

Georgia

Rice

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).

In 1991, Georgia regained its independence from the USSR. Its first leader was Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a member of the "Round Table- Free Georgia" party (MM-TS), and one of the leaders of the Georgian nationalist movement. However, Georgia was also plunged into a civil war, which killed two hundred people before Georgia was even recognized as independent (MacKinnon 1997, 96). Gamsakhurdia's forces lost to a faction led by two military leaders, Zviad Kitovani and Dzhaba Ioselani, and on 6 January 1992, he fled the country. Ioselani is recognized as the head of state during this period. This is a SOLS change.

Shortly thereafter, in March 1992, the military leaders, who apparently had not been effective at organizing the government or revitalizing the economy, invited Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet Foreign Minister to take over leadership of Georgia. (MacKinnon 1997, 96). Shevardnadze accepted, filling the office of "Chairman of the State Council." This is a SOLS change. Shevardnadze's government is classified as a separate personalist regime that is distinct from Gamsakhurdia's personalist regime by GWF. Thus, we code it as a SOLS change, even though Shevardnadze was technically invited to rule to country by the former government. Shevardnadze was eventually 'elected' President in 1995, when the presidency was reinstated. At that point, he classified himself as a member of the Citizen's Union of Georgia (SMK). He remained in office until 2003.

On 2 November 2003, parliamentary elections were held in Georgia. The results were widely disputed, and led to popular demonstrations, known as the Rose Revolution. Pressure on Shevardnadze to leave office increased, and on November 23, he resigned. Power passed to the Speaker of Parliament, Nino Burjanadze, until elections were organized in January 2004. Burjanadze is listed as an "interim" president, so we have not coded his time in office as a SOLS change. The result of the elections brought Mikheil Saakashvili, a member of the National Movement-Democrats (ENM) party into office. This is a SOLS change.

In November 2007, after a series of violent anti-government demonstrations, Saakashvili stepped down from office and called for new presidential elections. Again, Burjanadze stepped in to fill the role of President until elections were held in January 2008. Again, we have chosen not to code his time in office as a SOLS change, as he was clearly in an interim position. The elections resulted in Saakashvili being reelected as President, and he remains in office in the present day. This is not a SOLS change.

References

- Ekedahl, Caroline McGiffert and Melvin Allan Goodman. 1997 *The wars of Éduard Shevardnadze*. College Station: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- MacKinnon, Mark. 2007. *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union*. Canada: Random House Canada.
- United States Department of State. 2010. "Country Background Note: Georgia". Last edited 21 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5253.htm>
- 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.

Coded by Meera Krishnan June 25, 2010
Updated by Naoko Matsumura 06/13/2012
Revised by Bryan Rooney 10/17/2011
Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/23/14