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THE POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS COUNTRIES POLITICAL COUNTRY RANKINGS

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Georgia: The Interconnections between Democracy and Security

By Alexander Cooley and Lincoln Mitchell, New York

Abstract

Georgia needs democracy to ensure close ties with the West and prevent a recurrence of the kind of poor decision-making that led to the August 2008 war with Russia. Although Georgia made some progress in building democracy until November 2007, the events of that month and subsequently reversed those advances. The current period is marked by relative calm, but Georgia's democratic development faces key tests in the 2010 local elections, 2012 parliamentary elections, and the 2013 presidential elections.

No Security Without Democracy

Political events in Georgia since the Rose Revolution are deeply entwined with a narrative of democracy. Because of Georgia's need and desire to be more closely aligned with the West, advancing democracy and showcasing its democratic "values" takes on an additional import. For Georgia, the link between democracy and security is clear and direct. Without the former, the latter will continue to be elusive and Georgia will remain prone to rash and insulated decision-making that result in foreign policy misadventures of the kind seen in August 2008.

For Georgia, like other Eastern European countries, most clearly the Baltic States, NATO membership is key to securing themselves against the ongoing threat presented by Russia. Given the politics of NATO and its internal divisions over antagonizing Russia, there is certainly no guarantee that should Georgia ever become a consolidated democracy that it would automatically become a member of NATO. However, the continued failure of Georgia to become democratic will make it very easy for NATO to continue to exclude Georgia. The same holds true of Georgia's EU aspiration.

The constant, if moderate, political instability in Georgia is also a hindrance to the country's growth and development. This instability manifests itself through frequent street demonstrations, persistent government harassment of opposition figures, the resignations of numerous government officials since 2004, frequent cabinet shakeups and, of course, the disastrous military defeat in 2008. For Georgia, greater democracy will likely tone down the rhetoric and nationalist anger, disperse power, and contribute to better decision making, which will, in turn reduce the chronic instability in Georgia. In Georgia, weak democratic institutions in the almost two decades of independence have contributed to much political instability, suggesting that in Georgia, it is not democracy that is causing instability. Accordingly, deepening democracy in Georgia is not only a moral imperative, but a key to stabilizing both the country and the wider South Caucasus.

Democracy in Georgia

The Rose Revolution was initially viewed as a major democratic breakthrough for Georgia and a harbinger for further democratization in the region. The initial excitement surrounding the charismatic President Mikheil Saakashvili and the contrast between his energetic administration and that of his predecessor, obscured the more complicated reality of the democratic developments in Georgia since 2004. Early in Saakashvili's first term the democratic promise of the Rose Revolution began to dissipate, though many policymakers in Brussels, and especially in Washington, ignored these warnings.

The first indication of this was a set of constitutional amendments which were approved in February 2004, very shortly after Saakashvili took office. Both the substance of these amendments and the process through which they were adopted should have raised concerns about the democratic intentions of the new government.

Substantively, these amendments restructured much of the government and made the presidency far more powerful than before. Under the new constitution the government was restructured to create a prime minister who would be appointed by the president and preside over a council of ministers, whom he would appoint, thus weakening the parliament. The president, however, retained the right to directly appoint the key posts of ministers of defense, interior and security. The president was also given the right to dissolve this council of ministers. While the prime minister and his government could be impeached by 60 percent of parliament, such a vote would not affect the president. Additionally, the president was given the ability to dissolve parliament if it failed to ratify the budget—thus effectively diminishing the parliament's role in budget making. The president was also allowed to appoint governors and mayors throughout the country.

The process by which the constitutional amendments were passed signaled an additional shortcoming which

continued to dog Georgia's democratization throughout the post-Rose Revolution period: the government's willingness to move quickly without paying sufficient attention to legal processes and democratic structures. The amendments were passed by the rump parliament, which, in early 2004, consisted of 75 people who had been elected in the disputed 2003 parliamentary election to single-mandate districts and 150 MPs who remained from the previous parliament. These members would not be replaced until the March 2004 parliamentary elections. While this parliament would not, on the surface, seem as friendly to Saakashvili as the new one, these returning MPs were eager to curry favor with the new president. Those who did not seek the president's favor were cajoled and threatened, as needed, into supporting the new amendments. As a result, the amendments were passed through parliament very quickly, not allowing for sufficient, and legally required, debate and public discussion.

Georgia's democratic development since the Rose Revolution can usefully be divided into two periods, with the dividing line being November 2007. Before November 2007, there were clear problems with democracy in Georgia. The constitutional amendments, the emergence of a one-party system with strong ties between the ruling party and the state, a less-free media climate, the government's willingness to manipulate the election law, and its persistent tendency to cut democratic corners in order to expedite its legislative reforms were evidence of this.

But, during this pre-November 2007 period, some genuine progress and successful state-building took place. The government took strong steps to reduce petty corruption, especially in the police and education sectors. Opposition media, while harassed from time to time, was allowed to broadcast nationally. Although election laws were often manipulated, elections, particularly in 2004, were conducted better than they ever had been in Georgia. Democratic development in Georgia during this time could be accurately described as not a priority for the government, but there was still some reason to think that Georgia was moving in the right direction.

This all changed after November 2007. During that month, the Georgian government violently dispersed peaceful demonstrations in Tbilisi using water canons, baton-wielding security forces and acoustic weaponry. The dispersal of the demonstrations occurred alongside increased media repression as Georgia's most powerful independent media outlet, Imedi TV, also fell victim to violent repression as police broke into the studio, destroyed equipment and effectively shut down the station.

Shortly after the crackdown, Saakashvili resigned briefly before being reelected in a snap election in January 2008. Unfortunately, that election as well as the parliamentary election that occurred in May of that year were not of the caliber of previous elections in post-Rose Revolution Georgia. In both cases, the ruling party won strong victories amidst reports that the government deployed extensive resources to help the ruling party, including providing unequal access to media, to ensure the desired outcome.

During the roughly two and a half years since the crackdown of November 2007, there have been ongoing concerns about Georgia's media freedoms, government surveillance, continued concentration of power in the presidency and interior ministry, the absence of an independent judiciary and a parliament that is even weaker than in the years immediately following the Rose Revolution.

In the spring and summer of 2009 street demonstrations tied up parts of downtown Tbilisi for much of the period from April to July. This time the government did not violently disperse the demonstrators, as it sought, and received, much commendation for this in the West. But European observers were concerned about the harassment and beatings of demonstrators, often in the evenings, by forces that were believed to be from the interior ministry.

The Georgian government appears, at least at the highest levels, to understand the country's democratic shortfalls. Since November 2007, President Saakashvili has on several occasions, once in September of 2008 and once shortly before Vice President Biden's visit in the summer of 2009, pledged to redouble his efforts to bring democracy to Georgia, even calling for renewing the Rose Revolution. Saakashvili also appointed a special minister for working on democracy issues. However, these gestures and statements are intended primarily for the consumption of an increasingly critical international community and are rarely translated into meaningful actions or institutional reforms.

While the excesses of the Georgian government are certainly one of the reasons for democracy failing to grow in Georgia following the Rose Revolution, it is far from the only reason. The Georgian government, for its part, has accused the opposition of making personal attacks, issuing unrealistic demands, such as the president's resignation, and, in some cases, cooperating with the Russian security and intelligence forces. The government has also criticized the opposition for being neither disciplined nor substantive. While these criticisms are, in many cases, true, they obscure both the govern-

ment's role in ensuring the weakness of the opposition as well as the bigger structural problems which Georgian democracy faces. Since independence, the failure to develop a meaningful multi-party system has hindered democratic development in Georgia and made it susceptible to being ruled by dominant party systems, such as the current one controlled by the United National Movement (UNM). Substantive differences and political interests among the Georgian electorate, are weak, and are not reflected in political party platforms. The link between pursuing economic and other interests and pursuing political goals is not strong in Georgia as many see politics as an elite activity with little bearing on ordinary people. Instead, nearly two decades after independence, political parties are leadership-dominated and defined almost entirely by their relationship to the party in power.

Similarly, Georgian civil society and media remain weak. The increased government control of the media and the decline of strong civil society organizations that could act as watchdogs over the government, also are seen in the weakness of local organizations, the relative absence of community groups and a critical shortfall of social capital.

The Current Situation

Georgia entered 2010 with a political system that was dominated by Saakashvili's UNM. In addition to holding the presidency, the UNM had a big majority in parliament and controlled every local government in the country. Additionally, almost all people holding appointed office, including big city mayors, were either members of, or sympathetic to, the UNM. The parliament had only two parties: the UNM and the Christian Democrats.

The last half of 2009 and first months of 2010 were considerably calmer than the previous twelve months.

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Recommended Reading:

- Sabine Freizer, "Georgia's Constitutional Amendments: A Setback for Democratization?" *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analysis*, February 11, 2004.
- Miriam Lansky and Giorgi Areshidze, "Georgia's Year of Turmoil," *Journal of Democracy* 19:4, October 2008.
- Lincoln Mitchell, "Compromising Democracy: State Building in Saakashvili's Georgia," *Central Asian Survey* Vol. 28 No. 2 (Summer 2009): 171-183
- ISFED election monitoring reports: <http://www.isfed.ge/eng/elections/reports/>.
- OSCE/ODIHR election reports: <http://www.osce.org/odihr-elections/30930.html>.

Unfortunately, there is also little evidence that democracy has advanced in Georgia during this period. Media did not become freer, but instead remained largely under the strong influence of the government. The government also abandoned the promise made by Saakashvili at the United Nations in September 2009 that the mayors of all big cities would be elected, instead only allowing elections for the mayor of Tbilisi. The early negotiations around that election resulted in the government successfully insisting on a highly unusual 30 percent threshold in the first round that was broadly understood as a way to ensure that Gigi Ugulava, the government candidate, would not have to run against the leading opposition candidate, Irakli Alasania, in a runoff.

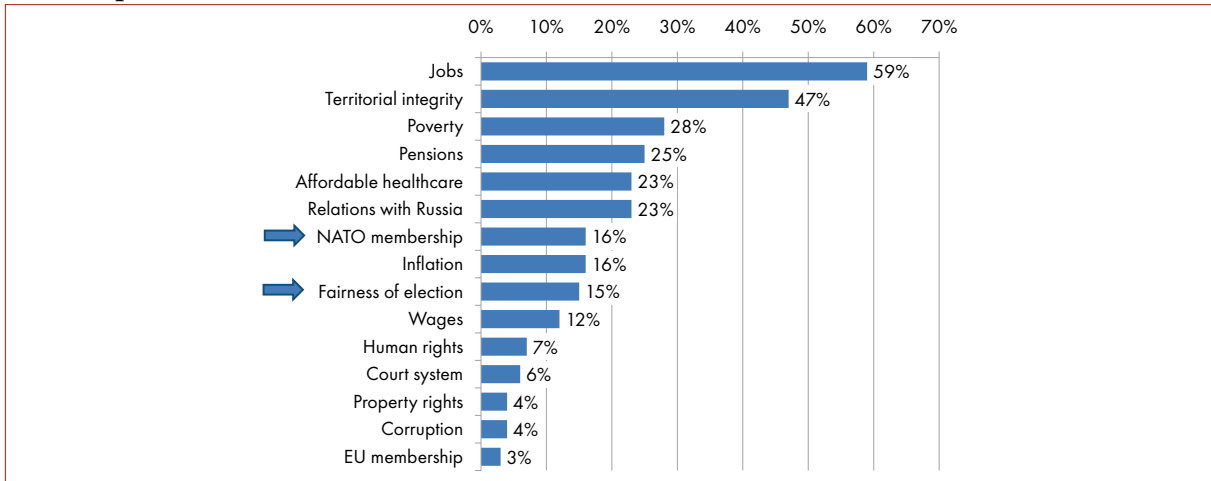
The absence of any major events, demonstrations or immediate crises during this period has lent a "calm before the storm" feel to the Georgian political environment. The next three years, beginning with the Tbilisi mayoral race in May 2010, will feature three major elections and will be a critical period for Georgia's democratic development and overall stability.

The 2010 local elections and 2012 parliamentary elections will be important on their own but will also help set the stage for the 2013 presidential elections which will determine who will succeed Saakashvili, who is constitutionally barred from seeking another term as president. If Georgia makes it through the next three years with some stability and an orderly transition to a new president through an election that is broadly viewed as free and fair, there will be real reasons for optimism for Georgia's future. Achieving this will not be easy, however, and will require sustained engagement and vigilance from what is an increasingly Georgia-fatigued international community.

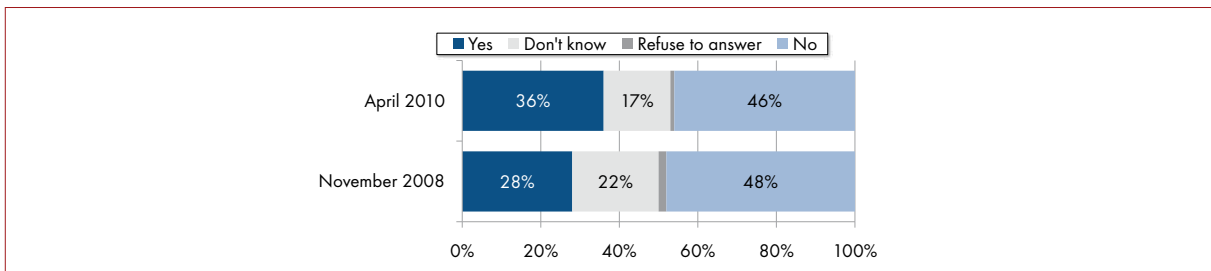
Opinion Poll

Georgians' Attitudes Towards Democracy and NATO Membership

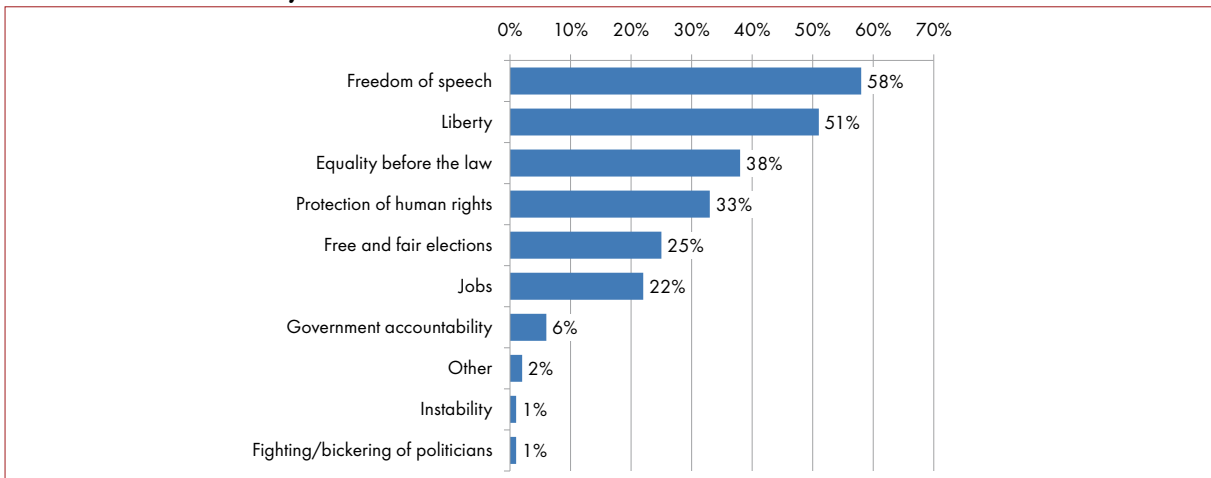
Most Important National Issues



Is Georgia a Democracy Now?

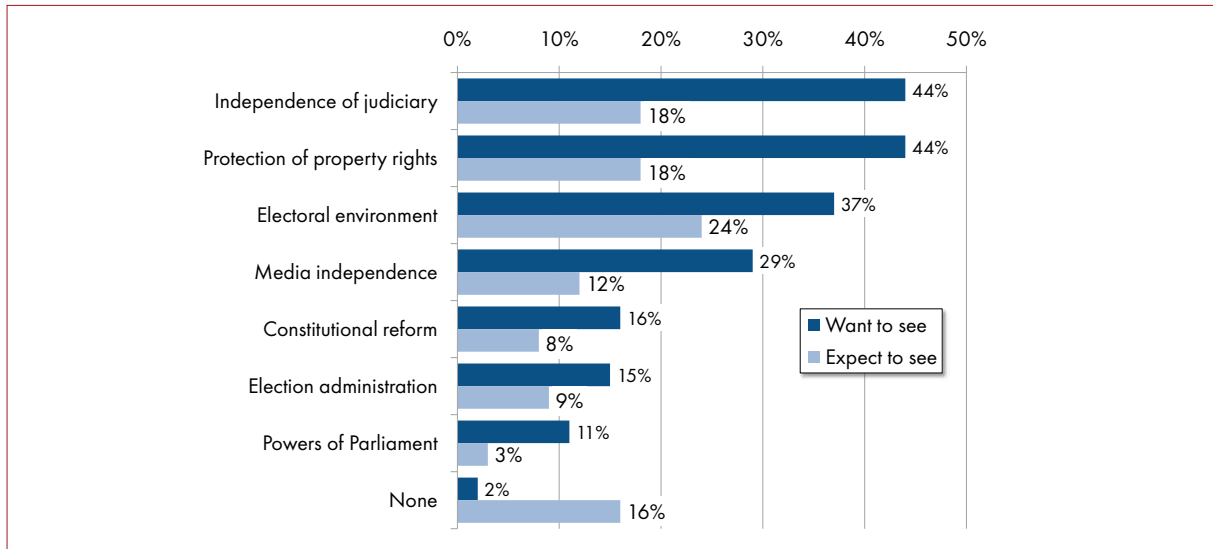


What Does Democracy Mean to You?

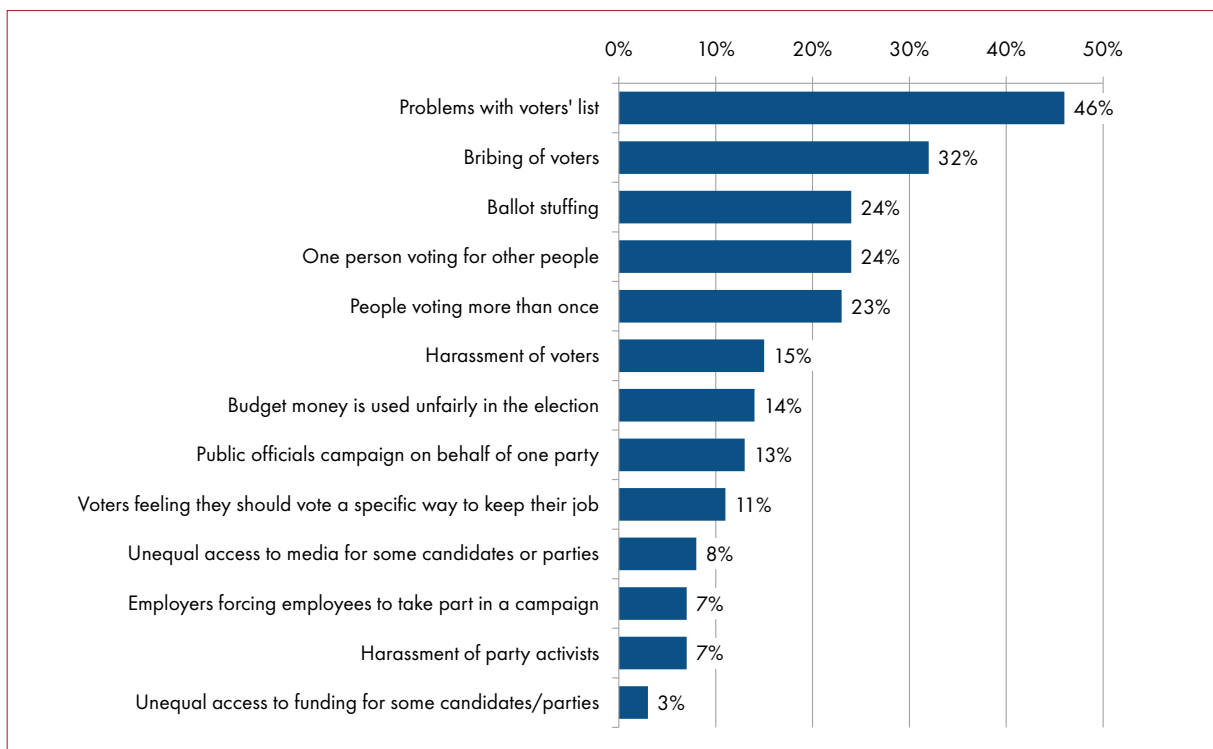


Source: Representative opinion polls conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) for: Public Attitudes towards elections in Georgia: Results of a April 2010 survey carried out for NDI by CRRC, <http://www.civil.ge/files/files/NDI%20Survey%20Presentation%20Apr.%202010%20-%20Media.pdf>

Which Political Reforms Do You Want/Expect to See Achieved in the Next Six Months?

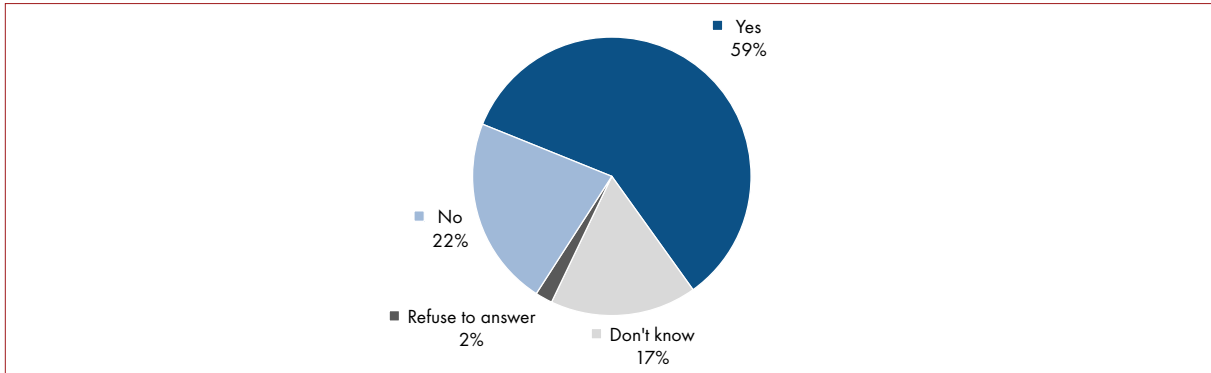


What Do You Think Are the Three Biggest Barriers to Free and Fair Elections in Georgia?

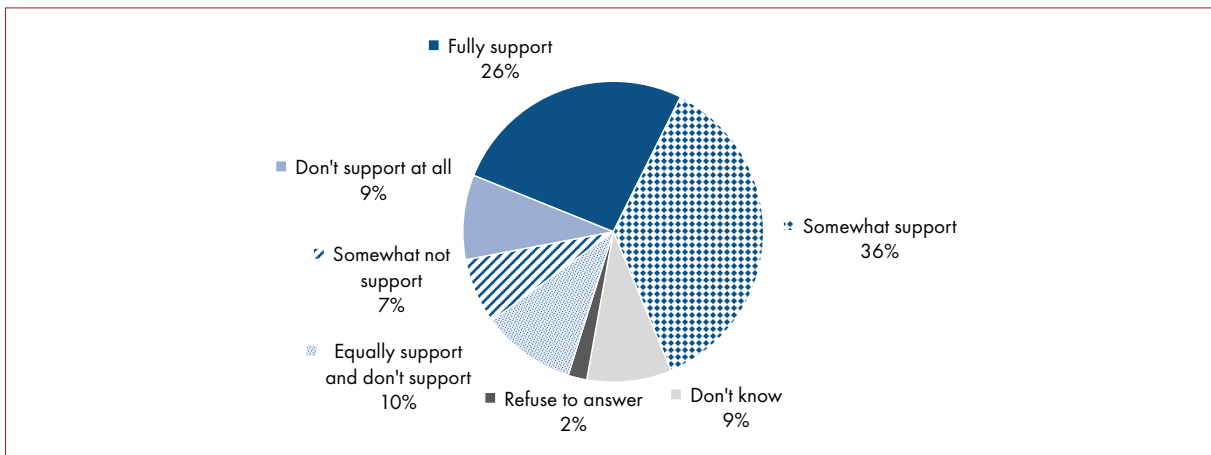


Source: Representative opinion polls conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) for: Public Attitudes towards elections in Georgia: Results of a April 2010 survey carried out for NDI by CRRC, <http://www.civil.ge/files/files/NDI%20Survey%20Presentation%20Apr.%202010%20-%20Media.pdf>

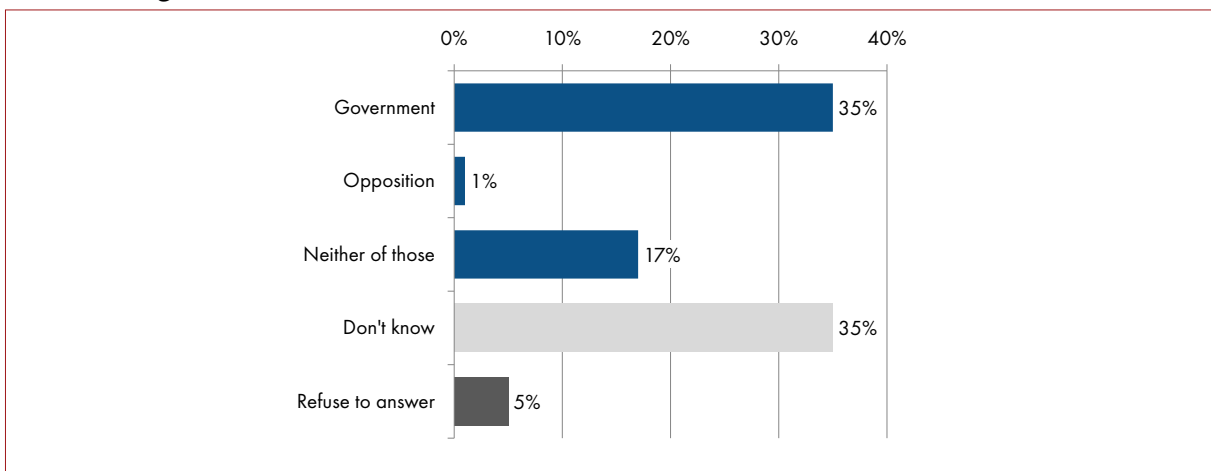
Can You Influence the Results of Elections by Voting?



To What Extent Do You Support Georgia's Membership in NATO?



Do You Think That Domestic News And Current Affairs Broadcasts On Georgian Public Broadcasting (TV-Channel 1) Reflect The Interests Of ...?



Source: Representative opinion polls conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) for: Public Attitudes towards elections in Georgia: Results of a April 2010 survey carried out for NDI by CRRC, <http://www.civil.ge/files/files/NDI%20Survey%20Presentation%20Apr.%202010%20-%20Media.pdf>

The Political System of Armenia: Form and Content

By David Petrosyan, Yerevan

Abstract

Despite a promising start in the early 1990s, Armenia's political system has devolved toward authoritarianism. The terrorist attack on the Armenian National Assembly on October 27, 1999, resulting in the killing of the speaker and prime minister, ultimately made it possible for President Robert Kocharyan to concentrate power in his hands. He subsequently ignored a Constitutional Court ruling and held a variety of elections that were neither free nor fair. Under Kocharyan and his successor Serzh Sargsyan, Armenia is largely ruled by a clan that gained power during the 1992–94 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Currently, Armenia's three presidents, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Kocharyan, and Sargsyan, define the three poles within the political system.

Armenian Politics since Independence

Like its post-Soviet neighbors, Armenia has never been a fully democratic country. However, in the course of the past 8–10 years, the democratic achievements of the 1990s, which saw the beginnings of a competitive political system, have gradually eroded and Armenia has evolved towards authoritarianism.

In theory Armenia fully subscribes to the principles of democracy and the majority of Armenia's legislative initiatives are approved by the Venetian Commission of the Council of Europe (CoE). Ironically, Armenia was accepted as a member of the CoE in 2001 – precisely at the time when the de-democratization process started.

One of the principle problems in contemporary Armenian politics has been the inability to establish free and fair elections. In the early 1990s, when an essentially Soviet political system was still in place in Armenia, Armenia elected its first multiparty parliament and president in a relatively democratic way. However, by the mid-1990s this process had begun to deteriorate. The parliamentary elections in 1995, the constitutional referendum in 1995 and the presidential election in 1996 were widely criticized as being conducted in an undemocratic manner. The same counts for the extraordinary presidential elections held in 1998.

The only exception was the 1999 parliamentary election, the results of which were accepted not only by Armenian society, but won high praise from various international monitoring missions, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE. However, the terrorist attack on the Armenian National Assembly on October 27, 1999, which resulted in the killings of parliamentary speaker Karen Demirchyan and Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, effectively led to a transfer of power from the de facto dual command of

prime minister and parliamentary speaker to President Robert Kocharyan.

Armenian Politics under President Robert Kocharyan

During his first presidential term (1998–2003), Kocharyan repressed human rights, closed alternative media outlets (in particular electronic media) and consolidated the ruling elite's hold on power. Most important was the government's control of the media. Both the political opposition and broadcasters beyond the control of the government lost access to the airwaves. The only exception was the independently financed regional TV broadcast GALA in Gyumri. Given the total control over the media by the Armenian authorities, the preservation of an independent regional media outlet is highly significant. The GALA broadcast is of reasonably high quality and ensures the provision of balanced information on current events in Armenia.

The 2003 presidential elections not only exacerbated the existing problems but also marked the emergence of new ones. In particular the executive and legislative branches both refused to comply with the decision adopted by the Constitutional Court on April 17, 2003, in a case brought by presidential candidate Stepan Demirchyan, the son of the murdered parliamentary speaker. The court ordered a referendum asking the people if they had confidence in the sitting president, but this decision was never implemented. Opposition demands that the government comply with the decision of the Constitutional Court and hold the referendum led to widespread use of force against opposition activists.

The fraudulent 2003 presidential election was followed by the falsification of the constitutional referendum in 2005, the parliamentary elections in 2007 and finally the presidential election in 2008. The latter ended in bloodshed on March 1, 2008, orchestrated by

the central authorities in Yerevan, as a result of which ten people died, according to official sources. The casualties were mostly civilians. While monitors such as the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly have criticized all elections since 1998, they have nevertheless recognized them.

Armenian Clan Politics

In reality, Armenia's political system is based on a small group of clans and oligarchs, giving the country a corrupted form of government similar to the regimes found in Latin American after the Second World War. The core components of the oligarchic system are based within the defense, interior and national security ministries, through which huge financial sums were channeled largely unchecked during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1992–1994. Although the government claims to support the free market, key posts in the political system are distributed among a clan that has its roots in Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory which in Soviet times belonged to Azerbaijan and whose independence from Azerbaijan is not internationally recognized. While strictly speaking the majority of the members of this clan are not from Nagorno-Karabakh, they are forced to play according to the rules set by the heads of the clan, to which the second and third president of Armenia, Kocharyan (1998–2008) and Serzh Sargsyan (since 2008), belonged. Sargsyan is a perfect example of this system since he is a native of Nagorno-Karabakh, who held positions as the Defense, Interior, National Security ministers and served as secretary of the National Security Council before acceding to the presidency.

Although the constitution of 2005 no longer allows the president to dismiss the prime minister at his discretion, the presidential post remains the key position in Armenia. Thus, real political power in Armenia remains concentrated in the hands of three key political figures: the acting president, Sargsyan, and the two former presidents—Kocharyan and Levon Ter-Petrosyan (1991–98). In a sense this situation satisfies all three individuals, because it gives each of them the possibility to return to the presidency or remain in office. However, this system does not allow for the rise of new political figures, from either the governing coalition or the opposition. The cleansing of the political arena by Kocharyan and Sargsyan has essentially blocked the emergence of new political players who could rival the three presidents. Thus the paradigm of the domestic political process in Armenia has not changed over the past two years and

all factions, to one degree or another, are close to one of these three political poles.

The Three Main Players in Armenian Politics

After two years as president, **Serzh Sargsyan** has not managed to consolidate his power. This failure can be attributed to his low level of public support, the lack of influential supporters among his backers, and former President Kocharyan's continuing control over several key political figures. Because he lacks full control of the governing system, Sargsyan cannot limit the influence of the former presidents. Furthermore, Sargsyan must repay too many political debts to his supporters, including some among the criminal community, thereby preventing him from establishing greater personal control over the political system and damaging his public support.

Unlike his predecessor, Sargsyan is the head of the ruling party, the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), which holds the majority in the parliament and, unlike other ruling parties in other countries of the former Soviet space, supports an ideological platform based on ethnic nationalism. However, the Republican Party has in practice become a trade union of bureaucrats from various backgrounds and the current members of the party seem not to care very much about the party's ideological orientation. It is significant to note that none of the founding fathers of the Republican Party remain in power.

Robert Kocharyan has maintained his influence in the government through a coalition that includes Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan and his allies in powerful positions; the Prosperous Armenia party (*Bargavach Ayastan*) with its leader Gagik Tsarukyan; some factions from the *Dashnaktsutyun* party, i.e. the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), which has traditionally been one of the staunchest supporters of Armenian nationalism, as well as some top-level politicians, such as Parliamentary Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan. However, Kocharyan's influence is limited by the possibility that the incumbent president may stop working with him and the risk that Ter-Petrosyan will come to power. Furthermore, Kocharyan faces the problem of limited foreign and domestic public support as a result of the events of March 1, 2008. Overall, Kocharyan's influence in the system has been declining.

Recent rallies and demonstrations organized by the extra-parliamentary opposition, the Armenian National Congress (ANC), and other actions involving **Levon Ter-Petrosyan** illustrate that public support for the first presi-

dent has grown. The rapidly deteriorating socioeconomic situation in Armenia has contributed to the strengthening of his position. In particular, Ter-Petrosyan has had a number of recent successes. First was the declaration by the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) that there are 14 political prisoners in Armenia and the appearance of the experts from the FIDH at rallies organized by the opposition. Additionally, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) under its CoE mandate urged the Armenian authorities to hold a public enquiry into the events of March 1, 2008. Once the study was complete, the Committee questioned the authenticity of the authorities' investigation of these events. The CoE Monitoring Committee will examine the timetable for the reforms proposed by the authorities through the temporary parliamentary commission to study the events of March 1, 2008. In taking this action, the CoE Monitoring Committee accepted not only the authorities' proposals, but also those of the opposition.

Main Political Parties

In addition to Armenia's main ruling party, the Republican Party, which was examined above, there are two additional parties in the three-party coalition government.

The **Rule of Law** party is a centrist political party led by Artur Baghdasaryan. Following the 2008 presidential election, Baghdasaryan was required to recognize the victory of Sargsyan and vow that he would not seek the presidency in future elections. The presidential administration also requested the same from the current speaker Abrahamyan.

Furthermore, in March 2008 two key members of the government, Gurgen Sargsyan from the ministry of transport and communications and Mher Shahgeldyan from the Ministry of Emergency Situations, left the Rule of Law party. Their posts were immediately filled by Sargsyan's allies. The new ministers appointed were the former head of the State Real Estate Committee and adviser to the Committee's president Manuk Vardanyan, and the former first deputy chief, Police Major-General Armen Yeritsyan, both of whom then became members of the Rule of Law party within hours. As Vardanyan and Yeritsyan are at best only nominally members of the Rule of Law party, the government, which previously consisted of representatives from three parties, de-facto transformed into a two-party coalition (Republican Party and Prosperous Armenia).

The **Prosperous Armenia** party is a political project founded by former President Kocharyan and led by the oligarch Gagik Tsarukyan, who is a key business

partner of Kocharyan. Currently Prosperous Armenia is a de-ideologized organization trying to present itself as a kind of opposition force to the government. However, the party structure could be split at any time by the party president, and most of its supporters could be incorporated into a reformed ruling party. The Armenian authorities have extensive experience in these kinds of "transformations."

The main challenge to the ruling parties over the last ten years came from the **Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaktsutyun (ARF)**, which is an established political player, used to cooperating with the governing coalition. However, in April 2009 the ARF left the ruling coalition and was sent into "opposition" because of its disagreement over the policies of president Sargsyan on the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations. However, the party representatives maintained the chairmanships of two key parliamentary committees (defense and security, and foreign affairs) due to their expertise in this field. The party exerts influence through its own TV station "Country," which broadcasts on the UHF frequency and is not subject to pressure from the authorities. Also, unlike the ANC, it is not restricted by the authorities when organizing public events (rallies, marches, meetings, etc). Members of the ARF also have unlimited access to government-controlled TV in contrast to the leaders of the Armenian National Congress or the Heritage Party (discussed below).

The ARF's political ideology is conservative-nationalistic and may be characterized by the following points:

- The party fully recognizes the legitimacy of the current administration of Serzh Sargsyan and does not demand early national elections.
- It does not recognize the existence of political prisoners in Armenia, claiming that all such individuals were sentenced correctly and that no political considerations were involved.
- It maintains that the events of March 1, 2008, have already been sufficiently investigated by the authorities, and rejects all claims to the contrary.
- Finally, it does not support the policy of the authorities in important political issues, such as the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations within the framework of the October 10, 2009 protocols signed in Zurich.

While Sargsyan's government tolerates the ARF and does not actively repress it, it heavily criticizes the **Heritage** party (*Zharangutyun*). The Heritage party can be considered the "real" parliamentary opposition and is led by Raffi Hovannisyan, a former US citizen who previously served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in

Armenia. The party heavily criticizes the administration for having little legitimacy. Moreover, the party continues to cooperate with the ANC in the fact-finding group to uncover the truth about what happened on March 1, 2008. The fact-finding group was originally established by presidential decree in autumn 2008 but dissolved in the summer of 2009. The opposition published a number of well-documented reports about the bloody events and the public expects the publication of the final report.

Heritage fights for the protection of human rights, the restoration of constitutional order in the country and for an impartial investigation and prosecution of all perpetrators of the bloody events of March 1. The party leaders' attempts to form a "third force" in Armenia or a dialogue between the three parties forming the government (Republican Party of Armenia, Rule of Law and Prosperous Armenia) and those in the opposition (Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Heritage and the ANC) has failed.

The extra-parliamentary **Armenian National Congress** includes 18 political parties supporting left, right and nationalist ideologies, as well as dozens of community organizations. Although it currently represents a minority of the population (10,000–40,000 people), its strength could increase ten-fold at any time. The ANC is headed by the first Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrosyan. Its waiting game tactic is based on the parties' perception that although the current administration shows low levels of legitimacy, it satisfies the geopolitical interests of the main external players in the region (Brussels, Washington and Moscow). Although Ter-Petrosyan is not the most desirable figure for the foreign powers, he is acceptable to them. The ANC's main objective remains the restoration of the constitutional order in Armenia and the reform of the existing system. The main demands of the Armenian National Congress include:

- The immediate release of all political prisoners.
- The restoration of an independent "fact-finding group" to address the events of March 1, with the participation of international experts. A full investigation into this crime and punishment of the individuals involved.
- The removal of the restrictions on rallies, demonstrations and gatherings imposed after the March events.
- Free competitive TV broadcasting and the return of the independent TV station A1, in accordance with the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights.

- Reform of the Electoral Code (the ANC submitted 7 proposals)
- The holding of early presidential and parliamentary elections.

The ANC has also unveiled a program of socio-economic reforms to overcome the crisis in "100 Steps", which attracted considerable interest in the expert community.

Conclusion

The main obstacles to real political and economic reform in Armenia are the low levels of legitimacy among the political players, the lack of a real separation of power, the high levels of corruption, the influence of the criminal underworld on Armenian politics and the close relations between the business community and the state bureaucracy.

Armenia needs a government which is elected in a free and fair process and thus able to gain the kind of legitimacy necessary to transform the country's flawed political system. The afore-mentioned "100 Steps" program, which is essentially an anti-oligarchic plan, could form the basis for this reform process.

A particular problem is the ties of Armenia's political elite to the clan structures of Nagorno-Karabakh. Since the elite originating in Nagorno-Karabakh is considered to be illegitimate, they are required to rely on representatives of their clan in order to maintain their hold on power in Armenia proper, thereby reinforcing the clan structures.

The current Western approach towards Armenia is one which follows *Realpolitik*. The promotion of democracy, civil liberties and human rights has been subordinated to a larger geopolitical agenda. The West has ignored the Armenian government's unwillingness to comply with the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights on the closure of the A1+ TV broadcasting service. The international community expects that the weak and illegitimate administration will succumb to the threat of sanctions and make concessions in the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

So far this optimism has not been justified. President Sargsyan is under pressure from other centers of power within Armenia which do not support the same goals as the West. The West needs to push for political and democratic reform in Armenia in order to regain the trust of the Armenian people. With its current policies, the West is in fact supporting the preservation of artificial reforms.

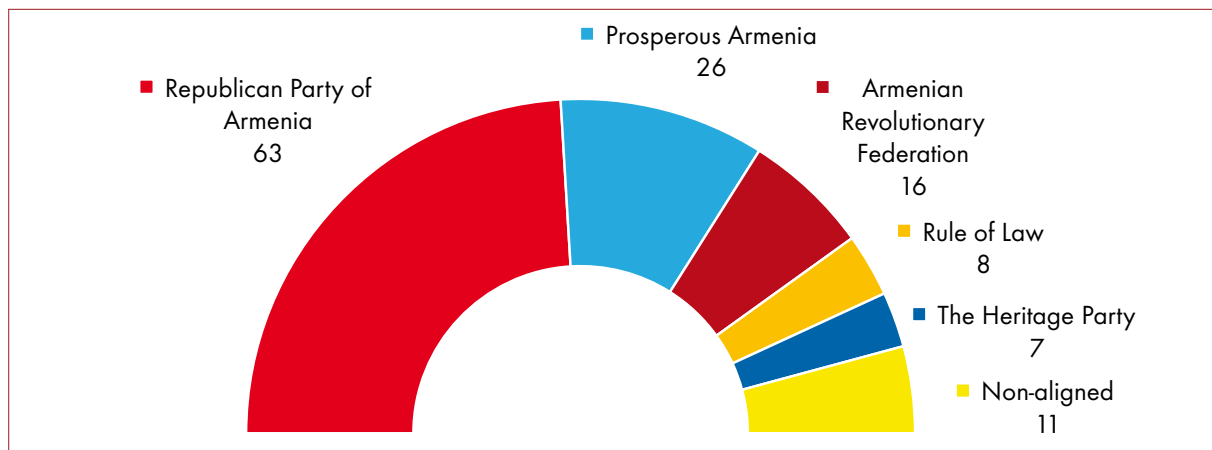
See overleaf for information about the author.

About the Author:

David Petrosyan is a specialist in the field of applied biotechnology. He has been working as a journalist since 1991 and has published over a thousand articles, reports, analyses and reviews on Armenia and the Caucasus region. Petrosyan is also the co-author of two books: *Armenia, Europe, Asia: Corridors and Crossroads* (2001) and *Journalists on the War in Nagorno-Karabakh* (2002). In 2001 he won the first prize in the category “Political Analysis and Commentary” in a national competition for his publication “Armenians and Chechens: The Past and the Present”. Since 1991 Petrosyan has been working as a political editor for the independent information centre Noah’s Ark (*Noyan Tapan*, at <http://www.nt.am>).

Diagram

**Distribution of the 131 Mandates in the National Assembly of Armenia
As of May 1, 2010**



<p>■ 1. Republican Party of Armenia</p> <p>■ 2. Prosperous Armenia</p> <p>■ 3. Armenian Revolutionary Federation</p> <p>■ 4. Rule of Law</p> <p>■ 5. The Heritage Party</p> <p>■ 6. Non-aligned</p>	<p>63 mandates</p> <p>including:</p> <p>26 mandates</p> <p>including:</p> <p>16 mandates</p> <p>including:</p> <p>8 mandates</p> <p>including:</p> <p>7 mandates</p> <p>including:</p> <p>11 mandates</p> <p>including:</p>	<p>Non-party members</p> <p>Party for Democracy and Labor</p> <p>Party Mighty Homeland</p> <p>Non-party</p> <p>Social Democratic Hunchakyan Party*</p> <p>Non-party members</p> <p>Non-party members</p> <p>Non-party members</p> <p>Non-party members</p> <p>Non-party members</p> <p>National Unity</p> <p>Prosperous Armenia</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>9</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
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* The MP from the Social Democratic Hunchakyan Party represents a non-canonical party. The canonical Social Democratic Party remains in the ranks of the non-parliamentary opposition and is a member of the Armenian National Congress.

Comparing Azeri Attitudes toward Political Participation in Azerbaijan and Georgia

By Joshua Noonan, Azerbaijan and Georgia Fulbright Fellow '09-'10

Abstract

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan and Georgia have followed very different paths of development. Georgia has remade itself into a more transparent, open, and democratically-based country, whereas Azerbaijan has continued the post-Soviet tradition of “single party plus” rule. The historic, political, and social experiences of Azeris in Azerbaijan and Azeris in Georgia have been quite different. The project summarized here seeks to compare the attitudes towards political participation for Azerbaijani minorities in Georgia with the attitudes of Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan in order to find if and why these attitudes diverge. This article describes and analyzes the key differences and similarities found between the sampled populations of ethnic Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Introduction

The Rose Revolution is an example of one of the most successful “color revolutions” since it harnessed civil discontent for a peaceful change of government in Georgia in the autumn of 2003. This revolution had a profound impact on Georgia, removing many of the policy-makers from the previous regime, increasing respect for democratic processes, and spurring a precipitous drop in corruption due to the active prosecution of individuals involved in bribery, while also nearly eliminating low-level corruption in the police force by dismantling the notoriously corrupt traffic police. As a result of the Rose Revolution, Adjara, a Muslim region within Georgia on the Black Sea coast was reintegrated with the rest of the country in 2004.

In contrast to Georgia’s regime change, Azerbaijan has lived under an authoritarian system since 1993, when Heydar Aliyev took control of the government from Abulfaz Elchibey. Before Aliyev died, the election of his son Ilham as president was engineered in order to continue the political dynasty. Ever since 1993, Azerbaijan has functioned as a “single party plus” system where the ruling *New Azerbaijan Party* has controlled the political agenda while being nominally opposed by several weak and disorganized political parties. Despite the continued occupation of 16% of the territory of Azerbaijan, there has been a high degree of stability enabled through co-optation of any potential opposition, energy-driven economic development, and repression of groups who refused to accept the status quo.

Since Azeris live in both societies, it makes sense to ask how they relate to the two different political systems. In starting this project, my initial hypothesis was that indeed the Azeris living in reasonably democratic

Georgia would relate to the idea of political participation differently than those living in the more authoritarian Azerbaijan.

Methods

To test this hypothesis I developed a survey and administered it to samples of Azeris living in both Azerbaijan and Georgia. The questionnaire was designed with 8 general biographical questions, 4 formal political participation questions, 12 general political questions, and 6 questions concerning attitudes about the government and the efficacy of government.

Based on my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Azerbaijan for more than two years, I choose to use a convenience sample instead of a random sample because I thought that I would get more genuine answers from respondents if they received the questionnaire from someone they trusted rather than an unfamiliar stranger. With more resources, I would have been able to hire a local polling organization to conduct a random sample. Nevertheless, in the circumstances, the most productive way to proceed was by utilizing community leaders in Azerbaijan and Georgia to help distribute questionnaires to local community members. For the majority of the survey collection, the distributors gave the surveys to colleagues, family members, friends, and acquaintances, who after completing the surveys anonymously returned them to the distributors who would ultimately give them back to me. I distributed and collected fewer than 10 percent myself. Finally, fewer than 2% of the surveys were distributed via Facebook and returned by e-mail by participants from Azerbaijan.

There was a 30%–40% return rate for the questionnaires distributed by NGOs and active commu-

nity members. The questionnaire was distributed in villages, regional centers, and the capitals of Azerbaijan and Georgia. A total of 397 questionnaires from Azerbaijan and 262 questionnaires from Georgia were collected.

The sample in Azerbaijan could be skewed with a higher number of people expressing negative attitudes towards the current regime than actually exists in the population, since I utilized my contacts in many local and national NGOs, such as Transparency International as well as counterparts of former colleagues in Azerbaijan. This method of distribution may have led to a more critical and a more liberal group of contacts compared to a randomly sampled group of Azeris in Azerbaijan. Accordingly, the results described below are more impressionistic than conclusive. Nevertheless, they raise questions that can be addressed through more systematic research.

Differences in Party Participation between Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia

I have found that Azeris in Azerbaijan are 10 times more politically mobilized than their counterparts in Georgia. In Azerbaijan the total number of participants who reported that they were members of a political party was 33% (27% identified with the ruling *Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyası (YAP) – New Azerbaijan Party*, 3% opposition, 3% undefined, see Figure 1 on p. 17 for a complete breakdown). In Georgia the total number of participants who reported that they were members of a political party was 3.2% (1.5% identified with the ruling *Ertiani Natsionaluri Modzraoba (ENM) – United National Movement*, 1.7% registered that they were party members, but did not denote their affiliation).

Azeris in Azerbaijan who work as educators, physicians, nurses, and other public sector positions are obliged to become members of the ruling party as well as to participate in elections and obligatory political activities. Furthermore, many Azeris in Azerbaijan see joining the YAP as a way to become employed, whereas party membership does not seem to be a common practice for Azeris in Georgia. The ruling party does not dominate all aspects of life in Georgia as it does in Azerbaijan, so that is one reason why the participation rates in the ENM are lower. Moreover, since many Azeris living in Georgia do not speak Georgian, it is more difficult for them to participate in any part of Georgian society.

Furthermore, the fact that Azeris in Azerbaijan are the majority instead of the minority is a contributing factor for their increased participation, as they know the language of politics and society. By contrast, for the Azeris in Georgia, even parliamentary deputies do not

feel obliged to learn or speak Georgian, and often simply vote with the ruling United National Movement. One Azeri-Georgian stated in an interview, “*We vote for those who are in power, not according to any ideology as we are more concerned about our safety.*”

General Satisfaction with the Government between Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia

The contrast in overall satisfaction with the government between Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia is quite striking, particularly since many more Azeris were dissatisfied with the Azerbaijani government than with the Georgian government. Overall, 21.2% of the respondents in Azerbaijan and 4.2% of the respondents in Georgia reported that they were dissatisfied with the current government. 20.2% of participants in Azerbaijan registered their answers as “rarely satisfied” and 29.0% in Georgia wrote that answer, while 13.1% in Azerbaijan and 16.4% in Georgia were fully satisfied (see Figure 2 on p. 17 for a complete breakdown).

Azerbaijani dissatisfaction may be the result of an uneven allocation of wealth. Though the Gini Coefficient is higher in Georgia (40.8 – 2009 figures) than Azerbaijan (36.5 – 2001 figures), the difference in apparent wealth is more noticeable in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, there is both rampant petty and high-level corruption in Azerbaijan, which also may affect the satisfaction of the population with the government. Moreover, the cognitive dissonance caused by a continual full spectrum barrage of positive propaganda in the face of a reality defined by unemployment, poor infrastructure, internally-displaced persons and refugees from a 20-year-old frozen conflict, and official misuse of funds may also explain the dissatisfaction with the current government.

Despite the anonymity of the research, the Georgian respondents may feel pressure to respond positively, as they are minorities in their country of residence. During the rule of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia from 1991–1992 minorities may have felt threatened by nationalist slogans popular at the time. Many Azeris living in Georgia in the 1990s, most notably in Marniuli and Gardabani, faced overt harassment by the police and Guawdia national guard, who sought payoffs. Other problems included the reported mining of the village of Tekali in Marneuli region, and attacks on other villages.

In recent times, the *de jure* recognition of minority rights has increased and there have been a few attempts to integrate minorities into Georgian society. Nevertheless, even though Georgia is dramatically more democratic than Azerbaijan, Azeri residents have legitimate grievances. Currently, Azeris in Georgia mention the

unconstitutional refusal to allow the construction of mosques and madrasahs, the lack of Georgian language training, and discrimination as major problems. These grievances may not always gain expression in the political system because the members of parliament who represent the Azeri minority feel that it is in their interest to vote in support of the ruling ENM.

Satisfaction with the Opposition's Role between Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia

Large numbers of Azeris in both countries, 51.6% of the respondents in Azerbaijan and 34.3% of the respondents in Georgia, wrote that they were dissatisfied with the role of the opposition. In Azerbaijan, the problem is that the opposition is split in terms of its policy goals and between those who prefer to work within the system and those who work outside of it with the result that it is ineffective. In Georgia the opposition is more effective since it is more visible. This difference can be seen in the fact that 16.1% of participants in Azerbaijan claimed that they were "rarely satisfied," while 27.9% in Georgia answered in that manner. A meager 2.3% in Azerbaijan and 2.3% in Georgia were fully satisfied with the role of the opposition (see Figure 3 on p. 17 for a complete breakdown).

Attitudes towards the Future of the Political System between Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia

Azeris living in Georgia are much more positive about the future of their country's political system. Thus, 37.3% of people surveyed from Azerbaijan and 57.3% of people surveyed from Georgia reported feeling positive about the future of their country's political system. In contrast, 19.1% of participants from Azerbaijan and 5.3% of participants from Georgia reported feeling negative about the future of their political systems. Those sitting on the fence included 40.6% of respondents from Azerbaijan and 30.9% of respondents from Georgia who reported feeling neutral about the future of their country's political system (see Figure 4 on p. 18).

Again, the issue of fear among Azeris living as a minority group in Georgia could play a part in the positive answers. This could be due to a fear of being attacked by the majority for responding negatively. Despite that fact, I believe that due to the various reform efforts made as a result of the "Rose Revolution", the population of Azeris in Georgia in fact do feel more positively towards the political system. I believe that these feelings are caused by the more popular nature of the current government in Georgia as well as the still limited,

but increasing, protection of constitutional rights for the citizens in Georgia.

Differences in Sourcing of Political Information between Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia

In Azerbaijan 64.4% of participants stated that they received political information from TV and in Georgia the figure was 73.5%. It must be noted that many Azeris in Georgia who live near the border with Azerbaijan watch only Azerbaijani or Turkish TV in Georgia. When non-Georgian speakers need to learn about what is occurring in Georgia, they can read one of the Azeri language newspapers, have informal meetings, or if they are able, communicate in Russian with local Georgians. A large percentage of Azeri-Georgians do not speak Georgian, and this deficiency makes participation in society much more difficult.

With regard to the Internet, 29.8% of respondents from Azerbaijan and 19.5% of respondents from Georgia stated that they used it to collect political information. 3.4% of Azerbaijani people surveyed and 24.0% of Georgian people surveyed stated that they received political information from newspapers (see Figure 5 on p. 18 for full details). I believe that the gap of about 10% in the difference in Internet usage could be explained by the sampling of a higher percentage of villagers in Georgia than in Azerbaijan.

Differences in Attitudes towards Political Priorities for Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia

The greatest policy concern was "Education" for both Azeris in Azerbaijan (63.7%) and Azeris in Georgia (55.0%). The second most important issue was "Human Rights" at 37.8% in Azerbaijan and 27.1% in Georgia. The third biggest policy concern was "The Economy" at 22.8% in Azerbaijan and 16.1% in Georgia. The next two political issues followed parochial problems defined by the country of residence. Just 5.1% of participants from Azerbaijan, but 39.7% of participants from Georgia stated that "Minority Rights" was a policy that needed to be considered. This is a logical selection on the Azeri-Georgians' part, as they are a minority in the country, unlike ethnic Azeris in Azerbaijan.

I expected many of these responses, especially those concerning education and the economy (see Figure 6 on p. 18 for the major issues). Education is valued by many ethnic Azeris for both females and males, though because of families' low earning power and the prevalence of traditional gender roles, education is stressed

more for males than females. Concerning the economy, I speculated that there would be a higher rate of concern than that which was reported. It is possible that Azeris did not know the word for Economics in Azeri, so that could be why there was a lower rate of response for that question. It is also possible that it simply was not important. I was more surprised that the issue of human rights was stressed as important for respondents on both sides of the border.

“Corruption” was selected by 16.7% of respondents in Azerbaijan and 5.0% of respondents in Georgia. I believe that this can be easily understood since in the 2009 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, Georgia ranks 61 and Azerbaijan ranks 143 globally. Furthermore, due to the effects of the Rose Revolution, petty corruption has dropped dramatically in Georgia, whereas paying bribes is still a common practice in schools, hospitals, and general governmental offices in Azerbaijan.

Conclusion

The biggest differences in attitudes for Azeris in Azerbaijan and Georgia focused on the role of the government and the opposition. There were also differences in the percentage and type of political party memberships and in prioritizing political issues, specifically the differences between stressing corruption in Azerbaijan and minority rights in Georgia. Thanks to the generally positive trajectory of the government in Georgia as well as the positive and more active role that the opposition plays, there is a lower rate of dissatisfaction among the

survey participants than from those surveyed in Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan, a relatively high level of political party membership can be attributed to the fact that party membership is a requisite for employment, high levels of recruitment during tertiary education, and also a strong centralized party apparatus. In Georgia, the low party membership can be attributed to a weaker party structure, a lower rate of the politicization for public sector employment, and a paucity of knowledgeable Georgian speakers amongst the Azeri minority. The Corruption Perception Index explains the higher rate of concern for corruption in Azerbaijan. Finally, the attacks on minorities during the early 1990s in Georgia as well as lingering issues of integration and discrimination explain why many Azeris living in Georgia selected minority rights as key a political priority.

Future research on this topic should address the following issues. A survey distributed by local polling firms would allow for a random sample, thus making the data more representative. Also, in order to capture more of the population, it would be useful to have the questionnaire written in Cyrillic for Azeris who studied under the educational system of the USSR as well as in Russian and Georgian and naturally, if expanded to Azeris in Iran, it would have to be printed in Arabic script as well. Nonetheless, despite the limitations of the current survey, I did find differences among the two sampled populations, and I believe that with more resources and rigor, an even more fruitful academic venture can be conducted.

About the Author:

Joshua Noonan is a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He has been a Fulbright Fellow in Azerbaijan and Georgia from August 2009 to June 2010 and will study Russian as a Kathryn Davis Fellow at Middlebury College this summer.

Original questionnaires and data for the survey can be downloaded from the following links:

Questionnaire in English

<http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=0AWOllcvqSHCaZGhqNG1kbnNfMTU5Z3ZuenA3ZnA&hl=en>

Azerbaijan and Georgia Combined Excel Data Set

<http://docs.google.com/fileview?id=0B2OllcvqSHCaMDEzZWFIzTYtNjU5Ni00OTg0LTg0ZDMtNjY4MjA1M2JmMjM5&hl=en>

Azerbaijan and Georgia Combined SPSS Data Set

<http://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B2OllcvqSHCaYzlhNzVjMTU5YTYVYS00MTRlTk4MTMfMGZjNzNjNGJlNDQ4&hl=en>

Original Scanned Questionnaires in Azeri

<http://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B2OllcvqSHCaNWQ1MWM4ZTk0ODU1ZS00ZjdlWjkyTUfMDdmNzJkNTEyMzUw&hl=en>

Diagrams

Survey Results

Figure 1: Political Party Membership

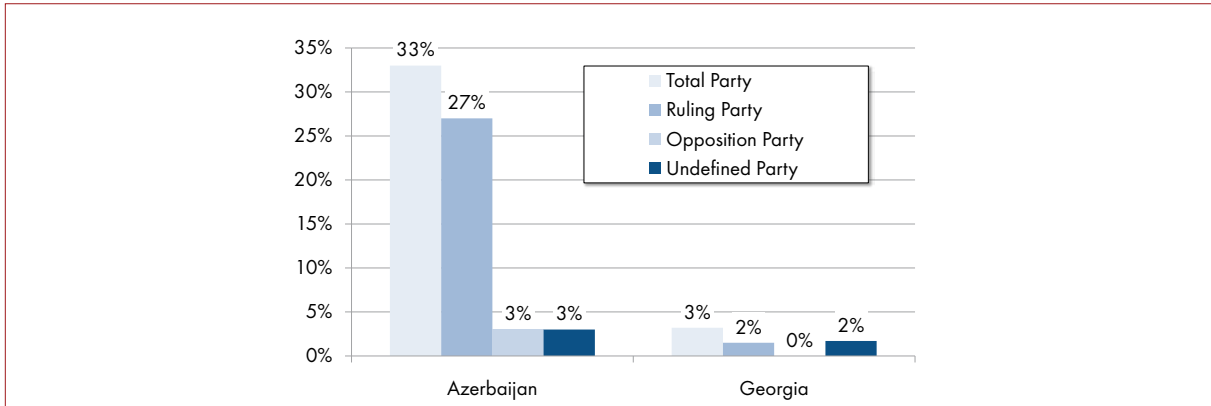


Figure 2: General Satisfaction with the Government

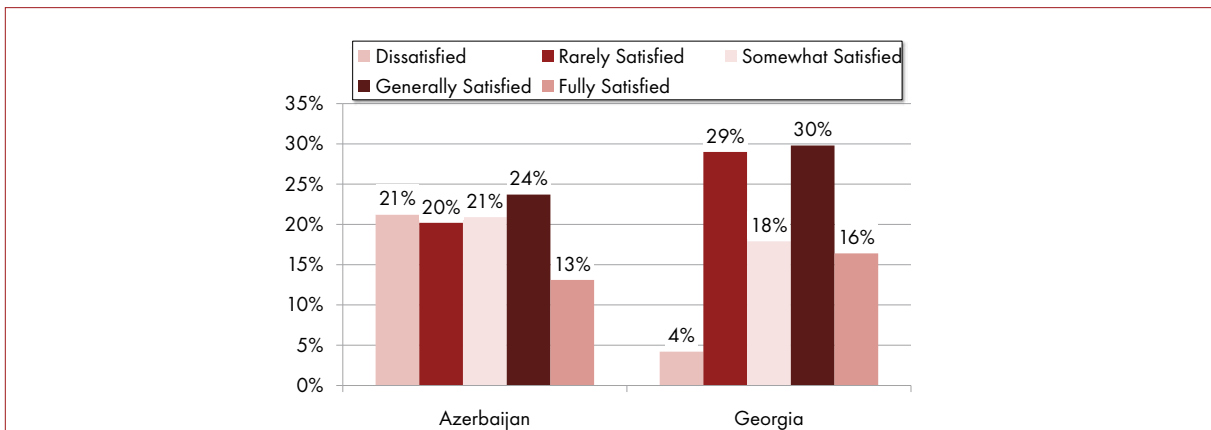
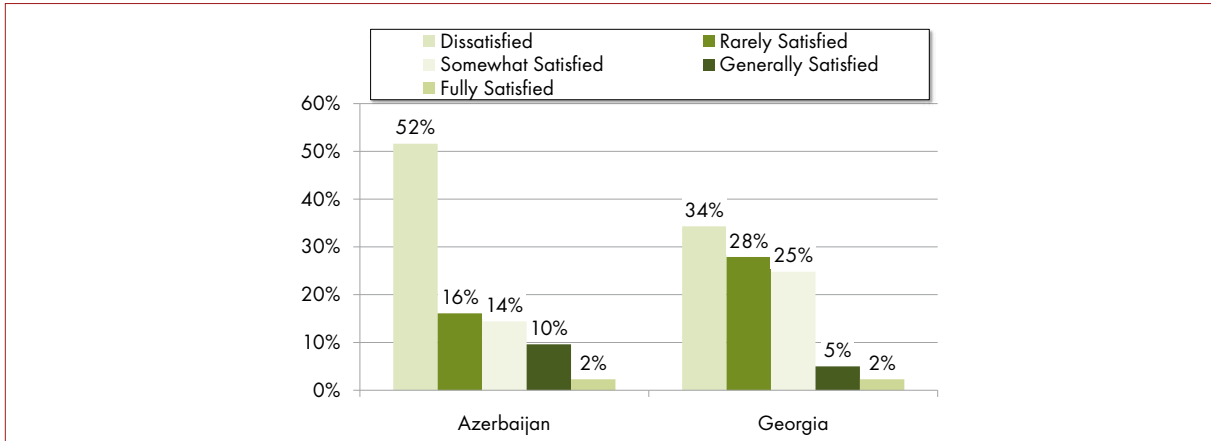


Figure 3: Satisfaction with the Opposition's Role



Source: Non-representative opinion poll conducted by Joshua Noonan, for methods see p. 7-8; see p. 10 for links to data and questionnaires.

Figure 4: Future of the Political System Attitudes

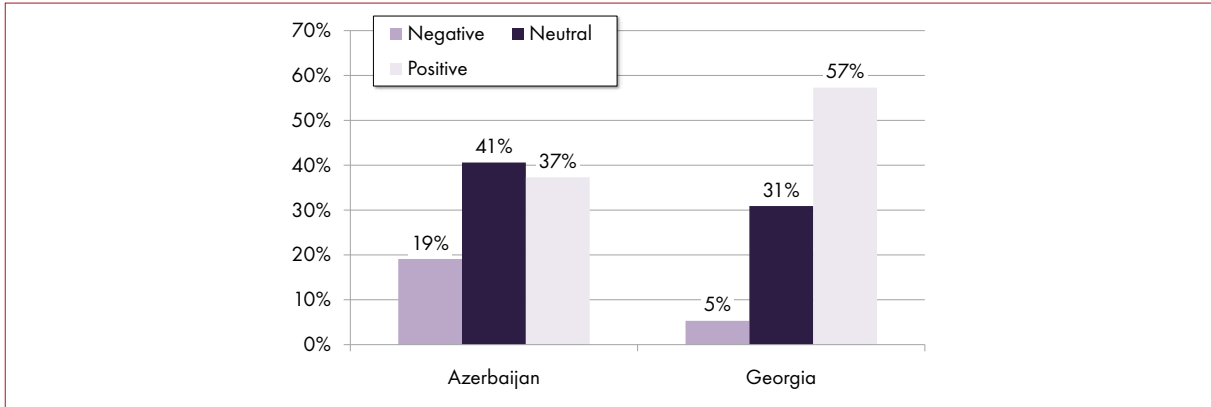


Figure 5: Sourcing of Political Information

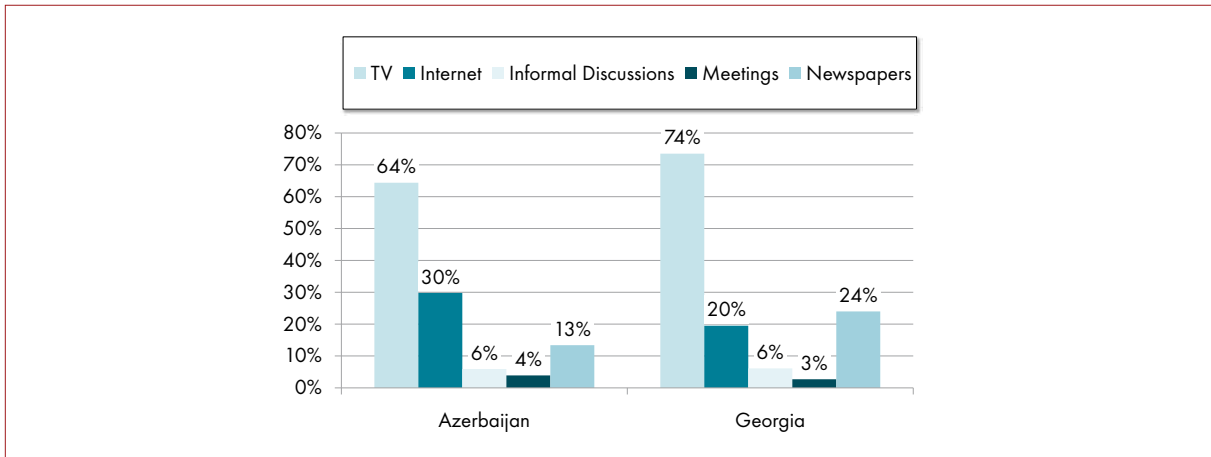
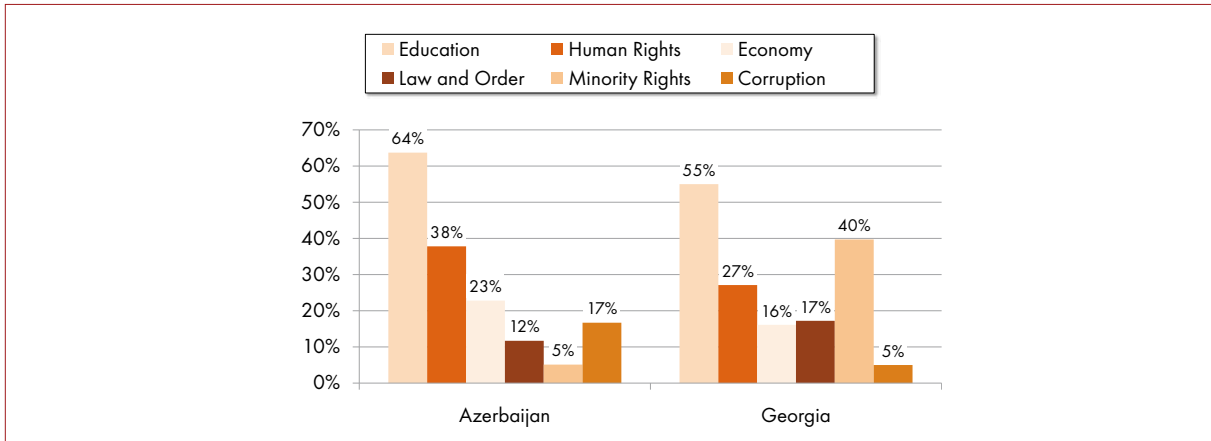


Figure 6: Political Priorities



Source: Non-representative opinion poll conducted by Joshua Noonan, for methods see p. 7-8; see p. 10 for links to data and questionnaires.

A Brief Introduction to Political Country Rankings

By Heiko Pleines, Bremen

Since *Freedom House* began assessing the extent of freedom in the countries of the world in 1972, the idea of handing out “report card”-style audits to entire societies has won increasing numbers of supporters. In the last decade, several organizations launched new projects which systematically and comparatively assess the political state of affairs. As a result, the areas under investigation are being increasingly differentiated and the rating systems are becoming increasingly complex.

Whereas the first Freedom House project, *Freedom in the World*, only differentiated political and civil rights, the organization’s *Nations in Transit* series, begun in 1995, now encompasses seven topic areas ranging from “democracy and governance”, “electoral process”, “independent media”, “civil society”, and “corruption” to “judicial framework and independence”. The *Bertelsmann Transformation Index*, which was introduced in 2003, evaluates nearly 40 indicators. The *Global Integrity Report*, which was first issued in the same year, tracks almost 300 indicators, but due to this in-depth level of investigation, only covers a smaller number of countries. In addition, there are several rankings that consciously focus only on certain aspects of a political system, such as freedom of the media or corruption.

The increasing number of indicators has also complicated the evaluation process. Whereas the first Freedom House ranking simply offered scores from 1 through 7, the newer indices are based on composite values which allow for a more differentiated ranking of all countries in the world.

All political country rankings primarily refer to the ideals of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and assess the extent to which individual countries meet these ideals. Perfect democracies with rule of law thus receive the highest marks, while dictatorships are generally at the bottom of the tables. Some rankings, however, also take into account the rulers’ management qualities or socio-economic indicators and criteria related to economic policy.

Most of the rankings are based on expert assessments. As a rule, one or two experts write up a country study, which is subsequently reviewed and, if necessary, corrected by other experts. The experts are generally well acquainted with the country in question in their capacities as scientists or journalists. Alternatively, some indices such as the *Corruption Perceptions Index* published by Transparency International evaluate opinion surveys collected from the population or from economic experts. As a reaction to the increasing number of indices, the World

Bank has created a meta-index. *Worldwide Governance Indicators* summarize the results of a total of 31 indices under the heading of a new index.

While many academics use country rankings in order to compare democratization processes internationally and to identify causal factors in successful transformations, others view such rankings as public-relations stunts or even as misleading. The limits of their explanatory power can be seen when comparing several indices that purport to measure the same variables. Since 2002, the freedom of the press has been assessed by as many as three independent rankings, namely *Freedom of the Press Rating* (Reporters without Borders), *Nations in Transit – Media*, and the *Press Freedom Index* (both from Freedom House). The significant discrepancies in the development of the individual indices for many countries illustrate the limitations of quantifying the freedom of the press.

Another weakness of country ratings is that shorthand representations in the news media overstretch the explanatory power of such indices. A good example for this is the *Corruption Perceptions Index*, published by Transparency International, which is regularly described in the mass media as a ranking of the world’s most corrupt countries, with development trends being indicated by comparison with the previous year. In its notes on the index, Transparency International denounces both of these uses as inadmissible. The index only measures perceptions, not actual corruption. Studies have demonstrated that this is a significant distinction. Direct comparisons with the values for the previous year are not admissible because of variations in sources used, moving averages over several years, and other methodological problems.

The World Bank also tones down the applicability of its *Worldwide Governance Indicators* in the fine print. The section on “frequently asked questions” states that changes in country rankings over time may be caused by four different factors. Three of these are related to changes in surveying methods and are not connected

to the development of the country in question. In conclusion, it is stated that two of these factors “typically only have very small effects on changes”.

In assessing the explanatory power of the country ratings, at least as important as methodological questions on indexing is the fact that they rely on the subjective appraisals of experts. These experts derive their opinions from journalistic publications and from their own personal assessments as academics, journalists, and business professionals; as a rule, they have no access to other non-public sources. At the same time, the experts, who generally only scrutinize one country, are limited in their ability to draw comparisons between different countries. Therefore, there is no guarantee that two

experts assessing different countries that are on the same level of development will award the same ranking to their respective countries.

Accordingly, the *World Bank*, for example, declares: “We recognize there are limitations to what can be achieved with this kind of cross-country, highly-aggregated data. Therefore, this type of data cannot substitute for in-depth, country-specific governance diagnostics as a basis for policy advice to improve governance in a particular country, but should rather be viewed as a complementing tool.” This is probably also why most organizations supply extensive country studies together with their country rankings. These, however, generally tend to be disregarded by the media and the general public.

About the Author:

Heiko Pleines is head of the Dept. of Politics and Economics, Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen. He works as an external expert for the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, the Global Integrity Report, and Transparency International.

Documentation

Political System-Related Country Rankings

Compiled by Stefan Forstmeier, Christina Hinz, Kateryna Malyhina, Jana Matischok, Ksenia Pacheco and Heiko Pleines

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Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI)

Prepared by: Bertelsmann Foundation (Gütersloh, Germany)

Since: 2003

Frequency: Every two years

Covered countries: 125

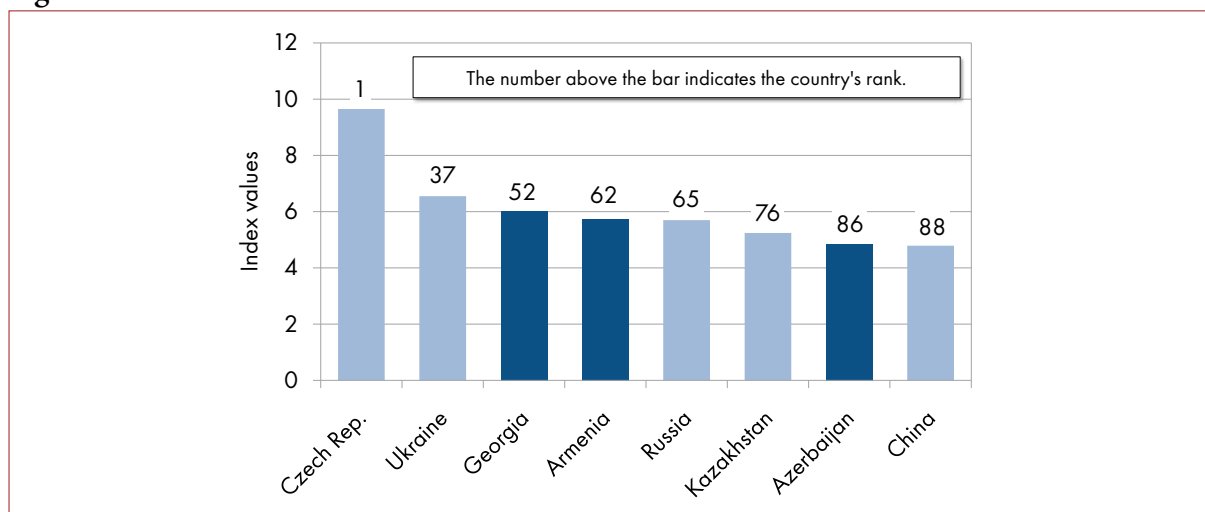
URL: <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de>

Brief description:

The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) is a global ranking that analyzes and evaluates development and transformation processes in transition and developing countries with more than 2 million inhabitants. The BTI analyzes the status of democratization and market liberalization as it evaluates actor's performance in managing these changes. The quantitative data is outlined in two parallel indices: the Status Index and the Management Index.

The Status Index shows the development achieved by states on their way toward democracy and a market economy. States with functioning democratic and market-based structures receive the highest score. The Status Index's overall result represents the mean value of the scores for the dimensions "Political Transformation" and "Economic Transformation". The mean value is calculated using the exact, unrounded values for both these dimensions, which, in turn, derive from the ratings for the five political criteria (Stateness; Political Participation, Rule of Law, Stability of Democratic Institutions, Political and Social Integration) and the seven economic criteria (Level of Socioeconomic Development, Organization of the Market and Competition, Currency and Price Stability, Private Property, Welfare Regime, Economic Performance, Sustainability).

The Management Index evaluates management by political decision-makers while taking into consideration the level of difficulty. The Management Index's overall result is calculated by multiplying the intermediate result with a factor derived from the level of difficulty evaluation. The intermediate result is obtained by calculating the mean value of the ratings for the following criteria: Steering Capability, Resource Efficiency, Consensus-Building and International Cooperation. The level of difficulty evaluation takes into account the structural constraints on political management. It is obtained by calculating six indicators that evaluate a country's structural conditions, traditions of civil society, intensity of conflicts, level of education, economic performance and institutional capacity.

Figure 1: BTI Status Index 2010. Index Values and Rank

Table 1: BTI Status index 2003–2010. Index Values and Rank

	2003 Index values (rank)	2006 Index values (rank)	2008 Index values (rank)	2010 Index values (rank)
Czech Rep.	9.6 (2)	9.23 (3)	9.56 (1)	9.65 (1)
Ukraine	5.9 (44)	6.96 (32)	6.93 (35)	6.55 (37)
Georgia	4.1 (79)	5.73 (61)	6.60 (38)	6.03 (52)
Armenia	5.7 (46)	6.26 (44)	6.41 (41)	5.75 (62)
Russia	6.0 (41)	6.14 (47)	5.94 (59)	5.70 (65)
Kazakhstan	5.1 (61)	5.48 (66)	5.53 (68)	5.24 (76)
China	4.2 (77)	4.42 (85)	4.70 (85)	4.79 (88)
Azerbaijan	4.4 (72)	4.51 (82)	4.51 (87)	4.85 (86)
Turkmenistan	3.3 (96)	3.20 (109)	3.39 (115)	3.55 (115)

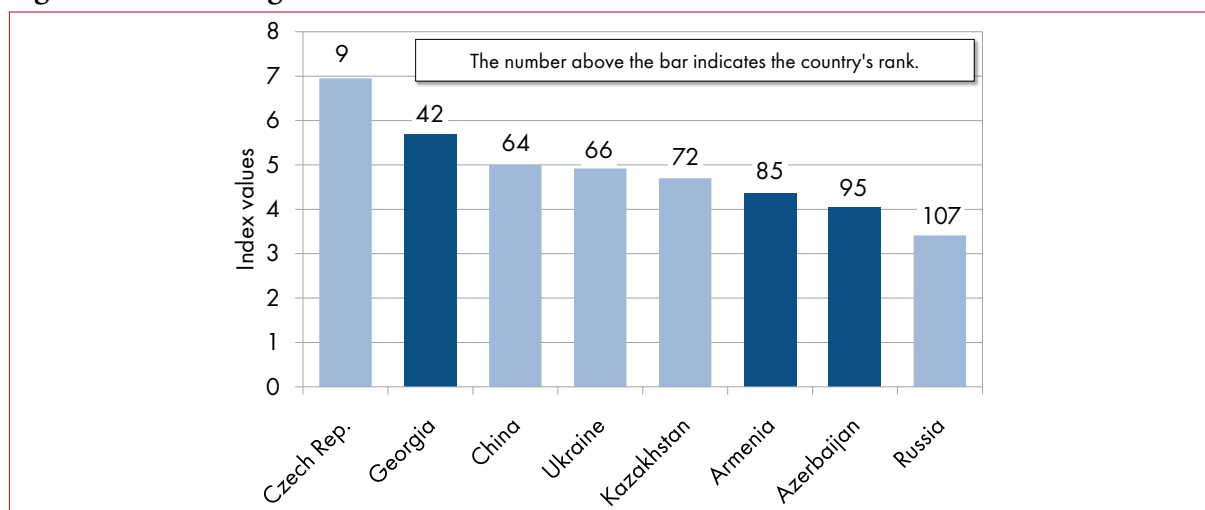
Figure 2: BTI Management Index 2010


Table 2: BTI Management Index 2003–2010. Index Values and Rank

	2003 Index values (rank)	2006 Index values (rank)	2008 Index values (rank)	2010 Index values (rank)
Czech Rep.	6.7 (12)	6.95 (10)	6.62 (20)	6.95 (9)
Georgia	2.3 (95)	5.91 (35)	6.36 (23)	5.68 (42)
Ukraine	5.1 (39)	4.69 (65)	5.21 (55)	4.92 (66)
Armenia	5.1 (39)	5.08 (56)	5.14 (56)	4.36 (85)
China	4.4 (55)	4.48 (70)	4.92 (67)	5.00 (64)
Kazakhstan	3.3 (76)	4.13 (82)	4.69 (76)	4.70 (72)
Russia	5.5 (31)	3.84 (87)	3.84 (98)	3.41 (107)
Azerbaijan	3.2 (79)	3.50 (95)	3.83 (99)	4.05 (95)
Turkmenistan	1.0 (110)	1.83 (116)	2.00 (121)	2.28 (119)

Freedom House: Freedom in the World

Prepared by: Freedom House (Washington, USA)

Established: 1972

Frequency: Annual

The data refer to the respective previous year.

Covered countries: at present 193

URL: <http://freedomhouse.org>

Brief description:

Freedom in the World is an annual comparative assessment of political rights and civil liberties. Each country and territory is assigned a numerical rating on a scale of 1 to 7 for political rights and an analogous rating for civil liberties; a rating of 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the least amount of freedom. These ratings determine whether a country is classified as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Seven subcategories, drawn from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, represent the fundamental components of freedom.

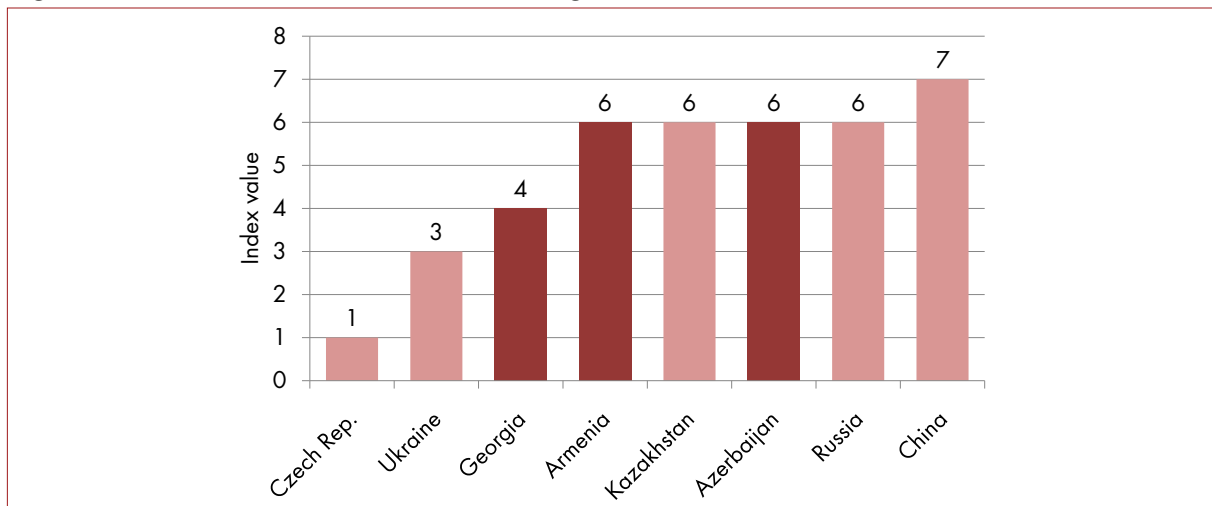
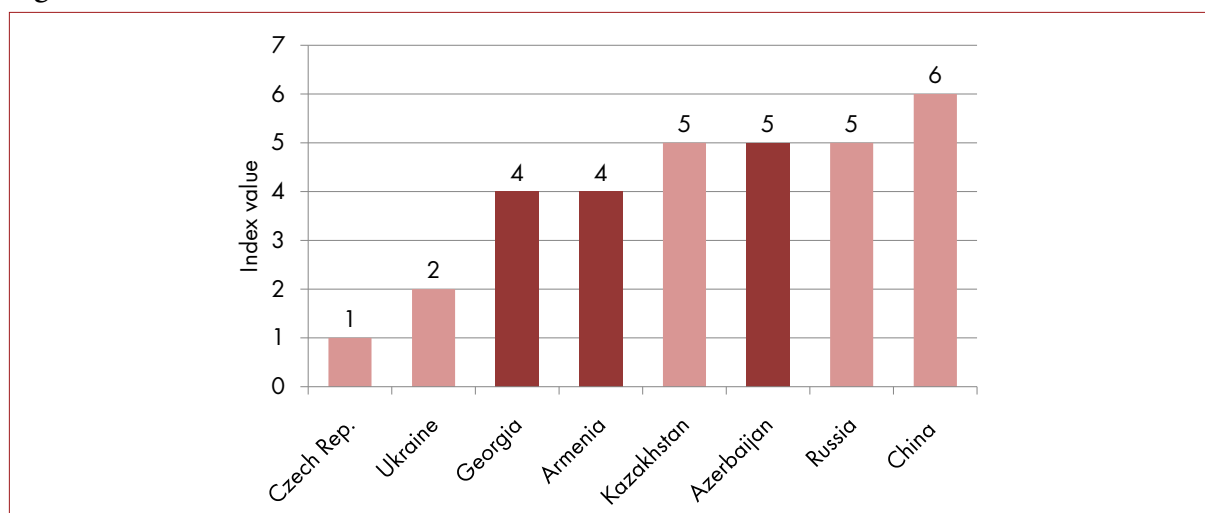
Figure 3: Freedom in the World: Political Rights 2010


Table 3: Freedom in the World: Political Rights 2002–2010

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Georgia	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4
Armenia	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
Azerbaijan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Figure 4: Freedom in the World: Civil Liberties 2010

Table 4: Freedom in the World: Civil Liberties 2002–2010

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Georgia	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4
Armenia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Azerbaijan	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Freedom House: Freedom of the Press

Prepared by: Freedom House (Washington, USA)

Established: 1980

Frequency: Annual

The data refer to the respective previous year.

Covered countries: at present 195

URL: <http://freedomhouse.org>

Brief description:

Countries are given a total score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) on the basis of a set of 23 methodology questions divided into three subcategories. The degree to which each country permits the free flow of news and information determines the classification of its media as “Free,” “Partly Free,” or “Not Free.” Countries scoring 0 to 30 are regarded as having “Free” media; 31 to 60, “Partly Free” media; and 61 to 100, “Not Free” media.

Figure 5: Freedom of the Press 2010

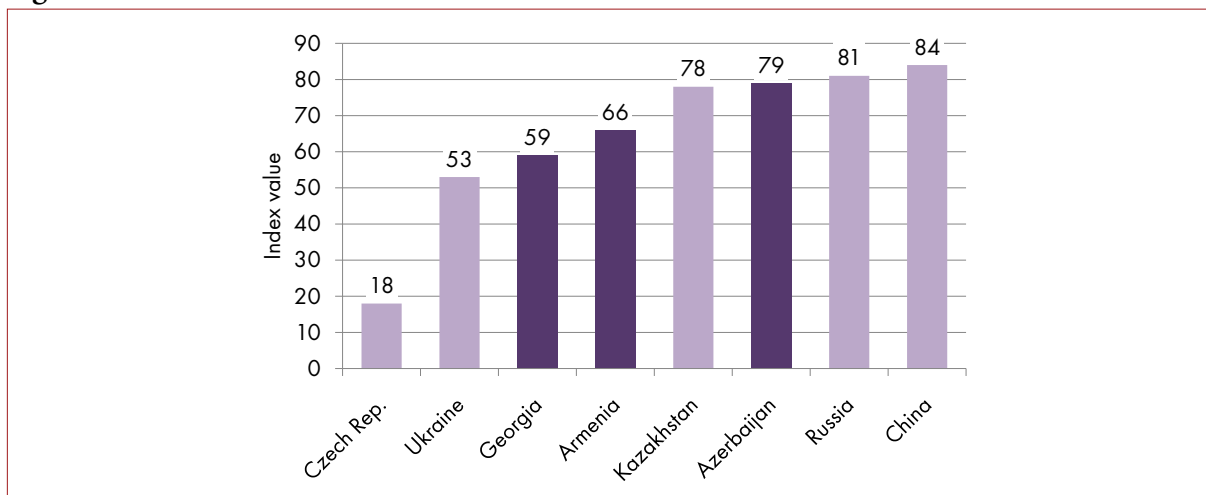
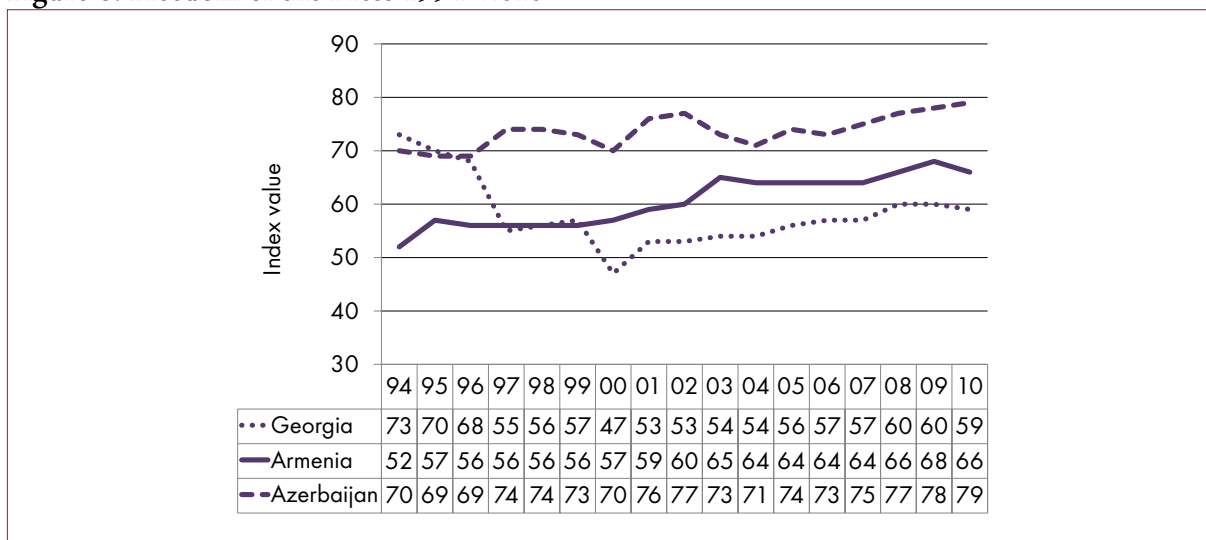


Figure 6: Freedom of the Press 1994–2010



Freedom House: Nations in Transit

Prepared by: Freedom House (Washington, USA)

Established: 1997

Frequency: Annual

The data refer to the respective previous year.

Covered countries: at present 29

URL: <http://freedomhouse.org>

Brief description:

Nations in Transit measures progress and setbacks in democratization in countries and territories from Central Europe to the Eurasian region of the Former Soviet Union. The rating covers seven categories: electoral process; civil soci-

ety; independent media; national democratic governance; local democratic governance; judicial framework and independence; and corruption. The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of democratic progress.

Figure 7: Nations in Transit: National Democratic Governance in 2009

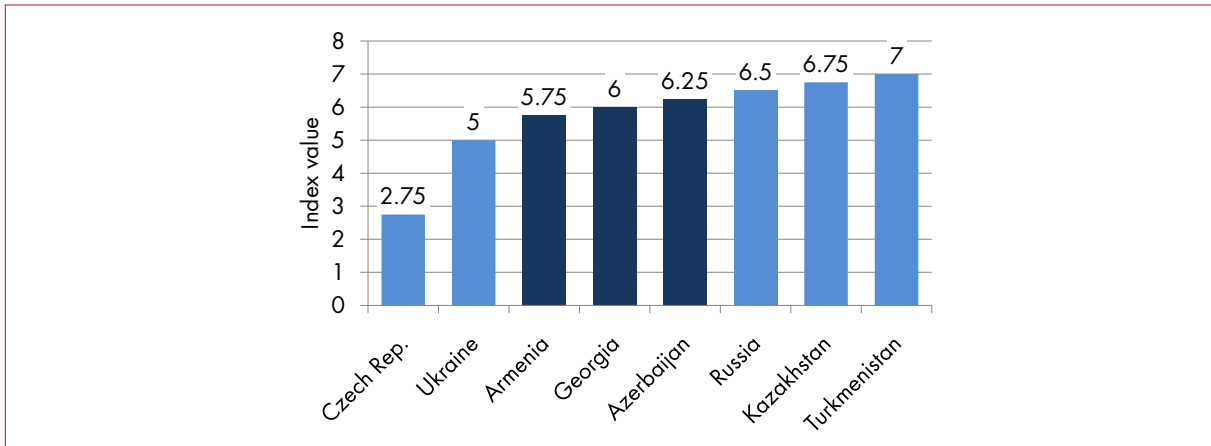


Figure 8: Nations in Transit: Electoral Process in 2009

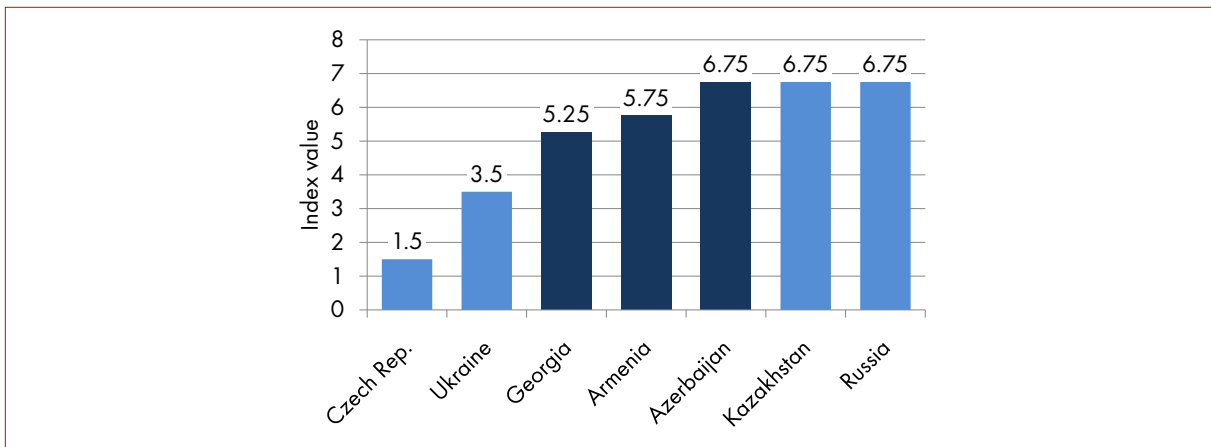


Figure 9: Nations in Transit: Electoral Process 1999–2009

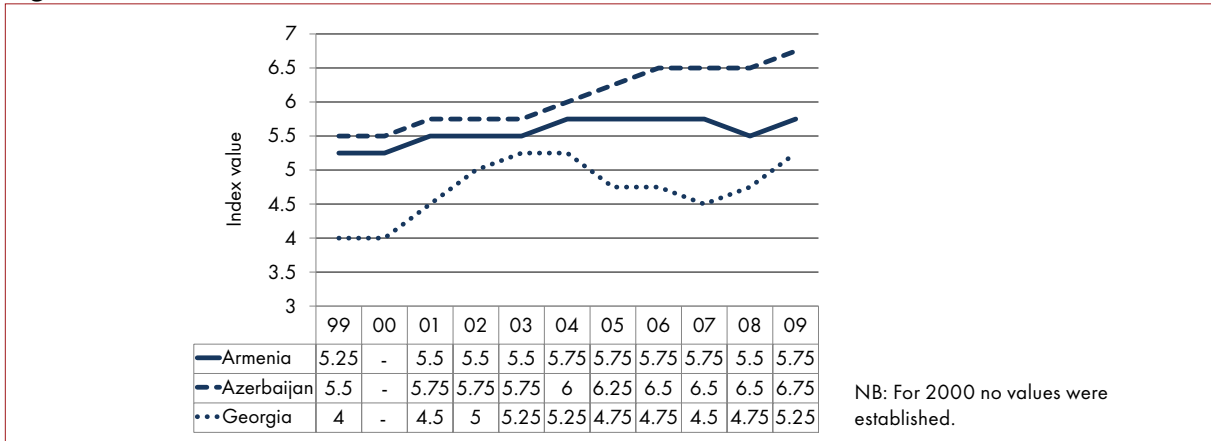


Figure 10: Nations in Transit: Civil Society in 2009

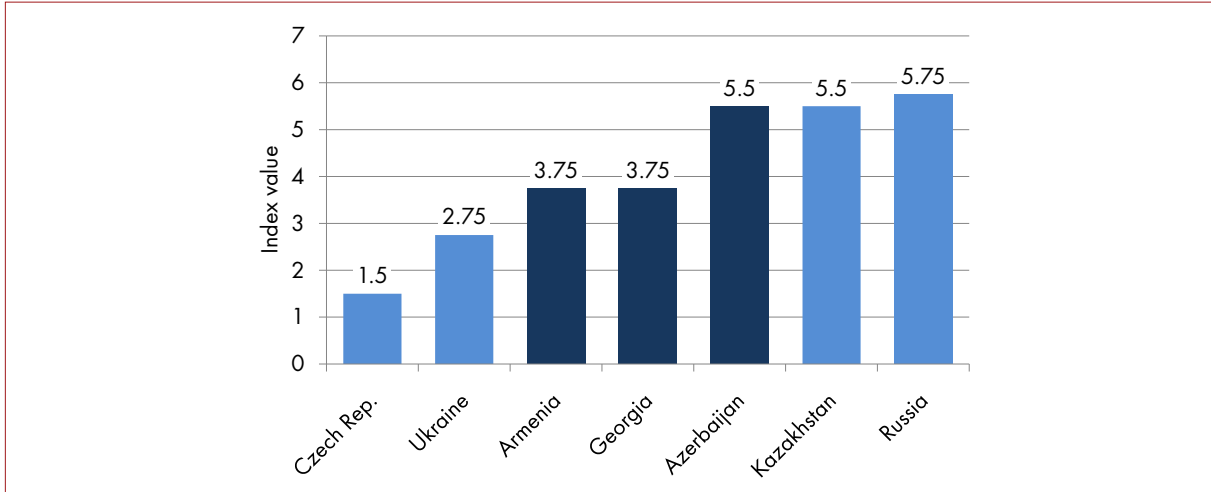


Figure 11: Nations in Transit: Civil Society 1999–2009

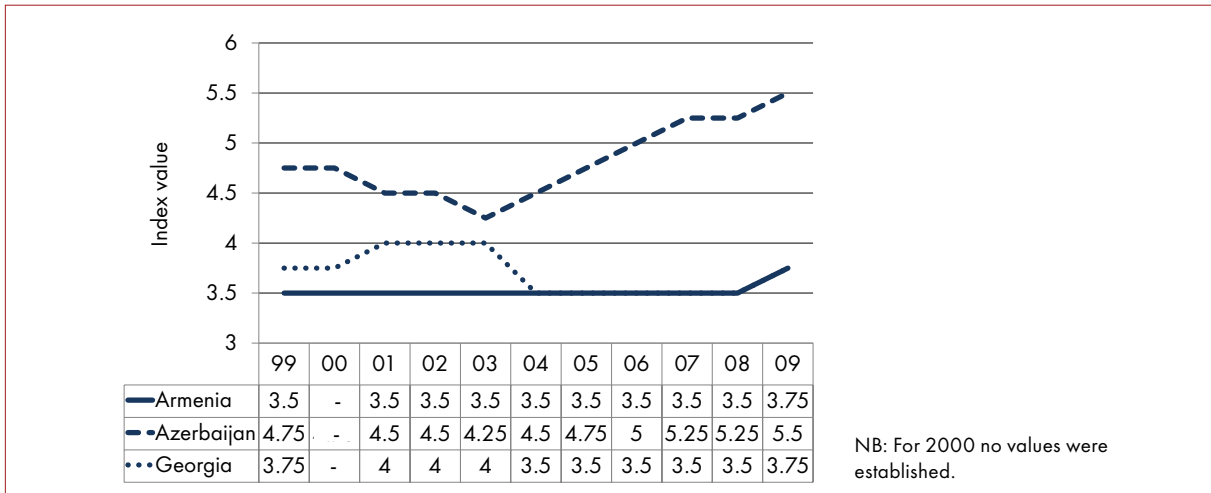


Figure 12: Nations in Transit: Independent Media in 2009

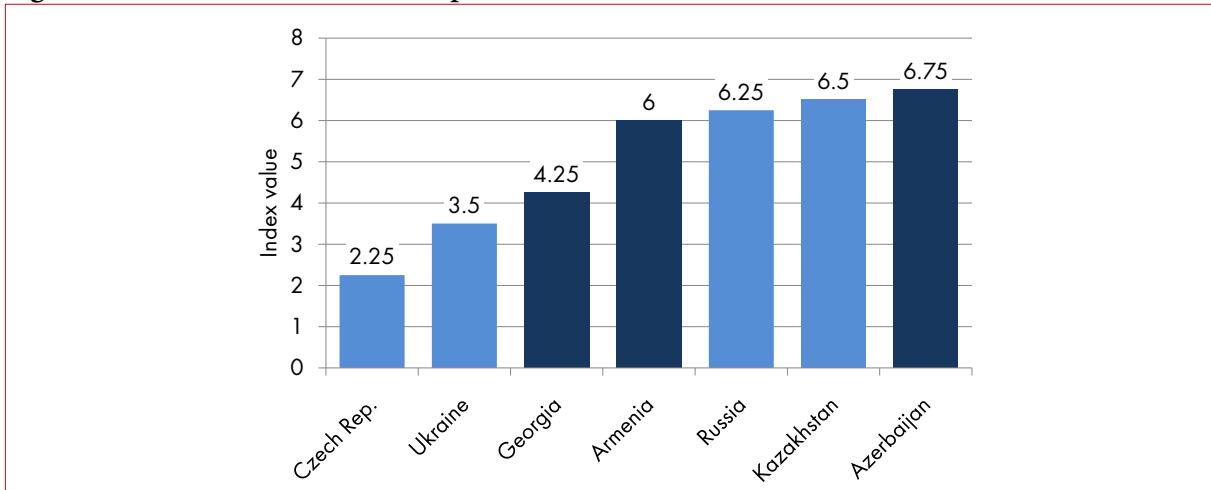


Figure 13: Nations in Transit: Independent Media 1999–2009

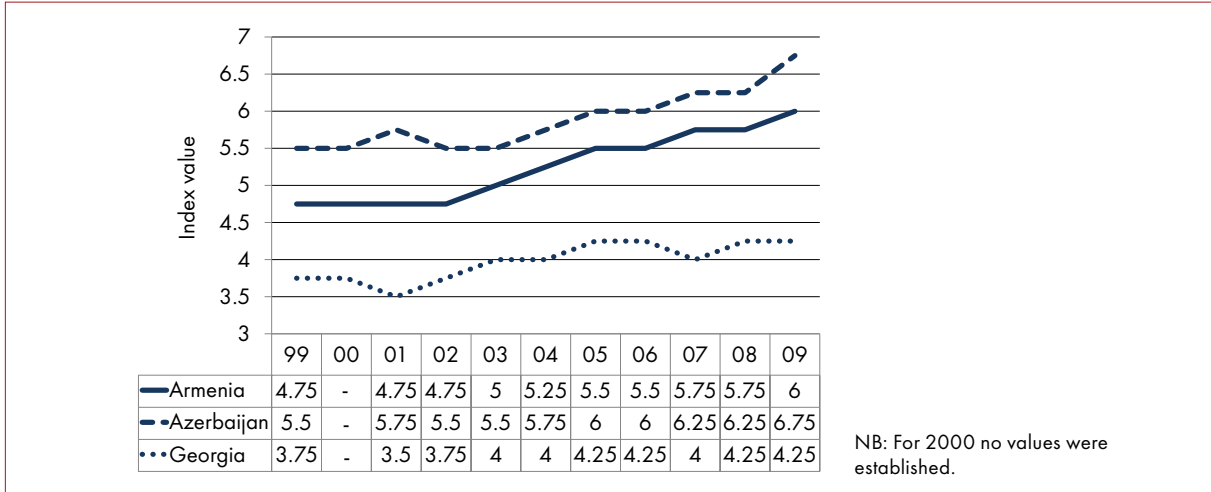


Figure 14: Nations in Transit: Local Democratic Governance in 2009

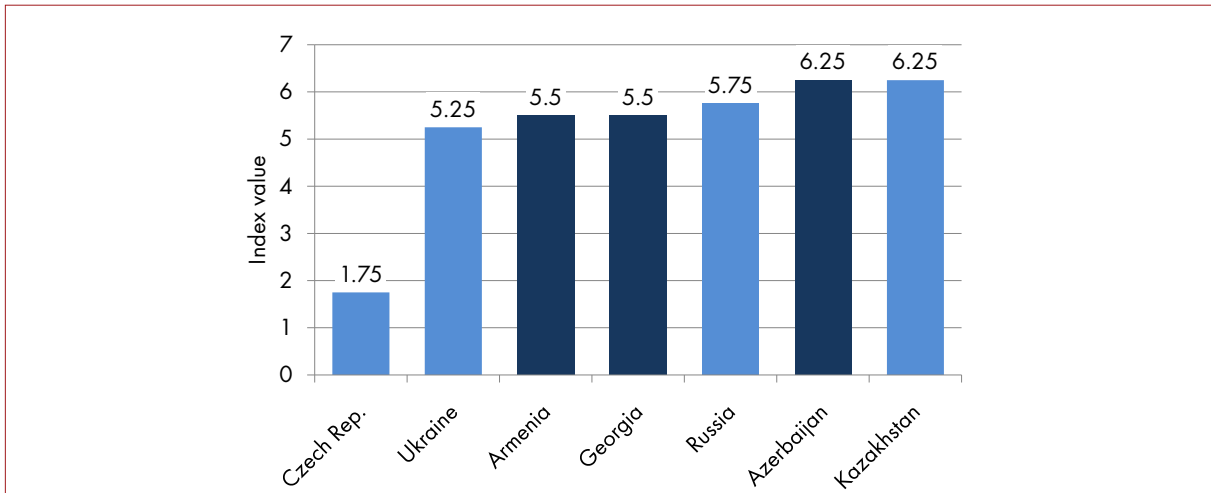


Figure 15: Nations in Transit: Judicial Framework and Independence in 2009

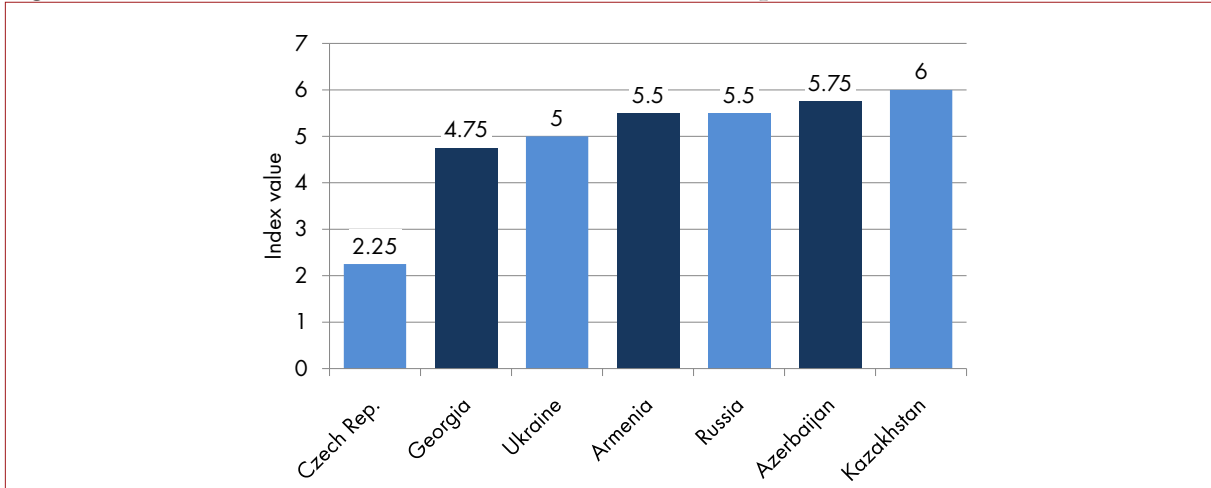


Figure 16: Nations in Transit: Judicial Framework and Independence 1999–2009

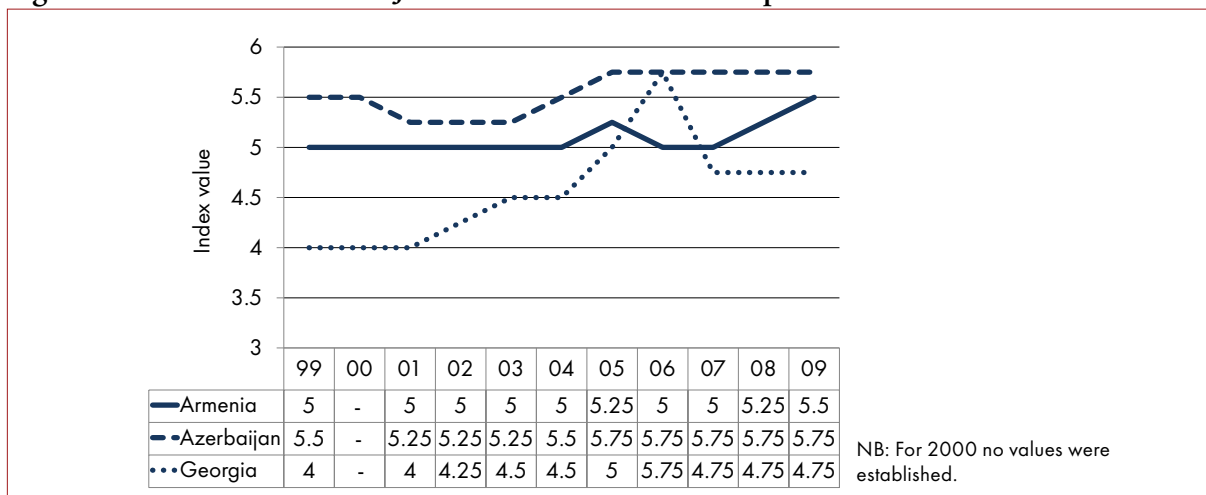


Figure 17: Nations in Transit: Corruption in 2009

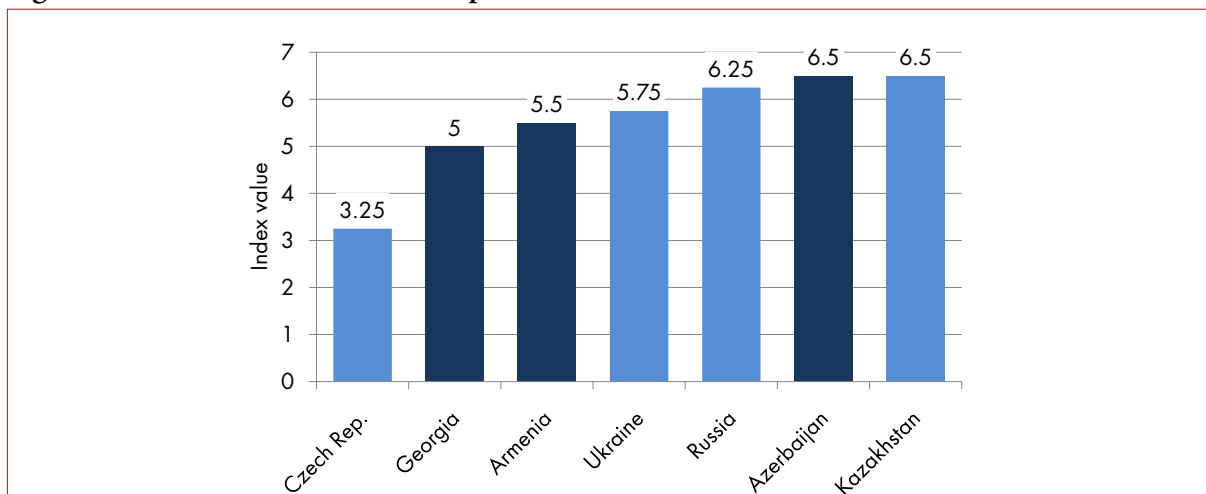
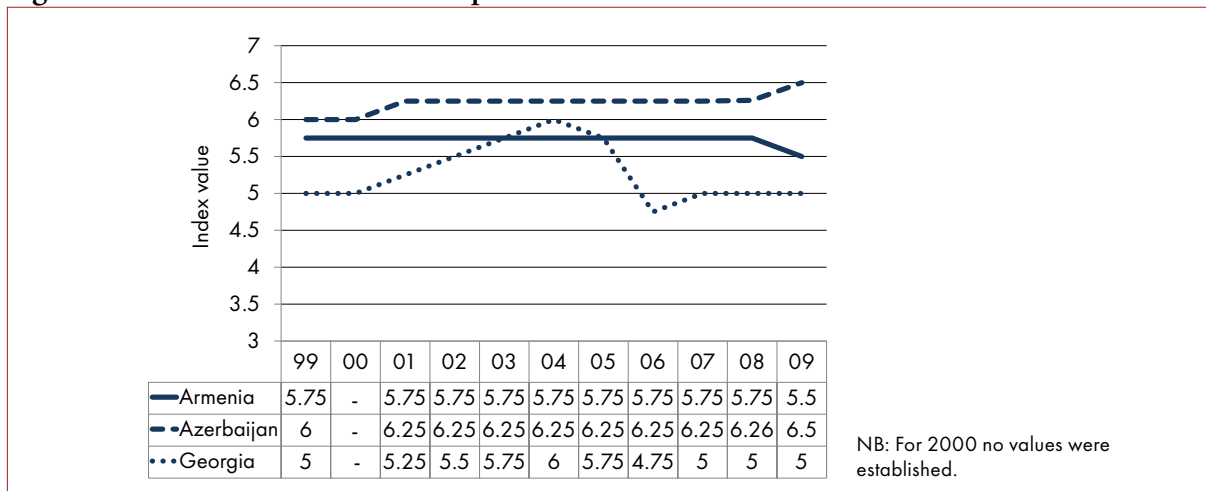


Figure 18: Nations in Transit: Corruption 1999–2009



Global Integrity Report

Prepared by: Center for Public Integrity (Washington, USA)
 Established: 2003
 Frequency: Aperiodic (2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)
 The data refer to the respective year under review.
 Covered countries: 25 (2004), 43 (2006), 55 (2007), 58 (2008)
 URL: <http://www.globalintegrity.org>

Brief description:

The Global Integrity Index assesses the existence and effectiveness of anti-corruption mechanisms that promote public integrity. More than 290 discrete Integrity Indicators generate the Integrity Index and are organized into six key categories (Civil Society, Public Information and Media; Elections; Government Accountability; Administration and Civil Service; Oversight and Regulatory Mechanisms; Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law) and twenty three sub-categories. Prepared by a lead researcher in the country and then blindly reviewed by additional in-country and external experts, the Integrity Indicators not only assess the existence of laws, regulations, and institutions designed to curb corruption but also their implementation, as well as the access that average citizens have to those mechanisms. There are two general types of indicators: “in law” and “in practice.” All indicators, regardless of type, are scored on the same ordinal scale of 0 to 100 with zero being the worst possible score and 100 perfect. “In law” indicators provide an objective assessment of whether certain legal codes, fundamental rights, government institutions, and regulations exist. These “de jure” indicators are scored with a simple “yes” or “no” with “yes” receiving a 100 score and “no” receiving a zero. “In practice” indicators address “de facto” issues such as implementation, effectiveness enforcement, and citizen access. As these usually require a more informed and subjective assessment, these “in practice” indicators are scored along an ordinal scale of zero to 100 with possible scores at 0, 25, 50, 75 and 100. The Global Integrity Index groups countries into five performance “tiers” generated from the scores assigned to the individual integrity indicators: very strong (90+), strong (80+), moderate (70+), weak (60+), very weak (60-).

Table 5: Global Integrity Report 2009

	Civil society and media	Elections	Division of powers	Public management	Control	Constitutional state	Average
Armenia	<i>not included</i>						
Azerbaijan	66	63	50	62	75	69	64
Georgia	81	79	65	75	68	73	73

Press Freedom Index

Prepared by: Reporters without Borders (Paris, France)
 Established: 2002
 Frequency: Annual
 September to September in the year of publication
 Covered countries: at present 173
 URL: <http://www.rsf.org>

Brief description:

The index measures the state of press freedom in the world. It reflects the degree of freedom journalists and news organisations enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the state to respect and ensure respect for this freedom.

Each one has a ranking and a score which together sum up the state of press freedom there. Reporters Without Borders compiled a questionnaire with 50 criteria for assessing the state of press freedom in each country. It includes every kind of violation directly affecting journalists (such as murders, imprisonment, physical attacks and threats) and news media (censorship, confiscation of issues, searches and harassment). The questionnaire was sent to partner organisations (14 freedom of expression groups in five continents) and 130 correspondents around the world, as well as to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists. A scale devised by the organisation was then used to give a country-score to each questionnaire.

Figure 19: Press Freedom Index 2009

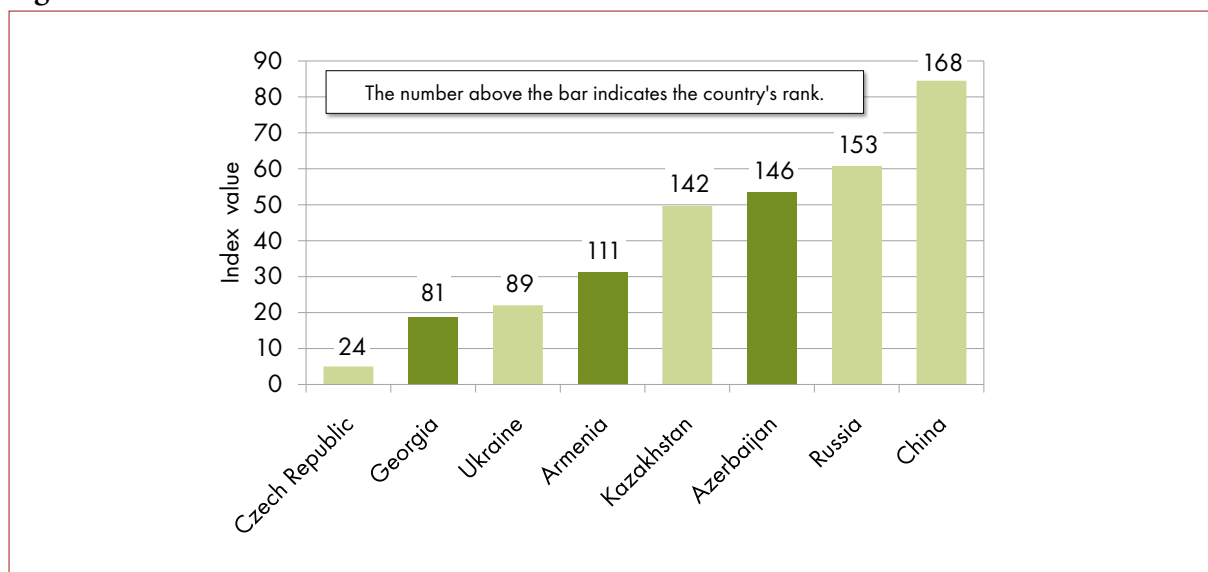
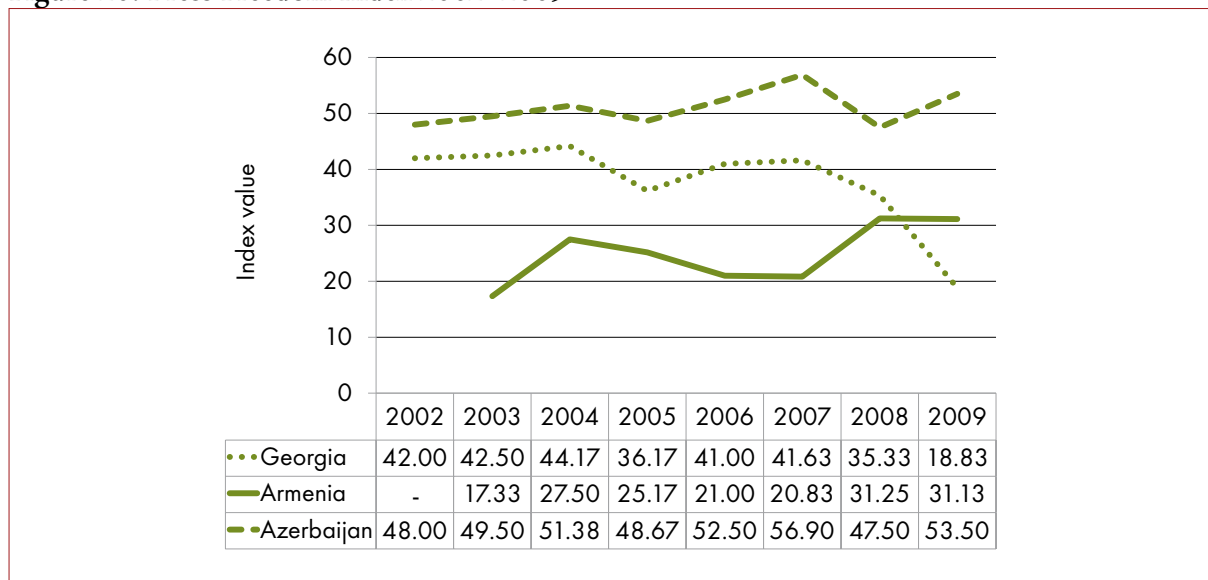


Figure 20: Press Freedom Index 2002–2009



Corruption Perceptions Index

Prepared by: Transparency International

Established: 1995

Frequency: Annual

Covered countries: at present 180

URL: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

Brief description:

The Corruption Perceptions Index is a composite index that draws on multiple expert opinion surveys that poll perceptions of public sector corruption in countries around the world. It scores countries on a scale from zero to ten, with zero indicating high levels of perceived corruption and ten indicating low levels of perceived corruption.

Figure 21: Corruption Perceptions Index 2009: Scores and Ranking

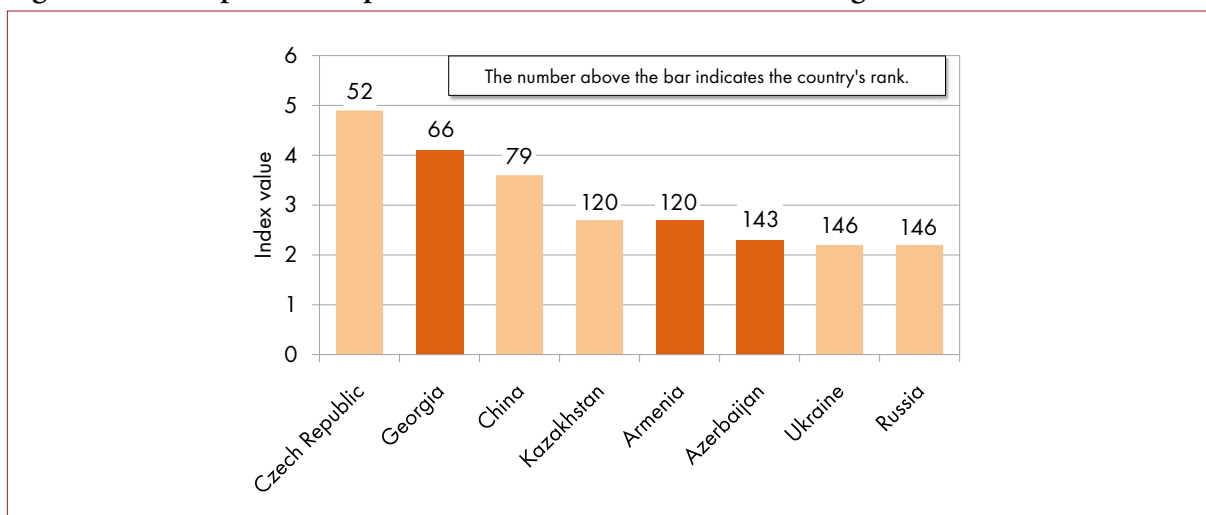
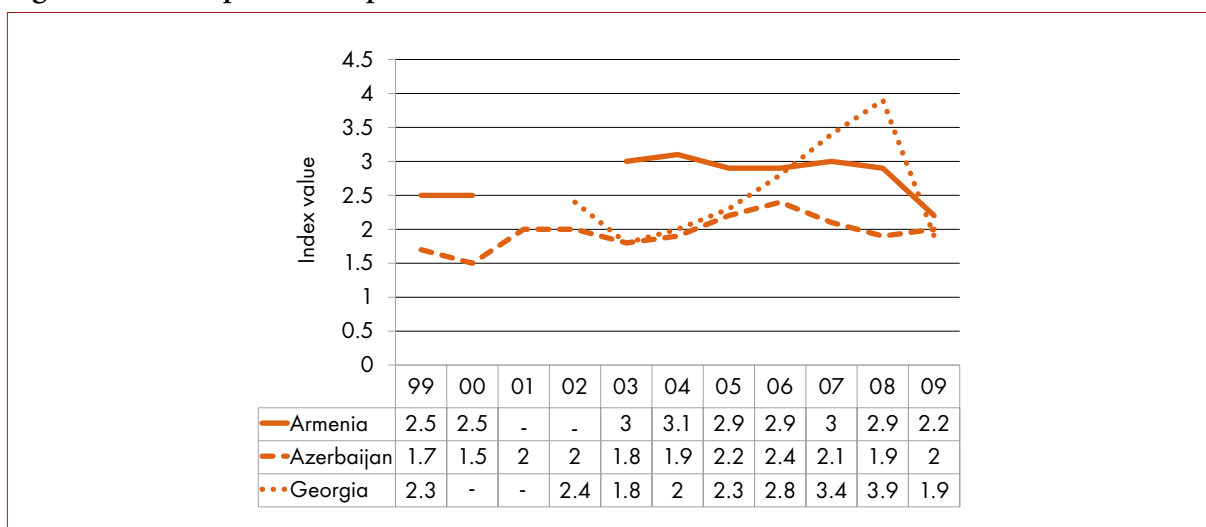


Figure 22: Corruption Perceptions Index 1998–2009



Worldwide Governance Indicators

Prepared by: World Bank

Established: 1996

Frequency: Annual, between 1996 and 2002 every two years.

The data refer to the corresponding year of evaluation and are published one year later.

Covered countries: at present 213

URL: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>

Brief description:

This index measures six dimensions of governance. The indicators are based on several hundred individual variables measuring perceptions of governance, drawn from 31 separate data sources constructed by 25 different organizations. The relevant index value shows the average of all relevant sources according to their reliability. Virtually all scores lie between -2.5 and 2.5, with higher scores corresponding to better outcomes.

Figure 23: Worldwide Governance Indicators 2008 (Average Values)

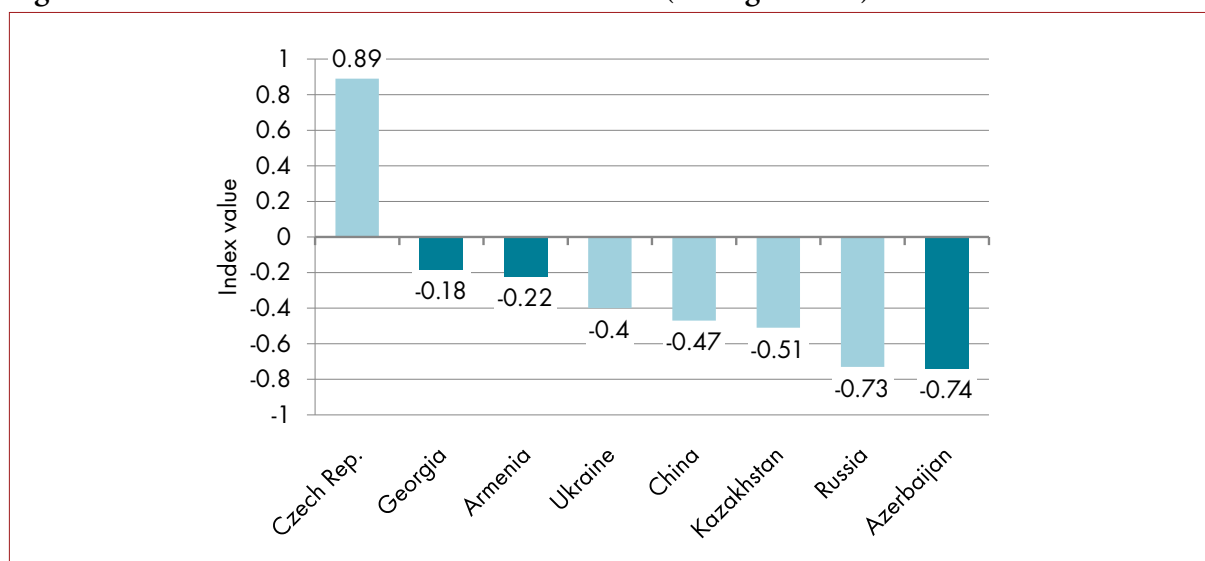


Table 6: Worldwide Governance Indicators 2008

	Voice and Accountability	Political Stability and Absence of Violence	Government Effectiveness	Regulation	Rule of Law	Control of Corruption
Armenia	-0.66	0.01	-0.07	0.32	-0.36	-0.54
Azerbaijan	-1.23	-0.48	-0.64	-0.32	-0.76	-1.00
Georgia	-0.25	-1.00	0.18	0.59	-0.34	-0.23

Figure 24: Worldwide Governance Indicators: Political Stability and Absence of Violence 1996–2008

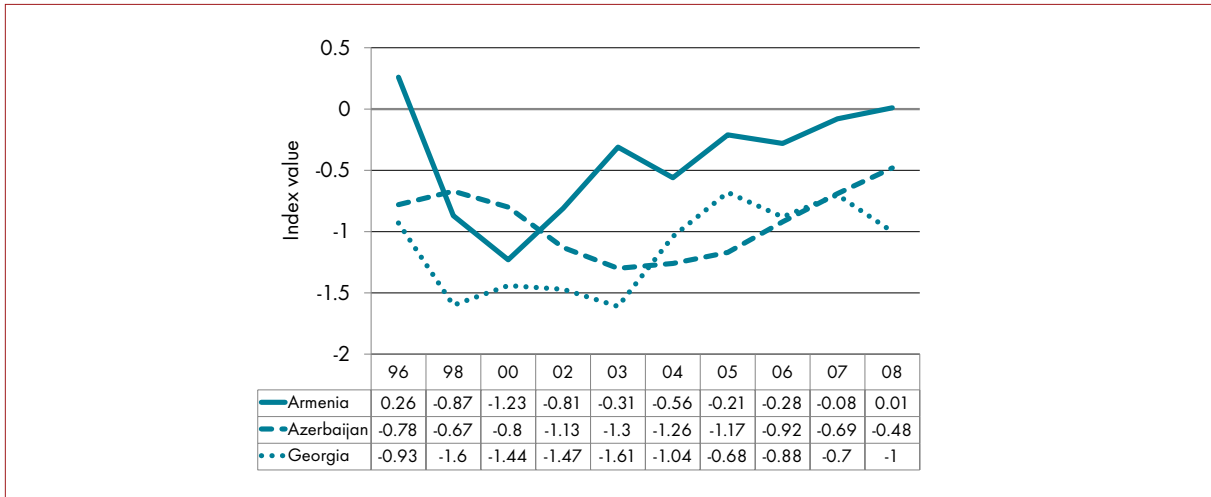


Figure 25: Worldwide Governance Indicators: Government Efficiency 1996–2008

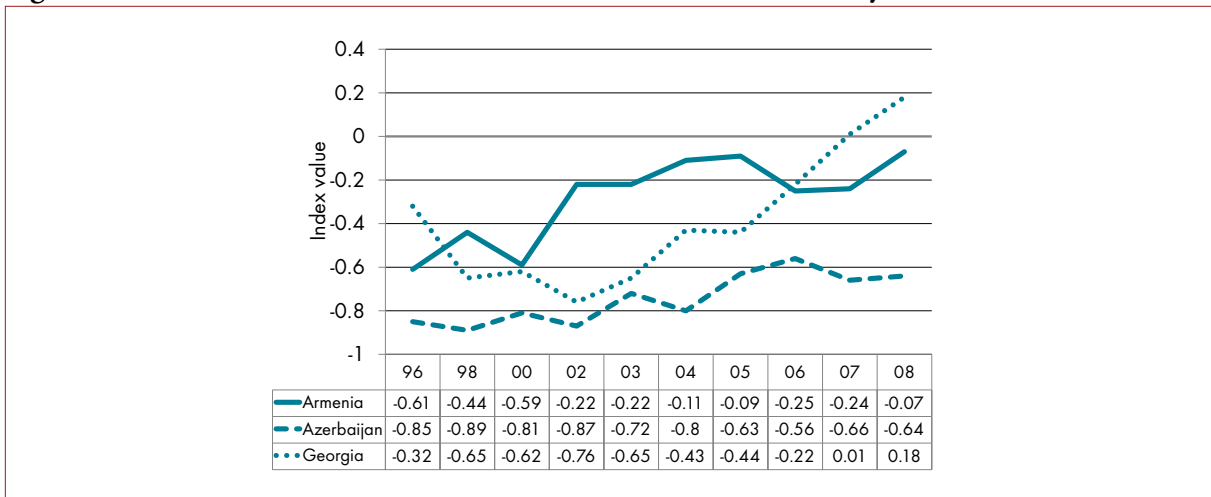


Figure 26: Worldwide Governance Indicators: Rule of Law 1996–2008

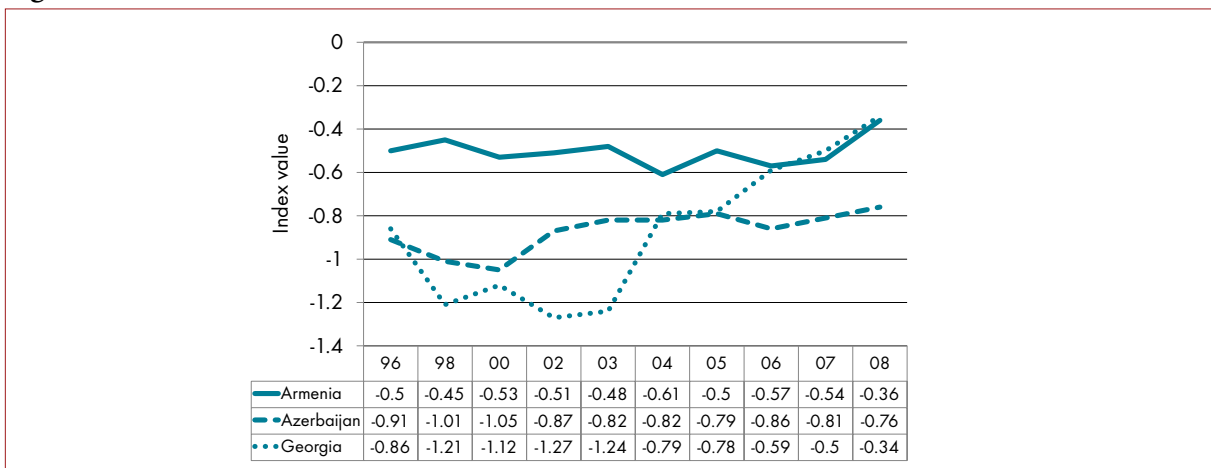
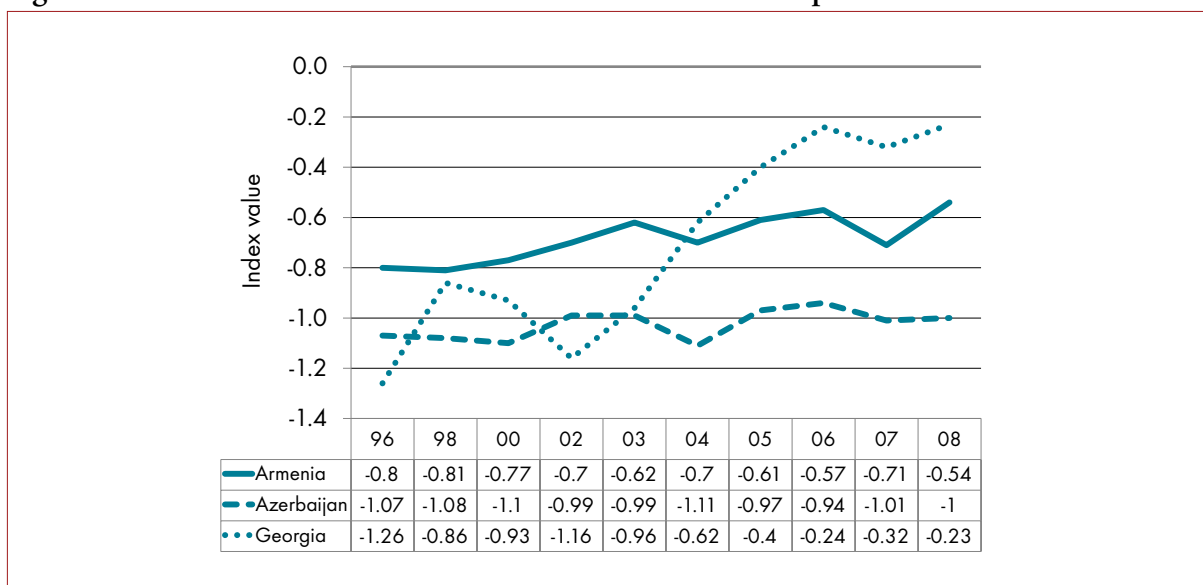


Figure 27: Worldwide Governance Indicators: Control of Corruption 1996–2008


Chronicle

From 20 April to 17 May 2010

20 April 2010	Georgia detains a Russian tanker in the port of Batumi and fines it for polluting the Black Sea
23 April 2010	Georgian People's Party leader Koba Davitashvili and Conservative Party leader Kakha Kukava visit Moscow for talks with Russian politicians and Georgian diaspora groups about the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia
23 April 2010	Georgia condemns David Wilshire, a monitor from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), for meeting with a South Ossetian official in the embassy of the breakaway region in Moscow
26 April 2010	Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church Catholicos Garegin II makes a first-ever trip to Azerbaijan and joins with Azerbaijan's Shi'a Muslim leader Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade and Russian Orthodox Church leader Patriarch Kirill in calling for a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
26 April 2010	Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze visits Turkey
27 April 2010	Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz says Turkey and Azerbaijan have reached an agreement on the price and volume of Azerbaijani gas to be shipped to Turkey through the Nabucco gas pipeline
27 April 2010	Georgia's ranking remains "partly free", the rankings of Armenia and Azerbaijan remain "not free" in Freedom House's survey of global press freedom (see also p. 24-25)
29 April 2010	Newly appointed Russian co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group Igor Popov visits Stepanakert in Nagorno-Karabakh
29 April 2010	Abkhaz leader Sergei Bagapsh says that he will not allow international observers on the territory of Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia and that he is "cautiously optimistic" over the possible recognition of Abkhazia by Ukraine and Belarus

(continued overleaf)

Chronicle from 20 April to 17 May 2010 (continued from previous page)

29 April 2010	Georgian ex-public defender and co-chairman of the opposition Alliance for Georgia Sozar Subari withdraws from the election race for the Tbilisi mayor's office
30 April 2010	Nine candidates apply to the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) to run for the May mayoral elections in Georgia's capital Tbilisi
1 May 2010	Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze visits Syria
3 May 2010	Iranian Interior Minister Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar visits Azerbaijan
5 May 2010	Leader of Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia Eduard Kokoity visits Russia to discuss Russia's assistance on reconstruction and infrastructure projects
6 May 2010	Policy Day is celebrated in Georgia
7 May 2010	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian meets with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Shanghai on the sidelines of the 2010 World Expo
7 May 2010	FBI director Robert Mueller visits Georgia and meets with Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili and Justice Minister Zurab Adeishvili
7 May 2010	Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili meets Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican
7 May 2010	A poll conducted by the Caucasus Resource Research Centers (CRRC) for the U.S. National Democratic Institute (NDI) shows a decrease in support for NATO membership in Georgia
8 May 2010	Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says that Moscow is ready for talks with "constructive forces" in Georgia
11 May 2010	Some Azerbaijani politicians blame Iran for contributing to the flooding of villages in southeastern Azerbaijan by manipulating reservoirs near Azerbaijan's border
11 May 2010	Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri appoints Giorgi Pertaia as business liaison adviser
11 May 2010	The State Commission for constitutional reform in Georgia agrees on the draft of a new constitution which would significantly increase the powers of the Prime Minister if adopted
12 May 2010	Azerbaijan, Georgia and Romania sign a protocol on forming a joint venture to export gas to Europe
12 May 2010	Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian reaffirm Armenia's commitment to closer relations with NATO during a meeting at the NATO headquarters in Brussels
12 May 2010	EU commissioner for enlargement and European neighborhood policy Stefan Füle says that Georgia is committed to take up the opportunities offered by the EU through the Eastern Partnership and European Neighborhood Policy
12 May 2010	Georgian media mogul and leader of the People's Orthodox Movement Malkhaz Gulashvili flees to Tskhinvali in South Ossetia
12 May 2010	Azerbaijani villages continue to be evacuated due to massive floods
13 May 2010	The EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) welcomes the release of three Georgians by the authorities of the breakaway region of South Ossetia
14 May 2010	Ukrainian Foreign Minister Konstantine Grishchenko says in an interview with the Russian newspaper <i>Kommersant</i> that Kyiv is not considering the recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

About the Caucasus Analytical Digest

Editors: Iris Kempe, Matthias Neumann, Robert Orttung, Jeronim Perović, Lili Di Puppo

The Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD) is a monthly internet publication jointly produced by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Tbilisi (www.boell.ge), the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de), the Resource Security Institute in Washington, DC (resourcesecurityinstitute.org/) and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich (www.css.ethz.ch) with support from the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Caucasus Analytical Digest analyzes the political, economic, and social situation in the three South Caucasus states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia within the context of international and security dimensions of this region's development. CAD is supported by a grant from the Heinrich Boell Foundation.

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Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Foundation, affiliated with the Green Party of Germany, is a legally independent political foundation. The regional office for the South Caucasus was opened in 2003. Its main objective is to contribute to the forming of free, fair and tolerant societies in the region. The Foundation supports and facilitates cooperation of individuals and organizations throughout the region who, based on the principle values of human rights, search for the change of undemocratic and intolerant attitudes in societies and politics, for the transformation of ethno-political and territorial conflicts into the direction of fair and non-violent solutions and for the sustainable development of people and communities. The Foundation encourages critical public debate to make processes of decision-making democratic and transparent.

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The Resource Security Institute (RSI) is a non-profit organization devoted to improving understanding about global energy security, particularly as it relates to Eurasia. We do this through collaborating on the publication of electronic newsletters, articles, books and public presentations.

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