

Georgia

Vanderbilt

According to our coding rules, Georgia is coded as a non-democracy from 1991 until 1995 and then again from 2000 until 2004. According to Cheibub et al. (2010), Georgia only turns democratic in 2004 and has a mixed system. However, we code a brief period (1995-1999) wherein Georgia is a presidential democracy. The decision to code a presidential democracy (as opposed to the future mixed system) is based on various sources that explicitly claim that, “The 1995 constitution formally made Georgia a presidential system.” (Siaroff 2000; see also Shugart 2005). GWF code Georgia as being under two separate personalist regimes from 1991 until 2003 (1992, 1993-2003, 2004 as provisional).

Zviad Gamsakhurdia, of the Round Table-Free Georgia (MM-TS) was elected president at independence. There is no SOLS change at independence. In 1992, Gamsakhurdia’s opponents caused him to flee the country. According to the US Library of Congress, a military council took over composed of four men with Jaba Ioseliani, Mil, as their leader. We code a SOLS change here since Ioseliani was not Gamsakhurdia’s predesignated successor but rather party of the military group that brought his government down. (Note that in the data file the personalist regime that Geddes codes starts in 1991 and thus Gamsakhurdia should be part of the personalist system. However, it appears in her case listing the personalist regime only begins in 1992 which seems more appropriate.)

In January a triumvirate involving Ioseliani, Kitovani, Shavardaze was formed (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 1999). “Shortly thereafter, a Political Consultative Council and a larger State Council were formed to provide more decisive leadership. In March 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia at the invitation of the Military Council. Shortly thereafter Shevardnadze joined Ioseliani, [Tengiz] Sigua, and [Tengiz] Kitovani to form the State Council Presidium. All four were given the right of veto over State Council decisions (U.S. Library of Congress 1994).” Even though it appears that Shevardnaze was involved in the new government from the beginning and then effectively took over Ioseliani’s post as head of this reconstituted ex-military council, the start of his rule is still SOLS change. This is because he is coded as a separate personalist leader by GWF and the Ioselani regime was not part of his personalist regime, but more of a military regime. In 1995 Shevardnadze’s title changed to president and his party affiliation changed to Sakartvelos Mokalaketa Kavshiri (SMK). Shevardnadze ruled for 11 years until 2003 when, after three weeks of protests labeled the “Rose Revolution,” he resigned.

Former speaker of parliament Ms. Nino Burdzhnashvili of the Burdzhnashvili-Demokratiuli Aliansi party (BDA), took over as interim president (The Economist 2003; U.S. Department of State 2010; Cahoon 2010). This is not a SOLS change.

After democratic elections in 2004 Mikhail Saakashvili of the Natshhionakhuri Modraoba–Demokrathebi party (ENM), became president. This is a SOLS change since the personalist Shevardnaze government ends and Saakashvili takes over as head of a reformist government.

In 2007 between 50,000 and 100,000 Georgians protested Saakashvili’s rule. In response, Saakashvili imposed a state of emergency, then to appease protesters he scheduled new elections

for early 2008. In the interim, he handed over the presidency to Burdzhaneladze (Freedom House 2009; Cahoon 2010; U.S. Department of State). This is not a SOLS change. Saakashvili won reelection in 2008. This is not a SOLS change because he was the last regular leader.

References:

Cahoon, Ben. "Georgia." *World Statesmen.org*. Web. 23 June 2010.
<<http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Georgia.html>>.

"Georgia's velvet revolution." 2003. *The Economist*, Nov 26th 2003. Available from
<<http://www.economist.com/node/2243603>>.

Ekedahl, Caroline McGiffert and Melvin Allan Goodman. 1997 *The wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*. College Station: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Freedom House. 2009. "Freedom in the World 2009: Georgia." Available from
<<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?country=7612&page=22&year=2009>>.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees. 1999. "Background Paper on Refugees and Asylum Seekers From Georgia. October 1999.
<<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3ae6a6590.pdf>>

U.S. Department of State. Background Notes: Georgia. Available at:
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5253.htm> (Accessed 11/01/2010).

U.S. Library of Congress. 1994. "A Country Study: Georgia." Available from
<<http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/getoc.html>>. Accessed October 5, 2010.

Shugart, Matthew. 2005. Semi-presidential Systems: Dual Executive and Mixed Authority Patterns," *French Politics* 3 (3): 323-351.

Siaroff, Alan. 2000. *Comparative European Party Systems: An Analysis of Parliamentary Elections Since 1945*. New York, Garland Publishing.

Welt, Cory. 2009. "Still Staging Democracy: Contestation and Conciliation in Postwar Georgia." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 17/3: 196-226.

Coded by Anna Carella October 5, 2010
Checked by Michaela Mattes 11/02/2010.
Updated by Naoko Matsumura 06/13/2012
Revised by Bryan Rooney 10/17/2011
Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/23/14