

The Results of Transition Period on Georgian Women's Political Participation from “Rose Revolution” till Today

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Abstract

The following thesis is research done on the Georgian women's political participation during the transition period, namely from the 2003 "Rose Revolution" till today. The goal of the paper is to solve the dilemma that of the processes of drastic promotion of women politicians to the high official posts right after "Rose Revolution" and sudden ousting of female politicians from the executive and legislative branches of government by 2008. Using oral history as a research method, I focus on the narratives of the politician women who came to power during the president Saakashvili's campaign of the female politicians' promotion and who moved to the opposition parties after the campaign was over. In my thesis I argue that the informal political bargains carried through patronage-based selection system, lack of institutional mechanism to ensure gender equality and changed electoral system before 2008 parliamentary elections caused the decline of women politicians from dominant political arena. My thesis is situated within the theoretical framework of gender and transition and thus, aims to fill the gap in literature of gender and politics by providing case study of Georgia as a unique case of the substantial promotion of female politicians into power directed by central authorities.

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Introduction

“After the “Rose Revolution” Mikheil Saakashvili’s declaration about the promotion of women into politics as being the utmost priority of newly established democratic government contained biased connotation as he stated that governmental seats will be allocated among women and professionals”

Tamar Kiknadze¹

After the “Rose Revolution,” President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili started an active campaign for promotion of women into politics. In fact, from his direct orders many women were appointed to high governmental posts, to political parties and other official institutions. This resulted in appointing five female ministers in executive body and in the highest rate (9.3 %) of women in parliament with a woman speaker of the parliament.² In the beginning, the campaign seemed promising because in addition to appointing female politicians as ministers and heads of different executive departments, the process of cultural and societal influences towards welcoming women politicians was launched. 2003 “Rose Revolution” was providing grounds for the democratic advancement of the country that brought many other promises connected to the improvement of previously degraded spheres of politics, economy, business and agriculture. It was seen then as a transition from the Soviet-minded politics into the era of progress and democracy.

In fact, transition period did not occur in Georgia after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 (Wheatley, 2005). The country had to wait twelve years more to face real changes and depart itself from Soviet legacy, because it was ruled with the similar mechanisms as in State-Socialism. Although Georgia became an independent country with a newly elected president and with a lot of patriotic aspirations that followed, it continued to function with old systems

¹ See Appendix, Table 3.

² See Appendix Table 1; Table 2.

of regime (e.g., patronage-based system), with many of the same people in the government. It was not until 2003, when non-violent change of government known as the “Rose Revolution” brought young administration under Mikheil Saakashvili into power. Young politicians with new political beliefs and values initiated and started carrying out array of reforms in every sphere of social and political life. Everything connected with old politics was considered as unpopular and unacceptable to modern ideals that young administration with young president were trying to establish in the formation of a new ‘democratic’ country.

The new administration under Saakashvili was very much involved in empowering not only women but also young male politicians despite the fact that some were without much experience, some without much education, some without minimum professional skills. Being young and western educated was enough to be fitted into new *formula* of political elite. This kind power relations led country to have easily and frequently changeable Cabinet of Ministers headed with the most regularly altered Prime-Minister (Government of Georgia, 2010). The campaign that promoted female politicians was indeed successful in the very first years (2004-2005); it enabled many women to make progress in their political careers previously denied by patriarchal systems, lack of finances or lack of emotional encouragement. However, this campaign did not continue and by 2010 there is just one woman minister left in the Cabinet and women are more under-represented in parliament than ever before with 3.4%.³

What were the reasons for such drastic empowerment of women into governmental bodies right after 2003 “Rose Revolution” and why there are ‘no women’ left in Georgian parliament and in decision making bodies after six years? To answer my research question I used qualitative methods of data collection, namely I have conducted interviews with politicians who have been working under Saakashvili’s first term of presidency but made

³ See Appendix, Table 1; Table 2.

political move to the opposition parties. Movement to opposition was a vividly popular trend among politician women who have been dismissed from the high official post in governmental institutions or were left out from parliament after the parliamentary elections of 2008. I have also chosen respondents dealing with gender and politics from different spheres (political experts, scholars and professors) as I believe the interviewees' different background, occupation and political views will help me analyze my research question and provide answers to the dilemma that has shaped the political arena concerning female politicians rapid promotion after the "Rose Revolution" and drastic decline in the government and in the parliament by 2008.

Conducted interviews helped me to outline four main issues that had possible impacts on female politicians' underrepresentation from the executive and legislative branches. The firstly impact is the unawareness of issues concerned with gender equality and lack of knowledge of gender perspectives within both society and political elite; Second reason is connected to the lack of institutionalization of gendered-based policies; Thirdly, changed electoral system for 2008 legislative elections had an affect on politician women's underrepresentation; and finally informal political bargains and lack of transparent institutions played significant role in disempowerment processes. Besides analyzing the reasons that fostered the ousting processes of female politicians, my research will focus on transition period as a theoretical framework to examine the politics of newly established democracies towards gender issues, namely processes of women's political empowerment.

Narrative analysis enabled me to argue that informal political bargains, namely patronage-based selection system that was carried out by high government officials based on clan politics, did not offer stable political environment for female politicians' further advancement in decision-making power. In addition, the changed electoral system before 2008 parliamentary elections and reduced assembly size radically minimized parliamentary

seats for opposition parties that also caused women's drastic decline from legislative branch as today's opposition in Georgian politics is densely represented by female politicians if we take into account that four dominant opposition parties are headed by female politicians, mainly by ex-allies of president Mikheil Saakashvili (Political Parties, 2010).

My thesis consists of three main parts: theoretical framework, methodological section and analytical part. The first chapter frames gender and transition on a theoretical basis. The second chapter gives detailed description of the methodology used in the research. The other four chapters provide analysis to solve the dilemma that has shaped the promotion and ousting processes of women politicians from decision-making powers. Taking Georgia as a case study, my research addresses the issues of gender and politics that can be applied to the practices of women in politics on a global level. It seeks to explore the reasons of politician women's empowerment initiated by the government that proves to be unique case and thus, provides interesting materials for investigation. My research gives the basis for wider discussion of how gender aspects in male-dominated politics are performed and what are the mechanisms that enable the advancement and further promotion of women in politics.

Chapter I: Theoretical Framework:

1.1. Women Politicians in Transition Period

“Women’s political invisibility is particularly striking in those countries where their political mobilization contributed to the demise of authoritarianism and the transition to democracy.”

Shahra Razavi

“Within 1980’s model of political transition to democracies”, Georgiana Waylen (1994) argues that “‘politics’ [of transition period] is defined narrowly to include only the upper institutional echelons of the public sphere” (p.335). Thus, according to Waylen (1994) politics becomes male dominated arena, as women politicians do not comprise “upper echelons” and are not part of influential political elite. As a result transition period is not viewed as being in favor of women’s political activism. This is true for many countries that have been undergoing through transition from state-socialism to so called “democracy” Shahra Razavi (2001); for instance till today Kyrgyzstan is among the ten countries in the world where there is not a single woman in the Parliament (Taabaldiev and Akmatalieva, 2007). According to Taabaldiev and Akmatalieva newly elected government in Kyrgyzstan after the Revolution of 2005 failed to empower women to legislative and executive branches of government. This discriminatory framework continues till today, owing to transitional period’s perplexities together with problems connected with cultural norms, religious beliefs and patriarchal values. This tendency proves to be different for Georgian politics.

After “Rose Revolution” in 2003 president Mikheil Saakashvili started promoting women politicians both in government and in different social institutions. As I will show, campaigns towards gender equality are atypical for the countries that are in transitional period and undergo total transformation of social and political regime. However, after

substantial increase of women in governmental posts right after “Rose Revolution”, there are no female politicians left in Cabinet of Ministers today. In order to understand the reasons of drastic promotion of female politicians into the government during transition period and sudden reduction of women from political arena after six years it is important to analyze characteristics and peculiarities transition period entails towards gender issues.

For evaluating the political processes that have been occurring in Georgia during transition period I would like to make comparisons with countries that have undergone through the similar processes. According to Galligan and Clavero (2008), the significant part of the scholarship in gender and politics focusing on the pattern of women’s political underrepresentation during transition period of Central and Eastern European countries have centered their studies on three factors: “the cultural legacy of state socialism, the prevalence of traditional attitudes towards gender, and the lack of women’s mobilization in civil society” (p.152). However, Galligan and Clavero’s (2008) analysis go beyond socio-cultural aspects and focus on women’s political role and their estimation towards feminist perspectives in political discourses of newly established democracies. They argue that the lack of feminist critique on behalf of politician women towards masculine-dominated politics undermines women’s political representation as strive for affirmative action is not visible in their political agenda (Galligan and Clavero, 2008).

Georgiana Waylen (1994) in her article *Women and Democratization* tries to follow and analyze the democratization processes that have been occurring in the Central and Eastern European countries after collapse of Soviet Union in contrast with Latin American countries’ experiences during transition period in 1980s. This comparison gives the overview of what were the differences in the political actions carried by women and what should have been accomplished in Eastern European countries that could have led to more productive outcomes. Her examinations can be applied to analyze the political situation in Georgia

during the transition period, because some of the policies carried out in Eastern Europe can be compared to Georgian situation. There were certain drawbacks and faults carried out during the transition period that failed to emphasize gender awareness and women's equal participation in the social and political arena. Although the case of Georgia from the beginning was different from the Eastern European and Latin American countries' experiences in a way that women were constantly promoted in high governmental positions during transition period, however, this trend started to change and now women are ousted from dominant party political processes.

As concern of gender issues in transition period is recent phenomenon there are not many scholars in Georgia who are dedicated to these problems; thus, for my study I will use the theories of scholars and political scientist who have been analyzing the topic of gender and transition world-widely. Georgina Waylen (1994), Shahra Razavi (2001), Matland and Montgomery (2003) have provided important footage for studying and investigation concerns and obstacles that women face during and after transition period. Waylen (1994) argues that the reason why women could not situate and position themselves in equal terms with men in political and social domains during transition period was the fact that Eastern European women did not possess the advantage of previous social movements (unlike women in Latin America) that played significant role in overthrowing the authoritarian regimes. Matland and Montgomery (2003) argue that women in East and Central Europe "worked to undermine authoritarian rule by fostering regime-subverting values in the home" (p.25) and thus had little opportunity to organize as a certain ideological groups in the public sphere for protecting women's interests.

According to Razavi (2001), women's experience of previous movements in Uganda and South Africa and cooperation of those groups with government made many women gain high positions in leading political parties that should have played positive role on raising

gender awareness and incorporating democratic principles because government felt obliged to support these women and started recruiting female candidates, who were viewed as a catalysts of change. Women MPs saw this affirmative action as a favor from government and were reluctant to voice any criticism or dissent against dominant power that has blocked the capacity to explore women's issues beyond the national party's agenda (Razavi, 2001).

Even in Latin America and in some African countries – despite the role that women played in transition politics – it becomes clear that participation does not guarantee any particular role in the outcome. According to Waylen (1994) this happens because democratization has not been accompanied by moves towards wider social and economic equality that could enable women to participate in greater numbers. Thus, she concludes that speed of transition period appears to be one of the factors: while a slow transition allows women's movement more opportunities to organize and influence outcomes, fast and harsh transition deprives them from this opportunity. Central and Eastern European countries, and Georgia likewise, have faced very rapid transition period that was imposed from above with minimum participation of women's movements in the overthrowing the dictatorships that is considered to be significant obstacle for democratization. Although the speed of promoting women politicians was quick but peaceful process in Georgia, however, it did not result into more considerable participation of women politicians because as Waylen (1994) argues rapid promotion does not give opportunity for creating organized movements around women's issues.

Chapter II: Research Methodology

For my thesis I am using qualitative methods of data collection, namely face to face interviews as a primary source of my analysis. The reason why I chose this specific means of methodology is connected to the scarce material that is available of the topic of my study. As my research is concerned with recent political situation of Georgian women's under-representation in government, not much academic studies or researches are done in this sphere; this directed me to choose the interviews as my main data collection instruments that provides both expertise of the subject and gives opportunity for narrative analysis.

I have conducted ten interviews with politician women who were members of parliament (during 2004-2008) and who have been actively involved in ongoing political processes after they made a political move to opposition parties; with scholars and researchers who have been working on gender issues; and with leaders and members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who have been profoundly examining and analyzing political conditions of present government with special focus on gender aspects of Georgian politics. I have chosen the respondents from three different spheres – political, academic and so called “third sector”. So, I will be looking at cultural, socio-political and institutional discourses, in order to see how narratives are interacted (as Reissman (1993) suggest) and how they differ in their interpretations of my research subject.

Although I had chance to interview just two politicians, I have attended the conference “Increasing Women's Political Participation in Georgia” organized by National Democratic Institute (NDI) where leaders of all political parties taking part in 2010 self-government elections, signed “Win with Women – Global Action Plan”. In this conference I had chance to become familiar with the official political statements that each political leader (around eleven) declared about the concern of poor participation of women in politics and to

find ways to promote women to leading positions. I have also observed women at public events and engaged with them in informal settings. I will be comparing these official narratives with the informal talks I had with women politicians to see if the discourses change as the talks shift from unofficial to official. Conducting interviews have provided me both with expertise data and in-depth narrative analysis of ongoing conditions of gender in politics.

2.1. Possible Difficulties and Outcomes

During conducting interviews there is possibility that interviewer comes across two possible problems of methodology that are associated with gaining trust of the potential respondents and avoiding set of fixed answers, called “rehearsed” storytelling (Ritchie, 1995). As there is power, hierarchical and age difference between me and my interviewees it needs a lot of effort from the interviewer to establish trust, become “insider” so that respondent is willing to go beyond “rehearsed” answers and mechanical responses. This becomes even difficult when interviewer has to interview politicians, whose second “job” is to give public interviews; they are specially trained to provide mechanical, “rehearsed” responses. I will be using Ritchie’s (1995) examinations from “Doing Oral History” where he gives profound analysis how to avoid “rehearsed” answers. If the interviewer is well prepared he/she will “spot inaccuracies” immediately and the job is to challenge these contradictions by asking questions that “lead down less familiar paths” (Ritchie, 1995, p.73). Thus, interviewer should be ready to lead the conversation in the manner which will enable him/her to get the desired responses but from different occurrences, events or stories. In order to be ready for this I studied interviewees’ biographies and became closely familiar with the background of the respondents, the activities and political campaigns she/he has been carrying out, with results and overall performances of their projects.

As politicians or political experts are very cautious of every word they say, it is significant to gain trust and become “insider” to make them talk openly. In order to gain trust it is important how one presents himself/herself “because after one’s presentational self is ‘cast’ it leaves a profound impression on the respondents and has great influence on the success of the study” (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p.59). When I presented myself as an MA researcher from Hungarian international university, it made interviewees feel important because someone outside Georgia was interested in their points of views and has come specially from other country to interview them. The fact that their interviews would be used outside boundaries of Georgia made politicians talk more openly as opportunities to be heard beyond borders is limited, especially for the opposition parties who comprised the core of my interviewees. Thus, in this case the background of interviewer and the data usage played important part in gaining trust and hence, resulted in an open dialogue.

2.2. Which Type of Interview and Why?

For my face to face interviews I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Ritchie’s (1995) “Doing Oral History Interviews” is the basic text that I used for conducting interviews. His suggestion to use mix types of question in order to gain control of the interview process (Ritchie, 1995) was followed in my project. I collected demographic data about my respondents by using specific, factual questions. I have elicited these types of questions in the end of the interview both orally and in written form through questionnaire depending on the respondent’s preferences. However, throughout the interview I was following “funnel interviewing” approach – starting from general questions and narrowing down to the main, final one (Ritchie, 1995). This helped me to get both overall analyses of the ongoing political processes and answer the research question I am interested in. What’s

more, by “funneling” I established contact with the interviewees that broke the ice of discomfort and distrust during the interviewing process.

2.3. Doing Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis in my research was done through the methodological approaches offered by Catherine Kohler Riessman in her book “*Narrative Analysis*”. “Narrative analysis takes its object of investigation the story itself” (Riessman, 1993, p.3) and as qualitative interviews are core methodology of my paper, doing narrative analysis was useful for analyzing interviews, interpreting them and making further generalizations. In my research I employed narrative analysis that was useful to go beyond political discourses: to see interviewees’ motivations behind their narratives that facilitated making comparisons between official discourses and authentic intentions. For conducting qualitative analysis, Riessman (1993) offers three-level procedure that must be considered by the investigator: “how to facilitate narrative telling in the interviews, [how to] transcribe for the purposes at hand and [how to] approach narrative analytically” (p.54). For the process of interview analysis I was following these guidelines closely because it offered useful, step by step procedure on how researcher can conduct, transcribe and analyze qualitative interviews.

2.4. Facilitating Narratives

In order to encourage narrativization it is preferable to use “open-ended questions that will open up topics and allow respondents to construct answers” (Riessman, 1993, p.54). Besides conducting semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that is believed to elicit conversation, before the interview I have been introducing my research paper to the respondents by stating the topic and research question of my thesis. Throughout ten

interviews that I have conducted, this proved to be useful method for eliciting narratives and for providing interviewees with the core focus that made them construct their stories and talk around my research question, namely what were the reasons that fostered the processes of ousting politician women from high official posts of executive and legislative branches of government.

2.5 Transcribing Process

The second level is transcribing process which Reissman (1993) considers as “absolutely essential to narrative analysis” (p.56). Although transcribing process is time-consuming and demanding task, it is preferable that researcher himself/herself does the transcribing work, because as Reissman (1993) notes delegated interviews for transcriptions may results in reduced and omitted sections that might be significant for the researcher’s analysis. I think doing transcribing on your own is very useful for three reasons: firstly, from my personal experience I can say that during transcribing process I discovered the issues that I did not pay attention while interviewing; secondly, as transcribing is quite long process and investigator traces narrative structure of the interviewees, transcription is useful for further interpretation because I had come up with different aspects of the speech, not only linguistically but also non-verbal utterances like pauses and different levels of voice. Indeed Reissman (1993) argues that “the way story is told provides clues about meaning” (p.58). Thirdly, making quick remarks and notes while transcribing helped me during analysis process as they were immediate responses and were useful in building up an argument. In order to make transcription less tough and more durable work, I have been doing transcription right after the interviews. I found this method very useful because as interview talk was fresh I remembered the narrative quite distinctly, that helped me to make selection

and reduction process less time-consuming and I was able to set priorities of the topic without double transcription as Reissman (1993) offers in her book.

2.6. Analyzing Interviews

While analyzing interviews I have been following Reissman's (1993) recommendations how to structure the narrative: first by asking the questions about the organization of the narrative and then trying to expand the meaning of the narrative from encoded form of the talk to the "underling propositions that make the talk sensible" (p.60). Also for interpreting interviews I was using the combination of *thin* and *thick descriptions* (Denzin, 2001). Thin description was useful for reporting the facts and occurrences that has been taking place in Georgia from 2003 ("Rose Revolution" period) till today. The facts are important to interpret the political processes that have been shaping women's marginalization from political spectrum. I have been following Denzin's (2001) method of thick description, namely *interactional thick description* as this method concentrates on the interpreting interactions between people. As I am studying the interaction of Georgian president with women politicians, both in the period of 2004 and 2008 elections, *interactional thick description* enabled me to analyze the relations (whether formal or informal) the president had with politician women when he was first elected into office, what was the reasons of appointing women as ministers and why he stopped promotion of women for his second term? Was this campaign connected to personal relations or it had nothing to do with informal interactions?

2.7. My position as a researcher

Researching recent and actual problems in Georgia in the sphere of gender and politics, gave me opportunity to become familiar with the official and non official narratives of the women actively involved in politics which helped me to see my research from a different scope; it raised the problems and obstacles of women's political empowerment that previously I did not pay attention to, like discriminative 'labor law of Georgia', social stereotypes and extensive lack of knowledge and unawareness of gender issues within political elite. Being Georgian puts me in privileged position in doing such research, as I am aware of current political issues and familiar with dominant political actors and their ways and means of governance of the country. This gave me opportunity to analyze certain events that played important role in diminishing the role of women politicians from the executive and legislative branches of government.

Although there was an unequal power relation between me and my respondents, who were older and had more expertise and experience of the field of my study than me, I did not encounter any discomfort during our dialogue. The respondents have shown great interest in my research and besides interviews they were eager to provide me with further materials and readers that have dealt with my work. Firstly, this proves that certain groups in Georgia who are aware of gender problems are open and ready to provide any assistance for those interested in this field. Secondly, they do not pay much attention to formalities and can easily become involved into informal talks. Besides conducting interviews for my research, I made contacts with influential political and social actors in gender issues that will be beneficial when I continue my work in this field back in Georgia.

Chapter III: Women's Political Role during the "Rose Revolution"

"So far I have not encountered any attempts by Georgian female politicians to bring feminist perspectives to politics"
Irina Bakhtadze

This chapter will provide analytical framework on women's political role in government during Saakashvili's presidency, how female promotion was viewed among those women already in office and whether their service was directed towards gender awareness. The chapter will talk about the importance of "role modeling" during the fresh campaigns for promoting women politicians and how the image of negative "role models" can result into unsuccessful campaign of female empowerment. Within the theoretical framework of *symbolic representation* I will argue that negative "role models" can negatively effect on public's decision-making processes when choosing female politicians as their candidates.

Besides this I have come up with number of narrative frameworks from the interviews that I will use to argue that when in government and in parliament politician women did not employ feminist critique while performing politics and did not use their power to ensure further promotion of women, i.e. their politics was not directed towards representing women and advocating issues that dealt with improving women's conditions in politics or in social spheres. Gender issues as being priority was not visible neither in the political discourses of women when in power nor when they lost authority and became opposition party leaders. The movement from government to opposition was the primary reaction of politician women against government's disempowering politics that have affected them.

3.1. “Role Model” Backlash

Politician women that carry similar politics as Maia Nadiradze did when she was the leader of the majority in the parliament, not only discredits fellow female politicians but forms barriers for other women who are far more efficient and professional (I. Putkaradze, personal communication, April 19, 2010).

Political scholars (Pitkin (1967), Phillips (1998)) argue that creating role models out of women politicians increases female representation as more women are encouraged by success stories that provide them with sufficient ambition to run as candidates themselves. Pitkin (1967) argues that “the existence of women representatives [as a role model] will encourage others to gain the confidence that they too can aspire to this role” (p. 204). For Phillips (1998) “role modeling” is the “least interesting” argument about raising the proportion of women in the politics. Although some theoreticians view it as beneficial tool, some do not consider it as an important technique to change women’s representation I would argue that theory of “role modeling” can backlash and result in the negative consequences towards promotion of women.

When employing *symbolic representation* which makes public “to be influenced by emotional ties [with representatives]” neglecting the importance of the interests of certain groups (Pitkin 1967) then the “role model” plays important role for further promotion of women that is directed from the public and not only from the authorities. Galligan, Clavero and Calloni (2007) argue that “*symbolic* power effected by individual powerful female leaders may act to increase public demand for more women representatives” (p.69). Considering this theoretical framework I argue that “role models” have high significance in increasing public demand for female politicians as their representatives, because during

symbolic representation negative “role models” discourage public to advocate for further promotion of politician women in power.

In an interview, Irina Putkaradze, an active political analyst of “third sector,” gives the example of Maia Nadiradze, one of the influential politicians under Saakashvili’s government, as a negative figure who misused her power and thus, became a negative ‘role model’. In the country where women start appearing on political arena from the fresh and in the country where gender stereotypes strongly prevail, selection procedures play important role. It is necessary to empower professional, efficient and competent women in the high posts that will promote women as an equal representatives and political actors in masculine dominated politics. If this factor is ignored it will label women as inefficient actors for governing the country that will deepen the stereotypes about *token women*, women who are part of the group not because of their value but because of mere representation. Negative ‘role modeling’ will be seen as a barrier for the professional development against those women who are genuinely skilled and experienced and who can bring change when in power. In such cases gender stereotypes will prevail that will form obstacles for women’s further promotion.

There is a general trend in Georgian politics: “women” in power do not have desire to empower and cooperate with other women but they try to look for partnership with male colleagues (I. Bakhtadze, personal communication, April 20, 2010).

The formation of negative “role models” is not derived only from informal selection procedures but is a result of the lack of implementation of gender policies when in power. When women do not advocate other women’s promotion, and are concerned with personal benefit, they become the carriers of negative political images. After researching about

ongoing political processes in the sphere of gender and politics, professor Bakhtadze claims that Georgian women when in power do not welcome other women and prefer to work with male politicians, which forms great barriers for other women to be promoted. Once in power women want to establish allies with male colleagues because they are seen as important political forces guaranteeing them the place in politics. Stereotypes about doing politics, where male domination in politics is a must, are very strong that blocks women to seek cooperation with other females. What's more, paying attention to women's issues and advocating gender-equality politics should be a must among female politicians, in order to establish institutions that will enable their participation and provide guarantees during the crisis.

Chapter IV: “Creating” Gender Equality Mechanisms

“The promotion of women was carried out not through institutional mechanisms but was based on political will of the government. Now the political will is not in favor of female politicians and there are no institutional mechanisms established to protect women’s political representation”

Marine Chitashvili

After Rose Revolution, as Georgian government failed to establish institutions that could have been guarantee of male/female balance in the politics, the process of women empowerment discontinued. In this chapter I will be discussing the institutional mechanisms as a set of rules and formal regulatory practices that enable the functioning of state in more stable environment for carrying out policies that comprise all the population without marginalizing some groups. Institutional mechanisms are used to provide legal rights to certain minority groups and to ensure their equal involvement in the politics that will legally guarantee their stable development and protect them during the crisis. I argue that the lack of institutionalization of gender policies were one main reasons of the decline number of women politicians from executive and legislative branches as the promotion processes was not grounded on legal regulations and the rule of law.

To support my argument I am using Gerd Meyer’s theories about formal institutions as a legitimization tool for limiting or enabling functioning of certain policies. Meyer (2006) defines institution as “an established, organized, and visible actor, being an individual or a collective actor, in a political system following written and unwritten rules” (p.18). Meyer (2006) points out two basic “representative” functions of political institutions: *Order* and *Orientation*; while the former issues orders and follows the process of its functioning to be relevant and beneficial to whole population, the latter gives orientation to the society in order to influence citizens (through for example media or recruitment offices) for getting “supportive reactions” of institutionalized policies. In Georgian case the idea of

institutionalization processes differ on many levels. As I am concerned with institutions evolving around women's issues I will focus on the policies and institutions that deal with protection gender-equality and promotion of women's empowerment. During the narrative analysis it became clear that there are mainly two problems connected to the institutional mechanisms. First, lack of institutional apparatus and second, lack of provisions for carrying out gender-based policies. From the interviews I have deduced that after passing certain laws in Georgian legislature there are limited provisions done for its actual functioning. This attitude towards implementation processes results in unproductiveness and ineffectiveness of legislative mechanisms.

Analytical section of this chapter will cover two issues connected to the creation of institutional mechanisms for ensuring gender equality provisions. These were *Gender Advisory Council* created under the supervision of the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia and Gender Quota Bill that was prepared by politician women and female political experts for passing in the parliament. *Gender Advisory Council under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia* was established to ensure the development of gender equality processes on the legislative level and issue recommendations for carrying out gender-sensitive policies. In order to discuss how council works on ensuring above-mentioned policies, I will be using interviews that I had chance to conduct with the former and present members of the council. I will be also looking at the law of Gender Equality that was prepared by the same council and was passed very recently, on 25th of March, 2010 in order to discuss the importance the law and if its relevance to gender equality and women empowerment in politics.

4.1. The First and the Only Institutional Mechanism

When, as a member of parliament, I addressed the issue of creating a committee about gender issues, my advice was not taken into consideration until international organizations' recommendations (namely SIDA) about creating certain council took place (G. Magradze, personal communication, April 24, 2010)

The first institutional mechanism that was created after “Rose Revolution” to support the development of gender issue on multiple levels was Gender Advisory Council under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia. The establishment of the council was initiated and sponsored by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and is carried out by UNDP (United Nations Development Program) together with the help of the parliament of Georgia from 2004. The members of council, besides MPs are experts and NGO leaders from different women-based non-governmental organizations. The projects of the council mainly deal with “elaborating proposals and recommendations on National Gender Policy and setting out the actions to integrate gender equality in all spheres and sectors of the political, economic and social life of Georgia” (Parliament of Georgia, Gender Advisory Council, 2010).

I would like to point out factors that have effected council's unproductive work towards gender-based issues. The creation of the council was dictated by international norms (by CEDAW⁴ and SIDA) and was not based on Georgian government or its citizen's awareness towards creation institutional mechanisms that would set certain rules and norms for implementing change. The fact that the formation of the council was dictated from the

⁴ The CEDAW report on Georgia can be accessed on United Nations official website:
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/904b60a20b7b0417c12572330055c8d2/\\$FILE/N0647834.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/904b60a20b7b0417c12572330055c8d2/$FILE/N0647834.pdf)

international organizations provides us with the evidence that although newly formed government under president Saakashvili was promoting women to high posts, the tools to ensure this change was not based on grounded mechanisms (for instance, law) for its further implementation. The aim of the government was not to establish long, productive and effective institutes to guarantee gender balance, but was done for short-term purposes, mainly in order to create an image of a country who was taking steps towards democracy.

According to the interview that I have conducted with political experts it appears that one of the reasons of above mentioned crisis was due to the lack of professionalism in the sphere of gender and politics. Georgia in those times did not possess expertise in the field that would initiate the creation of the policies on professional level. The Gender Advisory Council was composed mainly with members who had knowledge of gender issues but lacked experience in this field. It was not enough for carrying out gender-sensitive issues and ensuring its progress on long-term bases. Thus the council failed to implement laws and initiate policies that would create institutional mechanisms for protecting gender equality.

On one of the council's meeting, to my further initiations towards the law [the law of Domestic Violence passed in 2006] one of the male members of the Gender Advisory Council replied: 'now when law is passed what else can we do about it' (N. Javakhishvili, personal communication, April 22, 2010).

The tendency to abandon laws after passing them has been widely used practice by the new government. The laws stay on paper and implementation mechanisms are not followed. There are spheres which need just legal implementation and there are policies that besides legalization need the work with society and population as Meyer (2006) suggest to orient, direct and influence citizens. Gender issues are among these policies which not only need orders but directives as well. As none of the mechanisms were used to make gender

issues popular and well known to public, pointing out its necessities and usefulness of gender-based policies, we are left with citizens who even do not know what gender means nothing to say about demand from the public to lobby gender issues.

Although the Gender Advisory Council was working more or less efficiently in first few years of its establishment, currently it's functioning is at stake. In the interview with member of the Gender Advisory Council, expert on gender and psychology, Professor Nino Javakhishvili, points out:

I was not very much satisfied with outcomes of the council but at least we were having meetings on regular bases from the beginning of its foundation. It is more than one year that I have not received any initiation to attend the council's meeting (N. Javakhishvili, personal communication, April 22, 2010).

The fact that Gender Equality Law was passed recently (on March 2010) under the supervision for Gender Advisory Council meetings for preparing the law should have been held. However, the members of the council did not take part in its preparation because they have not attended any meetings recently, which means that either there was not any meetings held to discuss the law or some of the members were deliberately omitted. Taking this into consideration we can deduct that the council's another drawback is the lack of cooperation among members themselves and lack of interest in sharing ideas. Thus, if gender experts were missing from the preparation of the above mentioned law then who were in charge?

From the Council's website I collected interesting data which divides the members of the council into two parts: the permanent members are comprised just with the current MPs (the majority of whom are male and from the presidents' party) and the members who attend the council meetings 'upon request'; among these are Public Defender, gender experts and leaders of NGOs dealing with women issues (Parliament of Georgia, Gender Advisory

Council, 2010). So, if ‘members upon request’ were not involved in preparation of the Gender Equality Law, then permanent members should have taken part in it. If the law on Gender Equality was prepared without taking gender specialists’ recommendations into account, the law itself cannot be considered as an influential document that can provide some change towards gender equality. It means that there is no progress in the working assumptions of the council; indeed it has become worse, as besides professional assistance it also lacks cooperation and collaboration among the members. Thus, institutional mechanisms in Georgia do not work because:

...there is so called horizontal segregation in the structure; instead of vertical links in the system there are top-down connections, which makes it a close proximity with hierarchical power on top (Marine Chitashvili, personal communication, April 22, 2010).

As Georgia has a pretension to be a democratic country that advocates gender equality issues it should be an open institute itself; it should represent the needs and requirements of all the citizens, thus it should welcome those who have different points of views and who want to become part of the establishment. The reason why Georgian government was not willing to establish institutions and did not ensure the proper functioning of already existed ones, was that it wanted to maintain autocratic elements of the regime disguised under democracy in order to keep ultimate power in the hands of the few. The intention was to create government as a one collective group comprised of people who would be faithful to the president and would not question his activities. Such system is very much based on informal political bargains and tendencies towards formation of informal institutions and clan politics, which I will discuss in the next chapters.

4.2. Gender Quota Debates:

While preparing the gender quota bill we did not have an illusion that it would actually work and parliament would adopt it. Our aim was to raise gender awareness and initiate talks around gender issues. However, I believe if there was the president's 'good will' the bill could be passed (N. Javakhishvili, personal communication, April 22, 2010).

In this section I will be discussing gender quotas as a means of legislative guarantee for balancing male/female representation in the parliament because the practice of enacting gender quotas have shown that quotas are one of the techniques of improving the situation of women in power and increasing their number in state or local governments. I will be looking at gender quota debates that arose in 2008 when the Gender Advisory Council together with the group of NGO leaders and women in opposition political parties prepared the Gender Quota bill that was introduced to the parliament. Preparation of the bill was long process as the points views of the members of the committee on quota implementation differed. The debates arose on the types and percentages of quotas. Some members of the quota proposal wanted gender quotas to be applied to political parties, other members to legislative level; many participants of Gender Quota Bill claimed that 1/3 of women in the parliament would be substantial amount; however, fewer members demanded 50 % of the parliamentary seats. The radical difference in the ideas and lack of mutual consent and affirmative action made the bill unsuccessful. Although some women-based NGOs and women in oppositional parties still fight for enacting quota system on legislative level, many male politicians and what is surprising, many women politicians are against it. Common argument against gender quotas is that it is not time for such unimportant issues as gender balance is to be seriously considered, because according to opponents of the bill there are far more significant issues to

be taken care of. Another reason why women oppose gender quotas is the fear that there is a lack of professional women that can occupy 50 % of the legislative seats.

I think legislature about quotas should not be passed, as the parliament should be represented by quality and not quantity. Despite the fact that I am member of Gender Club and actively work on gender issues, my position towards quotas is radically negative (M. Nachkebia, personal communication, April 21, 2010).

Although the number of women graduates in Georgia exceeds the number of male educated citizens, the professionalism and women are seen as a separate phenomenon. As a result of prevailing gender stereotypes women are envisioned as not professionally developed enough even by women who consider themselves actively involved in gender and politics sphere. The argument of the leader of the women's club from "The New Rights" party is biased as she represents the party which is conservative and has a charismatic male leader. In this case, interviewee cannot make objective judgments as she has to speak from her party's vision. The majority of the women politicians have similar ideas about quotas, that's why the gender quota bill did not receive due attention in the parliament.

In the interview with Nino Javakhishvili, one of the initiator and active participant of gender quota bill, it became clear that even the participants did not expect parliament to pass the gender quota bill. Not only the bill was not adopted, it did not receive due attention neither in mass media nor among politicians. From the narratives, the gender quota initiators seemed very disappointed about the lack of gender debates that have followed the initiation. Passing quotas is one of the most difficult processes for the guaranteeing the gender equality because it should be enacted on legislative

level. Despite this, gender quota bill was prepared and presented to the parliament. Although Nino Javakhishvili was skeptical about the bill, she like other participants had hoped that quotas might be enacted. I think the discourse the interviewee is part of defense mechanism; when something does not appear the way one expected, they try to justify their action by neglecting the importance of it.

Some supporters (from my interviewees) of the quotas argue that political environment in Georgia is very much based on clan thinking where it is difficult for a woman to pave the way to the politics without personal connections or without having similar characteristics and points of views with the clan members. Women are seen as intruders in the space of masculine politics and as a result are unwelcome to invade already occupied male spaces. The interviewees assumed that the reason why women are seen as outsiders is connected to the political vision. According to them, women politicians will bring more gender equality perspectives toward politics if they are substantially represented in the legislature:

“No one can convince me in the opposite notion that when women comprise the half of parliamentary seats, there will be a policy priority shift towards social issues, like education, health, etc.” (N. Tsikhistavi, personal communication, April 22, 2010)

Although majority of male politicians, including women, do not advocate gender quotas they argue that gender-blind politics will change if women come to politics. They believe that woman “naturally” is inclined to set priorities towards less militaristic, thus considered masculine policies and will focused more on no-violent issues, social spheres and gender-based equality. So far, women in Georgia have been carrying out the policies which were not gender sensitive and did not help other women to come to power. So the question

arises, what gives us the proof to think that other women who will be in power will not do the same and will advocate gender equality? The leader of the Women's party in Georgia uses Critical Mass theory and claims that if women will be substantially represented in politics, the policies will automatically change towards gender sensitive issues.

If any group is not represented by a critical mass there won't be fundamental changes in the policies towards gender equality (G. Magradze, personal communication, April 24, 2010).

There is a general trend that I have encountered while doing interviews: some politician women and female political experts who were against gender quotas couple of years ago became firm supporters of it today. From my investigation the reasons that might have effected their opinion is connected to the government's approaches towards the implementation of the policies. When these processes do not have institutionalization mechanisms and appropriate legislature that will guarantee women's place in the politics, gender quotas are seen as a fast and direct tool to make a change. However, these women are in minority; the majority of politicians are against gender quotas both on the party or legislative level. If the unawareness of gender issues continues in Georgia in the same way as it is now, I think gender quotas will become more popular and acceptable among politicians, because it will be seen as an important mechanism to empower women. There are so many indirect barriers formed for women that quoting might be the only outcome for gender balance. However, I think that if women politicians do not change the policy priorities towards gender issues, the critical mass of women comprised of 50 % will stay as a mass and will not turn into productive actions of women empowerment.

Chapter V: The Reasons of Female Politicians Decline from Decision-making Power

5.1. Consequences of Georgian Electoral System on Women's Political Participation

For 2008 Parliamentary elections in Georgia, 9 out of 150 seats were won by female candidates, out of which just one woman was elected through majoritarian system and 8 women through proportional. Totally 57 majoritarian candidates were nominated, out of which only one female candidate nominated by the United National Movement⁵ was successful. Statistically 1.7% majoritarian female candidates won the mandate compared to 10.6 % of women candidates obtaining the seats through proportional representation system. (Parliament of Georgia, UNDP, "Gender and Politics in South Caucasus", 2008)

In this chapter I will discuss electoral reforms and I will focus on the dimensions of changed electoral system that negatively effected on women's political representation. In order to understand the reasons of drastic fall of women from decision making processes in Georgian politics it is significant to analyze Georgian electoral system. The election code has been changing since 2003 that became catalyst of many changes effecting women politicians. Discussing changed electoral system will provide analysis of the process that has played crucial role beside other impacts for ousting politician women from legislative branch of the government. Theoretical frameworks that I will be applying to this chapter are Pippa Norris (1995, 1997), Arend Lijphart (1994) and Richard Matland's (1998) analysis of electoral systems' effects on political representation. In the first section I will be using Norris's (1995) general framework about the electoral reforms, Lijphart's (1994) theories about *two-*

⁵ National Movement Party for Victorious Georgia is a pro-governmental party which has the majority seats in the parliament

dimensional changes and Matland's (1998) theories of proportional representation versus majoritarian system and its advantages and disadvantages on the female representation in legislative body. In the second section I will be using interview analysis conducted with politicians and experts dealing with gender and elections, who have been taking part or were actively commenting and analyzing 2008 parliamentary elections.

5.1.1 Electoral Reforms

According to Norris (1995) there are countries which have introduced the changes in electoral system on minor level, like "revisions of constituency boundaries" and there are states that have made major modifications like "switching electoral formulas", shifting between majoritarian and proportional systems or expanding/reducing assembly size, however some countries preferred to preserve constitutional framework untouched (p.7). Georgia is among those countries that performed major modifications not only on one dimension but multiple categories at the same time. Modifications of electoral system are carried out for several reasons; increasing the number of representatives of minority groups in legislative bodies is one of those reasons. According to Norris (1997) some countries electoral reforms were "generated by increasing concern about the representation of women and ethnic minorities" (p.1). However, for Georgia the ultimate goal when choosing electoral system was not the inclusion of minority groups in the politics. Representation of female politicians in both central as well in local governments was rather low.

Neither in the 1990's when Georgia gained independence, nor today do women possess considerable seats in the Parliament. This phenomenon can be explained by the mixed electoral system that was adopted by Georgian constitution in 1995 and which continues to persist in today's system with many alterations and modification. Norris (1997) states that new democracies of post-soviet countries adopted 'mixed' electoral system in order

“to combine the best of both proportional and majoritarian systems” (p.2). Not only did mixed election system negatively influence women’s participation in Georgian politics, but Georgian government has been amending the electoral code that made the situation for politician women worse. The initiators and the actors of the electoral changes were the government and the president who was supported by his party (United National Movement) that comprises the majority of the parliamentary seats. Thus, any amendment or law that government comes up with is easily passed, as president has total support from the legislative body.

In fact, there were no obstacles that might have prevented the modifications in the electoral code (for the benefit of the president’s party) in different dimensions right before 2008 parliamentary elections. There is the list of the changes made in 2008 electoral system that affected women’s political participation:

- 1) Proportional Representation was reduced in favor of majoritarian election, thus the number of proportionally elected representatives decreased. It is empirically proven by scholars that by proportional representational system women have more advantage in being elected than in majoritarian. According to Richard Matland (1998), women’s representation in the counties with proportional representation show substantial increase while majoritarian system depicts the opposite because, “PR systems have higher district magnitudes which lead to higher party magnitudes”⁶ (p.67). Unlike majoritarian system where there is one seat in a district and where women candidates have to compete directly against men, proportional representation offers higher district magnitude where parties have more options to win and have not only one seat but several, which provides women with more chances to be elected (Matland, 1998).

⁶ “District magnitude is the number of seats per district; party magnitude is number of seats party wins in district” (Matland, 1998, p. 67).

- 2) The assembly size was changed from 235 members to 150 that reduced the number of mandates by around 35 % (Parliament of Georgia, 2008); cut down of parliamentary seats is another factor that has influenced women's underrepresentation because "assembly size can have a strong influence on proportionality and on the degree of multipartism" (Lijphart, 1994, p.12). As politician women are mainly represented as last members in a party list, in a reduced parliament just the first core politicians occupied the seats, who were mainly male candidates.

- 3) The president Saakashvili ruled about conducting mutual elections of both president and parliament in 2008. According to Lijphart's (1994) theory in the presidential system of government, there is "an important effect on legislative elections if presidential and legislative elections are held at the same time" (p.131) because there is a large chance that president's party will win. United National Movement (President's party), which won the election in 2008 had the least number of women candidates nominated for the election compared to other political parties that were taking part in the election (Parliament of Georgia, 2008). The rescheduling of the elections proves that the aim for the government was personal interests and own benefits, that set gender sensitive issues aside. As a result, conducting mutual elections reflected on women's low representation in a legislature.

5.1.2. Results of Changed Election Code on Women's Legislative Representation

My interviewees have shown great concern towards lack of implementation of gender sensitive issues from the side of government that resulted in females' absence from core political decision making processes. The interviewees have come up with different notions why these processes of women's disempowerment have been carried out. However, the majority of the respondents I have interviewed had been claiming that those were changes in

the electoral system that negatively affected women's political participation. Some interviewees considered electoral system the only influential factor that played important part for women's underrepresentation.

I would connect women's low representation to the modification of Georgian electoral code that took place on multiple levels before 2008 elections. I do not think women's underrepresentation in today's parliament is due to the changed gender policy that government carried out, but the main reason of this trend lies in the changed electoral system (T. Bagratia, personal communication, April 21, 2010).

Tamar Bagratia, leading specialist of Central Election Commission of Georgia during 2008-2010, considers that Georgian government did not make deliberate policy changes towards women's discrimination from politics but only changed the electoral law that effected women as well. However, I would argue that modifications in electoral system were carried out for the self benefit because by changing electoral system and decreasing the assembly size, the seats for other parties, i.e. the opposition parties were reduced and the majority of the seats were allocated among members of United National Movement (President's Party). As there are fewer women in the governmental party and as the majority of female politicians moved to the opposition, changed electoral system should be considered as an important factor in reducing number of politician women from the decision making powers. United National Movements' interests to maintain the majority of the seats in the parliament caused the changes in electoral system. This move was aimed to reduce the parliamentary seats for oppositional parties in order to maintain ultimate power in decision-making processes. By ousting opposition, government automatically ousted women politicians as the political move from pro-governmental institutions to oppositional parties have been shaping female politicians activities already from 2006.

The main concern with the electoral changes that interviewees stressed were due to the reduced number of proportionally elected candidates in favor of increased majoritarian seats. In March 12, 2008, the amendment to the constitution ruled out that in the mixed electoral system, the number of nominated candidates will be distributed evenly between majoritarian and proportionally elected candidates, by 75 seats each (Parliament of Georgia, Amendments to the Constitution, 2008). The changed electoral code proportionally increased the number of majoritarian nominees. According to 1995 constitution the seats in the parliament were allocated with 150 proportionally elected politicians against 85 majoritarian. As the assembly size changed from 236 to 150 members, the number of candidates changed respectively but in the favor of the majoritarians.

When parliament wanted to issue [above mentioned] law, as an MP, I was firmly against the passing the bill; I knew that women would be more suppressed by the majoritarian system because just those candidates nominated in the single mandate precincts win who have money. Women do not have enough finances and thus they are unsuccessful (M. Nachkebia, personal communication, April 21, 2010).

In Georgia where economical advancement is not in favor of empowering women on leading managerial positions, i.e. enabling women to manage businesses independently and gain financial benefits and profits, majoritarian system of election dramatically degrades women's participation. Besides difficulties and barriers to compete with male candidates, female politicians who are in opposition do not have enough financial support to finance their campaigns independently to run as majoritarian candidates. The reality that faces current political situation in Georgia is the lack of transparent party funding. The only way to become politically active is by having money, either illegal or legal but having considerable amount of money to conduct political campaign and carry out pre-election charity activities. This

enables parties gain popularity among the electorate that eventuality leads to winning. As majority of women do not possess businesses or substantial amount of finances and have low economical activity which is stereotypical for Georgia, women's chances to run as majoritarian candidate is extremely minimal.

To become an influential businessman in Georgia you should be pro-government and have so called "roof" from the authorities, which most of the women do not possess; otherwise your enterprise will be terrorized and terminated (M. Nachkebia, personal communication, April 21, 2010)

As there is no independent business environment, accumulation of substantial income to run as a political candidate is limited to only those who have good contacts with government and who are involved in informal negotiations. Women are left out from such illegal bargains because male politicians do not take politician women as a serious candidate either for running a business or participating in core political activities. In this political environment women are discouraged to go to politics and run as the majoritarian candidates. However, according to the interviewee analysis political barriers is not the only reason of their passivity; the society itself is not supportive towards women candidates and prefers male politicians to female. The ratio is dominated not only by men but by women as well who consider women less competent and less professional to be able to carry out governmental duties.

The society is not concerned with having women representatives because masculine stereotypes of doing politics are very strong which prevents society to see woman as an influential politician (Irina Bakhtadze, personal communication, April 21, 2010).

There is no requirement from the society to have women leaders, that's why processes of lobbying gender equality is not initiated from the people and is considered as less priority issue. Hence, without active lobbying the processes of empowering women cannot progress. Overall, the electoral system which is set on majoritarian system where women have to be directly elected through a single mandate will be oppressive to female candidate in many ways, out of which lack of finances and dominant masculine stereotypes are the curial barriers.

5.2. Informal Political Bargains

“The selection criteria for governmental posts was based on three main principles: loyalty, age and education abroad”

Marine Chitashvili

In this chapter I will be discussing informal political bargains that shaped the politics of empowering women after “Rose Revolution” and consequences it had on women’s political representation. In the framework of informal bargains I will be talking about patronage-based “selection system where decisions are made by limited number of elites that control power” (Matland and Montgomery, 2003). Although, Matland and Montgomery (2003) argue that patronage systems are unfavorable to women because they are closed systems that do not welcome women’s participation, many women in Georgian politics were appointed through patronage system. I argue that patronage system is not always unfavorable to women politicians as the Georgian case has shown. However, such system is not carried out through democratic principles that might be the obstacle for women’s empowerment for a long time span; indeed the process of progress of women politicians in power does not develop and can subsequently come to an end. Thus, any informal bargains, including patronage selection system may backfire; the campaign of promoting women that is not based on law and is carried out through informal means is not stable process and can have unpredictable consequences. The selection criteria of Georgian female ministers were based on patronage-system, social networking and private contacts. Although the appointments of male ministers were carried out with similar procedures, the processes of empowerment of female politicians backfired and resulted in women’s underrepresentation from decision-making politics after couple of years. Together with female ministers, male ministers selected

by patronage-based system were losing the ranks and high posts. Political bargains that are not carried out through legal processes and are not based on the rule of law can be unfavorable for both female and male politicians. However, unlike women officials, men were able to reconcile with the regime because in a male-dominated atmosphere (as politics is) they were not facing the barriers that female politicians come across.

According to Kathleen Collins (2006) “patronage is a key element that clan elites use to bind members to each other” (p.27); After “Rose revolution” there was still a tendency towards employing and appointing women and also men on personal relations (despite the claims towards democratic principles), and there was an inclination that country would start carrying out clan politics, based on kinship and similar cultural and political views, however, government appeared to be very unstable institution; shifting the posts or dismissing high officials from their ranks was very common political action. Although one of the main criteria of appointing the ministers was based on loyalty and faithfulness principle to the presidents and his surrounding political environment but this process appeared short. In the next sections I will be using interview analysis to discuss the issues connected with selection criteria of politician women; what were other means besides loyalty principle that government required from the ministers and how these criteria differed between male and female politicians. Using narrative analysis based on interviewee’s responses I have confronted with conspiracy theory that was developing by authoritative powers against female politicians during their ousting processes from the high posts.

5.2.1 Patronage-Based Selection System

Conducting interviews provided me with very interesting data about the empowerment processes that were taking place after “Rose Revolution”. From the interviewees responses it appears that it was not only president Saakashvili but also late

prime-minister, Zurab Zhvania, who was very actively involved in the women's promotion during 2004. His social networks involved substantial number of both male and female politicians, because for years he has been actively involved in dominant politics (was the Speaker of the Parliament during Shevardnadze's presidency) and had significant contacts accumulated through years of residing in the country.

Those three politician women who were appointed as the ministers during the first years of the "rose revolution" were from the Zhvania's 'team'... these ministries headed by women were: Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Internally Displaced People (IDP) (G. Magradze, personal communication, April 24, 2010).

From the narrative it becomes obvious that selecting women on high posts was not based on merit but on personal contacts and membership in clan. The candidates were being selected from the friends' circles and not through transparent selection process. The main criterion that is expected during such kind of selection is the loyalty and faithfulness to your 'employer'. This was certain kind of exchange policy, which Collins (2006) calls as *clientelism* - "informal exchange of favors between two actors" (p. 38). Those who would be loyal had a chance to get promoted. Although it was not the only criterion for becoming the ministers but loyalty factor mattered a lot. Other priorities of forming the cabinet of ministers were based on age and education in foreign countries. These selection criteria did not differ according to gender; both female and male politicians were encouraged to take high post if they were able to meet the above mentioned criteria. However, the campaign of female politicians was in need of far more promotion, based on legal mechanisms or institutionalization as the barriers to enter politics are far persistent and tough for women than men.

What's more, in the narrative about the ministries it is implied by the narrator that the ministries headed by women were not the core decision making institutions that could have implementation of the institutional gender equality mechanisms. Thus, although women politicians were promoted, they were assigned to the ministries that were more traditionally considered to be run by female politicians. So, prejudices about women's 'ability' to do politics were present during promotion campaign and they were given posts that did not perform dominant politics in the country. However, even though these ministries were less privileged, appointing women was a very good start for the further promotion of women, because it provided chances for women politicians to gain power that could expand and grow. However, this trend did not continue and the lack of female ministers is apparent in the cabinet by 2010. One of the reasons for this can be Zurab Zhvania's disappearance from politics because of his sudden death in 2005. As the key actor in promoting women in government was not present, this could have had consequences on women empowerment process aftermath.

Besides ministers many women came to the National Movement (president's party) by Saakashvili's private contacts or personal relations. The most famous example that even president does not hide, but on contrary proudly admits is the case of Nino Kalandadze, who got acquainted with president in the airport and who was later offered the job to join the party. Currently, she is the deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (Government of Georgia, 2010). Those politicians, who are appointed through social networking presume the post as 'gift giving' and thus are the most loyal to the political actors who gave them the chance. Those who were loyal politicians still are present in the government, but those who refused to be faithful either left office or were dismissed, because they lost the status in the clan where they belong previously. This occurred because the power relationships and preferences in the policies that followed Prime-Minister's death have changed. The authority

and power that guaranteed to support women disappeared because the main promoter of women's empowerment, Zurab Zhvania was not in the government any more.

If male politicians created their professional CVs in Parliament, why women cannot do the same and without prior experience come to power (M. Chitashvili, personal communication, April 22, 2010).

From the narrative we might deduct that male politicians were privileged to take post in the sphere that was not their specialization. There are many examples how male ministers were replacing each other, shifting from one post to another, but staying still in power. For instance, Nika Gvaramia after being the minister of Justice was appointed as the minister of Education and Science without substantial professional experience to work in the sphere of education and science (N. Gvaramia is a lawyer by profession) (Government of Georgia, 2010). The cabinet of ministers is full of such paradoxes. The professionalism is not the most important selection criteria. In the interview Marine Chitashvili provides the reasons for such processes: it is based on the assumption that if the professionals in the specific sphere are appointed in their field, then they will be able to create fundamental changes and thus contradict the government's plans by considering the directives from the authorities as a priori. The professionalism is viewed as a thread to the regime, which makes the importance of professional experience for the post an insignificant criterion. From the narrative, it is also evident that the professionalism of female candidates in a way was taken into consideration and the selection was not solely based on loyalty, age and gender but also on prior experience of the field. For instance, Salome Zurabishvili, possessed thirty years of work experience in diplomacy and foreign affairs before she would be appointed as a Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2004 (Political Parties, 2010). One of the reasons of her dismissal from the post was connected to the professionalism and previous experience because she has been creating

problems for the authorities as her way of management of the ministry was viewed as a turning away from the official political discourse of Georgian government. I would like to argue that the politician women who were promoted to the high post comprised two important traits: first they were professionals, and second they were members of same social networking which was promoting female politicians. However, soon after 2004 professionalism was viewed as threat to the authoritative government because it could have put the existing regime at the stake. Thus, as politicians women were eventually dismissed from the high post due to over qualification, their membership in the clan networks subsequently came to an end that resulted in the politician women's ousting from the Georgian government.

5.2.2. "Conspiracy Theory"

In the county where there is tendency towards autocratic regimes and clan politics, the presence of women in the same political team forms some kind of discomfort and uneasiness for men, because women generally have different approaches towards the problems which men politicians most of the time do not share. In the presence of men, male politicians feel more at ease, they come together well and are able to discuss issues freely as most of them have similar ideas and political view points (G. Magradze, personal communication, April 24, 2010).

Having an experience of the interaction between different political groups, Guguli Magradze's narrative implies that she has probably come across to the same situations as described before, where women distress men with their presence by opposing their points of views. I would say that female politicians would felt more discomfort than males if they had

to work in such environment because as they were minority in the political group, most of the case they would be marginalized and their views neglected. What's more, from the narrative of the interviewee some form of conspiracy theory can be deduced.

Theorists frame conspiracy not only through the political events but through feminist discourses based on gender (Harding and Stewart, 2003). "Conspiracy theory" in the case of Georgia was directed to the ousting of women from politics. The narrative of Guguli Magradze implies that men politicians were in favor of forming male 'clubs' that automatically ousted women because working conditions for male politicians was more desirable to be performed with men than women. So, women gradually started fading away from posts which was more a continuing process than a sudden decision. Such political course might also suggest that sudden ousting of women could provide suspicion for conspiracy, but ongoing process was viewed less threatening towards women politicians. Nevertheless, the "conspiracy" against women was well-staged and well performed; as it continued over time it was not viewed as part of conspiratory actions but rather unchanging course of politics. Hence, the process of disempowering women from the high posts was not spontaneous and unplanned practice.

The ongoing fight for power made Georgian government become involved in the "conspiracy" that was developing against opposition parties and thus, against politician women, because, as noted before, the political move that followed women's dismissal from the high posts was the engagement with the opposition to the President Saakashvili. "Conspiracy theory" was emerging both through legislature and through informal political discourses of the officials. Changed electoral system that reduced the number of seats in the assembly size of the parliament and modified PR and majoritarian system was a move towards blocking opposition parties to enter the parliament. This is the part of "conspiracy" that was directed towards opposition as well as towards women politicians.

The leading party together with the government has been mainly concerned with power relations and has been using all mechanisms to keep the dominant power in politics. While in office female politicians could not use their authority for the creation of gender-based institutional mechanisms. It was viewed as a threat to male-dominated political elite and consequently, was not considered as an important issue to develop. As a result, women were blocked from gaining substantial power as the ministries that were headed by female politicians were not the dominant ministries that could ensure development or progress of gender equality.

Chapter VI: Political Move to the Opposition Parties

6.1. Politician Women Deceived?

The campaign of promotion women on high posts by the newly elected government was based on false promises . . . the authorities in many cases break their enacted law themselves (M. Machkebia, personal communication, April 21, 2010)

In the narrative of Manana Nachkebia, former MP and current leader of the Women's Club of opposition party -"New Rights", it is evident that the trust of government has seceded because they (politician women) are not in power anymore as president Saakashvili has promised in the beginning of his presidential campaign. The respondent was talking about breaking the law in general but it implied that if government can break official laws, then informal campaign of women's empowerment that was not based on institutional mechanisms would be far easier to discontinue, i.e. her narrative entails the notion of "betrayal". The narrative framework that I would like to work with is the concept of "betrayal" that came up from the interviews that I conducted with the female politicians. Behind their narratives it was evident that the anger and mistrust they showed during the interviews towards the current authorities was derived from the fact that they were actually deceived by president who promised higher women empowerment but stopped the campaign within the few years. That was one of the reasons why majority of women politicians moved to the opposition. It is visible in the party lists of the opposition parties, out of which four oppositional parties are headed my female politicians (Political Parties, 2010).

The campaign of women's promotion did not stop at once; rather it was a gradual process that started around two years after the 'rose revolution'. The ministers in the cabinet

were being replaced so often that women in power were shifted from one post to another which gradually paved the way to their disappearance from decision-making powers. As it was not one-day process the reactions of women politicians varied, however, the main trend that followed women's ousting from government was the movement to opposition, whether allying with other political parties or forming their own parties. For example, Nino Burjanadze, one of the main figures of "Rose Revolution", Speaker of the Parliament and close ally of Saakashvili (during "Rose Revolution") left her office and went into opposition forming her own party "Democratic Movement – United Georgia" in November 2008 (Gularidze, 2008). Salome Zurbashvili, the former Foreign Affairs Minister of Georgia who was 'brought' into Georgian politics (from France where she was residing) by the president's directives to become a minister, formed her own party "the Way of Georgia" in March 2006, after resigning from the post as a Minister (Political Parties, 2010). Guguli Magradze, ex-MP was among the first women who started criticizing the government and the president openly; consequently she left parliament and founded her own party in March 2008, which was meant to be "Women's Party".

From the interviews with these politicians it became apparent that the political move to opposition entailed number of motives. The first reason was connected to political environment; interview analysis showed that women politicians no longer shared the same political views with the authorities because according to some of my respondents there was a shift in the policies government started to carry out, which politician women did not sympathize with. So, in order to stay in politics they had to move to the opposition parties or form their own political blocks, because the place in decision-making powers was no longer accessible for them. Secondly, by forming political parties they wished to become strong opposition to the government that might have lead to the changes in government's policies.

“Women Club” was founded within the “New Rights” party right after the formation of the party itself. The projects that were carried out by this club were directed towards social issues (e.g. raising funds for orphanages, helping mothers of large families). By doing so we were trying to increase our electorate. However, nowadays, due to lack of funding our activities even on charity bases are stopped (M. Nachkebia, personal communication, April 21, 2010).

In the narrative of M. Nachkebia, the leader of the “Women’s Club”, about the priority issues performed by the members of the club it is visible that the club was only concerned with social issues and did work on any policies that would help women’s political empowerment. The political agendas of “New Rights” party as the rest of other oppositional or governmental parties see gender and social issue on the same level. This is very problematic because it blocks the genuine meaning of gender equality and feminist perspectives towards implementing policies. To put it simply, the concept of gender is misused and put under different connotations. This forms barriers for the women’s promotion processes in politics as there are no political forces that work on gender issues. What’s more, there is a huge slippage in Nachkebia’s narrative, as she unexpectedly (I could encounter the feeling of anxiety and confusion while she unconsciously said the phrase – “by doing so we were trying to increase our electorate”) mentions the real intentions of her parties for funding the “Women’s Club”. Thus, the main aim of the club is not to promote women in politics, is not to support those in need but to increase the electorate for the accumulation of the voters in the elections.

The opposition parties ‘play’ with the same political tools as they did before when in power. There are no significant policy changes or political mechanisms that could be different from the dominant political force, i.e. government of Saakashvili. None of the

political parties employ gender-based issues into their party plans and none of their parties' strategies are targeted towards gender equality and the means how to improve the conditions of women on economical and political levels. Thus, the recent politics that are performed by both government and opposition by ignoring gender-balance as the priority issues for doing politics is limited in innovation and implementation of alternative politics.

6.2 “Women’s Party” is a Women’s Party?

I was following the processes of the formation of the “Women Party” with much enthusiasm. I was expecting the party to become ‘lobbyist’ of women’s issues in politics that would initiate change towards gender-equality. However, my expectations were not fully fulfilled; it did not mobilize women on large scale and did not advocate gender issues as expected (I. Putkaradze, personal communication, April 19, 2010).

According to my interviewees, the Women’s Party that was established in March 2008 was believed to become the realization of the gender equality that would work towards women’s issues and could become women’s representative in the parliament. Although creation of such party did not cause huge resonance among Georgian population, however, many women politicians, academics and female citizens joined the party for the hope of gaining parliamentary seats as they believed that significant number of women in parliament could make a difference towards gender-equality.

I would point out three main factors that became barriers for “Women’s Party” to carry out policies that were expected the party. Firstly, establishing women’s party did not bring the popularity among the electorate (according to the statistical information of 2008 parliamentary elections the “Women’s Party” together with “Tradionalists” got just 0.44 % of

the total votes) (Parliament of Georgia, 2008). The party was not viewed as an important carrier of politics because women are not envisioned inside male-dominated political elite as a significant political force that can govern the country. Thus, gender stereotypes played significant role in the recognition of “Women’s Party” as an uninfluential political establishment. Secondly, lack of interest to fund the party was based on unpopularity and gender-based prejudices. In the interview, the leader of the “Women’s Party” stated that the party is solely depended on the membership donation and there are no other means of funds that flows to the party. The reasons she mentioned was the unwillingness to carry business interests in their party politics because without it nobody would be willing to fund the party just on charity bases. I have come to the conclusion that the main reason is the lack of interest to finance the women’s party, than it’s unwillingness to carry businessmen’s interests. The prejudices in the society of women’s managed politics are very strong; that’s why there is lack of interest both from the business sector and from the public.

The third factor that I would like to highlight is the lack of gender perspectives even in this party. The fact that “Women’s Party” entered in the party block with right-wing “Traditionalists” party shows that gender perspectives are not priority; the formation of block with conservatives would not enable women’s party carry out the issues that are gender-sensitive because these two parties have different political views and standpoints. The reason fro this is the fact that above mentioned conservative party carries out politics which does not necessarily lobby gender issues but rather is advocate of politics rooted into traditions that are not enthusiastic to make changes towards women’s political representation and gender-equality. The alliance was based on mutual interests, as both parties by unification sought gaining enough votes for the parliamentary elections. The alliance showed that the ultimate goal for “Women’s Party” was to overcome the electoral threshold. The leader of “Women’s Party” in the interview admits that as “Women’s Party” was founded just three months

(March, 2008) before elections, the cooperation of two parties was done for the purpose to increase the number of electorate and get more votes for the parliamentary elections of 2008.

When in coalition with the “Traditionalists” party, the leader Akaki Asatiani never formed barriers for us; he was not opposing even our radical views on certain issues. So we never felt being restricted and thus, had maximum freedom of activities, which is really important (G. Magradze, personal communication, April 24, 2010).

To my question about the political block with conservative, the leader of the “Women’s Party”, Guguli Magradze, started immediately defending her decision and justifying the reasons of the coalition. From her narrative it was evident that she admitted the paradoxical nature of the alliance but tried to justify the motives of coalition from the very beginning. The second factor that was evident from the narrative was the way how she was framing the leader of “Traditionalists” party. From the narrative I came to conclusion that the alliance was based on personal contact and friendly relation; the similarity in political views was not the important factor. The coalition was based on private contacts and not on party preferences. Otherwise, the alliance would not have taken place if we take into consideration the political differences between these two allied parties. Thus, the ultimate goal of “Women’s Party” was not the priority of gender issues but the desire to overcome the electoral threshold; alliance with a political party that has different political traditions proves this. However, the block did not receive the 5 % of the votes that was essential for passing the barrier for the parliamentary seats; it received only 0.44 % (Parliament of Georgia, 2008).

“Women’s Party” had chance to be established as an important political force by highlighting gender perspectives and by emphasizing on being women’s representative in the parliament. There might be two possible reasons of the party’s unsuccessful campaign:

firstly, the party was not viewed as a defender of women's right, because the party did not have strategic plans in their campaign for improving the conditions of women in Georgia; it did not focus on women as an important electorate. Secondly, the alliance with conservatives made signals to many voters that the "Women's Party" might have altered its political course and changed the priorities, in which gender issues were in the bottom of the list.

Conclusion:

The aim of my research was to map the results of women's political participation in transitional period of Georgia from 2003 "Rose Revolution" till today. I wanted to investigate the reasons of politician women's drastic promotion in the executives and legislative branches of government in 2004, who were the key political actors that lead this campaign and how the processes of empowering women were developing, namely what were the mechanisms that were used for the promotion of women politicians till 2008. The further concern of my research was to analyze the negative consequences of the empowerment campaign on politician women and to discover the causes that lead to the decline of female politicians from the Cabinet of Ministers and from the Parliament. To meet my goals I have been using narrative analysis of the female politicians, political experts and scholars whom I have interviewed for my research in April 2010. Being part of political elite during President Saakashvili's first term of service and now being members and leaders of opposition parties, my respondents provided me with important overview of the past and present events that gave me opportunity for choosing thematic field and thus doing analysis of the political situation in Georgia (from 2003 till today) beyond official political discourse.

The narrative analysis enabled me to conclude that Georgian government's political agenda after the "Rose Revolution" towards empowering female politicians was not grounded on gender awareness and on institutional mechanisms that could have protected women's political representation during the period of crisis. In addition, in-depth interview analysis allowed me to argue that informal political bargains, namely patronage-based selection system performed by the authoritative members of the government through clan politics did not offer stable political environment for female politicians' further advancement

in decision-making power. At the same time, the results of 2008 parliamentary elections carried out with changed electoral system and reduced assembly size radically minimized parliamentary seats for opposition parties that caused women's drastic decline from legislative branch because today's opposition in Georgian politics is substantially represented by female politicians (four dominant opposition parties are headed by female politicians) (Political Parties, 2010).

The conducted research provides three basic theoretical innovations to the existing literature of gender and politics with particular focus on Georgian women's political participation. While scholars like Pippa Norris (1995), Arend Lijphart (1994) and Richard Matland (1998) base their analysis on the mechanisms to increase women's participation and high political representation, in my work I go beyond this framework and I examine the reasons of women political promotion during the transition period, which generally tends to be unfavorable for female empowerment.

Georgina Waylen (1994), Shahra Razavi (2001), Matland and Montgomery (2003) have provided an important background for studying and investigating concerns and obstacles that women face during and after transition period. However, Georgian women's political promotion showed dissimilar processes during the transition period that are not addressed by theoreticians yet. Although Georgian women politicians did not face those barriers during transition that were outlined by above mentioned scholars but this campaign did not result into substantial advancement of female politicians. My research addresses not only the barriers but also the processes of maintaining already obtained power. Even though, it is important to gain significant authority among dominant political forces but it is equivocally important to create mechanisms that will ensure the preservation of the power.

Although the patronage-based selection system (choosing candidates based on social networks and not on merit) is viewed as unfavorable for the promotion of female politicians

(Matland and Montgomery, 2003) the opposite can be argued if women comprise considerable number of the members in ‘clan’ politics promoted by the authoritative political figures based on *clientelism*, i.e. informal exchange of mutual interests. Analyzing mechanisms of politician women’s advancement on high post allows me to argue that women’s promotion may backfire if it is based on informal political bargains and does not incorporate institutional apparatuses as a significant tool for implementing change. Investigating actual motivations (of dominant political leaders) behind women’s political promotion campaigns provides with substantive analysis to argue that the processes of women’s empowerment cannot be always positive if is not carried out through democratic principles and transparent practices.

My study – the only scholarly research done so far about the current conditions of women’s political involvement in Georgia, namely about the consequences of politician women’s drastic promotion to high executive and legislative posts and its effects on today’s female politicians’ underrepresentation – can provide a basic foundation for further research in the area of gender and politics. As in my research, I did not concentrate on politician women’s visual representation when in power and its effects on their decline from decision-making bodies this might be a one of possible subjects of focus for other scholars working in the same area. Furthermore, the consequences of Georgian politician women’s empowerment can be compared to the practices in other countries’ undergoing similar political developments and transitions, like Eastern European post-socialist states. Such studies could go beyond Georgian framework and could provide more widely scholarly works in the sphere of gender and politics.

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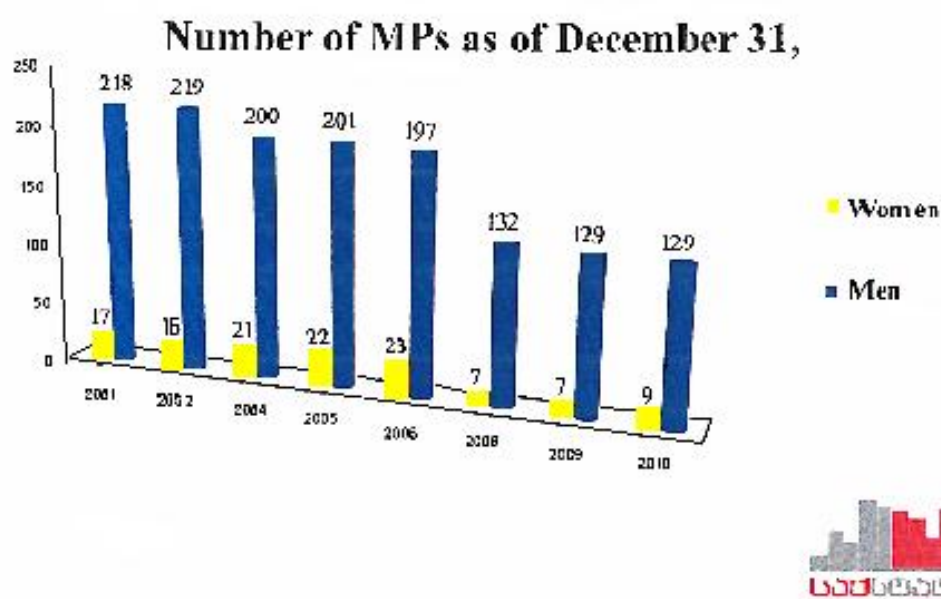
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Appendix

Table 1. Statistical Data of Female Politicians in the Georgian Parliament from 2001-2010.

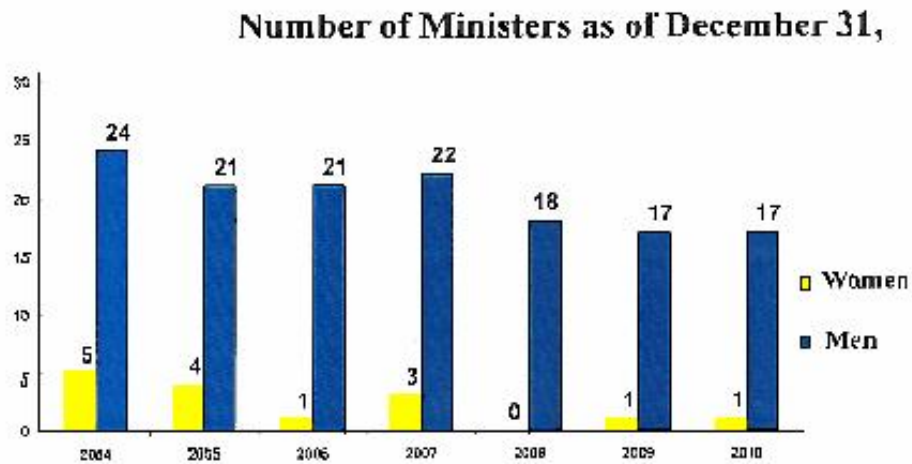
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT



Source: Georgian Statistical Center. Retrived from www.geostat.ge

Table 2. Statistical Data of Female Politicians in the Georgian Cabinet of Minister from 2004-2010.

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT



Source: Georgian Statistical Center. Retrived from www.geostat.ge

Table 3. The List of the Interviewees (conducted in Tbilisi, Georgia, April, 2010)

Name/Surname	Profession/Occupation	Interview Date
Guguli Magradze	Leader of “Women’s Party”, Member of Georgian Parliament from 2004-2008; Professor of Gender and Conflict, Tbilisi State University	April 24, 2010
Manana Nachkebia	Leader of “Women’s Club” at “New Rights” Party; Member of Georgian Parliament from 2004-2008	April 21, 2010
Irina Putkaradze	Executive Director of the NGO “Coalition of Civil Development”	April 19, 2010
Nino Tsikhistavi	Leader of NGO “Caucasus Women Network”; Expert on Gender Equality	April 22, 2010
Medea Turashvili	Political Analyst at “International Crisis Group”	April 26, 2010
Marine Chitashvili	Professor doctor of Social Sciences; Founder of Center for Social Sciences (CSS); Ex-member of Gender Advisory Council under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia	April 22, 2010
Irina Bakhtadze	Co-founder of NGO – “Women in Transition”; Professor at International Black Sea University	April 20, 2010
Tamar Kiknadze	Politologist; Expert on Gender; Professor of Political Science, Tbilisi State University (TSU)	April 21, 2010
Tamar Bagratia	Expert on Gender and Elections; Leading Specialist of Central Election Commission of Georgia during 2008-2010; Professor of Gender and Politics, Tbilisi State University.	April 20, 2010
Nino Javakhishvili	Member of Gender Advisory Council under the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia; Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, TSU	April 22, 2010