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FEAR THE OUSTED! HOW VESTED INTERESTS FIGHT BACK

The Case of Georgia

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Abstract

The literature that discusses the anti-corruption reforms' failure in transitional countries departs from the assumption that the vested interests represent one of the critical stumbling-blocks for the reforms. The previous researches demonstrate that the political elite's reluctance towards the reforms significantly underpins power elites' success to preserve their vested interests. While some authors suppose that the reform-oriented political elite can break the vested interests' resistance in the long-run, Georgia's case highlights that the vested interests remain viable even when the reform-oriented new political elite directly attack and oust them from the profitable administrative and political positions. The thesis intends to respond research questions to what extent do the ousted power elites try to fight back to restore their lost privileges and profits; what types of methods do the ousted power elites use to restore their lost privileges and profits; and to what extent is the resistance of the ousted power elites linked to the backsliding of the anti-corruption reforms. The thesis built upon the qualitative research methodology, precisely, the process-tracing method and employs archival data.

Key words: anti-corruption reforms, vested interests, fight back, Georgia

“Corruption often has a “Robin Hood in reverse” character: the losers are likely to be the exceptionally poor, female, and marginalized, whilst the winners are already wealthy and part of an inefficient, swollen state” (Riley 1998).

1. Introduction

The anti-corruption reforms started in 1997 (World Bank 1997a, World Bank 1997 b) and from 1990 to 2006, it covered almost all regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South Asia (Webb 2008). However, regardless of the enormous efforts, the international donors have carried out for the success of the anti-corruption reforms, the reforms have failed in most cases and corruption has remained the most prevalent practice in the majority of reformist countries (Rotberg 2017, Mungiu-Pippidi and Johnston 2017, Kpundeh 2004, Mungiu-Pippidi 2011, Stephenson 2019, Hussmann and Hechler 2008, Mutebi 2008). Therefore, on account of unsatisfactory outcomes coming from the transitional countries, examining the critical reasons for why corruption remains the political and economic equilibrium in most developing countries represents one of the most discussed topics for political scientists, economists, and development pundits nowadays.

The scholarship that studies anti-corruption reforms' failure has emphasized that the measures were practically unable to change entrenched corrupt equilibrium in most reformist countries. The scholars mentioned the political will together with the vested interests of powerful groups and individuals, as well as a weak civil society as the reasons for the insufficient implementation of economic and public sector reforms in transitional countries until 1997 (Kpundeh 1998, Stefzel 1998, Johnston 1998, Riley 1998, Khan 1998, Eigen 1998). As it unfolds, the same reasons hinder anti-corruption reforms after 1997 (Kpundeh and Johnston 2002, Shah 2007, Mishra 2005, Meagher 2005, Amundsen 2006, Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008, Enweremadu 2012 etc). Some scholars also highlight particularistic culture (Mungiu-Pippidi 2006) and collective

action problem (Persson et al. 2013) as significant stumbling-block for the anti-corruption reforms.

The mentioned literature discusses the single dynamics of the anti-corruption reforms; precisely, it discusses why corruption is tenacious in most reformist countries. Alternatively, by focusing on the backsliding in the anti-corruption reforms, this thesis offers new insights into the anti-corruption research. The backbone of the idea of the thesis comes from the literature about vested interests. While the scholarship comprehensively describes to what extent influential individuals with a particular vested interest at stake hamper anti-corruption reforms to maintain corrupt equilibrium for their profit, they discuss only cases where the vested interests flourish under weak political elites. However, whether the influential individuals with vested interests continue to resist even when the government has declared their intention to eradicate corrupt practices in a country is missing from the literature. The question seems exceptionally relevant for the study of particular reformist countries where the direct fight against corruption was used, that, as conventional wisdom and empirical studies say, refers to measures with the primary goal of "frying the big fishes" and to oust the influential corrupt individuals from a new social and political narrative (Rothstein 2018, Quah 2008, Shah 2007, Meagher 2005, Johnston and Mungiu-Pippidi 2017). Therefore, the goal of the thesis is to contribute to the filling gap identified in the literature by answering the research questions:

- 1. To what extent do the ousted power elites try to fight back to restore their lost privileges and profits?*
- 2. What types of methods do the ousted power elites use to restore their lost privileges and profits?*
- 3. To what extent is the resistance of the ousted power elites linked to the backsliding of the anti-corruption reforms?*

The thesis presents the case of Georgia in order to find the answers to the research questions. Georgia represents a reformist country that used the direct fight against corruption with a particular target of "big fishes", many of which were arrested,

their property confiscated, and some of the former corrupt elites had to flee from the country after starting of the anti-corruption reforms (Mungiu-Pippidi and Johnston 2017, World Bank 2012). Georgia rapidly achieved significant success in terms of anti-corruption policy (World Bank 2012); however, the recent report of Transparency International evaluates the state of corruption of the country as "state capture" (Transparency International 2019). Therefore, Georgia represented the best case to study the backsliding in the anti-corruption policy and investigate the ousted power elites' contribution to this dynamics. The process-tracing method demonstrated that most of the ousted corrupt individuals started fighting back against the reformist political elite shortly after implementing the anti-corruption reforms. They used the then-valence issue, protection of human rights, as an umbrella requirement from the government and in this fight, they addressed mass protest rallies, financing of the protest movement, using of media, and anti-governmental rhetoric against the incumbents. The study also showed the extent to which the anti-governmental movement, fuelled significantly by the ousted corrupt elites, prepared a ground for the power transition that followed by the "state capture".

The contribution of the thesis is twofold: first, based on the actor-oriented approach, the thesis contributes to the broad literature on the failure of anti-corruption reforms by studying a specific part of it, understanding backsliding in the anti-corruption policy. Second, it displays the particular strategies of the influential individuals with vested interests to defend the profitable environment even when they are far from power.

The thesis is structured as follows: Section 2 offers an overview of the relevant literature about the anti-corruption failure; section 3 provides a discussion about influential individuals who are affected by the anti-corruption policies. It also highlights their particular capabilities related to the research questions; section 4 focuses on the research design; section 5 presents and discusses the results; section 6 offers a discussion of the findings; section 7 provides a discussion regarding the limitations of the study and the relevance of the generalization of the findings; section 8 concludes the thesis. The work ends up with suggestions for future research.

2. Previous Research

Following 1997, the international donors have been giving enormous financial, technical, and advisory support for the developing countries to eliminate the entrenched corruption, strengthen the institutional capability, and ultimately reduce poverty (Webb 2008). However, regardless of the colossal efforts the international society has put in the developing countries in terms of combating corruption, as it appeared recently the anti-corruption reforms have in most cases failed, and corruption has remained the most entrenched equilibrium in the majority of reformist countries (Rotberg 2017, Mungiu-Pippidi and Johnston 2017, Kpundeh 2004, Stephenson 2019, Mungiu-Pippidi 2011, Hussmann and Hechler 2008, De Maria 2010, Mutebi 2008). The failure of the anti-corruption reforms strongly associates with the reformist countries' deep-rooted political and cultural characteristics. As it appeared later, the World Bank and other donor organizations' misleading predisposition towards the reformist countries was a critical reason why the corrupt *modus operandi* did not change in most cases.

The international society built the modern anti-corruption measures upon Klitgaard's (1988) "principal-agent" approach (Estache et al. 2011, Riley 1998, Rothstein and Tanneberg 2015, Shah 2007). The approach per se was designed to combat the bureaucratic corruption. The principal-agent theory considers politicians or rulers as *principals* and civil servants and bureaucracy as *agents* (Rothstein and Tannenber 2015). The theory assumes that the *principal* embodies the public interest primarily because of the public mandate granted by the election, and the *agent*, who are not direct representatives of the voters, act out of self-interest (Klitgaard 1988). To limit the space for corruption, Klitgaard argues that principal needs to motivate agents (Klitgaard 1988) and his approach based on Gary Becker's (1968) model of the "crime and punishment"- if detected, the agents should risk punishment, they can be fined, fired, or even imprisoned (Rothstein and Teorell 2012, Shah 2007). It is worthy to mention that the universal acknowledgement of Klitgaard's principal-agent approach stemmed from the rising tide of democracy in Eastern Europe, Latin America and, even in some African and Middle Eastern countries that intensified in the late 1990s (Webb

2008, Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008, Riley 1998). The approach's general idea perfectly matched with the new development agenda.

The literature that discussed the particular environment in developing countries highlighted such political and cultural characteristics that might be detrimental to successful anti-corruption reforms. According to the principal-agent approach, the anti-corruption reforms' success depends on the benevolent government and their strong political will to combat corruption. However, the scholarship highlighted that the political will, defined as "the demonstrated credible intent of political actors" (Kpundeh, 1998), was lacking in the majority of the reformist countries. By 1997, the developing countries represented an amalgamation of less well-intending political leaders combined with various stakeholders' vested interests and weak constraining legislative and civic mechanisms. The results show that in most countries, the public sector reforms' success thwarted mainly because of the nonexistence of political and institutional commitment (Doig and Riley 1998; Stefzel 1998). Besides, scholars also explained the roots of weak political will and the sustained corrupt equilibrium in developing countries. Kpundeh (1998), Johnston (1998), and Riley (1998) argued that the general lack of civil liberties and political freedoms per se were a source of the low level of political competition in reformist countries; accordingly, political figures, bureaucrats and entire agencies could be involved in corrupt practice without any fear of losing power.

In addition to the lack of governments' political will toward the economic and then public sector reforms, the developing countries were also characterized by the problem of the vested interests that significantly hindered the reforming process. The rationale of the vested interests derives from the neoclassical political economy that asserts that the basic foundation of social analysis is rational individuals (Colander 1984). The logic of the rationally motivated individuals refers to protect their interests; generally, interest groups tend to influence the government to carry out the policy profitable for the narrowly defined interest groups and not for the whole society (Grindle 1989). The theories also explain the logic of government and why it adheres to the interest of narrow groups of individuals. Weak and unstable governments have their self-interest to maximize their hold on power (Theobald 1990). To ensure their self-

interests, weak governments use government resources to reward those who support their hold on power; in this way, political elites become less reactive to interest group pressures and more active in attempting to maximize their chances of staying in power by putting together supportive coalitions and using public resources to "buy" support (Grindle 1989). Vested interests can be reflected in rent-seeking and clientelism (Hutchcroft 1997). The literature on the negative dynamics of the economic and institutional reforms in developing countries before 1997, talks about the substantial vested interest of individuals and groups who pressured the government (Kphundeh 1998, Johnston 1997, Khan 1998).

Apart from a lack of political will, the developing countries also characterized by a weak civil society. The anti-corruption reforms envisaged that non-state agents as civil society and media would also held government accountable by monitoring and spreading information about their possible corrupt bargains (Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008). However, before 1997, the researchers had spoken about vulnerable civil societies in developing countries (Johnston 1998, Khan 1998, Eigen 1998, Theobald 1990). Also, the scholars highlighted the high level of public mistrust in the reformist countries (Riley 1998) that would reduce the chances for public mobilization against corruption.

As the recent developments illustrated, the anti-corruption efforts enacted after 1997 were inherently misleading. The rising tide of democratization could not cure the problems related to the lack of political will, vested interests, and vulnerable civil society in developing countries, as the international donors hoped. The anti-corruption reforms came upon precisely the same political and social resistance as it happened in the case of economic and public sector reforms before.

The general critics towards the approach of the anti-corruption reforms that were designed for the developing countries refer to the "one-size-fits-all" approach. The scholars argue that the anti-corruption reforms' success was questioned since the efforts were initially based on the wrong expectations. Anti-corruption reforms represented a duplication of knowledge, ideas, skills and techniques from the industrialized world to transitional and developing economies; however, the donors did not consider the "country externality" that arises when the design is taken from a

different national context (Doig et al. 2005, Heeks 2006, Gupta 2017). Besides, the scholars argue that the problem of the "one-size-fits-all" is an appraisal of the principal-agent approach as a universal model for anti-corruption initiatives. They argue that the model is designed to combat bureaucratic corruption, however, as it was shown, in developing countries corruption cases mostly related to government per se (Riley 1998, Kpundeh 1998). When the highest political elites are deeply entrenched in corrupt networks, international commitments cannot change the fundamental incentives, even if they help to implementing new laws (Gutterman and Lohaus 2019). Accordingly, when there is a gap between design and reality, the greater the risk of failure, Heeks (2006) pointed out regarding the failure of the anti-corruption reforms.

The literature, that discuss the failure of the anti-corruption reforms after 1997, point out the particular cases when the anti-corruption reforms failed because of the lack of the political will rather than of a principal-agent problem that would be easily dealt by legal-technical intervention. Shah (2007), Mishra (2005), and Meagher (2005) speak about weak commitment of national leaders to combating corruption and mention that the endemic corruption mostly relates to the highest levels of government and many senior officials in reformist countries. The anti-corruption reforms faced a similar difficulty in the cases of Ghana (Kpundeh and Johnston 2002), Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, and Nigeria (Kpundeh 2004). Further, the literature mentions that the political elite intentionally maintain autocratic tendencies in reformist countries to prevent room for horizontal accountability mechanisms and to keep the beneficial equilibrium for themselves (Heeks and Matinsen 2012). In Uganda, an undeveloped system of check and balances, weak political parties, and mostly manipulated elections are the reasons for the country's entrenched political corruption (Amundsen 2006). Insufficiently established institutional and legislative "infrastructure" is a reason for rampant political corruption in Moldova and Ukraine (Emerson et al. 2017), as well as in Guatemala, Bulgaria, Bangladesh (Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008), Brazil (Prado 2016), Nigeria (Enweremadu 2012), and in Thailand (Mutebi 2008).

It is worthy to mention that the problem of vested interests marked in reformist countries after 1997, as well. "Corruption itself can be an institution", in some cases becoming even more powerful than those aimed at bringing it under control, and maybe

all too capable of pushing back against reform, Teorell (2007) explains corruption's organizational structure. The literature on the role of vested interests has noted that vested interest groups found new opportunities to reconstitute themselves to be "new but old players" in the political and economic reform processes during the transition period. They became government officials, law enforcement officers, business actors, including the top-tiered public, police force, and military officers who together consolidated the power of vested interests (Hadiz 2006, 2013, Umam et al. 2020). In most African countries, highly powerful stakeholders in ruling parties, governments, and the judiciary firmly adhered to the status quo and resisted change to serve and protect their political-economic interests (Haarhuis and Torenvlied 2006). Lawson illustrates Kenya's case where corrupt elites from the government and judiciary system delegitimized the anti-corruption agency and eventually the head of the agency had to flee from the country (Lawson 2009). A similar case was in Indonesia, where ordinary police, prosecutors, and judges regained exclusive control over corruption cases, undermined the independent anti-corruption agency's legitimacy, starting blaming the agency's leaders in human rights violations and other misconducts, and arrested them (Butt 2011). The anti-corruption reforms encountered the problem of vested interests in Thailand, Ukraine and Honduras as well where a robust business-politics nexus were able to capture critical state and regulatory processes that enabled them to block new reforms (Pasuk and Baker 2005, Mutebi 2008, Lough and Dubrovskiy 2018, Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008).

Furthermore, in reformist countries, civil society also remained weak to affect government accountability. The conventional wisdom suggested that vital civil and political liberty, press freedom, and the freedom to assemble would overcome the issue of vested interests (Rose-Ackerman 1999). However, because of the autocratic restrictions, lack of funding or their low organizational capacity, the civil society organizations did not develop in most areas of the developing world (Fritzen 2005, Johnston and Kpundeh 2002, Kpundeh 2004, Enweremadu 2012, Lough and Dubrovskiy 2018, Johnston 2019, and Umam and Head 2020). Besides, the nonexistence of the independent media complicated the efficacy of the vertical accountability mechanism (Enweremadu 2012).

In the context of the anti-corruption reforms' failure, the scholars also highlight cultural traits and social-political mistrust that presumably hindered the reforms. Mungiu-Pippidi (2006) argues that corruption is not a political issue, but it stems from society's particularistic organizational model. On the example of Post-Communist nomenklatura, she explains the particularism as a social organization system where individuals, who enjoy this privilege link to status-based groups, have much greater access to public goods, and people even do not expect to be treated fairly in these societies. Some scholars also highlight the significance of social and political trust in terms of combating corruption (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005); in this regard, Persson et al. (2013) explained the anti-corruption reforms' failure by a collective-action problem and argued that in countries where corruption is a social norm of behaviour and everyone expects that everyone is corrupt, those expectations make corruption more entrenched.

To conclude, the nexus of political will, vested interests, and vulnerable civil society caused the failure of the anti-corruption reforms in most of the transitional countries. The international donors did not take developing countries' cultural and political characteristics into consideration. While they perceived bureaucratic corruption as a critical pillar for the anti-corruption reforms, a reluctance of reformist countries' governments made the anti-corruption reforms fail. Apart from the nonexistence of political will, vested interests immensely contributed to keeping a corrupt equilibrium in countries. Unfortunately, vulnerable civil society could not balance the substantial nexus of weak political will and vested interests for the anti-corruption policy's benefits.

The mentioned literature discusses the single dynamics of the anti-corruption reforms; precisely, it discusses why corruption is tenacious in most reformist countries and remains a room for the actor-oriented study of backsliding in the anti-corruption reforms. The literature illustrates that corrupt influential individuals' vested interest represents one of the critical reasons why corruption remains rampant in most reformist countries. Despite the democratic agenda created a possibility for power transition, the old political and economic elites could get a "new form" and take part in political life from various governmental systems. In that way, they could resist the new

reforms and maintain a profitable status quo. It is worth mentioning that the literature on anti-corruption reform's failure only illustrates the cases where weak and unstable new governments allow powerful political and economic elites to preserve their vested interests. While some authors suppose that a coalition of reform-oriented interest groups can deal with the problem of the vested interests in a long-run perspective (Haarhuis and Torenvlied 2006), the information whether vested interested powerful groups start counterattack even under the condition of strong political will; and to what extent their fight back may relate to backsliding in the anti-corruption policy, is largely missing in the literature.

3. Theoretical Framework

This section further discusses the phenomenon of vested interests and defines influential individuals or groups of individuals interested in maintaining corrupt equilibrium for their benefits. Based on behaviourist psychology and rational choice theories, the theoretical framework assumes that the vested interests may intensify and start counterattack when the reform-oriented new political leadership oust them from privileged positions.

Social science scholars have studied influential individuals' phenomenon and referred them to a common name of "elites". The prominent Italian sociologist Pareto was one of the first scholars who defined that small group of people with the term "elites". Pareto describes these people as representatives of an upper stratum of the society who have a disproportionate amount of wealth, privileges, and significant social positions (Pareto 1961). Later, sociologist Charles Wright Mills narrowed down the definition to leading representatives of the bureaucracy and powerful interests groups and, by considering their influence over the governmental system, referred them to a common name of "power elites" (Mills 1956). Mills argues that this particular group of society distinguished from a lower stratum of society by wealth and networking (Mills 1956). Wedel (2017) names the influential individuals as "shadow elites" and defines

them more by their *modus operandi* and organizational structure than by family, class background, wealth, or institutional position. It should be noted that Mills describes precisely influential individuals who represent a bureaucracy and interest groups, while Pareto and Wedel discuss generally elite groups, including non-governing elites (Pareto 1961) and social influencers (Wedel 2009, 2017), that is why, this thesis uses the term "power elites" when it mentions influential individuals who have vested interests.

The literature also discusses the power elites' *modus operandi* that ensures their vested interests' protection in the long term:

Power elites act as a team

They know each other, they always take one another's interests into account, and that type of relationship guarantees the security of their significant properties and high income, Mills (1956) argues. Besides, power elites can consolidate and aggregate their interests; precisely, they can transform their pursuit of self-interests into group action to achieve individual goals (Grindle 1989).

Power elites can manipulate political issues for their economic and political benefits

By using a populist political approach, powerful interest groups can trigger the government to protect their interest on the governmental agenda; precisely, they raise issues to public attention and place them on the government's agenda (Grindle 1989).

Power elites can be mediators between the government and the private sphere

Power elites fuse state and private interests; they assume a tangle of roles across state and private spheres to achieve their goals, exhibiting scant loyalty to official organizations on behalf of which they work, notably of government; access to insider information is their most vital resource (Wedel 2017).

Power elites can mobilize other influential parts of society

Power elites' roles as connectors among government, corporate, and non-governmental organizations and venues and their networks vis-à-vis each other allow

them to mobilize consultancies, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations when they need (Wedel 2017).

They are flexible.

Power elites are labelled "flexians" as they work together in longstanding groups, and thus multiplying their influence (Wedel 2009).

Theories on anti-corruption policy-making depart from the assumption that the success of political-administrative reforms heavily depends upon the existence of a political will and political power of these vested interests (Geddes 1991, Rose-Ackerman 1999, De Mesquita et al. 2000). As mentioned in the "previous research" section, this assumption is valid since, under the condition of weak political will, power elites perfectly utilized their *modus operandi* and protected the profitable status quo in most cases of the reformist countries. However, with regards to the success of political-administrative reforms, some authors also assume that in the long run, this small but influential group is supposed to be counteracted by a coalition of reform-oriented interest groups (Haarhuis and Torenvlied 2006). Robert Klitgaard, an expert on anti-corruption strategies, argues that the vested interests can be only challenged by "frying the big fishes" that generally remain untouchable under the condition of weak political will (Kpundeh 1998).

The history highlights several best cases when the reform-oriented new political elite broke the vested interests' resistance, straightforwardly attacked powerful corrupt individuals, and ousted them from influential and profitable positions. This approach significantly contributed to the success of the anti-corruption reforms, and those countries rapidly overcame the issue of corruption accordingly, in for example Singapore, Hong Kong, Estonia, and Georgia. Singapore represented the first country that used direct fight to eradicate entrenched corruption in the country. Quah (2017) contends that what distinguished Singapore from its neighbours was that "the atmosphere entirely (was) against corruption". In Singapore, the anti-corruption agency, Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, investigated powerful officials, and almost all were sentenced for crimes related to corruption cases (Shah and Huther

1999, Quah 2008, Quah 2017). Similarly, in Hong Kong, the investigations led to the prosecution and conviction of senior officials and powerful businesspeople (Shah and Huther 1999, Meagher 2005). Later, post-Soviet Estonia enacted a radical act, Prime Minister Mart Laar and his colleagues considered communist institutions to be entirely corrupt and removed all old officials from the office (Mungiu-Pippidi and Johnston 2017). Georgia implemented the same practice after the Rose Revolution; the government declared war against corruption particularly targeting the “big fishes”. Corrupt power elites were excluded from the social and political sphere as many of them were arrested, fined a significant amount of money, and the prosecution confiscated their property (World Bank 2012). All these countries employed a direct method of anti-corruption policy that refers to attacking corrupt behaviour through the blitzkrieg method, with increased control, stricter punishments, and less discretion of the agents (Rothstein 2018). It is worth mentioning that those methods transformed the countries from being very corrupt to becoming clean very soon (Eigen 2002, Johnston and Mungiu-Pippidi 2017, World Bank 2012).

The examples of countries illustrate that the research focus should narrow down to the cases where the government used the direct method against corruption. The direct method of the anti-corruption policy refers to more radical act and it is different from the indirect method, which mostly entails methodically changing social norms by enhancing intra-governmental control mechanisms between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary (Fjeldstad and Isaksen 2008). The indirect method of anti-corruption policy also includes improving the provision of a functioning system of taxation, gender equality in the public sector, and free and universal public education (Rothstein and Tanneberg 2015). Accordingly, in the case of the direct methods, a government attempts to change "standard operating procedures", a manner of behaviour between culture and formal institutions (Hall 1993) in a rapid and forcibly way. The process exceptionally harms the former corrupt individuals who represent the primary targets in the war against corruption; on the one hand, the government directly attacks them to show citizens that the rule of games have changed; on the other hand, reversed political equilibrium no longer provides profitable deals for the old corrupt

elites. The given circumstance leaves room for speculation that the ousted power elites may start to fight back to restore the lost status quo.

Behaviourist psychology and rational choice theories also support the assumption that ousted power elites may start counterattack against new equilibrium to restore the lost status quo. George Homans (1974) incorporated Skinner's (1935) famous theory about conditioning in his social theory and emphasized the particular circumstances that may cause humans to fight back. Homans (1974) argues that reinforcing stimulus changes humans' behaviour. He discriminates positive stimulus in two ways: intrinsic reward and the avoidance of the punishment; similarly, according to him, there can be two classes of punishment: intrinsic punishment and the withholding of reward. Homans' findings suggest that increasing positive stimulus pushes humans to perform naturally, while increasing a negative stimulus generates changes in humans' natural behaviour (Homans 1974). Interestingly, regardless of punishment that causes changes in human beings' natural *modus operandi*, Homans argues that the punishment tends to produce "hostile emotional behaviour in the person punished, and we must be prepared to cope with it" (Homans 1974). Homans's findings make a point of departure for explaining the power elite's behaviour after their forcible exclusion within the anti-corruption policy. The direct method against corruption refers to changing "standard operation procedures" mainly by punishment and radical policy that tend to be the same as "conditioning" with a negative stimulus in behaviourist psychology. To use the terms of behaviourist psychology, government use the "intrinsic punishments" against corrupt power elites and arrest them or fine them; or government employs another type of punishment, "withholding reward" and limits the corruption sources for targeted power elites. By considering Homans's finding, in any case, the corrupt power elites are directly punished or simply, the reversed political equilibrium limits corruption opportunities for them. Based on this, I posit that the ousted power reveals their "hostile emotional behaviour" towards the new political system to some extent.

Besides, the rational choice theory that labels humans as *homo economicus* and considers economic calculations as fundamental underpinnings of humans' social and political interaction (Gershlager 2005, Coase 2013) also provides an opportunity to

speculate that ousted power elites may start to fight back to restore their economic privileges.

To summarize, power elites characterized by a unique *modus operandi* that ensures the protection of their vested interest in the long run. Precisely, they cooperate with one another; have good networking with both sides, government and private sphere; they manipulate with political issues and mobilize society. While the direct method of the anti-corruption reforms aims to punish power elites for breaking the vested interests' resistance, based on behaviourist psychology and rational choice theory, I expect that punishment can produce power elites' hostility towards the new political system and the ousted power elites start counterattack against it. Presumably, they use all their capabilities mentioned above to take advantage in the fight.

By considering the theories presented in the chapter, the study employs the inductive methodological approach. In the given section, the sociological literature emphasizes the individual capacities of power elites. At the same time, behavioural psychology and rational choice theory explain why the power elites can use their capabilities and resist the new political system in the context of successful anti-corruption reforms. However, the theories do not provide any empirical or normative arguments on whether the ousted power elites start fighting to restore the profitable equilibrium in a country or how the power elites use their capabilities to reach the goal. Accordingly, the identified gap in the current state of knowledge impelled the study to use the inductive methodological approach with its ultimate purpose to theory-building. Due to the chosen methodology, the research questions are more open-ended than they would be in the deductive method.

The three questions I would like to answer in this thesis are:

4. *To what extent do the ousted power elites try to fight back to restore their lost privileges and profits?*
5. *What types of methods do the ousted power elites use to restore their lost privileges and profits?*

6. *To what extent is the resistance of the ousted power elites linked to the backsliding of the anti-corruption reforms*

4. Methodology

4.1. Method of Analysis

The thesis employs a case study as a method of analysis. This particular method refers to a detailed examination of a single case's historical episode (George and Bennet, 2005; Gerring, 2009). The characteristics of the research questions underlay the method of analysis for the thesis. The research questions mentioned above require a heuristic study. In this regards, a case study method has its significant advantage to serve the heuristic purpose; precisely, when there is a "black box" in the existing knowledge with regards to the causal mechanisms or causal path, the case study offers a possibility to inductively identifying additional factors and generating hypotheses (George and Bennet, 2005). Thus, I argue that the utilization of a case study design is the most suitable method of analysis for the given study.

4.2. The Case of Georgia

From successful anti-corruption reforms to "state capture"

The characteristics of the anti-corruption reforms and following events in Georgia are what drove the case selection for the study. The theoretical framework highlights that together with Singapore, Hong Kong and Estonia, Georgia is a country which used the direct method against corruption. However, Georgia is a deviant case. Among the mentioned countries that used the direct fight against corruption, only Georgia has been characterized with "clear signs of state capture" and backsliding in the anti-corruption policy recently (Transparency International – Georgia 2019,

Transparency International 2019. Since the anti-corruption reforms resulted in the exclusion of former corrupt power elites from the centre of power in Georgia, the country represents rigorous source material for investigating research questions through actor-oriented approach.

In Georgia, the anti-corruption reforms started at the end of 2003, when a new political elite, the United National Movement came to power after the Rose Revolution. The Rose Revolution was named the "anti-corruption revolution" since its anti-corruption rhetoric represented a triggering force of the peaceful demonstrations that eventually brought the old regime down.

The United National Movement (the UNM), a splinter group from the established party, Unions of Citizens of Georgia, initially developed as an anti-corruption party. From 2001 the UNM politicized corruption, a then-neglecting issue, and explicitly started exposure of the powerful corrupt clans in the highest level of the government and blaming President Shevardnadze in protected them (Civil Georgia, Sept 5, 2001). "Georgia without corruption" was a galvanizing slogan for the United Movement in the run-up to the elections of 2003 (World Bank 2012). When the Shevardnadze government cheated in the election, the same slogan represented the single dominant theme for the protests against the fraudulent election (World Bank 2012). Accordingly, Georgia's Rose Revolution was defined as an anti-corruption revolution as citizens of Georgia rose against President Shevardnadze and the entrenched corruption he symbolized (Shelley 2007, Nodia 2005). The anti-corruption rhetoric eventually granted popular support for UNM in the 2004 presidential elections, and the UNM's presidential candidate, Mikheil Saakashvili, got 97 per cent of votes (Tabula, Aug 17, 2016). It is worthy to mention that European Parliament's Election coordination group evaluated 2004 Presidential elections' process as "as closer alignment with European standards for democratic elections" (Volcic 2004).

The failed state institutions, almost empty treasury account and fear of vested interests resulted in employing the direct method against Georgia's corruption. By 2004, the population was suffering from public officials, who profited enormously from the state because of their status (Shelley 2007). Corruption was endemic at almost all government agencies, citizens had to pay bribes for all essential services (World Bank

2012). Due to rampant corruption in the tax services, it was almost impossible to fill the budget deficit and consequently, increasing arrears on public goods and services, salaries, and pensions were a normal part of life (The World Bank 2012). In the interviews for the World Bank's (2012) report, the key founders of the Georgian anti-corruption reforms argued that a blitzkrieg approach was the only way to curb corruption fast and resist the vested interests.

Georgia started fighting against administrative corruption through policy, energy sector, education system, and custom service reforms (The World Bank 2012). Besides, the breaking resistance of the vested interests represented one of the significant targets of the country's anti-corruption policy. The prosecutions of Georgia's corrupt power elites occurred for two main reasons: replenishing the empty treasure account and changing a society's mindset (World Bank 2012). The government believed that together with the respective anti-corruption measures, attacking power elites would be a strong message that would alter the mindset; the government wanted everyone to understand that the rules changed (World Bank 2012).

The government adopted two critical amendments in the legislation against corrupt power elites. The first amendment referred to the confiscation of public officials and their relatives' illegal and unjustified property (World Bank 2012), while the second one entailed the principle of "plea bargain". According to an amendment to the Georgian Criminal Procedural Code adopted on February 13, 2004, if a defendant agreed to cooperate with the prosecution, admitted to committing the crime and provided the investigation body with accurate information on a heinous crime or a crime committed by an official authority, the prosecutor had the power to annul the conviction (OECD 2005). However, even in the case of cooperation, a defendant had to pay a particular amount of money favouring the state budget or ceding property to the state (OECD 2005). The government claimed that similar bargains were standard before; however, it happened illegally between a prosecutor and a defendant (Civil Georgia, Feb 2, 2004). Elimination of corruption in law enforcement institutions through the legalization of the existing bargains and increasing the budget amount was the government's critical argument favouring the "plea bargains" principle (Civil Georgia, Feb 2, 2004). As a result of the new criminal code, the police hit hard at well-known corrupted individuals.

Television news captured scenes of masked and armed police forcibly arresting officials from the former government and other influential people; however, those arrested could buy their freedom through plea bargain arrangements (World Bank 2012). The government extracted significant resources from those arrested to begin replenishing the empty treasury account through the mentioned amendments to the legislation. Simultaneously, they also sent an unequivocal message that even the powerful were punished and that corruption would no longer be tolerated (World Bank 2012).

It is noteworthy that Georgia achieved significant success in the fighting against corruption, and the country was often named a shining example of how to root out corruption in the post-Soviet space (Mungiu-Pippidi and Johnston 2017). Transparency International's reports also showed stable, positive dynamics in the CPI (Global Corruption Barometer 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009; Transparency International 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018). Despite the mentioned reports reflected some concerns with regards to political corruption that caused mainly by a lack of appropriate legislation, the report of 2019 was different. In 2019, Transparency International and Transparency International Georgia explicitly pointed out that Georgia was backsliding in the anti-corruption reforms and the country showed clear signs of state capture (Transparency international 2019, Transparency International - Georgia 2019). It is essential to mention that Transparency International's local and international bureaus linked the anti-reform backslide and the state capture to the private interests of Georgian Oligarch, Bidzina Ivanishvili, who bankrolls the ruling party, known as the Georgian Dream that came into power in 2012 through a free and fair parliamentary election (EAG 2012) and rules the country to the present.

Since Georgia has recently shown clear evidence of exploitation of the state resources by a predatory group of local elites, the question arises whether the ousted power elites contributed to the country's regression from the regional epitome of the successful anti-corruption reforms to the state capture and backsliding in the anti-corruption policy to some extent. By considering the existence of the power elites who forcibly were ousted within the anti-corruption reforms, an in-depth investigation of Georgia's case has the potential to provide an actor-oriented explanation for the backsliding in the country's anti-corruption policy.

4.3. Research Design

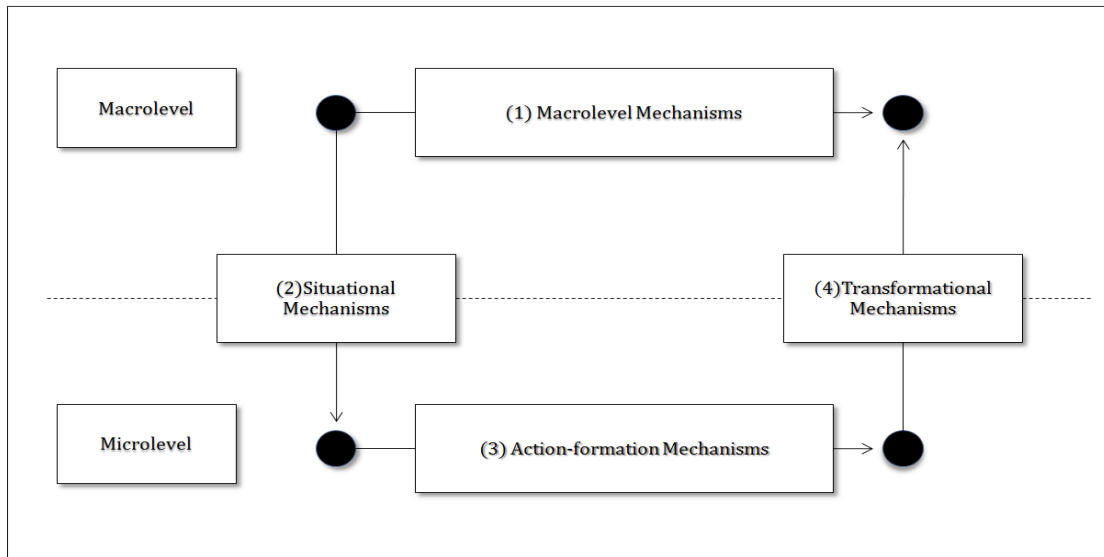
Process-tracing represents a methodological tool for the thesis. Process – tracing studies the phenomenon over time by giving close attention to events' sequences (Collier 2011). Process-tracing has a significant value as, based on the inductive observation, it enables a researcher to clarify the particular mechanisms that link factors with each other (George and Bennet 2005). By considering the research questions, the process tracing represents a valid tool for the given work. In the thesis, the unit of analysis is power elites ousted by the anti-corruption reforms' direct method. Accordingly, to investigate whether ousted power elites started fighting against new equilibrium, what particular strategies they used for taking advantage over the new political system, and whether their counterattack relates to backsliding in the anti-corruption policy, the study envisages a heuristic examination of the ousted power elites' biographical data from the end of 2003 to 2012. The time frame for the study is designed according to the political development in Georgia. As it was mentioned in the previous section, in 2012 the power transition happened in Georgia and the Oligarch Ivanishvili's –backed political party, Georgian Dream came into power. Since 2012 to present, Georgian Dream runs the country and Bidzina Ivanishvili per se is linked to the state capture (Transparency International-Georgia, 2019).

Section 5.1 presents information about the particular power elites who were ousted within the anti-corruption policy. To identify the targeted individuals, the study uses a descriptive analysis of media archives, books, and the information obtained through personal communication with Givi Targamadze, a member of the anti-corruption committee, which operated in Georgia early 2000s. The “real world “description (Kvale and Brinkman 2009) was the aim of the interview. The interview aimed to check particular information resources regarding the patron-client linkages; accordingly, the interview was structured and conducted with pre-designed questions. The section uses the interview in combination with other resources. The interview with Givi Targamadze was conducted by audio call. The section 5.1 includes all possible ousted power elites about whom the information was available in the open sources. In

this section, the primary data about the ousted power elites is organized and synthesized by content analysis.

Section 5.2 studies the particular strategies the ousted power elites used against the new political equilibrium. In this section, the study uses the descriptive and rhetorical analysis of the archival and digital record. The rhetorical analysis built upon Finlayson's (2013) theory of organizing values and concepts as a strategy of persuasion. Section 5.3. demonstrates the study's main findings; in this section, for conceptualizing the mechanisms used by the ousted elites, the paper exploits Beach and Pedersen's (2013) theory about micro-macro and their connecting situational, action formation and transformational mechanisms through them agents can affect the outcomes. The authors differentiate the mechanisms and argue that they affect the outcomes differently and at different stages in the processes. Precisely, the macro-level mechanisms refer to the institutional norms that can play a significant role in the actors' behaviour. Alternatively, the situational mechanism used as a connecting tool between macro and micro level mostly refers to the restrictions of the individuals' action in the social structure; besides, it shapes individuals' desire. Action- formation mechanism is in line with individuals, their properties, actions, and relations to one another. Transformational mechanisms are the mechanisms through which actors generate various intended and unintended social outcomes at macro-level.

Figure 1. The Causal Mechanisms



Beach and Pedersen (2013)

4.4. Data selection

The given study exploits inductive research, and accordingly, the data was built upon archival research, an interview with the area expert, a relevant book, and an unpublished manuscript.

Section 5.1 identifies and categorizes the ousted power elites. The section based on various information sources. For identifying the pre-revolutionary clannish relationships in the government and illustrate the power elites in 1990 - 2000s' Georgia, the study uses the book's chapter titled "*Power Elites in Georgia: Old and New*" (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005). The given book chapter represents a reliable secondary source as the work per se based on then-contemporary investigative journalism articles.

At the same time, for identification of the patron–client networks in 1990-2000s' Georgia, the study exploits an unpublished book written by Erosi Kitsmarishvili, a media executive and politician, who was murdered in unclear circumstances in 2014 and the unpublished manuscript provided by the editor-in-chief, Beso Kurtanidze. At the same time, to identify the patron-client relationships between the study individuals, the section also used the mainstream journalist article provided by the online web –portal Droni Georgia (www.droni.ge). However, in order to check the reliability of existed data and further investigate patron-client networking entrenched in Georgia in the late 1990s, the study also exploits interview with Givi Targamadze, a former member of the Anti-Corruption Council operated before the Rose Revolution. Besides, to identify the power elites who were ousted through the anti-corruption reforms, the data built upon the online media archives Civil Georgia (www.civil.ge). Civil Georgia's reliability for the study derives from its method how it collects and delivers data. Civil Georgia gathers information about ongoing processes from the media and compiles only factual information.

The data for section 5.2 obtained from the archives of Civil Georgia. For the ideology and rhetorical analysis, the section also uses digital narratives drawn from YouTube. However, it is worthy to mention that the study has a particular limitation regarding the quantity of the data. Precisely, section 5.2 built upon media archives provided online. However, the printed media archives and archives of the TV channels have not been used for the research. Because of the mentioned limitation, all study individuals' information is not provided with the same quantity.

5. Analysis

5.1. A Presentation of the Relevant Individuals for the Study

An overview of Georgia's entrenched political environment represents the point of departure to identify the particular power elites established in political and economic

positions before the Rose Revolution in Georgia. Then the section presents the power elites who were ousted by the anti-corruption policy.

Before the Rose Revolution, Georgia lived in highly corrupt environment. From 1995 onwards, the state administration moved away from society and became one big clan (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005). The entrenched political and economic equilibrium in Georgia reasonably met the definition of the elite cartel corruption provided by Johnston (2005) as “interlocking groups of top politicians, business figures, bureaucrats,... and ... leaders (where they) share corrupt benefits among themselves, build networks and alliances (to) solidify their power “.

In Georgia, the national political and administrative elite mostly related to then-President, Shevardnadze’s family, relatives, and political insiders before the revolution. As Tchiaberashvili et al. (2005) mention, that relationship per se was a vehicle for vertical corruption that encompassed the various administrative levels within the state's branches.

Within the family group, several subgroups were represented. The father-in-law and Shevardnadze’s son Paata, Guram Akhvlediani, was the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and the leader of the most influential subgroup – the ‘clan Akhvlediani’. This subgroup had business interests in mineral oil and aircraft. It also controlled the port of Poti (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005).

Shevardnadze’s son-in-law, Gia Jokhtaberidze, a leader of ‘clan Jokhtaberidze’, occupied a leading position in the telecommunications business. This clan had interests in-state property, in such industrial giants as Rustavi 'Nitrogen' and Zestafoni factory of non-ferrous metallurgy. Jokhtaberidze obtained contracts for the benefit of the Magi telecommunications company (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005). From the side of the state, Deputy Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Gia Kakuberi – a witness at Jokhtaberidze’s wedding, also protected the clan’s interests (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005).

Shevardnadze’s nephew, Nugzar Shevardnadze, represented the third clan. In the first half of the 1990s, this group was the strongest clan, but its position weakened as the “clan Akhvlediani” increased its control of the mineral oil business. The 'clan Nugzar Shevardnadze' had principal interest in the import of consumer goods. Kakha

Targamadze, Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia in 1995-2001, was his friend and a witness at his wedding (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005)

In the sphere of transport, Shevardnadze's nephew, Avto Baramashvili, controlled ecological inspection on motor transport. His brother, Temur Baramashvili, held a high rank in the traffic police. Especially close relations between the Shevardnadze family and the Chairman of Railway Department, Akaki Chkhaidze and the Chairman of the Road Fund, Boris Salaridze, assisted Shevardnadze's clan interests (Tchiaberashvili et al.2005)

State administration and family interests interlocked in the various spheres of the economy in Georgia. The state administration's clannish character is also revealed by the example when a brother of the Minister of Transport, Connections and Communications Merab Adeishvili, Gia Adeishvili, became the Deputy Minister of Fuel and Energy (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005).

While discussing Shevardnadze's clan, worthy of mentioning Levan Mamaladze, an influential governor of the Kvemo Kartli region in Georgia, who was regarded as Shevardnadze's loyalty (Civil Georgia, December 26, 2001). Worthy to note, Sul Khan Molashvili as well, a chief auditor significantly assisted Shevardnadze's family in corrupt cases (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005).

In addition to the clan of Shevardnadze, another political-economic clan in Georgia related to Aslan Abashidze, an informal leader of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara; this political-administrative region of Georgia was outside central control. Aslan Abashidze was an icon of clan-based governance; nepotism was a critical character of the local elite. Aslan Abashidze per se represented a chairman of the Supreme Council of Adjara; his son Giorgi was a Mayor of Batumi; his nephew Giorgi Tsintskaladze was a Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Adjara; his cousin Antaz Mikava was a second Deputy of the Council of Ministers of Adjara; his brother-in-law Ilia Tsulukidze was a Minister of Security of Adjara; his cousin -Minister of Internal Affairs; his son-in-law Temur Komakhidze was a Minister of Culture of Adjara; another son-in-law Nodar Tamazishvili was a Minister of Communications; another cousin Giorgi Tsintskiladze was a Minister of Health, and his wife's nephew Guram Gogitidze was a Head of Tax Service (Tchiaberashvili et al. 2005).

Further investigation of the then-power elites also illustrates two political insiders who assisted the vested interest with their political capacities, and at the expense of their service, they got particular economic benefits from the clan. Tchiaberashvili et al. (2005) mentioned two young politicians Levan Gachechiladze and David Gamkrelidze, leaders of the New Rights political party, who appeared on the political stage when the disintegration of the Shevardnadze's party, Citizens' Union, began in 2001. In his unpublished book, Kitsmarishvili describes the reason why Gachechiladze and Gamkrelidze came into politics in 2001. According to his manuscripts, when the political positions of Shevardznadze weakened before the Rose Revolution, three clans countered each other to hold power after Shevardnadze's resignation. David Gamkrelidze and Levan Gachechiladze, together with Kakha Targamadze, then - Minister of Interior, belonged to the clan of Badri Patarkatsishvili (Kitsmarishvili, Unpublished Manuscript). Patarkatsishvili was Russia's backed oligarch, who represented Boris Berezovsky's friend, Yeltsin's former adviser (Tchiaberashvili et al., 2005). Patarkatsishvili acquired wealth and power in the same way as other oligarchs in the 1990s in Russia. Johnston (2005) explains "the "loans for shares" episode of the mid-1990s' Russia that enabled oligarchs to get enormous benefits from the early stage of privatization. As Kitsmarishvili describes in his manuscript, Patarkatsishvili had no political ambitions; however, he wanted to run the political processes quietly, out of the scene (Kitsmarishvili, Unpublished Manuscript). To preserve the country's profitable economic and political environment, he had already chosen David Gamkrelidze as the next Presidential candidate (Kitsmarishvili, Unpublished Manuscript). Media monitoring also highlights some connections between Gamkrelidze's business and former Minister of Interior, Kakha Targamadze. According to the article, Gamkrelidze came to politics from business. He founded the insurance company "Aldagi" and through the protection of Kakha Targamadze, he granted exclusive terms and conditions from Shevardznadze's government on the insurance market; precisely, all vehicles, export cargos were obliged to be insured at "Aldagi", and other insurance companies did not have right to insure these categories (Droni, July 4, 2010). Givi Targamadze, a member of the Anti-Corruption Council, also proved the information. According to him, "Aldagi's protector was Kakha Targamadze who made

state organizations obliged to insure at Aldagi; this always was an issue on the parliamentary committee hearings in 2001 (Targamadze, Personal Communication, April 10, 2020). Gachechiladze's business interests linked to the wine business; he was a leading shareholder of the leader of the manufacture of wine in Georgia, Georgian Wine and Spirits (GWS). According to Givi Targamadze, "his wine business was lobbied by Niko Lekishvili, who per se represented the clan of Kakha Targamadze; the wine was exported to Kazakhstan" (Targamadze, Personal Communication, April 10, 2020).

After the Rose Revolution, when the anti-corruption reforms started, the above-mentioned "big fishes" were targeted. Many of them were arrested or ousted from their positions. From Shevardznadze's inner circle, only Jokhtaberidze was arrested. Gia Jokhtaberidze was arrested on February 20, 2004. The prosecutor's office accused him of taxes evasion (Civil Georgia, February 28, 2004). Gia Jokhtaberidze was released in April 2004, when he, based on the plea bargain, paid 15.5 000 000 USD to the state budget's benefit (Civil Georgia, April 26, 2004). It is worthy to mention that Jokhtaberidze paid much more than was required by the prosecutor (Civil Georgia, April 26, 2004). As Targamadze mentions in personal communication, Jokhtaberidze bought freedom and a guarantee of integrity from the government. "When he heard about the amount of money the prosecutor was required from him, he mentioned that he could pay more than this ridiculous amount of money (15.5 000 0000 USD) to the state if it was needed" (Targamadze, Personal Communication, April 10, 2020). Other members of the clans who were related to Shevardnadze's family remained untouchable; however, they had to be ousted from their positions. As Targamadze mentions, "they had to be ousted from positions; however, they still maintained their properties and businesses" (Targamadze, Personal Communication, April 10, 2020).

Even though, the new political elite did not combat Shevardnadze's family and relatives, the persecution started against the power elites who represented influential state bureaucrats and held an office under Shevardnadze's Government.

David Mirtskhulava, a Minister of Energetic in Shevardnadze's government, was arrested at the end of 2003. He was accused of abuse of the office and financial machinations; he was sentenced to ten-year imprisonment (Civil Georgia, March 30, 2005).

On 2003, December 19, a criminal proceeding started against Akaki Chkhaidze. He was accused of tax evasion (Civil Georgia, December 29, 2003). Precisely, he was accused of the appropriation of 476.000 Gel; however, as the then-Interior Minister stated, during the investigation, further details would be revealed and presumably, there will be the accusation of "millions" instead of 760.000 Gel (Civil Georgia, January 19, 2004). On January 16, 2004, Akaki Chkhaidze was arrested, and he was released after the payment of 3 000 000 USD in 2004 March (Civil Georgia, March 31, 2004).

Sulkhan Molashvili, a Chief Auditor in the Shevardnadze government, was arrested in 2004. By the decision of the Tbilisi City Court, Sulkhan Molashvili was sentenced to nine-year imprisonment. He was accused of malfeasance in office and appropriation of the 3 000 000 Gel.

Koba Narchemashvili, a Minister of the Interior from 2001 to 2003, was arrested in October 2004. He was accused of violating the customs procedures and illegal customs clearance of vehicles (Civil Georgia, October 14, 2014). After payment 300 000 Gel in favour of the state budget, he was released on December 31, 2004 (Civil Georgia, January 3, 2005).

Merab Adeishvili, a Minister of Transport and Communications from 2001, was arrested in February 2004. He was blamed for the office's abuse and appropriation of the state funds (Civil Georgia, January 19, 2004). He was released after payment of 1.5 000 000 USD in April 2004 (Civil Georgia, April 3, 2004).

The reforms carried out after the Rose Revolution referred to Aslan Abashidze and his clan as well. Since, in 2004, Georgia's authority restored the constitutional rule over the territory of Adjara, Aslan Abashidze left Georgia for the Russian Federation. By the mediation of the special representative of the Russian Federation, Sergei Ivanov, the government of Georgia guaranteed inviolability for him; however, according to the then-Minister of Interior, the guarantee for Aslan Abashidze and his family members would cover only the territory of the Russian Federation (Civil Georgia, July 5, 2004). On December July 14, 2004, according to Batumi Court's decision, the property of Aslan Abashidze was seized (Civil Georgia, July 14, 2004). On December 5, 2005, without his presence at the hearing, Aslan Abashidze was accused of the abuse of the power, appropriation of the state property, the illegal arrest of people, and arranging terrorist

acts (Civil Georgia, March 4, 2006). In 2006, the unjustified property of Aslan Abashidze and his relatives was confiscated by the decision of the court. The whole amount of the confiscated was an equivalent of 100 000 000 Gel and including living houses, buildings, land areas, LTDs, vehicles, bank accounts (Civil Georgia, July 4, 2004).

Two of the above-mentioned power elites avoided the arrestment by fleeing the country. Levan Mamaladze, a governor of the Kvemo Kartli Region in the Shevardznadze's government, left Georgia immediately after Eduard Shevardnadze's resignation for presumably the Russian Federation. Levan Mamaladze was one of the first former officials the Prosecutor's office started proceeding against because of the unjustified property. He was accused of misappropriation of the state funds and extortion (Civil Georgia, June 19, 2004). Similarly, immediately after the Rose Revolution, Kakha Targamadze, a former Ministry of Interior, left Georgia for the Russian Federation; otherwise, he would be arrested. Noteworthy that contradiction between Kakha Targamadze and the so-called "reformers" started before the Rose Revolution. The Anti-Corruption Council always reported corrupt cases affiliated with Targamadze during the parliamentary committee's hearings; mainly, he was blamed for cooperating with the international drug trade (Civil Georgia, September 9, 2001). The anti-corruption council members permanently demanded his resignation from the office (Civil Georgia, Sep 4, 2001).

Regardless of the persecution that made the particular power elites ousted from the positions and profits, changes in the political environment and eradicating the established patron-clientelist linkages politically and economically bankrupted Gachechiladze and Gamkrelidze. After the Rose Revolution, Gamkrelidze's insurance company, Aldagi, lost its monopoly. There appeared various Insurance companies, and in the competitive environment, Aldagi could not be such profitable as previously under the umbrella of a powerful protector" (Targamadze, Personal Communication, April 10, 2020). In the same way, Gachechiladze lost the "roof" for his business and necessary networking for the success of his wine export. Besides, he often was the target of personal attacks by the new president, Saakashvili. Saakashvili, because of the well-established corrupt bargains with the members of the Shevardnadze's government,

often called Gachechiladze “a symbol of corruption” at the hearings on the parliament committees” (Targamadze, Personal Communication, April 10, 2020).

The prosecution arrested several state officials as well.

Iase Zautashvili, a head of the Tax Department at the Ministry of the Finance of Georgia, was arrested for the realization of the fake excise marks in March 2004 (Civil Georgia, March 30, 2004). In May 2004, Zautashvili was released from prison after payment of 300 000 USD favouring the state budget (Civil Georgia, May 22, 2004).

Ioseb Natroshvili, a director of the Wholesale Market of Energy, was arrested in 2004 February. He was accused of the appropriation of 2.5 000 000 Gel (Civil Georgia, February 2, 2004).

Merab Jordania, a president of the Tbilisi Football Federation, was arrested for tax evasion. He was released after the payment of 742.000 Gel (Civil Georgia, August 13, 2005).

In 2005, the proceeding started against Bidzina Giorgobiani, ahead of the Forestry Department, with the accusation of the woods' illegal alienation. He fled to Germany, and the investigation was carried out without his presence (Civil Georgia, December 24, 2006).

Omar Kutsnashvili, ahead of the LTD “Geoengineering”, was arrested in July 2008. He was charged for the falsification of the invoices (Interpressnews, September 7, 2012).

To conclude, the anti-corruption reforms attacked “big fishes”. Most of them experienced significant fiscal lost. However, the lost distinguished by the particular social and political positions of the ousted power elites. Shevardnadze's family experienced reputational damage more than the fiscal one. Although almost all of them were ousted from the positions, they maintained their property and businesses. Shevardnadze' son-in-law, Jokhtaberidze was an exception who was arrested and paid in favour of the state budget; however, he kept leading the operation of his business in the field of communications. The attack was much severe towards the power elites who, of course, linked to Shevardnadze's clannish pyramid, but hold the bureaucratic offices. Shevardnadze's family's fate did not share with the regional leader, Abashidze, who

represented one of the biggest targets of the reforms that started after 2003. However, it must be noted that the attack against Abashidze and his family had a political reason first of all; it included in the agenda of restoration of the constitutional order over the territory. The attack was also strong towards non-clannish bureaucracy. The political wing of the elite cartel also experienced fiscal and reputational damage due to anti-corruption reforms.

5.2. A Biographical Data of the Ousted Power Elites

In Georgia, the ousted power elites' fighting back against the new political environment relates to their attachment to the anti-government movement that started shortly after the anti-corruption reforms' implementation. Demands for protecting human rights and democratic principles represented a critical reason that drove the protests against the government and aimed at removing the reformists away from power. A young man's, Sandro Girgvliani's, murder represented a triggering force for the mass demonstrations against the government as high official's linked to the case. However, the number of the events, as the death of the then- Prime Minister, Zurab Zhvania under the unclear circumstance, and the killing of a young man, Amiran Robakidze, by a policeman during special operations had created fertile ground for the movement. The opposition and human right groups blamed high-level officials of the Ministry of Interior for fabricating the evidence to cover up mentioned cases and demanded the resignation of the high officials and the creation of a parliamentary investigation committee. Apart from the requirement by impartial investigations into the cases mentioned above, when a riot occurred at a prison on March 27 of 2006 in Tbilisi and, as a result of a clash between police and prisoners, several inmates died, the topic of prisoner's rights was added to the anti-establishment movement's general narrative. The political opposition's ultimate goal was to change the government. (For detailed information about the anti-government movement, Appendix 1).

This section offers an overview of the ousted power elites' biographical data, demonstrating the particular number of the ousted power elites participated in the anti-establishment and their contribution to it.

David Gamkrelidze

David Gamkrelidze, who represented a political actor of elite-cartel corruption that existed before the anti-corruption revolution, was one of the anti-establishment movement leaders from the beginning of the protest. Even after the Rose Revolution, Gamkrelidze continued being a politician as a leader of the opposition, New Rights political party and a member of Georgia's parliament. As an opposition politician, he contributed to the anti-governmental movement from its start in different ways.

He was one of the politicians who demanded the creation of the parliamentary investigation committee that would handle the inquiry into the death of Zurab Zhvania (Civil Georgia, May 31, 2005).

With his political party, Gamkrelidze joined the opposition alliance that was created after Girgvliani's murder. His fierce activism against the incumbent government was noteworthy since he was an initiator of the protest rallies against the government that he named the most efficient means for resigning the Minister of Interior (Civil Georgia, March 1, 2006). Gamkrelidze represented one of the politicians who signed the memorandum and informed foreign diplomats about the government's wrongdoings related to human and property right violations (Civil Georgia, April 24, 2006).

Worthy of mentioning Gamkrelidze's attempt to affect the new equilibrium with the help of the Oligarch, Badri Patarkatsishvili, who considered Gamkrelidze as his main political foothold for his economic interest (Kitshmarishvili, Unpublished Manuscript) before the anti-corruption revolution. In October 2007, it appeared that Patarkatsishvili still had political interests in Georgia since he stated his readiness to provide financial assistance to the opposition (Civil Georgia, October 29, 2007). In November 2007, when the political climate was tense in Georgia, Gamkrelidze visited London to meet Patarkatsishvili (Civil Georgia, October 29, 2007).

As an opposition Presidential candidate, Gamkrelidze challenged the then-President in the presidential election. For the election of January 8, 2008, as a Presidential candidate, he was nominated by four opposition parties (Civil Georgia November 26, 2007). After his electoral defeat in the presidential election, Gamkrelidze and his New Rights party joined the opposition parties in a hunger strike in March 2008 as a form of protest against the election results. Gamkrelidze then joined an election bloc created by nine opposition political parties for the parliamentary elections set for May 21, 2008 (Civil Georgia April 4, 2008); As a leader, he came in second on the election list of the united opposition alliance (Civil Georgia, April 26, 2008).

After the war between Georgia and Russia, Gamkrelidze was among the politicians who sent the letter to the participants of the conference of Donors of Brussels, in which Georgian politicians required the formulation of efficient mechanisms from the West that would help Georgia in the process of democratization (Civil Georgia, October 28, 2008).

In 2009, Gamkrelidze started cooperation with a new political alliance composed of Levan Gachechiladze, an independent MP, the Way of Georgia, the Conservative Party of Georgia, the Republican Party, and United Georgia (Civil Georgia, October 10, 2008).

Gamkrelidze illustrated strong connections with the old clan he belonged to before the Revolution once again in 2009. In 2009, when protest rallies were again taking place, Gamkrelidze met Kakha Targamadze to get financial assistance for the opposition (Civil Georgia, June 24, 2009). Kakha Targamadze was considered his "patron" in the pre-reforms period (Targamadze, Personal Communication, July 10, 2020).

Gamkrelidze joined one more political alliance in 2010, but the public demonstrations were already weak, and the alliance dismantled soon.

Levan Gachechiladze

Levan Gachechiladze was another leader of the anti-government movement. Gachechiladze, likewise David Gamkrelidze, represented a political insider for the Oligarch, Badri Patarkatsishvili (Kitsmarishvili, unpublished manuscript) and, by using

the terms related to patron-clientelist relationship, a "client" for the former-Interior Minister, Kakha Targamadze (Targamadze, Personal Communications, July 10, 2020) before the start of the anti-corruption reforms in Georgia. After implementing the anti-corruption reforms, he also represented the MP as an independent lawmaker (Civil Georgia, October 17, 2007).

According to the archival records, Gachechiladze actively emerged on the political scene in 2007 when the opposition created the "National Council of United Peoples' Movement". An independent lawmaker, Gachechiladze, joined the opposition alliance that demanded human rights protections, the resignation of Saakashvili and snap elections (Civil Georgia, October 17, 2007). During the autumn of 2007, Gachechiladze stepped up his demands that Saakashvili needed to resign immediately (Civil Georgia, November 3, 2007).

During the protest rallies that were carried out in November 2007, Gachechiladze, along with Gamkrelidze, began talks with Patarkatsishvili about securing financial backing for the opposition (Civil Georgia, November 12, 2007).

After his failed bid as a presidential candidate, his supporters intensified their rhetoric about accusations of widespread election fraud; Gachechiladze's backers later demanded a second round of parliamentary elections (Civil Georgia, January 6, 2008), wherein Gachechiladze came in first on the election list of the united opposition (Civil Georgia, April 26, 2008).

After the Russian-Georgian war, the radical wing of the opposition, led by Gachechiladze, proposed four demands to the government: 1) the cancellation of the strict/policy regime on the media; 2) an independent investigation into the August War to analyze what caused and who was responsible for the conflict; 3) an evaluation of the activities of the government and the appointment of interior and security ministers based on credibility and trust; 4) and new election codes that would ensure fair and free early presidential and parliamentary elections (Civil Georgia, September 17, 2008)

Gachechiladze joined the other leaders when he sent a letter to the Donors of Brussels regarding the autocratic tendencies in country (Civil Georgia, October 28, 2008), and from 2008 to 2010, he created six opposition coalitions that attempted to topple Saakashvili and organize early elections. The coalition also led rallies. From

January 2008, the opposition's radical wing started a new wave of protests that again demanded Saakashvili's resignation. Twelve opposition parties and civil society representatives signed a declaration that had three demands: 1) the resignation of the president, early parliamentary and presidential elections, and the creation of appropriate conditions for free and fair elections (Civil Georgia, March 16, 2008).

During the 2009 rallies, Gachechiladze stated that he had travelled abroad hoping that he could secure outside financial to, as he put it, "further the fight against the government". Soon after, Georgian TVs were broadcasted video of Gachechiladze and Gamkrelidze, which made it clear that the two were having meetings with another ousted member of the power elites, Kakha Targamadze, in Berlin (Civil Georgia, June 24, 2009). By the end of 2010, Gachechiladze had joined a new political party known simply as "the Georgian Party" (Civil Georgia, October 12, 2010). The party initially attempted to continue the demonstrations well into 2011 but were, fundamentally unable to do so. When Bidzina Ivanishvili appeared in politics, it is noteworthy that both Levan and his brother, a famous showman in Georgia, Gia Gachechiladze attended the first organized rally that took place in support of Ivanishvili in 2011 (Tabula, April 30, 2012).

Kakha Targamadze

As mentioned above, former Minister of Interior, Kakha Targamadze, who represented one of the powerful power elites before the anti-corruption reforms started, contributed to the anti-government movement in 2009 with, a is widely believed, financial assistance that he provided to the opposition through his two former protégés, Gachechiladze and Gamkrelidze (Civil Georgia, June 24, 2009).

Koba Narchemashvili

Koba Narchemashvili, a former Ministry of Interior, connects to the anti-government movement through his brother, Lasha. Lasha Narchemashvili was a

member of the New Rights party, and during the anti-government movement, he participated in mass rallies and hunger strikes (Civil Georgia, March 10, 2008). In 2007, the New Rights members stated that they had started consultations with Koba Narchemashvili and proposed that he become a front man for the party (Civil Georgia, September 18, 2007). However, based on an investigation in the media's archives, Koba Narchemashvili per se did not appear politically active from the end of 2003 to 2012.

David Mirtskhulava, Iase Zautashvili

David Mirtskhulava, a former Minister of Energetic and Iase Zautashvili, a former head of the Tax Department at the Ministry of the Finance of Georgia, did not align themselves directly with the anti-government movement. They were, however, affiliated with the movement through a particular individual, Eka Beselia, who represented an attorney of Mirtskhulava (Civil Georgia, April 8, 2004) on the one hand, and the sister of the wife of Zautashvili (The Georgian Charter of Journalist Ethics, 2018) on the other. Beselia joined the United Opposition after the arrest of Okruashvili in 2007. She was a general-secretary and the leader of a new political party known as "the Movement for a United Georgia" that Okruashvili established after he fled to France while facing prosecution (Civil Georgia, March 4, 2008). Beselia represented one of the United Opposition Alliance leaders and placed sixth on the party's election list for the 2008 parliamentary election (Civil Georgia, April 26, 2008). Beselia actively appealed for an independent judiciary and campaigned on a human rights platform. In 2010, she left the Movement of United Georgia and established a new social movement aimed at "protecting the rights of illegally imprisoned persons and fighting for an independent Judiciary" (Civil Georgia, April 30, 2010). In April 2010, along with other opposition leaders, Beselia organized demonstrations seeking the release of political and illegally-held prisoners in April 2010 (Civil Georgia April 30, 2010). From 2011 on, Beselia became a member of Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream political coalition (EAG, September 16, 2012).

Bidzina Giorgobiani

According to the news archives available, Bidzina Giorgobiani, a former head of the Forestry Department, linked to the anti-government movement in 2009. In March 2009, Giorgobiani attended the meeting of opposition leaders that took place in Berlin. Giorgobiani had already been a member of the Conservatory Party during that period and was assigned to lead mass demonstrations in Europe, which were supposed to take place simultaneously with a rally in Tbilisi on April 9 (Civil Georgia, March 16, 2009). Giorgobiani also cooperated with the Ivanishvili coalition. In the pre-election period in 2012, he transferred a considerable amount of money from abroad to a company affiliated with Ivanishvili (Radio Liberty, May 30, 2012).

Omar Kutsnashvili

Omar Kutsnashvili, the head of the LTD " Geoengineering, aligned with the anti-government movement through his son, Zakaria Kutsnashvili. The younger Kutsnashvili represented a leader of the opposition "Socialist" party that operated before the 2003 Rose Revolution (Civil Georgia, September 18, 2001). In 2009, the younger Kutsnashvili was a member of an organization known as "The Families of Political Prisoners". He organized demonstrations along the road to Tbilisi's international airport when the US Vice President, Joe Biden, was on an official visit to Georgia. According to Kutsnashvili, the demonstration was meant to inform Biden about the "catastrophic environment" in the country "in terms of democracy and freedom" (Civil Georgia, July 17, 2009). Omar Kutsnashvili's son became a member of the Georgian Dream when Bidzina Ivanishvili came to politics in 2011.

The biographical data demonstrates that several ousted power elites started fighting back after the anti-corruption policy, which excluded them from the new political environment. The particular mechanisms that the former power elites used in their fight against the new political equilibrium were the alignment with political parties, their collaboration with the political opposition and the creation of political alliances with them, the carrying out demonstrations and protests, providing information to the international community about the wrongdoings of the reformist

government, as well as, collaboration with tycoons and former “patrons”. However, the analysis of their strategies within the broader context of the anti-government movement and following parliamentary elections highlights the rhetoric as a particular persuasive strategy the ousted power elites carried out.

The anti-government movement that took place from 2006 to 2011 that was characterized by its anti-government rhetoric was carried out by both the opposition and ousted power elites. The visceral cases of Robakidze, Girgvliani, and Zhvania were often used in the anti-government rhetoric of the opposition, with very negative connotations. An analysis of the rhetoric shows that during the height of the anti-government movement, the stigma of "a bloody regime", "murders", and "violators of inmates' rights" began to resonate with the public when it came to their perception of the incumbent UNM government. This eventually resulted in Saakashvili's UNM being removed from power by Ivanishvili's political coalition.

The study target, Davit Gamkrelidze, was one of the politicians who called the death of the Zurab Zhvania “an assassination”, citing, “in society, there is distrust toward the legal system of Georgia, was it (Zhvania’s death) misfortune or assassination? Georgian questions the legal statement about the case since the Minister of Interior and the general prosecutor made very hasty and ungrounded statements regarding it” (Civil Georgia, Feb 10, 2005). A comment made by a member of Gamkrelidze's political party regarding the prison riot in 2006 galvanized the opposition against the government, in which he quoted as saying: "some brave prisoners ... they proved the doubts we had before this (the riot) started from a typical case of beating prisoners to sadistically abusing them (Civil Georgia, April 3, 2006).

The death of Zhvania was used for the political speculations during the anti-government movement again and again. A film about Zhvania's mysterious death, which an investigative reporter directed, was shown outside during the protests of 2007. The film focused on contradictions and discrepancies in the official version of events around his death and the subsequent investigation. The screening was organized by a group of ten opposition parties that were jointly campaigning for early parliamentary elections (Civil Georgia, October 10, 2007).

Gachechiladze and Gamkrelidze used anti-government rhetoric, with a strong focus on the UNM government's brutality, during the election campaign for parliament in 2008. While visiting the TV broadcast "Primetime", Gamkrelidze was citing "I will do my best to end Saakashvili's bloody regime through peaceful methods...We are living in a country under the serious terrorist's rule". "Everybody is going to do their best to get rid of the bloody regime of Saakashvili," Gachechiladze was saying during the same TV broadcast (Civil Georgia, April 8, 2008). Levan Gachechiladze's brother, a famous showman in Georgia, contributed significantly to the development of the mass demonstrations in the spring of 2009 and was charged with spreading the anti-government rhetoric to the public. He was an initiator of the so-called "City of Cells" deployment in Tbilisi's city centre during the protests. Number 5 written on the cells referred to the election number of the UNM, while the conception of "cell" per se indicated the strict regime created by the incumbents. Along with the demonstrations, he was an author of the TV broadcast "Sakani 5" (Cell N5) that was broadcasting on the channel "Maestro" for nine months. The TV program had an informal format where he, with other like-minded persons and proponents of the anti-government movement, discussed political issues. Based on a digital analysis of a particular video of his TV broadcast, Gia Gachechiladze and other anti-government movement participants provided a clue as to how the reformers would end their tenure. In the broadcast of February 26, 2009, they demonstrated a piece of paper with various drawings on it, including brooms and messaged that "they (the government) would be swept away by brooms" (Maestro TV, February 26, 2009).

The rhetorical emphasis mentioned here is significant since it strongly links the ousted power elites to the election results in 2012. Around two weeks before the parliamentary election of 2012, the opposition TV channel released several videos showing the alleged rape of male prisoners with a broom was filmed (Civil Georgia, September 19, 2012). In September 2012, the same opposition TV channel showed news footage of a 10-month-old baby who was found drowned. The baby belonged to the family of party activists for the Georgian Dream. In the video, the Georgian Dream representative says, "(the government) has frightened people. They (people) are scared even to say a single word against them (the government)... Are you surprised that a

broom was used for the torture of prisoners? They (the government) kidnap small children; the president should be sent to trial. They are killers, truly killers" (Region TV, September 30, 2012).

The videos resulted in mass public protests and, eventually, volatile voters' alignment with the opposition coalition. The public polls conducted in August 2012 showed that if parliamentary elections were to be held the next day, 37% of voters would vote for Saakashvili's reformist government, 12% for the tycoon-backed political coalition, 3% for another party. The share of volatile voters was 43 %, with the 'don't-knows' at 22%, those who refused to answer were at 21% (NDI, 2012). After the videos' release, Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream won 54.97% of votes, while the UNM reformers only won 40.34 % (EAG, 2012) and lost power, accordingly.

The above-mentioned rhetorical analysis highlighted that the ousted power elites' circulated the anti-government rhetoric throughout 2006-2009 resulted in a parliamentary election in 2012. The stigmas of "murderers" and "bloody regime" had been attached to the incumbent government for years and created a solid emotional ground for the voters to align with Bidzina Ivanishvili's political alliance for the election of 2012.

The benefits of the transition in power gave the particular ousted power elites affiliated with the anti-government movement from 2003 to 2011, discriminate from one another.

The power transit was not successful for David Gamkrelidze. In 2011, a newly emerged political leader, a tycoon, Ivanishvili, stated that he did not foresee cooperation with the New Right political party and David Gamkrelidze (Civil Georgia, December 14, 2011). After the 2012 parliamentary elections, when New Rights experienced one more electoral defeat, Gamkrelidze surprisingly left politics (Tabula, October 3, 2012).

Different from Gamkrelidze, Levan Gachechiladze enjoyed significant financial benefits from the new government. From the reserve fund, the City Hall gave 30 000 Gel to Gachechiladze for his health services, who owns the wine company, and he is a declared millionaire (Liberali, March 28, 2018). In 2020, a state organization, the Partnership Fund, financed the idea of a Wine Company-owned Gachechiladze for 7,000,000 GEL (Tabula, August 16, 2020).

After 2012, David Mirtskhulava became a technical director of Transelectica Georgia, a company that plans to build the giant Khudoni Hydro Power Plant in cooperation with the state. He is also the chairman of the Georgian National Committee of High Dams (Georgian National Committee on large damns, 2020). As for Zautashvili, he has not affiliated with the ruling Georgian Dream government that came to power in 2012; however, he was often invited as an aviation analyst on TV, an industry where he owns a business after 2012(Radio Fortuna, 2015).

Omar Kutsnashvili serves on the supervisory board of an oil and gas corporation and leads many business activities. From 2013 to 2018, his company, Geoengineering, won eleven state tenders totalling 749,474 GEL, and the procurements took place with little-to-no market competition (Transparency International Georgia 2017).

In 2016, Koba Narchemashvili joined the Ivanishvili-backed political party, Georgian Dream, and he was the MP nominated by that party during the years 2016 and 2018 (Parliament of Georgia, 2020).

Kakha Targamadze was allowed to arrive in Georgia in 2012, and, according to an interview conducted in 2014, he admitted that he had flown in several times after the new government came to power. He has also been open about his sympathies for Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream (Kvira, August 17, 2014). However, his claim about the restoration of Georgia's citizenship was not satisfied by the new government (Netgazeti, August 18, 2018).

After the parliamentary election of 2012, Bidzina Giorgobiani arrived in Georgia and held his former position in the government; later, he became the National Forestry Agency chairman. He was also the head of the Environment and Green Spaces department in Tbilisi City Hall (Civil Service Bureau, 2015).

5.3. Results of Analysis

The descriptive analysis of the archival records showcases responses to the research questions.

The biographical data of the ousted power elites covering the period from the end of 2003, the implementation of the anti-corruption reforms to 2012 to the power transition resulting in removing the reform-oriented political elites from the authority, shows the response for the first research question. The research question referred to *whether the ousted power elites start to fight back to restore the lost privileges and profits*. The response is "yes". The archival records showed psychological and rational motives supposed in the section of theoretical framework started activation and ousted power elites started open resistance against the new political system, and their fight reflected in their participation in the anti-government movement. However, Georgia's case highlighted that only seven ousted power elites participated in the anti-government movement, one may argue that whether the ousted power elites start counterattack against new political equilibrium depends on how their affiliation with the rampant corruption had damaged their public image.

The archival records' examination demonstrated that the ousted power elites who represented a "faces" and epitomes of the old, corrupt system established before the anti-corruption reforms rarely tried to fight back. The archival records show hardly any political activities from the ousted power elites' strongly affiliated with the former President Eduard Shevardnadze's family or the ousted power elites whose administrative positions linked the clans operated by the members of Shevardnadze's family. One exception was Kakha Targamadze, an epitome of Shevardnadze's corrupt government, who more or less tried to fight against the new system as he met opposition's leaders with regards to financing the movement. Narchemashvili and Mirtskhulava, who represented influential elites from the Shevardnadze's government, never fought against the new equilibrium openly, and they link to the anti-governmental movement through their representative or even family member, respectively. As illustrated in the section of presentation of the ousted power elites, Shevardnadze's family and clan usually retained their business and properties under the tenure of the reformist government. However, the ousted power elites belonged to Adjara's leader, Abashidze's clan, who experienced significant fiscal loss also did not fight back.

One may think that the absolutely discredited public image was a reason why most ousted power elites connected with the previous government did not start to fight

against the new system. Georgian society was well aware of those particular power elites' affiliation with corruption. Most likely, they would not have got any public support; at the same time, their engagement in the anti-government movement would risk the legitimacy of the movement in overall. The story regarding Kakha Targamadze's association with the movement in 2009 can support the mentioned assumption. Many of the political opposition leaders publicly refused to acknowledge that they knew anything about Targamadze's engagement in the movement (Civil Georgia, June 24, 2009).

An overview of the ousted power elites who resisted the new system can support the correlation between the discredited public image and the probability of starting fighting back to some extent. Unlike the power elites, which were strongly affiliated with the entrenched corruption, the ousted power elites, who the most fiercely resisted the new system, were politicians. Despite their strong background linked to the patron-clientelist system, the anti-governmental movement leaders, Gamkrelidze and Gachechiladze, were known as politicians and businessmen for the mass society. The information about their dishonest bargains was only available in investigative journalist articles and at the hearing on the parliamentary committees. Accordingly, they would not have to fear of public disapproval.

The bureaucracy and business people's engagement in the anti-governmental movement mainly depended on the extent of connections they had with the active political parties, as in Zautashvili, Giorgobiani, and Kutsnashvili cases.

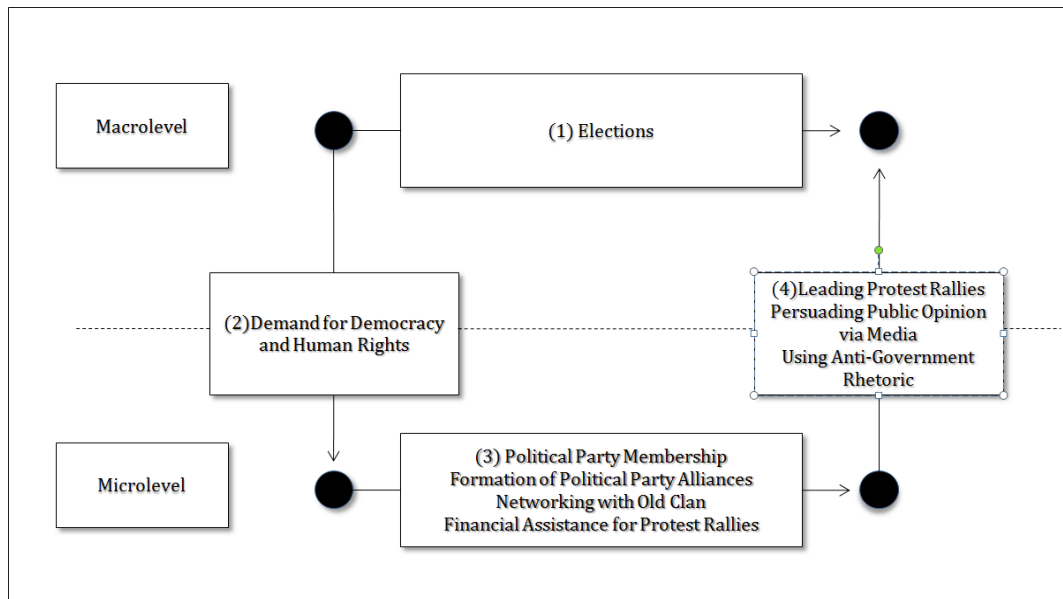
However, worthy of mentioning that the particular benefits the ousted power elites got from the new political elite presumably depended on the extent of relationship they could establish with the new political elite.

The archival records covering the period from 2003 to 2012 offer a response to the second research question, which asked *what types of methods they use to restore the lost privileges and profits*. The descriptive data demonstrated the ousted power elites employed various strategies. The ousted power elites appealed to protection of human rights and democracy, fought from the platform of political parties, created political alliances with like-minded politicians, challenged the reformist government's candidate in elections, addressed the old clan for financial assistance, financed the anti-

government movement, persuaded public opinion through media and anti-government rhetoric. All of the mentioned activities referred to the national elections and aimed to create a solid ground for power transition and remove the reformist government from power.

Differentiation of the strategy the power elites used to counterattack against the new equilibrium simplifies identifying their *modus operandi* after the exclusion. In this study, one may regard the elections as an institutional environment that played a significant role in defining the ousted power elites' overall strategy since the ousted power elites aimed to remove the reformist government through elections. An appeal to human rights and democracy protection can be identified as a situational mechanism that legitimized the ousted power elites' fight against the reformist government. For the ousted power elites, fighting from political party platforms, the creation of the political alliances, using the networking with the former clan members with regards to financially secure the anti-government movement was the action-formation mechanism that refers to individuals, their properties, actions, and relations to one another to reach the goal. At the same time, leading the protest rallies against the incumbents and persuading public opinion through media and anti-governmental rhetoric represented particular transformational mechanisms to generate the preferable social outcome.

Figure 2. The Causal Mechanisms Used by the Ousted Power Elites



The analysis of the primary rhetoric used during the anti-governmental movement partially provides the answer to the third research question, which asks *to what extent the fight back from the ousted power elites' side links to the backsliding in the anti-corruption reforms*. The backsliding in the anti-corruption policy links to the completely new political party, the tycoon, Bidzina Ivanishvili-backed, Georgian Dream. It is hard to prove the anti-government rhetoric's direct effect on the voter's persuasion for the parliamentary election of 2012 since the correlation between those factors is not studied in the thesis; however, I suppose that the established stigma of “bloody regime” worked and the videos released before the election already had a well-prepared ground to affect.

To conclude, Georgia's case highlighted several tendencies about how the power elites act to protect their vested interest when they are ousted and no longer can affect the government policy from influential administrative positions. They still performed according to their classic *modus operandi* as they were flexible, acted as a team to reach the goal, manipulated political issues for their economic and political benefits, and mobilized the society ad hoc. However, the demonstration of the particular mechanisms through which the ousted power elites fought against the new, reform-oriented equilibrium represents the given inductive study's real value. Georgian ousted power

elites, driven by psychological and rational motives, began fighting back and counterattack against the new political ecosystem by fighting against the reformist government. Transition in power in favour of their preferable government represented the ousted power elites' ultimate aspiration. They engaged in the anti-government movement through political parties. Overall, the ousted power elites could impede the anti-corruption policy by neutralizing the reformist government in elections favouring the political party that did not have a demonstrated political will to fight against corruption.

6. Discussion of Findings

The chapter offers a discussion of the study findings and stresses the critical conditions that underpinned the ousted power elites' success against the reformist government. Previous chapters showed that the two critical demands, protection of human rights and the democratic principles in the country, turned into the vital mechanism that galvanized opposition against the then-incumbent government and that per se allowed the ousted power elites to be attached to the anti-governmental movement. When discussing the ousted elites' engagement in the anti-government movement, the discourse requires an overview of the political context in which the anti-corruption reforms were implemented.

The anti-corruption policy was one of the pillars of the significant upheavals that started after the Rose Revolution in Georgia. By the end of 2003, ineffective state institutions and the Russian Federations' political influence challenged Georgia. Accordingly, to respond to the political and institutional problems, the new political elite considered building a functioning state (Mitchel 2006, Jones 2006) and democratization (Mitchel 2006) as critical aspirations for the country.

The President, Mikheil Saakashvili publicly, declared democracy the main route for Georgia's political development (Mitchel 2006). In 2005, during the visit of the US president, George Bush, in Tbilisi, while making a speech before the thousands of citizens gathering on the Freedom Square, Saakashvili stated that the "Rose Revolution

ended up with the victory of freedom; however, it continued with the new tide of democracy"(Civil Georgia, May 11, 2005).

Regarding the state's functioning, rampant corruption did not represent a single issue for the state and entrenched institutionalized organized criminal also endangered state institutions' efficacy (Shelley 2007). Due to the country's challenges, together with the fighting against corruption, the new political elite considered fighting against criminals as an essential and utmost remedy for state-building. In 2004, the government started a *zero-tolerance* approach towards all criminal activities, even for a minor one. Resulted from the zero-tolerance policy, the prison population soared by 300% from 2003 to 2010 (Open Democracy 2012). It is Worthy of mentioning that the government's methods against criminals did not correspond the democratic principles, an official aspiration of the country. International organizations permanently pointed out that human rights violations and acts of torture and ill-treatment were common in the penitentiary system (Amnesty International Georgia 2005, IFHR 2007, and UNHRC 2008).

Besides, regardless of the official declaration about democratic development, then-incumbents were reluctant to establish democratic principles (Lazarus 2013). The constitutional reforms represented a critical factor why the government began inclination to the autocratic style; the constitutional reform weakened the parliament and resulted in a great deal of power concentrated in the president instead (IFHR 2006, Nodia 2005). Respectively, international organizations often marked the judiciary's lack of independence from the executive (EBRD 2006) as a significant challenge for Georgia's democracy.

Furthermore, the particular measures employed for curbing corruption left questions regarding their compatibility with the rule of law. Saakashvili, then-president, often mentioned "Singaporization" in the context of economic development; however, it was evident that he followed Lee Kwan Yew's approach when it came to combat corruption as well than Estonia's way, which also used the direct fight against corruption, but transformation process occurred together with the strengthening the rule of law (Johnston and Mungiu-Pippidi 2017). The Group of State against Corruption acknowledged Georgia's success in fighting against corruption; however, they strongly

recommended developing the vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms (GRECO 2006). The non-existence of the rule of law limited the legitimacy of anti-corruption reforms to some extent. Nodia (2005) argues that the non-existence of the rule of law made the efforts addressed to fight against corruption dubious.

Admittedly, the anti-government movement which was attached by the ousted power elites had legitimate ground. The systemic problems associated with human rights violations and ill-treatment represented the critical reasons for the opposition and the ousted power elites to mobilize people on the protest rallies; these grounds also made the anti-government rhetoric more credible in the eyes of the population. Kachkachishvili, Georgian sociology, (Personal Communication, July 8, 2020) emphasizes that people who were attending the protest rallies were protesting the autocratic methods that the ruling party established in almost every social sphere, especially in the penitentiary system that the government justified with the necessity of the fighting against the criminal world.

At the same time, the non-existence of the rule of law limited the government's credibility towards the anti-corruption policy per se and turned into the significant political capital for the ousted corrupt power elites to be attached to the anti-government movement. All "punished" power elites who participated in the anti-government movement regarded themselves innocent in the corruption cases. The specific cases that highlighted the government's unfair treatment towards the ousted power elites strengthen the ousted elites' arguments against the reformist government. For example, representatives of non-governmental organizations spoke that Sul Khan Molashvili, a Chief Auditor in the pre-revolutionary government, was a victim of the torture and ill-treatment in prison and estimated him as a political prisoner (Human right Georgia, July 21, 2004). Accordingly, such cases allowed other ousted power elites as Omar Kutsnashvili to state himself as political prisoners; despite, the data proved that he still represents one of the most corrupt individuals, even under the rule of the new political elite that came to power after the reformist removed from office in 2012. The questions regarding the rule of law and the legal procedures related to the fighting against corruption not only gave big moral advantage to the ousted power to align with

political parties and alliances, but it also neutralized moral barriers for the political opposition to cooperate with the ousted elites affiliated with corruption cases.

The findings illustrate that a backsliding in the anti-corruption policy followed after the power transition in Georgia's case. The power transition per se was underpinned by systemic problems in the penitentiary system and overall lack of democratic rule. However, one may argue that the ousted power elites attached to the anti-government movement highlighted the existing problems for their benefits. While discussing the Singapore and Hong Kong case's, Doig and Riley (1998) mention that duplication of Hong Kong and Singapore's anti-corruption models would be complicated for other countries since this model is "politically threatening". The mentioned authors do not clarify what they mean by the term "politically threatening". However, Georgia's case illustrated that using autocratic Singapore methods against corruption in the democratic context is politically threatening when a government does not establish the rule of rule and is characterized with undemocratic wrongdoings in the underlying institutional reforms. In the political context where elections affect the power transition, the reformist government's particular institutional weaknesses give a tremendous advantage to the ousted power elites to start to fight against the reformist through democratic mechanisms. In a low institutionalized country, where the anti-corruption policy represents a critical policy direction only for a single political party, as it was in the case of Georgia where anti-corruption policy represented a "trademark issue" only for the UNM (Nodia 2006), it is easy the power transition to underpin the changes in the anti-corruption policy dynamics.

7. Limitations and Generalizability of the Study

As mentioned in the section on methodology, the limitation relates to the data's quantity in the given study. The study built upon only the media archives accessible online. Due to the reason mentioned above, the thesis does not provide a comprehensive

rhetorical analysis. I argue that the mentioned limitation does not affect the findings and their validity, although the media archives' examination to a great extent would show the more comprehensive picture regarding the study subjects' anti-governmental rhetoric.

The findings can be used for the deductive research of similar cases. Georgia is a unique case. It represents the only case that used the direct method against corruption, directly attacked the vested interests, and experienced significant success in reducing the country's rampant corruption. However, in the late years, the country also experienced the backsliding in the anti-corruption policy and the phenomenon linked to the ousted power elites' fight back to some extent. Hence, I suppose the study's actor-oriented model can be relevant for an investigation into backsliding in the anti-corruption policy for countries which has used the direct method against corruption and has met the electoral democracy's standards from the starting point of anti-corruption reforms' implementation to the backsliding.

8. Conclusion

The thesis concerns the issue of vested interests in the broader context. The literature that discusses the anti-corruption reforms' failure in transitional countries points out that the vested interests represent a critical stumbling-block for the political and administrative reforms. Furthermore, the scholarship also highlights that the political elite's reluctance towards the reforms underpins power elites' success in preserving their vested interests. The collaboration between vested interest-motivated power elites and a weak government is a rational choice for both sides. While some authors suppose the reform-oriented political elite can tackle the vested interests in the long-run (Haarhuis and Torenvlied 2006), Georgia's case highlights that the vested

interests remain viable even when the reform-oriented new political elite directly attacked and ousted them from the profitable administrative and political positions.

The thesis, which investigates Georgia's historical period from the end of 2003 to 2012, demonstrates that the particular power elites, who were ousted due to a demonstrative, direct method of the anti-corruption reforms, started fighting back against the new political equilibrium shortly after the implementation of the anti-corruption policy. The counterattack reflected in their engagement in the anti-government movement that eventually aimed at removing the reformist government from power. The study also shows that the ousted power elites turned the issue of democracy and human rights, the most salient issues for that period, into their respective political capital and used them against the reformist government for their benefits. The general strategies utilized by the ousted elites to reach their goal included an alignment with political parties, organizing protest rallies, informing international society about the wrongdoings of the government, carrying out anti-government rhetoric. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the anti-governmental movement and the ousted power elites' anti-elitist rhetoric contributed to power transition to some extent since it provided a solid ground for voters' alignment to the different political coalition.

A demonstration how vested interest fight back against the reform-oriented political environment represents a particular implication of the given study. The thesis illustrates that *the blitzkrieg* method against corruption is not a final resolution of the vested interests' issue. In the democratic agenda, the ousted power elites can use the democratic mechanisms to fight against the reformist government with the ultimate purpose to remove them from power. Regarding the anti-corruption policy dynamics, in low institutionally developed countries such as Georgia, where the anti-corruption positions represented only a single party's exclusive, the political elite's change can cause backsliding of the anti-corruption policy.

Drawing from the general findings, the thesis can influence societal perspectives; precisely, the study can recommend the government that aims to curb corruption through the direct method. The study highlights the ousted former corruptible elites can use any weaknesses of the government for their advantage. However, the ousted power

elites can be neutralized to some extent by protecting democratic principles on the government's side, as during the implementation of the measures against corruption per se, as well as during carrying out the underlying reforms. Protecting the rule of law and providing a democratic, transparent transformation process can limit the ousted power elites' possibility of taking a moral advantage over the reformist government and counterattacking them through democratic mechanisms.

9. Ideas for Future Research

The paper examines the particular category of the elites, so-called power elites who represent a web of bureaucrats, politicians, and business people who were ousted through the direct method of fighting against corruption, mainly in fiscal terms. Alternatively, the paper remains the cultural elites under-researched who might be ousted by the anti-corruption reforms as well to some extent. Snip (2012) who studied the characteristics of the Georgian cultural elites and their alignment with the political powers, argues that the Georgian cultural elite was not supportive of the Rose Revolution and its outcome, while they had a harmonious relationship with Shevardnadze's government. Besides, even a rudimentary check of the archival records demonstrates that Georgian cultural elites used their social capital in favour of the Oligarch, Bidzina Ivanishvili's political party during the election campaign of 2012; precisely, they employed as brokers of clientelist politics and promised the citizens lived in rural areas that the Oligarch would assist them financially after the electoral win (Snip 2012). Accordingly, further investigation of cultural elites' motivation to support the authorities, which relates to the country's corrupt equilibrium, can be a topic for future studies.

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APPENDIX 1

Fierce criticism towards the reformist government and mass demonstrations against them started shortly after United National Movement (UNM) came to power. Demands for protecting human rights and democratic principles represented a critical reason that drove towards the anti-government movement in Georgia and eventually aimed to remove the then-incumbent government from power. A murder of an employee of the United Georgian Bank represented a triggering force for the mass demonstrations against the government. However, the number of the events, as the death of the then- Prime Minister and the killing of a young man by a policeman during special operations, had created fertile ground for the movement.

The first case when the political opposition questioned the legitimacy of the newly reformed law enforcement agencies emerged after the murder of Amiran Robakidze in 2004. During a special operation, a patrol policeman killed Robakidze, who was in a car that the police were chasing. According to the official version, Robakidze was killed while the police were trying to arrest "an armed gang of bandits" (Civil Georgia, August 10, 2006). Despite the court imprisoned the policeman in questions for the murder, politicians and some human rights groups blamed high-level officials of the Ministry of Interior for fabricating the evidence to cover up the crime and the incompetence of the police (Civil Georgia, August 10, 2006).

On February 3, 2005, then-Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania was found dead in his friend's apartment in Tbilisi. According to the then-Interior Minister of Georgia's official statement, the case was an accidental incident caused by a gas leak in the apartment (Civil Georgia, February 3, 2005). Later, experts from the U.S.'s FBI confirmed the Georgian officials' statement and announced that Zhvania had died of carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a faulty gas heating device. Zhvania's family seriously questioned the investigation's conclusions and asked for a further official inquiry as they believed Zhvania had been assassinated (Civil Georgia, February 10, 2005). Several key politicians shared Zhvania's family's opinions and demanded the creation of a parliamentary investigation committee (Civil Georgia, February 10, 2005).

On January 28, 2006, Sandro Girgvliani, the head of the United Georgian Bank's international relations department, was found dead in the forest near Tbilisi. According to Girgvliani's friend, who aired some details about the murder on a TV program, Girgvliani had a minor dispute with his girlfriend at a café where she was accompanied by the wife of the then-Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili. The high officials of the Interior Ministry were with the

ladies as well. Girgvliani verbally insulted the spokesman for the Interior Ministry. Shortly after, when Girgvliani and his friend left the café, they were kidnapped by unknown assailants (Civil Georgia, February 22, 2006). The next morning, Girgvliani's dead body was found close to a nearby cemetery. Even though the individuals who allegedly committed the murder were detained, opposition parties doubted the official investigation. They demanded the resignation of the Minister of the Interior since they thought Merabishvili was covering up high officials with links to the case (Civil Georgia, March 6, 2006).

In 2006, an anti-government movement and mass demonstrations started. The first opposition alliance established after the murder of Girgvliani, and since Saakashvili and influential MPs from the ruling party did not accept demands about Merabishvili's resignation, and they strongly supported him instead, the opposition parties started mass protests against the government (Civil Georgia, March 6, 2006).

In the early spring of 2006, apart from the requirement by impartial investigations into the cases mentioned above, the topic of prisoner's rights was added to the anti-establishment movement's general narrative. On March 27 of that year, a riot occurred at a prison in Tbilisi and, as a result of a clash between police and prisoners, several inmates died, and at least two policemen were injured. The cause of the violence was the source of various interpretations and political contradictions between the government and the opposition. According to the then-Minister of Justice, it was a well-planned riot organized by crime members, known as "thieves in law" in post-Soviet countries, who planned a jailbreak. The Justice Ministry stated that the plot posed a severe threat to Georgia's, and they had warned the rioters several times before a special purpose unit was brought in to thwart their plot (Civil Georgia, 2006). However, the opposition parties refused to accept the official version of the events and stated that the riot was a spontaneous uprising by prisoners rebelling against systemic police brutality (Civil Georgia, February 28, 2006).

In response to the government's misconduct, the opposition brought forth a memorandum that was sent to foreign diplomats serving in Georgia. The memorandum included several key issues, such as 1) information about the murder of Girgvliani and emphasized the role of high-level officials from the Interior Ministry; 2) numerous facts about the misappropriation of property by people close to the authorities, as well as on non-transparent privatization processes; 3) official protests against amendments to the election legislation, which they claimed: "ruled out the possibility of holding free and fair democratic elections" (Civil Georgia, April 24, 2006). Along with the memorandum, the opposition continued mass

demonstrations in the autumn of 2007 and started a parliamentary boycott to demand snap elections in the spring of 2008.

From 2007, the issue of political persecution became a central part of the anti-governmental movement. In the autumn of 2007, the former Minister of Defense, Irakli Okruashvili, was arrested. After a disagreement with the ruling party, Irakli Okruashvili revealed some significant military issues, and he also accused the government of the fabrication of Zhvania's incident on the live broadcast while visiting one of the TV programs. His arrest was officially tied to high-level corruption accusations (Civil Georgia September 27, 2007; Civil Georgia September 28, 2007). The mass demonstrations that followed renewed the oppositions' demands for a more transparent government and better guarantees that human rights would be protected - a movement that the opposition called "Election Revolution" (Civil Georgia, September 29, 2007).

Regardless of what the organized protests were trying to represent, the political opposition's ultimate goal was to change the government through elections. That is why the opposition created election blocks and alliances for the presidential and the parliamentary elections scheduled in January and May 2008. The opposition was divided into two blocks for the presidential election with two different presidential candidates (Civil Georgia, November 7, 2007). However, soon after, these two political blocks joined and presented a united alliance for the parliamentary election (Civil Georgia, May 17, 2008). Although, that was unsuccessful for the opposition in terms of the share of the votes they got, since the Presidential candidate, then-incumbent President, Saakashvili, got the majority of votes (EAG 2008).

The Russian-Georgian War of August 2008 enhanced the opposition's rhetoric against the government and represented a new trigger for more protest rallies between 2009 and 2011. The demonstrations' public demand was the government's resignation and early elections since the opposition blamed the government, especially Saakashvili, for provoking the war with the Russian Federation.

In August 2008, opposition leaders sent a letter to the Donors of the Brussels conference participants. In this letter, they highlighted the particular "effective mechanisms" that would help Georgia in democratization. In the letter, the politicians mentioned that foreign aid should be targeted to eliminate the socio-economic damage caused by the war, and not for the enhancement of the regime, since they blamed Saakashvili's military adventurism for the defeat and a lack of democracy in the country (Civil Georgia, Oct 28, 2008).

Intensified protests against the government characterized the year 2009. The most significant feature of those rallies was the deployment of tent camps on the road in front of the

parliament building. The camp area was named "*the City of Cells*", which referenced the UNM's zero-tolerance towards minor crimes (HumanRights Georgia, 2009).

The period between 2010 and 2011 illustrates that mass demonstrations against the government continued, however, they were relatively low compared to the previous years. A disagreement among the opposition leaders and the creation of diversified political alliances were the main factor for the split and why the anti-governmental movement lost some of its verve and eventually ended up without any significant accomplishments.

In Georgia, on the political landscape, the balance of power changed significantly in 2011 when the drive to push the UNM from power began to take shape seriously. In November of 2011, Bidzina Ivanishvili, a Georgian tycoon, declared the opposition political party's founding that would participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections to unseat the UNM and remove Saakashvili from power (Civil Georgia, October 7, 2011).

Many political parties that participated in the anti-governmental movement moved to Ivanishvili's new coalition (EAG Sep 16, 2012). In the parliamentary elections of 2012, the Ivanishvili's political alliance, the Georgian Dream, won 54.97% of the votes, far more than the UNM's 40.34 % (EAG 2012). The Georgian Dream then formed a majority in the parliament and created a government.

APPENDIX 2

April 10, 2020
Tele-Interview
Interviewer: Teona Zurabashvili
Interviewee: Givi Targamadze

T.Z. Mr.Targamadze, you were an investigative journalists before the Rose Revolution who mostly covered the corruption cases. Later, you became a member of the Anti-Corruption Committee which operated in Georgia early 2000s. Thus, I suppose you remembered the particular individuals and their corrupt activities who represent my study targets. In the other sources, I found the information that Mr. David Gamkrelidze and Mr. Levan Gachechiladze used to get particular economic benefits from Shevardnadze's government, and instead, they provided political support. Do you prove that this information is right? If so, could you please provide further information about those two persons and their corrupt bargains?

G.T. The information is true. Shevardnadze's clan prepared them as the next political elite after Shevardnadze would resign since he was already old and weak. Levan Gachechiladze and David Gamkrelidze were leaders of political party "New Rights". Regardless "New Rights" were considered as an opposition party, actually "New Right" was a satellite party for the ruling party. We all remember that the "New Rights" was the only party which did not protest the election fraud in 2003 and accepted the results. All parliamentary opposition protested the results; they did not attend the first parliamentary meeting as a sign of protests. However, the "New Rights" was the only political party which attended the meeting and helped the government to reach a quorum. Of course, they had corrupt bargains with Shevardnadze's government. For example, David Gamkrelidze had an insurance company "Aldagi" and Kakha Targamadze, then-interior minister, protected his business. Precisely, Kakha Targamadze made the state organizations obliged to be insured only at "Aldagi". It was always a discussion issue on the parliamentary committee hearings in 2001. As for Levan Gachechiladze, his business interests linked to the wine business; he was a leading shareholder of the leader of the manufacture of wine in Georgia, Georgian Wine and Spirits (GWS). His business was lobbied by Niko Lekishvili, who per se represented the clan of Kakha Targamadze; the wine was exported to Kazakhstan.

T.Z. What did David Gamkrelidze and Levan Gachechiladze lose by the anti-corruption reforms followed by the Rose Revolution?

G.T. I would say they lost a profitable environment. They lost influential "roofs" from the government. Since the Rose Revolution ousted corrupt clans affiliated with the Shevardnadze's government, Gamkrelidze's insurance company was no longer protected by the influential officials. Accordingly Aldagi lost its monopoly. There appeared various Insurance companies, and in the competitive environment, Aldagi could not be such profitable as previously under the umbrella of the powerful protector. Similarly, Levan Gachechiladze lost the "roof" for his business and necessary networking for the success of his wine export. Besides, he experienced a reputational damage as well. He was the target of personal attacks by President Saakashvili. Saakashvili often called Gachechiladze "a symbol of corruption" at the hearings on the parliament committees.

T.Z. Mr. Targamadze, the archival records reveal that the new political elite did not start direct fight against Shevardnadze's family and Jokhtaberidze was an only exception who were arrested and fined. You also were a member of the new government that came to power after the Rose

Revolution, could you provide further information what was the reason that Shevardnadze's family remained untouchable?

G.T. They did not remain untouchable, they all ousted from the positions. However, it's true, we did not arrest them and almost all of them maintained their property and businesses. If we attacked Shevardnadze's family directly that would be considered as a personal attack. We wanted to develop the country in a civilized way and hence, we tried not to touch his family. Jokhtaberidze was the only one since he represented one of the biggest fish related to Shevardnadze's family. However, the amount of the fine he paid was nothing for him. I remember when he heard about the amount of fine, he said that if it was needed, he could pay much more to the state budget than this ridiculous amount of money the prosecutor required from him. Actually, he bought freedom and inviolability from the new government. After payment he continued leading his businesses as usual.