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***Georgia from the Outside: The
Path to Democracy***

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Introduction

Georgia's 2003 "Rose Revolution" capitalized on the popular discontent with the corrupt and ineffective government and ushered in hope for freedom, democracy and prosperity. This hope and enthusiasm was true domestically and internationally as well. International observers were keenly looking forward to a new wave of democratization that would now finally sweep over the former Soviet space. Domestically, people were looking forward to a government that would finally hear their voices and prioritize the state interest over their personal.

Mikheil Saakashvili and his young team promised to deliver all that. They promised to end the corruption and nepotism, free and fair elections, protection of human rights and dignity and economic prosperity. Saakashvili won presidential elections in 2004 in landslide, getting over 96% of the vote, and another term in a much more contested 2008 elections, barely avoiding the second round of elections with 53% of the vote.

His promises have been reiterated consistently and both Saakashvili and his government have proven to be enthusiastic advertisers of own performance. Contrasting the achievements since 2003 with the dark and decayed times of Shevardnadze's government has been particularly pervasive. However, while progress is visible in some areas, when it comes to democracy, the performance is widely considered to be less than perfect.

To measure the performance this paper looks at various international indices, which assign numerical value and standing to different countries around the world. While narrative assessments are much more numerous and may well provide more details, this paper looks specifically at those resources that allow for comparison of countries performance across pre-defined components/indicators and do so across time, thus showing development trends. These indices and rankings are widely used and internationally recognized scholarly resources. While all approaches and methodologies have inherent limitations and their criticism abounds, these resources still provide valuable data. It is worth noting, additionally, that despite using divergent methodologies, the findings of all of these resources largely point in the same direction and the correlation between the assessments is recognized to be significant.

The findings of these indices may at times coincide with domestic feelings and may at times be much more or less critical. However, despite their various limitations, one value of these international indices to us is that they represent how Georgia is viewed from the outside and in the global context. Such distanced assessment is undoubtedly interesting to consider for policy makers, as well as policy watchers.

To map Georgia's democratic performance, this paper presents data relating to broad assessments of democracy, as well as some of its common attributes for example, media freedom, based on data availability and reliability.

Democratic consolidation and its measurement – Georgia in the Gray Zone

Breakup of the Soviet Union and the development of its successor states are viewed as part of the larger so called “third-wave of democratization”. The idea that breaks with authoritarian system will eventually undoubtedly lead to democratic one has been predominant in Western scholarship since 1980s. What evolved as the field of “transitology” held as its main tenants, that all change from authoritarianism would be a transit towards democracy and that the sequence of that transition is clearly determined, ending in consolidation.

However, while significant time has passed since the start of first such transitions, the consolidation of democracy has been much rarer than hoped. While both political scientists and development aid professionals insist of referring to these countries, Georgia included, as democracies, new adjectives clarifying or qualifying this description have been amply offered to reflect the fact that these countries are far from being full-fledged democracies.

However, while the countries which have started to reinvent themselves after the fall of the previous authoritarian system are most often not fully authoritarian any more, neither are they democratic. Instead, they are stuck somewhere in between and do not necessarily seem to be moving much in either direction. Thomas Carothers broke down this “gray zone” of countries into feckless pluralist systems and dominant power systems¹. The countries falling in these categories seem to have achieved equilibrium, although this equilibrium does not necessarily have to last forever.

Georgia in 2002 (i.e. still under Shevardnadze) was identified as a dominant power system, but arguably the situation has not changed much since. For all the talk of drastic reform and democratization, the new government can be given credit for strengthening the state, but not necessarily the state of democracy. Contrary to the traditional deterministic transitology expectations building a state and a democracy do not necessarily involve the same moves and Georgian experience seems to be a perfect case to the point. Despite certain success in state capacity building, Georgia still remains stuck in between authoritarianism and democracy and does not appear to be changing much for at least the last decade. The indices cited below give a clear demonstration of this – while scores assigned by various methodologies may show small changes in response to various political developments each year, there is no clear trend line of development in the medium run. Georgia seems to be clearly rooted in the gray zone.

Freedom in the World

One of the oldest and most commonly used assessments of worldwide state of democracy is the Freedom in the World data annually produced by US based Freedom House. The index is produced since 1973 and data on Georgia has been published since 1992. Freedom in the World measures two variables – political rights and civil liberties on the scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means free and 7 means not free. The “status score” is the average of the two, and is used to classify a given state as free (scores 1-2.5), partly free (scores 3-5), and not free (scores 5.5-7). A score and report published in a given year reflects the assessment of the situation in the previous year².

¹ Carothers, Thomas, “The End of the Transition Paradigm.” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 13:1 (2002) pp. 15-21

² Freedom House Freedom of the world page gives access to the data and reports for the years of 1992-2012. Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2012>. Accessed 15 June, 2012

Georgia continues to be classified as a partly free country since 1993. The change of leadership was almost immediately reflected on the assessment and in 2005 Georgia got the score of 3.5, reflective of the credible presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2004, however they did not much reflect the problematic changes in the Constitution that not only tilted the balance of power much in president's favor, but were also adopted in a rush, violating Constitutional process requirements. However, the best historical performance was shown in years 2006 and 2007 (reflective of the assessment of the situation in 2005 and 2006 respectively) and the score of 3 was assigned. While the respective reports talk of the decreased media freedom and diversity and dominance of Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM) party, they also note the successful anti-corruption reforms (traffic police and university entry exams overhaul) and better protection of freedom of religion and easing libel laws that were problematic during Shevardnadze's period.

Table 1: Freedom in the World, Georgia 1992-2012

	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Political Rights	6	4	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Civil Liberties	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	3
Total Score	5.5	4.5	5	5	4.5	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4	4	4	3.5	3	3	4	4	4	3.5	3.5
Status	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF

However after the initial progress, in the next three years Georgia's assessment worsened by a full point, both in Political Rights and in Civil Liberties. This decline is not surprising, given the events of November 2007, when state of emergency was declared as the government alleged a coup attempt, and the state dominated environment at the ensuing early presidential and parliamentary elections in January and May of 2008, respectively. 2008 was particularly devastating for Georgia given the brief war with Russia in August. While the entire country and political spectrum rallied for a short time following the crisis, the polarization became even more striking as the government's handling of it soon became disputed. This situation carried on into 2009 as well, with the opposition protests persisting.

Interestingly, the assessment turned to better in 2011 and 2012 (for years 2010 and 2011 respectively), both getting the status scores of 3.5. The report attributes the 2011 improvement to the relative political stability, well-organized local elections in May and to allowing greater media diversity, including allowing pro-opposition Maestro TV to broadcast via satellite.

The report does note the adoption of Constitutional amendments in October 2010 and the fact that it shifts significant powers previously enjoyed by the president into the prime-minister's domain. However, it fails to note the manner in which the changes were elaborated and adopted. While the constitutional commission involving civil society members was nominally at work for over a year, the final draft presented in parliament was not previously agreed upon; the public discussion of the draft was formally held for the constitutionally determined period of one month, it also lacked any meaningful discussion

and participation. Further, besides redistributing powers between branches, the new draft also changed rules of parliamentary makeup, redistributing the 150 seats equally between the proportional and majoritarian systems in a way that did not improve the existing situation of extremely unequal weight of individual votes across the electoral districts. Allowing for greater share of first pass the post votes in a political environment clearly dominated by one party further strengthened UNM's prospects in future elections.

Country reports for 2012 are not yet available. However, for domestic observers the improved scores may be duly surprising, given the eventful political year in 2011 revealing insecurities of Saakashvili's government. Police brutally broke up opposition demonstration on the night into May 26, 2011, the Independence Day, clearing the grounds for the planned military parade. Persecution of the protest participants on political grounds was alleged by domestic and international human rights organizations. This was later supplemented with the case of photo journalists alleged to be Russian spies, but later released on plea agreements. Among the photographers persecuted was the author of the intense pictures showing police brutality on the night of May 26 and many believed this was the state's retribution.

Fall marked a major stir-up in the Georgian political scene, with secluded billionaire Ivanishvili, who previously funded many of the government's infrastructure and development initiatives, publicly announcing his discontent with where the country was headed under Saakashvili's leadership. He declared his own political ambitions and plans to support the perpetually fund-starved like-minded opposition. Government's concerted efforts against Ivanishvili included intense scrutiny of his assets and businesses, stripping him of Georgian citizenship, in a surprise move changing the party finance regulations as to allow for retroactive criminalization of his funding for opposition groups, among others. This was supplemented with a concerted effort of pro-government media at discrediting Ivanishvili as Russia's pawn.

Nations in Transit

Nations in Transit is another project of the Freedom House, providing a more detailed assessment of select 29 countries undergoing democratic transition. While using the standard Freedom House methodology of rating countries on the scale of 1 to 7 (best to worst), Nations in Transit presents a much more detailed breakdown of components to its definition of democratic transition. The seven components of electoral process, civil society, independent media, national democratic governance, local democratic governance (until 2005 issue presented as a unified governance indicator), judicial framework and independence, and corruption are then averaged to derive a single Democracy Score.³

In this research too, Georgia remains a firmly partly free democracy. While the ten year period of 2002 to 2011 has shown some variation in scores, this variation is neither significant, nor uniform in direction.

This research also illustrates that Georgia's democratic performance has basically not improved since the change of government in 2003. Looking closer at the indicators shows that it is primarily national democratic governance and local democratic governance where Georgia performs the works. The indicators that receive relatively positive assessment are civil society and independent media. We might tentatively conclude that in Georgia, the civil society is better equipped and ready for democracy than the government.

³ Freedom House Nations in Transit page makes available data and reports for years 2003 to 2011. Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/nations-transit>. Accessed 15 June, 2012

Table 2: Nations in Transit, Georgia 2002-2011

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Electoral Process	5	5.25	5.25	4.75	4.75	4.5	4.75	5.25	5.25	5
Civil Society	4	4	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.75	3.75	3.75
Independent Media	3.75	4	4	4.25	4.25	4	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
Governance⁴	5	5.5	5.75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
National Democratic Governance	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5	5.5	5.75	6	6	6	5.75
Local Democratic Governance	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	5.75	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.25	4.5	4.5	5	4.75	4.75		4.75	4.75	5
Corruption	5.5	5.5	5.75	6	5.75	5.5	5	5	5	4.75
Democracy Score	4.58	4.83	4.83	4.96	4.86	4.68	4.79.	4.93	4.93	4.86

The country reports⁵ of the Nations in Transit are much more sizeable and substantial than those of the Freedom in the World. However, the detail provided does not change the overall assessments. Rather, they can be more useful for outside observers for breaking down the overall democracy scores or freedom perceptions along several dimensions important for understanding the countries.

EIU Democracy Index

Next extensively used index on democracy is prepared by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). EIU democracy index covers 165 sovereign states and 2 territories and contains consistent data only for four years: 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2011. The overall scores of democracy are derived by counting simple average of five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture. There are several questions that are considered particularly important and the low score on them yields lower overall assessment. These questions are: whether national elections are free and fair, the security of voters, the influence of foreign powers on government

⁴ In 2004 the governance indicator was divided into national democratic governance and local democratic governance.

⁵ Currently Georgia reports for NiT are only available on Freedom House web page for years 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2011.

and the capability of the civil service to implement policies. The cores on the categories are primarily measured through the questioners containing 60 indicators that are assessed by the experts.⁶ In addition, various public opinion surveys are considered while assigning scores and particular attention is paid to voter turnout and the balance between executive and legislative powers. The clear but relatively complex methodological design makes EIU democracy index a good source for assessing state of democracy in different countries.

Each of the five categories, as well as the democracy score itself, is measured on 0 to 10 scale. EIU index also suggests the categories based on the scores:

1. Full democracies--scores of 8-10
2. Flawed democracies--score of 6 to 7.9
3. Hybrid regimes--scores of 4 to 5.9
- 4 Authoritarian regimes--scores below 4

For all four years the data is available on Georgia. This index consistently places Georgia among hybrid regimes, which is third out of four identified categories.

Table 3. EIU democracy Index, Georgia, 2006,2008, 2010, 2011.

	2006	2008	2010	2011
Regime Type	hybrid	hybrid	hybrid	hybrid
Rank	104	104	103	102
Overall Score	4.9	4.62	4.59	4.74
Electoral Process and Pluralism	7.92	7	7	6.58
Functioning Government	1.79	0.79	2.14	2.14
Political Participation	3.33	4.44	3.89	4.44
Political Culture	5	4.38	3.75	4.38
Civil Liberties	6.47	6.47	6.18	6.18

Based on EIU democracy index, state of democracy in Georgia is marginally deteriorating in Georgia since 2006 to 2010 and also marginally improving in 2011. EIU democracy index is in line of freedom house based researches, and it might be of the harshest assessments of the state of democracy in Georgia placing it closer to authoritarian regimes than any other assessment.

⁶ Democracy index 2011, Democracy under stress, A report from the Economist Intelligence Unit. Available at: http://www.eiu.com/public/thankyou_download.aspx?activity=download&campaignid=DemocracyIndex2011. Accessed 16 June, 2012

Polity datasets are the most widely used data source among the social science researchers. Polity IV is one of the projects by The Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research (INSCR). Originally the conceptual framework and data collection was started under the supervision of Ted Robert Gurr in 1975. Its methodology has last been transformed and updated in 2000. The Polity IV dataset covers most of sovereign states that existed and/or still exist since 1800 up to 2010. This includes 164 states. The research objective is to study the authority patterns and based on that, regime stability and change.

The Polity conceptual scheme is unique in that it examines *concomitant qualities of democratic and autocratic authority* in governing institutions, rather than discreet and mutually exclusive forms of governance.⁷

The Polity Score itself is derived of two important variables – scores of democracy (DEMOC) and scores of autocracy (AUTOC). Democracy indicators are derived from three central variables: competitiveness of political participation, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment and constraints on the chief executive. Data on civil liberties is not included while calculating democracy indicators. Autocracy indicators are based on coding of also three variables: political participation, the regulation of participation, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment. Both of these indicators are measured on eleven point scale from 0 to 10.

The polity score itself is a combined score that is computed by subtracting the autocracy score from the democracy score; the resulting unified polity scale ranges from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic). The "Polity Score" captures this regime authority spectrum ranging from -10 (hereditary monarchy) to +10 (consolidated democracy). The Polity scores can also be converted to regime categories. The recommended categorization is: "autocracies" (-10 to -6), "anocracies" (-5 to +5 and the three special values: -66, -77, and -88), and "democracies" (+6 to +10).

Based on the data derived from the official website,⁸ here we can assess Georgia's overtime performance illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2. According to Polity IV calculations democracy score overtime improves in Georgia and since 2004 reaches +7. Meanwhile, the second dimension, autocracy also improves (in this case improvement is the decrease of autocracy score) but since 2007 the score increases again to +1. The Polity score therefore looks best from 2004 to 2006 and reaches 7, which means that Georgia can be classified as democracy. The increase of autocracy score lowered this performance down to 6 starting from 2006. This score is still satisfactory for democracy, however is exactly on the edge of anocracy.

⁷Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2010. Available at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>. Accessed 3 June, 2012

⁸ Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research (INSCR) data page. Available at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm>. Accessed 3 June, 2012

Figure 1. Polity IV, Democracy and Autocracy Scores, 1991-2010, Georgia

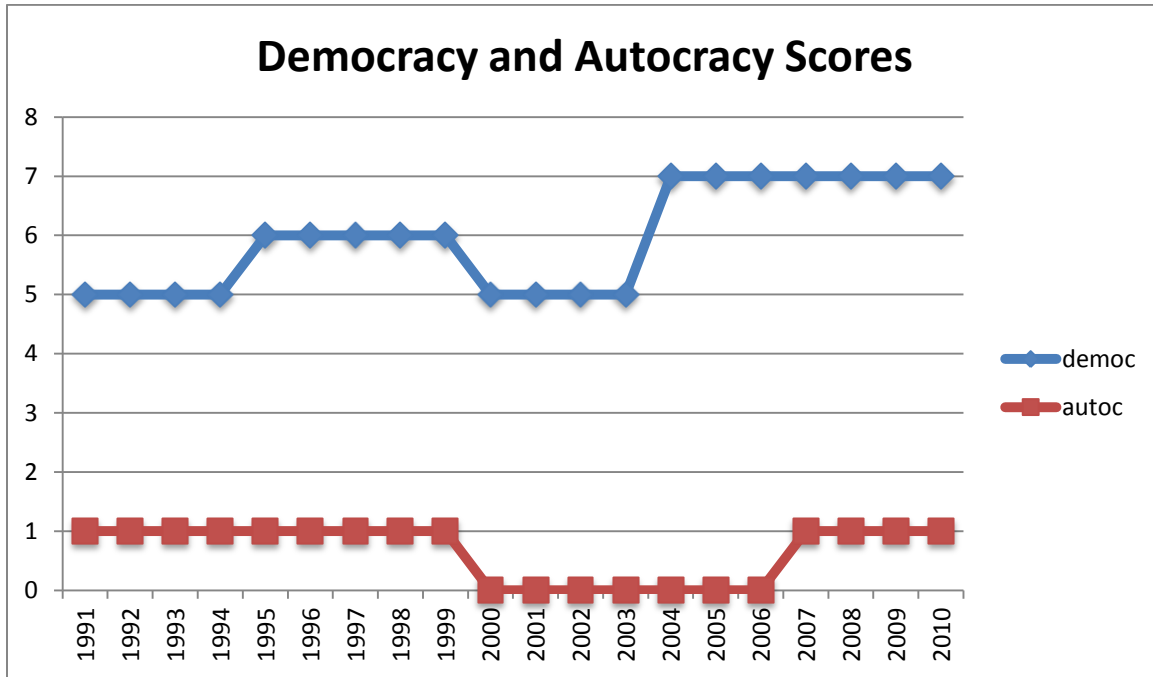
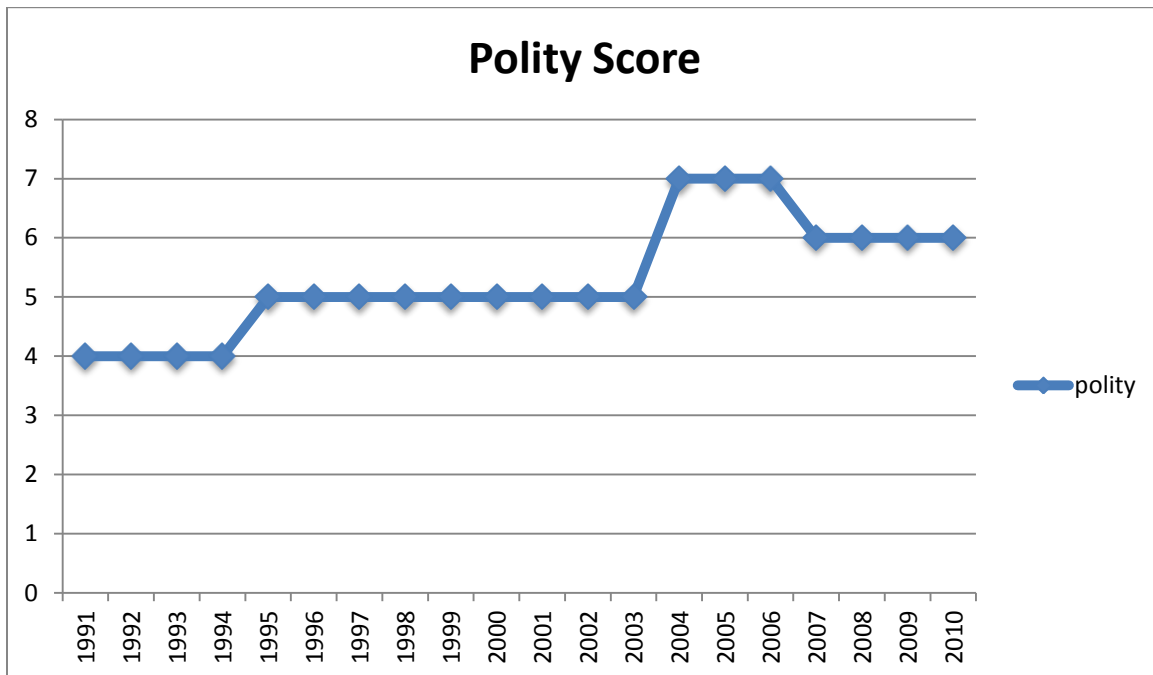


Figure 2. Polity Score, 1991-2010, Georgia



Therefore, Polity IV is the single dataset which classifies Georgia as a democracy. While interpreting this result, we have to keep in mind that Polity Scores are derived based on few institutional variables and do not consider civil and political liberties or the extent of the security of human rights in the country. Thus, the definition of democracy that Polity IV research is using is quite narrow and thin, and is mostly built on formal institutional structure instead of taking into consideration complex formal and informal practices and processes. Thus, we can consider that according to Polity IV data Georgia satisfies the minimalist understanding of democracy.

This research also observes the trend captured in other researches: the democratic performance is improving since 2004 till 2006-2007 and then goes into decline.

Press Freedom

Free media is broadly considered as a significant constituent element of democratic societies. Free exchange of ideas and information allow citizens to form opinions using multiple sources and perspectives. Healthy media environment allows for greater government accountability and is a source for democratic control over the government in between elections. Media further plays significant role in the preparation for elections, being the most significant campaign ground for all parties.

Importance of media and its influence in Georgia have been made particularly clear during the 2003 Rose Revolution, which was largely shaped by then-opposition Rustavi-2 TV channel. However, soon after the Revolution political talk-shows quickly disappeared from Georgian airwaves, ownership of media outlets became more clearly aligned with the government and critical and investigative journalism became a thing of past.

Freedom of the Press

Freedom House has been assessing press freedom around the world since 1980 and scores the countries from 0 (best) to 100 (worst). The scores are derived from the 23 questions making up three subcategories – legal environment, political influences and economic pressures. Based on the total scores the countries are classified as having free media (0 -30), having partially free media (31 - 60), or having not free media (61 - 100).

Since 2002 Georgia has been consistently ranked as having partially free media.

Table 3: Freedom of the Press, Georgia 2002-2011

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Status							PF	PF	PF	PF	PF
Legal Environment	20	18	16	14	13	13	14	14	14	14	18
Political Influences	18	21	23	26	27	27	28	29	29	22	21
Economic Pressures	15	15	15	16	17	17	18	17	17	19	13
Total Score	53	54	54	56	57	57	60	60	60	55	52

The country reports provided along with the scores are short summaries of the main events related to press freedom in the reporting period, providing some context. However, they do miss some important events, like the 2010 photo reporters' case mentioned above.

Despite their shortness, the reports for Georgia point to the trend of government's increased control of the media, particularly television. Opaque media ownership and intertwining of political and economic interests are mentioned, as the ensuing situation when even in the absence of direct orders, journalists are practicing self-censorship to keep their jobs.

The 2012 release improved Georgia's scores from 55 to 52 and said the "change reflected the establishment of a number of new publications, the issuing of a broadcast license to a media group that is

critical of the government, and the enforcement of new requirements on transparency of ownership.” Country reports and detailed score breakdowns are not yet available. Internet Freedom

Internet and social media are increasingly important ways of not only getting information outside traditional media, but have proven to be massively influential in even shaping the political development, as the Arab Spring and the more recent developments in Russia have shown. While internet connectivity is still largely concentrated on the cities in Georgia and is beyond reach of the majority of country’s population, internet news sites and public discussion on social networking sites has proliferated. While internet has been an effective tool for mobilizing people to sign various petitions and small scale protests, its impact has yet to become significant.

In view of internet’s growing importance Freedom House first studied Freedom on the Net in 2009, in 15 countries, including Georgia⁹. The study was released again in 2011, covering 37 countries. The scores are calculated for three pillars – obstacles to access, limits on content and violations of user rights. The scores may range from 0 to 100, with the countries scoring 0-30 considered free, 31-60 partly free and 61-100 as not free.

Table 4: Internet Freedom, Georgia 2009, 2011

	2009	2011
Status	Partly Free	Partly Free
Obstacles to Access	15	12
Limits on Content	15	10
Violations of User Right	13	13
Total	43	35

Given Georgia’s low level of internet regulation and practically no internet censorship, the internet freedom level is quite high, just 5 points outside the free internet group.

Media Sustainability Index

IREX has been publishing the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) since 2001.

IREX prepared the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) in cooperation with United States agency for International Development (USAID) as a tool to assess the development of media systems over time and across countries. IREX staff, USAID, and other media development professionals contributed to the

⁹ Freedom House first studied Freedom on the Net page makes available the date for years 2009, 2011. Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-net>. Accessed 16 June, 2012.

development of this assessment tool. The MSI assesses five “objectives” in shaping a successful media system:

1. Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information
2. Journalism meets professional standards of quality
3. Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable, objective news.
4. Media are well-managed enterprises, allowing editorial independence.
5. Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media.¹⁰

The scoring is done based on panel of local experts who represent the local media-related institutions of the country. The panelists get acquainted with the objectives, indicators and scoring system of the index and assign scores to the country based on the five objectives. The panel is not held only in severe cases, and the scores are assigned based on the interviews with experts.

The methodology was only changed in 2010. The marginal changes were introduced in form of concept clarification and adding of several scores to the objectives. The IREX team is convinced that despite these changes the index remains comparable over time.

The overall score is calculated from the averages of the scores of five indicators. The IREX offers simple classification of the sustainability of the country based on the 4 point scale:

Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1) Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2) Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3) Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism and the business environment of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and sustainable.

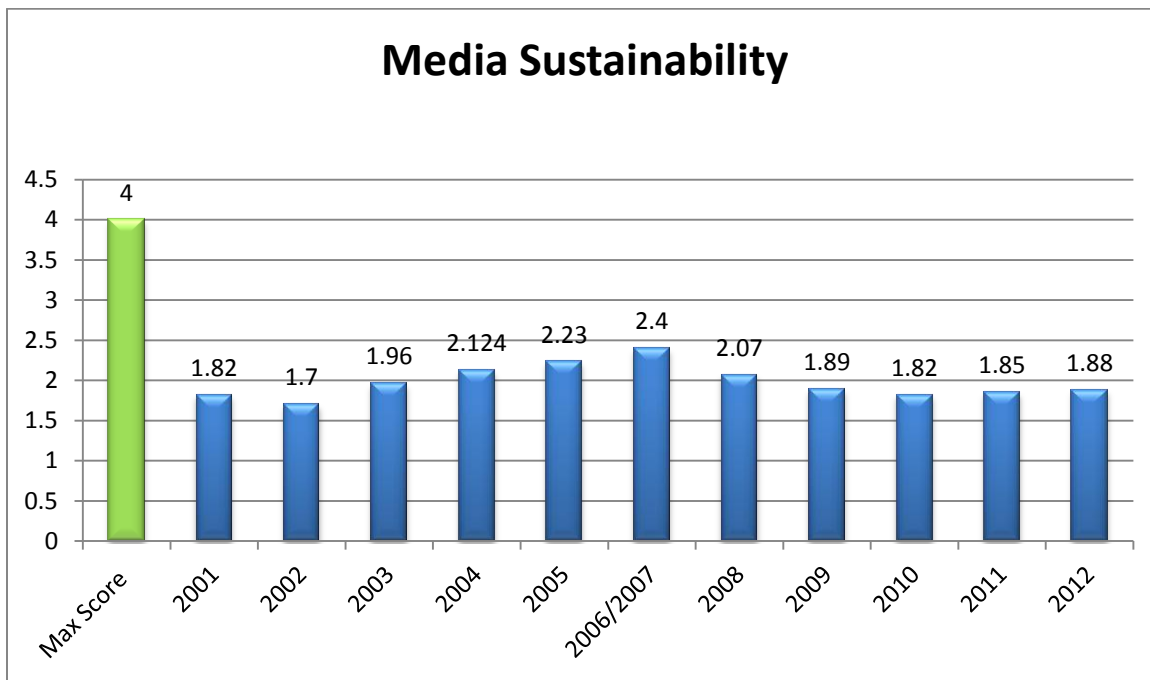
Sustainable (3-4) Country has media that are considered generally professional, free and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

¹⁰ Media Sustainability Index (MSI) Methodology, retrieved June 6,2012 from <http://www.irex.org/resource/media-sustainability-index-msi-methodology>

Table 5. IREX Media Sustainability Index, Georgia 2001-2012¹¹

	2001	2	3	4	5	06-Jul	8	9	10	11	12
Free Speech	1.87	1.82	1.98	2.26	2.31	2.73	2.16	1.9	2.05	2.1	2.11
Professional Journalism	1.57	1.59	1.94	2	2.12	2.09	2.11	1.8	1.62	1.8	1.76
Plurality	2.15	1.91	2.1	2.25	2.23	2.62	2.09	1.9	1.68	1.9	2.05
Business management	1.54	1.32	1.44	1.85	1.94	2.14	1.77	1.9	1.61	1.5	1.48
Supporting Institutions	1.97	1.89	2.34	2.26	2.25	2.42	2.23	2	2.14	2.1	2
Overall Score	1.82	1.7	1.96	2.12	2.23	2.4	2.07	1.9	1.82	1.9	1.88

Figure 3. IREX Media Sustainability Index, Georgia 2001-2012



Based on the IREX Media Sustainability Index Georgia recently appears to be classified as unsustainable, mixed system. The scores of the each year's five objectives can be seen in the table 5. The overtime changes in the sustainability of media are illustrated in figure 3.

¹¹ The overall scores are not calculated by IREX before 2005, therefore averages of five objectives are calculated by the author throughout 2001-2004.

The graph well illustrates that the positive tendencies for the sustainability of Georgian media are observed starting from 2003. From 2004 to 2008 Georgia qualifies as the country which is near sustainability. Unfortunately since 2008 the scores drop down and no significant changes or improvements can be observed up to today. According to this measurement Georgian media goes back to the unsustainable condition like it has been before 2004.

Conclusion

Current paper assesses Georgia's democratic performance overtime, based on international indices measuring democracy and media freedom.

While we make these conclusions based on international indices we have to consider their advantages as well as limitations. The biggest limitation for majority of indices that study many countries is that the research necessarily needs to focus on limited number of variables. This means that the complex picture of the development in each country cannot be comprehended well based on the indices. Thus, big amount of possibly vital information might not be reflected in the indices. Also, the Particular challenge for this type of research is that it has a problem of reflecting the impact of informal processes and institutions that takes place in various societies. Many times, the indices have problems of comparability, however, fortunately the indices used in the current paper do not face major methodological challenges in comparability over time.

On the positive note we can say that the indices are able to capture at least basic, important developments; they give the chance to make overtime comparative assessments on those few variables that they do observe. Whatever the limitations of various indices are, they all point in the same direction and provide a valuable snapshot of Georgia in the international context from the outsider's view.

Analyzing data retrieved from different internationally recognized indices shows that the information of various indices identifies similar tendencies of democratic developments in Georgia. These indices show that overtime Georgia did not progress in terms of political liberalization. Unfortunately one of the core promises of Rose Revolution – building democratic political system in the country- was never fulfilled, not even partially.

The first part of the paper discussed four indices that measure democratic performance in the country. Based on Freedom in the World index by Freedom House, Georgia remains to be classified as partly free country. The data for this index is available from 1992 to 2012. According to Freedom in the world data, in 1990's Georgia performed the worst, however by 1998 Georgia's performance improves (the score was 3.5 of 7 point scale). Unfortunately, by 2012 Georgia's score is 3.5 again, which illustrates that overtime the state of Georgian democratic development does not progress. This data also indicates that minor improvement in performance is witnessed in the years of 2005-2007, but afterwards the scores worsen. Even though the performance fluctuates slightly, we cannot observe any significant changes in Georgia's performance over time; the country remains to be classified as partly free and the democratic performance by the beginning of 2010 is not better than by the end of 1990.

Nations in transit is another project of Freedom House which provides more detailed assessment of democratic transition of selected 29 countries. This research much like previous one shows that Georgia's democratic performance has not improved overtime. Furthermore, according to this data, performance even deteriorates slightly. Closer look at the specific indicators shows that Georgia performs the worst on the indicators like national and local democratic governance, while media freedom and civil society are in a better state.

Democracy Index produced by Economist Intelligence Unit gives opportunity to assess state of democracy in Georgia only since 2006. This study identifies four types of regimes: full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regime. Georgia falls into the third category of hybrid regime.

Polity IV dataset is the only one that classifies Georgia as a democracy. According to this index Georgia's performance improved first in 1995-96 and then in 2004. The best performance is witnessed throughout 2004-2007, and it is declining afterwards due to the increase of autocratic tendencies in the country.

The second part of the paper assesses one of the core components of democracy – press freedom. Freedom of Press assessment by Freedom House places Georgia among the countries that have partially free media. This index indicates relative improvements in press freedom throughout 2005-2010, but this performance deteriorates in 2011 and 2012 and goes down to the level of performance of 2002.

Internet freedom index also assesses Georgia as partly free, however scores are quite high that reflects fairly high level of internet freedom as there are practically no internet regulations and censorship in Georgia. On the other hand, we should admit that internet is not a primary source of information in Georgia and only very limited part of the society has access to internet and skills of using internet resources. Therefore freedom or non-freedom of internet does not affect majority of the population, however it might be of big significance for the students and some of the political and civil activists.

According to media sustainability index prepared by IREX, Georgia has unsustainable mixed media system. This is a very troubling assessment as out of four levels of sustainability that are identified by IREX study, Georgia is placed in the lower, third level. Georgia had better assessments by media sustainability index throughout 2004-2008 when country was classified as having nearly sustainable media, but much like some of the other indices, this one also confirms the tendency of having declining performance since 2008.

What can we conclude about Georgia's democratic performance based on these international indices? The data that was analyzed and discussed in this paper shows that even if there is certain variance over time in Georgia's performance, overall there is no clear trend line of development. Based on most of the indices Georgia is rooted in the gray zone, is partially free, and partially democratic.

Some of the indices, for example Freedom in the World as well as Nations in Transit, show basically no changes of any significance over time. Other indices indicate relative improvement in the democratic performance as well as freedom and sustainability of media throughout several years after the Rose Revolution of 2003. All these slight changes are reversed back since 2007-2008. Overall, it can be concluded that by 2012 state of Georgian democracy is not any better compared to Georgia's performance by the end of 1990s, no important positive change can be witnessed over time.

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