Party System Institutionalization in Post-Soviet Georgia

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Abstract

Political parties are the unit of analysis for several studies, but this is different from studying party systems. Stable party system is the basis of a consolidated democracy. Despite the fact that many researchers are interested in studying of system stability and institutionalism, the empirical studies about the mentioned issue are rather scarce. Electoral volatility is used as one of the measurements of the party system. Pedersen Index is the famous instrument in researches of electoral volatility. The length of democratic transaction and party system fragmentation determines the electoral volatility. In accordance with the electoral volatility, the post-Soviet and former socialist countries are significantly ahead of the other regions. A little experience of multiparty political system and weak party identification is named as the cause of the mentioned. The effective number of parties (ENP) is the indicator, which allows us to define the institutionalization of party system. By using the effective number of parties, which is determined through the obtained votes of the parties, we can determine their political weight. The present paper aims to examine Georgia’s perspectives within the context of party system institutionalization. In accordance with the research hypothesis, the weakness of program / ideological connection between parties and electorate creates a basis for a weak party institutionalization. In post-Soviet Georgia, the weak institutionalization of the party system played an important role in the point of view of political transformation. This paper explores the most common methods of data collection used in qualitative research: namely: a) Expert interviews with political researchers b) In-depth interviews with representatives of political parties; b) In-depth interviews with selected electorate.

Keywords: Party System Institutionalization; Electoral Volatility; Program / Ideological Connection; Georgia.

Introduction

The political transition in Georgia didn’t begin by moving on the liberal democracy but began from the authoritarianism. Weak state institutes and semi-authoritarian regime were the major abstract factor of country democratization. Moreover, the country had to move from the Soviet past in the background of heaviest socio-economical and armed conflicts. Georgia is joining the ranks of the hybrid countries, whose major challenges were the fair competition of political government, unconstitutional change of government and weak institutionalization of the party system.

For the last quarter of the 20th century, the world party system and its political campaign have undergone important changes. The majority of the Western European parties are based on the solid ideological basis and representation of the interests of electorate. In the new democracies, political parties are characterized by weak organization and strong personalization. Moreover, in these countries, the fragile ideological grounds of political parties conditioned spectacular character of election campaign. In post-Soviet Georgia, the weak institutionalization of party system has played determining role in terms of transformation of political process. Formation of the new political system in Georgia started from the late 1980s. First multiparty elections were held on October 28, 1990, and 34 political organizations and election blocks participated. The number of political parties has been increasing since then. As of today, the number of registered parties in Georgia is over 230, among which up to 20 active political parties. Much has been written about the process of party system institutionalization in different countries. All meanings

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of the notion of institutionalization contain the idea of stability (Huntington, 1968; Laakso & Taagepera, 1979; Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006; Mair, 1997; Bader, 2007). In sum, only a few studies have concentrated on Georgian party system institutionalization. This study seeks to fill one of the gaps in the literature on party system in Georgia, specially, offering an analysis of the process of institutionalization.

**Literature Review**

Most theoretical works on party systems implicitly assume the context of the developed democracies, although, the interest in the research of party systems in hybrid regimes has been increased. In these countries, the political parties are characterized by a weak organization, the shortage of members and short-term political goals. Taking into consideration the mentioned goals, the transformation of the party systems in new democracies has been carried out much faster and with less threshold conditions than in the Western European countries. Huntington (1968) describes institutionalization as a process when organizations and procedures reach stability and acquire high values. There is a great deal of disagreement among scholars about how party system institutionalization should be defined. In this paper, and in order to analyse the institutionalization of the party system in Georgia, I draw Mainwaring & Torcal’s (2006) framework of party system analysis.

Although, much research has been conducted to explore the process of party system institutionalization in different regions (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006; Kuenzi & Lambright, 2001), the reasons why some party systems institutionalize while others do not remains unclear. A large number of researchers believes that in the post-communist countries, the stable and representative party system is very important for the consolidation of the democracy regime (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1990; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995). One of the most serious problems in the region is the high electoral volatility and the combination of frequent turnover of parties (Bielasiak, 2005; Birch, 2001). The level of electoral volatility in developing democracies is high (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006). The electoral volatility determines the stability of party systems (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000) and institutionalization (Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007). The parties in the systems which are characterized by high electoral volatility have weak program features and it is difficult for citizens to identify them (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006). The high electoral volatility leads political elite to stop acting in accordance with the strategic plan and the voters – according to the strategic calculation (Moser, 1999; Moser, 2001).

The paper puts forward the argument that in Georgia the party system is highly fragmented and unstable (Bader, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Bielasiak, 2005; Nodia & Scoltbach, 2006). The concept of party system is defined in various ways in theoretical literature (Huntington, 1968; Janda, 1980; Kuenzi & Lambright, 2001; Panebianco, 1998, Randall & Svasand, 2002). Despite the fact, that there is a lot of literature about party system institutionalization, the most widely cited work is Sartori’s (1976). Sartori identified two important dimensions of party systems: the number of relevant parties and the degree of ideological polarization. In counting parties, Sartori included those that might form part a governing coalition, as well as parties whose existence affected the tactics of party competition. His measure of ideological polarization, most clearly operationalized in Sani & Sartori (1983), focuses on the ideological distance among parties. Although, it should be noted that he overlooked the level of institutionalization. Pedersen (1983) index that measures electoral volatility covers two types of volatility: (A) emergence and disappearance of the parties from political system; (B) Replacement of the parties by voters that is one of the indicators of representative democracy and shows redistribution of power between the political actors; The first type is closely related to the political system stability of the country; in the post-communist countries the electoral volatility is mainly due to volatility of party, while electoral volatility in the developing countries is mainly due to the voters volatility. The high electoral volatility is determined by the following factors: a) In a classic article Converse (1969) argued that as individuals aged, their partisan attachments became stronger, the length of support for a party and of exposure to elections explained deepening attachment over time to parties. By implications, newly established party systems would become more stable over time as voters had more time to
identify with parties. b) Electoral volatility increases as party system fragmentation increases. With more parties, there should be less ideological / programmatic space between parties; hence the distinction among ideologically contiguous parties are less clear-cut. With less important ideological differences between parties, voters are more likely to shift from one party to another. Volatility should be higher under these circumstances (Bartolini & Mair, 1990; Roberts & Wibbels, 1999; Tavits, 2008). In research, I study the causing factors of the first type of electoral volatility.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research is the theory of party system institutionalization. In accordance with the mentioned theory, the effective number of parties (ENP) is the indicator, which allows us to define the institutionalization of the party system (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979). The high rate of effective parties means that party system is diffusive, while the low rate indicates on existence of dominant parties. It should be noticed that in accordance with the researchers’ assessment the highest rate of the effective parties is 6.30, but the lowest one is 3.14.

Based on the data and research purpose, this study has employed qualitative research method. The purpose of the research was to explain the tendency of party system institutionalization development in Georgia. For this purpose, the interviews were conducted with political researchers. They were selected through the targeted and snowball method. I conducted in-depth interviews with representatives of the selected political parties. I applied to the targeted selection and as criteria, I separated the qualified electoral subject status of the party during the monitoring period.

One of the purposes of research was to study the electorates’ perception of party system institutionalization. At the initial stage of the research had been outlined that between the parties and experts the 2004 year had been discussed as the turning phase, in terms of party system transformation. The Rose Revolution of November 2003 marked a new attempt at democratic transition. Political parties function in a social context. They respond to and express citizens’ demands and concerns. In a number of cases – The Rose Revolution was the last of them – Georgian citizens have sent a message to their political elites that they will not tolerate authoritarian rule. Taking into consideration the mentioned I guided by the following criteria: 1. Should be considered the age of the respondents and interview persons who were watching the ongoing processes in 2003 as voters and at the same time had already participated at least in one election before the 2004 parliamentary elections; 2. The interviewed respondents should be the permanent residents of Georgia for the last 30 years, in order their election campaign model perception not to be surfaced. Thus, it was outlined that should be interviewed the respondents, considering gender and age proportion (50-59 and 60+) and 30 years census of living in Georgia. During the study in total had been conducted 40 in-depth interviews with voters.

Party System Institutionalization in the Central and Eastern European Countries

A large part of the researchers believes that in the post-communist countries stable and representative party system is very important for the consolidation of the democracy regime (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1990; Kitschelt et al.,1999; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995). One of the most important problems in the region is the high electoral volatility (Bielasiak, 2005).

In the Central and Eastern European countries there wasn’t experience multi-party system. The voters didn’t have feeling of affiliation of political groups and party identification (Lewis, 1996; Mair, 1997) exactly by this may be explained the electoral volatility in the Central and Eastern Europe is higher than in Western Europe (Lewis, 1996; Tavits, 2008). The average indicator of total electoral volatility in post-Soviet is 45. A type volatility is less than 32%, but B type volatility is less than 13%. In the post-Soviet space, the 70% of volatility came to A type volatility. In the same period in the West European countries, the 60% of electoral volatility came to B type volatility. Thus we can make conclusion that in the post-Soviet and post-socialist countries the volatility caused by instability of parties is significantly higher than the volatility caused by hesitant electorate. In the region, in terms of electoral volatility, Lithuania is
significantly ahead of the other countries (Jurkynas, 2004). In this regard in the Baltic countries is observed an interesting trend. In Lithuania in the 1990s the party system was more stable than in Latvia and Estonia, however, the high indicator of volatility was caused due to the fluctuations of the number of votes between two main parties (Conservative Union - Homeland and the Social Democratic Party).

In Lithuania, the indicator of electoral volatility had been increased after the tipping elections of 2000. The electoral volatility was quite higher in Lithuania until 2006. In the parliamentary election of 2006 was observed positive changes; however, in the election 2010 was found that several parts of the parties lost the confidence and was again observed the high trend of volatility. In the Baltic countries from the 1990s, Estonia was distinguished by the trend of volatility decreasing.

The parties' competition in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are observed mostly between the big parties. In the Czech Republic and Hungary, big parties are dominant. Unlike them, in Estonia and Slovenia, the stability of party system is based on the small and average parties. The Czech Republic with Hungary and Romania are distinguished with the low volatility in the Central and Eastern European regions (Gherghina, 2014).

From the beginning of the 1990s, Bulgaria is characterized by increasing electoral volatility. Weak party identification, fragile ideological grounds, and hesitant electorate are named as the reasons for the mentioned. For many years in Bulgaria to obtain governmental positions was possible through the paternalistic ties (Kolev & College, 2012). Bulgaria and Poland in the region are the countries where most of the parties are distinguished by the high indicator of volatility.

In the weak conditions of party institutionalization of Ukraine, the parties are quickly formed and disappeared. Before every election, the formation of new political parties reaches its peak in Ukraine. Political parties don't have support from the population. The hesitant electorate causes significant problems. It is interesting fact that in 1998, 2002, 2006, 2007 and 2012 years in the parliamentary elections only Communist Party of Ukraine - CPU participated uninterrupted. The main obstacle factors of institutionalization of the party are considered the following: Unprepared legislative base, party communication gaps, low responsibility of electorate (Rybiy, 2013).

It should be noticed that the Communist party of Moldova in the various period managed to cooperate with the government. The clear example of this was presidential election of 1996 when the Communists supported the future president Petre Luchinsky. The existence of dominant party - Agrarian Party of Moldova significantly limits competition of parties. In Moldova parties mostly are used as clientelistic institutes. Corruption, parties lacking ideological basis and political fragmentation are the challenges of Moldova party system (Berglund, 2013).

Party System Institutionalization in Georgia

The interest in research of party system institutionalization especially emerged in the 1990s, however, we should look for its basis still in 1960s in the Huntington researches (1968). The weak institutionalization of the party system is the highlighted problem of new democracy. After gaining independence, the political parties in Georgia didn't have a sense of stability. The party system suffered crisis in the terms of articulation-aggregation of public interests and program/ideological ties between the electorate and parties. The personalization of the policy and the strong dependence on the leader was expressed sign of political parties. The mentioned reasons were undermining their development and caused weak institutionalization of the party system.

First multiparty elections in Georgia were held on October 28, 1990. Number of registered political parties can be quite high in countries having older and consolidated democracy. In the case of Georgia, the number of registered parties does not automatically indicate the existence of the multiparty system. In multiparty systems, public support is distributed among several parties the way that even the winning party has to build a coalition with other parties when forming the government. Since the 1990s, Georgian political system has permanently been characterized by the presence of the dominant governing party and separated opposition unable to unite.

Development of the party system has directly been influenced by the existence of the Presidential model of governance. An ambitious president tries to subordinate full power under the president's figure. In April 1991, Georgia was established as a presidential republic. Especial
personalization of Gamsakhurdia's political figure, the confrontation with former supporters and existed radicalism led to the violent change of government (Kuzio, 2007). This created the precedent to change the government by non-elective way and which hampered electoral accountability.

1995 Constitution reflected Shevardnadze's attempt to conduct effective control. Georgia developed in an American style – a powerful presidential republic – as the semi-presidential republic was not believed to be an adequate form of governance in the 1990s. Based on February 6, 2004, Constitutional amendments, President Saakashvili further empowered presidential governance. Under the conditions of strong presidential governance, elected president’s party is in a dominant position, while opposition parties are fragmental and weak. During Gamsakhurdia’s rule in Georgia, the rivalry between alternative political forces exceeded the frames of electoral competition, and former allies opposed each other with arms. 1992 parliamentary elections revealed 24 winning parties, although, ensuring of electoral accountability was failed, and at the next elections majority of them did not even take part. In the Shevardnadze period, opposition was weak and divided. Despite the fact that the Citizens Union of Georgia was opposed by many parties, the force born within the former governing party – the United National Movement – proposed a real alternative to voters. Under the conditions of the government formed as a result of the Rose Revolution, weak and marginal opposition did not propose effective alternative. However, since 2012-2013 years after 2010 year’s constitutional amendments fully entered in force, according to which the president was denied the right of party belonging, the vector of electorate’s confidence removed towards the prime-minister and unofficial leaders.

One of the main barriers for the formation of multiparty system lies in the interdependence of parties. Frequent change of the electoral system hampers the formation of political organizations as of viable organizations and their evolution. The system is unable to ensure equal representation of the political will of voters in Parliament and even in the conditions of inadequate support of voters, thanks to the majority, electoral system makes the probability of having Constitutional majority possible.

In the 2012 parliamentary election the former governing party went into opposition, and continued political life and activity, of course, it was the great precedent in the process of creating democratic political traditions in Georgia. The Georgian Dream Coalition continued the tradition of managing government with majority. Bidzina Ivanishvili’s factor became decisive in the given process, around who the main opposition coalition was formed. For preserving and continuing the aforementioned tendency, it was very important to ensure the democratic conduction of 2016 parliamentary elections.

Although, 2016 pre-election environment created expectations for multiparty parliament and coalitional government formation, polarization was again strengthened in the conclusive phase of the election campaign, which influenced the attitudes of voters. Thus, instead of the multiparty system, we had the two-party system contours. It was a fact that qualified subjects which remained outside of the parliament, failed to adequately evaluate the resource capabilities of the two main parties, and were not able to consolidate their resources in a unified platform. For example, if the Free Democrats and the Republics had united in a block, they would, by all means, have overcome the election barrier. Other parties also had resources for cooperation. The Alliance of Patriots of Georgia does not change the existing reality. Local success of the given political union is tied to marginal trend, which is situational, and further confirms that the society is tired from other marginal parties, such as, for example, the Labor Party.

The effective number of parties (ENP)\(^2\) is the indicator, which allows us to define the institutionalization of party system (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979). By using the effective number of parties, which is determined through the obtained votes of the parties, we can determine their political weight. The high rate of effective parties means that party system is diffusive, but the low rate indicates on existence of dominant parties. For orientation should be noticed that in accordance with the researchers' assessment the highest rate of the effective parties is 6.30, but the lowest one is 3.14. In the early years of the independence in accordance with the effective parties Georgia was at the advanced positions across the world; however, this meant special fragmentation of the party.

\(^2\)ENP=\(1/\sum(Si)^2\) - \(Si\)– number of votes obtained by each party
system. In the second half of the 1990s, the effective number of parties had been relatively increased, but the fragmentation still remained as a problem. The incompatibility of the parliamentary fractions, political parties and dominant ruling parties against the disconnected opposition were much more exacerbating crisis of party system (Bader, 2008).

The Effective Number of Parties in Georgia

![Figure 1: The Effective Number of Parties in Georgia](image)

Source: Author’s calculations from the electoral results provided by the Central Election Commission of Georgia.

After the Rose Revolution, the institutionalization problem of party system had been accelerated by artificial threat. Was formed several "satellite" parties, which blocked unwanted parties for the ruling group. Pseudo-opposition parties were oriented on weakening of opposition. After a tense pre-election period, the Georgian Dream opposition coalition ousted United National Movement in 2012. In the post-Soviet Georgia to transfer government via the election way created a positive precedent, but this is only a certain case and is not enough to create optimistic mood.

In the 2016 parliamentary election ruling party, Georgian Dream gained the constitutional majority, but the strength of the Georgian Dream is not as strong United National Movement was. For the last period, the number of parties reached 240, however, most of them don't participate in active political processes. The existence of small parties, the social votes having identical interests are scattering and the parties are weakened. The main reason for the weakness of opposition is exaggerated ambitions of leadership of these parties and inability of estimation of each other’s resource abilities. Actually, for politicians gaining seats in parliament is a prime objective, with parties being merely the instrument through which this objective can be attained. The lack of ideological basis is one of the most important problems facing political parties. The formation of the parties in Georgia serves to political and economic elites rather than social factors. The low levels of party identification bear witness to the failure of parties to forge bonds with potential supporters. In the weak conditions of party institutionalization of Georgia, the opposition parties are quickly formed and disappeared. All these shorten the possibility of formation of united platform, which on its side has influence upon results of elections.

In the conditions of transitional democracy between the newly created parties and elections it appears a weak representative link. It is often believed that pre-election promises are insignificant in comparison with the charisma of party leaders. The Georgian party system is characterized by the domination of a governing party, which does not have the possibility to represent public interests. In Georgia, during the last three decades parties of power have dominated legislatures. Politics is characterized by instability, conflict and the so-called competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky & Way, 2002). Wheatley argues that Georgian political parties are top-down organizations and failing to forge links with Georgian society (Wheatley, 2005). They are mostly short on ideology and correspond to the catch-all party type. The political parties lack institutional inclusion and representation on all societal levels. Political parties have also appeared to be incapable in view of articulating and aggregating public interests. The party system has failed to play the role of mediator between society and the state. Broader groups of the population are not adequately represented by political parties. There is no stable and socially
rooted party able to articulate and aggregate societal interests (Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), 2008). The party system of Georgia is classified as a loose multiparty system with one dominant party (The Round Table-Free Georgia, The Citizens' Union of Georgia, The United National Movement, The Georgian Dream). Despite the superficial impression of stability, the party system lacks representation and competitiveness. Ideological incapability, for its part, reasons the tendency of party system to collapse and vanish, which will remain unchanged during the nearest future.

The parties in Georgia in the conditions of weak representation of voters' interests were trying to compensate for the mentioned problem with political populism. The pre-election program is only a cover to show that the party considers the public interests (Wheatley, 2005). Traditionally the parties are reluctant to occupy drastic left-wing or right-wing position. In these circumstances, it is difficult for electorate to perceive ideological differences and during vote, they still are focusing on leader. Characteristic of Georgian political parties is an excessive role of leaders’ personalities and a great measure of the elites who are behind the creation of parties. Most influential parties are machines for ensuring support for their individual leaders (Freedom House. Nations in Transit – Georgia, 2008). Bader submits, that political figures with an independent profile and high name recognition are not eager to take a second or third spot in any party (Bader, 2007). As usual, the creation of parties in Georgia results from a leader figure or a small group.

The strength of the governing party was conditioned by series of satellite parties existing in party system. Satellite parties acted as opposition parties, although, they were loyal to the existing regime and blocked any appearance of opponents undesired by the government team. During a pre-election period, such satellite parties were oriented at weakening of opposition forces by taking away their votes. Such a strategy promotes preliminary determination of elections and prolongs the period of being a governing team in power.

The opposition was able to gain authority only by means of rebellion or revolution. Parliamentary elections of 2016 were important, which gave hope of formation multiparty parliament and a coalition government, though instead of multiparty system we got two-party system outlines. However, after the elections, due to the processes taking place in political framework, possibility of formation of the two-party system was under doubt and vector was again towards multiparty system.

Mass media and especially television is the medium with the greatest personalization effect. Leaders of Georgian parties are the main spokespersons through the media. The national media presents political parties through a handful of their leaders or as the saying goes, recognizable faces (Nodia & Scoltbach, 2006). Political leaders extensively used the television to gather political support. Under such conditions, politicians’ personal appearances and behavior portrayed by the media matter more than social and political issues. According to public opinion, the most important factor in choosing political parties is the leader’s personality.

In accordance with the research the personalization of the politics indicates parties as well as the electorate:

“Leader's charisma, speaking type, height, gender, biography, and others have a very serious impact on the election. The ideology seriously loses against the leader” [Interview with Levan Berdzenishvili, Leader of Republican Party].

“The leader always played a great role in Georgia. If we look at the history of parties the ideological difference retreated and strong personalities come forward. It could have been Gia Chanturia, Shevardznadze or someone else [Interview with Davit Darchiashvili, Leader of European Georgia].

In the study of electorate, mood had been observed one interesting tendency. The respondents indicate that the ideology is important for parties; however, they say that the Leader's factor during the voting in elections is crucial.

“In our country, people trust personality factor and this determines the success of the party in the elections” [Romani, 55 years old, Auto locksmith, Mukhiani].

“In Georgia party hasn’t any perspective without an influential leader.”[Tamari, 40 years old, Philologist, Rustavi].

The interviewed voters don't consider themselves as stable voters of a certain party and they tell that the reason for the mentioned is the frustration over the years. It is interesting that even
that unit voter, who sees himself as a stable voter of a particular political party thinks that this is caused due to the faithfulness of the party leader:

“I am a stable voter of one of the parties. The leader, as well as ideology, is important for me, but I think that the leader is a more defining factor” [Ilona, 45 years old, Svanetisubani].

Many authors have argued, that the importance of the ideological foundations of politics in the world is in decline (McAllister, 2007). Therefore, individual political actors have become more prominent at the expense of parties. The rise of political personification is seen as the result of two factors: first, the weakening of affective ties between voters and parties and second, the growing role of television in political communication. The concept of personalization is used in relation to the behavior of voters, political actors and the media (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). The instability of development of political parties in Georgia threatens institutionalization of the party system. The parties in the systems which are characterized by high electoral volatility have weak program features and it is difficult for citizens to identify them (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006). In accordance with the Pedersen Index Georgia belonged to those countries where electoral volatility of the parties reached to the high indicator, although, it has decreased during the last few years.

*Pedersen index - The case of Georgia*

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pedersen Index</th>
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<tr>
<td>1992-1995</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<td>1999-2004</td>
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<td>2004-2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-2012</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2016</td>
<td>20%</td>
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*Figure 2: Perdsen Index – The Case of Georgia*

Source: Author’s calculations from the electoral results provided by the Central Election Commission of Georgia

In Georgia electoral volatility of opposition parties is extremely high and in the term of institutionalization of the party system is considered as one of the most important problems. After gaining independence the Communist Party disappeared from the political arena, the same fate had the block Round Table-Independent Georgia during the ruling period of Shevardnadze, which before played a role of a dominant political party. The Union of Citizens and the Revival Party, which had quite great influence and support in the 1990s had disappeared after the Rose Revolution. In this regard, the only exception is The United National Movement, which after the 2012 parliamentary election went in opposition and continues its political activity.

The absence of ideological watershed between the parties contributes to the instability of electorate. The ephemeral political blocks formed in the pre-election period in order to win in the elections weaken representativeness of political parties (Bader, 2007). The voter often can’t see the fundamental difference between the parties; this is the basis of frequent changes of parties:

“The acting parties in Georgia are very similar to each other, they become active during the election period and are giving factually neglected promises” [Temuri 65 years old, Physicist, Phanaskerteli Str.].

Political researchers indicate the instability of electorate and find interesting explanation for it:

“In accordance with the research, there is great chance the person support party, which doesn’t promise anything concrete or promises something that can’t be kept” [Interview with Koba Turmanidze, President of CRRC Georgia].

In the Democracy systems, the accountability from the side of parties to the electorate is considered within the context of Employer (Principal – (electorate)) and Employed (Agent – (elected party)). In this regard is distinguished the following types of Mutual Feedback: Program, Personal, and Clientelistic (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). To elect personal representative by
an elector is the ground of the representative democratization. However, in some cases, the elective accountability is suspended. „Voting retrospective" theory (Fiorina, 1981) shows, that isn't carried out electors interests representation and accountability insurance. Because the elected representative doesn't fulfill his/her own pre-election promises.

In the transition period in post-Soviet society, the trust of political parties had been ruined, which may be explained as weakness of representativeness of voters' interest by elected political force (Stzompka, 1999). The pre-election promises in Georgia most of all are fixed on the attraction of electorate and there is often observed the communication problem with electorate:

“The relationship with electorate is very difficult art, that requires nearly 20 times more reserve than has the majority of Georgian parties” [Interview with Levan Berdzenishvili, Leader of Republican Party].

“The election year is most active when the voter and certain parties communicate with each other; the remaining period is passive mode” [Interview with Shorena Khorbaladze, Representative of National Forum].

Elements related to clientelism can be observed in Georgia’s party system. During the ruling period of Shevardnadze in the state were established paternalistic – clientelistic relationship. However, Clientelistic relationship is still served. Clientelistic relationship between political parties and electorate and political personalization leads to software accountability and representative replacement by personal – clientelistic interaction. Dominate ruling party, insufficient informed electorate, paternalistic and clientelistic relationship in the politics hampers accountability and representation. To ensure electoral accountability it is important personal-clientelistic relationship to be changed by the software interaction between voters and parties based on the political ideology.

**Conclusion**

This study found that the Georgian party system suffers crisis in the term of institutionalization. On the one hand, the weakness of the program/ideological connection between parties and electorate and articulation-aggregation of public interests remains as an unsolved problem in party system. The political parties do not have a sense of stability and are focused on short-term success. On the other hand, the personalization of politics and the strong dependence on the leader, even more, escalates crisis in the party system institutionalization.

Georgia is joining the ranks of the hybrid countries, whose major challenges were the fair competition of political government and unconstitutional change of government. The majority of the political parties in Georgia are relatively new and immature. Under such conditions, parties are quickly formed and disappeared. The lack of ideological basis, political fragmentation and personalization are the most important problems facing political parties.

**References**


