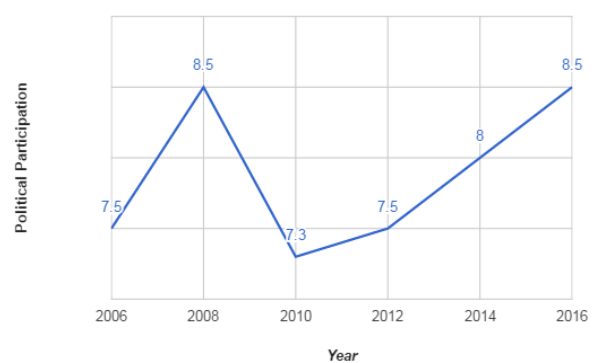


Figure 5.4.: Political Participation 2006-2016
(Source: Transformation Index)



The political participation score of the Transformation Index looks at fair elections together with assembly rights and freedom of expression. The electoral process measured by Nations in Transition Index looks at how democratically elections are organized, how the party system looks like and to which extent the populace is involved in the process of electing politicians.

Both indexes show¹⁷ that elections have become fairer compared to the starting period of 2004. However, the scores of both indicators are just as high according to the latest index compared to the indexes that cover the years of 2005-2007. This can be attributed once again to the backslide after this period, a negative trend which was only reversed later, and in a slow pace.

When we consult year by year developments and further sources, some more details can be observed. First of all, is that there was no strong opposition to UNM after the Rose Revolution, reflected by the lack of pluralism in the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in 2004 (Broers, 2005: 344). Georgia effectively became dominated by one party – UNM¹⁸ (Fairbanks, 2007: 56; Cheterian, 2008: 696). Part of this was due to post-revolution euphoria (Freedom House, 2005). The OSCE observed the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2004. While it was in general positive about the repeated elections, it nonetheless stated that the elections lacked a competitive environment (OSCE, 2004a; OSCE, 2004b). During the Presidential elections of 4 January, there was basically no viable alternative to the popular Mikheil Saakashvili that won 96% of the vote. During both elections, the boundaries between the state and UNM were blurry and the campaigns favoured UNM (OSCE, 2004a; OSCE, 2004b). Irregularities took place and electoral boards were politicized (Ibid.).

Local elections took place in 2006. The OSCE reported these favoured the ruling party again, as rival parties were hindered to organize themselves due to a presidential decree¹⁹ (OSCE, 2006). Electoral laws were changed in favour of UNM, due to a winner-takes-all system for local elections (Ibid.). Government activities and those of UNM were blurred, as state resources were used for their campaign (Freedom House, 2007; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008). Nonetheless, on average the elections were fairer than before. Conditions slightly improved, as laws were introduced to create a fairer level playing field. Electoral fraud also decreased. Free television time for political parties was also introduced and a new law on the financing of political parties (Freedom House, 2007). A problem that remained was the lack of a strong opposition to UNM (ibid.).

¹⁷ Important to take into consideration once again is that a higher score is positive for the Transformation Index, while a lower score is positive for the Nations in Transit Index.

¹⁸ This was symbolized by the fact UNM changed the official country flag to its UNM flag (Cheterian, 2008: 696).

¹⁹ This was because the President suddenly decided to hold these elections earlier (OSCE, 2006).

Early Presidential and Parliamentary elections were held in January and May 2008. Although more competitive, the elections were again in favour of the ruling UNM party because of the same earlier mentioned reasons election commission were politicized, state and UNM activities were blurry and UNM was covered the most in the media (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010). Pressure and intimidation were also exerted on the opposition. The election system was also changed in favour of the ruling UNM party, just before the elections²⁰ (OSCE, 2008a; OSCE, 2008b; Mitchell, 2008: 72-73). The opposition was still fragmented and undermined by electoral thresholds. Although the elections were one of the most pluralist and competitive elections (OSCE, 2008a; OSCE, 2008b), the atmosphere of polarization, intimidation, pressure in an environment that was favourable to the ruling UNM made the elections less democratic according to Freedom House (2009). This also applied on the Presidential elections of 2008, during which Saakashvili got to spend the most money (Jones, 2013: 159-160).

The local elections of 2010 were an improvement compared to 2006. However, similar problems remained present, as there was again an uneven playing field, reports of fraud as well as blurry campaign and state activities and state activities of certain public officials were again blurred. Certain opposition candidates were also pressured to withdraw their candidacy and there was a general continuing trend of pressure and intimidation on the opposition (OSCE, 2010). On the other hand, opposition parties were involved in the election councils and additional funding was provided. Further reforms by UNM with opposition parties following large scale protests were also discussed for more fair elections throughout 2010-2011 (Freedom House, 2011; Freedom House, 2012; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012).

The Parliamentary Elections of October 2012 were a milestone on one hand, as the incumbent UNM was replaced by the new Georgian Dream (GD) coalition. It was the first democratic transfer of power in Georgia (OSCE, 2012; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). The elections were very competitive and the crucial “‘must carry, must offer’” provision obliged media to provide platforms to the campaigns of opposition parties as well (OSCE, 2012; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). Earlier Council of Europe recommendations on electoral reforms were followed and implemented prior to the elections, such as a lower threshold to get into Parliament, and a guaranteed minimum number of seats. Additionally, a new law on campaign financing was

²⁰ The amount of majoritarian seats in the Parliament based on a winner-takes-all system that favoured the ruling party also increased from 1/3 out of all seats to 1/2 out of all seats (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010).

agreed on to create an equal playing field. But the most determining factor was that the billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili broke ranks with Mikheil Saakashvili and decided to take part in the elections and provide substantial funding to his political coalition, in which he united most opposition parties. On the other hand, state and party activities were once again blurred, and there were incidents of violence, intimidation and extralegal pressure, especially on the opposition. The elections were one of the most polarized. Many party activists had been harassed or intimidated, leading to detentions and fines of mostly opposition members (OSCE, 2012). The challenging GD coalition in turn also attempted to buy a lot of voters. This was made possible due to the fortune of its billionaire leader Bidzina Ivanishvili (Freedom House, 2013). Berglund (2014: 455-456) basically described the election fight as a show off between political and economic power between Mikheil Saakashvili and Bidzina Ivanishvili.

The Presidential Elections of 27 October 2013 led to another democratic transfer of power, as the candidate of GD, Giorgi Markvelashvili, beat the UNM presidential candidate. Amidst the campaign arrests of UNM politicians took place on a large scale. However, the campaign was less polarized compared to 2012 (OSCE, 2013; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; Freedom House, 2014). Fundamental freedoms were upheld and candidates were able to participate and campaign freely, although media gave less of a platform to independent candidates. In general, they were a showing of democratic maturing according to the OSCE monitoring report (OSCE, 2013). Candidates had more chance to express their views on the media and fewer incidents of violence and irregularities took place compared to 2012 (Freedom House, 2014).

Local elections in 2014 completed the transfer of power from UNM to GD, as GD won every local election, including the mayoral races. While it was an improvement compared to earlier local elections of 2010, it did follow the trend of the ruling dominant party automatically winning local elections as well, and pressure was exerted on voters by the GD²¹ (Freedom House, 2015a). Therefore, despite the progress compared to earlier local elections, it does confirm an undemocratic trend that the dominant party stretches its control over most of the country by nature. The ruling GD coalition also redrew electoral districts, using the same tools UNM did (Freedom House, 2015a; Freedom House, 2016). On the other hand, the strength of the GD is not as strong UNM was. The GD coalition has fallen apart, with

²¹ GD authorities claimed it could be damaging if their legislature would not be won by them, and that it could take “measures”.

individual parties deciding to contest the elections of 2016 by themselves, which could be more positive for a more pluralistic political landscape (OSCE, 2016; Freedom House, 2016).

Therefore, to conclude, following the Rose Revolution, elections were initially conducted fairer. However, the dominance of UNM and the lack of a strong opposition did not lead to a pluralistic political landscape. The ruling party also made it more difficult for the opposition to have a platform and organize itself. The real change came only after 2012, when the UNM was defeated by GD. After the break down of this coalition, a more pluralistic political landscape can be expected, leading to more competitive elections in the future, as long as GD does not use the same tactics to the same extent as UNM before to take out the opposition.

5.2.2. Rule of law

The next FRIIC democracy characteristic I will look at is the rule of law. As stated in the theory part, the rule of law refers to the extent basic rights are guaranteed by an independent judiciary, politicians do not stand above the law and corruption is sufficiently low. However, when looking at the rule of law, Georgia shows a mixed picture. Independence of the judiciary has remained a problem. On the other hand, the tackling of corruption in Georgia is considered as one of its success stories. The progress when it comes to corruption can be seen in Figures 5.5. and 5.6.

Figure 5.5.: Corruption 2004-2016
(Source: Nations in Transit Index)

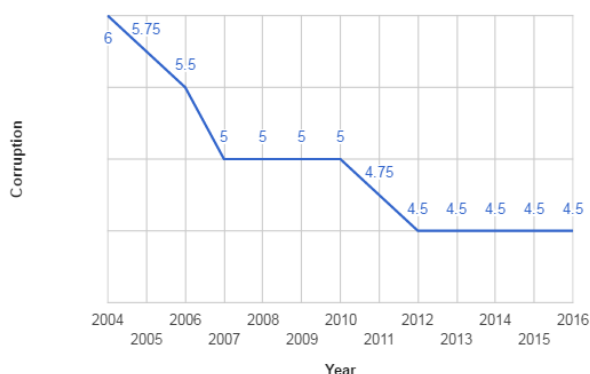
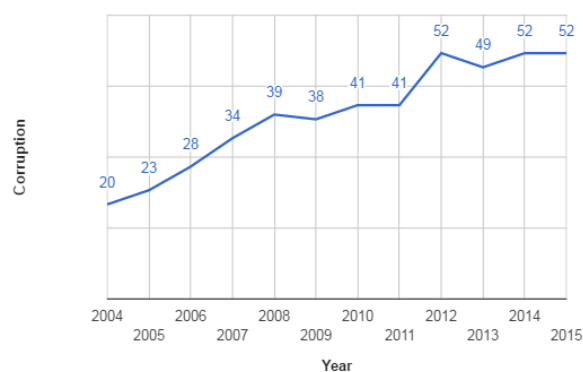


Figure 5.6.: Corruption 2004-2015
(Source: Perceived Corruption Index)



Both figures show a continuous positive trend, as the corruption score according to Nations in Transit went from 6 to 4.5, in which a lower score means a decrease in corruption, while the corruption score according to the Perceived Corruption Index by Transparency International²²

²² More information on the methodology of the Perceived Corruption Index by Transparency International can be found here: http://www.transparency.org/files/content/pressrelease/2012_CPITechnicalMethodologyNote_EMBARGO_EN.pdf

went from 20 to an astonishing 52, moving from a category of the most corrupt countries in the world such as Haiti, towards a category comparable to Central Eastern European countries, some of which it outperforms. A higher score for this index means a decrease in corruption. It has to be noted though that we can observe a stagnation of the score in the second UNM term between 2008-2010 and another stagnation recently. However, on average, it is clear Georgia has made huge progress when it comes to tackling corruption.

The details of these developments can be observed year by year as well. Corruption had been widespread before the Rose Revolution, as Georgia was one of the most corrupt countries in the world²³. Such corruption was also tolerated by the government (Freedom House, 2004). After being elected as President, UNM leader Mikheil Saakashvili made tackling corruption one of his core missions. Anti-corruption campaigns were pursued against former officials as well as current officials. Staff was fired on a large scale, while raising the salaries of remainder and new staff. The total staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for example decreased from 50.000 to 22.000. Furthermore, 15.000 police personnel were sacked, while raising the salaries of new recruits to tackle corruption (Cheterian, 2008: 701; Jones, 2013: 167; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006; Freedom House, 2005). One crucial example is the traffic police, which was disbanded altogether. New employees were subsequently recruited one by one. Afterwards, people were not harassed on the road anymore for random reasons (Freedom House, 2005). An independent agency was also created to monitor the police (Freedom House, 2006a).

The well-known university entrance exams, for which high bribes had to be paid, were also tackled (Cheterian, 2008: 701; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Freedom House, 2006b). This practice was also confirmed in several interviews. I held in Georgia, one of which had to pay a bribe herself when she was younger, while her current daughter did not have to face such practices anymore²⁴. Especially low-level corruption was effectively tackled (Fairbanks, 2007: 56), and a particular success story of the Rose Revolution (Cheterian, 2008: 701; Mitchell, 2009: 175).

²³ Before President Eduard Shevardnadze stepped down in 2003, he had little control over most of its own government authorities and civil service, which was characterised by 60 organizational units. Many had fake jobs, as they were more focused on entertainment rather than work. Some offices were simply empty. Over 65% of the jobs was suggested to have been filled as a result of corruption. (Jones, 2013: 166).

²⁴ Sopio Samushia, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European & Euro-Atlantic Integration, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The very corrupt tax and custom agencies were brought under the Ministry of Finance in one organization (Freedom House, 2007). High-level officials, including members of Parliament and former ministers were also charged for corruption allegation, although alleged of being selective and focus too much on party opponents. These concerns remained throughout 2007-2010 and became a bigger problem (Freedom House, 2008; Freedom House, 2009; Freedom House, 2010).

There was some stagnation afterwards, in the observed backslide period. However, corruption became more covered and exposed in the media later on. Measures to tackle corruption have also made it more difficult for powerful economic actors to manipulate the state for their own enrichment (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). More high-level businessmen, as well as a minister and a deputy minister, were charged for corruption (Freedom House, 2010; Freedom House, 2011). A new anti-corruption council was also established in 2009, which was to be aided by civil society groups (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). Transparency further increased due to online tax services, the publication of public jobs on websites. Public officials were also obliged to file their assets.

Elite-level corruption is still present however and cronyism has grown (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012; Fairbanks & Gugushvili, 2013: 118). Selective justice remains a problem, as those unfavourable with the government are handled while those in favour are not, suggesting an instrumental use of the fight against corruption (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012). More recent reports indicate high-level corruption is still “integral part of the system” (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). Many people close to Mikheil Saakashvili owned huge economic assets, showing the close links between the political and economic power in the country (Freedom House, 2013). Political control of state institutions decreased after UNM lost power in 2012 (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014). The new government led by GD since 2012 has set out to tackle elite corruption of previous UNM government (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; Freedom House, 2013; Freedom House, 2014; Freedom House, 2015a) In 2013, the Inter-Agency Anti-Corruption Coordination Council was created, which coordinates and monitors anti-corruption activities of different institutions and actors, and of which both government, judiciary and civil society members are part of (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016).

Despite these efforts, anti-corruption has stagnated again in recent years, amidst the mentioned accusations of nepotism²⁵ within government offices and an increase in politicization of the civil service, suggesting elite-corruption by UNM has been simply replaced by GD (Freedom House, 2016).

However, on average, especially in the first few years of UNM rule, corruption was high on the agenda and fiercely tackled, putting Georgia on par with certain Eastern European countries now, while being one of the most corrupt countries back in 2004. Given the recent stagnation under the new government, it remains to be seen whether it will be able to maintain this position and improve or even improve its record.

Another important part of a functioning rule of law is that the judiciary is independent and impartial. This has remained a problem in Georgia. In almost every interview, the judiciary was considered as the “problem child” of Georgia. This also becomes clear when we look at Figure 5.7., showing there has been no actual progress when it comes to the judiciary. It has rather stagnated most of the time, and even scores worse than before the Rose Revolution, according to the chart. Data from Bertelsmann Stiftung 2006-2016 shows a similar development of stagnation.

Figure 5.7.: Judicial Framework and Independence 2004-2016

(Source: Nations in Transit Index)



Before the revolution, it was already clear the judiciary was not based on the rule of law. Jones (2013) mentions several attempts to achieve a more independent judiciary were already

²⁵ Some GD Ministers even defended nepotism (Kupatadze, 2016: 122).

done before the Rose Revolution²⁶. Things seemed bright initially following the Rose Revolution, as the fraud Parliamentary Elections of 2003 were cancelled by the Supreme Court (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006). However, it turned out to be business as usual when the new government took over, which was systematically pressured. The judiciary also rarely disagreed with the public prosecutor and a close aid of Mikheil Saakashvili was appointed to the Supreme Court (Freedom House, 2005; Freedom House, 2006a). Public prosecutors influenced judges as well, which even supervised courts until 2006 (Jones, 2013: 151).

Attempts to realize an independent judiciary was made by raising their salaries over the years (Freedom House, 2005; Freedom House, 2006a; Freedom House, 2008). However, the judiciary remained subdued to the government (Broers, 2005: 345; Freedom House, 2005; Freedom House, 2006a; Freedom House, 2006b; Mitchell, 2006: 672). The new government also purged a part of the judiciary, by giving them rewards to resign, or by simply forcing them to resign. The fear of such also prompted judges to take decisions in line with the demands of the public prosecutor (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008; Freedom House, 2007). These practices were legitimized by government representatives for the reason they would be bribed by criminal gangs otherwise. Judges were used to secure government interests and strengthen the state, rather than protect its citizens. Targeting political opponents remained a problem (Jones 2013, 170).

When it comes to the Constitutional Court of Georgia, the President has no more right to directly appoint them since 2007. However, the President indirectly still influences the appointments (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010). This was also concluded by the EU Rule of Law Mission in 2007, which stated they had not met one independent judge (Jones, 2013: 171-172). Suspects were mostly automatically considered as criminals. Basic rights were not guaranteed, mass human right violations took place and people often did not have a fair process. This resulted in a sharp increase in the number of prisoners, from 6000 to 13.000. A lot of them suffered very bad health conditions and a lot experienced torture or died during their imprisonment (Freedom House, 2007).

²⁶ Gamsakhurdia tried to deal with this legacy by attempting to depoliticize the judiciary, extending their tenure and abolishing the appointment of judges by regional Soviets in 1991. Mikheil Saakashvili himself, back then as Minister of Justice in 1997, attempted an ambitious reform as well, although stalled in the end (Jones, 2013: 169).

Improvements were made when it comes to decreasing the period of pre-trial and trial detentions from 9 to 4 months and from 24 to 12 months (Freedom House, 2007) Furthermore, progress was made with an amendment to the Law on Common Courts, which realized more a more independent way of appointing judges by the High Council of Justice (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Freedom House, 2008). A new study to become a judge was launched in 2007 as well in which newly-trained judges were to become lifelong-servants, in order to guarantee (Freedom House, 2008).

Despite reforms, selective persecution continued, few people avoided being convicted, property rights were increasingly violated of those not favourable to the government while the amount of prisoners kept on increasing (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 693). Physical violence, confiscation, unlawful demolition of buildings and torture of people also increased over time (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Freedom House, 2009; Freedom House, 2010). Such practices were also exerted on high-level politicians, including the former defense minister of the old government, as well as a former close aide of the President that could have posed a challenge (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010).

The situation worsened in the following years. In 2010 over 22.000 people were in prison – up from 13.000 in 2006, with increasing reports these were in prison for political reasons. In 2012, systematic torture in prison was exposed, after which action followed (Freedom House, 2013). However, people were put in prison more throughout 2012 before the elections. The new GD government wanted to make the situation better, but launched a campaign of “restorative justice” instead, in which mostly former UNM officials were targeted (Freedom House, 2013), as the new government continued what UNM did to their opponents by making instrumental use of the law and judiciary.

The new GD government did come up reforms to depoliticize the High Council of Justice and separated the Prosecutor Office from the Ministry of Justice (Freedom House, 2014). In 2013, lifelong appointment of judges was also finally implemented, to promote the independence of judges, although a probation period of 3 years had to be endured first (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014; Jones, 2013: 171). Wrongdoings of the former government were exposed, although used for own political goals, including blackmail. The new government also released prisoners with an amnesty law. However, the list was set up preliminary, instead of selecting

conditions for people being granted amnesty, suggesting arbitrary motivations, rather than restoring justice (Freedom House, 2014).

Selective justice of former UNM officials continued, which included high officials such as the former Mayor of Tbilisi. Former President Mikheil Saakashvili was not spared either, which prevented prosecution by fleeing Georgia, while his relatives faced property confiscations. However, these practices did not continue as intense as under UNM, and trials did not always lead automatically to convictions, suggesting some improvements. The acquittal rate²⁷ also went down to more realistic percentages after having been over 99% between 2010-2012 (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; Freedom House, 2014; Freedom House, 2015a; Freedom House, 2016). One particular case is that of Rustavi2, a pro-UNM media outlet which was set to close due to a ruling by a lower judge, but was overturned later by the Constitutional Court (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016; Freedom House, 2016).

Therefore, to conclude, judicial independence and reforms to achieve this has been the most difficult aspect of the Georgian state to change over time. Jones considers it as the “invalid” of Georgia’s reforms (Jones, 2013: 168). In general, the judiciary has been used more as an instrument by politicians (Jones, 2013: 153). The Dutch diplomats have considered it as one of the weak points of Georgia²⁸, while Kornely Kakachia referred to it as a “disease”²⁹. Bertelsmann Stiftung (2014) considered the politicization of the judiciary as a legacy of UNM. The former UNM deputy foreign minister stated the judiciary was confused after the loss of UNM in 2012 over its rule, as some judges followed the line of the new government, while others functioned more as an opposition to the government³⁰. This suggests the judiciary is still far from independent and impartial. Furthermore, the judiciary, rather than becoming more independent, has rather become more partisan, with judges being proxies for either GD of UNM (Freedom House, 2016).

5.2.3 Information access

The third FRIIC characteristic I will look at is information access. In the theory part, I explained that information access is about whether citizens in general are able to have full access to information, whether it is from the media, or from the government. This also

²⁷ The proportion of people being convicted after being sued

²⁸ Dutch diplomats, personal interview, May 10, 2016.

²⁹ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

³⁰ Sergi Kapanadze, personal interview, May 6, 2016, Caucasus University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

depends on their transparency and on the ability of citizens and organizations to evaluate them. Furthermore, a plurality of views has to be provided by the media, which are independent without a clear bias for one or just a few parties. The scores of the media independence can be found in Figures 5.8. and 5.9. for which I consulted Freedom House's Nations in Transit Index and Reporters With Borders's World Press Freedom Index.

Figure 5.8.: Independent Media 2004-2016
(Source: Nations in Transit Index)

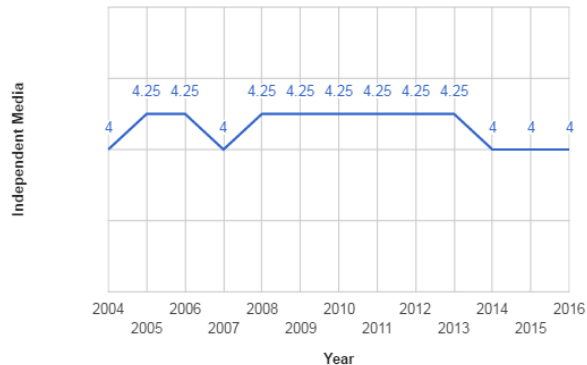
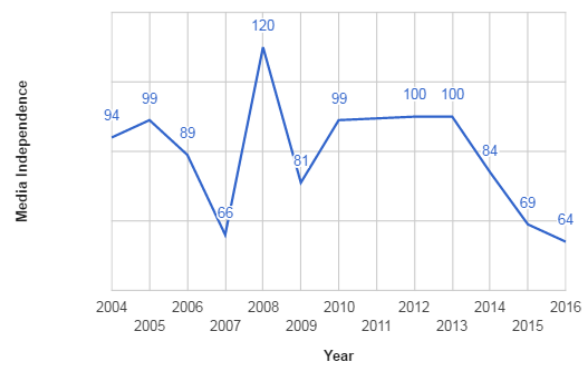


Figure 5.9.: Media Independence 2004-2016
(Source: World Press Freedom Index)



According to the Nations in Transit Index, the score of the independent media has remained the same over time, with a score between 4 - 4.25, as we can see in Figure 5.8. Bigger differences can be seen when we look at the World Press Freedom Index³¹ by Reporters Without Borders in Figure 5.9., which shows high scores³² for the years 2007, 2015 and 2015 that cover the years of 2006, 2014 and 2015 respectively. In 2007, it was ranked 66 out of 163 countries observed, and in 2016 it was ranked 64 out of 179 countries observed, suggesting the score was relatively better in 2007. In any case, the World Press Freedom Index shows a bumpier ride of the media independence in Georgia. For this, it is again important to look at the broader context and observe the year by year developments in Georgia.

Prior to the Rose Revolution, media were relatively free. While not comparable to Western standards, they were one of the freest of former Soviet countries, apart from the Baltics. Important to note is that the most important media source in Georgia was and is television, as due to poverty few could and can afford newspapers (Tudoroiu, 2007: 322-323). Television media played a huge role in criticizing the regime of President Eduard Shevardnadze before

³¹ More information on the methodology of the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders can be found here: <https://rsf.org/en/detailed-methodology>

³² A lower score means a more independent media. Importantly, is that the score is based on ranking, thus how good Georgia performs in this regard compared to other countries in the world, which explains some of the stronger fluctuation over the years

and during the revolution, as they exposed the electoral fraud committed (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006; Freedom House, 2005; Jones, 2013: 121-122; Tudoroi, 2007: 323).

UNM initially introduced reforms that fostered media freedom, such as the Law on Public Broadcasting in 2004. More protection for journalists was provided as well and both defamation and libel were decriminalized (Freedom House, 2005; Jones, 2013: 121-122). Afterwards, press freedom deteriorated however, as critical shows on television disappeared. Beatings and intimidation of journalists became more common. Licenses were also not given to independent media, and existing media Rustavi2 and later on Imedi became staunch pro-government channels (Mitchell, 2006: Jones, 2013: 123-124).

Access to information and media freedom were challenged due to self-censorship. Furthermore, media outlets such as Iberia and the Ninth Channel were closed down. Others such as Rustavi2 were either brought under government control or controlled by UNM friendly figures. Important political talk shows that criticized the government also stopped (Broers, 2005: 345; Mitchell, 2006: 673; Freedom House, 2005; Freedom House, 2006).

Improvements were seen in 2006-2007, as new political talks emerged on channels such as Imedi again that criticized the government and more freedom was given on public channels to criticize the government (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008; Freedom House, 2006; Freedom House, 2007). However, at the end of 2007, following anti-government protests, Imedia was shut down. Furthermore, the outlet was taken over by somebody close to the government, after its owner the billionaire Badri Patarkatsishvili died (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Freedom House, 2008; Freedom House, 2009). The remaining big opposition television channel Kavkasia was furthermore pressured by the financial police (Freedom House, 2008; Freedom House, 2009).

The freedom of press became worse than before the Rose Revolution, according to a report of Transparency International of 2009 (Jones, 2013: 124; Transparency International, 2009). Television and newspapers outlets were also mostly monopolized with personal links to UNM, and those independents that try to enter the market got pushed out by lack of advertisements and due to pressure (Jones, 2013: 125-128). Media also were highly biased towards the UNM, during elections, especially Rustavi 2 (Jones, 2013: 159-160). At some point the government seemed to be in control of most media (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010).

These negative developments were mostly confirmed in the interviews I held, including by the former deputy foreign minister of UNM³³. Erekle Urushadze of Transparency International claimed media independence simply worsened since the revolution^{34 35}. Following demands by the opposition and protests, some improvements took place as the public television channel GPB started providing coverage for different political actors and parties.

Furthermore, general access to information seemed to have improved as in 2010 internet access increased to 28.3% from just 7.6% in 2006, while social media such as Facebook began to play a bigger role (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014; Freedom House, 2011; Freedom House, 2012). The opposition slowly got control of more television channels and more anti-government television channels emerged (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014; Freedom House, 2012). Bidzina Ivanishvili that launched the GD Party had his wife control TV9, while his brother owned Global TV – which Bidzina Ivanishvili supported financially – and was alleged to indirectly control Maestro TV as well. This illustrated media independence was far away, although this did lead to more plurality (Freedom House, 2013; Freedom House, 2014).

Progress was made due to the “must carry, must offer” law that obliged television channels to provide a platform for different political parties, although it was weakly enforced. On the other hand, UNM favoured television channels close to them such as Imedi and Rustavi2 with tax benefits (Freedom House, 2013). Things seemed to improve following the ouster of UNM, as several media outlets seemed to become less partisan, and Bidzina Ivanishvili decided to close down TV9. Most of the people I interviewed were more positive of the changes since GD got into power. However, last year showed some worrying developments, as certain political talk shows were closed down, in which Bidzina Ivanishvili was suggested to play a role, and the main television channel Rustavi2, that is more UNM favourable, was almost shut down, before a higher judge prevented this (Freedom House, 2016).

Erekle Urushadze of Transparency International that I interviewed confirmed this worrying trend, although the government has more trouble than UNM before to close down media

³³ Sergi Kapanadze, personal interview, May 6, 2016, Caucasus University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

³⁴ Erekle Urushadze, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Transparency International, Tbilisi, Georgia.

³⁵ While not Figure 5.9., the media independence score was higher in 2003, before the Rose Revolution, with a score of 73.

easily³⁶. Although outside the analyzed time period, in February 2016 concerns were made by Transparency International that the GD government is attempting to bring the third most watched television channel Maestro under its control (Transparency International, 2016). This suggests a potential return to the past in the run up to the Parliamentary Elections of October 2016.

A further concern is that several pro-Russian and anti-Western media propaganda sources have emerged with no clear funding base (Freedom House, 2016). On a brighter note, electronic media started to play a more important role (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014; Freedom House, 2014; Freedom House, 2015a). Internet access was about 49% in 2014, rising from 43% in 2013, as the government strives to offer high-speed internet throughout the country by 2017. This suggests electronic media could become more important (Freedom House, 2015b), which could benefit general access to information, as freedom on the net is relatively high in Georgia according to Freedom House, with a score of 24 out of 100 in 2014, comparable to most Western European countries.

Therefore, most of the analyzed time period shows that media independence is difficult in Georgia, as it seems to have been mostly partisan, despite some upswings. Positive developments took place only after the ruling dominant party UNM was either weakened due to protests, but mostly after it was basically defeated following the Parliamentary Election of 2012. Ever since, things look more positive, although last year's developments prior to the elections of this year show at least an attempt of the ruling GD government to pursue the same media restriction tactics as UNM. Internet access and internet freedom have risen however, making the picture look more positive, although the media landscape is also being penetrated by pro-Russian and anti-Western actors that provide propaganda.

5.2.4. Institutionalization

The next FRIIC characteristic of democracy that will be dealt with is institutionalization, which refers to whether democracy is sufficiently anchored in laws and practices. This in order to prevent a backslide of democracy, preferably backed up by a constitution and potential powerful actors are constrained by structures like these. Important is also that the actors involved accept the rules of the game, and that there are thus no strong anti-democratic

³⁶ Erekle Urushadze, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Transparency International, Tbilisi, Georgia.

forces. Strong political parties in this regard can also be important for such containment. To analyze whether there have been improvements when it comes to this factor, we can again make use of the indexes of Nations in Transit by Freedom House, and the Transformation Index by Bertelsmann Stiftung³⁷. We can consult these in Figures 5.10 and 5.11.

Figure 5.10. National Democratic Governance 2004-2016
(Source: Nations in Transit Index)

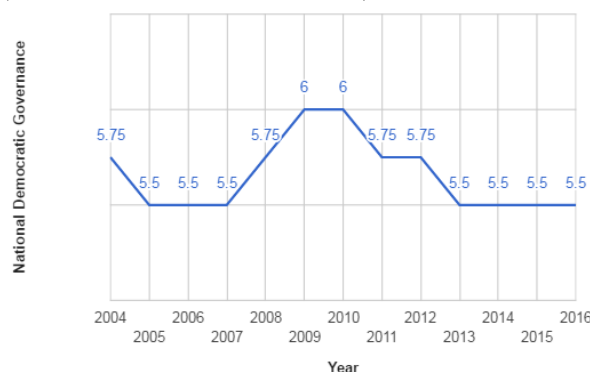


Figure 5.11.: Party System, Democracy Performance & Commitment 2006-2016
(Source: Transformation Index)

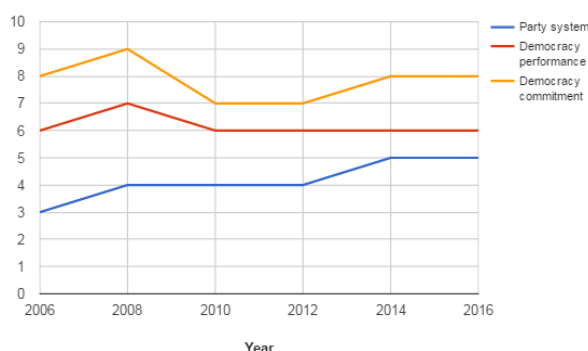


Figure 5.10. that there has been basically no change, as the stability and democratic character of Georgia scored 5.75 before the Rose Revolution, while scoring just 5.5 now. A backslide took place in 2008-2009. Figure 5.11. shows a more mixed result, as democracy performance and democracy commitment have remained the same, although again showing the backslide in 2008-2009, the years measured by its score of 2010. The strength of the party system has improved, from 3 to 5. This requires us again to look at the year by year developments.

Before the Rose revolution, democracy was weakly anchored in Georgia. Georgia had a Parliamentary system following its independence, but powerful figures like Gamsakhurdia in (1991-1992) and Shevardnadze (1992-2003) instrumentally made use of the constitution and laws for their own benefit³⁸. After the Rose Revolution, the new government focused on centralizing power, rather than empowering democratic institutions (Freedom House, 2005). This was symbolized by the person of Mikheil Saakashvili that won the Presidential Elections of 2004, two weeks after a strong presidential system was approved by the Parliament (Broers, 2005: 345; Freedom House, 2005; Freedom House, 2006a; Freedom House, 2006b; Mitchell,

³⁷ From the Transformation Index, the individual factor “Stability of Democratic Institutions”, is used which focuses on both the performance of democratic institutions, and the commitment of actors involved to these. Furthermore, as we highlight the importance of political parties, the component party system of the factor “Political participation” is used, that is focused on the strength/organization of political parties.

³⁸ Shevardnadze, for example, was for a while both Chairman of the Parliament as well as the Head of State. Furthermore, he consolidated these powers later on in the President function (Jones, 2013: 147-148).

2006: 672). He was considered by most people more a state builder rather than a democrat (Mitchell, 2006: 674).

The constitution amendment in 2004 for a semi-presidential regime was supposed to lead to more checks and balances. However, de facto the Cabinet of the Prime Minister was accountable to the President who could dismiss them, which he often did. At the same time, the legislative power of the Parliament was diminished (Freedom House 2005), as the President could make use of prerogatives. This system is therefore considered more a “super-presidential system” rather than a semi-presidential one (Jones, 2013: 148-149).

A persistent problem was that political parties have no social rooting, have low-membership and rather function as vehicles for leaders. This applies as well on UNM, led by Mikheil Saakashvili (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008; Freedom House, 2005). Instead of anchoring democracy in laws and habits, UNM and Saakashvili expanded power, effectively making Georgia a one-party state and blurring the lines between that of his political party and the government (Freedom House, 2007). Doing so, they basically continued the practices of former Presidents like Shevardnadze Gamsakhurdia (Jones, 2013: 143-144). This was confirmed in interviews as well. Sergi Kapanadze, a former Minister of UNM before, claimed centralization increased, as well as authoritarian tendencies by Saakashvili³⁹. The Parliament did not function as a check on power, since most legislative proposals were barely discussed and the opposition in the Parliament even boycotted its sessions as they had no say (Freedom House, 2007). The UN diplomat went further and stated the Parliament had basically become a rubber-stamp exercise⁴⁰.

In 2007, huge protests exposed the fragile state of democracy, which resulted in a political crisis and a state of emergency of 9 days. Protests were initially dispersed by the government with violence. Eventually, Mikheil Saakashvili agreed to earlier elections (Freedom House, 2008). Several sudden changes to the constitution also took place frequently, showing low respect for a democratic process by the actors involved, above all the President that also reshuffled his government several times, to secure his power (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Freedom House, 2008; Freedom House, 2009; Freedom House, 2010). This trend continued, as the Parliament barely functioned following the elections of 2008 (Bertelsmann Stiftung,

³⁹ Sergi Kapanadze, personal interview, May 6, 2016, Caucasus University, Tbilisi, Georgia

⁴⁰ UN diplomat, personal interview, May 10, 2016.

2010). The President also refused to give up powers, legitimizing these because it needed a strongman due to the conflicts with Russia (Freedom House, 2010).

However, discussions on a new constitution started in which the Parliament and other actors were involved, and in which recommendations by the Council of Europe were considered. Eventually, a new constitution for a parliamentary system was adopted in 2010, which would go into effect after the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections of 2012 and 2013 (Freedom House, 2010; Freedom House, 2011). However, the powers that were given to the Prime Minister showed it was more a “super-prime-minister system” according to Jones (Jones, 2013: 150), and a move according to some by Saakashvili to continue his rule (Freedom House, 2011).

Protests also took place frequently by those of the opposition who lost the elections in 2008, often resorting to violent protests in order to compensate for their weakness in elections, illustrating the low commitment by actors in Georgia to democracy (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010). This was confirmed in May 2011, as violent protests took place again, leading to the death of 4 people. The protests were led by opposition member Nino Burjanadze that used to be a member of UNM, and had favored escalation, to gain political power through undemocratic ways. On the bright side, other opposition members favored more negotiation with the government in a peaceful way (Freedom House, 2012).

The UNM government continued undemocratic practices. When billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili decided to enter politics in 2011, the government stripped him off his citizenship and attempted to shut down his bank (Ibid.). The trend of centralization and authoritarianism was only stopped in 2012, when UNM lost to the GD coalition of Ivanishvili. Crucially, UNM and Mikheil Saakashvili accepted defeat, showing a commitment to democracy (Freedom House, 2013; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014).

The GD government sought to depoliticize state institutions (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). UNM and GD also worked together in 2013 on curbing the powers of the President. Further constitutional amendments, which were done frequently under UNM rule, became more difficult as it would require the consent of 75% compared to 66,6% of all Parliament members, and would require two Parliament rounds (Freedom House, 2014). That new President of GD in 2013 Giorgi Margvelashvili did not have the kind of

unlimited power because of the constitutional changes. Importantly, he started to play a more independent role that is required of the President, and sometimes functioned as a counterweight to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet (Freedom House, 2015; Freedom House, 2016).

The Parliament began to slowly function more like a Parliament, with the UNM as a strong opposition. This is a big difference to UNM rule in which the opposition was weak (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014; Freedom House, 2014; Freedom House, 2015). The Parliament functioning remains weak however, and political parties rarely cooperate or perform their tasks to represent their electorate (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). Political parties still lack a strong member base and rooting in society.

Political parties are also still personalized, with a strong focus on leaders. They are also unresponsive to changing public opinion (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). During interviews I held, it was also confirmed that it is the case still now in 2016 that the Parliament barely does its work⁴¹. Bidzina Ivanishvili, which won the elections with his GD coalition and stepped down a year later in 2013, is still suggested to play a big role in politics behind the scenes, including in minister resignations such as those of the popular Defense Minister Irakli Alasania (Freedom House, 2015; Freedom House, 2016). Some refer to this new situation as “informal governance”, since the billionaire has been suggested to continue ruling the country through informal channels, without being able to hold accountable^{42 43}. Furthermore, it is assumed Mikheil Saakashvili, who now works as a governor in Ukraine’s Odessa, still has a big influence in UNM decision making, especially as he not out ruled returning to Georgian politics, despite having his citizenship stripped by GD and having faced prosecution (Freedom House, 2016).

To conclude, in many ways democracy has still not been anchored firmly in institutions and practices. The period of UNM rule showed a repeat of the past, as the party and its strongman leader dominated political life and did not tolerate much opposition. As Eduard Shevardnadze dominated politics during his rule, so did Mikheil Saakashvili during his. Opposition that did

⁴¹ In interviews it was confirmed it is even difficult to attract Parliament members for important international conferences. Attempts by the writer of this thesis to establish contacts with Parliament members for interviews, were all futile, with many having inactive email accounts, even from the European Integration Committee.

⁴² Sergi Kapanadze, personal interview, May 6, 2016, Caucasus University, Tbilisi, Georgia

⁴³ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

take place was often violent, showing low commitment to democracy. The same can be said of the government, which has resorted to intimidation, pressure and repression through informal channels. The first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in 2012 was crucial and Bidzina Ivanishvili and his GD coalition stopped the authoritarian trend. Pluralism increased due to their victory, and the President plays a more independent role now. Constitutional change is also more difficult now and it is no longer the case one political party dominates the stage. There is however still reason for concern due to suggestions Bidzina Ivanishvili still governs behind the scenes as some Wizard of Oz, undermining democracy (Berglund, 2014: 467; Freedom House, 2015; Freedom House, 2016). The Parliament still does not function properly either, despite some positive changes from 2012 onwards.

5.2.5. Civil Society

The last FRIIC characteristic I will look at is civil society. As stated in the theory part, civil society refers to non-governmental organizations that function as a link between society and state, maintain a check on power and help foster the interests of society. They can be professional associations, labour unions, think tanks etc. The Nations in Transit Index has a special factor contributed merely to civil society. The Transformation Index has this as well, although it calls civil society interest groups. Both of them have tracked their development over time and can be consulted in Figures 5.12. and 5.13.

Figure 5.12.: Civil Society 2004-2016
(Source: Nations in Transit Index)

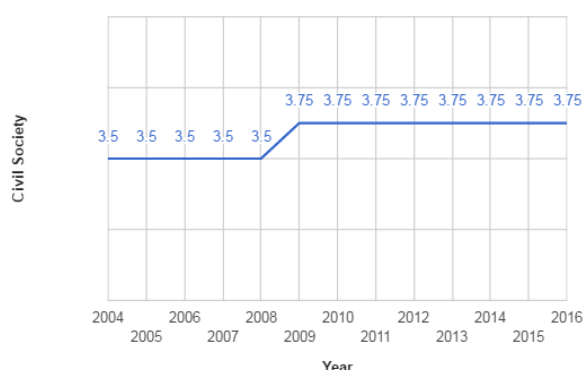
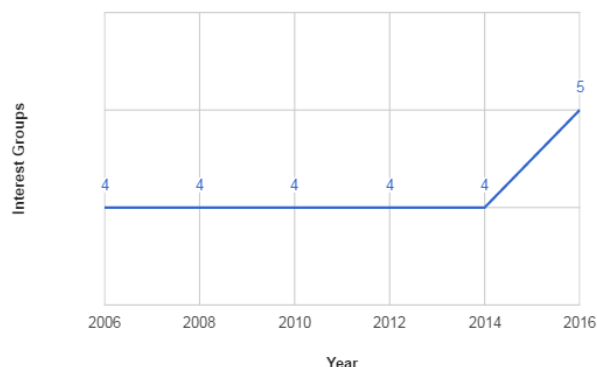


Figure 5.13.: Interest Groups 2004-2016
(Source: Transformation Index)



The figures show a barely changing civil society. However, it must be said that according to Nations in Transit, it is one of the strongest aspects of Georgia democracy, as it scored a 3.5 mostly out of 7, with a low score being positive for democracy. It has remained about the same according to the index, scoring 3.5 for a long time, before worsening slightly to 3.75 in 2009, following the backslide. The score is very good compared to the other factors in the

Transformation Index, which has ranked it mostly with a score of 4 out of 10, before reaching a higher score of 5 in 2016, which covers the 2013-2014 years. The reason for this is because the latter index puts more emphasis on traditional interest groups such as labour unions. Which are weak in Georgia, due to the Soviet legacy⁴⁴. Neither index provide clear insights into the details however, while based on my interviews and the consulted sources a lot of changes can be noticed over time, which I will describe in the next part as I will list the year by year developments.

In general, Georgia already had an established civil society in Georgia, which was sponsored by the West. It was stronger compared to other post-Soviet countries apart from the Baltics (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006). They had links with the government and took part in law designing and consultations. Furthermore and most crucial, they played an essential role during the revolution, as they were the ones who discovered the electoral fraud committed (Freedom House, 2004; Jones, 2013: 136).

When it comes to civil society developments since 2004, Jones (2013) mentions civil society suffered following the Rose Revolution of 2003 (Jones, 2013: 112-113). This was partly for natural reasons, since a lot of people that worked in the civil society sector, moved from civil society to the government from 2004 onwards. This weakened the watchdog role civil society used to play (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006; Broers, 2005: 345; Mitchell, 2006: 673; Cheterian, 2008: 699). This was also confirmed by almost all of the people I interviewed.

Initial reforms by UNM and Saakashvili did aim to strengthen civil society. Favourable civil and tax codes made it easier to register NGOs, and public councils were created as platforms for NGOs to exert influence. Capacities of NGOs also increased and they were more consulted by the government (Freedom House, 2005; Freedom House, 2006; Jones, 2013: 138). However, civil society became divided in those critical of the government, or in favour of the government, which led to alleged partisanship, as the government opted to cooperate with the latter (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008; Freedom House, 2006; Freedom House, 2007; Freedom House 2008). Funding also decreased by Western donors, on which NGO activities depended (Freedom House, 2009). These developments were confirmed in interviews. Erekle

⁴⁴ Most labour unions were basically sponsored Soviet institutions in Georgia. Strong labour unions also lack as most Georgians are either unemployed or self-employed, and thus have few incentives to organize themselves (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006).

Urushadze also mentions that foreign aid for civil society had stalled after the revolution, a trend that only changed in 2008/2009, when Western partners became wary about the centralization tendencies of the UNM government⁴⁵. Developments became more negative for civil society, as they were less involved by the government, their performance went down and they were less covered in the media (Jones, 2013: 138). The government increasingly even ignored civil society after the second UNM victory in 2008 (Freedom House, 2009; Freedom House, 2010). Many NGOs took upon their critical roles once again in 2008/2009, as international funding grew again. (Freedom House, 2010; Jones, 2013: 138).

A general weakness of civil society however was its representativeness, as they lack social rooting, limiting their ability to act as an intermediary between state and society (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2006). Kornely Kakachia also mentions the problem that civil society is focused on the capital of Tbilisi, neglecting most of the communities on the outskirts and rural areas⁴⁶. Many NGO workers are often out of touch with ordinary people in Georgia and to focused doing the kind of activities that international organizations favour, due to the financial dependence (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014)

In the years 2010-2011 civil society began to organize itself better again, and started to operate in coalitions, to promote certain topics such as media plurality. On the other hand, the Orthodox Christian Church and certain Orthodox Christian groupings – also labelled as uncivil society – started preaching more anti-Western values. They opposed granting equal rights to religious minorities for example, or responded to critique with violent protest on occasions (Freedom House, 2011; Freedom House, 2012).

Things got better around the Parliamentary Elections of 2012, in which the GD coalition won and took over from UNM. Civil society once again prospered according to a Polish diplomat and Dutch diplomats following 2012, as UNM figures moved to civil society, and civil society was given room again to criticize the government^{47,48}. This was also confirmed by Freedom House (2013; 2014; 2015). Just prior to the elections, student organizations took a role in antigovernment protests. They focused on prison abuse, following a scandal that

⁴⁵ Erekle Urushadze, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Transparency International, Tbilisi, Georgia.

⁴⁶ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

⁴⁷ Dutch diplomats, personal interview, May 10, 2016.

⁴⁸ Polish diplomat, personal interview, May 10, 2016.

emerged on the treatment of prisoners, which turned out to be crucial to the defeat of UNM. Students played an important role, just as did during the Rose Revolution, while not support a particular political party (Freedom House, 2013). In general, civic activity of students has also grown over the years, a notable development (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016).

Civil society was reported to have grown since, although a concern is that the issue of increasing partisanship (Freedom House, 2015; Freedom House, 2016). Self-organization of employees and employers also increased because of a new Labour Code, and which has led to more activity (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). A worrying trend is that the Orthodox Church is taking a bigger role in politics, often criticizing the influence of the West. Its Patriarch called upon the government to forbid a LGBT demonstration, and some Orthodox-Christians activists organized a violent protest against the LGBT rally. It has also opposed certain anti-discrimination laws against minorities (Freedom House, 2014; Freedom House, 2015).

Another point of concern is the emergence of pro-Russian NGOs, which are alleged to be funded by Russia, organizing events in support of the Crimea annexation and events and conferences on closer ties with Russia instead of the EU. Nonetheless, it does increase plurality in the NGO sector (Freedom House, 2015; Freedom House, 2016). Bidzina Ivanishvili, although supposed to have retreated from politics, expressed concern over Western NGOs such as Transparency International, classifying them as pro-UNM, which shows again a worrying trend, reflected also in a downturn of NGOs being involved in government decision making (Freedom House, 2016).

To conclude, civil society was quite strong already before the Rose Revolution, despite the explained lack of traditional interest groups such as labour unions. They played an important role in the Rose Revolution of 2003. However, what can be observed is that links between political society and political society have been too politicized. Structural problems are still present when it comes to funding. NGOs also lack sufficient social rooting, and are too focused on Tbilisi and big donor's wishes. The role civil society plays in democratization has become more ambiguous, due to the increasing role of the Orthodox Church and the rise of pro-Russian NGOs. On a positive note, young students are playing an increasingly important role, as shown as well in their role by exposing the prison scandal that played a role in the 2012 elections. Labour unions are also playing a more important role, although slowly. Furthermore, civil society is still one of the strongest elements of Georgia's democracy.

6. Explanations of Georgia's democratization process

In this chapter, I will answer the second sub-question with regard to which factors and actors had influence on Georgia's democratization, and to which extent. The first set of factors is endogenous explanations, for which developments inside Georgia will be looked at, that could explain the democratization process. The second set of factors I will look at are exogenous factors, to look at potential outside factors and actors that have influenced this process.

6.1. Endogenous explanations

Four endogenous factors will be discussed in this section: modernization, the role of legacy when it comes to culture/history, political society and finally civil society, which I consider as explanatory variables for bringing about democratization. When it comes to modernization, I will look at whether a certain economic development has taken place in Georgia that would foster modernization and democratization. Afterwards, I will look at the roles civil society and political society played in the democratization process. The final endogenous factor I will look at is legacy: the extent to which history, culture and the former institutional set up plays a role in the analyzed time period for democratization.

6.1.1. Modernization

First of all modernization. As stated in the theory part, modernization is about a certain kind of economic development that would foster the conditions for democracy, such as an emerging middle class, urbanization and a more differentiated labour market. We can first look at the economic progress Georgia has made since 2004, for which we can look at the Figure 6.1. for GDP growth and 6.2. for HDI growth.

Figure 6.1.: GDP growth Georgia 2004-2015
(Source: World Bank, 2016)

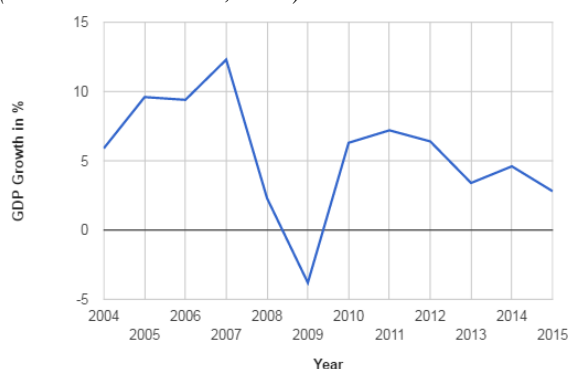
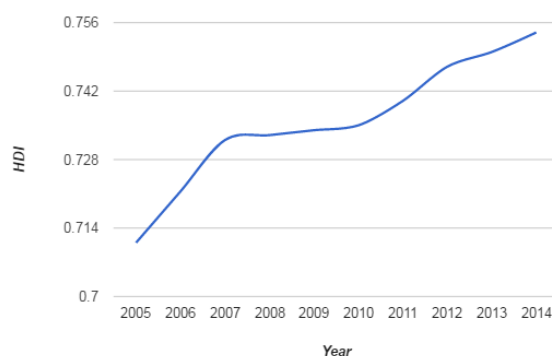


Figure 6.2.: HDI Georgia 2005-2014
(Source UNDP; World Bank, 2016)



The figures show Georgia experienced significant GDP growth since 2004. GDP per capita has increased significantly as well, which grew from \$ 928,00 per capita in 2003 to \$ 4.160,00 in 2015 (World Bank, 2016). The years of 2008 and 2009 show a downturn, as in these years, the war with Russia took place and the global financial crisis broke out. However, on average Georgia experienced more prosperity, especially in its early years. In the same period, it transformed from a high development country to a very high development country (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016), which we can see in figure 6.2., since the Human Development Index (HDI) improved from 0.711 in 2005 to 0.754 in 2014⁴⁹.

As stated in the theory part, GDP and HDI are indicators to establish whether economic development has taken place. However, we have to establish as well whether this has led to increases in education and urbanization as well, which are key components of modernization. We can see those numbers in Figures 6.3. and 6.4.

Figure 6.3. Gross enrolment tertiary education 2003-2014

(Source: World Bank, 2016)

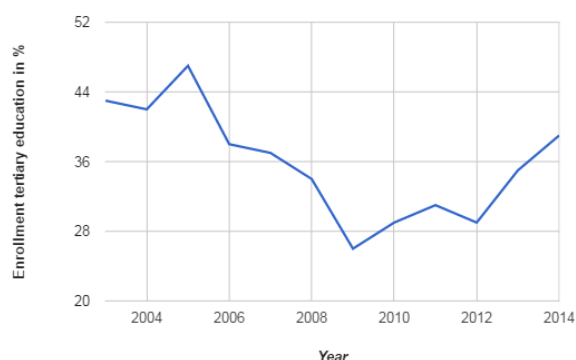
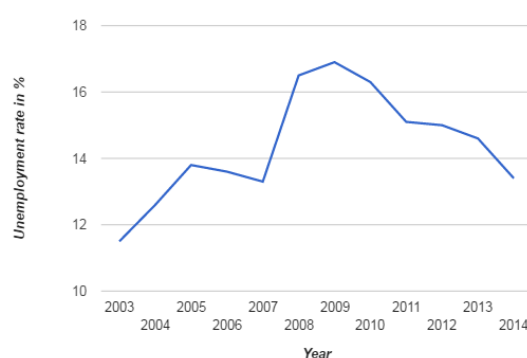


Figure 6.4.:Unemployment rate 2003-2014

(Source: World Bank, 2016)



The figures show negative developments, as the number of people that attend tertiary education after secondary education, such as university, has declined since 2003. After making an initial peak in 2004, levels dropped down and have not recovered. Therefore, despite better economic circumstances, fewer people made it to tertiary education. This negative trend already set in before the war in 2008 and the financial crisis, which led to a fall to 26% in 2009, but still now it has not bounced back to its earlier peak.

Another important factor is urbanization – the shift of people moving from rural to urban areas – according to modernization theory. However, urbanization has been the same since

⁴⁹ The period of 2005-2014 is chosen, as no data was available from the years of 2004 and 2015

2003 mostly, moving from 52% to 53% of the total population by 2013 (World Bank, 2016). The absolute number of people in urban areas has actually been decreasing significantly (Ibid). When it comes to industrialization that is related to the diversity of occupations – the move from agriculture to industrial or post-industrial jobs – we can look at the employment in the agriculture sector as a proxy. However, these numbers have remained the same. According to World Bank (2016) data, the portion of people working in the agriculture – mostly self-employed with small farms – was 54% in 2004 and has remained stable. According to data from 2015, it is still around 53%. Furthermore, employment in industry and services has hovered around 9-10% and 36-37% respectively (World Bank, 2016; National Charts Office of Georgia, 2016).

Therefore, not much diversity in occupations has been reached either. Apart from that, techniques have not increased much as well in the crucial agricultural sector. Most rely on outdated machinery, as they mostly have only subsistence agriculture. While over half of Georgians work in agriculture, only 8-9% of GDP is created by it (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). Additionally, when it comes to unemployment, overoptimistic figures are provided by the Georgian government, as they tweak unemployment figures favourable of those working in the rural areas of Georgia. Unemployment could otherwise be over 50% (Jones, 2013: 202). A recent poll by the National Democratic Institute (2016) measured that 63% of the Georgians still consider themselves as unemployed.

Social exclusion is still a problem, which is driven by low employment, low education attainment levels and a lack of access to health care, social assistance and credits (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). Inequality has also barely changed over time, as Georgia had a Gini coefficient of 0.4 in 2004, and was 0.4 still by 2013 (World Bank, 2016). Market liberalization reforms have furthermore weakened democracy. A particular example is the privatization of education, which has made it impossible for poor people to pay, which are again mostly concentrated on the rural areas of Georgia, and in effect reduce the chance for them to make use of political and economic chances (Jones, 2013: 109-111). This is also reflected in civil society participation, which emerges more from rich areas, as poorer areas fail to realize such representation of their interests. Jones (2013) in this regard considers the civil society sector as aristocratic, lacking infrastructural development because of inequality, extreme low civic participation, political instability as well as insufficient economic growth in the outskirts of Georgia (Jones, 2013: 109-111). Kornely Kakachia stated as well that civil

society in Georgia is too focused on Tbilisi, rather than on the outskirts⁵⁰, illustrating the link between civil society and modernization as well.

Jones (2013) later on points out that since 2003, urban-rural divisions have only increased as rural life is still characterized by high levels of poverty, bad health and low education. In comparison to other countries, Georgia also barely spends money on its rural areas, making it impossible for these communities to lift themselves out of poverty, especially as they are exposed to fierce competition due to globalisation and increased free trade (Jones, 2013: 132-133). Jobelius (2011) states Georgia's focus on an extreme model of liberalization without social protection has been at the cost of the weakest in society such as agricultural workers, employees, small entrepreneurs and consumers, making them unable to climb the economic ladder and exercise their political rights (Jobelius, 2011: 4-5). Therefore to conclude, while economic progress did take place, this has not been the kind of economic development according to the modernization theory that would bring about democratization.

As suggested in the theory part, democratization could also emerge by the break down of monopolies as a result of liberalization of the economy. Sources of accumulating political power are broken up as capitalism changes the balance of power in a country, giving more room for other actors (Vanhanen, 2003: 9 Rueschemeyer et al., 1992). However, during UNM rule, parts of the economy were basically taken over to consolidate its control. Strong opponents with political and economic power were taken out. Expropriation was common practice as argued earlier (Freedom House, 2009). The UNDP diplomat I spoke to said that basically an atmosphere of fear emerged in society, as it became taboo to challenge the government, as repercussions could be expected⁵¹. Such stories I also came across when talking to people during my stay in Georgia, as even local businesses were intimidated to comply with policies set out by the government and hand over property.

Therefore, economic development and the liberalization of the economy did not lead to the rise of actors translating their economic power to political power, in order to oppose the government. It has been rather the contrary, as the emergence of the UNM political monopoly, led to attempts to create a subsequent UNM economic monopoly as well. It attempted to oppose the billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili as well, which was initially favourable to Mikheil

⁵⁰ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

⁵¹ UN diplomat, personal interview, May 10, 2016.

Saakashvili and UNM (Freedom House, 2012). He faced several repercussions as well, one of which being the loss of his citizenship, which was only restored after the election of the GD party. He used his economic capital to unite and sponsor the different opposition parties under the umbrella party of GD (Freedom House, 2013; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014).

However, his rise can not be explained by economic development that took place according to the theory, as the economy increasingly became dominated by UNM and their allies. The new GD government has sought to reverse this practice, and made the environment slightly more favourable with more anti-monopoly legislation to tackle monopolies and elite corruption, and prevent companies from getting privileges due to their political ties. This was also to please the European Union by abiding to the requirements for the DCFTA (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016). It remains to be seen whether the future balance of power in the economy would change and disperse economic power due to these reforms.

6.1.2. Civil society and political society

Other endogenous factors that could play a role as argued in the theory part are civil society and political society. These endogenous factors will be analyzed at the same time due to their often mixed nature, which was the case in Georgia to a large extent.

As argued in the theory part, political society is strongest when it cooperates closely with civil society, especially if both consist of pro-democracy actors (Haynes, 2012: 3 & 6). In Georgia, it was often the case these links were fluid (Jawad, 2005: 27). In this regard, we can again look at the events prior to the time period analyzed, as civil society groups such as the student movement *Kmara* had strong links with political society⁵². This does not mean civil society groupings and their goals have had broad support over time by the wider society, as they were often considered as elitist, centred in Tbilisi and neglecting the interests of the outskirts of Georgia, as mentioned earlier. Their influence therefore should not be overstated either, especially as they were dependent on the West (Nodia, 2005a: 10-11).

⁵² This movement as well as other civil society groupings were mostly dominated by figures that had close links to UNM or would later move to UNM, a so-called political fusion (Broers, 2005: 342-343). Some even considered it as an alliance that did not just include UNM and civil society, but also Rustavi2, a popular television channel (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 690). Civil society therefore played a crucial role in the revolution that was meant to make Georgia more democratic in 2003, when the pro-democracy movement gained political power (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 691-692).

When we look at the Rose Revolution, it was the role of civil society what made it possible to criticize the government and also helped foster a mobilization against the Shevardnadze regime⁵³. However, as described in 5.2.5. civil society lost influence after the Rose Revolution. One factor was that UNM increasingly ignored them (Freedom House, 2009), illustrating the alliance between political society and civil society rather was rather one of convenience⁵⁴. It also shows civil society's role in fostering democratization can be ambiguous, or undermined once the new power does not need it anymore. Additionally, civil society was weakened due to decreased international funding, as international donors expected democracy had been or would be achieved (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 694).

However, there have been some moments in which civil society had influence. In November 2007 anti-government were held. People called for more democracy as well as improving life standards, showing the willingness of Georgian people to go to the streets again if needed (Jones, 2012: 9-10). The protests prompted President Mikheil Saakashvili to hold earlier elections in January and May 2008 (OSCE, 2008a; OSCE, 2008b). However, this was only after escalation as the protests became increasingly violent and international intervention was required to prevent further crackdown by the government. For this reason, the events were more regarded as a trauma and the failure of political dialogue (Cornell & Nilsson, 2009: 256). Certain civil society links with the government were narrow, as some automatically supported them, also later protests. Some of them were awarded governmental jobs later, showing parts of civil society were co-opted by, constraining the check on power function of civil society (Berglund, 2013: 791-92; Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 695-697).

When it comes to a countervailing oppositional political society, such was blocked by President Mikheil Saakashvili and UNM. Electoral laws were often changed shortly before elections and made the electoral environment more favourable to them⁵⁵. A general atmosphere of fear was also created in which incentives were given for business to align with UNM and Saakashvili, rather than to oppose him (Berglund, 2014: 450-451; Jones, 2013: 153-155). Political society and its check on power is also weak due to the weakness of the

⁵³ In this regard the mentioned *Kmara* movement – literally meaning “enough”, cooperated closely with UNM and played a role in ousting the regime by monitoring the fraud elections and organizing protests afterwards that were covered by the Rustavi2 channel (Broers, 2005: 340-342; Freedom House, 2006a; Nodia, 2005a: 9).

⁵⁴ We can see this in the events after the Rose Revolution, as first of all a lot of the people working in the NGO sector moved to government positions, having opened the doors to influence.

⁵⁵ For example, as described in section 5.2.4., media outlets were shut down and economic assets were taken away from crucial rich opponents.

Parliament, as stated earlier in section 5.2.4. Members of the opposition often boycotted the Parliament altogether (Jones, 2013: 153-155).

Political society has some general structural weaknesses as well. They fail to be representative by promoting different policies people want and have low-membership (Jones, 2013: 114-118). They rarely institutionalize, are fluid and too focused on leaders⁵⁶ (Bader, 2008). Minorities in particular are underrepresented due to the party-list system and because of electoral thresholds (Jones, 2013: 153-155). Political debates are often not substantive and more personalized, instead of discussing party program differences, as people in turn rather vote for leaders (Jones 2013: 114-118). Politicians are also mostly power focused. This was also illustrated by the 2007 protests, in which opposition politicians demanded merely liberal reforms to enhance their relative power, while not focusing on crucial socio-economic subjects for whom the protests were also held (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 697).

Political society and civil society was only boosted by 2011. As a result of anti-government protests that year, the “must carry, must offer” reform was realized⁵⁷. This reform resulted in more television time for opposition parties to be broadcast nation-wide, and was part of the reason GD beat UNM in 2012. The EU together with the US pressured Georgia to do so, together with civil society organizations (Pokleba, 2016: 11). That year billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili also entered politics, which created a new party as well as an alliance, for which he provided sufficient funding to mount a challenge. He also set up his own television channel TV9 for this (Freedom House, 2013; Berglund 2014: 455-456). However, this did not demonstrate a natural emerging strong political society, but rather a sudden rupture when he broke ranks with President Mikheil Saakashvili.

However, what was crucial, is the role student protests played in 2012, just prior to the Parliamentary Elections that protested over the prison scandal, and shifted public opinion in favour of the opposition. Just before, UNM was predicted to win (Freedom House, 2013). Importantly, the student protests were not aligned to any political party. In general, civil society thrived again after UNM lost. Part of this reason is again natural, as UNM figures

⁵⁶ The alliances of Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze also crumbled down after they lost power.

⁵⁷ Sopio Samushia, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European & Euro-Atlantic Integration, Tbilisi, Georgia.

moved to civil society, such as the former deputy foreign minister of UNM I spoke to. It does highlight the problem of potential partisanship in civil society.

Furthermore, according to reports by Freedom House (2013; 2014), civil society is increasingly involved them when it comes to providing advice and decision making⁵⁸. This was also confirmed in interviews. Civil society representatives have also been given more talking time on television. Nonetheless, civil society is still considered as weak due to the lack of social rooting, while the political arena still seems to define everything according to Pokleba (2016: 12), suggesting real democratic change can only come about if the political society is favourable to it. A notable development was that Bidzina Ivanishvili declared in 2013 that after stepping down he would help develop civil society to hold government accountable, for which he would provide funds (Berglund, 2014: 466; Civil Georgia, 2014), although this could also confirm the worry if they would be simple party-substitutes.

To conclude, links between civil society and political society is what made the former so successful, but undermined it as well, as they were often substitutes for political parties, making them lose credibility and influence. Therefore, this link is not necessary positive for democratization, although having functioned as a countervailing force to authoritarian rule such as during the Rose Revolution. This can be said as well of the protests of 2007, that resulted in earlier Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, and the 2011 protests, which helped foster the creation of a new constitution and the implementation of a law that would provide more equal presentation for political parties in the media. Additionally, the 2012 student protests were essential in ending the authoritarian trend by UNM. However, civil still lack social rooting and are dependent on external funding, showing the link with exogenous factors. More importantly is whether they are allowed to provide critique to the government and are involved in decision making. This all depends on the attitude and power of the ruling government, showing it has a role in democratization, but a rather shaky and uncertain one.

6.1.3. Legacy

I will now look at the role of Georgia's legacy in its democratization path. Important to know where Georgia as a country has come from. Most of the interviewed also stated Georgia's

⁵⁸ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

history and legacy should be taken into consideration, when looking at its democratization path. This was stressed by Kornely Kakachia⁵⁹ who emphasized the economic and political difficulties Georgia went through in the 90s, but also by Sopio Samushia which highlighted Georgia was basically a failed state at the time⁶⁰.

Following its independence, Georgia had a volatile history of conflict, fight for power, civil war, separatist conflict and Russian intervention. This made Georgia throughout the 90s up to the Rose Revolution a weak state. Its neighbours faced similar challenges⁶¹. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first popular elected President of Georgia in 1991, made conflict with separatist regions (Fairbanks, 2004: 111). Georgia was additionally facing economic collapse, while moving away from Soviet Union structures (Jones, 2013: 53-54). Gamsakhurdia centralized power in his hands, but alienated its people (Jones, 2013: 56-61), polarizing society and demonizing both the USSR and later the US (Jones, 2013: 62-63; Fairbanks, 2004: 111). He was no friend of democracy, cracking down on opposition and media (Jones, 2013: 64-68). Gamsakhurdia's rule ended after a civil war in September 1991 between supporters and opponents of his rule. His rule was ended by a military coup (Jones, 2013: 68-73). Tbilisi came out damaged and 113 people died (De Waal, 2010: 134-135). Gamsakhurdia went into exile but kept strong support in Samegrelo, a province in the West of Georgia.

The new military council brought in Eduard Shevardnadze, an old communist, to bring back stability. However, the next period of 1992-1995 was characterized by hyperinflation and further economic decline, while it could not control its territories. (Jones, 2013: 75-77). Conflict with South-Ossetia that started in January 1991 was only stopped in June 1992. That same year in August-September, a war erupted with Abkhazia, resulting in an intervention by Russia. The military and later state council was furthermore unable to govern in unity, from which Russia profited (Jones, 2013: 78-85). In October 1992, Shevardnadze centralized control by becoming Chairman of the Parliament, a function comparable to President at the

⁵⁹ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

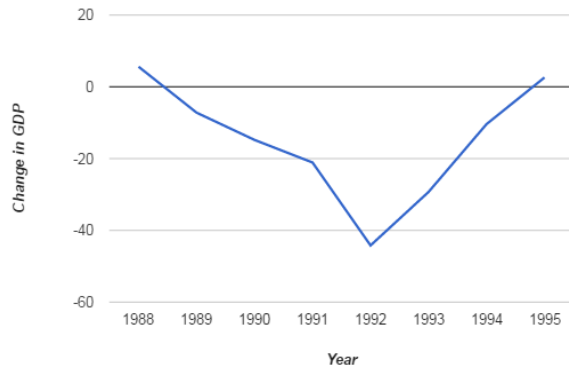
⁶⁰ Sopio Samushia, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European & Euro-Atlantic Integration, Tbilisi, Georgia.

⁶¹ Armenia and Azerbaijan in the region experienced their own difficulties following independence in the 90s, and all got ruled by clans in the end (Fairbanks, 2004: 111). Nationalism was on the rise, and minority rights were curbed. Political leaders across the region opted for confrontation, rather than building bridges.

time (Jones, 2013: 87-94). The economic downfall⁶² over the years since independence can be seen in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5.: Development of GDP in Georgia 1988-1995

(Source: World Bank)



The war in Abkhazia was eventually lost by Georgia (Jones, 2013: 94-98). Additionally, rebels aligned to former President Gamsakhurdia launched a rebellion in Magrelo (De Waal, 2010: 163). Power struggles continued until Shevardnadze marginalized his generals and took out Gamsakhurdia, while he personalized his rule (De Waal, 2010: 189; Jones, 2013: 98-102; Fairbanks, 2004: 112). Small progress was made from 1994-1995 onwards as the country slowly recovered, military groups were disbanded, further conflict with separatist regions was prevented, ties with the West were improved and foreign investment was attracted (De Waal, 2010: 189; King, 2001: 96; Jones, 2013: 102-104).

Despite the progress, Georgia hardly functioned as state, as the government could not control its regions. There was lawlessness and the police functioned more like a mafia organization. Furthermore, the state could barely collect or providing basic public goods (King, 2001: 100-103; De Waal, 2010: 189-190). Georgia also had no control over the region of Adjara, which functioned as a mafia state and was ruled by Aslan Abashidze (De Waal, 2010: 189). Georgia's GDP did grow 6% on average between 1995 and 2003 and some positive conditions for democratic institutions were created such as allowing civil society, and allowing a relative free media (McFaul, 2005: 7-8).

However, under Shevardnadze's rule, all elections were rigged. He later on curbed the freedom of the media and reversed democratic reforms (King, 2001: 98-100). Furthermore,

⁶² Economic downturns of GDP were as severe as -7.2%, -14.8%, -21.1%, -44.2%, -29.3% and -10.4% in the years between 1989 and 1994.

the last few years of Shevardnadze between 2000-2003 were characterized by drift, corruption and authoritarian tendencies (De Waal, 2010: 190). Foreign Chechen and jihadist fighters entered the country freely while criminal gangs dominated the capital. Shevardnadze lost support amongst his allies, including the crucial young reformers (Cheterian, 2008: 693-694). This eventually led to a split in his own party the Citizens Union of Georgia (CUG). Young reformers such as Mikheil Saakashvili left the party later and established own political parties (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016: 3; Devdariani, 2004a: 81-82).

Efforts in the last years of Shevardnadze to further crack down on the media and NGOs were without success or even backfired as his rule weakened. Shevardnadze was already weak at the time and widely exposed to be corrupt by media (De Waal, 2010: 190-191; McFaul, 2005: 8-10; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016: 3-4). He was eventually forced to step back following mass protests after fraud was exposed with the Rose Revolution (De Waal, 2010: 191-192). Therefore, Georgia after reaching independence was characterized mostly by bad leadership, continuous conflict, political turmoil, economic decline and lack of control of its territory while the state barely functioned and wasn't able to provide basic services.

However, as illustrated in this chapter, the new rulers took over a troubled Georgia. Important to keep into consideration is that the new regime that took over in 2004 had to deal with a regime based on personal rule rather than democratic institutions by Eduard Shevardnadze (Freedom House, 2006a; Freedom House, 2006b). Apart from that, it inherited a state that was considered by most either a weak or even a failed state (Cheterian, 2008: 694). The rule of law barely functioned. On the eve of the Rose Revolution, the President of the Supreme Court of Georgia highlighted there was still a totalitarian mentality among the judiciary and characterized by legal nihilism, poor training, and the inability to apply new laws in old structures. Most judges did not have high earnings, making them vulnerable for bribes (Jones, 2013: 169). Another problem was the fact that the public prosecutor office – the Procuracy – was formerly a part of the Soviet executive (Jones, 2013: 151), suggesting that which is referred to as the “judiciary” in Georgia, was rather an extended arm of the executive.

Kitschelt (2001) and Lewis (2012) have mentioned the former set up of society can be important for its future. In the case of Georgia, Kitschelt (2001: 70-71) mentions the inheritance of a patrimonial society, in which the focus was on leaders and where the public and private sectors were mixed. Furthermore, civil society had a weak base since traditional

interest groups in Georgia during Soviet rule were either forbidden or were simply hollow Soviet institutions. This made it difficult to establish labour unions for example. Institutions that did exist during Soviet rule, including political parties were viewed with scepticism, as they were all Soviet controlled (Berglund, 2013: 781).

The regimes that followed after Zviad Gamsakhurdia, first by militias that had staged a coup, and later that of Eduard Shevardnadze did not make things better either. They essentially discredited post-Soviet institutions. Former imperial rule had already alienated its people from the state, but these regimes continued the trend of rulers exploiting the state and its people for personal gains (Berglund, 2013: 780). Corruption and criminal mafia gangs thrived, as Georgia had one of the worst criminality rates in the region (Cheterian, 2008: 693-694). Laws and procedures were frequently violated, and people were dependent on powerful elites as patrons to assure their well-being (Berglund, 2013: 781-782). This trend continued, as powerful political and economic elites switched to emerging elites like Mikheil Saakashvili, prior to the Rose Revolution, as Eduard Shevardnadze was expected to lose power (Berglund, 2013: 783-786).

After Mikheil Saakashvili got into power, he had to deal with the legacy of a weak state. As illustrated already in section 5.2.2., he took on the corrupt and criminal legacy that Eduard Shevardnadze left behind by tackling corruption heavily. While his approach was controversial, he did help solve the problem of a weak state. He took on the mafia and realized the state was able to perform basic tasks again with these state-building efforts such as tax collecting and providing basic services again. In turn, he partly solved the problem of alienation people felt from the state (Berglund, 2013: 786-789), as Georgia in some regards became less corrupt than the new EU member states of 2004 and 2007. Elite-corruption was maintained however, as argued in section 5.2.2.

UNM and Mikheil Saakashvili did continue another legacy of Georgia: that of the former authoritarian patrimonial regimes. Jawad (2005: 26) early on already mentioned this was reflected in the charismatic rule of Mikheil Saakashvili. As stated in sections 5.2.1., 5.2.2. and 5.3.3, he centralized power while using the judiciary, the legal system and the media to do so. Private and public spheres were mixed, as with previous regimes. Mikheil Saakashvili used

divide and rule tactics⁶³ to take out opponents with economic and/or political power, while he allowed others close to him to enrich themselves, or co-opted them as observed before. He was only stopped to continue his rule as Prime Minister in an enhanced constitution if Bidzina Ivanishvili, a billionaire had not challenged him as analyzed before.

As analyzed in earlier parts, the new strongman Bidzina Ivanishvili sought to deal UNM's legacy. He did so by stepping down after he had served as Prime Minister for one year in 2013. Doing so, he claimed Georgia should move away from the traditional messiah-authoritarianism (Civil Georgia, 2013b). He closed down his private channel Channel 9 as well, showing that although the messiah-authoritarianism haunted Georgia for a long time, it seems to be playing a less big role now (Berglund, 2014: 466-467). Ivanishvili seems to shy away from the practices of his predecessor. Many of the interviewed also stated there was more freedom following the end of UNM rule, as civil society groupings were again involved in decision making as well. It remains to be seen if this legacy will not haunt Georgia again, because of Bidzina Ivanishvili's alleged "informal governance". The following elections and transfers of power will be crucial in order to determine whether this is the case. Bidzina Ivanishvili did state he would keep on criticizing the government if needed through informal channels and through the media (Civil Georgia, 2014).

Another legacy Georgia inherited was one of conflict, struggle and war. Independence was reached at a high price. Structural ethnic divides were present in Georgia. This lack of national unity and such ethnic cleavages, make the path towards democratization quite difficult, as stated in the theory part. Ethnic groups can form a potential obstacle to democratization, especially if they consider themselves as a nation that should be outside the state and are active with their calls for autonomy or even militant, also depending on whether their being oppressed or not (Kitschelt, 2001: 70-71; Linz & Stepan, 1996: 29-36), both of them which were the case⁶⁴. In this regard, the notion of Lewis (2012: 15) holds that in order for democratization to prosper properly, state borders need to be clearly defined and there has

⁶³ This was also shown for example by the fact he reshuffled his Cabinet continuously, showing that loyalty to him was the only way of being guaranteed protection under his rule, continuing patrimonial traditions of former rulers and regimes (Berglund, 2013: 795-797).

⁶⁴ At the time of independence, around 30% of the population consisted of minorities (Berglund, 2013: 778; Zürcher, 2007: 117). The first leader of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia, following its independence, turned these ethnic divides in explosive cleavages, as Georgia mostly experienced civil war and conflict in its early years of independence, and failed in exerting control over all the territories of Georgia (Berglund, 2013: 775).

to be territorial integrity. There was no national unity in Georgia, as with the Yugoslav federation, and this posed problems following its break-up.

The Soviet legacy also becomes relevant here when it comes to explaining the deeper causes of the separatist conflicts. During Soviet rule, different ethnicities in Georgia were institutionalized. They had Autonomous Oblasts and an own territory, despite the fact ethnicities were basically spread across the country, and Georgians were a plurality in most of these areas⁶⁵ (Berglund, 2013: 777). These were instrumental for the Soviet rulers to keep control and play the different ethnic groups or nations against each other, and also incentivized these distinct nations to organize themselves based on their ethnicity, as some had been granted the organization setup to do so⁶⁶. Doing so, these nations institutionalized (Berglund, 2013: 777; Zürcher, 2007: 27-31). This is referred to as ethno-federalism by Zürcher (2007), and realized the fact that in Georgia multiple state-building attempts were taking place by different nationalities. This federalism was asymmetric, in the sense that core ethnic groups of territories were given privileges compared to the other nationalities, whether they actually had a majority or not, and undermined their incorporation in the mother state of Georgia. The granting of such status was also arbitrary (Zürcher, 2007: 24-25).

Former practices of ethno-nationalism and clientelism were picked up by its new leaders. This is what nationalist Georgian leaders like Gamsakhurdia and their followers did, cracking down on these minorities, while separatists and their leaders in South-Ossetia and Abkhazia were supported by the Russian military, and were able to create de-facto states. Russia provided support for these causes for divide and rule reasons (Zürcher, 2007: 133-135 & 143-144), and was able to keep control on these territories later as they became military and economically dependent on Russia (Zürcher, 2007: 150-151). This in effect hindered state-building and democratization⁶⁷ (Berglund, 2013: 779).

⁶⁵ In Abkhazia for example, Abkhazians were actually a minority with 17,8% in their territory, with Georgians being the biggest group with 45,7%. Only in South Ossetia were the Ossetians a majority, although only with 66% (Zürcher, 2007: 117-118).

⁶⁶ It has to be noted that apart from the clear examples of Ossetians and Abkhazians in South-Ossetia and Abkhazia respectively, there were a lot more minorities such as Azeri's, Armenians, Greeks, Chechens and Migrelians, which were not granted an own territory nor an own institutional frame by the Soviet authorities inside the larger Georgian Soviet state

⁶⁷ Military conflict between groupings in the country make democratization almost impossible. Long term peace-building would be needed, before processes of state-building and democratization are possible (Grimm & Merkel, 2008).

President Mikheil Saakashvili and UNM had to deal with the separatist problems South-Ossetia and Abkhazia, but also Adjara that was being ruled by a warlord (Mitchell, 2009: 171; Cheterian, 2008: 693-694). Furthermore, in the western regions Samegrelo and Svaneti criminal gangs wielded the real political power. For these reasons, state-building was prioritized over democratization (Mitchell, 2009: 172-173). President Mikheil Saakashvili did so successfully initially by reasserting control over Achara (Mitchell, 2009: 176-177). Reincorporating Abkhazia and South-Ossetia was more difficult, as they were de-facto states already, and because of their history of conflict with Georgia. UNM and Saakashvili subsequently increased military spending over the years from 0,7% to 8%, while stressing the desire to retake these territories. The separatist legacy therefore had costs: state-building efforts were hastened at the expense of democratization (Mitchell, 2009: 178-179). Tensions increased with these regions, as well as with Russia (Cheterian, 2008: 697-698).

Crucial for the analyzed time period, is that this legacy again took its toll for Georgia. In August 2008, Georgia and Russia fought a war over the territories of Abkhazia and South-Ossetia. While a later independent report determined that Georgian forces initially caused the conflict, by attacking the capital of South-Ossetia, Russia disproportionately retaliated⁶⁸ by invading Georgia as well until French President Nicolas Sarkozy intervened on behalf of the EU to strike a peace-deal. Georgians were ethnically cleansed afterwards from the territories (EUobserver, 2009; Civil Georgia, 2009). Parts of Georgia were devastated following the invasion by Russia, which included many bombardments, most notable in the capital Tbilisi. The result made reconciliation over these territories impossible.

While the role of Russia should not be underestimated, it was Mikheil Saakashvili which like his predecessors in the 90s tried to solve separatist conflicts with violence. In effect, this further hindered democratization and state-building in Georgia (Mitchell, 2009: 180). Following the negotiations on a new constitution in 2010 and 2011, President Mikheil Saakashvili at the time initially refused to curb down the powers of the President, which he deemed essential because the country was occupied, and that it needed a strongman (Freedom House, 2010). The democratic ratings for the years 2008-2009 after the conflict also worsened. The conflict did make Georgia more dependent on the West, making it potentially more likely it would adhere to democratic development in exchange for Western support, and considered

⁶⁸ Some considered the event as a trap Georgia fell into (Cornell & Nilsson, 2009: 258; Mitchell, 2009: 180), including the European Union Special Representative for the South-Caucasus Peter Semneby.

as a matter of survival in order to maintain Georgia's independence from Russia (Cornell & Nilsson, 2009: 259-260).

Bidzina Ivanishvili stated in 2013 when he was still Prime Minister that the UNM regime had made mistakes in 2008 to wage the war, and stated the conflict should be solved peacefully, rather than by force, calling for dialogue (Civil Georgia, 2013a). These remarks were reiterated later by him, showing the new regime had at least chosen not to let this legacy haunt them anymore, although this could be premature. In any case, reconciliation efforts have stalled, especially following the troubles in Ukraine from 2014 onwards, and Russia has strengthened its links and control over the territories with controversial security treaties it signed with both Abkhazia and South-Ossetia (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016), making it highly unlikely another invasion of the territory would be in Georgia's interest.

Therefore, when it comes to legacy, the separatist conflicts have haunted and undermined Georgia's democratization path, although recent developments show a return to these practices is not wanted nor possible. In any case, the Soviet legacy as well as the patrimonial legacy have played a negative role in this process as well, although these are slowly left behind and being taken care off, showing some more optimistic prospects for the future. In any case, at least there is a relatively Georgian state now on which democracy can be build.

6.2. Exogenous explanations

We will now look at the second set of explanatory factors for the democratization process of Georgia: exogenous factors. We will look at the geopolitical environment, and determine the amount and size of opportunities actors such as the EU and Russia have to influence Georgia's democratization process.

6.2.1. Geopolitical environment

Following the end of the Cold War, as the capitalist democratic West triumphed over the communist authoritarian Soviet Union, the influence and status of the West reached an unprecedented and uncontested peak. This had prompted authors such as Francis Fukuyama to declare the so-called "end of history" and the ultimate victory of liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 1992). Out of all actors, it was the European Union first and foremost that played a crucial role at the end of the Cold War. It did so most ambitiously through enlargement to the East. No other actor has been willing and capable of offering such benefits, of which

former communist countries in Central- and Eastern Europe have profited. In turn, these countries by themselves were heavily motivated to join the European club. As Fukuyama later stressed, it was the European Union which he saw as the ultimate end-model for transnational democracy (Fukuyama, 2007).

However, the pity is for Georgia is that the demise of the Soviet Union and the prevalence of the West and the enlargement efforts, Georgia was in ruins. Georgia did not have a favourable geographical position and experienced economic disaster and violent conflict. By the time of the Rose Revolution, the geopolitical environment had changed. This was also confirmed by Jawad (2005: 28-29), who said that despite Georgia's new foreign policy orientation the geopolitical environment had become more complex.

The first important change was the resurgence of Russia. Russia that was once one of the great powers alongside the US was initially diminished to a fragmented and troubled state engulfed in turmoil⁶⁹. Things changed by 1999, as Russia's economy started to thrive again due to oil and gas sales (DeBardeleben 2009, 346). President Vladimir Putin subsequently transformed Russia's foreign policy, aiming to restore the old influence and power it had as the Soviet Union⁷⁰ (Spechler 2013, 2).

A second important was the relative decline of the West, as the world has become more multi-polar. In this changing setting, the EU has slowly become more inwards looking. This change has been set in already due to the so-called "enlargement fatigue" and neo-protectionism, as public supported for the EU went down after the enlargements in 2004 and 2007. This was symbolized by the referendums in the Netherlands and France in 2005, when they turned down the constitutional treaty (Haukkala, 2008: 1613; Popescu & Wilson, 2009: 30). The EU has been affected as well by the financial crisis and the subsequent euro crisis (Howorth & Menon, 2015: 11-13).

⁶⁹ Russia had lost half of its population and a quarter of its land Ambrosio 2013, 435-436). Additional influence was taken by both NATO and EU, as they expanded to countries that were once in the influence sphere of the Soviet Union (DeBardeleben 2009, 392). Russia's economy was also in decline mostly during the 90s, and experienced some financial and political crises as well (DeBardeleben 2009, 337).

⁷⁰ Vladimir Putin and his close aides considered the collapse of the Soviet Union as the geopolitical disaster of the century, and both Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev repeated continuously in official speeches that Russia's former influence of the Soviet Union should be restored (DeBardeleben 2009, 392; Ambrosio 2013, 461).

A third change is that following the Russia-Georgia war of 2008, the EU had also been more careful, especially towards giving membership prospect for these countries that are crucial to Russia's sphere of influence. This became even more so after 2014, when Russia invaded Ukraine, and when it also became clear that an open geopolitical competition between the EU and Russia had become a reality (Gromadzki, 2015: 33).

We will now look at what role the EU and Russia potentially can play when it comes to promoting democracy. As stated in the theory part, leverage – to make a country do something – depends on linkage, which is the density of ties between countries involved. An overview of a few linkage factors and their potential strength can be found in Box 6.1., in which I used the model of Way & Levitsky (2007). For this, see also Box 3.1.

Box 6.1. Linkage of Georgia to external actors

	European Union	Russia
Economic linkage	+ → ++	++ → +
Intergovernmental linkage	+ → ++	+ → -
Social linkage	+	++
Information linkage	+-	+- → +
Civil society linkage	+	- → + -
Geographic proximity	+-	++

Note: linkage strengths are determined by author based on own estimations based on different sources, with - - being the most negative score and ++ the most positive score. The → sign implies a development.

When it comes to economic linkage, Georgia enjoys strong economic links with both Russia and the EU over time, according to Georgian Statistics (2016), although there has been a shift towards the EU (Sasse, 2013: 568-569), as trade with Russia has declined. Intergovernmental linkage is low with Russia, as Georgia for example is no longer member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) since 2008. When it comes to the EU, Georgia has several frameworks in which it operates with the EU such as the ENP and EaP as stated earlier, for which it has also signed an AA and a DCFTA. Georgia is involved in NATO structures together with EU countries, although Georgia's focus on NATO has shifted to the EU (Sasse, 2013: 570). Social linkage is a lot stronger with Russia, as a lot more tourism is taking place between the two countries (Georgian Statistics, 2016), while not as much with the EU. A lot of Georgians work in both EU countries and Russia, although more do so in the latter (Sasse, 2013: 570). When it comes to information linkage as seen in 5.2.3., Georgia has a lot of freedom on the net, of which access has increased over time, making it easy to access both Western and Russian media. Furthermore, Russian media, especially Russian television, has penetrated the Georgian landscape more for obvious language reasons. Russian is spoken

by a large part of the population still for historical reasons and recent polls indicate Russian media are still being watched by a portion of the population (International Republican Institute, 2015). Recently, they are also suggested to have more influence on Georgia through propaganda (Dzvelishvili & Kupreishvili, 2015). Civil society linkage has been strong as reported in section 5.2.5., as most civil society organizations are financed by the West. On the other hand, Russia is recently establishing and financing more civil society outlets, promoting its Eurasian Union while providing negative content about the West, including the EU (Dzvelishvili & Kupreishvili, 2015; Falkowski, 2016: 33-34). Geographical proximity is an obvious one, as Russia borders Georgia directly. The EU is relatively close to Georgia but has no direct borders with it. The linkage factors that determine how closely connected countries are as mentioned and their development broadly define how effective leverage potentially can be.

When we determine the strength of leverage – how vulnerable a country actually is – to pressure, the four factors⁷¹ of economical strength, military strength, the presence of competing foreign policy and the presence of so-called “black knights” have to be measured. When we again look at the geopolitical environment described in the former section, we can state some things about the strength of the actor’s leverage involved as well, as we can see in Box 6.2. in which I again used the model of Way & Levitsky (2007) and extended it by adding Russia. For this, see again Box 3.2. as well. Important to realize here is that the “black knight” or spoiler of one’s leverage power from Russia’s point of view would be the European Union while it is Russia for the European Union.

Box 6.2.. Leverage of external actors on Georgia

	European Union	Russia
Relative economic strength	++	+
Relative military strength	+-	++
Competing foreign policy issues	+ → -	+
Black knight	- -	-

Note: linkage strengths are determined by author based on own estimations based on different sources, with - - being the most negative score and ++ the most positive score. The → sign implies a development.

In my model, I consider Russia as the strongest external actor. While it does not have the economic strength as the EU, it does possess significant military strength which has been used before in the 90s and in 2008, and which it could theoretically deploy directly because of the

⁷¹ Way & Levitsky’s (2007) model included just 3 factors, as military and economic strength are combined. In this thesis however, these will be split, resulting in 4 factors in total.

geographical distance and its presence and military control in the separatist territories of Georgia. Furthermore, as illustrated in the former section, Russia's direct neighbourhood is one of its main concerns, with no strong competing foreign policy issues over time. In this case, the black knight for Russia is the EU. When it comes to the EU, it is weak militarily, while being strong economically. However, both are faced by increasing competing foreign policy issues over time. As described in the former section, the EU has become more inwards looking. The black knight is obvious: Russia, which has demonstrated its spoiler role several times, and has to be reckoned with.

What is finally relevant to determine the influence of external actor is political conditionality. As described in the theory part, countries can be pressured or incentivized to democratize through rewards and punishments, carrots and sticks. This can be done for example by giving or withholding aid. Carrots can be monetary or non-monetary, such as providing expertise, to promote democratization efforts such as strengthening the rule of law, electoral processes, legislation, political institutions, civil-military relations and civil society (Haynes, 2012: 7-8).

When it comes to the EU, the most obvious carrot is of course granting close ties with the EU when it comes to trade and as ultimate prize EU membership, which it has done to most former communist countries in the east. Important to note as well is the notion by Morlino and Sadurski (2010) that the influence of an external actor, is strongest when the goals that are being pursued are in line with the domestic situation and the willingness of the country to implement desired policies. On the other hand, Russia can use political conditionality as well, granting benefits in case a country adheres to certain conditions or punishing it if it does not.

6.2.2. The role of the EU and its policies

We will now focus on the role of the EU. While it must be said the EU was not the only democracy promoter, as other Western actors are also involved, I will focus on the role of the EU alone in my thesis, which I also consider as having the largest role in the democratization process of Georgia. Jawad (2005) states it was the EU rather than others that could play an essential role in democratization, also because Georgia wanted to move closer to the EU by its new leaders, preferable accession (Jawad, 2005: III) Therefore, Georgia shows there should be significant potential for the EU to influence Georgia – also taking into consideration linkage and leverage –, as it simply has no alternative since it seeks independence from

Russia, which it could through to closer ties with the EU (Boonstra & Shapovalova, 2011: 10-11). All of this has been most of all reflected by the wordings Ghia Nodia used in 2005:

By erecting the flag of the EU on his inauguration day and proclaiming that joining the EU (and NATO, of course) is the government's most strategic goal, Mr Saakashvili offered the EU a very strong restraining power against his own authoritarian instincts. It is up to the EU to use this constraining power skillfully. (Nodia, 2005b: 52)

We will now look which policies the EU actually pursued. Before 2004, EU relations with Georgia were based on the loose Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) of 1996 (European External Action Service, 1996), that came into force of 1999. However, Georgian-EU relations were not as a good and deteriorated in the years up to 2003, with low commitment on both sides (Rinnert, 2011: 6). Things were set to change following the Rose Revolution. Just one day after the fresh President Mikheil Saakashvili was officially inaugurated in Georgia on 25 January 2004, the Council of the European Union proposed to incorporate Georgia in the ENP policy as well together with Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in which plans were considered to enhance donor coordination (Council of the European Union, 2004a), resulting in a donor conference⁷².

The funds showed increased commitment by the EU. This was also reflected in the decision to incorporate Georgia in the ENP. While criticism was mounted that it did not offer a future in the EU, the new authorities in Georgia did frame it as such and expected the ENP was a first step towards membership (Devdariani, 2004b). This was most of all reflected by President Mikheil Saakashvili during his inaugural speech in 2004 on the 25th of January, after having also raised the flag of the Council of Europe and the European Union, stating the direction of the country would be towards European integration, democracy and the rule of law, which he saw as the destiny of the country (Civil Georgia, 2004; Bolkvadze et al., 2014). This was in line in what the EU had desired from Georgia's previous regime

This shows potential. As stated in the theory by Morlino and Sadurski (2010), the influence of the EU when it comes to democratization is the highest when it is in line with the domestic situation of a country. Although EU membership was not offered, the government set out a

⁷² An international donor conference hosted together by the European Commission and the World Bank subsequently raised € 850 million on 16 June (World Bank, 2004), of which the European Commission pledged an extra amount between € 125 and € 150 million for period 2004-2006, which meant the EU doubled its financial assistance for that period (European Commission, 2004b). For these funds, the European Commission emphasized democratic reforms, although not through clear conditionality criteria (Börzel, 2009: 171).

clear EU path and appointed a special minister for European integration. The ENP policy was subsequently launched just months later on 12 May 2004 (European External Action Service, 2016a). The ENP builds upon the existing PCA agreement (European External Action Service, 2016b), and included substantial funding, assistance and other rewards such as visa liberalization and access to the EU's single market, as well as setting conditions which have to be met in return for these.

Most fundamental of the ENP are the ENP Action Plans. Georgia started negotiating an Action Plan in 2004, which was finalized on 14 November 2006 (European External Action Service, 2016c). During negotiations between 2004-2006, Georgia was granted € 147 million, amounting to € 49 million a year. Furthermore, € 45 million was granted for TACIS, of which € 24,5 million was earmarked for democratization efforts in the rule of law area, although institution building was also included, making blurry what exactly contributed to democratization (European Commission, 2006). Nonetheless, it was a significant increase compared to prior periods. Furthermore, for the years 2003-2006, another amount of € 8 million was given through the EIDHR framework to support civil society amongst others (European Commission, 2006).

The ENP Action Plan focuses on so-called priority areas, on which Georgia has to focus on and reform. The most important for our research is that of area 1, which focuses on an array of issues related to democratization such as the rule of law, an independent judiciary, basic rights, fair elections, civil society and strengthening democratic institutions. Another relevant area is 2, which focuses partially on tackling corruption. Doing so, there is some overlap with the FRIIC characteristics, although information access is lacking and institutionalization is not that clear-cut. However, crucial is that the ENP Action Plan stipulates a few clear specific demands that have to be met, such as the adaptation of a criminal procedural code, a functioning civil register, implementing Council of Europe decisions and realizing fair elections in 2006, 2008 and 2009 (European External Action Service, 2016c: 7-8). More loose references were made to improve FRIIC characteristics as well, including information access and institutionalization. Measures had to be taken to increase the transparency of civil service, adopt anti-corruption measures, strengthen the Parliament, strengthen the role and function of political parties to enhance pluralism and ensure freedom of the media (European External Action Service, 2016c: 13-30). The role of the Council of Europe in assisting the EU was also clearly anchored. In this regard, the EU outsourced some democratization promotion efforts to

the Council of Europe and its Venice Commission, that provide advice, expertise and monitor. Doing so, they function as external “watchdogs” (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 463). For the period 2007-2013, a period of 7 years, it has listed on the official website (European Commission, 2016c) an amount of € 452.1 million has been provided for both bilateral and special programs, amounting to about € 56.6 million per year.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement has been replaced by an Association Agreement (AA) in 2014 (European External Action Service, 2016d), when it was signed and provisionally applied before being officially applied in July 2016. Apart from the AA a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) was agreed on. Furthermore, the ENP Action Plans had been slowly replaced by Association Agenda’s, in anticipation of the AA that was going to be signed, the first one which covers the time period of 2014-2016 (European External Action Service, 2016e).

Many FRIIC characteristics are emphasized in the AA, as well as cooperation in about 26 other policy areas as the whole document covers over 1000 pages (European Commission, 2016c). The new Association Agenda that has been agreed on 26 June 2014 is therefore more extensive, but with a stronger focus on democratization. For institutionalization it stipulates constitutional amendments in consultation with both the Council of Europe with the aim of remaining sustainable, pursuing decentralization and keeping sufficient checks and balances. The roles of the Prime Minister and President in the new constitution have to be respected as well and Council of Europe recommendations had to be followed up. OSCE critiques on elections have to be addressed for more fair elections. On the rule of law, reforms have to be adopted with clear benchmarks and the tackling of corruption has to be continued. When it comes to civil society, a social dialogue has to be established with empowered trade unions and employer organizations, and civil society organizations in general have to be involved more to monitor the AA as well as media freedom. This brings us to information access and media freedom, as media pluralism and transparency has to be strengthened in line with Council of Europe recommendations (European External Action Service. 2016e).

Therefore, the list of demands has become larger. In return, symbolically, in the new AA, Georgia’s so-called “European Choice” seemed to have been recognized and it has been marked as an Eastern European country, although the question whether Georgia could be a candidate EU-member at some point in the future remains ambiguous. Visa liberalization is

promised if conditions are met. When it comes to funding, in the years of 2014 and 2015 this substantially increases to € 131 million and € 100 million yearly, showing the increased engagement (European Commission, 2016c).

Nonetheless, despite all the increased commitment to improving democracy in Georgia and the provided funds, success has been limited. This was already the case prior to the Rose Revolution. The country report of 2003 concluded the EU's policies did not have the expected results in return for the funds provided (European Commission, 2003b: 21). Börzel explains the EU was to output focused. Doing so, it sought more to strengthen the Georgian state to be able to implement its policies, rather than democratize it, which Börzel refers to as an effective government approach (Börzel, 2009: 169). When it comes to the ENP and its action plans, they seemed to be more clear in what had to be done, and shifted towards more clear political conditionality (Börzel, 2009: 171). Nonetheless, as observed in chapter 5, progress in democratization had been limited.

A number of factors led to limited influence by the EU. First of all, according to Börzel (2009), the EU assumed there was actually no need to promote democracy⁷³, given the motivations of new leaders to make Georgia a democracy. Doing so, they failed to observe the domestic developments after the Rose Revolution. In the meanwhile, power was being concentrated in the President, while no strong democratic institutions were being build (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 464).

A second factor is that the EU's approach was focused more on strengthening the Georgian state between 2004-2006, in a more so-called effective government or state-building approach, neglecting democratization (Börzel (2009: 170-171 & 176-177). And this is what Georgia pursued as well (Mitchell, 2009). The ENP action that was agreed in 2006, did focus more on strengthening non-state actors, in particular civil society. Nonetheless, the strength and effectiveness of the government were still the primary focus, as the switch was rather mixed at least (Börzel, 2009: 171). The earlier described funds were focused on other sectors such as improving governance and capacity. In effect, it this strengthened the government, while not necessarily improving democracy in this way (Börzel; 2016: 96-98).

⁷³ Börzel (2009: 170-171) even found that just prior to the Rose Revolution, the EU did actually plan to shift to more negative conditionality. It subsequently dropped this idea however after the regime change. It was assumed democracy was achieved.

A third factor was that the conditionality policy of the EU was weak, as it did not include a lot of negative political conditionality. Börzel (2016: 96) states the EU was reluctant to impose negative conditionality. The country report of 2005 on Georgia reflects this, as it does not mention any potential consequences in the absence of democratic reforms (European Commission, 2005). The ENP policy focused too much on stability and security. Even though the EU had been consistent on democracy promotion in the case of Georgia, which was also reflected in policy documents, this was not pursued actively in practice (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 461; Rinnert, 2011: 8). The joint ownership principle of the ENP policy also undermined conditionality (Rinnert, 2011: 8). The reluctance to impose negative conditionality is reflected in subsequent documents⁷⁴ on Georgia.

The EU remained relatively silent throughout most of UNM rule, despite the authoritarian trends, as described earlier in Chapter 5. Another more recent example are the selective justice practices by GD in 2012-2013. The EU was hesitant to endanger the AA and DCFTA that was going to be signed in Vilnius at the end of 2013, and resorted from using political conditionality (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 464-465). This despite the fact that it was exactly these instruments that were supposed to provide the most leverage, as they have been the most ambitious instruments of the EaP policy so far in Georgia. This continued as Georgia together with Ukraine and Moldova were able to sign AAs and DCFTAs, despite a lack of progress in democratization (Börzel, 2016: 96-97). The one-size-fits-all approach of the EU's policies also undermined it (Börzel (2016: 98-100). Similar rewards were offered to all countries. The EU weakened its leverage by not introducing a competitive element.

A fourth factor is that the domestic situation weakened the influence of the EU. Despite rhetoric by the new leaders they would democratize the country, reforms were neglected several times. This was also reflected in the EU progress reports. The leaders considered such as a threat to their survival and that of Georgia. These concerns increased following the protests that took place in 2009 and 2011, as the costs of implementing democratic reforms were considered as a huge cost (Börzel, 2016: 96-98; Freyburg et al., 2015: 26-28; Rinnert, 2011: 14).

⁷⁴ (European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2008; European Commission, 2009; European Commission, 2010; European Commission, 2011; European Commission, 2012; European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2014b; European Commission, 2015)

A fifth factor is the lack of sufficient rewards and political incentives by the EU, such as EU membership (Rinnert, 2011: 15). EU policies are undermined because of weaker and inconsistent incentives. The problem is here that it does not promise the big reward of EU membership at the end of the tunnel, which has made the enlargement policy such a success, and takes away incentives to reform (Börzel, 2016: 96-98; Duke, 2011: 88; Freyburg et al., 2015: 26-28). This links with the conditionality weakness, as effective conditionality works the best when sufficient positive incentives in the form of rewards are being given. In other EaP states before, such as in Moldova, local civil society activists and NGOs claim the policy lacks the ability to promote democracy (Christou 2010, 422) because the biggest carrot, the possibility of EU membership, is not offered. Studies by Vachudova (2005), Schimmelfennig et al. (2006), Haukkala (2008), Popescu & Wilson (2009) confirm the EU can only substantially effect economic and societal change in states by giving clear prospects for membership and European identity and a full stake in European institutions and European identity. Diplomats EaP states considered the EU's policies as an insult to their ambitions by being put together in the same basket of countries with Belarus (Korosteleva, 2011: 252). Popescu & Wilson (2009: 5-6 & 33) do not go as far but do criticize that the EU needs to bolster its power of attraction.

While these more harsh critiques should be taken with a pinch of salt, it is important to recognize the significance of symbolism. The ENP and later EaP are considered as a “light” version of the enlargement policy (Popescu & Wilson, 2009: 12), as less rewards are being offered and come in a slower pace. Professor Kakachia⁷⁵ in this regard stated that Georgia feels punished for being grouped together with other countries like Azerbaijan and Belarus in the EaP, while they want a more upgraded partnership in which it would be more respected. Gabelaia (2016: 223-224) stated in this regard that it does not help the EU has been ambiguous on whether to grant Visa Liberalization, and increasing demands all the time. Georgians could lose faith in whether the EU is truly committed to Georgia, as while it has made “sacrifices”, it still has no security guarantees, no visa liberalization and no clear prospect for a future inside the EU (Falkowksi, 2016: 43-44). Another reason of low-commitment was more simple and straightforward: insufficient funds and financial assistance has been offered (Rinnert, 2011: 8). Despite the mentioned numbers, they were not sufficient.

⁷⁵ Kornely Kakachia, personal interview, May 8, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The criminal law reform for example cost more than the total funding between 2007-2010.

The EaP that was launched in 2011 was according to Rinnert (2011: 10-13) more of the same apart from new tools and instruments. Despite increased funds, the same fundamental problems that made the ENP weak, are still present in the EaP, such as joint ownership and weak positive conditionality, along with insufficient economic and political incentives. A European Parliament funded report in 2015 also criticized the EaP policy, suggesting individual more political approaches would work out better, rather than multilateral technical policies. It suggests the policy is outdated and in need over overhaul (Gromadzki, 2015: 6)

Another problem of commitment is that the EU does not do sufficiently help Georgia with problems with its separatist regions and Russia which threaten its mere existence. The EU failed to internationalize those conflicts and did not do enough to bring about a solution (Börzel, 2016: 100-101). As learnt in the legacy section of endogenous factors, it is a potential factor that still follows Georgia and as long as the EU does not provide security guarantees, it is less likely to follow up on democratization efforts that could potentially undermine its security, showing again the interaction between endogenous and exogenous factors. While it would be hard for the EU to consider such guarantees, it is positive on the other hand that further economic integration is considered as a security guarantee for Georgia, showing the unique motivations Georgia has to move closer to the EU (Rinnert, 2011: 14).

In this regard, the DCFTA was more positive, as it provides perspective for further economic integration in EU structures, and thus also for Georgia's own security (Rinnert, 2011: 16-17), which has been realized by now. The DCFTA was considered as a new and positive economic incentive, as it was expected to bring about significant economic benefits (Rinnert, 2011; 13). Recently, these benefits have been calculated to amount to a 4.3% increase in Georgia's GDP, if implemented correctly (European Commission, 2014a). Therefore, while commitment is a problem still, the DCFTA was a positive development, through which the EU could potentially exert more leverage in the future, although it squandered the opportunity to do so before as observed earlier.

The EU failed as well to exert influence indirectly. As illustrated in the theoretical model of this thesis, the EU influences endogenous factors such as modernization and civil society. However, the ENP and EaP policies did not affect modernization in Georgia as observed in

6.1.1. The kind of economic development needed to foster modernization, and in turn democratization did not take place. Rather, the situation has stagnated. It is hard to say whether the EU has either prevented a further stagnation, or has worsened it. No data is available on whether the EU has played a role in this, and if it otherwise mitigated any deterioration of modernization. Both Jones (2013) and Jobelius (2011) observed Georgia opted to follow an extreme model of liberalization, instead of moving to the social model of Europe, as they neglected social exclusion. This was also confirmed in the several progress reports by the EU on Georgia. Therefore, the EU's policies in any case did not have in indirect positive effect on bringing about modernization.

When it comes to strengthening civil society and other non-state actors that the EU could strengthen indirectly, Aliyev (2016: 47-48), concluded contributions to civil society by the EU already prior to the Rose Revolution had been limited, while other European countries and the US did. Therefore, it is hard to say the EU, despite being a big donor, played an essential role in this regard with strengthening the civil society that brought about the Rose Revolution. This changed with the new EaP policy. As earlier observed in this chapter and in Chapter 2. The Civil Society Forum initiative was considered as a good development in this regard for long term democracy strengthening. Nonetheless, the strong link with the government that was created was criticized. It politicized the initiative and most of the funds ended up at the government anyway⁷⁶ (Aliyev, 2016: 50-52). Funds to local NGOs were limited, and still short-term focused, giving negative incentives to run NGOs like businesses. Most funds also still go to larger Brussel based NGOs (Aliyev, 2016: 52-53). This undermines smaller and local grassroots NGOs, which are further disadvantaged because of the English language complicated bureaucratic procedures to receive funds (Aliyev, 2016: 54; Jones, 2013: 138-139). Similar concerns have been made by Kornely Kakachia, who criticized most NGOs are Tbilisi focused, while neglecting the rural areas of Georgia. With regards to the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership, Kapanadze mentioned as well that the institution was too bureaucratic, prompting most NGOs to look for smaller networks for cooperation amongst themselves⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ This applies as well on the earlier mentioned EIDHR policy as most support and assistance was focused on strengthening central government, and which were the ones who received most funds (Börzel, 2016: 97).

⁷⁷ Sergi Kapanadze, personal interview, May 6, 2016, Caucasus University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Therefore, when it comes to most of its policies, the EU failed to seriously influence Georgia's democratization process either directly or indirectly based on the findings so far in this chapter. It does not mean the EU has no influence at all. While its policies have minimal influence, the EU did make a difference in some instances. On particular occasions, it was vocal on democratic backslides, and prevented such. This in contrary to the US, more careful or reluctant to criticize out of geopolitical concerns (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 463). In this regard, we have some bright remarks about the EU's actual influence, as it sometimes intervened directly in Georgia. In this regard, it is important Georgia is integrated in the European polity structures of the Council of Europe as well as in the EU's ENP and EaP policies. While not directly bringing about democratic reform, they nonetheless maintain pressure (Jones, 2013: 167) and functions as some kind of brake on authoritarian backslide.

One crucial moment were the November 2007 protests, in which the government cracked down. After EU intervention, government authorities showed restraint. The EU defused the situation through mediation by special representative for the Caucasus, which was sent by the then high representative for foreign and security policy Javier Solana on 7 November 2007. The mediation was successful between the government and opposition, together with European countries, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the US, as Mikheil Saakashvili announced early elections (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 698).

Unfortunately, the elections in the following year were not criticized⁷⁸. However, discussions on adopting a Parliamentary Regime followed afterwards. Pressure from the EU and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, had made President Saakashvili come up with concessions of the President powers (Jones, 2013: 167). Sopio Samushia also mentions that following heavy critique by the West including the EU during the protests held in 2011, the "must carry, must offer" reform was realized⁷⁹. This reform resulted in more television time for opposition parties to be broadcast nation-wide, and was part of the reason GD beat UNM in 2012. The EU together with the US pressured Georgia to do so, together with civil society organizations (Pogleba, 2016: 11). This suggests an indirect effect of the EaP policy, together

⁷⁸ While not near as fraud as those before the Rose Revolution, they were no prime example of fair elections either. The EU did not criticize them and rather focused on regime stability instead of democracy promotion (Muskhelishvili & Jorjoliani, 2009: 699). The EU missed a chance here.

⁷⁹ Sopio Samushia, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European & Euro-Atlantic Integration, Tbilisi, Georgia.

with the fact Georgia is embedded in European governmental structures that bring about some kind of peer-pressure and socialization to adhere to European standards.

Another example were the Parliamentary Elections of 2012, an important moment of democratic consolidation. Importantly, prior to the elections, the West had made clear to UNM and President Mikheil Saakashvili on several occasions a peaceful transfer would be important for Georgia's relations with the West, making it clear another kind of transfer would have consequences. (Lebanidze, 2014: 211; Börzel, 2016: 98). Crucial was the clear insistence of the West that there could be repercussions, a clear sign of potential negative political conditionality (Lebanidze, 2014: 210).

In most of the interviews I held the interviewed had trouble stating whether the policies of the EU had direct effect on Georgia's democratization process when it comes to the mentioned FRIIC characteristics. At most, an indirect effect was stated. Crucial here were remarks by some, such as Erekle Urushadze of Transparency International⁸⁰, who stated that the EU has an indirect effect on the democratization process due to a fear of a backlash which could lead to less support, that could be crucial to their political survival as they want to be closely linked with the West. This suggests that the EU's policies have had no real direct effect on improving democratization, but does play a crucial indirect role when it comes to backsliding. It also shows it is important for the EU to stay closely involved with domestic developments that occur in a country, and quickly react and if possible threaten with potential repercussions.

Therefore, to sum up, the track record of the EU had been negative before the analyzed period as well as afterwards. While the EU was supposed to have a lot of leverage potential on Georgia, that is basically condemned to ties with the West and the EU in particular, the EU has wasted such potential to a large extent. Political conditionality as well as commitment has remained too weak, as the EU does not offer substantial positive incentives, while reluctant to resort to negative incentives if needed. The domestic situation with the authoritarian tendencies of UNM made things more difficult. The direct interventions with the fear of a backlash by the EU seemed to have most effect, making the picture look less bleak.

⁸⁰ Erekle Urushadze, personal interview, May 10, 2016, Transparency International, Tbilisi, Georgia.

6.2.3. The spoiler role of Russia

As described in section 6.2.1., the geopolitical climate has changed considerably since the 90s, in which Russia resurged by the time the Presidency of Vladimir Putin started in 1999, and sought to play a more active role in its neighbourhood. Just before the Rose Revolution, it had closer ties with Georgia, and made attempts to help Georgia with its conflicts, when its leader Eduard Shevardnadze seemed to pursue closer cooperation with Russia in return. A crucial moment of this was the reintegration of Georgia in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Russia switched roles again following the Rose Revolution, as a pro-Western government was installed (Tolstrup, 2009: 936-937). While politically and financially supporting the more undemocratic separatist regions, attempts were made to weaken the central government in Georgia, in effect undermining the nation- and state-building process of Georgia (Ibid.). Doing so, it has played the role of ‘black knight’ (Börzel, 2015: 519-520). According to Babayan (2015: 443), Russia realized the EU’s offers of free trade, financial aid and visa liberalization are attractive for its neighbours, and decrease Russia’s influence, as happened with prior enlargements. While it does not necessarily regard democratization as a threat, it does consider better ties of Georgia with the West, and less influence for Russia as such. Motivations to thwart democratization efforts are therefore more strategically motivated (Babayan, 2015: 446; Börzel, 2015: 521-522; Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 467).

Russia pressures countries on the one hand by rewards, such as military and economic investments (Babayan, 2015: 446). On the other hand, Russia has used different sticks such as discriminatory energy pricing, import bans, sudden custom restrictions, military cooperation, security guarantees and instrumentalizing frozen conflicts (Babayan, 2015: 447)

Dragneva and Wolczuk (2012: 9) argue that the Eurasian Customs Union is an attempt by Russia to directly compete with the EU for the region, and a response to the EU’s ENP and EaP policies. Russia considered the DCFTAs as a direct threat to its influence as well as to its Eurasian Union project, especially as the two would be incompatible with each other (Babayan, 2015: 446-447; Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 467).

A few examples illustrate how Russia pressured Georgia and neighbouring countries. From 2004-2008 it used a controversial passport policy, in which Russia was giving away free Russian passports in South-Ossetia and Abkhazia, undermining the territorial integrity of Georgia. Furthermore, in 2006 it also resorted to several economic sanctions on wine, water

and vegetables to undermine the pro-Western regime (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 468). However, the war in August 2008 was the most crucial, showing Russia's willingness to use military force, as it went beyond the borders of South-Ossetia and launched a disproportionate invasion of Georgia (Saivetz 2012b, 402; Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 468). Furthermore, it challenged the international order by subsequently recognizing the independence of the separatist territories. In 2014 and 2015, security treaties were again signed by Russia with South-Ossetia and Abkhazia, taking over border control and further establishing influence and control over these territories (Deutsche Welle, 2015; German, 2016: 164-165).

Russia showed demonstrated similar willingness to use military force with its invasions in Ukraine in 2014, annexing the Crimea and supporting separatists in the Donbas when it became clear a new government would sign an Association Agreement with the EU. Doing so, according by Babayan (2015: 449-45), Russia has hindered democratization efforts by the EU, once again through undermining statehood (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015: 469). Prior to the invasion in Ukraine, it had already made attempts to thwart Ukraine's orientation towards the West⁸¹. Pressure was exerted as well on other countries when it became clear they were about to sign AAs (Babayan (2015: 447; Gromadzki, 2015: 18-19). With regards to Moldova, Russia also attempted to prevent it signing an AA⁸². A clearer example was Armenia's U-turn move to join the Eurasian Customs Union, after Russian pressure over Nagorno-Karabakh⁸³.

Russia attempts to influence Georgia as well through other channels. Propaganda reports have become more frequent, also as described in former sections, as it finances civil society, promoting its Eurasian Union while providing negative content about the EU (Dzvelishvili & Kupreishvili, 2015; Falkowski, 2016: 33-36). It also sponsors pro-Russian media organizations such as Georgia and the World and Sputnik Georgia for example, that produce clear propaganda (Falkowski, 2016: 33-34). Some political parties are also suggested to be

⁸¹ Russia imposed several sanctions in 2013, such as restrictions on agriculture, meat and steel (EUobserver, 2013c). The top chocolate brand of Ukraine, was also banned (Euractiv, 2013). Sergei Glazyev, a close aid of President Vladimir Putin, threatened that same year Russia would ruin Ukraine if it would sign the AA (EUobserver, 2013d). Putin also pushed former President Yanukovich to abandon the AA and establish closer ties with Russia instead, in exchange for financial support (Börzel, 2015: 527).

⁸² Russia banned the import of Moldovan wine in 2013 prior to its intention to sign the AA with the EU. Wine is Moldova's most important export product (EUobserver 2013a). A subsequent threat to Moldova was made by the Russian Deputy Prime Minister, who threatened that Moldova might lose control of its separatist region Transnistria and face a "cold winter". (Voxeurop 2013).

⁸³ Just shortly before, Russia had supplied € 1 billion in arms to Azerbaijan, suggesting military pressure as Azerbaijan and Armenia still have a conflict over its Nagorno-Karabakh regions (EUobserver 2013b), in which Russia pursue divide and rule tactics. Russia had also provided Armenia with huge subsidies, after earlier threatening Armenia with a rise of gas prices by 60% (Babayan, 2015: 448-449).

supported by Russia. Apart from that as described earlier, the Georgian Orthodox Church that has close ties to Russia, expresses many anti-Western rhetoric as well, and is often seen as an instrument for Russia (Falkowski, 2016: 31-32). Their combined efforts have already altered public opinion slightly towards more anti-Western (Falkowski, 2016: 34-36).

Therefore, Russia as the black knight has made clear democratization of Georgia and other EaP states is linked to geopolitics (Nodia, 2014: 148-149). If they would succeed in democratizing Georgia, it would be considered as a challenge to Russia. The problem in this is that Russia will be expected to retaliate, as it has done so far with economic, energy but also military measures as witnessed in 2008 and 2014. Therefore, geopolitics will effectively limit the EU's efforts for the time being. Some authors go further such as Nilsson and Silander (2016), which have even questioned the whole ENP and EaP policy, as democracy has not improved on average that much, while security concerns have increased, as shown in Ukraine, Georgia and to a lesser extent in Moldova. They partly blame the EU for this, for competing with Russia together with NATO, which is part of the reason Georgia was invaded in 2008, just as Ukraine was invaded in 2014.

On the other hand, some argue Russia's behaviour has pushed Georgia towards the EU. Already in 2004, the new regime's focus on the EU and NATO was more out of fear of Russia (Kupatadze, 2016: 121-122). These motivations became stronger after the 2008 Russian-Georgian War of 2008. In a similar way, attempts to pressure Ukraine to backtrack from signing an AA with the EU backfired, even in the face of the country's military invasion (Gromadzki, 2015: 20). Delcour & Wolczuk (2016: 470-471) claim Russia's efforts have made both Georgia and Ukraine even more pro-Western, and committed to pursuing democratization, even if it is often by merely words. This also provides the EU and the West in general with more leverage over these countries.

Therefore, Russia played a large role and still wields huge influence, which it has not been shy to demonstrate, if needed by force. However, its ability to prevent Georgia from having a pro-Western and democratization course has limits, which is partly self-inflicted.

7. Conclusions and policy recommendations

We will now turn to the conclusions of this thesis, which will be provided step-by-step. Doing so, the answers to the sub-questions of this research will be provided as well as the answer to the main research question and the hypotheses. At the end I will come up with policy recommendations.

7.1. Georgia's democratization process

When it comes to the democratization process of Georgia and the so-called FRIIC characteristics of fair elections, the rule of law, information access, institutionalization and civil society, progress has been limited. After an early period of relative optimism between 2004-2006, years of backslide followed in 2007-2010, after which things slowly improved. The elections of 2012 that ousted UNM were most crucial. Fair elections have improved over time. The rule of law remains a problem, as it is still far from independent and used as an instrument by the UNM and GD governments. Information access has increased over time, mostly due to the internet, which is free. Media freedom declined mostly under UNM rule, while becoming slowly better at the end of their rule and when GD took over again. Institutionalization of democracy is still a problem, as there are still no strong democratic institutions nor strong party-systems. The Parliament remains weak, although the switch to a parliamentary-system did mark an improvement. The unclear role of Bidzina Ivanishvili as the unaccountable king player that pulls the strings through “informal governance” remains a problem. Civil society remains relatively strong, although too closely linked with politics, too dependent on donors and they still have weak rooting in society. However, on average, things look slightly better than they did in the year of the Rose Revolution, and there is some hope for further improvements in the future. The Parliamentary Elections of October 2016 will be essential in this regard.

7.2. Relevant factors, actors and the influence of the EU

Looking at the different factors and actors that played a role in the democratization process, modernization as an endogenous factor did not seem to have a role as it simply did not take place based on the findings of this thesis. While there has been economic development, it has not been the kind of economic development according to the modernization theory since urbanization has not increased, differentiation in the labour market has not increased and access to higher education decreased. Social exclusion remains a problem, as Georgian

governments have pursued a radical model of capitalism. Capitalism in Georgia in any case did not lead to more diversified economic and political power either. Rather the contrary, as UNM sought to transform its political monopoly in an economic one, although failed as they could not stop Bidzina Ivanishvili when he entered politics with his economic fortune in 2011.

Civil society and political society played an important role at the beginning of the Rose Revolution, as they teamed up to stop authoritarian trends. Furthermore, civil society has at certain times played an important role, usually together with either political society or international actors, to push for democratic change or halt an authoritarian trend. However, partisanship undermined it and made the alliance sometimes one of convenience. Party-systems in the end remain weak, while the role of civil society in democratization is ambiguous and dependent on too many other factors as described. The rise of Russian funded NGOs that serve clear other goals is a growing problem, as well as the increasing role of the Georgian Orthodox Church and its activists. Political society has chosen non-Parliamentary activity mostly, but has matured more recently, and could strengthen more due to the break-up of the GD coalition. Nonetheless, a clear separation between civil society and political society is still lacking.

Georgia's legacy played a clear negative role in Georgia's democratization process. It has had lasting effects on Georgia, which still haunts it now. The 2008 Russian-Georgian War was a clear example of this, as well as the dominance of powerful figures like Mikheil Saakashvili and Bidzina Ivanishvili. Nonetheless, newer generations of Georgian politicians have dealt with some of these legacies, as low-level corruption has been tackled and state powers have increased. Ivanishvili also stepped back while the new authorities stated they would not resort to violence again will hopefully diminish the significance of these endogenous factors in the future and the negative role it could again play in Georgia's democratization process. Therefore hypothesis 1 can be answered negatively when it comes to the modernization factor, and mixed when it comes to the civil society and political society. When it comes to legacy, the answer is negative, but in the sense it had a bad impact on democratization.

The analysis of the exogenous factors showed that the EU had and still has strong potential to influence Georgia's democratization process, although it is undermined by internal troubles and the spoiler role Russia plays. However, paradoxically, it has also driven Georgia further in the arms of the EU and the West, strengthening the role of the EU.

However, the EU wasted most of its potential with its relatively weak policies when it comes to conditionality and commitment, while focusing too much on strengthening the Georgian state, rather than to democratize it. The DCFTA is a positive step forward, and could make the EU play a bigger role in the future in case of further economic integration, although it squandered the leverage it could have had. The EU did not criticize or impose negative conditionality on the lack of progress and backslides with regards to the rule of law and information access. Therefore, hypothesis 3 can be answered mixed, as its policies barely had effect, while its interventions did have in some occasions have a positive effect or at least prevented a negative effect.

While modernization did not take place, it seems the EU had no positive indirect effect on it either, especially as Georgia pursued a different economic model. Civil society was also not strengthened significantly with the EU's policies as most funds went the state, while the Civil Society Forum initiative was considered as too bureaucratic and politicized. In this regard the EU's policies had no direct or indirect effect on civil society that is both a FRIIC characteristic of democracy and an endogenous factor for democratization. Therefore, hypothesis 4 can be answered negatively as well.

While demands were made in most policy documents with regards to the FRIIC characteristics, they were rarely realized. Fair elections were not realized in 2008, although the EU did play a positive role in the 2012 one. The same applies when it comes to institutionalization, as the EU promoted a more balanced system of checks and balances with a Parliamentary System. However, these successes were rather a result of interventions and not of the EU's policies directly.

The EU has been the most influential during such moments of intervention such as during the 2007 and 2011 protests and the role it played in securing a peaceful transfer of power in 2012. Interventions had effect in Georgia, as leaders feared a potential backlash, showing how crucial ties with the EU are for Georgia. Therefore, while I have concluded the EU's efforts have had little or no direct effect, I discard the idea a counterfactual in which the EU would not have engaged would have led to Georgia in a similar or better state, as it has had a clear indirect effect, which has been confirmed by interviews as well.

Therefore, as long as the EU is not further weakened and offers a more ambitious partnership for Georgia in the future, it could keep on playing an important role in the democratization process of Georgia. However, the picture looks bleak now as its internal problems are only expected to worsen due to the lasting Euro crisis, refugee crisis and the Brexit. If its commitment to Georgia weakened, as shown with the visa liberalization, Georgia could lose interest at some point. However, for the time being, it has no alternative. The EU has yet to see that and use it to maximize its influence on its democratization process.

7.3. Policy recommendations

Based on the findings of this thesis, some policy recommendations can be made in any case for future EU policies on Georgia:

1. More effective conditionality: the EU should be less reluctant to impose negative conditionality and withhold or postpone future monetary and non-monetary assistance, as well as further economic and political integration possibilities if there is no progress in democratization. It has lacked to do so before, despite the fact the EU can have potential strong leverage based on the findings of this research.
 - a. *Clear benchmarks* should be established in policy documents when it comes to the mentioned FRIIC characteristics, with clear expectations on what should be done and clear deadlines before which they should be met.
 - b. *Clear consequences* should be anchored in policy documents as well, which could lead to automatic withholding of monetary and non-monetary benefits if the mentioned benchmarks have not been realized.
2. Smarter ways of funding and commitment: effective conditionality requires more and smarter ways of commitment and funding as well when it comes to monetary and non-monetary rewards such as offering bigger stakes in the EU's internal market and other policies.
 - a. *A 50/50 approach* should be pursued when it comes to funding government and non-government actors in Georgia. While half of the funds should still go straight to the Georgian state to keep them on-board, more effort should be made as well to strengthen civil society in Georgia without much bureaucratic demands and politicization. Furthermore, local governments, interest groups and local initiatives should be sponsored, to empower decentralization and to mitigate the unequal development, as most economic activity seems to focus

on the capital, while the outskirts are neglected that often live on substance agriculture. This could also strengthen the soft power of the EU.

- b. *Agriculture* could be a big opportunity in this regard for Georgia, since half of the labour force still works in the agriculture sector in Georgia on the outskirts, and relevant for modernization. While Georgia has not modernized based on my findings in the way that would be beneficial for democratization, a successful transformation of the agricultural sector with help of the EU in the form of additional funds and expertise could potentially activate about half of Georgian's population that now face poor living standards and social exclusion.
 - c. *Visa Liberalization* in any case should be realized before the Parliamentary Elections of October 2016, in order to remain credible and prevent a fatigue of trust in the EU by the Georgians, as it has promised to do so.
 - d. *A different framework*, as the one-size-fits-all policies of the EU's policies do not take into consideration the ambitions of countries like Georgia that want to have closer ties. Either a privileged partnership should be set up with Georgia, or Georgia should be put together with Ukraine and Moldova in a more ambitious grouping. Symbolization, recognition and respect are important in this regard. Nonetheless, EU-membership should be clearly ruled out for now because of both internal and external reasons.
3. More engagement: more high-level meetings should take place. Each rotating-presidency should organize one high-level meeting at least with Georgia, possible together with Moldova and Ukraine, to keep constant pressure on the democratization process. Such instances should provide opportunities as well to criticize irregularities as well, or even backslides, as the analysis has shown that the EU has been relatively successful on occasions when it comes to direct interventions. Constant contact and dialogue are essential for this, also when it comes to discussing the mentioned benchmarks of recommendation 1a.
4. Involve and contain Russia: although controversial, the – perceived – geopolitical stakes, as well as the role and the influence of Russia have to be acknowledged which requires the EU to involve and contain Russia. This does not mean giving in to Russia's behaviour, but reassuring it on the intentions the EU has, and respect for its spheres of influence. This would be hard to sell to Georgia, but ultimately in its interest for long-term stability and help deal with its legacy, which is essential for

democratization, state-building and economic progress. In return, the EU would have to implement the former recommendations as well.

- a. *Involve Russia* when it comes to establishing closer ties with countries such as Georgia. Joint-initiatives to realize further cooperation with Russia, as well as South-Ossetia and Abkhazia, should not be out-ruled, in order to bring all parties together and slowly rebuild trust to increase the chances of stability in the region. The EU should in any case clearly rule out EU-membership.
- b. *Contain Russia* if needed. While respecting Russia's role on the one hand, and making it clear it would not expand to Georgia without its consent, it depends on whether Russia does not further destabilize the separatist areas and respect Georgia's sovereignty outside of these areas. If it does not, clear economic sanctions should be imposed. If possible these should be anchored in a treaty.

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9. Annexes

9.1. Interview format

Interview format:

Eastern Partnership (EaP) and its effects on the democratization process in Georgia

As part of my thesis, which includes a qualitative research design, interviews will be held with professionals/experts that have knowledge of the democratization process of Georgia in general, and have dealt with the EaP in one way or another, for example by monitoring or (helping) fostering the democratization process in Georgia. These interviews are meant to provide additional or complementary insights, as well as to either confirm or disconfirm existing assumptions.

Interviewer : Robert Steenland
Interviewed : _____
Date : 4-12 May 2016
Location : Kutaisi/Tbilisi, Georgia

1. Introduction questions

Question 1A:

What is your exact position and function?

Question 1B:

How are/were you (and your organization) exactly involved with the democratization process in general, and that of the ENP/EaP in particular?

(E.g. do you have any tasks when it comes to monitoring, (helping) realize the implementation or advising/scrutinizing with regards to the democratization process or the EaP policy in Georgia?

2. General questions on the democratization process

Question 2A:

Would you say the democratization process has fared positively in Georgia since the Revolution at the end of 2003? If so, why and how?

Question 2B

Have there been any defining moments that have either fostered or hold back this process?
(e.g. the ENP in 2004, the Russia-Georgian war of 2008, the EaP launch in 2009, the end of the UNM rule in 2012/2013, the crisis in Ukraine?) If so, which and how?

Question 2C:

Having discussed the democratization process in Georgia, could you state whether the EaP has played a role in fostering this process in one way or another? If so, could you indicate some examples in which these policies have brought about reforms?

(E.g. with regards to reforms that lead to a stronger rule of law (judiciary reform, tackling corruption), helping enhance democracy (involving civil society, electoral system reform)?

3. Questions on civil society

Question 3A

Has civil society developed over the years during the democratization process?

(e.g. are there are now more non-governmental organizations that evaluate government policies and provide people more opportunities to bring about change?) If so, could you state an example?

Question 3B

With regards to civil society, could you mention any civil society initiatives that were launched or encouraged (financially) due to the ENP/EaP policies, and how do you evaluate their success and contribution with regards to the process of democratization?

4. Questions on the access to information and press freedom

Question 4A

Does citizens nowadays have more access to a wide array of information sources with regards to the media available in Georgia (e.g. radio, television, internet)? If so, could you give an example how people now have more access to information?

Question 4B

With regards to freedom of the press, would you say this has improved positively? (e.g. are there more independent media, and can journalist report without censorship) If so, could you state an example how this has occurred?

Question 4C

When it comes to freedom of the press, and general access to information by citizens, could you mention any initiatives that were launched or encouraged (financially) due to the ENP/EaP policies, and how do you evaluate their success and contribution with regards to the process of democratization?

5. Questions on political choice and competition

Question 5A

Would you say citizens have more political choice now? Is there more political competition now on possible policies and are there more (credible) political parties?

Question 5B

When it comes to political choice, have the ENP/EaP policies somehow fostered political competition? Could you mention any initiatives that were launched or encouraged (financially) due to the ENP/EaP policies, and how do you evaluate their success and contribution with regards to the process of democratization?

6. Question on institutionalization

Question 6A

Would you say democracy has been more institutionalized in Georgia now? (E.g. have subsequent elections consolidated democracy, and have there been certain constitutional/electoral reforms to anchor democracy prevent a backslide, judicial independence?) If so, could you provide some examples?

Question 6B

When it comes specifically to the institutionalization of democracy, could you mention any initiatives that were launched or encouraged (financially) due to the ENP/EaP policies, and how do you evaluate their success and contribution with regards to the process of democratization? (e.g. constitutional/electoral reforms, party financing, judicial independence)

7. Questions on judicial independence

Question 7A

Would you say that judicial independence has been strengthened in Georgia over the years? If so, could you state an example showing this? *(e.g. substantive or procedural legal reforms)*

Question 7B

When it comes to judicial independence, have the ENP/EaP policies somehow fostered political competition? Could you mention any initiatives that were launched or encouraged (financially) due to the ENP/EaP policies, and how do you evaluate their success and contribution with regards to the process of democratization?

8. Questions on corruption and the rule of law

Question 8A

Would you say corruption has been tackled over the years, when it comes to the rule of law? *(e.g. stricter public procurement laws, establishment of anti-corruption agencies)*
If so, could you give examples showing this?

Question 8B

When it comes specifically to the rule of law and tackling corruption, could you mention any initiatives that were launched or encouraged (financially) due to the ENP/EaP policies, and how do you evaluate their success and contribution with regards to the process of democratization? *(e.g. stricter public procurement laws, anti-corruption laws, establishment of anti-corruption agencies)*

9. Questions on the EU

Question 9A:

How is the EU perceived (social dimension) in Georgia (power of attraction)? Is it considered as something Georgia should strive to establish further ties with?

Question 9B:

What would you say are the main drivers for Georgia to establish further ties with the European Union?
(E.g. economic reasons – increasing trade, geopolitical/security reasons – moving away from Russia, cultural reasons – perception that Georgia is European)

Question 9C:

Would you say Georgia has a viable alternative to the ENP/EaP in the EU framework? Could Georgia establish further ties with Russia through the ECU instead, or pursue a more neutral position in between such as Azerbaijan? *(to confirm/disconfirm the ‘no alternative’ for Georgia assumption and the role of Russia as a competitor in the region to the EU)*

10. Questions on Russia

Question 10A:

Do you recognise attempts by Russia – that considers attempts by the EU to establish closer ties with its neighbours as a threat – to disrupt the policy initiatives of the EU? If so, how has Russia done so? *(e.g. economic measures, military threats)*

Question 10B:

How have EU-Georgia relations changed due to events such as the Russian-Georgian War of 2008, and the annexation of the Crimea, as well as its invasion of the Donbas in the east of Ukraine? Has it led to more commitment when it comes to the ENP/EaP.

Question 10C:

Coming back to the annexation of the Crimea, and the military troubles in the Donbas region of Ukraine, how has this changed the dynamics of the separatist regions of Georgia: South-Ossetia and Abkhazia? Are there fears these territories might be annexed as well, or used as leverage by Russia to thwart Georgia's attempts to establish closer ties with the European Union?

End of the interview