

Budapest, 2009

The Impact of Horizontal Concentration of Power on Ethnic Mobilization in Post-Soviet Georgia

Paper prepared for the Annual Doctoral Conference
Political Science Department, Central European University
March 2009

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Introduction:

In the specialized literature concentration of power is often viewed as conducive to democratic instability in ethnically divided societies. The most famous proponent of power sharing - Arend Lijphart – argued that stable democracy in deeply divided societies, which is understood as the absence of ethnic conflict, is highly unlikely under majoritarian winner-take-all systems that are characterized by concentration of power in majority one-party governments and by absolute majority rule.¹ Lijphart's consociationalism implies that a majoritarian winner-take-all system by its very nature blocks the access of ethnic minorities to the decision-making process, which leads to their alienation and which hence increases the chance for ethnic minorities' discord.

However, the vast literature exploring the causes that provoke and factors that favour ethnic mobilization generally do not focus on the impact of the horizontal concentration of power on the escalation of ethnic conflicts. Specifically, scholars who developed the political and institutional perspectives to explain ethnic mobilization either focused on specific institutional designs, as electoral systems or state territorial organizations, or analyzed the impact of a specific party system on the type and intensity of ethnic mobilization.²

Hence, on the one hand consociationalist theory predicts ethnic minorities' discord in ethnically divided societies with horizontally concentrated power; on the other hand the literature on ethnic mobilization does not identify the concentration of power as one of the major factors or causes leading to ethnic mobilization as a reaction towards the reduced access of minorities to decision-taking processes. However, clarifying both the relevance and type of impact that power concentration has on degree of ethnic mobilization is important, particularly for the post Soviet region in which several multi-ethnic republics experienced periods with horizontally concentrated power during transition.

In this paper I address this gap. Mainly, I aim to establish the causal chain between horizontal power concentration and ethnic mobilization. For this, I carry on an empirical analysis and process-tracing applied to the case of post-Soviet Georgia. I seek to determine if there was a causal relation between power concentration and ethnic mobilization in this country at all. Moreover, I aim to establish whether an eventual causal relation between these two phenomena points to a similar type of effect as the one established by consociationalist theory, which argues that concentrated power leads to the intensification of ethnic minorities' discord, in other words, to the intensification of ethnic mobilization.

Georgia is a relevant case for my purpose because during transition it experienced both fragmented and concentrated horizontal power. Moreover, it is a country with ethnically diverse population and with ethnic minority groups that mobilized at different levels since country's independence. The population censuses identify eight ethnic minority groups living in Georgia. In this paper I mainly focus on two – Armenians and Azeris - which are the greatest in size and have significant territorial concentration (Annex 1). I also make references to Abkhazians and Ossetians for comparative reasons. I disregard the other minority groups because they are neither considerable in number, nor territorially concentrated, hence their eventual low degree of mobilization would be better explained by these descriptive characteristics than by the factor I seek to explore.³

Accordingly, the paper is structured as follows. In the first part, I determine why Azeris and Armenians in Georgia should be expected to mobilize at all. For this, I check for the presence or absence of several factors often perceived as provoking ethnic mobilization. In the second part I present the degrees of power concentration and ethnic mobilization in post-Soviet Georgia. In the third part I link power concentration with ethnic mobilization through the analysis of vertical decentralization promoted by the incumbents of the concentrated power. In the fourth part I link power concentration with ethnic mobilization through the analysis of the electoral system incumbents of concentrated power applied in order to preserve their power. I summarize the findings in the concluding part.

1. Ethnic Mobilization in Georgia: How Much Predictable?

The literature on ethnic mobilization contains a great variety of possible causes that provoke/ and factors that catalyze ethnic mobilization. These studies resulted in a great variety of theories, from the ones centred on economic inequalities between minority and majority population, to the ones focused on external factors like the intervention of a kin state or support from a regional actor.⁴ However, there is little distinction made in the literature between possible causes that make minorities feel the urge to mobilize, and the favourable conditions that make ethnic mobilization achievable. This is because drawing a line between the two is difficult. Nevertheless, this distinction may be useful when a researcher seeks to understand the lack of ethnic mobilization in cases in which minorities had reasons to mobilize, but not the favourable conditions for it.

The reasons for mobilization, on the one hand, refer either to certain ascriptive characteristics of minorities (as their cultural differences as compared to the majority population, which strengthens a particular ethnic identity), to the disparities in economic

development between minority and the majority population, as well as to state policies towards minorities that minority groups may perceive as discriminatory. The favourable conditions, on the other hand, can be related to the external intervention of a kin state or regional actor, or to the existence of autonomy structures left from a former territorial organization.

The ascriptive characteristics as causes for ethnic mobilization were included in Tedd Gurr's explanatory model of "collective action", which implies that the stronger the ethnic identity (as measured by the cultural differences between the ethnic group and majority population), the greater the probability for ethnic mobilization. The cultural differences are measured, besides other things, by differences in language and religion.⁵ In Georgia, the Azeri, Armenian, Abkhazian and Ossetian minorities' languages come from language families that are different from the Georgian one⁶. In religious terms, Georgians' orthodoxy is shared by Ossetians and partly, by Abkhazians, but Armenians and Azeris have different religious beliefs.⁷ Moreover, statistical data show that in the last decade of Soviet Union minorities in Georgia had very little fluency in Georgian language,⁸ which made the distinction between their ethnic identity and Georgians' identity even more relevant. Hence, in line with Gurr's model the cultural differences between ethnic minorities and the majority in Georgia would predict a high level of ethnic mobilization.

The economic inequalities were viewed as possible causes that provoke ethnic mobilization by scholars like Juan Diez Medrano and Michael Hechter, who argued that uneven regional development that reinforces or creates inequality, combined with cultural differences among regions can be a reason for ethnic mobilization.⁹ In Georgia, this does not explain Abkhazian mobilization because during the Soviet period Abkhazia was one of the most economically-prosperous regions of USSR, with a well developed agricultural sector and tourism. South Ossetia, although without the resources and economic potential of Abkhazia, still was not an economically disadvantaged region during the Soviet Union, if compared to other regions of Georgia.

At the same time, Azeri and Armenian communities are concentrated in two regions which have always been underdeveloped economically if compared to the vicinity regions, situation which was preserved during the post-Soviet period. Data on emigration and unemployment in Georgia reveal the highest percentage of it in Javakheti, which is the southern region with Armenian compact settlement.¹⁰ Moreover, the district with the greatest Armenian settlement – Akhalkalaki – has had the smallest rate of industrial production, if compared to vicinity districts and also, the highest percentage of emigration and

unemployment, when compared to other districts from the region.¹¹ Hence, economic regional inequality could have been a reason for ethnic mobilization of Azeris and Armenians, but not of Ossetians and Abkhazians.

State policies towards minorities can provoke ethnic mobilization when they are perceived as attempting to undermine minorities' identity. If specific state policies imply the building of what Rogers Brubaker called a "nationalizing state", in which the dominant elites promote the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, and political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation,¹² this can be perceived by minorities as contradictory with their identity preservation and hence, constitute a reason for ethnic mobilization. By contrary, there will be no such reason if specific state policies imply the building of what Brubaker called a „multi-ethnic state”, which is the state built „of and for two or more ethno-cultural core nations”¹³.

In Georgia, by the time of Abkhazian and Ossetian conflicts there were no clear policy provisions in education, language and religion that would have indicated to minorities whether the state was being built as a „nationalizing” or as a „multiethnic” one.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the political discourse of the first Georgian president – Zviad Gamsakhurdia – was perceived as an extremely nationalistic one.¹⁵ Besides, anecdotal evidence reveals that his cadre policies had a nationalistic character¹⁶, and that minorities perceived these policies as a sign of a „nationalizing state” building.

But actual education, language and religious policies implemented later during transition period had a „nationalizing” character as well, which became even more visible after the 2004 „Rose Revolution”. During both presidencies of Shevarnadze and Saakashvili the language policies gave an absolute priority to Georgian language in all spheres,¹⁷ and also, the religion policies prioritized the Christian Orthodox Church.¹⁸ Moreover, the “nationalizing” state building affected education sphere during Saakashvili presidency, as the latest policies provide for several core subjects to be taught in minority schools in Georgian language.¹⁹ Hence, the state policies towards minorities in Georgia may have served as reason for ethnic mobilization at the beginning of 90s, but also in later periods of transition.

The presence of autonomous structures in the recent past and the loss/ or perceived danger to lose them was seen as a factor favouring ethnic mobilization as well.²⁰ This is because minorities that had autonomous structures in the recent past have the organizational and sometimes, even financial resources to mobilize. This factor has a great explanatory power in case of post-Soviet Georgia, as Abkhazians and Ossetians who were involved in civil wars with Georgian central government at the beginning of 90s had autonomous structures during

the Soviet Union. However, it does not explain the increase and decrease in the level of Azeris' and Armenians' mobilization during the period of transition.

The involvement of regional actors or kin states has also a great explanatory power for the ethnic mobilization in Georgia. On the one hand, Russia's intervention into Georgia's civil wars with Ossetians and Abkhazians at the beginning of 90s explains well the escalation of the ethnic mobilization at such high intensity levels. On the other hand, the almost inexistent involvement of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Georgian state policies towards Armenian and Azeri minorities reveals why these two minority groups generally mobilized at much smaller levels than Abkhazians and Ossetians.²¹ However, the lack of external intervention in case of Azeris and Armenians does not explain the variation in the level of their mobilization during the period of transition.

2. Ethnic Mobilization and Concentration of Power in Georgia:

Before exploring any possible link between horizontal concentration of power and ethnic mobilization in Georgia, it is necessary to clarify what these terms generally imply and how they can be measured. It is also necessary to apply available measurement tools on the case of post Soviet Georgia and determine the degree in which horizontal power concentration is associated with increased level of mobilization, association that is implied by consociationalist theory. In this part of the paper I pursue these tasks.

2.1. Horizontal Power Concentration - Definitions and Measurements:

The power configuration implied by what Lijphart called "majoritarian winner-take-all system" – which I call "horizontally concentrated power" - is the one characterized by the existence of majority executives, the dominance of the executives over the parliaments and the concentration of the legislative power.²² In Tsebelis' terms, concentration of power is determined by the existence of few, congruent and cohesive veto players, as compared to the diffusion of power which is determined by the existence of many incongruent and non-cohesive veto players on political arena.²³ Hence, horizontally concentrated power is the situation in which the decision making process is concentrated in the hands of few political actors that are linked by shared policy positions, institutional ties, and loyalty.

Concentration of power was often associated with the parliamentary system, as the dichotomy presidentialism/parliamentarism had at its core the separation vs. fusion of powers.²⁴ Parliamentarism was generally defined as the system of "mutual dependence", in which the executive power must be supported by a legislative majority and can fall if it receives a vote of no-confidence, and in which the executive has the capacity to dissolve the

legislature. Presidentialism, on the other hand, was defined as the system of „mutual independence”, in which the legislative and executive powers have their own fixed electoral mandates that constitute their own source of legitimacy.”²⁵

However, the association of presidentialism/parliamentarism dichotomy with separation/fusion of powers is often criticised. Scholars like Rockman, Tsebelis, and Cheibub explained that both parliamentary and presidential systems conceal a great deal of variation in the extent to which they concentrate or disperse power.²⁶ Lijphart also found both elements of “consensus” and “majoritarian” models of democracy in presidential systems, attributing to the former the independence of legislative and executive branches and to the latter, the concentration of the executive power in the hands of one person.²⁷ Therefore, it is not enough to attribute a certain institutional label to a case in order to determine its degree of horizontal power concentration. Additional indicators are needed. As Georgia has been formally a presidential system during transition period, additional indicators relevant for such form of government need to be identified.

Such indicators have been suggested by Andres Malamud, who defined two types of presidencies, based on the degree of presidents’ parliamentary support. He defined “concentrationist presidency” as the type in which there is an absolute majority in parliament constantly supporting a pro-presidential government and “separationist presidencies” as the type in which the head of state lacks a constant support in parliament.²⁸ From this classification it results that for measuring the degree of power concentration it is important to determine whether there was a pro-presidential, constant, and absolute majority in parliament and whether that majority was characterised by internal discipline. To this I add that the weaker the formal powers of presidents, the more presidents need a stable parliamentary majority support in order to arrive to a situation of concentrated power. This is because the stronger the formal presidential powers, the less the parliament can block presidential decisions.

2.2. Measuring Formal Presidential Powers in Georgia:

For measuring the presidential powers in Georgia I applied Shugart and Carey’s measurement scheme.²⁹ Also, I carried out a detailed content analysis of all relevant legal norms in Georgia since independence that regulated the division of formal powers between executive and legislative branches.³⁰ Formal presidential powers in Georgia got constitutional legitimacy only with the adoption of the constitution in 1995. Between 1991 and 1995 all formal rules regulating the role of the head of state had provisional character.

Table 1: Fluctuations in Formal Presidential Powers in Georgia (1991-2008)					
parliamentary mandates		1991-1992	1992-1995	1995-2004	2004-present
Legislative powers (max=4)					
1	package veto	3	2	3	3
2	partial veto	3	2	3	3
3	decree	2	1	2	2
4	exclusive introduction of legislation	0	1	2	3
5	budgetary powers	0	0	3	3
6	proposal of referenda	4	0	3	3
Non-legislative powers (max=4)					
1	cabinet formation	3	2	3	2
2	cabinet dismissal	3	0	4	3
3	censure	1	0	4	2
4	dissolution of the assembly	4	0	0	3
total		23	8	27	28
maximum possible		40	40	40	40

The measurement results (table 1) reveal that except between 1992 and 1995, presidents in Georgia always had strong formal powers. Because the presidents had always the right to nominate candidates for Cabinet formation and the parliament could only react through accepting or rejecting them, the Cabinets were always pro-presidential. However, the formal rules established several means through which the parliament could eventually block presidential initiatives. First, never presidents had unlimited power to appoint Cabinet members, as in all periods presidents needed at least the consent of the parliament for the Cabinet formation. Second, presidents never had the right of non-overrideable veto. Third, presidents had never unlimited powers to issue decrees or introduce legislation.³¹ Hence, determining the degree of parliamentary support for incumbent presidents within the whole transition period is relevant.

2.3. Measuring the Level of Parliamentary Fragmentation in Georgia:

Parliamentary fragmentation is usually measured by applying formulas that calculate the number of parties/ party blocks that obtained parliamentary seats after elections.³² For measuring the degree of parliamentary fragmentation in Georgia I used the Effective Number of Relevant Party Index (ENRP). This index takes into account the coalition potential of parties/blocks in the parliament and also, the minimum number of MPs required for adopting ordinary, organic laws and constitutional changes. Also, it captures well situations with dominant parties.³³

Data in table 2 show that since independence Georgia had 10 years with one-dominant-party parliament, 4 years with a slightly fragmented parliament and 3 years with a highly fragmented parliament, if the relevance of fragmentation is limited to the adoption of organic

and ordinary laws. Data also show that since the last parliamentary elections in 2008 Georgia has a one-dominant-party parliament even when it comes to the adoption of constitutional changes and extra-ordinary laws.

Table 2: The level of parliamentary fragmentation in Georgia 1990-2008				
Elections year	First winning party/bloc	% seats obtained	ENRP value, when quota is (50+1)% ³⁴	ENRP value, when quota is 2/3 ³⁵
1990	Round Table-Free Georgia	62	1	2,6
1992	Peace Bloc	16	7,8	15,3
1995	Citizens' Union of Georgia	46	3,2	5
1999	Citizens' Union of Georgia	56	1	3,6
2004	National Movement Democrats	65	1	3,2
2008	United National Movement – for Victorious Georgia	79	1	1
			<i>The closer the index value to 1, the less the parliament is fragmented. Value 1 shows the presence of an absolute majority party.</i>	

But simply using such formalized method in order to determine the level of parliamentary fragmentation is not sufficient. This is because such formulas are based on the assumption that internal parties' discipline is high.³⁶ The post-Soviet region in the period of transition experienced a process of parties' and party systems' formation, hence for this region such an assumption is highly unrealistic. Therefore, checking for the actual internal discipline of majority parties is crucial.³⁷

Data collected from my interviews with MPs reveal that party discipline of elections' winning parties was generally high. However, there were two exceptions: during the 1990-1992 and 1999-2003 mandates. In the former case, the majority group "Round Table – Free Georgia" split in several factions soon after the 1990 parliamentary elections and by the beginning of 1992 there was no one parliamentary faction that could secure a stable majority.³⁸ In the latter case, the majority party officially split in September 2001. Between 2001 and 2003 there was no majority and neither a stable pattern of voting behaviour.³⁹

The 1995-1999 parliamentary mandate needs more detailed analysis. The ENRP index reveals a certain degree of parliamentary fragmentation within this period. However, a closer analysis demonstrates that in reality the winning party "Citizens' Union of Georgia" managed to secure an absolute majority soon after the 1995 elections. This was first because several MPs elected as independent candidates joined the party's faction.⁴⁰ Second, the "All-Georgian Revival Union" (with 13% mandates in parliament) constantly supported the majority party.⁴¹ Hence, between 1995 and 1999 the parliament was not fragmented.

2.4. Measuring the Degree of Presidents' Parliamentary Support:

The first Georgian president Zviad Gamsakhurdia became officially president of the country in April 1991. Although the “Round Table-Free Georgia” movement that he was chairing secured an absolute majority in the 1990 legislative elections, many of his supporters within the movement gradually abandoned him.⁴² Moreover, there was an alternative legislative branch formed in 1990 – the “National Congress” – that was opposing the president and that was supported by “Mkhedrioni”, a nationalist paramilitary group.⁴³

Between 1992 and 1995 there was no official institution of presidency. There was a head of state – Eduard Shevarnadze - who had extremely weak power base by 1992, with limited formal power and no secure majority in parliament. Shevarnadze started to concentrate power only by 1994, after a state of emergency period which created favourable conditions for establishing a majority in parliament.⁴⁴ The 1995 parliamentary and presidential elections’ results strengthened Shevarnadze in power, as the Citizens’ Union Party that was formed around/and chaired by him won the parliamentary elections. Hence, the president enjoyed a constant parliamentary support between 1995 and 2001, period which covered almost two parliamentary mandates. The process of power diffusion started in 2000, when an internal opposition started to form within the presidential party. The party split in 2001 and Shevarnadze lost the majority parliamentary support.

After the “Rose Revolution” in 2003 the horizontal power got concentrated again, as president Mikheil Saakashvili controlled well more than two thirds of parliamentary seats that were occupied by pro-presidential “United National Movement” MPs. These MPs were loyal to the president since “many were hand picked by him on the party list before the 2004 elections”.⁴⁵ After 2008 elections the pro-presidential coalition secured even more parliamentary seats and currently, the Georgian president has enough power and support to change the constitution without having the opposition’s agreement.

Fragmented		Concentrated			
1	1991-1992				
2	1992-1994				
		3	1995-1999		
		4	1999-2000		
5	2001-2003				
				6	2004-2008
				7	2008-.....

In table 3 the periods of concentrated power and the periods of fragmented power are distinguished. The periodization is based on measurements of the formal presidential powers, parliamentary fragmentation and presidents' legislative support. The table shows that the power was fragmented at the beginning of 90s and shortly before the Rose Revolution. It also shows that the periods with concentrated power were rather long-lasting, which implies that there was considerable time for its potential effects to manifest.

2.5. Ethnic Mobilization - Definitions and Measurements:

In the specialized literature, ethnic mobilization has been attributed to diverse social phenomena. While scholars agreed that ethnic mobilization is defined by the existence of collective action of a group that unify individuals sharing similar ethnic markers, the way in which they measured the degree of ethnic mobilization differed. Some scholars focused on the analysis of collective ethnic behaviour, others tried to determine the degree of separatist party vote; others tended to study historical and structural analysis of autonomous movements, while others focused specifically on ethnic conflicts, wars and genocides.⁴⁶

The ethnic mobilization is one of the types of social mobilization. Generally, social mobilization is defined as “the process of creating movement structures and preparing and carrying out protest actions which are visible movement ‘products’ addressed to actors and publics outside the movement.”⁴⁷ Hence, ethnic mobilization as social phenomenon contains two necessary indicators: the existence of movement structures, and the carrying out of protest actions. By movement structures it is implied the existence of organizations that aggregate and represent the ethnic groups' demands. By protest actions it is implied what Tedd Gurr defined as “communal political action”: the action “initiated by members of a group on behalf of its interest and directed against, or designed to influence, state authorities.”⁴⁸

Based on a typology of “mobilizing agents”, Dieter Rucht identified three types of possible movement structures: “grassroots” model, “interest group” model, and “party-oriented” model. The “grassroot” type is the one based on loose, informal and decentralized structures, which relies on committed adherents and operates through protest actions. The interest group type is the one based on the direct influence of politics through formal organizations, which relies on the access to decision makers and is based on the representation of its members in politics. The party-oriented type is the one characterized by reliance on electoral processes and party politics, which operates through the occupation of political offices and has as main resource loyal voters.⁴⁹ Hence, as the ethnic movements can take any

of these three forms, in order to determine the level of ethnic mobilization in Georgia the existence of all these three types shall be checked for.

As far as protest actions are concerned, Tedd Gurr elaborated a useful tool for measurement: first, he distinguished three possible types of “communal political actions” – non-violent protests, violent protests and rebellions; second, he constructed separate scaling for each of these actions that can be used to measure the intensity of each type.⁵⁰ The types of movements do not necessarily correlate with specific types of protests. While an ethnic party is expected to rather stand behind peaceful protests, the ‘grassroot’ movements can involve in both violent and non-violent protests.

Hence, in order to determine the degree of ethnic mobilization in Georgia during transition and its change within time, first a look at the level of movement structures’ organizations (with a focus on all three types of movements) and second, an analysis of the type and intensity of protest actions are needed. Depending on the level of movement structures and protest actions’ intensity, I classify the analyzed cases into four gradual levels of ethnic mobilization, from “very low” to “high” (table 4).

2.6. Ethnic Mobilization in Post-Soviet Georgia:

The Abkhazians and Ossetians living in the former Soviet Georgian autonomies of Abkhazia and South Ossetia were the ethnic minorities with the strongest movement structures at the beginning of 90s. These ethnic groups’ leadership managed to mobilize their followers under all three types of movement structures. First, both Ossetians and Abkhazians at the beginning of 90s had party-oriented movement structures. In case of Abkhazians, an ethnic political party was created in 1991 – the Union of Abkhazian People – party which had a large support of Abkhazian population and which participated in the administration of the rebel areas during the 1992-1993 Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. In case of Ossetians, the local branch of the Communist Party constituted a party-type ethnic movement that had a large support among Abkhazian population and that also administered the rebel areas during the 1991-1992 Georgian-Ossetian War.⁵¹

The two ethnic groups had also grassroot movements founded at the end of 80’s,⁵² which had a large mass support and were the first to organize local mass protests against the central government. The Ossetians and Abkhazians had also “interest’ group” type of movements whose leaders, due to their administrative positions, had the potential to blackmail the central government by the refusal to cooperate. These movements were constituted by the Abkhazian and Ossetian local governmental militias who had direct access to the local coercive forces.⁵³

As far as protest actions are concerned, Abkhazian and Ossetian “communal political actions” started with relatively peaceful, but intense demonstrations at the end of 80s. Eventually these demonstrations evolved into scattered acts of sabotage, rioting guerilla activities and culminated in the 1991-1993 civil wars. The level of demands was very high, as both regions asked for territorial separation. After the civil wars the central government lost its control over Abkhazian and South-Ossetian regions.

The Armenians living in the southern region of Georgia have also had certain level of organizational structure, which varied in its intensity during the transition period. At the end of 80s a social movement was formed – “Javakh” – which was a committee for the local public organizations and at the beginning of 90s, had a high level of popularity among the Armenians living in the region. The organization was defending the promotion of the Armenian culture, but it also voiced demands for territorial autonomy.⁵⁴ But by 1994 its popularity started to decrease and then it gradually fell apart, because some of its leaders were given local administrative positions, while others immigrated to Russia. By 1994 another political organization was formed – “Virk” – that wanted to become a political party representing the interests of Armenian minorities, but that never managed to get registered and in fact, had never been as popular as “Javakh”.

Since 2000 several organizations exist in the region with Armenians. Some of them advocate language rights and sporadically, territorial autonomy. In 2002 one of these organizations – “United Javakh” – managed to bring together several region’s youth organizations in support of one of its leaders’ candidacy for local elections, leader who eventually became the mayor of one of the regions’ districts.⁵⁵ This organization has advocated more self-governing rights of the region. By the end of 2006 the organization lost from its importance and had to face competition from other similar local groups.

Non-violent protest actions in the region with Armenian concentration were organized at the beginning of 90s, with manifestation of small-scale mass demonstrations and verbal oppositions. These protest actions were nationalistic in character, and people were voicing demands for territorial autonomy. But later during the 90s there were no more local protest actions organized and generally no demands with ethnic character were voiced.

Protesting activities and the public expression of demands with ethnic character then reappeared after 2000. In 2003 the leader of “Virk” organization addressed to the central government the request to grant a formal status to the region with territorial concentration of Armenians, either in form of territorial autonomy, or as part of an eventual federation or confederation. Later by 2005 such demands were voiced through mass demonstrations as

well. These demonstrations were not primarily provoked by ethnic issues, but by the closure of the Russian military base in the region, which the local population highly opposed because that military base was an important local provider of employment. However, in relation to these demonstrations “United Javakh” advocated for more cultural and linguistic rights for the Armenian population of Georgia, but also for more self-governing rights for the region.⁵⁶ Some smaller scale demonstrations, during which demands with ethnic character were voiced, were organized in the region by 2006, but gradually they disappeared, although the central government has not met any of Armenians’ ethnicity-related demands.

The Azeri minorities in Georgia having territorial concentration in the Southern part of the country mobilized relatively less than the Armenian community during the period of transition. Nevertheless, Azeris had also a highly popular and well supported local ethnic organization – “Geyrat” – which was formed in 1990 and which had as primary goal to prevent Azeris’ cultural rights and protect the community from being forced out of the country as a result of pressure from Georgian nationalist organizations. Between 1992 and 1994 the organization had the role of local security for Azeri citizens from local criminal groups. In 1995 the importance of the organization for the mobilization of Azeri community started to decrease, as its main leaders have been co-opted in power. By the end of 90s the organization was highly fragmented and practically contained three different factions with competing leaders.⁵⁷

After 2000 several organizations have been registered in the region with Azeri concentration, but none of them have developed so far a capability to mobilize more than a handful of people to protect the local interests or the community interests. The organizations that exist today focus rather on Georgian language training, civic education and intercultural communication, which is rather in line with integrationist goals than with the defence of the community’s identity or cultural rights.⁵⁸

However, at the end of 80s the Azeri minority engaged in protest actions as well. Large scale mass demonstrations were organized prior to Georgian independence, demonstrations that had an ethnic character, as people were voicing concerns about the ethnic based discrimination and they were against the national movement in Georgia. In 1991-1992 the Azeri’s’ protest actions were less intense, expressed through small-group meetings supporting different local elites. During Shevardnadze’s presidency, there were no important protest actions in the region, only small-group occasional gatherings expressing concerns about the land distribution, but not about ethnicity-based issues. Since the Rose Revolution, there were no important protest actions in the region with Azeri concentration.⁵⁹

Hence, Armenians and Azeris from Georgia had “grassroot” and “interest-group” social movements that had more or less coherent mass support in different periods within transition. But never did they have a “party oriented” model of movement structure, that would have functioned through electoral appeals. These movement structures engaged in organizing protest actions in different moments of transition, but were most prominent in doing so at the beginning of 90s and - in case of Armenians – also within the years around the Rose Revolution.

**Table 4:
Ethnic mobilization and power concentration in Georgia (1990-2008)**

Dynamics in power concentration		1991-1992	1992-1994	1995-1999	1999-2000	2001-2003	2004-2008
		fragmented		concentrated		fragmented	concentrated
Level of ethnic mobilization	Very low			Armenians 1994 -2001 Azeris		Azeris	
	Low						Armenians 2006-resent
	Medium	Armenians 1990-1993 Azeris 1990-1992				Armenians 2002-2006	
	High	Abkhazians 1990-1993 Ossetians 1990-1993					

Table 4 shows the degree in which the level of ethnic mobilization in Georgia corresponds to the periods with power concentration. It reveals that Georgian minorities generally mobilized in periods with fragmented power, and that by contrary, they mobilized much less in periods with concentrated power. These descriptive findings do not confirm the consociationalist views that majoritarian winner-take-all systems will make democratic stability in ethnically divided societies highly unlikely because in such societies inter-ethnic discord will result from the very nature of the system.

3. The Territorial Organization as Linking Element between Power Concentration and Ethnic Mobilization in Georgia:

The political incumbents in a system with concentrated power, in which the opposition has limited standing in political decision-taking processes will seek to keep the system in place as long as the majority group controlling the legislative and executive branches preserves the internal coherence and discipline. For replicating the system of concentrated power from one electoral cycle to another, the control over potential formation of political alliances within the country’s regions is needed. This is because the challenge to the concentrated power can be created at regional level, where potential counter-elite would seek to replace its lack of access to resources with the access to certain regional loyalties. By controlling the regions, the incumbents of concentrated power system can prevent such

situation. A gradual process of formal centralization or a slow process of decentralization can insure the control over the regions. Hence, it is expectable that in systems with lasting horizontally concentrated power the level of decentralization is relatively low.

Scholars that analyze the territorial organization of state power in ethnically diverse societies often argue that decentralization in such societies is particularly important for the reduction of ethnic conflict. Their general argument is that decentralization systems bring governments closer to people, increase opportunities to participate in government and give groups control over their political, social and economic affairs. This control is particularly important in countries with territorially concentrated minorities, as it enables these minorities to effectively protect their various interests and concerns, as language protection, economic development and security, at the regional level of government, thus preventing them from provoking inter-ethnic conflicts.⁶⁰ According to this logic, centralized systems in states with territorially concentrated minorities will have the opposite effect, because these systems reduce minorities' opportunities to participate in government.

However, more and more scholars argue that decentralization may increase the potential for ethnic conflict, because in decentralized systems local elites have more access to resources for mobilization, which makes possible ethnic mobilization and the escalation of ethnic conflicts. Svante Cornell, for instance, argued that the ethnic territorial autonomies can promote ethnic mobilization, because in autonomous structures there are institutional and financial resources needed for it. Moreover, according to Cornell autonomies alienate ethnic groups and isolate minorities from participation in the large sphere of state.⁶¹ Other scholars argued that decentralization increases the potential for ethnic conflict when it is made on ethnic lines, because it reinforces ethnic identities by recognizing certain ethnic groups in the country and giving them a sense of legitimacy.⁶²

Hence, there is no unanimity in the literature on the effects of decentralization on ethnic mobilization and escalation of ethnic conflicts. This might be because decentralization may reduce ethnic conflicts in some cases and enhance them in other cases, depending on a range of specific circumstances. Brancati identified the existence of regional parties as one of the possible circumstances that enhance ethnic conflicts in decentralized states⁶³, while Bakke and Wibbels added that decentralized systems lower the potential for ethnic conflicts if ethnic groups are not economically unequal at interregional level.⁶⁴ My specific further goal is to determine whether in post-Soviet Georgia the territorial organization favoured or undermined the ethnic mobilization. For this, I first determine the degree of decentralization within

Georgia's transition period and second, find the particular elements of Georgian territorial organization that could have favoured/ or undermined the potential for ethnic mobilization.

3.1. The Territorial Organization of State Power in Georgia:

For determining the degree of decentralization in Georgia, I use the conceptual tools elaborated by Daniel Treisman, who defined six "conceptions of decentralization": vertical, appointment, electoral, fiscal, and personnel decentralization.⁶⁵ These attributes are particularly useful for my purposes because they can reveal how much of internal resources for eventual ethnic mobilization territorially-concentrated ethnic groups had in Georgia.

For characterizing the territorial organization of Georgia, both the temporal and spatial dimensions need to be considered. The former is relevant because there have been several stages of territorial organization development since Georgia's independence, while the latter is relevant because Georgian central government had not the same level of control over all its territories.

The local administration between 1990 and 1991 functioned on three levels – central government, district level and township - with local administration either headed by nominees of prefects (presidential representative in the districts), or by the prefects themselves. After the 1991 coup d'état, the office of the prefect was abolished and regional authorities were transferred to district heads of local administration. Between 1992 and 1994 the central government had little control over the country's regions and the regional affairs were mostly under the control of regional elites or illegal paramilitary groups.⁶⁶

The territorial organization of state power in Georgia was established through organic laws and presidential decrees. By 1995 president Shevarnadze issued a Decree which established a fourth tier of government – the 9 regions – to be led by governors appointed by the president. In 1997, the Organic Law on Local Government provided the basis for the development of Georgian territorial organization. Some 2002 amendments to the law allowed for more appointment and electoral decentralization, while other amendments in 2005 abolished the lowest tier of territorial organization and provided more fiscal and decision-making centralization.

These legal stipulations did not apply to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as these territories were beyond the control of Georgian jurisdiction after the wars at the beginning of 90s. Moreover, before 2004 the South-Western region of Georgia – Adjara – generally functioned as a territorial autonomy (although without a formally defined status) and the Georgian government had little control over its political affairs.⁶⁷ In 2004 the Georgian Parliament defined the formal status of Adjara, through which the actual autonomy of the region was

annulled because it guaranteed the Georgian president extensive powers to oversight over the region's main institutions.⁶⁸

3.1.1. Decision-making decentralization:

Treisman established that decision-making decentralization is determined by the degree in which the system allows the lower tiers to make political decisions, by the degree in which constitution allows residual authority to sub-national legislatures and also, by the existence of a regionally-chosen upper house of parliament with the right to block legislation. In other words, the more responsibilities are delegated exclusively to lower tiers, the more decision-making is decentralized.

The Georgia Constitution does not leave any residual authority to sub-national tiers. Neither is there a second chamber of parliament with regionally-chosen representatives. Before the 2005 administrative reform most of decision-making rights concerning regional politics were shared between the lower tiers and the central government. The only domains that were entirely left to be shared between different lower tiers were culture, leisure, sports, environment, public sanitation and public utilities, domains which have little political weight. Other decision-making areas as education, social welfare, health services and general administration were shared with the central government.⁶⁹

The large proportion of shared decision-making areas was one of the reasons for which the decentralization system in Georgia was criticized by the international experts.⁷⁰ The 2005 reform responded to these critiques, by establishing a clearer division among competences of different tiers, but not in favour of the lower tiers, but in favour of the central government.⁷¹ Therefore, Georgia had a weak level of decision-making decentralization during the transition period and tendencies towards decision-making centralization after the 2005 reform.

3.1.2. Appointment decentralization:

Treisman defined appointment decentralization as the extent to which executive appointments are made by actors at same (or lower) tier, rather than from above. Prior to the 2002 amendments to the Law on Local Self-Governance, in districts and in 7 biggest cities of Georgia the heads of executive organs were not elected, but appointed and dismissed directly by the President.⁷² Only the smallest territorial entities (i.e. councils of towns and villages) had the right to elect organs answerable to them. The 2002 legislative amendments provided for more appointment decentralization, and since then only in two major cities the president of Georgia appoints mayors⁷³. In all other cities and in the districts executive officials are elected by the legislative bodies of the same tier.⁷⁴ Although the governors of the 9 regions

are still appointed by the president, their undefined status and functions makes the lack of appointment decentralization at this level less relevant.⁷⁵

3.1.3. Electoral decentralization:

Treisman defined electoral decentralization by the extent to which sub-national officials are popularly elected. In Georgia before 2002, only representatives in local legislative organs of the two lowest tiers were popularly elected. These popularly elected organs had a very low capacity to monitor and influence the local executive bodies headed by presidential appointees. Generally the local legislatures had much weaker decision powers than the local executives. The 2002 administrative amendments intensified electoral decentralization, by establishing that heads of local executives at the district level would be indirectly elected by the members of popularly-elected local legislatures.⁷⁶ The second highest tier – the region – still has no popularly elected bodies.

3.1.4. Fiscal decentralization:

Fiscal decentralization is determined by the share of sub-national governments in total tax revenues or public expenditures. Tax revenues decentralization is greater, “the larger the share of total tax revenues that sub-national tiers receive.” Expenditure decentralization increases together with “the share of total public expenditures funded from sub-national budgets.”⁷⁷

In Georgia before the 2005 reform there were three main sources of local revenues: shared revenues, based on taxes accumulated on the national budget and then distributed to the budgets of districts; own revenues that were based on taxes collected by local authorities, and direct transfers from the central budget, widely used as a tool to finance local expenditures.⁷⁸ A study made by Georgian experts reveals that at the end of 90s, the shared revenues constituted the highest part of the local budgets and that generally it was increasing each year, at the expense of local own revenues and transfers from the central budget.⁷⁹ This distribution made it possible for the central government to control local financial resources.

In 2005 the level of fiscal decentralization was further reduced, because local tax revenues were greatly reduced. Moreover, shared taxes have been annulled and hence local governments became largely dependent on transfers from the central budget. The new legislation did not define the amount of general transfer fund. The financial dependency of local governments was also increased by the banning of local self-government loans from non-state financial institutions.⁸⁰

As far as expenditure decentralization is concerned, although the legislation established a wide variety of powers for local bodies to possess local self-governance property, in reality the most important regional public services (as health care, education, social care and

maintenance of public order) have been financed either directly from the central budget, or through some transfers. Very little such services could be covered by local funds because territorial bodies lacked respective financial resources.⁸¹

3.1.5. Personnel decentralization:

The level of personnel decentralization is determined by the “share of sub-national governments in the total government employees.”⁸² Treisman’s database shows that in 1997 only 18,8% of the total governmental personnel was employed at non-central level, which is a relatively low share if compared for instance to Hungary (48,1% in 1997), Estonia (34,4%), Lithuania (37.5%) or Moldova (50%).⁸³

Hence, the degree of decentralization in Georgia changed several times since independence. Before 1994 the central government had little factual control in the country’s regions. Nevertheless, since 1994 the way in which Georgian territorial organization functioned always implied means for effective control of sub-national affairs and leadership.

Up to 2002 the central government could control local leadership due to its appointment powers at local level which, combined with weak electoral and personnel decentralization, guaranteed local leadership’s loyalty towards the centre. The central government could also keep the local affairs under control due to the low level of fiscal and decision-making decentralization. With the 2002 changes the territorial organization slightly decentralized, as the centre loosened control over the local leadership by providing appointment and electoral decentralization. However, by 2005 the loosened control over the local leadership formation was counterbalanced with a tighter central control over the local financial resources and by the decision making centralization.

3.2. Concentration of Power, Decentralization and Ethnic Mobilization in Georgia:

As mentioned above, the two main elements of ethnic mobilization are the organizational structures and the protest actions. But for ethnic mobilization there is need for mobilizational resources. Susan Olzak identified loyalty, financial and organizational resources as the main mobilization sources.⁸⁴ Svante Cornell also mentioned leadership as a necessary source for ethnic mobilization.⁸⁵

In Georgia the state territorial organization by its very nature limited the access to financial resources for potential ethnic mobilizers. First, the fact that before 2005 the local budgets depended so much on the transfers and redistribution of taxes from the central government implied that the centre had strong means to eventually punish non-loyal local leaders. Because the loyalty of the region’s population towards local leaders depended on the success of their administrative performance, and this performance was determined by the

amount of money coming from the central government, the motivation of local leaders to discourage local ethnic mobilization and through this, demonstrate their loyalty to the central government was increased.

The financial dependency of the regional administrative leadership vis-à-vis the central government increased even more with the 2005 administrative reform. Because since then much of the shared revenues are collected and redistributed directly by the central government, and because the new legislation does not contain explicit criteria for this redistribution, the local leadership is now motivated even more than before to keep loyalty towards the central government. Hence, the weak decentralization in Georgia decreased the potential for ethnic mobilization, first through the limitation of potential mobilizing leaders to financial resources, and second, through the blackmailing effect over the local leadership that the system implied.

Weak fiscal decentralization's discouraging effect on ethnic mobilization can be augmented by the existence of a Centre in which the power is horizontally concentrated. This is because in conditions of concentrated power the opposition has little influence on deciding how state budget resources shall be distributed to particular regions. When a strong president who leads over the government has control over the parliament through a loyal-to-the-president majority fraction, the regional leaders will not ally with the opposition at central level to lobby for more financial resources, simply because the opposition has no lobby potential on financial resources redistribution in such systems. In situations with horizontally fragmented power they could eventually do so.

The state territorial organization of Georgia by its very nature also limited the potential for ethnic mobilization by limiting the access to mobilizing leadership. This is first because most of local leaders in regions with Azeri and Armenian concentration have been given with local administrative positions. The incumbents of concentrated horizontal power could do so due to the weak appointment/ and electoral decentralization system of Georgia before 2002. All key local positions were filled by appointees of Georgian president or his representatives in the districts. Eventually, any change in these appointees' loyalty towards the Centre could be punished simply by removing them from their positions of authority. In conditions of concentrated power this "decapitation" is even more efficient, because the appointment of local administrative cadres is controlled exclusively by the incumbents of the concentrated power.

The use of this particular strategy mostly during Shervaradze's presidency was much in line with the way in which Soviet Union federalism functioned. Philip Roeder explained well

how in Soviet Union cooptation of local indigenous elite to power at local level was used to keep inter-ethnic peace in place. As he explained, these local leaders were put in front of the choice between supporting/ or even allowing local ethnic mobilization against the Centre and losing their authoritative position with all related advantages.⁸⁶

After the 2002 legislative amendments, which provided for appointment and electoral decentralization, this method of controlling the local politics was weakened, as local leaders' administrative positions depended more on the loyalty of local population towards them. This type of decentralization gave incentives to local elites to look for internal resources for support of their candidacies in local elections. A relevant example is the one from the Armenian community concentrated in the Southern region, where in 2002 several local non-governmental organizations mobilized their resources for electing their representative as mayor in local elections.⁸⁷

The Georgian state territorial organization had also a diminishing effect on the access to loyalty resources for mobilization. This is because local leadership has little decision-making power. As described above, before 2005 the decision-making powers in most important policy areas were shared between the centre and local authorities. However, due to the central high potential for control over the financial resources and administrative positions of lower tiers, the centre had always the final word in eventual disagreements over political decision making at local level. Hence, local leaders had little potential to attract ethnically-based loyalty because they had little power to take decisions independently from the central government. In 2005 most of shared areas for decision making were given exclusively to the central level. Therefore, even if since 2002 there is more appointment and electoral decentralization and local leaders have more incentives to attract the loyalty of local masses, the access to loyalty resources was diminished by the decision-making centralization.

Hence, the weak level of decentralization in Georgia had not as effect the development of ethnic mobilization. By contrary, through limiting the access of potential ethnic mobilizers to leadership, financial and loyalty resources, the rather centralized system of territorial organization made it possible for the central concentrated power to keep under control any ethnically mobilizing processes. Hence, the horizontally concentrated power in Georgia constituted a hindering factor for the rise of ethnic mobilization, by virtue of its control over the regions through the rather centralized territorial organization of the country.

4. The Electoral System as Linking Element between Power Concentration and Ethnic Mobilization in Georgia:

The political incumbents in systems with concentrated power, in which the opposition has limited role in political decision-taking processes, will seek to keep the system in place as long as the majority group controlling the legislative and executive branches preserves the internal coherence and discipline. In a presidential/ or semi-presidential country in order to concentrate power it is important to bring a pro-presidential majority in parliament. Moreover, in order to replicate the concentration of power from one electoral cycle to another, it is important to preserve the pro-presidential majority in parliament, which can be done through the choice of an electoral system that would favour the pro-presidential party.

In the literature it is often suggested that majoritarian electoral systems produce two party systems, while proportional electoral systems produce multi-party systems. Several empirical studies demonstrated that countries with proportional electoral rules tend to have more parties in parliament than countries with majority or plurality electoral rules.⁸⁸ This position suggests that under a majority electoral system there is more chance for the formation of a parliament with a party holding an absolute majority of mandates than under proportional rule.⁸⁹ It also suggests that under majority rule there is more chance for the formation of a single party government than under proportional rule.⁹⁰

However, other scholars found limitations to this pattern. Pippa Norris argued that a majoritarian electoral system produce two-party systems only when parties are already developed.⁹¹ Sarah Birch revealed that in Eastern Europe it was the single member districts, and the single-member components of mixed systems that led to the parliamentary representation of the largest number of parties. This is because in Eastern Europe the parties during the 90s were in formation, and often they were small, had regionally concentrated support and low country-level support. Birch argued that such parties generally benefit from a majority electoral system.⁹² Moreover, when a majority system is introduced before the consolidation of political parties, it can even encourage the formation of regional parties, especially in countries with territorially concentrated groups of voters with specific ideological, racial, or ethnic characteristics.

Therefore, in transition countries with parties in process of formation and with territorially concentrated minorities the majority electoral system is not the best option for ensuring the formation of an absolute parliamentary majority. Generally, the proportionality of an electoral system is determined by two factors: the electoral formula and the proportion of wasted votes.⁹³ The highest proportion of wasted votes is generally attributed to majority systems.

But under proportional systems there can be a great number of wasted votes as well, if a high threshold is introduced⁹⁴.

Birch' data on proportional systems in Eastern Europe contradicted the conventional wisdom that PR systems ensure more proportional representation than majoritarian systems. On several examples from Eastern European countries, she showed how PR with high threshold can increase significantly the level of disproportionality.⁹⁵ In conditions of non-consolidated political parties, the high threshold favours those parties formed around/ or by individuals with high level of popularity at country level, especially if the electoral system also imposes a nation-wide constituency and nation-wide party lists. Parties supporting/ or supported by popular presidents will benefit particularly from such elections.

Coming back to Olzak's sources for ethnic mobilization, ethnic minorities need organizational structures in order to get mobilized. According to Rucht's classification of mobilizing agents, party organizations can constitute such a resource, case in which there will be a "party-oriented" type of ethnic movement structure. With this type of movement structure there can be ethnic mobilization performed by ethnic parties or, in case of concentrated minorities, also by regional parties. This type of ethnic mobilization is possible only when such parties are legally allowed and when their formation and consolidation is encouraged by a favourable electoral system.

Generally, the consociationalist literature, but also its critiques suggest that a highest level of ethnic political representation can be achieved under a proportional electoral system. This is because in such systems the small parties – like the ethnic ones – have greater chance to get into the parliament than in majoritarian systems. The critiques of consociationalism argued that in such systems the salience of ethnicity will be fostered through the representation of ethnic parties in parliament.⁹⁶

Nevertheless, when the ethnic groups are territorially concentrated and the ethnic parties regionally based, a majority electoral system can favour even more the electoral success of such parties, especially if they have little support outside their region/ethnic community. By contrary, a PR system based on single nation-wide constituency and on a high threshold will not have the inclusive effect of ethnic parties as predicted by consociationalists. Under such systems, parties will be encouraged to search for broadened support base for their parties, support that would transcend regional or ethnic boundaries, in order to increase the chances to pass the threshold and get parliamentary mandates.

4.1. The Link between the Electoral System and Power Concentration in Georgia:

Since its 1991 independence, Georgia always had a mixed electoral system, with proportional and majoritarian voting applied in parallel on the whole territory of the country. However, specific electoral rules have been often changed. First, the proportion between seats elected through PR and seats elected through majoritarian voting changed several times. Second, not in all post-independence elections the PR voting was conducted on the basis of single nationwide constituencies and nationwide party lists. Third, the threshold for the PR voting was modified several times as well.

As data in table 5 reveal, after independence the PR share of the electoral system was always greater than the majority share, except for 2008 elections. This means that PR vote had a greater influence on the election results than the majority vote and played a greater role for the degree of parliamentary fragmentation. Also, for the first post-independence parliamentary elections in 1992 the PR threshold was removed, but in consequent elections it was gradually increased to 7%, and only recently decreased to 5%. The PR elections were always conducted on single nation-wide constituencies, with nation-wide party lists, except in 1992. In 1992 elections the formation of different party electoral lists for different regions of the country was allowed. Therefore, it was only then that the electoral laws encouraged the regionalization of political parties.

Parliamentary elections dates	Number of seats in the parliament	Electoral system – mixed		
		majoritarian component %	proportional component %	proportional component threshold %
1990	250	50	50	4
1992	225	33	67	0
1995	235	39	61	5
1999	235	36	64	7
2004	235	36	64	7
2008	150	50	50	5

As shown above, the theoretical literature is contradictory in what concerns the impact of electoral system on parliamentary majority formation. Some scholars argued that PR system produces more fragmented parliaments than majority systems. Others showed that in post Soviet region the opposite is more often the case. In order to determine if in Georgia the PR part of elections favoured fragmentation or by contrary, concentration of power within parliaments, a careful analysis of specific election results is needed.

The proportionality of an electoral system is determined by the amount of “wasted votes”. There are different reasons for which wasted votes can be produced in a PR system: a high

threshold, a low turnout, or a seat distribution formula favouring the biggest parties. In order to determine an approximate number that would illustrate particularly the effect of threshold on the share of wasted votes, one can sum up the percentages of votes given in PR elections to parties that have not passed the established threshold. The results of such calculation for Georgian elections are presented in table 6. The percentage of wasted votes due to the threshold was particularly high in 1995 elections, when 44.1% of PR votes were given to parties that have not passed the threshold.

Elections	Threshold %	% “wasted votes” in PR part of elections	% PR votes granted to the mainstream party	% PR seats gained by the mainstream party	Total % seats gained by the mainstream party
1990	4	16,4	54	64	62
1992	0	0	20	19	16
1995	5	44,1	24	62	46
1999	7	16,5	42	57	56
2004	7	19,3	66	90	65
2008	5	7,0	59	64	79

The proportionality of a PR electoral system is also determined by the difference between the percentage of votes and the percentage of seats a party gained through PR elections. This is a direct result of threshold, but also of the seat distribution formula. Data in table 6 reflect the degree of this type of proportionality in different parliamentary elections, on the basis of PR votes and seats won by the mainstream party. Data show the lowest proportionality in 1995 elections, but also in 2004 and 1999. A similar calculation for the other parties that passed in parliament in those years shows a smaller disproportionality than for the mainstream party.

This demonstrates that the mainstream parties in these years greatly benefited both from the high thresholds and from the d’Hondt seat distribution formula. In other words, the pro-presidential parties in Georgia benefited from the existing electoral rules for concentrating the power within parliament. This was the case particularly in 1995, when president Shevardnadze’s party was not very popular yet, and when the process of horizontal power concentration was at its initial stages. But this was also the case in 2004, when president Saakashvili’s party gained a parliamentary majority and hence, made the re-concentration of power possible after a short period of its fragmentation.

It could be argued that pro-presidential parties in Georgia might have benefited more from majority systems than from PR system. This is because when applied to the post-Soviet context the majority system can bring more small parties in parliament and hence, divide the

potential opposition, which would be not possible under PR with high threshold. For instance, president Shevarnadze could use the majority system for dividing the opposition in 1995 and 1999 elections. But in 1995 when his party participated in elections for the first time, the respective party was not so popular yet to gain elections through a majority electoral system.

A proof for this is the relatively low percentage of PR votes given to Shevarnadze's party in 1995 elections (table 6). It was only in 5 (out of 94) districts that the party got more than 50% of votes. Another proof is that in the majority part of these particular elections, the party won only 23% of votes. A similar pattern is characteristic for 2004 parliamentary elections. Therefore, it is highly probable that an eventual majority electoral system would have not secured to pro-presidential parties majority of seats in parliament. Even if it was a system that could have been efficient for dividing the opposition, it was too risky for pro-presidential parties to be implemented at the stage of power concentration. Eventually, governing parties preserved the same electoral systems that brought them to power for subsequent elections.

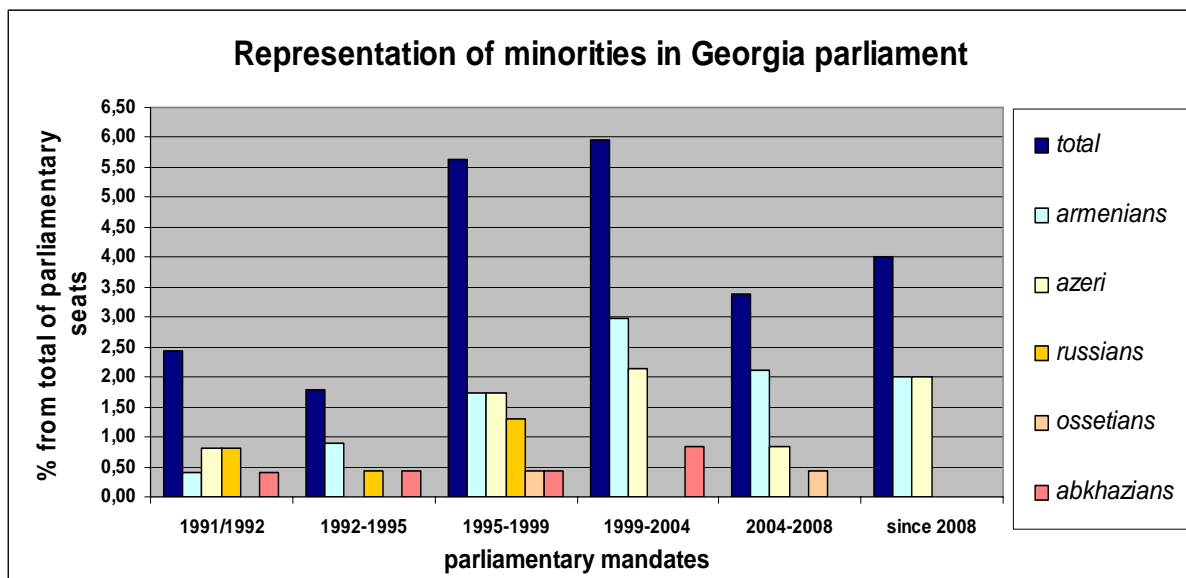
4.2. The Political Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Georgia:

Before exploring the link between the electoral system and ethnic mobilization, it is first needed to look at the factual degree of political representation of minorities in Georgia. For determining the degree of minorities' political representation I use a numerical count of minority MPs in each electoral cycle based on data compiled by the European Centre for Minority Issues in Tbilisi.⁹⁸ For determining the characteristics of ethnic minorities' political representation in Georgia, I use Hannah Pitkin's "standing-for" and "acting-for" types of political representation.

Pitkin defined the "standing for" representation as the one in which it is not important what a legislature does, but how it is composed. It is a representation measured by the degree of resemblance to what it represents. The "standing for" representation is a descriptive sample of the entire population: the idea that "in a democracy public officials may be selected to use their judgment as fair sample of the people, on the supposition that their opinion will be the same that the public itself would form, if it spent enough time to examine the matter thoroughly."⁹⁹ Applied to minorities' political representation, "standing-for" representation can be simply determined by the reflection of the entire population's ethnic composition on the ethnic composition of the parliament.

Pitkin defined the "acting-for" representation as the one in which it is not important how the legislature is composed, but what particular members of parliament do. The test of "acting-for" representation is not whether the parliament represents a descriptive sample of

the entire population, but how well representatives act to further the objectives of those they represent.¹⁰⁰ In case of minorities, “acting-for” representation can be determined by the degree in which political parties or individual MPs appeal to pro-minority discourse in electoral campaigns and in parliament. Also, it can be determined by the degree in which political parties or individual MPs seek to defend minority interests or express minorities’ demands during their mandates.



In order to determine the “standing for” ethnic representation in Georgia, a comparison between its population’s ethnic compositions and its parliamentary ethnic composition for different mandates is necessary.¹⁰¹ The data in the graph above show that overall ethnic minorities never constituted more than 6% of Georgian parliament and that only between 1995 and 1999 each minority group had at least one “standing for” representative in the parliament. Moreover, the period with highest level of minorities’ presence in parliament was between 1994 and 2004, which overall coincides with Shevarnadze’s presidency.

minorities	Total minorities	Armenians	Azeri	Russians	Ossetians	Abkhazians
1989 census %	29,9	8,1	5,7	6,3	3,0	1,8
2002 census %	16,3	5,7	6,5	1,6	0,9	0,1
Maximum % representation in parliament	5,0 (1999-2004)	3,0 (1999-2004)	2,1 (1999-2004)	1,3 (1995-1999)	0,4 (1995-1999)	0,9 (1999-2004)

The comparison between population’s ethnic composition and parliamentary ethnic composition presented in table 7 demonstrates that in Georgia the parliament never

constituted a “descriptive [ethnic] sample” of the entire population, as it was always characterized by “standing-for” under-representation. The only exception was the representation of Abkhazian minority between 1999 and 2004.

The “acting-for” representation is determined by policies and/or discourses of individual MPs or parliamentary parties. In Georgian parliaments minority MPs were overall inactive. It was generally thought that their low participation in parliamentary debates was due to their poor knowledge of Georgian language. Minorities’ voting behaviour in parliaments was generally in line with their party’s position, even when it was about voting for legislation directly affecting minority groups.¹⁰² Minorities in Georgian parliament rarely brought ethnic-related issues on the agenda. Neither have such issues been raised by non-minority MPs.

The political discourse of electoral candidates (parties or individual MPs) is also relevant for the “acting-for” representation, although it constitutes a weaker test for it than the actual parties’ and MPs’ legislative behaviour. Such discourse would be normally expected from ethnic parties, although in reality non-ethnic parties also can target particular ethnic minorities in electoral campaigns. For determining the degree in which parties tried to attract minorities in electoral campaigns I analyzed the content of party manifestos and diverse electoral materials for the 1992, 1995, 1999, and 2004 parliamentary elections. The content analysis revealed that in all campaigns for parliamentary elections between 1992 and 2004, the greatest “promise” made by parties to minorities in general was to respect minorities’ cultural rights and not to discriminate them on ethnic basis.¹⁰³ But no party ever referred to more specific pro-minority policies, such as minorities’ political representation, administrative status of their regions, or the use of their languages in public life.¹⁰⁴

**Table 8:
Ethnic Minorities in Georgian Parliament 1990-2008¹⁰⁵**

Parliamentary mandates	Minorities in parliament elected on PR lists (% out of the total number of minority MPs)	Minorities in parliament representing the dominant, pro-presidential party (% out of the total number of minority MPs)	Minorities in parliament elected through PR lists and representing the dominant party (% out of the total number of minority MPs elected through PR)
1990 - 1992	50	33	33
1992 - 1995	75	n/a	n/a
1995 - 1999	70	77	90
1999 - 2004	50	79	100
2004 - 2008	50	50	57
2008 (May)	50	100	100

As the electoral system of Georgia has been a mixed one since independence, the minority MPs could be elected either through a party list, or as independents within single-member constituencies. The data in table 8 show that in all parliamentary mandates at least

half of minority MPs entered parliament through party lists, which reveals the importance for minorities to have a party membership for passing in parliament. The data also show that minorities who passed in parliament through the PR part of elections after 1995 were mostly elected through the list of the pro-presidential, dominant party. Moreover, after 1995 at least half of minority MPs were members of the dominant party, no matter whether they got into parliament through PR or majority part of elections.

Lijphart argued that minority representation through a dominant party in parliament is not necessarily a sign of lack of power sharing between ethnic groups. He highlighted that if a dominant parliamentary party is in itself a grand coalition, i.e. it represents all segments of society, it is placed in the middle of political spectrum, and it grants ministerial portfolios to ethnic minorities, then the system will have the same effect as a multi-party grand coalition.¹⁰⁶ But this was not the case in Georgia. First, the dominant parties never emphasized ethnic demands in their electoral discourses and never politicized ethnic issues during parliamentary mandates. Second, until 2004 no representative of ethnic minorities held a ministerial position.¹⁰⁷ It was only after the “Rose Revolution” that president Saakashvili appointed an ethnic Ossetian as Secretary of State for Civil Integration.¹⁰⁸

Hence, the political representation of minorities in Georgia hardly ever had an “acting-for” form, as neither individual MPs, nor political parties presented themselves as voicing minority groups’ interests through their legislative behaviour or electoral discourse. Minorities in Georgia had only “standing-for” parliamentary representation. But even this representation did not reflect the real ethnic composition of population.

4.3. Concentration of Power, Electoral System and Ethnic Mobilization in Georgia:

As was shown above, the mixed electoral system in Georgia with its PR share exceeding the majority vote, and with its high threshold and nationwide party lists greatly contributed to the formation of pro-presidential majorities in parliaments and hence, to the horizontal concentration of power. Also, I showed that since independence minorities were under-represented in parliament and that they never had an “acting for” representation. The further task is to analyse whether this under-representation had something to do with the existing electoral system.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the electoral processes may develop the “party oriented” ethnic movement structures - the ones in which ethnic or regional parties’ organizations can serve as organizational resource for ethnic mobilization. The degree in which such parties develop depends, besides other things, on the type of electoral system. There are electoral systems that encourage the development of parties based on a single issue,

a particular ethnic group, or a particular region. So the development of “party oriented” ethnic movement structures will be normally catalyzed by such systems.

There are also electoral systems that encourage and reward political parties that are based on an electoral support beyond a specific ethnic community or region of a country. In the literature such systems are called “centripetalist”¹⁰⁹. In such systems parties are discouraged to focus on a specific issue that would be on the interest of a specific category of population. Therefore, in such systems the formation of ethnic or regional parties will be discouraged, while office-seeking minorities’ leaders would have more chance to get into parliament by joining mainstream parties than by creating their own ethnic or regional party. This will be the case especially in countries with relatively low percentage of an ethnic minority group and with territorially concentrated ethnic groups.

The creation of regional and ethnic parties can be also hindered by formal rules. The laws can either explicitly forbid the creation of regional or ethnic parties, or establish certain specific conditions for party registration that would be not achievable by regional parties. These conditions can establish a high minimum number of party members for party registration, or they can require that party members come from at least half of regions of the country.

In Georgia there was no provision in the legislation requiring that party members should come from a half of country’s regions in order to get the party registered. Neither was the minimum number of party members required for party registration so high. The 1991 Georgia Law on Political Associations of Citizens specified a minimum number of 100 people for the registration of a political party (or 0,2% of Georgian population). The 1997 Georgia Law on Political Associations of Citizens increased this number to 1000 (which makes 2% of Georgian population).¹¹⁰ However, the 1991 Law forbade the formation of political parties on ethnic and territorial basis. The 1997 law forbade only the formation of parties on regional basis.¹¹¹

Yet the legislation did not prevent the parties already registered from becoming regional afterwards. The Georgian legislation never forbade parties to focus on particular regional issues as part of their electoral campaign. Therefore, an eventual lack of parties on Georgian political landscape which would use ethnic and/or regional appeals as electoral strategy and/or which would have ethnic or regionally-based support, would have little to do with the existing legal rules.¹¹²

The analysis of Georgian party manifestos and electoral materials reveals that there have been no political parties which focused on regionally-based issues or on specific ethnic-based

issues during the parliamentary electoral campaigns.¹¹³ Hence, no party had an ethnic or regional character by virtue of its political discourse. Nevertheless, in 1995 elections there was a party that, despite its inclusive electoral discourse, had a region-based electoral support. This party was the “All-Georgian-Revival Union”, the third winner in the 1995 elections. The party was created within Adjara Autonomy by Aslan Abashidze, the autonomy’s leader. In 1995 elections this party had an overwhelming regional support. In the 5 districts of Adjara it gained between 42% and 95% of votes, while its support at country level was only 7%.¹¹⁴ This was the only party in Georgia that since 1995 has ever had a clear region-based electoral support.

But between 1995 and 1999 the “All-Georgian-Revival Union” sought to increase its electoral support beyond the Adjara autonomy. In 1999 parliamentary elections it made a coalition with other Georgian parties and hence, obtained significant support outside Adjara autonomy as well and became the second-winning fraction in the parliament. The fact that the only regionally-based party thought to enter in a broad coalition to get to parliament supports the fact that regionalization of parties was discouraged by the electoral rules in Georgia.

In Georgia the electoral system has been a centripetal one, except for 1992 parliamentary elections. The predominance of the PR system with a high threshold and nation-wide electoral party lists gave little chance to small parties to get into the parliament. It gave also little incentive for the formation of ethnic- and regional- based parties, because territorially concentrated Armenian or Azeri communities could not eventually provide enough votes to such parties to overcome the threshold. The fact that many of the Azeri and Armenian leaders joined the pro-presidential parties during the 90s demonstrate that these leaders found it easier to join the mainstream parties in order to get into parliament than organizing ethnic- or regional based parties and mobilize their respective communities for parliamentary support.

Hence, the Georgian electoral system has not contributed only to the consolidation of pro-presidential majorities in parliament. It also contributed to the limitation of the ethnic mobilisation. This is because it reduced the incentives to form regional or ethnic parties. It also reduced the incentives for already-formed parties to target specific regional or ethnic groups for getting to power. By reducing these incentives, the Georgian electoral system limited the access to organizational resources for an eventual “party based” ethnic mobilisation.

Conclusion:

The general aim of this paper was to explore the link between power concentration and ethnic mobilization in case of post-Soviet Georgia. It had as starting point the claim stated in the specialised literature that in multi-ethnic states with majoritarian winner-take-all systems the chances for inter-ethnic conflict are increased. This is because such systems block the access of ethnic minorities to decision-making processes, by virtue of the concentration of power in majority one-party governments and by virtue of the absolute majority rule. As Georgia is a known case for its multi-ethnicity, for its ethnic mobilisations and also, for its post-independence periods with horizontally concentrated power, I followed an empirical analysis and process tracing applied to this case. My specific goals were first to establish a more detailed causal chain between power concentration and ethnic mobilization and second, to check whether in the case Georgia, the causal relation between these two phenomena coincide with the one claimed by the consociationalist theory.

A short analysis of ethnic minority groups in Georgia revealed that the biggest minority communities – Armenians and Azeris – had the strongest reasons to get mobilised during the period of transition. This is because they were minorities with significant cultural differences, if compared to the majority ethnic group, and because they have had significant territorial concentration in one of the poorest regions of the country. Moreover, the state policies adopted since independence generally have not guaranteed favourable conditions for the preservation and free development of these groups' identities. The analysis also revealed that despite the lack of external intervention and non-existence of previous autonomous structures that are factors believed to have catalyzed Abkhazians' and Ossetians' mobilization, Azeris and Armenians in Georgia still mobilized and advanced demands to the central authorities in certain periods during transition.

A detailed analysis of the way in which presidential formal powers, parliamentary fragmentation, majority parties' discipline, and parliamentary support for the president evolved after independence revealed the periods with horizontally concentrated power and the periods with horizontally fragmented power in Georgia. The measurement results show that Georgia after independence had more periods with concentrated, than with fragmented power. The latter was the case only at the beginning of 90s, and shortly before the Rose Revolution.

An analysis of ethnic mobilisation processes in Georgia revealed that ethnic minorities generally mobilized in periods with horizontally fragmented power, and that by contrary, they mobilized much less (or not at all) in periods with horizontally concentrated power. These

descriptive findings from Georgia do not confirm the consociationalist views that majoritarian winner-take-all systems will provoke inter-ethnic discord in multi-ethnic states.

The empirical analysis of Georgian case revealed that indeed, as argued by consociationalists, the ethnic minorities were under-represented politically in the central branches of power. Moreover, the ethnic minorities' representatives that still managed to get in parliament never played the role of "acting for" representatives for their ethnic groups and in fact, most of times were members of the pro-presidential, mainstream parties.

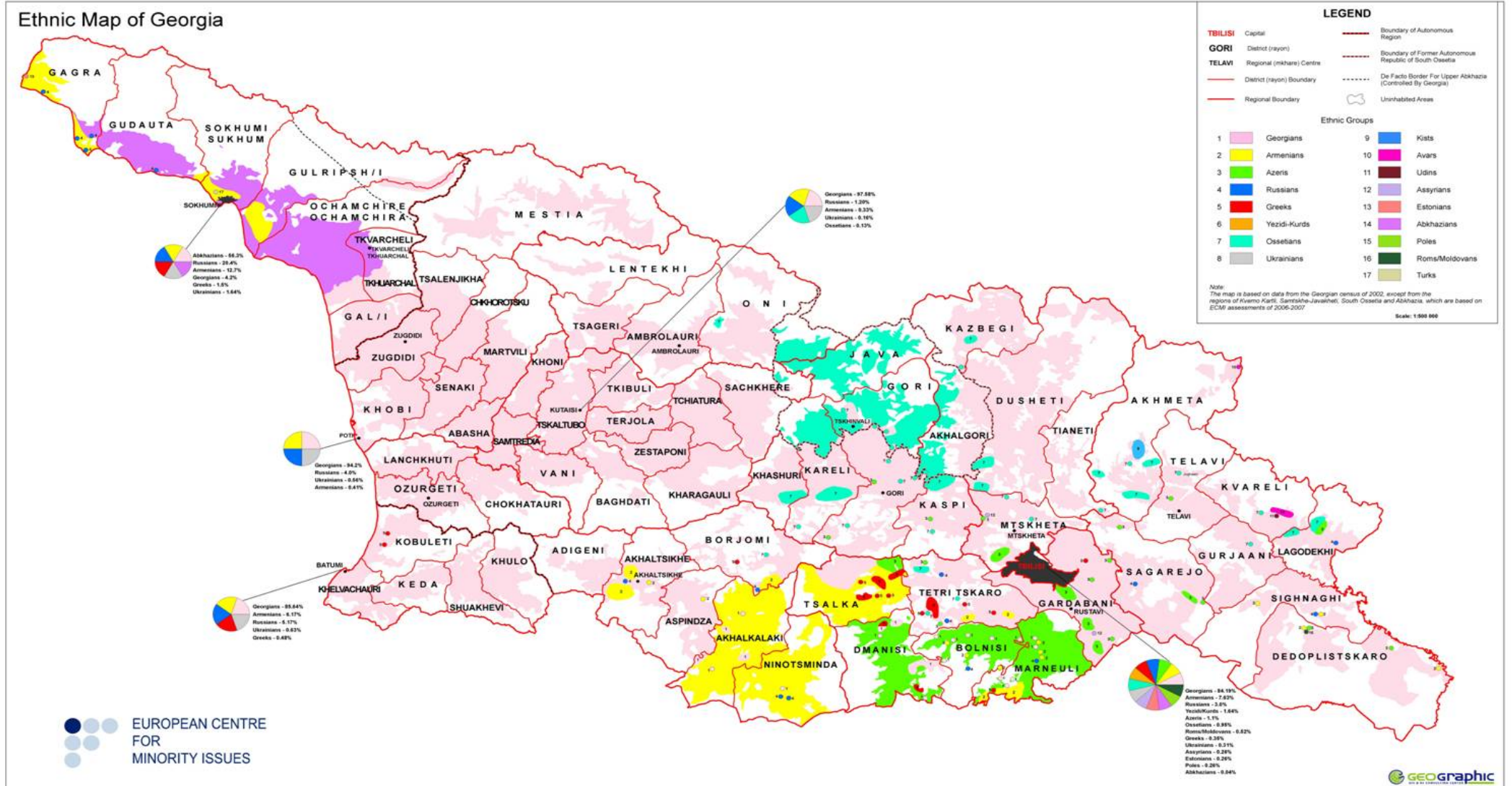
In case of Georgia this under-representation was linked with the fact that the horizontal power was concentrated. This is because in order to preserve the concentrated power, the electoral rules were moulded such that bigger parties were privileged and smaller parties were disadvantaged. Implicitly, the formation of small ethnic or regional parties that could ensure an "acting for" representation for minorities was discouraged.

However, the closer analysis of the causal chain between power concentration and ethnic mobilisation in Georgia revealed that in this particular country the implications of the horizontally concentrated power hindered the potential for ethnic mobilisation, because due to these implications, the access of potential mobilizers to mobilisation resources have been reduced.

This was firstly because in order to preserve the power concentrated, incumbents kept a weak level of territorial decentralisation of the country. This permitted them to keep under control the political processes in the regions. Moreover, central political incumbents moulded the territorial organization such that the regional actors could be rewarded/ or punished for their expressed/ or non-expressed loyalty towards the central power. A weak electoral and appointment decentralisation made it possible during Shevardnadze's presidency to control the elite formation processes in the regions and hence, to control who had access to material resources. A weak financial and decision making decentralisation during Saakashvili's presidency made it possible to control the access to material and loyalty resources of local leaders.

Secondly, the very fact that ethnic and regional parties' formation was discouraged by an electoral system that advantaged incumbent concentrated power means that the access to organizational structures for potential ethnic mobilization was hindered. As Georgian electoral rules discouraged the formation of regional and ethnic parties, ethnic minorities were politically under-represented. But at the same time, for the same reasons the access to an important resource for mobilization was blocked.

Annex 1



¹ Lijphart, A. (1969). Consociational Democracy. *World Politics*, 21, 207-225.

² Cohen, F. K. (1997). Proportional vs. Majoritarian Ethnic Conflict Management in Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 30(5), 607-630.

³ At the beginning of 90s Russian minorities in Georgia outnumbered the Azeri minorities. But between 1991 and 1994 a great number of Russians emigrated. According to Mikheil Aidinov, the Chairman of the Association of Russian-speaking journalists of Georgia, this emigration was due to the difficult economic conditions of the time (author's interview).

⁴ All major ethnic mobilization theories summarized and classified in Olzak, S. (2004). Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*: Blackwell Publishing.

⁵ Gurr, T. R. (1993). Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict Since 1945. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), 161-201.

⁶ Georgian is a South Caucasian language; Ossetian is part of Eastern Iranian group of Indo-European languages; Abkhazian is a Northwest Caucasian language; Armenian is a Indo-European language; Azeri is a Turkic language.

⁷ Cornell, S. E. (1998). Religion as a Factor in Caucasian Conflicts. *Civil Wars*, 1(3), 46-64.

⁸ Statistics presented in Valerii Tishkov, (1997) *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union*. (London: Sage Publication), p. 90

⁹ Medrano (1994) and Hechter (2000), quoted in Olzak, S. (2004). Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*: Blackwell Publishing.

¹⁰ Minasian, S. (2006). *Menshinstva Gruzii: Potentsial Integratsii na Primere Armyanskogo Naselenija Strany [Georgia's Minorities: Potential for Integration on the Example of Armenian Population]*. Yerevan: Caucasus Media Institute; p. 127

¹¹ Minasian, S. (2006); pp. 123-128

¹² Brubaker, R. (1995). National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External Homelands in the New Europe. *Daedalus*, 124(107-132).

¹³ Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; p 105

¹⁴ Between 1991 and 1995 the legislation of Georgia was very vague in what concerned the language use in public sphere. Nevertheless, when relevant, it implied quite extensive rights to use non-Georgian languages in public life. In 1991, for instance, the Supreme Soviet issued a decree which stated that „the use of non-state languages used by the population is secured in all state and public bodies, cultural, educational and other institutions”. See: *Georgia's Armenian and Azeri Minorities*. (2006). International Crisis Group; p. 26

¹⁵ During the author's interviews with representatives of Armenian, Russian and Azeri minorities in October 2008, all interviewees claimed that president Gamsakhurdia launched the slogan „Georgia for Georgians”.

¹⁶ Author's Interviews in October 2008 with Paata Zakareishvili (Georgian political scientist); Izumrud Qurbanov (co-founder of Geyrat organization)

¹⁷ For instance, the 1998 the Law on Public Service provided that all public service in Georgia shall be exercised using the Georgian language, that the lack of its knowledge can be ground of its dismissal, and that those applying for public posts and for posts in local self-government must have command of Georgian; The 1999 Administrative Code provided that if an application/statement or any other document presented by an interested party is not in the state language, the party shall present a notarized translation of the document within the term defined by an administrative agency; the 2003 amendment to the Election Code provided that members of parliament were required to speak Georgian language; the 2005 amendment to the Election Code provided that all candidates for members of the Central Election Commission and the District Election Commissions must be fluent in Georgian.

¹⁸ In 2002, the Orthodox Church signed a “Constitutional Agreement” with the state, which guaranteed the Church the "legal entity of the public law". In contrast to the status of other religions, the new status of the Orthodox Church guaranteed a range of privileges and practically strengthened its role as “state religion”. See: Tsintsadze, K. (2007). Legal Aspects of Church-State Relations in Post-Revolutionary Georgia. *Brigham Young University Law Review*, 2007(3).

¹⁹ The 2005 Georgian Law on General Education

²⁰ Gurr, T. R., & Marshal, M. G. (2003). *Peace and Conflict 2003: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-determination Movements, and Democracy*. College Park, MD: Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research.

²¹ Khaindrava, I., Khalilov, Z., Khomeriki, L., Losaberidze, D., Melua, D., Shergelashvili, T., et al. (2004). *Division of State Power between Central and Local Governments*: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; pp 26-30

²² Lijphart, A. (1984). *Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*. Westford: Courier Westford

²³ Tsebelis, G. (1995). Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartyism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 25(July), 289-326.

²⁴ Cheibub, J. A., & Limongi, F. (2002). Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5 ; p. 1

²⁵ Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, “Presidentialism and Parliamentarism in Comparative Perspective” in Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela (ed.) *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspective*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994. P. 120

²⁶ Rockman, B. A. (1997). The Performance of Presidents and Prime Ministers and of Presidential and Parliamentary Systems. In K. V. Mettenheim (Ed.), *Presidential Institutions and Democratic Politics: Comparing Regional and National Contexts* (pp. 45-64). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; Cheibub, J. A., & Limongi, F. (2002); Tsebelis, G. (1995).

²⁷ Lijphart, A. (1984); p. 67

²⁸ Malamud, A. (2001). Presidentialism in the Southern Cone. A Framework for Analysis. EUI Working Paper SPS, 2001/1; p. 10

²⁹ In the specialised literature there are many tools for measuring formal presidential powers. I apply specifically Shugart and Carey’s method, because it contains the most relevant indicators for my specific purposes and because its scaling principle allows for the placement of presidential regimes on a continuum, rather than within predetermined categories. Shugart and Carey’s set of indicators contain 6 “legislative” and 4 “non legislative” powers that can take values between 0 and 4. The greater the value attributed to an indicator, the more it means power is concentrated in the hands of the president, and the more it means the president does not need parliamentary approval to exercise a certain power. See: Metcalf, L. K. (2000). Measuring Presidential Power. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33(5), 660-685).

³⁰ The documents I analysed are: The *Law of Republic of Georgia on the Announcement of the Transition Period in the Republic of Georgia*, adopted on 14 November 1990. "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 15 November 1990; *The Law of Republic of Georgia on the introduction of changes and amendments to the Constitution of Republic of Georgia*, adopted on 25 July 1991. "Svobodnaya Gruzija" 30 July 1991; *The Law of Republic of Georgia on the Institution of Presidency of Republic of Georgia and on the introduction of Changes and Amendments to the Constitution of Republic of Georgia*, adopted on 14 April 1991. "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 16 April 1991; *The Law of Republic of Georgia on the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Georgia*, adopted on 27 August 1991. "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 6 September 1991; *Temporary Parliamentary Regulation of Georgia*, adopted on 27 August 1991. "Svobodnaya Gruzija", 26 November 1992; *The Constitution of Georgia*, adopted at 24 August, 1995. In *Konstitutsii Gosudarstv SNG [Constitutions of CIS Countries]*. Moscow: Norma-Infra, 1999; *Law of Georgia on Normative Acts*. (1996). Gazette of the Parliament of Georgia; *Constitution of the Republic of Georgia, as amended in February 2004*. European Commission for Democracy through Law (CDL 041);

³¹ There were two cases of states of emergencies during which heads of state could issue decrees and introduce legislation without the need of parliamentary approval. Between 1993 and 1994 a state of emergency was declared for 4 months, during which there were no parliamentary sessions and during which the parliament could not amend presidential legislative and appointment decisions. The period is analysed in: Wheatley, J. (2005). *Georgia from National Awakening to the Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*. Burlington: Ashgate ; pp. 83-89. Also, there was state of emergency declared in November 2007. See: Georgia under State of Emergency. *BBC News*, 8 November 2007.

³² The first such formula was Rae's "fractionalization index" (1967) which was based on systematical weighting of parties that won seats after elections. Later Laasko and Taagepera (1979) proposed a more intuitive formula that was very frequently used by scholars who needed to measure parliamentary fragmentation. But this formula was criticized for not capturing well situations in which a single party has more than a majority of seats available in parliament. Because it is commonly known that in post-Soviet republics such situations often occurred, this critique is relevant for the case of Georgia too. (Dumont, P., & Caulier, J.-F. The "Effective Number of Relevant Parties": How Voting Power Improves Laakso-Taagepera's Index, *COMPASS Workshop 2006*; p. 6)

³³ Banzhaf Index, its calculation is explained in: Dumont, P., & Caulier, J.-F. (2006).

³⁴ This quota is relevant for ordinary and organic laws, which requires 50+1% votes for adoption in the Georgian Parliament.

³⁵ This quota is relevant for extraordinary laws and constitutional changes, which requires 2/3 MPs' votes for adoption.

³⁶ Dumont, P., & Caulier, J.-F. (2006); pp. 9-10

³⁷ The party discipline generally refers to the degree in which members of one party vote unanimously in parliament. Tsebelis established one more indicator for it: "party discipline refers to the ability of a party to control the votes of its members inside parliament." (Tsebelis, G. (1995). *Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartyism*. *British Journal of Political Science*, 25(July); p. 311).

³⁸ The author's interviews in Tbilisi (October, 2008) with Zura Sanikidze (MP during 1990-1992); Koba Kikabidze (MP during 1992-1995); Temur Andriadze (MP during 1995-1999); Demur Giorkelidze (MP during 1999-2003).

³⁹ The author's interviews in Tbilisi (October, 2008) with former Georgian MPs.

⁴⁰ In 1995 parliamentary elections 13% of MPs were elected as independent candidates. But most of them constantly supported the Citizens' Union fraction during the 1995-1999 parliamentary mandate. (The author's interviews in Tbilisi (October, 2008) with former Georgian MPs.

⁴¹ In 1996, these two parties even formed a coalition for the parliamentary elections in Adjara autonomy. It is true that in 1998 the Revival Union went into opposition, but by that time Citizens' Union had already a secure

absolute majority in parliament. See: Wheatley, J. (2005). *Georgia from National Awakening to the Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*. Burlington: Ashgate ; p. 124

⁴² Wheatley, J. (2005); p. 53-56

⁴³ „Mkhedrioni” was a nationalist paramilitary group formed as a response to the creation of separatist paramilitary groups in Ossetia and Abkhazia regions. Data from: Wheatley, J. (2005); pp. 53-56

⁴⁴ Nodia, G. (1998). Dynamics of State Building in Georgia.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, L. A. (2006). Democracy in Georgia since the Rose Revolution. *East European Democratization*, 2006(Fall).

⁴⁶ Susan Olzak analyzed these measurements and cited their applications in: Olzak, S. (1983). Contemporary Ethnic Mobilisation. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9, 355-374.

⁴⁷ Rucht, D. (1996). The Impact of National Context on Social Movements Structures: a Cross-Movement and Cross-National Comparison. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (pp. 185-204). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; p. 186

⁴⁸ Gurr, T. R. (1993). Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict Since 1945. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), 161-201.

⁴⁹ Rucht, D. (1996); p. 187

⁵⁰ According to Gurr’s scaling, the intensity of a non-violent protest can range from simply verbal opposition to large-scale public demonstrations; the intensity of violent protests can range from scatter acts of sabotage to local rebellions; and the intensity of rebellions can range from sporadic banditry and terrorism to warfare. See: Gurr, T. R. (1993); p. 169

⁵¹ Minorities at Risk Dataset (Minorities at Risk Project). (2005). College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management.

⁵² Namely, Ossetians’ “Ademon Nykhas” and Abkhazians’ “Aydgylara” organizations. Specific information on these two organizations: Minorities at Risk Dataset (Minorities at Risk Project). (2005).

⁵³ Minorities at Risk Dataset (Minorities at Risk Project). (2005).

⁵⁴ Author’s interviews in October, 2008 with: Mihail Kolikidi (chairman of Forum for Civic Integration in Akhalkalaki); Nair Iritsian (mayor of Akhalkalaki district); Merujan Iezuian (member of Akhalkalaki Administrative Council).

⁵⁵ *Georgia's Armenian and Azeri Minorities*. (2006). International Crisis Group.

⁵⁶ Lohm, H. (2007). Javakheti After the Rose Revolution: Progress and Regress in the Pursuit of National Unity in Georgia. *ECMI Working Paper 38*.

⁵⁷ Author’s interviews in October, 2008 with: Fait Mammedov (professor in University of Marneuli); Fizuli Mustafaev (vice-mayor of Marneuli); Izumrud Qurbanov (co-founder of Geyrat organization)

⁵⁸ *Georgia's Armenian and Azeri Minorities*. (2006). International Crisis Group

⁵⁹ Author’s interviews in October, 2008 with: Fait Mammedov (professor in University of Marneuli); Fizuli Mustafaev (vice-mayor of Marneuli); Izumrud Qurbanov (co-founder of Geyrat organization).

⁶⁰ Arguments summarized in: Brancati, D. (2006). Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dumpening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism? *International Organization*, 60, p. 655

⁶¹ Cornell, S. E. (2002). Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspectives. *World Politics*, 54, 245-276.

⁶² Kymlicka, W. (1998). Is Federalism a Viable Alternative to Secessionism? In P. B. Lehning (Ed.), *Theories of Secessionism* (pp. 111-150). New York: Routledge Press.

⁶³ Brancati, D. (2006).

⁶⁴ Bakke, K. M., & Wibbels, E. (2006). Diversity, Disparity and Civil Conflict in Federal States. *World Politics*, 59(1), 1-50.

⁶⁵ Treisman, D. (2002). Defining and Measuring Decentralisation: A Global Perspective: Harvard University; p. 1

⁶⁶ Wheatley, J. (2005). Georgia from National Awakewning to the Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union. Burlington: Ashgate; pp. 69-82

⁶⁷ Wheatley, J. (2005). p. 115

⁶⁸ *Saakashvili's Ajara Success: Repeatable Elsewhere in Georgia?* (2004). International Crisis Group; p. 11

⁶⁹ Rekhashvili, I. (2000). Decentralisation Experience and Reforms: Case Study on Georgia

⁷⁰ See for example, the *Preliminary Draft Report on Local and Regional Democracy in Georgia*. (2004). Strasbourg: Council of Europe: The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; p. 5

⁷¹ Losaberidze, D. (2006). *The Case of Georgia*. Budapest: Open Society Institute; p. 4

⁷² *Report on the Situation of Local and Regional Democracy in Georgia*. (1998). Strasbourg: Council of Europe: the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; p. 5

⁷³ These two cities are Tbilisi and Poti.

⁷⁴ Losaberidze, D. (2006).

⁷⁵ Author's interview in October 2008 with Nair Iritsian, mayor of Akhalkalaki district.

⁷⁶ Losaberidze, D. (2006).

⁷⁷ Treisman, D. (2002); p. 12

⁷⁸ Rehashvili, I. (2000).

⁷⁹ For example, in 1997 the shared tax revenue constituted 60% of the total budget of local governments, while the own local taxes constituted only 5.9%, and the transfers from central budget constituted 21.0%. Data from: Losaberidze, D., Kandelaki, K., & Orvelashvili, N. (2001). *Local Government in Georgia*. Budapest: Open Society Institute; p 295.

⁸⁰ Losaberidze, D. (2006).

⁸¹ Rehashvili, I. (2000).

⁸²Treisman, D. (2002); p. 14

⁸³ Treisman, D. (2002). Data on Decentralisation.

⁸⁴ Olzak, S. (2004). Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*: Blackwell Publishing.

⁸⁵ Cornell, S. E. (2002). Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspectives. *World Politics*, 54, 245-276.

⁸⁶ Roeder, P. G. (1991). Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization. *World Politics*, 43(197-199).

⁸⁷ *Georgia's Armenian and Azeri Minorities*. (2006). International Crisis Group.

⁸⁸ Lijphart, A. (1994). *Electoral Systems and Party Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Norris, P. (1999). *Ballots Not Bullets. Testing Consociational Theories of Ethnic Conflict, Electoral Systems and Democratization*: Harvard University.

⁸⁹ Blais, A., & Massicotte, L. (1996). Electoral systems. In L. LeDuc, R. Niemi & P. Norris (Eds.), *Comparing Democracies. Elections and Voting in a Global Perspective*. London: Sage Publications.

⁹⁰ Blais, A., & Carty, K. (1987). The Impact of Electoral Formulae on the Creation of Majority Governments *Electoral Studies*, 5, 109-218.

⁹¹ Norris, P. (1999). *Ballots Not Bullets. Testing Consociational Theories of Ethnic Conflict, Electoral Systems and Democratization*: Harvard University; p. 8

⁹² Birch, S. (2000). *Elections and Representation in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*. Berlin: Sigma.

⁹³ Reilly, B., & Reynolds, A. (1999). *Electoral Systems and Conflict in Divided Societies*. Washington, D. C. : National Research Council's Committee on International Conflict Resolution.

⁹⁴ Sartori, G. (1994). *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Enquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes*. New York: New York University Press.

⁹⁵ Birch, S. (2000); p. 22

⁹⁶ Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkley: University of California Press.

⁹⁷ Data collected from the Central Elections Commission of Georgia in October, 2008.

⁹⁸ www.ecmigeorgia.org

⁹⁹ Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. London: The Regents of the University of California.

¹⁰⁰ Pitkin, H. F. (1967).

¹⁰¹ Generally, Georgian legislation did not provide a special quota for minorities. Between 1992 and 2004 there were 12 reserved seats in parliament for representatives from Abkhazia, but in most cases occupied by ethnic Georgians from Abkhazia.

¹⁰² The author's interviews in Tbilisi (October, 2008) with Zura Sanikidze (MP during 1990-1992); Koba Kikabidze (MP during 1992-1995); Temur Andriadze (MP during 1995-1999); Demur Giorkelidze (MP during 1999-2003); the author's interviews in Akhalkalaki with Mihail Kolikidi (chairman of Forum for Civic Integration), Fait Mammedov (professor in University of Marneuli).

¹⁰³ Electoral promises to defend minorities cultural rights and to protect them from discrimination were mentioned by several parties during the 1992 and 1995 electoral campaigns, but never in later elections.

¹⁰⁴ In 1992 and 1995 electoral campaigns there were political parties that stood for the existence of autonomous territorial structures within Georgia. But they referred to the regions of Adjara and Abkhazia particularly, and not to all regions with minorities in Georgia. For instance, in 1992 electoral platform of the National Integrity Party it is written that the party stands for territorial autonomies for Abkhazia and Adjara regions, but at the same time, stands against territorial autonomy for South Ossetia. All party manifestos which content I analyzed have been collected from "*Svobodnaya Gruzija*", 1991-2004.

¹⁰⁵ The following ethnic minorities are considered in this data compilation: Russians, Abkhazians, Ossetians, Armenians, and Azeris.

¹⁰⁶ Lijphart, A. (1996). The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation. *The American Political Science Review*, 90(2); p. 259

¹⁰⁷ The author's interview in Tbilisi (October, 2008) with Mihail Aidinov, the Chairman of the association of Russian-speaking journalists of Georgia.

¹⁰⁸ Popjanovski, J. (2006). Minorities and the State in the South Caucasus: Assessing the Protection of Minorities in Georgia and Azerbaijan *Silk Road Paper: Central Asia - Caucasus Institute*; p. 49

¹⁰⁹ Reilly, B. (2001). *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹¹⁰ Law of Republic of Georgia on Political Associations of Citizens, adopted on 10 August 1991. "*Svobodnaya Gruzija*", 30 August 1991; Organic Law of Georgia on Political Association of Citizens, adopted at 31 October, 1997.

¹¹¹ Article 2, Law of Republic of Georgia on Political Associations of Citizens, adopted on 10 August 1991. "*Svobodnaya Gruzija*", 30 August 1991; article 6, Organic Law of Georgia on Political Association of Citizens, adopted at 31 October, 1997.

¹¹² It is true that the pro-Armenian political association "Virkh" based in the region with Armenian concentration (Javakheti region) never managed to get registered as a political party. But the Ministry of Justice (which is responsible for parties' registration in Georgia) did not explain the refusal to register "Virkh" through the fact that "Virkh" is a regionally based organization. See: *Georgia's Armenian and Azeri Minorities*. (2006). International Crisis Group; p. 17.

¹¹³ In 1995 parliamentary elections there was a party called "Abkhazia – My Home". But this was not a party focused on regionally-based issue. In its electoral campaign, it focused on the conflict with Abkhazian region, prioritized the need to re-establish the Georgian authority over the territory of Abkhazia and pleaded for the integration of the country. Hence, it was a single-issue party, but not a regional one.

¹¹⁴ Data collected from the Central Elections Commission of Georgia in October, 2008.