Université de Montréal

La reconstruction de l'identité nationale géorgienne après la Révolution de Roses

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Abstract:

This research explores the reconstruction of Georgian national identity after the Rose Revolution in November 2003, a time when new definitions of Georgian national identity emerged. As the Rose Revolution was characterized by dynamic 24 - hour media coverage, this research explores ways in which the media, mainly TV channel Rustavi 2, contributed to the formation and dissemination of dominant discourses of Georgian national identity. The methodological approach incorporates both a critical discourse analysis of a media archive and eleven semi-structured interviews to identify the dominant discourses on Georgian national identity flagged in the media, and to explore how interviewees of different ethnic origins negotiated these dominant discourses three years after the Rose Revolution. Results of this exploratory research suggest that throughout the media coverage of the Rose Revolution the main debate around Georgian national identity was its transition from "Old" to "New" Georgia, and the unity of the Georgian people. To accentuate this discourse of unity, the media approached national identity by excluding multiethnic reality of Georgia, and bringing forward Christianity and the unique Georgian culture as unifying factors. Discourse on transition from "Old" to "New" Georgia was introduced to distinguish Georgian national identity from an "Old" Georgia that was associated with poverty, corruption and ethnic conflicts, and introduce a "New" Georgia associated with the Rose Revolution framed as a success story of Georgian Democracy.

Keywords: national identity, identity, media, Rose Revolution, flagging homeland, Rustavi 2, critical discourse analysis, television news.

Résumé

Cette recherche se propose d'analyser la reconstruction de l'identité nationale géorgienne à la suite de la Révolution de Roses en novembre 2003, une époque où de nouvelles définitions de l'identité géorgienne ont émergé. J'ai décidé d'axer ma recherche sur la façon dont les médias, surtout la chaîne Rustavi 2, ont contribué à la formation et à la dissémination des discours dominants sur l'identité nationale géorgienne. L'approche méthodologique que j'utilise repose sur l'analyse critique du discours de la couverture médiatique et onze entretiens semi structurés, pour d'identifier les discours dominants sur l'identité nationale géorgienne exposés et véhiculés dans les médias, et analyser comment ces onze personnes, de par leur appartenance à différentes origines ethniques, ont intériorisé et négocié, ou au contraire rejeté, ces discours dominants. Les résultats de cette recherche exploratoire suggèrent que la couverture médiatique de la Révolution de Roses a engendré un important débat autour de l'identité nationale géorgienne par la transition entre "ancienne" et "nouvelle" Géorgie et l'unité du peuple géorgien. Pour accentuer cette unité discursive, les médias ont véhiculé une image de l'identité nationale éliminant et réduisant au silence la réalité multiethnique de la Géorgie, tout en mettant en avant le Christianisme et une culture géorgienne unique. Ces deux derniers aspects ont même été représentés comme des éléments unificateurs. Le discours sur la transition entre "ancienne" et"nouvelle" Géorgie a été introduit pour faire table rase d'une ancienne Géorgie alors associée à la pauvreté, la corruption et les conflits ethniques et présenter la Révolution de Roses comme le grand succès de la Nouvelle Géorgie Démocratique.

Mots-clé: identité nationale, identité, médias, Révolution de Roses, flagging homeland, Rustavi 2, nouvelles télévisée, analyse critique du discours.

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The concept of national identity has always fascinated me as it is one of the most present things in our lives but at the same time it is the least questioned one. National identity is something that is rarely put under scrutiny and is largely accepted as a natural formation. The phenomenon that I would like to explore in my research is the reconstruction of Georgian national identity after the events of the Rose Revolution in November 2003 when the new definitions of Georgian national identity have emerged.

My interest in national identity is closely related to my personal experience, as I myself do not have a well-defined national identity. Being a daughter of a diplomat I have spent more than twelve years outside Georgia. During these years the modern Georgian national identity was constructed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Upon my return to Georgia, I discovered that I could not fully relate to the Georgian national identity and the values it carries. It is therefore my personal experience of not having a strong national identity that made me question the process of national identity construction; and I find myself intrigued by how these identities are mobilized and reshaped by the introduction of new elements.

In this research I am particularly interested in how already existing national identities are reconstructed within discourse through the participation of the media. In other words, I want to explore which topics and discourses on national identity are disseminated through media and later negotiated by ordinary people. The construction of national identity is a rather complex process, as national identities seem to derive from an extensive repertoire of practices that are influenced by many factors, making it difficult to limit this transformation to one source. Considering the complexity of the concept of national identity, I have chosen to investigate one particular case study: the reconstruction of the Georgian national identity after the events of the Rose Revolution in November 2003, which at the time were the center of the Georgian media's attention. This study will shed light on how the Rose Revolution happened in Georgia and the role of the media within the process. I believe that this study will help researchers gain a better understanding of

national identity reconstruction, and furthermore its role in the peaceful revolutions that took place in the Eastern Europe and Middle Asia from 2000 to 2005. By closely analyzing the case of the Rose Revolution in Georgia it will be possible to clarify the link between the media and the peaceful revolutions in Serbia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

Before discussing the theoretical framework and specific questions of my research, it is important to briefly contextualize the events of the Rose Revolution. Taking place in November 2003,[1] the Rose Revolution was the second revolution in a series of peaceful revolutions that started in Serbia in 2000 and was followed by the Ukraine in 2004 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005. In the modern history of independent Georgia, the Rose Revolution marked a new era in which serious political confrontation was resolved peacefully. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s was characterized by the rise of strong nationalistic movements, followed by violence in the majority of the post-Soviet countries that were in the search of a national identity. Georgia's modern history has also been marked by violence, including the civil war in 1992 and the ethnic conflicts in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia that are still not resolved. However, the peaceful resolution of the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the similar events of the Orange Revolution one year later in the Ukraine, were seen by many, as a new chapter in the history of post-Soviet countries as they moved towards development and the adoption of democratic values.

The Rose Revolution of November 2003 was characterized by massive peaceful demonstrations in response to the President Eduard Shevardnadze's and his supporters' attempt at manipulating the results of the parliamentary elections held on November 2nd 2003 (Hewitt, 2003: 3). The demonstrations reached its climax on November 22nd 2003, when opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili and his supporters seized the parliament building with roses in their hands. The next day president Shevardnadze resigned. Although fraudulent election results were named as the primary motivator that provoked these demonstrations, in reality it was just one among many. Other catalytic features of Georgia's pre-revolution environment included extreme poverty and corruption – where

[1] For more detailed overview of the Rose Revolution see Annex 2

52% of the population lived on the verge of poverty – as well as unsettled conflicts in breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Hewitt, 2003).

What began as a demonstration against Shevardnadze and his government in the capital Tbilisi soon became a massive, well-organized event with thousands of participants from all over Georgia supporting oppositional forces and demanding the resignation of Shevardnadze. Throughout these events there was 24-hour media coverage. As Spurling argues, one of the commercial TV Channels – Rustavi 2 – "ran rather biased coverage" openly supporting the opposition movement and its leader, Saakashvili, who currently is the president of Georgia (Spurling, 2003: 2). While supporting opposition leaders, Rustavi 2 also actively urged people to come outside and join the demonstrators. Later, when the events of the Rose Revolution were over but still in the spotlight, Rustavi 2 started running a promotional commercial for their channel claiming responsibility for the Revolution.

In the media and political discourse the Rose Revolution was framed as a success story of Georgian democracy. The Rose Revolution introduced significant changes to Georgian national identity and these changes were primarily disseminated through the media. My goal is to trace and analyze dominant discourses on Georgian national identity flagged in the media, and to explore how interviewed respondents of different ethnic origins negotiated these changes. To achieve this goal I have chosen to combine two different methods: critical discourse analysis of the media archive and semi-structured interviews.

In the first chapter I will present a detailed "problématique" around the reconstruction of Georgian national identity and the specific research questions of this study. I will also elaborate the concepts of identity, national identity, and the relation between the media and national identity. Finally I will situate Georgian national identity within its historical context. In the second chapter I will discuss the methodologies used in this research, notably critical discourse analysis of Rustavi 2's media archive during the final two days of the Rose Revolution and semi-structured interviews conducted three years from the conclusion of the Rose Revolution. The third chapter presents the critical discourse

analysis of the chosen media archive and the discussion. Subsequently, the forth chapter concentrates on the analysis of the interviews conducted within this research. Finally, in the fifth chapter I will present the conclusion with the findings of this exploratory study and the questions it raises for the future research.

1. Conceptual Framework

1.1. Identity

Given that national identity is a very complex concept it is hard to limit its reconstruction to one source, therefore multiple elements have to be articulated and questioned. As many authors recognize national identity construction is largely influenced by power relations, therefore important power mechanisms, such as inclusion and exclusion based on difference, categorization and selective mobilization of history have to be examined. But before discussing national identity it is important to highlight how the principle theorists of cultural studies conceptualize identity.

On a general theoretical level discussion around the concept of identity is underpinned by the tension between two opposed perspectives: the essentialist and non-essentialist (Woodward, 1993). The essentialist vision is based on the argument that identity is constant and once emerged, always remains the same. As Kathryn Woodward elaborates: in the essentialist vision "there is one clear, authentic set of characteristics which define a certain identity and they do not alter across time" (Woodward, 1993: 11). These claims of constant identity are based on an essentialist vision of history, race, and ethnicity (Woodward, 1993).

The non-essentialist vision is much more complex and provides a better opportunity to adequately analyze concepts of identity and national identity. According to this perspective, the process of identity construction is infinite in time and therefore can never be completed (Woodward, 1993). As Rotry argues, identity does not possess a stable core, "it is centreless and [a] contingent web constituted by networks of beliefs and desires" (Rotry cited in Edensor, 2002: 29). As Woodward explains, in the non-

essentialist vision, instability of identity is recognized and the construction of identity is explained in terms of differences that provoke opposition to different identities. As Tim Edensor argues: "identity is always in process, is always being reconstituted in a process of becoming; By virtue of location in social, material, temporal and spatial contexts" (Edensor, 2002: 29).

For my research I intend to adopt the non-essentialist perspective, which I believe more precisely articulates the concept of identity, incorporating all of its complexity and instability. To define the concept of identity I borrow from Stuart Hall who argues that "identity is constructed on the back of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group" (Du Gay, & Hall, 1996: 2). In other words, when defining identity it is always important to acknowledge that identities emerge from our feelings of belonging to some particular group that shares the same values, traditions, and symbols. This is more of an emotional attachment as identity is not inherent, but rather invented and constructed. As Hall further argues,

> "identities are subject to radical historicization and though identities seem to invoke an origin in the historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" (Du Gay, & Hall, 1996: 4).

As Chris Barker further clarifies identity is a "contingent historical-cultural formation" (Barker, 2000: 197).

As the construction of identity is dependent on multiple factors, this process is characterized by the centrality of power relations. Identities are not natural or pre-existing; On the contrary, they are constructed in a desired manner by the interplay of internal and external power relations. As Hall argues, identities are constructed within a discourse; "They are produced in specific historical contexts in specific institutional frames by the play of specific modalities of power" (Du Gay, & Hall, 1996: 6). It is hard to specify exactly how cultural power is exercised, as this depends on the specific context. Yet, at the same time, there are always core elements that are more or less always present in the identity construction process. As Ernesto Laclau argues, one of the

mechanisms of exercising power is defining certain boundaries or margins that identity cannot violate by strategies of exclusion and inclusion (Laclau cited in Du Gay, & Hall, 1996). Identity construction is based on the exclusion and repression of certain elements that threaten so-called "unity," thereby establishing certain violent hierarchies between the included and the excluded (Laclau in Du Gay, & Hall, 1996). As Homi K. Bhabha claims, "unities that identities proclaim are in fact constructed within the play of power and exclusion and are the result not of a natural and inevitable primordial totality, but of naturalized over-determined process[es] of closure" (Bhabha cited in Du Gay, & Hall, 1996: 5).

Furthermore, identities are constructed by exercising cultural power, which possesses many mechanisms. Certain central mechanisms appear to have always been present, such as inclusion and exclusion based on factors of difference; other mechanisms include mobilization and interpretation of history, and invention of traditions, values, images and symbols. Within these identity-constructing mechanisms, categorization has an important place. As Richard Jenkins argues, categorization contributes towards determining symbolic boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Jenkins accentuates two types of identification: the internal and the external (Jenkins, 2000). By the external categorization we define others that are excluded, and by the internal categorization we define ourselves as included. As Billig argues, "to achieve positive identity, groups will compare themselves positively with contrasting outgroups, for instance nations will produce flattering stereotypes of themselves and demeaning stereotypes of others" (Billig, 1995: 66). As Woodward argues, by placing themselves in opposition to "others," national identities become ever-stronger. For example: something that is part of the Georgian national identity is automatically opposed to the Armenian one, and through this opposition the authenticity of each national identity is reinforced and strengthened (Woodward, 1993).

As Seyla Benhabib writes:

> "Every search for identity includes differentiating oneself from one who is not [...] what is shocking is not for the evitable dialectic of identity/difference but rather the atavistic belief that identities can be maintained and secured only by eliminating difference and otherness" (Benhabib, 1996: 3).

This play on opposition and difference is marked by language, traditions, values and symbols. Alongside other elements, symbols play a crucial role in establishing borders of inclusion and exclusion. As Edensor outlines, the most powerful symbols are very fluid, and according to the context, the symbol can either become inclusive or exclusive (Edensor, 2002). In general, inclusion and exclusion can be performed by four distinct mechanisms: discursively, by usage of certain words like "we," "our," "their" and "they" which establish boundaries of belonging or exclusion; by symbols; by selective mobilization and interpretation of historical events, where certain events are brought to the forefront and others forgotten; or as Dejan Dmitrijevic argues, by traditions that are in most cases invented solely to reinforce or justify authenticity of a certain national identity (Dmitrijevic, 2004).

1.1.2. National Identity

In discussing identity, it is important to define national identity in particular. As Chris Barker argues: "national identity is a form of imaginative identification with the symbols and discourse of the nation-state" (Barker, 2004: 252). In this definition by invoking imaginative identification Barker adheres to Benedict Anderson's theory of "imagined community": that a nation is an imagined community and that the creation of the nation and national identity was made possible largely by the development of printed media and the mass production of books (Anderson, 1996). While Anderson argues in favor of the printed media in drawing a national identity together, this does not mean that it was the only factor that contributed to this process. National identity – like many other identities – does not have one source, but rather is constituted from multiple complex elements within a cultural context. It is the interweaving of all of these elements that creates the illusion of unity in national identity. As Hall argues:

> "Instead of thinking of national cultures as unified, we should think of them as a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity. They are cross–cut by deep internal divisions and differences, and "unified" only through the exercise of different forms of cultural power" (Hall in Barker, 2004: 253).

As Barker further elaborates national identities are not simply political formations but rather systems of cultural representations that are reproduced as discursive action (Barker, 2000). It is primarily "symbolic and discursive dimensions of national identity that creates the idea of origins, continuity and traditions" (Barker, 2000: 197). The link between discourse and national identity is important to my research as I plan to explore reconstruction of Georgian national identity in the discourse disseminated in the media. In other words, my goal is to see how discourse on Georgian national identity was reformulated.

Ruth Wodak explains that the construction of national identity "builds on the emphasis on a common history and collective memory" (Wodak, Reisigl, & De Cillia 1999: 154). Collective memory is a concept developed by Halbwachs and refers to "historical continuity by recalling specific elements from the archive of historical memory" (Halbwachs cited in Wodak, Reisigl, & De Cillia, 1999: 155). Similarly, for Bhabha it is a "national narrative" that ensures the creation of national identity and consolidates people (Bhabha, 1990). National narrative is characterized by a "strange forgetting" of negative aspects of the nation's past and remembrance of other aspects that constitute the nation's narrative (Bhabha, 1990: 310). In other words, national narratives are highly selective to ensure the vision of continuity and homogeneity of national identity. Most importantly national narratives are not spontaneous but on the contrary are "produced and reproduced and spread by actors in concrete institutionalized contexts" (Wodak, Reisigl, & De Cillia, 1999: 155). As D. C. Martin elaborates, "national narratives channel political emotions so that they can fuel efforts to modify a balance of power; transform the perceptions of the past and of the present" (Martin, 1995: 13).

Primarily national identity is constructed to ensure a vision of unity by eliminating difference and otherness and emphasizing unity and homogeneity. For example, after the dissolution of the USSR, many post-Soviet and Eastern European countries including Georgia created new national identities and national narratives that were consequently internalized by the people; aiding in fulfilling the illusion of unity for a certain national identity. Differences blatantly present in Georgia, such as its multiethnic population, were

ignored. Meanwhile elements that contributed to the vision of unity, such as the Georgian language, the Georgian ethnic group, and the selective mobilization and interpretation of Georgian history, were brought to the forefront to create a natural vision of a unified national identity. As Karmen Erjavec argues, "the collapse of the communist hegemony raised new questions about the meaning of national identity and these questions were answered in terms of ethnic identities" (Erjavec, 2003: 83).

1.1.3. National Identity and Media

As stated above, I am interested in the dynamic role of the media in the process of Georgian national identity construction after the events of the Rose Revolution. Yet, how central is the media in the construction of national identities? Many researchers in Cultural and Media Studies argue in favor of the strong effects of the media in the construction of national identity (Barker, 2004). For David Morley and Kevin Robins, TV broadcasting and especially broadcast news are "nation binders" something that helps to construct a sense of national unity in time and space (Morley, & Robins, 1995: 10). As these authors argue, with the aid of national broadcasting, dispersed individuals come together as a community that shares the same concerns, the same interests in the shared space, at the same time (Ibid). As Barker argues, the ritualistic watching of television contributes to a sense of citizenship and helps to situate the viewers in relation to a range of political concerns (Barker, 2004). According to Barker's vision, television helps to maintain and diffuse national identity and the changes made to it; as television addresses individuals as a part of a nation (Ibid). Barker claims that "television connects representations with domestic routines to facilitate the production of national identity" (Barker, 2004: 61). In other words, Barker places media at the heart of national identity construction and presents it as a tool for diffusing and disseminating ideological elements that define certain national identities.

As Billig argues, "media uses the naturalized syntax of hegemony, simultaneously speaking to and for the nation in both senses of representation" (Billig, 1995: 115). Therefore, media plays an important role in fixing the "common-sense" meanings of

certain national identities. The media, alongside other mechanisms, actively participates in the power game that shapes national identity according to the dominant ideology. As Gramsci explains, "ideology is not just a question of explicit political beliefs, but it is also a material force; it organizes human masses" (Gramsci cited in Bennet, 1981: 209). According to Gramsci, the struggle over hegemony is led by the "common sense" which goes widely unquestioned; this struggle is continually transforming and is not as innocent or spontaneous as in many cases it is represented to be (Gramsci in Bennet, 1981: 203). Dmitrijevic argues that media provides grounds for the legitimization or internalization of the reconstructed national identity. In other words, one sustains another as every major change to national identity demands legitimization from the people who have to adopt the new identity (Dmitrijevic, 2004). As Schlesinger argues, television – especially news – provides a stage for producing interpretations of nationhood for broader diffusion and eventual collective consumption (Schlesinger, 1991). By providing the stage and place for national contents, television in general, and news in particular is recognized as one of the most important national texts participating in boundary making; it contributes towards the categorizing of viewers in the national community as included or excluded. Therefore, by diffusing national contents, media contributes towards creating habits of national thinking. It is important to note that media alone does not create national identity, though it surely has some effect on it and further promotes it. For instance, in my research I have chosen to analyze media coverage of the Rose Revolution as a central element but I don't argue that the media alone participates in the national identity reconstruction.

Many authors criticize theories on the strong effects of the media. Although, they recognize the importance of media in the national identity construction process, they put emphasis on other practices which in addition to media, participate in national identity construction. As Philip Schlesinger argues, very often "gratuitous assumptions are made about linkages between national identity and the media, but these linkages have to be demonstrated" (Schlesinger cited in Law, 2003: 299). Billig (1995) and Edensor (2002) recognize the importance of media, but they do not place the media at the center of the national identity construction process. For Billig, national identity is not sustained by

exotic cases of nationalism that emerge in crisis situations, but on the contrary, that the national identity is embedded within everyday semiotic routines (Billig, 1995: 300). According to Billig, "the nation is habitually recognized in acts of acknowledgment – in activities described as "flagging homeland" – where participation in a national collective is gently woven into routine daily practices, as well as habits of language such as the joining of the national body into an inclusive "us"" (Billig, 1995: 6). Through the mechanisms of "banal nationalism" described by Billig, the presence of the homeland or nation is naturalized as it is presented as a context while telling the story. Even the usage of the all inclusive "we" does not seem unnatural in any way (Billig, 1995: 364). While "flagging homeland," national identity is made very present, but at the same time not too artificial: for example, while watching the news we don't really question why the pronoun "we" is used or some particular person is presented as a national hero. As mentioned above, in my research I don't argue that media alone plays the principal role in the national identity reconstruction. I recognize that media together with everyday practices described by Billig contribute towards introducing and sustaining changes to the national identity. To cover both media and everyday practices in my exploratory research I have chosen to use two different methods: critical discourse analysis of the media coverage and semi-structured interviews held in three years after the Rose Revolution.

1.2. Problématique: The Case of Georgian National Identity

In order to discuss the case of Georgian national identity it is important to situate it in the nation's historical context and gain insight how Georgian authors have articulated it. In the early 1990s, Georgia was one of the many post-Soviet countries in search of a national identity. As Manuel Castells points out, in 74 years the Soviet Union was unable to create a national identity in the sense that "communities may be imagined, but not necessarily believed" (Castells, 1997: 39). Consequently, the collapse of the USSR "gave rise to the assertion of newly reclaimed national and ethnic identities in the search for lost identities" (Woodard, 1993: 17). As a result, forms of religious, ethnic, and national identification have re-emerged (Ibid). I would therefore like to closely

question and highlight the main elements mobilized during the search for a modern Georgian national identity.

1.2.1 Historical context

The first attempt to construct a Georgian national identity was undertaken in the 19th Century by a group of Georgian intelligentsia known as the *Tergdaleulni*[2], in response to the domination and repression of Georgia under the Russian empire. As Jones writes, "the *Tegrdaleulni* were the first conscious nation builders in Georgia" (Jones, 2006: 37). Educated in Europe, the *Tergdaleulni* were successful in creating and diffusing the discourse of glorification of the Georgian nation and its history by rewriting a collective history and for the first time formalizing the Georgian language. One of the most successful strategic decisions however, was the creation of the "Association for the diffusion of literacy" which contributed towards the popularization of Georgian history and literature among the larger public. As one of the leaders of *Tergdaleulni* Ilya Chavchavardze argued, the "degeneration of the nation starts when the nation forgets its history" (Chavchavadze, 1990: 51).

This selective mobilization of history and Georgian language set out to create a natural character for Georgian national identity and re-unite the Georgian people by portraying long tradition of statehood. For the *Tegrdaleulni* it was statehood, and precisely the Georgian state that created and sustained the Georgian national identity (Jorjadze, 1990: 35). By the close association of the state and national identity they tried to prove that neither Georgian identity nor the Georgian state were new inventions but on the contrary had persisted across time. Their argument was far from a reality as at that time Georgia simply did not have statehood as it was incorporated into the Russian Empire as just one of the provinces. As Gordadze notes, the *Tegrdaleulni* by rewriting history ensured

[2] The "Tergdaleulni" were a young group of Georgian intelligentsia in 1860s– 1880s who advocated for educational reform, cultural freedom and self– government for Georgians within Russian Empire. The name on the group comes from the river Terek, the ostensible river between Russia and Georgia which they crossed to receive education in the Universities of Russian Empire and European countries.

Georgian nation's continuity in time and space and contributed largely to the creation of the modern Georgian nation (Gordadze, 1999).

Georgia realized its aspirations to statehood only in 1918 when the first Georgian Social Democratic Republic was established. Unfortunately independence was short lived as in 1921 Georgia was occupied by Bolshevik Russia and one year later was incorporated into the Soviet Union. While Georgia was still part of the Soviet Union dissident movement for restoration of Georgian statehood started to gain popularity in the 1960s and reached its peak in the 1980s with the liberation movement (Jones, 2004). Throughout the Soviet dominance in Georgia was marked by large-scale cultural and political repression. Only in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was Georgia again in search of a new national identity. Therefore, I would like to discuss the main elements described as integral part of the Georgian national identity by contemporary Georgian authors.

At the forefront of Georgian national identity, Georgian history occupies an important place. As Gordadze argues, "passion for the past serves as the source of pride and dignity for the nation and therefore is an essential part of the nationalistic ideology" (Gordadze, 1999: 54). Georgian historic discourse can be separated into two major parts. The first tracing back to the Hittite empire in the 18th century B.C. and the second connecting to the 11-13th centuries A.D. entitled the Golden Age. Many Georgian historians consider the Hittite Empire as the first homeland of Georgians (Chkeidze, 2002; Vardosanidze, 2004). The association of the Hittite Empire and the modern Georgian state is used to situate Georgian national identity as one of the oldest however, the lack of the authentic sources on this issue leaves a large space for interpretation.

The second part of the historic discourse concerns 11-13th centuries A.D. and is associated with pride and nostalgia for an era when the Georgian Kingdom was glorious, powerful and unified. As Rostom Chkeidze argues, the Golden Age proves that Georgians have influenced the major historical events and that this energy is not gone, but waiting for the appropriate moment to rise from the oblivion (Chkeidze, 2002). The Golden Age is most often evoked today in the hope of reuniting shattered Georgia, as

King David IV reunited the Georgian Kingdom in 12th century A.D. This association of two contextually different events is often used in modern political discourse; for instance President Mikheil Saakashvili chose to deliver his inaugural speech in January 25th 2005 on the tomb of King David IV as a sign that he will repeat David's glorious path. Saakashvili, on this symbolic site for Georgians, promised to reunite a shattered Georgia. As he said: "Georgia's territorial integrity is the goal of my life" (cited in Hewitt, 2003: 4).

In the historical discourse "proto-nationalism" plays a major role as it provides a source for the construction of the Georgian national identity (Gordadze, 1999). Proto-nationalism is a term used by Eric Hobsbawm who argues that "proto-nationalism should not be mistaken for modern nationalism" (Hobsbawm in Gordadze, 1999: 65). As Gordadze explains – "pour le nationalisme c'est l'allégeance à la nation qui prime et constitue la source de pouvoir politique, pour le proto-nationalisme, c'est la loyauté dynastique" (Gordadze, 1999: 65). For instance, historical discourse has created an illusion that the Georgian Kingdom was the beginning of the Georgian nation and in the first years of the independence, Georgian nationalists argued that the Georgian national identity had not been constructed anew, but rather remembered after liberation from the Soviet dominance. In comparison with the Golden Age largely omitted from the historical discourse on Georgian national identity are the 15-18th centuries A.D. that were marked by the internal conflicts that resulted in the dissolution of the Georgian Kingdom and occupation by the Russian Empire (Vardosanidze, 2004).

Another heavily accentuated element surrounding Georgian national identity is Christianity, which is viewed as a unifying factor and an integral part of Georgian national identity. As one of the Georgian philosophers Merab Mamardashvili writes, Christianity was the main force that transformed Georgians from an ethnic group to a nation (Mamardashvili, 2003: 55). Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first controversial president of Georgia largely blamed for the ethnic conflicts in the early 1990s, pointed out that history of Georgia can not be viewed separately from Christianity (Gamsakhurdia, 1991). After all, Georgians were second in the world after the Armenians to declare Christianity

as the state religion as early as 337 A.D. It is also important to note that two apostles of Jesus Andrew and Simon the Canaanite, came to Georgia to preach. As Gordadze argues, Christianity is one of the most important components of the Georgian nationalistic ideology (Gordadze, 1999). Alongside being one of the most important components, Christianity plays an important role in inclusion/exclusion as it includes Christian Orthodox and excludes others, mainly ethnic minorities that practice different religions.

When talking about Christianity in Georgia it is also important to discuss St. George, who is considered to be the patron saint of Georgia. Gamsakhurdia goes so far as to argue that in fact the country's name is related to St. George (Gamsakhurdia, 1999). As he further points out Christianity in Georgia has evolved into "Giorgianism" (in Georgian St.George is Tsminda Giorgi) (Gamsakhurdia, 1999: 20). Both on religious and political levels, St. George is considered as a symbol of resistance and victory. There is a symbolic link traced between St. George defeating the dragon, and the Kingdom of Georgia defeating the Seljuk Turks in 1121 A.D. (Gamsakhurdia, 1999). St. George is a also largely associated with the King David IV and the Golden Age, as his army portrayed St. George on their flag when they defeated the Seljuk Turks (Chkeidze, 2002).

Even today St. George is largely present on the national symbols of Georgia. St. George is the central image on Georgia's new coat of arms and the central element of the new "five-cross flag" is St. George's cross. As Chkeidze writes, "St. George led the way to the victorious and glorious Georgia that we hope and dream to restore some day" (Chkeidze, 2004: 35). In other words, St. George became the symbol of a prosperous Georgia. It is also interesting to note that in Georgia St. George's Day is celebrated not once but twice a year: on May 6th and November 23rd, which oddly coincided with the Rose Revolution's climax on November 23rd 2003.

Finally, the last element I would like to discuss is the duality of Georgian culture that incorporates both occidental and oriental elements. Georgia is a country on the crossroads between Europe and Asia and is equally influenced by both. The best demonstration of this duality is through Georgian culture, particularly the Georgian literary tradition. As

Guram Asatiani writes, the synthesis of occidental and oriental cultures is the defining feature of the Georgian national identity, as this combination creates something new and unique that is extremely organic (Asatiani, 1990). In the political discourse after the Rose Revolution this duality was dismissed for Europeanism that was accentuated as the principal element inherent to Georgian culture.

However, this duality between Europe and Asia is not the only one present in Georgia, another is the blending of tragedy and comedy. Russian writer Boris Pasternak defined Georgian culture as unusual mixture of deep tragedy and endless festivity (Pasternak in Asatiani, 1990). As Asatiani writes, literature is the central element in Georgian national identity, as it carries the Georgian soul better than anything else with its internal conflict and duality (Asatiani, 1990). Indeed, literature and especially the historical novel did play a defining role in the construction of Georgian national identity. As Gordadze argues, numerous historic novels contributed largely to the re-writing of history, mainly highlighting glorious times for the Georgians (Gordadze, 1999).

The main elements discussed above were explicitly present both in the media coverage and the semi-structured interviews. However, the most accentuated element of the Georgian national identity was Christianity.

1.2.2. Research Questions

In contrast to the violent events that occurred during the first years of Georgia's independence, the Rose Revolution proved to be an exclusively non-violent and a powerful event that changed Georgia's image and political orientation. The primary objective of my exploratory research is to gain a better understanding of how Georgian national identity was reconstructed after the events of the Rose Revolution. Particularly, I am interested in how integral elements of the Georgian national identity were rearticulated and framed in the dominant discourses disseminated in the media coverage of the Rose Revolution. As the Rose Revolution was characterized by the dynamic 24-hour media coverage this led me to question the ways in which the media and especially

television news contributed to the formation and dissemination of the dominant discourses on Georgian national identity. I have decided to explore dominant discourses on national identity that were mobilized and disseminated to construct post-Rose Revolution national identity through critical discourse analysis of the media coverage.

As exclusion/inclusion is always a part of national identity construction I was also interested to see to what degree the post-Rose Revolution national identity flagged in media discourse had become inclusive of elements such as difference and diversity. Considering that Georgia is a multi-ethnic country with more than seven ethnic minority groups (Azeris, Armenians, Russians, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Ukrainians and Kurds), I intended to explore if it was possible for Georgia to abandon its homogenous illusion of Georgian nationhood and construct a new national identity that would embrace all its diversity. This part of my research will shed light on how the changing Georgian national identity addresses ethnic issues either by embracing or ignoring them. Embracing a diverse ethnic reality remains a concern for many post-Soviet countries, and by examining its place in media, I believe I will aid in building greater knowledge on this issue; helping researchers to delve deeper into issues concerning questions of ethnicity.

Many authors in cultural studies argue that media plays key role in the national identity construction: Morley and Robins (1995) even call the media the "nation binder." Although, the importance of the media is undeniable, I would argue that it is unjustified to present the media as the principal element of the national identity construction as it is just one among many elements in a wide range of everyday practices that influence this process. In fact I would agree with Billig (1995) in arguing that the media and everyday practices combined, influence national identity construction to the greatest extent. Furthermore, I would argue that as the media circulates dominant discourses on national identity, it potentially re-shapes national identity and consequently then becomes a part of the everyday practices and routines that sustain national identity. In using the term "everyday practices" I am referring to everyday events and routines whereby national identity is embedded, constantly present and flagged. These routines and practices are described by Billig as "banal nationalism." According to Billig, "the term banal

nationalism is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the nations to be reproduced on daily basis" (1995: 6). As Gramsci argues, ideology "is the more general term for the ways in which sets of ideas and assumptions become dominant material forces of society", therefore common sense is "the sub-stratum" of ideology (Gramsci cited in Bennet, 1981: 207). Both the media and everyday practices are saturated by the ideological habits that sustain national identity. As argued by Gramsci, ideology is inseparable from commonsense, and both go largely unquestioned (Gramsci in Bennet, 1981). As noted by Billig, ideological habits present in everyday life and the media perform the action of "flagging homeland" (1995: 6). By "flagging homeland" practices are repeatedly reproduced in everyday life and media: and though these practices national identity is inscribed in common sense, which is represented as unquestionable. By "flagging homeland" national identity is made omnipresent, but at the same time natural as it is presented as part of a united national context. For example, the media "routinely use a *deixis* of little words" such as "we" or "they" which go largely unquestioned (Billig, 1995: 174). These words are used to establish boundaries of inclusion or exclusion in a national context. This boundary making is subjected to temporal and ideological elements that are in constant flux, and therefore these boundaries are constantly shifting. The first part of my research precisely explores how this process of "flagging homeland" took place during the media coverage of the Rose Revolution through critical discourse analysis.

My second research question is closely interrelated to and flows from the first question: It concerns how, after three years from the Rose Revolution, ordinary people have interiorized and negotiated or contrarily rejected dominant discourses on national identity framed and flagged by the media and politicians during the Rose Revolution. This part of my research concerns individual perspectives on the Rose Revolution and the Georgian national identity three years after the events in November 2003. In exploring this facet I am interested in how people conceive of their Georgian national identity, how they create categories of inclusion and exclusion, and how different these may be from the ones disseminated and flagged by the media during the Rose Revolution. Furthermore, I am interested in how their vision of the Rose Revolution has changed or remained stagnant

three years after these events. I have decided to address these question through semi-structured interviews conducted with 11 respondents of ethnic Georgians and representatives of ethnic minorities.

1.3. Conclusion

My research on the subject of Georgian national identity construction and the Rose Revolution has an exploratory character as the Rose Revolution is a considerably new phenomenon. It is extremely interesting that the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, one year later, bared an uncanny resemblance in how the events progressed and in that they were named revolutions. Additionally, both the Rose Revolution and the Orange Revolution were characterized by the dynamic media coverage which has led me to question the place of media in the struggle over hegemony. While scholars such as Billig (1995) would argue that everyday practices and banal nationalism mainly sustain and legitimize changes made to the national identity, I would argue that as media circulates, it holds the potential to re-shape national identity and consequently then become a part of the everyday practices and routines that largely sustain national identity. As the Rose Revolution in Georgia is a new phenomenon, it has not been fully studied and within my research, I hope to delve deeper into the phenomenon of the Rose Revolution and its repercussions for Georgian national identity.

Georgia is a very interesting case of a post-Soviet country in search of a national identity that must be Georgian, but at the same time, must encompass the country's diversity. I would like to explore the feasibility of Georgia, after spending more than 70 years under the Soviet Union, to step away from a homogenous illusion of Georgian nationhood and to construct a national identity that embraces and advocates democratic values and diversity. With the interview component of my research, I was interested to see how Georgians and the members of the ethnic minorities perceive and interpret the Georgian national identity both prior and after the Rose Revolution. Additionally, I wanted to

explore if and how the Georgian national identity had become inclusive of elements such as difference and diversity, or on the contrary, it remained exclusive.

Georgia's post-Soviet history, rife with ethnic conflicts and confrontations, in some ways resembles the history of the Balkan countries. Yet Georgia, unlike the Balkans, did not receive much scholarly attention. It is my goal to investigate and highlight the complex processes of national identity construction in this post-Soviet country, focusing on the events of the Rose Revolution, which took center-stage for both local and international media, and to find the place held by the Rose Revolution in the ongoing construction of Georgian national identity.

2. Research methodology

To fully cover my research questions I have chosen to use two different, complementary methods within qualitative methodology: critical discourse analysis of the media archive of the Rose Revolution for the first part of the research and semi-structured interviews for the second part. With critical discourse analysis I will be able to detect and analyze dominant discourses and capture formal portrayal of the Georgian national identity; in contrast, interviews will provide more personal insight to how ordinary people of different ethnic origins in Georgia have negotiated the post-Rose Revolution changes to the Georgian national identity.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

To answer my first research question and identify dominant discourses on Georgian national identity framed in the media, I have decided to undertake a critical discourse analysis of the media coverage on the last two keys dates of the Rose Revolution, November 22nd and 23rd 2003. My choice of critical discourse analysis was determined by the fact that this particular method is regularly used to study identity as a discursive process. It approaches identity as an ongoing process "accomplished through social interaction and particularly through communication" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 237). Critical discourse analysis will help to determine how media and particularly Rustavi 2, television channel that was closely associated with the Rose Revolution, flagged Georgian national identity in their coverage. Also this particular method will help me to identify which dominant discourses on Georgian national identity were mobilized and disseminated and how these particular discourses played out difference and similarity as inclusive and exclusive factors.

Critical discourse analysis is an appropriate method for my particular research as it "mediates the connection between language and social context, and by this allows incorporating political context, everyday reality and cultural background in the complex process of identity construction" (Fairclough, 1995: 189). As Hardy and Ainsworth

explain, "critical discourse analysis builds on Cultural Studies and involves the use of discourse analytic techniques combined with a critical perspective, to interrogate social phenomenon" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 236). Critical discourse analysis by "examining how communication practices construct identities reveals the reproduction of power relations" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 238).

While discussing critical discourse analysis it is important to describe what discourse is and specify what is meant by "critical discourse analysis". As Du Gay explains:

> "Discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. Thus the term refers both to the production of knowledge through language and representations and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play" (Du Gay, 1996: 43).

Although "discourse is inaccessible in its entirety, traces of it are found in the texts that help to constitute it" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 236). In other words, discourses are realized through texts but they also include broader social and cultural structures. Concerning the critical framework critical discourse analysis recognizes that particular vision of reality is not natural and "attempts to "de-naturalize" taken for granted assumptions" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 238). This reflects Foucault's emphasis on the contextually contingent nature of truth and the importance of power relations. Foucault points out that in the discourse power and knowledge are interrelated, as discourse produces, defines and constructs the objects of knowledge (Foucault, 1971). Foucault argues in favor of mutually constitutive relationship between power and knowledge and therefore knowledge is indissociable from regimes of power (Foucault, 1971). As Fairclough elaborates, "discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and changes power relations" (Fairclough, 1992: 67).

As there are numerous approaches within discourse analysis it is important to explain why I have chosen to use critical discourse analysis. I have adopted this method because of its "focus on the relationship between the discourse and broader political context,

instead of studying only linguistic structures and language" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 237). Although critical discourse analysis is largely associated with Norman Fairclough and linguistics, I choose to adhere to a broader definition of this method that mediates the connection between language and social context, incorporating political context, everyday reality and cultural background (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004; De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999).

> "Connection between the language and social context facilitates more satisfactory bridging of gap between texts and contexts and takes us beyond simple examinations of verbal or written interactions and allows us to appreciate the broader political context, as well as material implications" (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2004: 239).

As critical discourse analysis is specially designed to study identity "it involves an interest in the ways social members categorize themselves" (Van Dijk, 1997: 4). It approaches identity construction as an ongoing process through "social categorization as various classifications of people are brought into being, with practical effects for those targeted by these categories as well as involved in their construction" (Hacking, 2000: 57). In other words, critical discourse analysis recognizes the unstable nature of identity, and sees it as a result of a complex interplay of discourses and power relations.

As national identity is a complex concept I have also integrated elements of gender and visual analysis of the media coverage of the Rose Revolution. However, the analysis primarily addressed the dominant discourses circulated by the media and speeches of political leaders featured in the media coverage of the Rose Revolution.

2.1.1. Rustavi 2

As media attention towards the Rose Revolution was very intense both inside and outside Georgia I have decided to analyze the coverage of one specific Georgian TV channel Rustavi 2 for several reasons. Rustavi 2's portrayal of the events became inseparable from the Rose Revolution both in everyday life and in recorded history of the events. Therefore, my goal is to explore Rustavi 2's articulation of the Rose revolution in 2003,

which was to become a dominant discourse on the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity. The monopoly held by Rustavi 2 during the Rose Revolution can be explained by the fact that in 2003 the channel had little competition from other media and was the most popular channel in Georgia. In contrast with the state 1st channel, Rustavi 2 founded in 1994, was largely financed by Western Development Assistance, and represented the ideal of western reporting, different from the Soviet style that dominated Georgian media (Anable, 2006). To see which TV Channels operated in Georgia in 2003 see Annex 3.

Throughout the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 presented openly pro-opposition coverage of the events and was the most popular TV station with the highest ratings. Rustavi 2 was the first channel in Georgia to introduce investigative journalism that was mainly oriented towards the critique of the corrupt government of Shevardnadze "legitimizing what Georgians already knew concerning corruption in the government" (Anable, 2006: 16). A variety of investigative and debate programs were launched by Rustavi 2 including evening news Kurieri and 60 Minutes, which were almost entirely dedicated to the critique of the corrupt government officials and their lavish lifestyles versus the omnipresent poverty in Georgian society.

Having a long history of government critique, Rustavi 2 became the main force in the struggle against the unpopular President Shevardnadze and his government, and gave voice to people's anger. The government's unsuccessful attempts in 2001 to shut down Rustavi 2 triggered the channels popularity even more. But it was mainly during the Rose Revolution in 2003 when Rustavi 2's struggle against Shevardnadze and his government reached its climax. Not only harshly criticizing government, Rustavi 2 regularly provided a platform for the opposition leaders. As one of the opposition leaders notes, "Rustavi 2 was the most prominent independent media outlet that played a distinctive role in making the Rose Revolution successful and non-violent" (Kandelaki, 2006: 1). Rustavi 2 also played an important role in urging people to join the demonstrations as President Saakashvili later notes "Rustavi 2 was very important. It was instrumental in bringing people outside" (cited in Anable, 2006: 15). As the owner of the channel Erosi

Kintsmarishvili acknowledged, Rustavi 2 "provided rather one sided coverage of the events becoming an active part of the opposition" (cited in Anable, 2006: 18). After the Rose Revolution was over but still in the spotlight, Rustavi 2 began to run a promotional video proclaiming themselves as the channel of the victorious people. As Georgian social scientist Ghia Nodia noted "One can confidently say that there would have been no revolution without the media" and by media of course meaning Rustavi 2 (cited in Anable, 2006: 23).

2.1.2. The media archive

In the beginning of September 2006 when I arrived in Georgia to construct my archive, I decided to obtain the archive footage of Rustavi 2 from November 2003 when the Rose Revolution took place. As Rustavi 2's archive footage was very extensive taking in consideration shortage of time and space, I had to make strategic choices on what dates of the Rose Revolution would be put under the scrutiny. Therefore, I decided to concentrate on the key dates of the Rose Revolution, November 22nd and November 23rd 2003. These particular dates determined the development of the events and were the most intense days of the Rose Revolution, with Rustavi 2 providing non-stop 24 hour coverage. On November 22nd 2003 opposition forces and their supporters seized the parliament building. On the final day of the Rose Revolution November 23rd 2003, president Shevardnadze resigned, with his resignation marking the end of the Rose Revolution and of political confrontation in Georgia, that followed by the large-scale celebrations in the capital Tbilisi. On both of these days Rustavi 2 covered events live all day. As the live coverage on November 22nd 2003, was very long, redundant and repetitive, I decided to limit my analysis to the 9 p.m. evening news "Kurieri Post Scriptum" that included all the major stories of the day.

In contrast with November 22nd 2003, on November 23rd 2003 Rustavi 2 coverage consisted only of live transmission throughout the day and there was no evening news. As live transmission can be lengthy and repetitive, I decided to concentrate on the key events of the day: the statement made by Eduard Shevardnadze on his resignation,

statements by the opposition leaders that followed, comments by journalists, and the celebrations that marked the beginning of the post-Rose Revolution era. Although it would have been interesting to analyze the comments of ordinary people on these days Rustavi 2 coverage did not include any comments from the ordinary people at all.

I have analyzed the evening news of November 22nd and key news stories on November 23rd 2003 taking into account verbal and visual contents. This kind of analysis provided insight into how the Rose Revolution was covered by Rustavi 2 and highlighted the main points of struggle for a unified Georgian national identity. I have also attempted to highlight the status of Rustavi 2 and journalists in the events of the Rose Revolution. With this study of Rustavi 2's coverage, I sought to identify what was to become a dominant discourse on the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity. As mentioned above, I did not analyze only linguistic structures but also integrated historical and socio-political elements as combination of all these elements provided better opportunity to delve deeper into the national identity (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak 1999). As construction of national identity is a highly political topic speeches by politicians featured in Rustavi 2 coverage of November 22nd and 23rd 2003 occupied an important place in the archive; they provide an interesting insight into the articulation of Georgian national identity by the politicians.

My goal here was to examine how the media in this case Rustavi 2, approached and framed the Georgian national identity and furthermore, how media was implicated in this hegemonic moment of nation-building by disseminating and creating a narrative of nation. National identities are understood as mental constructs because they are "discursively produced, reproduced and transformed by the discourses continually launched by media and politicians" (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak ,1999: 153). As there is no such thing as a constant national identity, rather it is reconstructed within discourse. Therefore my goal was to capture dominant discourses on national identity disseminated by Rustavi 2 during the Rose Revolution. As the discursive construction of national identities is always influenced by categorization and construction of uniqueness or difference it was important to see how dominant discourses disseminated through the

media, dealt with these issues (De Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak ,1999). I have also attempted to integrate the historical and political contexts within which the Rose Revolution occurred, as they provide much-needed background for understanding and analyzing dominant discourses voiced during the Rose Revolution. The Rose Revolution was embedded in a specific historical context as it strongly resembled the powerful Liberation Movement in the late1980s that was marked by the unity of Georgian people in their struggle for the independence from the USSR. However, the Rose Revolution was the only instance in the modern history of Georgia when political confrontation was resolved peacefully; the Rose Revolution differed from Georgia's first years of independence that were marked by the violence that resulted in two breakaway regions and in ethnic conflicts.

Since the Rustavi 2 footage integrated into the archive was in the Georgian language I have translated it into English. As the translation was made by me, I recognize that some of its aspects were no doubt subjective.

To enrich the archive with different political and ideological interpretations of the events, I included some aspects of the press coverage in order to see the difference between how Rustavi 2 and newspapers framed the events of the Rose Revolution on November 22nd and 23rd 2003. The analysis of the press coverage was not the central point of my research, and I used it to complement and reflect on the Rustavi 2 material. To see the list of the analyzed newspapers see Annex 3. I selected newspapers, according to their degree of popularity and circulation. All five selected newspapers were national newspapers sold throughout Georgia. I selected specific articles on the events of November 22nd and 23rd 2003, analyzing each one starting with on what page it appeared, what was the title, the choice of words and interviews included in the article.

In addition to introducing elements of the press coverage, I have also integrated minor segments of a Rustavi 2 documentary made on the first anniversary of the Rose Revolution. Such as events of November 21st when thousands of people came to the capital Tbilisi to support the opposition forces. Media and political leaders framed this

event as the culmination of the unity among the Georgian people. In the interviews that I have conducted, events of November 21st 2003 were most often evoked as the most memorable moment of the Rose Revolution.

2.2. Semi-structured interviews

In the second part of my research I sought to explore how three years after the Rose Revolution, ordinary people interiorized and negotiated, or on the contrary rejected the national identity flagged in the media during the Rose Revolution. My goal was to determine how people currently conceive of their Georgian national identity, how they create categories of inclusion and exclusion and how these categories compare to the ones disseminated by the media during the Rose Revolution. To explore the personal opinions and perceptions of the ordinary people on the topic of the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. It is important to note that the interviews provide crucial data for my analysis as they incorporate a three year time difference (I conducted 11 semi-structured interviews in November 2006). As nature of this research is explorative, semi-structured interviews will contribute towards exploring the studied phenomenon in greater depth, and will touch on the experiences of the respondents (Gauthier, 2003).

Overall, combined with discourse analysis that provides a more general account of dominant media discourses, interviews offered an opportunity to explore a more personal, in-depth picture of the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity. As Gubrium and Holstein (2002) note, semi-structured interviews rarely constitute the sole source of data in research and are used in conjunction with other types of data gathering. Semi-structured interviews offer an appropriate method as they provide much-needed liberty to the interviewees to express their ideas and opinions freely (Gauthier, 2003). As Alvesson notes, "loosely structured interviews are open to what the interviewee feels is relevant and important to talk about" (Alvesson, 2003: 13). Semi-structured interviews provide a rich account of the interviewee's experiences, knowledge, ideas, and impressions (Alvesson, 2003; Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth, & Keil, 1988; Fontana, & Frey, 1994;

Martin, & Turner, 1986; Holstein, & Gubrium, 1997). As Savoie– Zacj explains "l'entrevue semi– dirigée consiste en une interaction verbale animée de façon souple par le chercheur. Grâce à cette interaction, une compréhension riche du phénomène à l'étude sera construite conjointement avec interviewe" (Savoie– Zacj, 2003: 296).

As I am interested in the perception of the Rose Revolution and post-Rose Revolution national identity, semi-structured interviews can play an important role, as they are especially designed for the exploration of complex questions (Gubrium, & Holstein, 2002; Atkinson, 1998; Douglas, 1985; Rubin, & Rubin, 1995; Denzin 1989a, 1989b; Geertz 1988). As Johnson argues:

> "Qualitative interviews are likely the best approach for the questions of greater depth, where the knowledge sought is often taken for granted and not readily articulated by most of members and research question involves highly conflicted emotions as respondents have complicated, multiple perspectives on same phenomenon" (Johnson, 2002: 105).

2.2.1. Selection of respondents

As the background of the respondents highly guides the outcome of the interview, I have chosen to interview two groups of people: ethnic Georgians and representatives of ethnic minorities in Georgia. My choice was determined by the fact that one of my principle research interests was to explore inclusiveness or exclusiveness of Georgia's multiethnic reality in the post-Rose Revolution national identity. It is important to note that after analyzing the media archive I have discovered a significant gap in the discourse on Georgian national identity, where ethnic minorities were not addressed at all. As Foucault explains, "discontinuity is characteristic of every discursive statement and systems of dispersion are the inherent to the discursive statements" (Foucault, 1972: 37). In Georgia where ethnic minorities constitute from 20-30 percent of the population, ethnic questions were largely muted. This particular choice of respondents gave me an opportunity to discuss the nature of the Georgian identity from the point of view of ethnic Georgians and representatives of ethnic minorities and to compare their opinions. All the

respondents were asked to discuss if the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity was ready to embrace its multiethnic nature. They were also asked to comment on the place of ethnic minorities within the Rose Revolution media coverage.

I decided to locate my respondents through a snowball approach that is largely used in qualitative interviewing (Holstein, & Gubrium, 1995; Spradley 1979; Warren 2002). I located my first respondent, a press journalist, who I met while working as a reporter on television in Georgia. She helped me to locate five more Georgian respondents through her social network. The situation was more complicated with respondents from ethnic minorities. The first person I located was an Armenian acquaintance, who helped me to find four respondents one Armenian, two Azeri and one Ukrainian. A list of the interview respondents, with information detailing their age, occupation and ethnic origin may be found in Annex 1.

It was especially difficult to find people from ethnic minorities because of the climate of fear generated by an incident that happened in October 2006: three high ranking Russian military officials and ten Georgian citizens, several of them of Armenian origin, were arrested in connection with a spy scandal between Georgia and Russia. This incident was largely covered both by Georgian and Russian media further complicating rather unfriendly relations between the two countries. An Abkhazian couple and an Ossetian respondent, whom I had contacted prior to this incident, cancelled their agreement to be interviewed after the spy scandal. They explained their decision by stating that they were not willing to speak about political issues as it might have been used against them by the Georgian government. Although I clearly explained to them that I was in no way associated with the Georgian government they did not change their decision. Another of the respondents, R11 who was of Ukrainian origin requested not to be recorded on tape, as she feared that the government might access the tape. I clearly explained to her that I was an MA student in Communication in Canada and did not work for the Georgian government, and that everything she said would remain strictly confidential. Her request not to be recorded was respected. Some of the Georgian respondents among them R2, R3 and R6 also mentioned the climate of fear, but did not have any particular requests.

However, they did share their belief that all telephone conversations in Georgia were recorded.[3]

As mentioned above, one of the principle criterion in the selection of the respondents was their ethnic origin and residency in Georgia. All of the respondents had spent a considerable part of their lives residing in Georgia. From eleven respondents ten spoke Georgian, except the respondent R11 who spoke Russian. The level of education of the respondents was not the principal criterion for the recruitment, but due to the snowball approach, all eleven respondents had higher education. Also, it is important to note that due to the snowball approach, the respondents belonged to two major professional fields: media and education. R1 was a journalist, R2 a student in journalism and R10 a graduate student in the media studies; because of their professional and academic fields, their opinions on the role of media are not representative, as they had more information and better insight to the media participation in the events of the Rose Revolution. In general, it is important to acknowledge that interviews conducted within qualitative methodology on a very small scale cannot be generalized and applied to all Georgians. The second group of the respondents were mainly in education: R2, R3 and R6 were university professors and R5, R8 and R9 were high school teachers. And finally R7 was a lawyer and R11 a retired chemist.

The age of the respondents varied greatly, from age 22 to age 60. We could separate respondents into two age groups: the first from 22 years old to 31 years old, and the second from 39 years old to 60 years old. Initially age was not a principle criterion of selection but while analysing interview data I noticed that age played an important role as people in the same age group had a tendency to agree on same subjects and had slightly similar perceptions of the Rose Revolution and Georgian national identity. The gender of the respondents was not an important criterion, although of the eleven respondents three were male and eight female.

[3] Their concern can be explained by the fact that often Georgian channels, and especially Rustavi 2 air telephone conversations provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to serve as a proof of crime when accused is a well-known political figure arrested on corruption charges. In the three months that I have spent in Georgia in 2006, two such events took place, concerning a well- known journalist and a leader of the opposition political party.

In an effort to maintain confidentiality and to preserve the independent thought process of participants, all interviews were held individually. All eleven interviews were held in the capital Tbilisi and all participants were contacted and informed about the goals of the research prior to the commencement of the interviews. Concerning ethnical issues that are crucial for the research, all the participants were given written consent forms in Georgian (and in Russian for the respondent R11) containing information concerning the objectives of the research, their participation, confidentiality, advantages/benefits and risks, and the time required. Interviews began only after the participants were familiarized with the consent form containing information on goals and objectives of the research and signed it. Respondents were informed about the option to request that the interview not be tape-recorded, but as mentioned above only respondent R11 chose this option. All other interviews were tape-recorded.

Participants were informed that they could cease participation in the study at any time without repercussions and request that their information not to be used in the dissemination of results, but none of the respondents have ceased their participation or made requests on not using their information in the dissemination of the results. The confidentiality and anonymity of all subjects was guaranteed from the beginning of their participation in the study. All tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded with the pseudonyms by me (the principle investigator). All of the information regarding the identity of the subjects is securely kept locked in a filing cabinet in my (the Principle Investigator's) personal possession. The coded data with the pseudonyms and all information regarding identity of subjects will be conserved for seven years and kept securely in my personal possession according to the ethics regulation of the University of Montreal.[4]

Of the eleven interviews, ten were held in Georgian and one, with the respondent R11, in Russian. The duration of the interviews varied approximately from 1h 30 to 2h 30 hours

[4]http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/fasinfo/formulaire_ethique.htm
http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/pdf/Doc_info_consentement.pdf

in average, depending on the availability of the respondents and length of their provided answers. As the interviews were held in Georgian and one in Russian, I have translated them into English. As the translating was done by me, I recognize that it might have introduced some bias.

2.2.2. Interview themes

Each interview consisted of two main parts following the practice of semi-structured interviews. The agenda was set thematically; the interviewees' responses were never restricted in any way and they were given an opportunity to elaborate upon their reflections. The first section concerned the respondent's perception of the Rose Revolution, with questions pertaining to the interviewee's participation in the events and their interpretation of these events both within and outside media contexts. In this part, respondents discussed what caused the Rose Revolution and what was the role of media, mainly Rustavi 2, within these events. Among subjects discussed were the objectivity of Rustavi 2 and their style of reporting. Temporal aspects were very important in this discussion, as these interviews were conducted three years after the conclusion of the Rose Revolution. Overall, at the heart of this section were respondents' personal interpretations and opinions on the Rose Revolution, as well as how these perceptions changed in the three years since the event.

The second part of the interviews was dedicated to a discussion of Georgian national identity, with questions pertaining to the subject's interpretation of what it is to be "Georgian". Emphasis was placed on the participant's perception of "Georgian-ness" and how this may have been reformulated after the Rose Revolution. Further, they were asked to discuss how the post-Rose Revolution national identity is flagged on daily basis and negotiated by ordinary people. The discussion was centered around the dominant discourses disseminated by the media during the Rose Revolution. Respondents expressed their opinions on the changes to Georgian national identity they have noticed after the Rose Revolution and their attitude towards it. Among the issues most discussed was the transition from "old" to "new" Georgia disseminated by the media and supported

by the political leaders after the Rose Revolution; this transition incorporated such elements as European integration, unity and national pride. The discussion of the transition from "old" to "new" Georgia was particularly interesting for understanding the process of categorization as well as the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of Georgia's multiethnic reality in the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity.

Due to the specificity of the qualitative data provided by the interviews, time difference and the small sample, interview findings cannot be generalized. They will, nevertheless, complement the preceding media analysis by integrating personal commentaries and opinions on the post-Rose Revolution national identity.

2.3. Conclusion

By combining the two different methods, critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews, my goal is to explore both media and everyday experience around the complex process of Georgian national identity reconstruction after the Rose Revolution. Critical discourse analysis complemented with the minor parts of visual and gender analysis, is aimed at identifying and analyzing dominant discourses on Georgian national identity disseminated by Rustavi 2 during the Rose Revolution. In contrast, the semi-structured interviews provide more personal insight into the post-Rose Revolution national identity. Interviews balance the data provided by the critical discourse analysis of what has become an official vision of Georgian national identity disseminated by Rustavi 2 with the personal perception of Georgian national identity of the ordinary people who lived through the Rose Revolution. Interviews also give me an opportunity to reflect back upon the role of Rustavi 2 three years after the Rose Revolution as opposed to the dominant vision disseminated by the media itself.

3. Critical discourse analysis of the media archive

This chapter consists of a critical discourse analysis of the media coverage of the Rose Revolution, with an emphasis upon the presentation and articulation of the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity. I will discuss the dominant discourses such as transition from "old" to "new" Georgia and the unity of Georgian people voiced by the media during the Rose Revolution and the peculiar role of Rustavi 2 in narrating these events. This analysis will help to explore how certain dominant interpretations of national identity were assigned and disseminated by the media.

The first part of this chapter will be dedicated to the brief description of the Rustavi 2 news stories on the Rose Revolution on November 22nd and 23rd 2003. Subsequently, the second part of this chapter will be dedicated to a critical discourse analysis of the Rustavi 2 coverage described in the first part of this chapter. Analysis will be structured thematically around dominant discourses on Georgian national identity flagged in Rustavi 2; this analysis will be integrated with aspects of the press coverage and parts of the documentary made on the first anniversary of the Rose Revolution.

The Rose Revolution was without a doubt the biggest media "event" in the history of Georgia. Starting on November 2nd 2003, when the controversial and largely contested parliamentary elections were held, and ending on November 23rd 2003 with the resignation of the President Shevardnadze, the Rose Revolution received unprecedented 24-hour media coverage, particularly over the final two days. I will examine how the media covered this political crisis and how national identity was framed within it: I will discuss the topics and themes disseminated by the media, the strategies used to represent national unity, and most importantly, how exclusion and inclusion were defined and performed. The news stories analyzed here are from November 22nd and 23rd 2003 – the key dates of the Rose Revolution – when the political crisis reached its climax, resulting in peaceful resolution. By analyzing this media archive I plan to examine how the media framed Georgian national identity and furthermore, how the media, particularly Rustavi 2, were implicated in this hegemonic moment of national identity construction. As the

media attention towards the Rose Revolution was very intense, I have decided to analyze the material of only one channel – Rustavi 2, this channel became the dominant voice throughout the Rose Revolution with the majority of Georgia's population following the events primarily through the lens of Rustavi 2. Rustavi 2 became notorious by openly supporting opposition forces and denouncing the corrupt and inefficient government of Eduard Shevardnadze. While openly supporting opposition leaders, Rustavi 2 also actively urged people to join the opposition forces in demanding the resignation of the president. An interviewee R4 related to me, during the Rose Revolution, journalists of Rustavi 2 were so persistent and repetitive in urging people to join the demonstrators that she felt almost ashamed for not participating, she was moved to feel that this may be something extremely important that could change Georgia, leading it to prosperity.

After the Rose Revolution was over, though still in the spotlight, Rustavi 2 began to run a rather interesting promotional commercial claiming responsibility for the Rose Revolution. Not only did they bestow upon themselves this merit, they also proclaimed themselves as the "television of the victorious people." As a journalist of Rustavi 2 Dato Kikalishvili claimed, "if Rustavi 2 didn't provide a platform for the opposition forces to openly speak to the people of Georgia, the Rose Revolution wouldn't have happened as rapidly or reached so many people in Georgia" (Rustavi 2, People making the Revolution. November 2004).

In order to provide a fuller context of the Rose Revolution and its developments, I have integrated aspects of a documentary produced on the first anniversary of the Rose Revolution; this documentary presented insights into the events of November 21st, when thousands of people from all regions of Georgia came to the capital Tbilisi to support the oppositional forces. This moment, dubbed by the media as "the convoy of unity" in reference to the convoy of cars that entered Tbilisi, was constantly invoked and framed by the media and politicians as the symbol of the unity of the Georgian people. In addition to the documentary, I have also integrated some aspects of the Georgian press coverage to enrich the material and to provide insight into how the Georgian press covered the events of the Rose Revolution. Printed media was integrated as a

supplementary element to complement the discourse analysis of Rustavi 2 coverage. I have analyzed five national daily and weekly newspapers on the key dates of November 22nd and 23rd 2003 (see annex 3 for the complete and detailed list of the newspapers).

3.1. Description of Rustavi 2 coverage on November 22-23rd 2003

3.1.1. Rustavi 2, November 22nd 2003

As Rustavi 2 coverage on November 22nd 2003, was extensive and as the result rather repetitive I have decided to focus my analysis on the evening news edition – "Kurieri Post Scriptum" – at 9 p.m., which included all major stories of the day on the developments of the Rose Revolution. This broadcast opened with the top story of the day, footage of the Parliament building as it was stormed by the opposition forces and their supporters. On this footage one can witness the leader of the opposition forces, Saakashvili, and his numerous supporters entering parliament with roses in their hands; at one point Saakashvili emotionally urges President Shevardnadze to resign. Surrounded by his twelve bodyguards, Shevardnadze at first refuses to interrupt his speech, but within minutes he is taken outside by his bodyguards.

The top story of the day is followed by the "no comment footage" where one camera follows Shevardnadze as he is taken outside, while the other, located within the parliament building, films the confrontation between the supporters of the opposition forces with the supporters of Shevardnadze. The evening news continues with live footage from the Rustaveli Avenue, where thousands of people were celebrating the victory of the opposition forces. The first news story on November 22nd 2003 provided a detailed overview of how opposition leaders and hundreds of Georgian citizens entered the parliament building and how Shevardnadze was forced to flee. Following the first story of the evening news are statements from the resistance committee, comprised of intellectuals and the well-known members of the intelligentsia in Georgia. This committee met with the head of the Christian Orthodox Church who pledged to aid in the

peaceful resolution of the situation and even proposed to moderate in the negotiations between the opposition and the President.

The second news story, concentrates on what happened after the opposition leaders and their supporters entered the parliament. This story follows the confrontation between the opposition supporters and supporters of Shevardnadze. After this news story, the anchor mentions the visit to Georgia by Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Igor Ivanov as he proposed to be the moderator in the negotiations between Shevardnadze and the opposition. At that time it was not entirely clear whose side Ivanov and Russia would take: would they support Shevardnadze or opposition forces? Ivanov, being half Georgian himself (his mother is Georgian), was seen by Shevardnadze as an appropriate candidate to be the moderator in the negotiations. However when Ivanov finally came to Georgia on November 23rd 2003, rather than meeting with Shevardnadze, he went to the demonstration held by the opposition supporters and there he invoked his Georgian roots and even spoke in Georgian, something he had never done before in public.

The third news story on November 22nd 2003 was loaded with patriotic sentiments and highlighted the most important moments that had led to the seizure of parliament by the opposition forces. This news story was followed by the interview with Nino Burjanadze who had assumed the presidency after the parliament was stormed. Following the interview with Burjanadze, an anchor announces that Shevardnadze has issued an order to shut down Rustavi 2; the anchor goes on to urge viewers to help defend the channel.

The evening news on Rustavi 2 concludes with a story on the music band and their artistic statement urging Shevardnadze to resign. The anchor mentions that the premiere of the band's Shevardnadze-inspired music video was made especially to coincide with the culmination of the Rose Revolution in Georgia. Ending the news edition with a story about a political music video concludes the evening news on a lighter note.

3.1.2. Rustavi 2, November 23rd 2003

In contrast with the previous day's news the November 23rd Rustavi 2 coverage consisted only of live transmission throughout the day. As live transmission can be rather lengthy and repetitive, I have decided to concentrate on the key events of the day: the statement made by Shevardnadze on his resignation, the comments of the opposition leaders, and the celebrations that followed.

After the opposition forces stormed parliament on November 22nd 2003 and Burjanadze assumed the presidency it appeared that the opposition forces had prevailed; however, Shevardnadze had not made any statement of his resignation and legally remained the president of Georgia, that is, until the evening of November 23rd 2003. But before Shevardnadze made his statement of resignation one day later, rumours were circling on Rustavi 2 and other media sources that Shevardnadze was planning to flee Georgia for Germany, where according to articles in the German press he owned a luxurious villa in Baden-Baden. However, Shevardnadze did not leave Georgia and after meeting with Saakashvili on evening of November 23rd, he resigned. As Rustavi 2 had been boycotted by the president throughout the Rose Revolution for its open support of the opposition forces, no cameras or journalists of the station were allowed to film Shevardnadze's statement. As a result, Shevardnadze's statement of resignation was broadcast through a cell phone. Rustavi 2's television broadcast was divided into two smaller screens: the first screen provided a view of Rustaveli Avenue where people were celebrating, and the second portrayed the president's residence from outside. As the resignation statement was broadcast through a cell phone, the sound quality was poor and one could hardly hear Shevardnadze saying: "this will not end peacefully, I have never betrayed my people and now I must say that it is better that the president resigns." (Rustavi 2, November 23rd 2003).

The coverage continued with the view on Rustaveli Avenue where fireworks were going off. Those celebrating on Rustaveli Avenue were later joined by the opposition leaders

Saakashvili, Burjanadze , president per interim and Zvania, one of the opposition party leaders.

3.2. Critical discourse analysis of the Rose Revolution media coverage

What follows is a critical discourse analysis of Rustavi 2's media coverage on November 22 and 23rd 2003 with the integrated minor aspects of the press coverage and the segment of the Rustavi 2 documentary entitled "People make the Revolution" produced for the first anniversary of the Rose Revolution in 2004.

As Stuart Hall argues, identities are constructed within (a) discourse (Hall, 1996). As we recognize that national identities are discursive constructs, then it is important to determine what discourses influence and construct particular national identities – in this case Georgian national identity. As Martin puts it, "the identity narrative channels political emotions so that they can fuel efforts to modify a balance of power; it transforms the perceptions of the past and of the present" (Martin, 1995: 13). In other words, political change affects national identity as different discourses are mobilized to modify, enrich and present national identity as essential. I am interested in the discourses mobilized in the Rustavi 2 coverage around the post-Rose Revolution national identity, the strategies used to present Georgian national identity as united and essential, and the topics that were incorporated into the discursive construction of Georgian national identity, as well as the peculiar role of Rustavi 2 within these events.

3.2.1. "New" versus "old" Georgia

In the Rose Revolution coverage the main debate around Georgian national identity was its transition from "old" to "new" post-Rose Revolution national identity. The discourse on "new" versus "old" national identity was shaped through several topics: the confrontation of Saakashvili and Shevardnadze; the introduction of the new national symbols and a reformulation of political narrative on Georgian national identity.

3.2.1.1. "New" versus "old" leader

Confrontation between Saakashvili and Shevardnadze occupied a central place in Rustavi 2 coverage of the Rose Revolution. In the opening footage of the storming of the parliament on November 22nd 2003 the scene of confrontation between the two leaders occupies an important place. The old leader Shevardnadze is portrayed as being afraid of his people, protected heavily by armed bodyguards, whilst the new leader Saakashvili embraces people. As Stephen Jones writes, Saakashvili represented everything the Georgian people wanted: "a virile, excitable and uncompromising hero with the promise of economic and political salvation" (Jones, 2005: 43).

A consistently negative portrayal of Shevardnadze was perpetuated both by journalists and political leaders in the Rustavi 2 coverage of the Rose Revolution on its last final two days. For instance, the news anchor comments in a voice-over of the opening footage of the evening news on November 22nd 2003:

> November 22nd 2003 is one of the most important days in the newest history of Georgia as the Velvet Revolution[5] Georgian style had happened! Eduard Shevardnadze, whose resignation has been demanded by the majority of Georgian citizens has greatly complicated the situation and citizens of Georgia have kicked him out from the Georgian parliament building. (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd, 2003).

The choice of phrases such as "kicked out" demonstrates the extremely negative attitude the news anchor held towards Shevardnadze, who is blamed for the further escalating the situation. At the same time, Shevardnadze is denounced as a leader of Georgia and loses all status in that he is "kicked out." He is portrayed as a president who has lost his power and has no control over the situation; this portrayal is illustrated by a camera shot in which Shevardnadze is grabbed by his bodyguards and taken outside like a person in retreat at the mercy of others. The printed press also covered the incident described

[5] The term Rose Revolution emerged only on November 23rd 2003, prior to that events in Georgia were entitled the Velvet Revolution. The Velvet Revolution is associated with the non– violent revolution in Czechoslovakia that saw the overthrow of the communist government that ironically occurred also in November 1989 in Prague. Retrieved February 15, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velvet_Revolution

above: Weekly newspaper *Akhali Versia,* described the situation by noting that Shevardnadze had been "pressured by his family members not to resign as their wealth and position would be threatened, and it was because of this pressure that he became detached from reality, resulting in opposition forces storming the parliament" (Gotchitashvili, November 24-30, 2003: A3).

As justification for the usage of rather strong words like "kicked out," the anchor of the evening news evokes the citizens of Georgia as the force behind the storming of parliament, consequently forcing Shevardnadze to flee. The citizens of Georgia are a large category and play an inclusive role in the categorization of all people living in Georgia, even for those who are not necessarily ethnically Georgian. This inclusion into the category of citizens of Georgia in opposition to Shevardnadze unifies all, regardless of differences; this statement plays the role of the of the "nation binder." As mentioned above nation binder is a discourse that helps to construct a sense of national unity in time and space, as individuals come together as a community sharing the same concerns and interests in the shared place at the same time (Morley and Robins, 1995). In other words, the nation comes together as the citizens begin to share common concerns, often disseminated by the news. As Phillips argues, it is within the news that a nation "represents and recreates itself; there we see which issues are considered important and relevant and also who "we" are" (Phillips, 1995: 54).

Shevardnadze was equally criticized and even demonized by the opposition leaders featured on Rustavi 2. In the first story of the November 22nd evening news on the storming of the parliament, Burjanadze interim President blames Shevardnadze for the crisis and uses it as evidence that he is an unworthy leader who has betrayed his people.

> The President didn't listen to the people. The President didn't hear the citizens of Georgia and the international community. He didn't make use of any chance to resolve this situation peacefully. He has no moral right to speak for the Georgian people (cited in Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003).

Members of the intelligentsia also largely featured in the evening news Kurieri Post Scriptum described Shevardnadze as a despot. For instance, the Georgian writer Aka

Morchiladze noted, "people celebrate the end of the 30 – year rule[6], the Old Georgia and despot Shevardnadze are gone" (cited in Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003). By "the Old Georgia" Morchiladze is referring to two ethnic conflicts and a civil war that shattered Georgia with extreme poverty and the corruption of Government officials, among them Shevardnadze's family[7]. One of the main reasons why Shevardnadze was described as a despot is due to his strong association with the Soviet Heritage, particularly with Russia. While president of Georgia, Shevardnadze did nothing to deserve being described as a despot; however, the same cannot be said about his early career as the first secretary of the Georgian Communist party under the USSR. Therefore Shevardnadze was an integral part of the "old" Georgia, the Soviet Georgia that everybody wanted to forget.

For Gramsci, the role of intelligentsia and intellectuals "is important in producing, maintaining and circulating ideologies that become naturalized as common sense" (Gramsci cited in Barker, 2003: 406). In other words, they have the power to influence the common sense by introducing new discourses. As Milan Kundera writes on Communist societies: "in the political jargon of the day, "intellectual" was an expletive and described a person who failed to understand life and was cut off from the people" (Kundera, 1980: 5). In other words, intellectuals were described as idealists who could not grasp the harsh reality of life. This attitude towards intellectuals was at large throughout the USSR, and as a Communist leader of Georgia Shevardnadze was keen on reducing the civil liberties of intellectuals. However, in the post-Communist Georgia situation changed, opinions of the members of intelligentsia are influential and they formed an important force against Shevardnadze, and were frequently featured in the Rustavi 2 coverage of the Rose Revolution.

It is crucial to clarify that Shevardnadze has been portrayed quite differently in the West. For the West, Shevardnadze is one of the key figures behind the "Perestroika" and the demolition of the Berlin wall. Shevardnadze was a key ally to Mikhail Gorbachev as the

[6] Eduard Shevardnadze was the first secretary of the communist party of Georgia during the Soviet Union and in 1990s became the second president of the independent Georgia.
[7] Shevardnadze's family is considered as one of the wealthiest families in Georgia.

Minister of the Foreign affairs of USSR. Later when he became the president of Georgia, Western countries considered him as a representative of democracy and stability in war-torn Georgia. However, within Georgia his image was radically different: He was never able to rid himself of his Soviet past and for most Georgians, he will forever be associated with the Kremlin and the Soviet Union. During the events of the Rose Revolution, one of the political leaders of Communist Georgia – Givi Patiashvili – went so far as to blame Shevardnadze for the events of April 9th, 1989, when the Soviet Army attacked peaceful demonstrators in Georgia; According to Patiashvili, it was Shevardnadze who gave the orders to attack the people. Shevardnadze was also largely blamed for ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. During his presidency, he did not manage to restore the territorial integrity of Georgia, a policy attributed to his "soft" politics towards Russia.

Together with being harshly criticized for unsuccessful years of post-Soviet Georgia, Shevardnadze was ridiculed by the journalists of Rustavi 2 and presented as a fallen leader who was unable to make his own decisions and unable to control the situation. This is well illustrated by the footage on the storming of the parliament when Shevardnadze was taken outside by his bodyguards to his supporters' demonstration, with a large number of government officials following him. In the Rustavi 2 evening news Shevardnadze's actions were always referred to as passive: he "was taken" outside, not he went outside; this indicates that Shevardnadze lost his status of the leader. While meeting his supporters, Shevardnadze seemed very emotional and lost: in close-up, we can see that he was extremely pale and even shaking. Shevardnadze told his supporters that he knew that the opposition forces had an intention to storm the parliament building, but that he had said everything he wanted to say. His statement appeared rather illogical, and redundant; he was unable to formulate his ideas and repeated himself several times. An example of this absurdity is that Shevardnadze talked about economic development in Georgia, something that was nonexistent at that time. As the respondent R6 I interviewed recalled, it appeared as though somebody had written Shevardnadze's bizarre speech with the purpose of making it obvious that he was an old man who had no idea what was

happening in his country – he was completely detached from reality. In other words, it was broadcast to expose him to ridicule.

Unlike Shevardnadze, Saakashvili received exceptionally positive media coverage. One of the examples of this is the first news story of the November 22nd evening news describing how opposition forces and their supporters headed to the Parliament building. From the story one gathers that the plan of storming parliament was extremely well organized: one group that included the leader of one of the opposition parties, Zurab Zvania[8] headed to the parliament's main entrance, while Saakashvili and his supporters headed to the back entrance. On their way to parliament, Saakashvili's group was confronted by the Minister of Interior affairs; this encounter erupted into a powerful scene of confrontation that established Saakashvili as a true, brave, and fearless leader. The depiction of this confrontation is reminiscent of a mythic tale in which a hero fights for his people's rights and prevails in the face of the villain. In contrast to Shevardnadze, who is always filmed surrounded by heavily armed bodyguards, Saakashvili's proximity to people defines his style of leadership for the "new European style Georgia". Shevardnadze was never a leader who interacted with his people and his style of leadership consistently carried Communist features associated with his prior political career: he came to embody the "old" Georgia.

The scene between Saakashvili and the Minister of Interior Affairs is one of the examples of how masculinity and virility was accentuated and even privileged, in that Saakashvili was not afraid to take the risk of entering parliament alongside his supporters. As Jackie Stacey argues:

> "In popular cultural narrative it is the male protagonist who takes a number of risks in the name of truth, justice, morality or love and by overcoming the negative forces in favour of these principles, he achieves a heroic stature which we might all admire or even aspire to. These are heroes that enable us to trust ourselves and our judgement, to know we are right" (Stacey, 1997 :8).

[8] Zurab Zvania became the prime minister in 2004 and died in 2005 under rather mysterious circumstances

In the case of the Rose Revolution, it is Mikheil Saakashvili, or "Misha" as his supporters call him, who occupies this niche of male protagonist, the hero that fights for justice and truth. He is the ultimate male hero who is admired by thousands and is seen by them as a fighter for their prosperity and well-being, the hero who will liberate Georgia from the villain Shevardnadze.

In the Rustavi 2 coverage Saakashvili was presented not only as a hero but also as the main decision maker behind the opposition forces. It was Saakashvili, not Burjanadze herself, who declared that Burjanadze, the speaker of Parliament, would assume the presidency until new elections were held. With this portrayal of Saakashvili, one can clearly see the general shift of power from Shevardnadze to Saakashvili, as he takes the place of leader by stripping the president of his title, even though Shevardnadze legally remained the president of Georgia until his resignation on November 23rd 2003. Overall the confrontation between the "old" and "new" leader came to represent the struggle of Georgia to overcome a post-Soviet heritage associated with Shevardnadze and to adopt new European style political orientation represented by Saakashvili.

3.2.1.2. New national symbols

New national symbols were introduced one year later in 2004, with Saakashvili's arrival to mark the beginning of the post-Rose Revolution era. New national symbols including the flag, the national anthem, and the coat of arms replaced the old national symbols, effectively detaching the Georgian national identity from the "old" Georgia marked by poverty, civil war and ethnic conflicts; In contrast, the new symbols were associated mainly with the Rose Revolution and the peaceful Georgia.

It was during the Rose Revolution that these new symbols became prominent. For instance, in the Rustavi 2 portrayal of the opposition forces was inseparable from the omnipresent new five cross flag. In the second news story of the evening news on November 22nd 2003, which provided a detailed overview of what happened after the opposition forces entered parliament, the new five cross flag occupied a central place.

The news story concentrated on the confrontation of the opposition supporters and supporters of Shevardnadze. In this struggle opposition supporters are identified by the five cross flag that each of them carries whereas Shevardnadze's supporters carry Georgia's old flag. Saakashvili's supporters were portrayed as fighters for justice – citizens who wanted to regain rights that had been jeopardized by fraudulent elections; in contrast Shevardnadze's supporters were portrayed as armed, angry and uncontrolled. As opposed to the opposition movement, supporters of Shevardnadze were never referred to as Georgian citizens but as people paid for supporting Shevardnadze; their discursive framing differs in that they threaten the fragile unity of the Georgian people as presented by the Rustavi 2.

In the media discourse, the new flag was situated as the five-cross flag used by the Georgian Kingdom in the 12th century A.D., a time described as the Golden Age of Georgia. This association of the new flag with the Georgian Golden Age discursively marks the beginning of the "new" Golden Age symbolized by the Rose Revolution and a new era of prosperity for Georgia. At the same time this was an attempt to leave behind the events that the old flag represented alongside the "old" Georgia.

3.2.1.3. Political Narratives

The reformulation of the political narrative of Georgian national identity in Rustavi 2 coverage occupied an important place in the transition from "old" to "new" Georgia. By emphasizing the negative elements of Georgia's post-Soviet years, this media discourse used a selective mobilization of history; the Rose Revolution was invoked as the new beginning that would lead to the prosperity and unity. One of the important elements consolidated in the new political narrative was the new-found unity of the Georgian people generated by the Rose Revolution. This unity was flagged in the third news story of the evening news on November 22nd 2003. This story opens with a view of Liberty Square where we can see thousands of people standing together and waving flags. This vision was of a united Georgia that both opposition leaders and journalists emphasized

many times, and consequently, it became one of the main forces behind the Rose Revolution.

After almost twelve years of independence, Georgia was divided by two unresolved ethnic conflicts, civil war, and extreme poverty for the majority of the population. At the same time, some people (especially government officials and their families) became extremely wealthy and the unity that everybody aspired to never materialized. During the Rose Revolution many people in Georgia started believing that this was the moment for a fresh start, where past troubles were put behind. This belief was very much sustained by media and political discourse.

In the third news story of the evening news on November 22nd a journalist begins the story by describing how thousands of people from all over Georgia came to Tbilisi in order to participate in the crucial fight initiated by the opposition after the fraudulent parliamentary elections of November 2nd 2003. The journalist's lead sentence is followed by comments from the opposition leader Saakashvili, who delivers an extremely patriotic speech, where he salutes patriots that came to the capital Tbilisi and mentions all the regions of Georgia. Saakashvili's ode to patriots reminded me of a poem that I learned in the first grade. In this poem, similar to Saakashvili's speech, all regions are mentioned, and it concludes with the phrase "all of them are my homeland, my beloved Georgia." From my knowledge of this poem, its intention is to teach children that while all regions of Georgia may be different, there are essential thing they share, as all are a part of Georgia.

The fact that the people from the regions of Georgia came to Tbilisi, was crucial to the discourse of unity of the Georgian people. One of the moments that expressed the ultimate unity of the Georgian nation was on November 21st, when thousands of people led by Saakashvili entered Tbilisi to demand the resignation of President Shevardnadze. The powerful footage of hundreds of cars entering the city at night to be greeted by residents of Tbilisi as heroes was the climax of unity for the Georgian nation and has been repeatedly flagged by the media and politicians. In the interviews conducted as a

dimension of my research, this moment was evoked most often as the strongest and the most memorable moment of the Rose Revolution. The image of the convoy of cars entering Tbilisi as they carry the new five-cross flag was and still is very actively flagged by the media as the crucial element of the "new" Georgia, introduced after the Rose Revolution.

Interestingly, this has not been the first time such an image was used to invoke the changing tide of a nation. In a documentary entitled "Bringing down the dictator," which follows the events of Serbia's 2000 fraudulent elections when then-president Slobodan Milosevic was overthrown, the very same scene was depicted: a convoy of cars and buses that carried supporters of the opposition to Belgrade. Interestingly, this documentary was broadcast by Rustavi *2* several times prior to the contested parliamentary elections of November 2nd 2003 and after the conclusion of the Rose Revolution (Anable, 2006).

Saakashvili also recalled the "convoy of cars" as the moment of unity that did not exist before the Rose Revolution in a Rustavi 2 documentary made on the first anniversary of the Rose Revolution:

> This event was completely different from those of 1991, when residents of Tbilisi didn't accept people from other regions; this time they greeted them like heroes! This was very important to me as we proved that Georgia is united (People making the Revolution, November 2004).

Here, Saakashvili invokes the events of 1991 that were originally rather similar to those of November 2003, but he refuses to make any links – instead denying them. The early 1990s and especially 1991 has been characterized as negative time in the history of Georgia, marked by civil and ethnic conflicts. Similar to the events of November 2003, a 1991 political confrontation arose between the first president of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia – and his opposition. Yet differently from the Rose Revolution, the 1991 political tension translated into a violent confrontation that has come to define the "old

Georgia" – something that Saakashvili and his supporters wanted to put behind them with the help of the Rose Revolution.

Zurab Zvania, one of the leaders of the united opposition and the person who renamed the Velvet Revolution in Georgia the Rose Revolution also framed the Rose Revolution as the new beginning for Georgia: "A new day has come for Georgia. This is the day that will bring happiness, wealth, peace and prosperity." (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003).

Similarily, Burjanadze also emphasized the new-found unity:

> Nobody can threaten Georgia's unity; nothing will ever destroy the unity of Georgia! All the refugees that are here with us today will go back to their homes, all of us will go back to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We will live in a developed, peaceful, successful and democratic Georgia, we will build this Georgia! (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003).

Burjanadze is the first political leader to mention the thousands of refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, who were fleeing ethnic conflicts during the early 1990s. These refugees were forgotten for many years and the only reminder of them was the Hotel Iveria in the downtown Tbilisi where groups of the refugees lived. Once one of the best hotels in Tbilisi, it had been transformed into something dreadful that for many symbolized the Georgia of Shevardnadze – the "old" Georgia. Later when Saakashvili was elected as president in February 2004, refugees were evicted and given financial compensation. In place of Hotel Iveria a Radisson SAS hotel is being constructed. In her speech, Burjanadze invokes a "new" Georgia that will regain its territorial integrity. The two ethnic conflicts that spawned this mass of refuges had resulted in breakaway regions and left thousands of people displaced. Promise of the restoration of territorial integrity played a crucial role within Georgia's post-Rose Revolution national identity. In the construction of national identities, territorial attachment to the land is very important as "identity is understood by who we are and where we are" (Hujanen, & Pietikainen, 2003: 254). As Sennett elaborates, "a sense of place derives from the need to belong to a

particular place, home. In satisfying this need for roots, people make commitments to localities" (Sennett, 1999: 15).

Restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia is part of the "new different Georgia" that Burjanadze had promised. She invoked these ethnic conflicts, though later dismissed them for the sake of a new unified Georgia. Bhabha writes about "a strange forgetting of the history of a nation's past," it is this forgetting that "constitutes the beginning of the nation's narrative" (Bhabha, 1990: 310). Sometimes remembering is evoked in order to forget, as was the case of Burjanadze's speech: she recalls previous events, while abstaining from elaborating upon them, and subsequently dismisses them in the name of the "new" Georgia which is always invoked within a European context as opposed to that of the USSR. As Milan Kundera argues,

> "People are always shouting that they want to create a better future. This is not true. The future is an apathetic void of no interest to anyone. The past is full of life, eager to irritate us, provoke and insult us, tempt us to destroy or repaint it. The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past" (Kundera, 1980: 22).

In her speech, Burjanadze also mentions that "nobody can threaten the unity of Georgia." The abstract "nobody" is either an internal or external enemy that serves to reinforce the Georgian peoples' determination to stay united. But the unity of which Burjanadze speaks is purely discursive, a part of her political populist performance that is designed to persuade and convince people that this was indeed the beginning of a new and different Georgia (Chambers, Johnson, Raghuram, & Tincknell, 2004). A discourse on the political narrative of Georgia was omnipresent during the Rose Revolution, but at the same time was very selective in its recollection of events. "Bad times," such as civil war and ethnic conflicts, were invoked to describe the "old" Georgia associated with Shevardnadze, while "good times" were invoked to describe the "new" Georgia, a rebirth of the good times.

In the third news story on November 22nd, a journalist also stresses the unity of the Georgian people by mentioning citizens who came to support the opposition from

different parts of Georgia. The journalist goes on to note that some of the people gathered on the Liberty Square were the same people who were there in 1989, when the liberation movement against the Soviet Union reached its climax in Georgia. On April 9th 1989, students participating in a peaceful demonstration against the Soviet Government were attacked by the Soviet army, resulting in the deaths 20 people. This incident generated strong resistance and massive hatred of the Soviet government, which was expressed through weeks of demonstrations. The Kremlin tried to stop these demonstrations through the use of chemical gases, but rather than dissipating the situation, the Kremlin's decision caused it to escalate, with the following months being rife with ever-greater demonstrations. This was the moment in Georgia's history when everybody wanted the same thing – the independence of Georgia. The journalist invokes these demonstrations as a sign that Georgians were united once before; but she neglects to mention the events following independence when Georgia became mired in political crises and civil war. This news story serves as a prime example of the selective mobilization of history, when certain events are brought up and others forgotten.

3.2.2. Unity

During the Rose Revolution, media discourse on unity of the Georgian nation occupied a central place. Explicitly flagged in the political narrative, unity was also emphasized through Christianity and Georgian culture. In this section, I will discuss how Christianity and Georgian culture were mobilized by Rustavi 2 in the tale of unity.

3.2.2.1. Christianity

The discourse on Christianity was omnipresent in the Rose Revolution coverage of Rustavi 2 as a unifying factor for all Georgians. This does not come as a surprise as Christianity, particularly Christian Orthodox religion, has historically been accentuated as an integral part of Georgian-ness and Georgian nationalistic ideology. As mentioned in chapter one, the philosopher Mamardashvili argues, that Christianity was the main force in transforming Georgians from an ethnic group into a nation (Mamardashvili, 2003).

After all, Georgians adopted Christianity as the state religion as early as in 337 A.D., with two apostles of Jesus – Andrew and Simon the Canaanite – coming to Georgia to preach.

Throughout the coverage of the Rose Revolution the Christian Orthodox Church was represented as the unique force capable of unifying all Georgians, the force that could reconcile the two hostile camps. Throughout the Rustavi 2 evening news on November 22nd and 23rd the head of the Georgian Christian Orthodox Church, Ilya II, was mentioned frequently and his statements were broadcasted twice. The same statement was published in the weekly newspaper Kviris Palitra:

> We are the unifying force of the Georgian nation. Today more than ever Georgia needs a unifying force and this force was and always will be the Georgian Orthodox Church (Kviris Palitra, November 17-23, 2003: A1).

This statement appears to be rather controversial, in that while the Georgian Orthodox church might well be the unifying force for Orthodox Georgians, it excludes all those who are not Christian or religious at all. This statement is at the same time inclusive for Christian Orthodox Georgians and exclusive for all "other" Georgians. In this case, only people sharing the Christian Orthodox religion have been taken into account, whereas others have been completely ignored.

By invoking Christianity as the unifying factor, Georgian national identity is completely detached from its Communist past, which rejected Christianity, and instead makes links with glorious times in Georgian history such as the Golden Age in the 12th century A.D. Without invoking Christianity, the discourse on the unity of the Georgian national identity would be less credible and appealing to people, as Christianity is largely unquestioned and has been accepted easily in Georgia. For instance, in the footage of the storming of the parliament, we see thousands of people walking towards the parliament building with the person leading the crowd carrying massive wooden cross; the cross symbolizes this march as a crusade against evil and the corrupt government of Shevardnadze. The cross symbolized the good and noble intentions of the demonstrators.

Saakashvili, the leader of the opposition forces invoked Christianity in the majority of his speeches broadcast on Rustavi 2. On November 22nd he announced that the head of the Christian Orthodox church of Georgia had refused to bless the illegitimate parliament. "The church is on our side, the law is on our side, the world is on our side and now we have to start rebuilding our country" (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003).

With this speech, Saakashvili performs the act of boundary-making, crucial in defining and maintaining a national identity: the statement discursively includes Christian Orthodox Georgians and excludes others who are not Christian Orthodox (mainly ethnic minorities, Armenians, Azeri, Ossetians and so on); it also defines religion and Christianity as an important element of Georgian national identity. At the same, time Saakashvili employs the word "our" a larger category inclusive of all Georgian citizens, not solely those that are Christian Orthodox. Through this act, Saakashvili "flaggs homeland." As Billig explains, by "flagging homeland", national identity is made omnipresent, but at the same time natural as it is presented as a part of a context (Billig, 1995). The usage of words such as "our" and "we" is part of "flagging homeland," as these words are largely unquestioned and are used to establish boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in a national context (Billig, 1995). This process of boundary making is subject to temporal and ideological elements that are in constant flux, therefore these boundaries are constantly shifting.

On November 23rd 2003, the discourse on Christianity was reinforced as this is St. George's day in Georgia. St. George was mentioned numerous times both in TV and press coverage – always in suggestion that the political confrontation had to be resolved on this special day as only good things happen on St. George's day. As Saakashvili put it: "St. George's day for me is the day of victory of good over evil. God is on our side. The evil corrupted government and Shevardnadze have to resign! St. George's day has to come in a free Georgia" (24 Saati, November 23, 2003: A1).

In other words, Saakashvili translated political confrontation into a symbolic or mythic one, where evil was represented as Shevardnadze and his entourage and good was everything that the opposition forces stood for, blessed by St. George and God. The status of St. George is very important as he is considered the patron saint of Georgia and on both religious and political levels is considered as the symbol of resistance and victory. One of the opposition leaders, Zviad Dzidziguri, even proclaimed all opposition forces as knights of St. George (Rezonansi, November 22, 2003: A3); in this way he draws a symbolic link between St. George defeating the dragon and opposition forces defeating Eduard Shevardnadze.

On November 23rd after the Rose Revolution reached a peaceful culmination Saakashvili noted that this event ending on St. George's day marked the symbolic beginning of the new era:

> Today our nation has won. Happy St. George's day! This is one of the greatest days in the history of Georgia, this is the birth of the new Georgia. We all must stand together so that the new Georgia can be prosperous and different. This revolution that we have all made, a revolution that we had promised to the world, has ended with the victory of Georgian people! (Rustavi 2, November 23rd 2003).

Today St. George is largely present in the national symbols of Georgia: it is his image that is central to Georgia's new coat of arms, in addition to St. George's cross being the central element of the nation's new "five-cross flag." As Chkeidze writes, "St. George led the way to the victorious and glorious Georgia that we hope and dream to restore one day" (Chkeidze, 2002: 105). In other words, St. George became the symbol of a prosperous Georgia and with the Rose Revolution ending on St. George's day it symbolically marked the beginning of the new era.

3.2.2.2. Georgian culture

In the Rustavi 2 coverage of the Rose Revolution, discourse on Georgian culture occupied an important place as it marked the unity of Georgian people and participated in the boundary making by differentiating Georgians from "others." The last news story of

the evening news on November 22nd 2003 explores a Georgian way of dealing with things through culture. The news story follows the making of the artistic statement urging Shevardnadze to resign. The news story opens with archival footage of Shevardnadze as the leader of the Communist party of Georgia and moves on to show the musicians working in the studio, where one of them – a famous singer known as Ucnobi – notes that this is a historic moment in the making. The musicians go on to comment that they had been preparing their music video for the resignation of Shevardnadze, but as the events progressed more rapidly than expected after the opposition supporters entered the parliament, they had to finish it as rapidly as possible. As the musicians elaborate, the key lyrics of their song "come to your senses" is addressed to Shevardnadze and represents the spiritual state of every single Georgian.

The music video is composed of footage of Shevardnadze, from his career as the chairman of the Communist party of Georgia, to his later tenure as president of Georgia. The video is framed in the genre of comedy. In one particular scene, the camera zooms in on a girl who has the caricaturized face of Shevardnadze painted on the back pocket of her jeans, depicting him as the object of a joke, someone who is no longer taken seriously.

In an interview the director of the video notes that while making the music video, they needed strong visual material alongside archive footage of Shevardnadze that could demonstrate how strongly his resignation was desired. They decided to use the November 21st 2003 material when the convoy of cars from the different regions of the Georgia had entered Tbilisi in support of the opposition forces. The creators of the music video also emphasized that their video was constructed in a uniquely Georgian style, addressing the political crisis through humour and music. This unique Georgian style has once more been mobilized to reinforce the Georgian national identity as something different from everything else. Many Georgian philosophers have addressed this cultural trend of blending tragedy and comedy. Boris Pasternak defined Georgian culture as an unusual mixture of deep tragedy and endless festivity (Pasternak cited in Asatiani, 1990). As Asatiani writes, this duality is a central element in Georgian national identity, as it

conveys the Georgian soul with its internal conflicts better than anything else (Asatiani, 1990).

Cultural elements were also strongly present in the demonstrations held during the Rose Revolution, beginning with music and dances and finishing with poetry. In a way, the demonstrations resembled theatrical performance with famous Georgian poets and actors delivering performances in the celebration of unity, creating festive atmosphere during the Rose Revolution.

In the printed press, the discourse on Georgian national identity was also shaped mainly through Georgian culture and traditions. Overall, Georgian culture and folklore were evoked stressing the unique Georgian style of resistance. The discourse on Georgian culture and its unique character was invoked to reinforce Georgian national identity and to situate it in relation to others.

3.2.3. Elimination of differences

3.2.3.1. Ethnic minorities

In general, Rustavi 2 coverage of the Rose Revolution was oriented towards the emergence of the new post-Rose Revolution Georgia and the new-found unity within Georgians elements that might have threatened this vision were completely eliminated and silenced. In my analysis, I have discovered a significant discursive gap concerning the question of ethnic minorities in Georgia. As Foucault explains, "discontinuity is manifested through discursive gaps and is the underlying reality of all discursive statements" (Foucault, 1972: 37). In other words, in order to create the vision of unity certain discourses are eliminated and form discursive gaps. In this particular research ethnic question was identified as a discursive gap.

From the beginning of my research I was interested to explore if the construction of the new Georgian national identity had been inclusive of the ethnic minorities present in

Georgia, as well as how these ethnic minorities were represented during the Rose Revolution. I was astonished to discover that Rustavi 2 did not mention the ethnic minorities during their extensive coverage of the Rose Revolution. The situation was almost identical in the printed press, with only one article bringing up the question of ethnic minorities and their position during the Rose Revolution. Published in a weekly newspaper *Kviris Palitra,* an article entitled "The non-Georgian population will not engage in the political confrontation" discussed the passivity of ethnic minorities during the political crisis (Devidze, November 17-23, 2003: A6). As the journalist noted, the political crisis did not escalate in regions largely populated by ethnic minorities; throughout the Rose Revolution the political climate remained calm in these areas as none of the political parties had tried to garner support from the non-Georgian population. According to an unidentified source cited in this article, the reason for this is that ethnic minorities in Georgia have always preferred to stay neutral during political crises. He goes on to state that ethnic minorities are ready to support any political force that will guarantee a peaceful and calm situation in Georgia. Most importantly though, this unidentified source presents the notion that ethnic minorities may abstain from supporting any political party as through their participation, they may be objectified and targeted as the source of the crisis (Devidze, November 17-23, 2003: A6) . Does this mean that ethnic minorities in Georgia can't express their political views freely and that none of the political parties are interested in acquiring the support from ethnic minorities? As the above article lacks precision and therefore credibility, it is difficult to conclude that ethnic minorities are indeed passive in making their political choices. However, I discovered no other articles or television footage in my research which address the question of the ethnic minorities and their participation in this event. Consequently one might wonder whether the topic of ethnic minorities was silenced, as it held the potential to threaten the fragile unity of the Georgian national identity flagged by the media and found within political discourse. I will return to this key question in the interview chapter.

3.2.3.2. "Ordinary" people

Also largely absent in the Rustavi 2 coverage of the Rose Revolution were ordinary Georgians who either participated in the demonstrations or chose to stay neutral throughout these events. It seems rather odd that in the news stories featured on November 22nd and 23rd there were no interviews with the ordinary people: particularly those who together with Saakashvili seized the parliament building. The only people accorded the right to be heard on Rustavi 2 were the leaders of the united opposition, mainly Saakashvili and members of intelligentsia. Usually, in Rustavi 2 coverage interviews with ordinary individuals occupy a central place. The Rose Revolution has always been described as "the people's event," I find it peculiar that those people who stood in the streets of Tbilisi for weeks and seized the parliament were never given the opportunity to speak and were completely ignored. Always portrayed as the masses, we do not see individuals at all, just people who think the same way and want the same thing. Perhaps interviews from ordinary individuals would have damaged the fragile unity of the Georgian nation, which was actively emphasized in media and political discourse. It may go without saying that all people in support of the Rose Revolution and against it were different, having different expectations; however, this difference can threaten a fragile unity. As Seyla Benhabib writes "what is shocking [...] is not the inevitable dialectic of identity/difference that they display but rather the atavistic belief that identities can be maintained and secured only by eliminating difference and otherness" (Benhabib, 1996: 3).

Overall, In Rustavi 2's coverage, citizens of Georgia are used as an impersonal general category; in contrast, in the printed press, citizens of Georgia are actually given a voice. An article printed in *24 Saati* entitled "These people came here on their own," describes ordinary people and their emotions, opinions and hopes. As one of the participants of the demonstration explains, "here you feel that you are Georgian. I was holding a flag and I understood how much I love my homeland, I never felt it before" (Bukia, November 22, 2003: A3). Inclusion of comments like this helped to shape the rather abstract concept of Georgian national identity, in this case expressed by the flag and people coming together

in a struggle for justice. In the same article the Georgian folk music largely present during the demonstrations is described as the generator of the patriotic mood, enabling the Georgian-ness. Another participant also reflects on the notion of homeland: "homeland is abstract, you can't touch it, but during this one week homeland was in these people that stood here for days under the rain and snow" (Bukia, November 22, 2003: A3). Unlike Rustavi 2, *24 Saati* adds human touches to their stories, including a large cross-section of Georgian Citizens with their individual reflections on homeland. In the same article, love of homeland is represented through toasting, something that is indeed an important part of Georgian culture; this element was also incorporated into the demonstrations (Bukia, November 22, 2003: A3). Although, like Rustavi 2, the printed press did not elaborate on the people that opposed the Rose Revolution, but they did include the opinions and expectations of the "ordinary" people that believed in the Rose Revolution.

3.2.4. Rustavi 2 and the Rose Revolution

It is impossible to discuss the Rose Revolution without examining the peculiar role of Rustavi 2 in these events. By actively covering the events of the Rose Revolution Rustavi 2 played a prominent role in fixing common sense meanings around the Rose Revolution and the hegemonic moment of nation construction.

For instance in the evening news of November 22nd, the anchor introduced the day's top news on the storming of parliament as follows:

> Good evening, on this peaceful evening of November 22nd 2003, reporters of *Rustavi 2* and I will tell you the details of today's historic day. (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003).

The word "historic" is used as a journalist reiterates the historic value to the events. As Gramsci has argued, "traditional intellectuals" – which include the employees of media, among them journalists – "maintain and circulate ideologies constitutive of hegemony that become naturalized as common sense" (Gramsci cited in Barker, 2003: 406). In other

words, Gramsci argues that the struggle over hegemony is led by common sense. As Billig elaborates, media plays an important role in fixing common sense meanings by "simultaneously speaking to and for the nation in both senses of representation" (Billig, 1995: 115). As we can see here, the anchor accords an historic value to the event and presents it as a natural and unquestionable occurrence that must be viewed in terms of common sense, which cannot be questioned. The anchor has therefore participated in the media construction of hegemony, that is, the hegemonic moment of nation construction. From this point on, November 22nd 2003 will continue to be seen as an historic moment for the Georgian nation, a point of change and transformation. Put more succinctly, the Rose Revolution was disseminated by the media as the historic moment that has shaped and will continue to shape Georgian history and identity.

By openly taking the side of the opposition forces, Rustavi 2 occupied dominant place among other media in the coverage of the Rose Revolution. As an example of this domination is the live footage from the Rustaveli Avenue featured in the evening news on November 22nd 2003. In the live footage a reporter mentions that the people gathered on Rustaveli Avenue wanted to be informed about what was happening in other parts of Tbilisi[9] and demanded (should it be possible) the installation of a giant screen on Rustaveli Avenue where they could watch Rustavi 2. A giant screen projecting Rustavi 2 was installed the very same day. During the Rose Revolution for the opposition supporters Rustavi 2 represented the privileged source of information; it was seen to be the channel that told the "truth" about Georgia and the development of the Rose Revolution. In other words, Rustavi 2 occupied a niche of the TV market watched exclusively by opposition supporters. Rustavi 2 harshly criticized Channel 1[10] for supporting the government, accusing it of becoming a propaganda tool for Shevardnadze and his team. In a way, however, Rustavi 2 became the propaganda tool for the opposition forces. As Saakashvili noted, Rustavi 2 "was extremely important. It was instrumental in the Rose Revolution" (cited in Anable, 2006: 15).

[9] During the Rose Revolution demonstrations were held in several places, the major ones were on Rustaveli Avenue and Liberty square, as well as near the office of the Ruistavi 2.
[10] The Public Broadcasting of Georgia that during the Soviet times was the only Government channel.

Rustavi 2 was indeed instrumental in disseminating and generating the discourse on unity of the Georgian people. By emphasizing the unity of the Georgian people and painting the situation in light of the tale of unity. In another example taken from the live footage in the evening news on November 22nd 2003, a reporter, surrounded by revelers gathered on Rustaveli Avenue celebrating the storming of the parliament by the opposition forces noted: "The people gathered here tonight are enjoying being together: they are united in feeling that they have achieved something and that situation will change in this country." (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003)

The discourse of unity was omnipresent both during and after the Rose Revolution. Unity is essential to the common vision of national identity, and is always represented as something extremely natural. The unity accentuated by Rustavi 2 was created discursively in order to mask inherent differences. As Hall argues,

> "instead of thinking of national cultures as unified, we should think of them as a discursive device that represents difference as unity or identity. They are cross–cut by deep internal divisions and "unified" only thought the exercise of different forms of cultural power" (Hall cited in Barker, 2004: 254).

As power mechanisms assure the visibility of unity, we can clearly see that while covering the events of the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 was one of the elements that actively participated in the power play and sustained the illusion of unity of the Georgian national identity. In Georgia that experienced civil war and two ethnic conflicts in the first years of its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, unity was something that simply did not exist. The Rose Revolution painted a picture of the promise of unity through the lens of media coverage and political discourse. The Rose Revolution in a sense became the symbol of unity for Georgian people in the 21st century, but this unity was constructed through the exclusion of ethnic and religious minorities, as well as all the citizens of Georgia who did not support or take part in the Rose Revolution. In fact, the only discourse on unity that arose was in the context of support for the opposition forces and the fact that unity among the opposition leaders themselves was fractured went completely ignored. Burjanadze, Zvania and Saakashvili had different opinions on the future of Georgia, but only the opinion of Saakashvili was emphasized by Rustavi 2.

In the tale of unity projected by Rustavi 2 any possible detail was used to reinforce the vision of unity. For instance the fact that police did not prevent opposition forces from entering the parliament was invoked to create a sense of unity for the Georgian people, when the reporter pointed out that a Georgian wouldn't affront a fellow Georgian. In other words, only similarities were put in the spotlight, but differences such as political orientation were overlooked, neutralized with Georgian-ness, shared by both demonstrators and police.

Most importantly by playing an important role in the Rose Revolution Rustavi 2 became a self referential actor nearly overshadowing the opposition forces in the struggle against Shevardnadze and his government. Rustavi 2 portrayed themselves as a crucial force against Shevardnadze and after the opposition forces stormed the parliament, Rustavi 2 announced that Shevardnadze had issued an order to shut down the channel. Opposition leaders and among them Saakashvili came to the defense of the channel addressing people to defend Rustavi 2:

> We have won! The whole world is with us. If *Rustavi 2* is shut down, this is the sign that Shevardnadze will try to use force against us. Don't let them do it, don't let them shut down Rustavi 2. That man [Shevardnadze] has to be removed peacefully (Kurieri Post Scriptum, November 22nd 2003).

As the anchor noted after Saakashvili's statement, Rustavi 2 was protected by its viewers – citizens of Georgia who had gathered outside the Rustavi 2 office. The camera pans to the crowd outside as they hold burning torches and write the letters "SOS" in fire. This "SOS" was a very well prepared media spectacle that drew a large reaction from the people. As strange as it seems, a viewer could actually see a person giving orders to the crowd on how to hold their torches so that people watching at home could see the sign "SOS." With this coverage, Rustavi 2 became the ultimate hero of the Rose Revolution: the sole channel that was telling the truth and that had threatened Shevardnadze so much that he personally issued an order to shut them down. It was never confirmed whether or not Shevardnadze had indeed issued an order to shut down Rustavi 2. After this incident,

the focus was displaced from politics to the media as a leading force behind the peaceful revolution.

In an article published in a weekly newspaper *Kviris Palitra* entitled "Why was Rustavi 2 blamed", it is clearly outlined how Rustavi 2 became the leading actor in the Rose Revolution and why was it attacked by the government to a greater extent than opposition forces (Jikashvili, November 17-23, 2003: A4). During the Rose Revolution Shevardnadze and certain pro-government politicians boycotted the channel. In the same article a producer of the evening news Kurieri, Eka Khoperia, noted: "The government blamed *Rustavi 2* for the massive demonstrations and they thought that by confronting us, demonstrations would stop. But in fact by attacking us they attacked ordinary people" (Jikashvili, November 17-23, 2003: A4).

Khoperia not only gives credit to Rustavi 2 for the demonstrations, but also declares that Rustavi 2 and Georgian people were fighting for the same goals. In other words, she suggests that Georgian people were allied with Rustavi 2, with the latter being more instrumental than the former in the unfolding of the events. Throughout the coverage of the Rose evolution, journalists of Rustavi 2 portrayed themselves as fighters for justice and truth. By showing the resistance of journalists against pressure from government officials and their supporters, they were depicted as martyrs. As an interviewee R10 recalled, viewers felt obliged by the journalists of Rustavi 2 to go outside and demonstrate against Shevardnadze, as journalists had sacrificed so much for the people and it was now time for the people to pay back the favor.

By documenting every aspect of the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 coverage started to generate an extremely well organized media spectacle with constant camera presence. This might be explained by the fact that "the professional ideology of news is geared toward an ideal collapse of temporal and spatial difference" (Hemmingway, 2004: 411). When this collapse occurs as it did on November 22 -23rd 2003, the credibility of the news becomes questionable as it leaves the impression of a media spectacle as there is no space or time between the real event and the media event (Hemmingway, 2004). During

events similar to the Rose Revolution, where the media are omnipresent, the difference between reality and the news (which I must stress is a product of the media) becomes blurred, causing the spectacle effect to threaten the credibility of the news (Hemmingway, 2004).

The only moment when the Rustavi 2 was unable to anticipate events and the crisis was actually felt by the viewers was during the translation of the statement of resignation made by Shevardnadze. As journalists of Rustavi 2 were boycotted by Shevardnadze because of their open support for the opposition forces, Rustavi 2 was not allowed to film the statement. As a result, Shevardnadze's statement of resignation was broadcasted through a cell phone. Because of this the sound quality was poor contributing to the confusion as both reporter and anchor seemed genuinely lost not knowing what to say. Rustavi 2 ended their extensive coverage of the Rose Revolution by announcing:

> Today November 23rd, St. George's day, at 9 p.m., Eduard Shevardnadze resigned. He has declared that he is not planning to leave Georgia. The president has maintained his and Georgia's dignity by his decision to resign (Rustavi 2, November 23rd 2003).

Throughout the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 represented an important force in the struggle against Shevardnadze and his government. Not only did Rustavi 2 openly support the opposition forces but it also actively urged Georgians to participate in the Rose Revolution as the new prosperous beginning marked by unity among Georgian people. However, to achieve this vision of unity Rustavi 2 silenced ethnic question and difference present with Georgian society both on cultural and political levels.

3.3. Conclusion

After the dissolution of the USSR, Georgia like many post-Soviet and Eastern European countries needed to create new national identity that could consequently be interiorized by the people, as this would aid in fulfilling the illusion of unity within Georgia and between Georgians. Differences blatantly present in Georgia – such as its multiethnic

population – were silenced. Meanwhile elements that contributed to the vision of unity – such as the Georgian culture, the Georgian ethnic group, and the selective mobilization and interpretation of history – were brought to the forefront to create a natural vision of a unified national identity.

Throughout the coverage of the Rose Revolution, the main debate on national identity was in its transition from the "old" to the "new" Georgia and unity of Georgian people. To accentuate this discursive unity, the media approached national identity through Christianity and the unique Georgian culture that were brought up as universal unifying factors. Therefore the symbols incorporated in describing the unity of Georgian people and boundary-making were both cultural and religious, such as St. George and Georgian folk music that accompanied the Rose Revolution from beginning to end. The unity of Georgian people was mobilized to emphasize the beginning of the new era dismissing all negative factors that had emerged during the first years of independence, such as extreme poverty and the two ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Discourse on the transition from "old" to "new" Georgia incorporated the introduction of the new Rose Revolution inspired national symbols that detached Georgian national identity from the "old" Georgia that was associated with corruption and ethnic conflicts. The new national symbols also marked the change in the political orientation of Georgia from Shevardnadze's post Soviet dependence on Russia to Saakashvili's European aspirations. In a sense, the Rose Revolution was a national cultural renewal as a protest against [the] post-Communist heritage represented by Shevardnadze, but also demonstration of Georgia's European aspirations. Overall, the Rose Revolution was shaped to end the Soviet legacy attached to Georgia.

Another discourse that was central to shaping the Georgian national identity during the Rose Revolution was that of unity within the Georgian national identity. As many authors argue, the vision of unity is crucial in maintaining a national identity. In Georgia's case, the vision of unity was flagged through Christianity and Georgian culture, viewed by many as integral parts of the Georgian national identity. Christianity was mobilized to

perform the boundary making by including Christian Orthodox Georgians and excluding others mainly representatives of ethnic minorities that practice different religions. By invoking Christianity as a unifying factor, topics concerning ethnic minorities were silenced and largely unquestioned as it threatened the fragile unity flagged in the media. This might explain why in such a multi-ethnic country as Georgia, ethnic minorities were largely excluded from the media coverage of the Rose Revolution.

Georgian culture was mobilized in the discourse on unity in order to reinforce Georgian national identity by differentiating it from others and establishing it as unique. Georgian culture and folklore was evoked numerous times throughout the events, stressing the unique Georgian style of revolting in their fight for justice. At the same time discourse on the uniqueness of Georgian culture contributed towards establishing symbolic boundaries by including Georgians that relate to it and excluding others that are not entitled to understand it.

A discourse on the political narrative of Georgia was also omnipresent during the Rose Revolution, but at the same time was very selective in its recollection of events. "Bad times," such as civil war and ethnic conflicts, were invoked to describe the "old" Georgia associated with Shevardnadze; while "good times" were invoked to describe the "new" Georgia, a rebirth of the good times. Political history is characterized by the strategic forgetting and remembering. As Bhabha (1990) argues, the strategic remembering of certain elements and forgetting of others constitutes the beginning of the nation's narrative.

While talking about dominant discourses disseminated in the media during the Rose Revolution it is important to situate Rustavi 2 in the hegemonic moment of the nation construction. Rustavi 2 played an important role in establishing the Rose Revolution as an historic moment for the Georgian nation, a point of change and transformation. By according historic values to these events and presenting them as natural and unquestionable Rustavi 2 contributed to fixing common sense meanings around the Rose Revolution. Furthermore, by compromising objectivity and openly taking the side of the

opposition Rustavi 2 shaped itself as the ultimate hero of the Rose Revolution. As a result Rustavi 2 emerged as a self-referential force in the Rose Revolution, by displacing the focus from politics to media and situating itself as the leading instrumental force behind the Rose Revolution crediting itself with the successful resolution of the events.

Finally, Georgian national identity rearticulated through the Rose Revolution did not introduce new radical elements that would threaten the integrity of the Georgian national identity flagged before. Rather, elements flagged during the Rose Revolution – such as the unity of the Georgian nation, the restoration of territorial integrity, and new political orientation – reinforced the essential vision of Georgian identity, as these were discursive elements that had always been present and were always at stake for those who considered themselves Georgian.

4. Semi-structured interviews

This chapter explores how three years after the Rose Revolution ordinary Georgians have either negotiated and interiorised, or contrarily rejected the Georgian national identity flagged by the media and political discourse during November 2003. Of particular interest is how people conceive of their Georgian national identity: how they have created categories of exclusion and inclusion and how these differ from those disseminated through the media during the Rose Revolution. In order to address the questions mentioned above it has been important to discuss the role of Rustavi 2 and see how it has been redefined in the three years from the Rose Revolution.

Eleven semi-structured interviews conducted with both ethnic Georgians and representatives of ethnic minorities in Georgia (See annex 1 for the list of respondents), have provided more insight into the nature of the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity – particularly with regard to the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of ethnic minorities within media coverage of these events and everyday practices. In contrast with critical discourse analysis of the media archive, these interviews provided access to the personal experiences of the respondents and highlighted different opinions. This part of the research has enabled me to pursue my interest in personal perceptions of the Georgian national identity, particularly in relation to the events of the Rose Revolution.

The first part of this chapter is dedicated to the respondents' perception of the Rose Revolution and a discussion of the specific role of Rustavi 2. Three years after the events of 2003, retrospective commentary facilitates reflections on the Rose Revolution. The second and third parts of this chapter are dedicated to a discussion of Georgian national identity and the subjects' interpretations of what it is to be "Georgian." Concentration was placed on the participants' perceptions of "Georgian-ness" and how this may have been reformulated after the Rose Revolution.

4.1. Rustavi 2 at the heart of the Rose Revolution

This section analyses the respondents' interpretations of the Rose Revolution, their perceptions of the role played by Rustavi 2, and how these perceptions have changed in the three years after the Rose Revolution.

All eleven respondents closely followed the events of the Rose Revolution exclusively on Rustavi 2, while seven of them of different origins (R1, R3, R4, R5, R6, R9, R 10 see annex 1) also participated in the demonstrations held on the Rustaveli Avenue.

> R1: I started regularly attending demonstrations on Rustaveli Avenue starting from November 21st. I participated because I really wanted the old government to leave. Unlike others, I did not stay there for ten hours a day because I had to work, but don't get me wrong I respect people who did stay there: they believed in the Rose Revolution as did I at that moment. I was there waving flags inspired by highly patriotic ideas. I thought I was part of something extremely important and that Georgia would be saved. Of course now I understand that it was all thanks to the Rustavi 2 propaganda.

Rustavi 2's aggressive style of reporting and their portrayal of the Rose Revolution influenced not only the recorded history of the events but also narratives of the interviewees. While all of the interviewed respondents agreed upon the crucial role Rustavi 2 played in the successful development and peaceful culmination of the Rose Revolution, their visions of Rustavi 2 differed.

4.1.1. Rustavi 2: hero or villain?

Although interviews were conducted individually, because of the explicit patterns concerning difference of opinions and consensus on the role of Rustavi 2 within the Rose Revolution I have separated interviewees into three groups according to their perspectives. The first one was ethnically mixed, the second composed of only ethnic Georgians and the third one composed of ethnic minorities. In the first group I have included two journalists (R1, R4) and one graduate student in the media studies (R10). The group was critical towards Rustavi 2 but at the same time recognized the key role of

the channel and praised their quality of reporting. In the second group composed of ethnic Georgians I have included respondents of the older generation, R2 linguist, R3 university professor, R5 history teacher and R6 university professor. This group was the most critical towards Rustavi 2 and expressed views about staged character of the Rose Revolution and manipulation of people by Rustavi 2. Finally, the third group, composed of representatives of ethnic minorities (R 8, R9 and R 11) praised Rustavi 2 for their participation in the events of the Rose Revolution and dismissed criticisms of objectivity and the agitated style of reporting.

Group 1

> R4: Everyone knew the position of Rustavi 2, they did not recognize neutrality but their coverage was great. Rustavi 2 was like a Georgian version of CNN, with their breaking news and 24 hour coverage. Other channels completely faded in comparison. For example the 1st channel was inadequate during the Rose Revolution when majority of Tbilisi residents were outside demonstrating they were reporting that absolutely nothing was happening, it was just ridiculous as always!

For respondent R4, a last year student in Journalism, Rustavi 2 represented the ideal of Western reporting that was the antithesis of Soviet journalism that dominated Georgian media even after independence. Even the fact that Rustavi 2 compromised the objectivity of their reporting did not seem to decrease their popularity and professionalism in the eyes of this respondent. With their 24-hour coverage and journalists that braved corrupt officials Rustavi 2 quickly became the most watched TV channel in Georgia.

In fact Rustavi 2 was the first channel in poverty-stricken Georgia to introduce investigative journalism mainly oriented towards critique of the lavish lifestyles of corrupt government officials and the family members of Shevardnadze. As a result evening news Kurieri Post Scriptum became an instant hit with viewers by voicing the people's deception and anger. Kurieri had become notorious for heated debates in which government officials were openly accused of corruption on a daily basis.

R1: In the last five years since Kurieri was put on the air, I remember every single news edition being dedicated to demonstrating how corrupt and useless the old regime was. I have never seen anything positive. Frankly, I don't know if journalists did it themselves or if they were ordered by somebody, but anyways, all this anti-government propaganda was very well done, especially when nobody really questioned the credibility of Rustavi 2 as people liked what they saw and heard.

As the popularity of the channel was skyrocketing, Shevardnadze's government did not abide by Rustavi 2's critique quietly: the government launched a series of ultimately unsuccessful efforts to close down Rustavi 2. One of the most unsuccessful and infamous efforts brought up by the interviewees occurred in October 2001, when the National Security Ministry raided Rustavi 2's headquarters fifteen minutes prior to the evening news, claiming that they were searching for financial records. Since the search coincided with the evening news, journalists broadcasted the entire raid live, urging viewers to come to the Rustavi 2 headquarters and defend the journalists who were facing pressure from the government. This call to action worked, as thousands of people came to the Rustavi 2 headquarters demanding the resignation of President Shevardnadze, whose actions appeared to be threatening the liberty of media in Georgia. An intervention that had initially been planned to repress Rustavi 2 instead skyrocketed the station's popularity.

R10: Rustavi 2 was always reporting exclusively negative information. This had a psychological effect on people as it made them angrier and more aggressive in wanting change. I remember when Rustavi 2 was raided: journalists were urging people to come outside and support them. It was all happening late at night and at that time people were afraid to go outside at night – there was no light, no police, nothing. But people did come to support the journalists!
The only thing that still bothers me is why the raid happened just before evening news?! I remember we had journalists of other channels visiting our faculty and they said the same thing, about the raid coinciding with the beginning of the evening news. Over all Rustavi 2 was doing everything to fight the government and any means were good in that struggle. People adored Rustavi 2 and watched it religiously. I guess Shevardnadze just did not believe or realize that Rustavi 2 had such power and could mobilize so many people in no time.

Respondents R10 and R1, both working in the media, believe the demonstrations and crises triggered by the National Security Ministry raid of Rustavi 2 was nothing more than a rehearsal for the Rose Revolution two years later.

> R1: This incident was very well used by Rustavi 2. I think it was not about freedom of speech at all, on the contrary it was like testing people's reaction – would they come outside to defend them – and people did. So they pretty much used the same tactics during the Rose Revolution. Also, they introduced Misha [Saakashvili] as a person who cared about the rights of people and rehabilitated the image of Zurab Zvania whom nobody liked anymore; but after he resigned as Speaker of Parliament, the attitude towards him changed.

As respondent R1 who is a press journalist working for one of the popular newspapers in Tbilisi noted, this incident also put Saakashvili on the political map. However, it was the Rose Revolution that genuinely made him popular. As Minister of Justice at that time, Saakashvili resigned to protest the government's actions against the media, an act followed by the Speaker of Parliament Zvania. Both Saakashvili and Zvania formed their own opposition parties: the National Movement and the United Democrats respectively.

Another incident that R1 mentioned was the assassination of Giorgi Sanaya, a popular anchor of Rustavi 2's Kurieri. This incident in her opinion reinforced Rustavi 2's status and triggered popular protests against the government. With both journalists and the greater public agreeing that he had been murdered because of his work, people once again came to the station's headquarters to show support for Rustavi 2 and to demonstrate against the government who had been blamed. Shevardnadze and his government were portrayed as the villains in their several attempts at closing down Rustavi 2, pressuring and even murdering reporters who were only informing on government corruption and ineffectiveness.

However, it was mainly during the Rose Revolution when the Rustavi 2's struggle against Shevardnadze and his government reached its climax.

> R1: Propaganda against the old regime was getting stronger and more elaborate. I remember when Kurieri aired this story entitled "Toilet Government" in which

> they flashed images of government officials that people hated and it had huge success and was actually funny. All these humoristic shows were mocking everybody except Saakashvili, Burjanadze and Zvania. All this propaganda really did work but I realized it only recently, because when I first watched it I believed it was true and genuine. Now I don't think this way anymore.

Respondents R1, R4 and R10 agreed that they did not question the validity of the station's statements in 2003, although three years after the Rose Revolution they see Rustavi 2 in different light – as the machine of propaganda and manipulation that helped to stage the Rose Revolution. For instance, R1 who is a press journalist emphasized Rustavi 2's use of visual manipulation, stating that the number of demonstrators was exaggerated and that the cameramen had used special tricks to make the demonstrations seem larger and more impressive than it was in reality.

> R1: I guess many people indeed participated in the demonstrations, but what Rustavi 2 reported was blown out of the proportion. For example they would report that hundred of thousands of people were gathered on Rustaveli Avenue, but I really doubt that so many people came outside. They always showed images of demonstrators tightly packed together, so you never knew for sure if the demonstrators were as numerous as stated, or if they were simply crowded in a relatively small space. I guess it was Rustavi 2's way of presenting their information in a special way to make it more important, memorable. Just like they projected that Georgian people made Shevardnadze resign, but in reality everything was planned from the beginning. It was some sort of a deal I guess. Look at Shevardnadze he is still safe in his residency.

While mentioning Rustavi 2's visual manipulation, these respondents also emphasized the channel's role in the transformation of the little-known Saakashvili into a national hero and the symbol of the Rose Revolution. During Rose Revolution coverage, Rustavi 2 portrayed Saakashvili as a leader destined to continue the tradition of King David IV, in rebuilding poverty-stricken Georgia into a prosperous European-style country. After winning the 2004 presidential elections, Saakashvili consolidated his public image by choosing the symbolic location of the tomb of King David IV to deliver his inaugural speech. All this happened after the Rose Revolution, but previously Saakashvili had been largely unknown. Educated as a lawyer in the United States, he went on to become the Minister of Justice in the Shevardnadze government; however he resigned after one year

in protest of the October 2001 raid of Rustavi 2 by the Ministry of National Security. Soon after his resignation, Saakashvili formed his own opposition party, the National Movement, which became known to the larger public only in 2003 when it was elected to the Tbilisi city council.

> R10: Nobody had heard of Saakashvili before the Rose Revolution. Nobody took him seriously. I remember people were calling him "Karlsson"[11] because he was always talking about fixing roofs, painting houses and making over-the-top speeches. But this changed during the Rose Revolution when cameras followed Misha [Mikheil Saakashvili] everywhere. We always saw him kissing and hugging people. I guess they created him in the image of a man of the people. It really irritated me because it seemed fake. He is really smart man and he used everybody, among them Rustavi 2.
>
> R1: I used to be fascinated by Misha. Each time I saw him on TV I was excited. We constantly saw his interviews on CNN and BBC, he spoke fluent English and French, and he was so emotional and seemed genuinely committed to what he was doing. Now I understand that I had just been affected by the non-stop Rustavi 2 propaganda.

During the Rose Revolution Saakashvili indeed became the most popular and most interviewed politician in Georgia with Rustavi 2 documenting his every step. He was presented in the media as a populist leader who embraced people, was close to them and listened to their problems; this image operated in contrast to Shevardnadze, who had continued in the trend of the Soviet era, distancing himself from people and ruling the country from his office. In fact, as interviewee R1 mentioned, Saakashvili was the total antithesis to Shevardnadze: he was young, charismatic and spoke several languages. He was very different from Shevardnadze, who after serving many years as the USSR's Foreign Affairs Minister was still unable to learn proper Russian.

[11] Karlsson is s fictional character who lives on the roof in the house in Stockholm in a series of Children's books entitled "Karlsson on the roof" written by Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren.

Group 2

Respondents included in the second group were the most critical towards Rustavi 2 and blamed the channel for staging the Rose Revolution. The staged character of the Rose Revolution was invoked during interviews more that once, always implying the decisive role of Rustavi 2 in making the Rose Revolution seem natural and spontaneous.

> R6: When revolution happens, the media always play a crucial role. In Georgia everything was exaggerated. The way Rustavi 2 covered the events seemed grotesque. Many moments were purely staged and it is weird that people can stage Revolution at all!

Moments that were most often referred to as staged by R6, who is university professor in political science, were the seizure of parliament by Saakashvili and the convoy of cars that was framed by the media and opposition leaders as the culmination of the unity of Georgian people. One of the reasons why these two key moments that defined the Rose Revolution left the impression of being "fake" according to R6 was the agitated style of reporting and absence of objectivity in Rustavi 2 coverage.

> R6: I don't think Saakashvili seized parliament at all. All he did in reality – he just defeated an old man. The government was in deep crisis, yet in his absurd speech Shevardnadze was talking about Dutch cows. Can you really credit defeating him as a heroic act?! That's why it felt fake to me.

The other much-discussed key moment of the Rose Revolution invoked in the interviews as fake was the convoy of cars entering Tbilisi. On November 21st 2003 thousands of opposition-supporters came to Tbilisi and were greeted by residents as heroes, this moment being framed by Rustavi 2 as the culmination of unity of the Georgian people. Despite such a portrayal, interviewees included in the second group saw the convoy of cars as a media spectacle orchestrated by Rustavi 2 in order to demonstrate that Georgia was united against President Shevardnadze. One respondent noted:

> R2: The majority of people that came to Tbilisi that day did not come on their own, they were brought here by Saaklashvili who went to the regions and brought

everybody he could find by promising that when he came to power all the problems would be solved.

In an interview featured in the documentary entitled "People make the revolution" made in 2004 on the first anniversary of the Rose Revolution, Saakashvili did not deny that people indeed were brought from Georgian regions to Tbilisi by his initiative. He even recalled a tale of heroism, when people from a town in western Georgia refused to take money for the petrol and instead decided to pay for it themselves, despite the fact that the majority of these citizens lived on the brink of poverty.

Despite criticism, respondent R3, also University professor, mentioned that the convoy of cars, or the "convoy of unity" as Rustavi 2 called it, was a determining moment during the course of the Rose Revolution. The footage, showing thousands of cars entering a darkened Tbilisi (all street lights were off due to an electricity shortage), was a motivating factor to go outside and support the opposition forces.

R3: It was very emotional to see all these people coming to Tbilisi. I remember a reporter standing among the people, greeting the convoy, and he was calling for the people [watching] at home to come outside and be a part of this all, and it worked on me, I went on the demonstration that day.

But as R3 noted, the thing that shattered the illusion of the Rose Revolution's authenticity, the unity rendered by the media, and the portrayed overwhelming support for opposition forces was the Serbian documentary entitled "Bringing down the dictator." The events recorded in the film occurred in Serbia during 2000, when President Slobodan Milosevic was overthrown. Interestingly, this documentary features footage very similar to the Rose Revolution's "convoy of unity": portrayed in the film was a convoy of cars and buses that carried opposition supporters to Belgrade. Rustavi 2 broadcast this documentary twice before the Rose Revolution and shortly after.

R3: When I saw it [Bringing Down the Dictator] I felt really bad. If I had seen the documentary beforehand I would not have gone to the demonstrations. I used to

> compare the Rose Revolution to the events of the 9th of April 1989,[12] a time when Georgians were really united. After I saw the Serbian documentary, I understood that it was just a very well-orchestrated event: we were copying Serbia, doing the same thing just with the different name. In fact, Rustavi 2 created the revolution – they manipulated us and made us do what they wanted us to do!

Significantly, R5 who is a history teacher, recognized that Rustavi 2's portrayal of the Rose Revolution was exaggerated and sometimes manipulative; in fact, he thinks that without Rustavi 2 the Rose Revolution might have never materialized.

> R5: I am sure all that happened would have ended without any results if Rustavi 2 had not supported opposition forces. With their 24-hour coverage they became the voice behind the Rose Revolution. They exaggerated everything and escalated the situation, but it was impossible to live like that anymore and it made Shevardnadze's resignation inevitable. At that time I supported it as I thought they were doing good things. I still think that way.

Group 3

Three respondents, R8, R9 and R11 (the first two being of Azeri origin and the third Ukrainian) were the only interviewees who claimed that everything they saw on Rustavi 2 was true and no manipulation had even taken place.

> R8: Everything Rustavi 2 showed was true, it was all filmed and cameras don't lie. They showed everything we saw with our own eyes when we went outside. Today I hear very often that Rustavi 2 urged people to come outside and demonstrate against Shevardnadze and yes they did it but this doesn't mean that they manipulated us.

Ultimately, all of the interviewees acknowledged Rustavi 2's important place in the development of the Rose Revolution. Respondents with a background in the media praised Rustavi 2's professionalism while covering the events but still mentioned that the coverage was sometimes exaggerated. They also noted Rustavi 2's active propaganda against Shevardnadze as the key element in bringing people outside to demonstrate.

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[12] On 9th April 1989, students participating in a peaceful demonstration against the Soviet Government were attacked by the Soviet Army, resulting in deaths of several people. This incident generated strong resistance and massive hatred towards the Soviet Government which was expressed though weeks of demonstrations. 9th April 1989 marked an important moment for Georgian liberation movement.

Meanwhile, respondents included in the second group emphasized "fake" character of the Rose Revolution and Rustavi 2's manipulation of people. Finally, respondents in the third group praised Rustavi 2 for their truthful reporting.

The pattern of interview finding in this segment was mostly influenced by the occupation of the respondents. Respondents in the first group had media background, two of them being journalists and one graduate student in the media studies. Respondents in the second group were all in education, three of them being university professors and one school teacher. Also significant was the age group (respondents included in the first group were younger that 40 years old and respondents in the second group were all older than 40), and ethnic background (as respondents included in the third group were of Azeri and Ukrainian origin).

Both media analysis and interviews indicate the planned character of the Rose Revolution. Interview findings being more critical as three years from these events the majority of the interviewees recognize that the Rose Revolution was not as spontaneous as flagged in the media.

4.2. The "New" Georgia

During and especially after the Rose Revolution the main debate on Georgian national identity both within and outside media contexts was the transition to "new" Georgia. This section will focus on how interviewees have negotiated the emergence of a "new" Georgia characterized by European integration, new national symbols, national pride and unity. The narratives of the informants highlight how they have perceived changes in Georgia after the Rose Revolution and how these changes were manifested in everyday life.

4.2.1. European Integration

In media and political discourse, European integration was emphasized as a shift away from a war-torn and poverty-stricken post-Soviet Georgia, towards a prosperous European-style state with democratic values. As Jones writes, "the Rose Revolution embodies a long and idealistic tradition among Georgian intelligentsia since the mid-1800s to replace the legacies of colonialism and authoritarianism with Europeanism" (Jones, 2005: 37). Indeed the first attempt to construct a Georgian national identity and to generate the mobilization of Georgians was undertaken at the end of the 19th century by a group of Georgian intelligentsia known as *Tergdalelulni*. This group had been formed as a response to the domination and repressions of the Russian Empire that Georgia was part of. Educated in Europe, *Tergdaleulni* reinforced cultural and political unions with Europe between 1918 and 1923, when the Georgian republic was established. During the Rose Revolution, the pro-European aspirations of their predecessors were once again introduced into Georgian dialogue and discourse. However, the attitude of all eleven respondents towards Georgia as a part of Europe was rather pessimistic and negative. All interviewees, differences of ethnic origins and of age, see European integration as an attempt to assimilate Georgians into European culture, which is felt to be very different from their own.

> R1: We can talk about European integration as much as we want but our mentality has not changed with the Rose Revolution and honestly it is far from being European. For example I can't even relate to European movies so how can I become European?!

The majority of respondents view European integration as unrealistic. According to them, Georgian culture does not bear many similarities with European culture, which is perceived to be largely pragmatic and lacking in the family values that are crucial to the Georgian way of life. As explained by respondent R3, one could become European, though would be forced to compromise many features that make them definitively Georgian.

> R3: They want us to be integrated into Europe but our mentality will change if we stop communicating with our families and became exactly like them. Georgia is interesting because of our culture and people that are very different from Europeans. If we denounce our roots we will lose everything we have, we will lose our identity. We bear values that modern Europeans lost a long time ago. In a way we are the lost memory of Europe.

According to R3, being European and being Georgian are two different things that have little in common. A statement pronounced by deceased Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zvania at the Council of Europe in Strasburg, in which he asserted "I am Georgian therefore I am European," defines the orientation of post-Rose Revolution Georgia, despite its failed acceptance by the interviewees.

> R2: I don't think it is such an honour for Georgians to be considered as Europeans. I prefer our country to be unique, different with its traditions. We have to be who we are and not try to be like Europeans. Why do we have to be like them, why can't they be like us?! I don't want to be European; I prefer and want to be Georgian. How can I be happy about the fact that I am Georgian when at the same time I am trying to be European?! It is just unacceptable for me.

For a country that was detached and isolated from Europe for more than 75 years under the regime of the Soviet Union, reintegration into Europe appears rather complicated. Especially when being European is perceived as a threat that will eliminate Georgian culture and subsequently take its place. Because of this, European integration is seen by the interviewees as a betrayal of Georgian-ness and something that is not occurring naturally but rather being forced.

> R7: They try to change who we are in order to make us look more European. For instance after the Rose Revolution they started teaching in the schools that when you are on a bus you should never cede your place to anybody because you have paid for it. But how about respect for older people, we should stop respecting them just because we paid for the bus ride?! It is just stupid and why do we have to renounce our traditions and live by the rules that are acceptable in Europe?! This is just very bad.

The very same example about a bus was invoked by two other respondents R5 and R2 that see European integration as a purely cultural process that will eradicate Georgian traditions and lifestyle. Therefore European integration, presented by the new government as a longtime tradition interrupted by Communism, seems unflattering for all the interviewees of different age and ethnic origin. For them European integration threatens Georgian culture itself as becoming European places Georgian culture in an inferior position. It is interesting to note that the issue of European integration was the only exception where all eleven respondents regardless their ethnic origin, age or occupation expressed similar ideas.

European integration that is shaped in the political discourse as a carrier of modernity and progress is denounced by the interviewees as it represents a serious threat to Georgian national identity. For the respondents European-ness is the opposite of Georgian-ness and two simply can not coexist.

4.2.2. National Symbols

One of the major changes after the Rose Revolution was the introduction of new national symbols: the new flag, the national anthem and the coat of arms. These symbols were to mark the beginning of a new era for Georgia. The new symbols were introduced to replace old ones, which were associated with the negative recent past of independent Georgia: one example was the ethnic conflicts and the bad image of Georgia abroad.

After the election of Saakashvili the new five-cross flag that had first emerged as the flag of "National Movement" party was to be transformed into the new flag of Georgia.

> R9: As for as I know, I have heard it on TV the new flag is actually the old flag. As I remember King David IV won some major battle with this flag and our president won again under the same flag.

The association of the new five-cross flag with King David IV and the Golden Age of Georgian invoked by R9, who is history teacher of Azeri origin, is rather symbolic. The Golden Age is currently most often invoked both in media and political discourse as an

example of how a shattered Georgia can be reunited, as King David IV "the Builder" reunited the Georgian kingdom in the XII century. For example, after his election in February 2004 Saakashvili chose to deliver his inaugural speech on the grave of the King David IV as a sign that he will repeat King David's glorious path.

However, respondent R1, who is a journalist of Georgian origin, explains that it is not the association with the Golden Age that makes the new symbols special but what they represent today.

> R1: I did not like the old flag, it was lame. This one is better, it has crosses. The old flag was the symbol of a poor and devastated Georgia. When refugees fled Abkhazia this was the flag they carried, and for me it was always the symbol of defeat and war; in contrast, the new flag is the symbol of a strong country and the Rose Revolution. It unifies all of us who stood on Rustaveli Avenue as we can relate to what happened and how things have changed in Georgia. I also like the new national anthem, each time I hear it I feel patriotic. I know it is banal but I really love Georgia.

For respondent R7 who is of Armenian origin, new national symbols correspond to the situation that Georgia is now facing. He emphasizes that the new flag is also better known outside Georgia as it had been flagged by international media such as CNN and BBC during the Rose Revolution. In contrast the old flag of Georgia was completely unknown to the rest of the world, those being familiar with it associating it with negative events that occurred in Georgia such as the ethnic conflicts and civil war during the early 1990s.

> R7: The new national symbols are more progressive, more 21st century-style. I really like it. The new flag is Christian and this is important for me. For example, if I go to the US and say that I am citizen of Georgia they will respect me because this flag is the symbol of what happened here during the Rose Revolution. I did not like the flag of Gamsakhurdia [the old flag] as I did not like him for saying that Georgia was for Georgians. For instance I am Armenian but Georgia is my country! When you hold the new flag you are not ashamed, as nothing shameful was done under this flag, differently from the old one.

Some of the respondents mainly from the younger generation and representatives of ethnic minorities embrace the new national symbols; in contrast, others, mainly ethnic Georgians of the older generation, still believe that the change was unnecessary as the old national symbols represented the struggle of Georgia against Soviet domination and the consequent restoration of independence in 1991.

> R2: I liked the old flag. It had spiritual meaning for me, it was a flag of the liberation movement and the first republic of Georgia. Personally, I also preferred the old flag as it was more original and beautiful. In contrast, this flag is somewhat plain and people also say that this is a catholic flag not Orthodox but I haven't really researched it to claim that it is true.

According to R6, the change of national symbols has been disrespectful to all Georgians who fought for the independence of Georgia. As he argues, the changing of national symbols erased the memory of Georgians, not only of the negative moments in the newest history of Georgia such as ethnic conflicts and poverty, but also crucial moments in the history such as the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918-21 and the rebellion of 1924 after the Soviet occupation.

> R6: The fact that they changed the national symbols demonstrates how unprofessional they are. The old symbols represented historic memory and respect for our ancestors and symbols of Georgia's first European-style Republic in 1918. These were symbols defended at a cost of thousands of lives and were cherished during the Soviet years.

Several of the respondents did not consider these new symbols to be truly Georgian, as the new flag bears a strong resemblance to the flag of the crusaders in the Middle Ages; initially, it was the flag of Saakashvili's political party, the "National Movement."

> R3: I am a conservative person so I was initially against the changing of national symbols. Now I think that the anthem is good and people know it by heart. But I don't like the bright colours in the flag, especially the bright red because it is not a Georgian traditional color. Our colors were never bright, they are darker like brown and dark blue. I have also heard that this new flag is not Georgian at all. In

> fact nobody knows what it is and where it comes from. It is confusing to have national symbols that are unknown to you.

As respondents noted, national symbols have been actively flagged and publicized since the Rose Revolution, both in media and everyday life. A video on the new national anthem, featuring famous Georgian public figures, was regularly broadcast on several Georgian channels and the Georgian flag was and still is omnipresent in every big and small city throughout Georgia. Since the Rose Revolution it has even become fashionable to wear t-shirts with the flag on it or to paint the flag on your face when there is an occasion do so, and even creating new musical arrangements for the national anthem.

> R11: National symbols and especially the flag is literally everywhere, Tbilisi is full of it on every corner even on garbage bins. The anthem is played 200 times a day on TV, so yes you learn it by heart. I think it is too much but I guess this is the way they are trying to promote patriotism.

The regime of Shevardnadze was highly criticized by citizens of Georgia for neglecting national symbols and not valuing them: the only times national symbols were invoked were either during ethnic conflicts or soccer games, both always ending in defeat. Soccer was indeed a national sport in Georgia before the Rose Revolution, despite the fact that none of the soccer players of the Georgian national team actually knew the words to the Georgian anthem. But as interviewees have noted situation has changed and children are taught the national anthem at schools and every Monday in each school the flag is raised and the anthem is sung by the students. Also gaining in popularity are patriotic camps, where teenagers are taught how to be better patriots of Georgia. While for some respondents of the older generation (R6 and R3), these camps are reminiscent of the Soviet era pioneer camps, although this time it is Georgia and not the Soviet Union that is glorified.

While some of the respondents (R1, R7, R9) from the younger age group and representatives of ethnic minorities praise the new symbols as the fresh start for Georgia,

Georgian origin respondents from the older age group(R2,R3 and R6) see the change of symbols as disrespectful of those who fought for the independence of Georgia. Finally, the third group (R5 and R10) do not accord any particular importance to the change of symbols.

4.2.3. National pride

Alongside popularizing national symbols, the biggest change noted by respondents was the rediscovery of national pride after the Rose Revolution, although reasons of this particular rediscovery were articulated differently. Some of the respondents argued that the Rose Revolution had brought back the faith in Georgian state, while others argued that national pride was generated by the fear of criticizing Saakashvili's government that is always portrayed as ideal and efficient.

After the independence in 1991, Georgia was marked by two ethnic conflicts, civil war, poverty, high rates of unemployment and shortages of electricity. In these circumstances, national pride lost its meaning. Among the goals of the new government were the reaffirmation of Georgian statehood and the restoration of trust towards government. As some of the respondents noted, the attitude towards the government is changing in a positive direction, in contrast to the Shevardnadze regime that was defined by the public mistrust.

> R1: The attitude towards the government has changed and I like it. After the war, the overall attitude of people was nihilistic. Now our government tries to popularize our values and this is done in order to raise the self-respect of our nation. Sometimes it goes to extremes, for example when Misha makes his usual speeches he always mentions that we Georgians are a great nation and we are rebuilding our country and everyone must take part in this process. I think this really matters for people and now it is actually cool to be Georgian!

While some praise Saakashvili's patriotic populism, others fair that he will repeat the mistakes made by the first president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia. At first Gamsakhurdia managed to reunite Georgians and seek independence from the Soviet Union, but he later largely contributed towards the division of the nation that manifested

into civil war and ethnic conflicts. Like Saakashvili, when Gamsakhurdia became a popular hero and leader of the liberation movement, his popularity in western Georgia "bordered the cult of adulation" (Jones, 2005: 39).

> R4: I think Saakashvili is some sort of caricature of Gamsakhurdia with his populist propaganda. At first during the demonstrations when emotions were overflowing, I thought many things would change but now I understand that the reality is different. Yes, we are really trying to be a more respectable country, the new government says we already are, but I doubt it. I think it is more of an illusion that they created, differently from the old government that could not have cared less.

One of the biggest concerns of the new government has been the rehabilitation of Georgia's image abroad. Before the Rose Revolution Georgia was little known to the international community and the only media attention it received concerned ethnic conflicts and Russian allegations of Georgia providing asylum to Chechen terrorists. Some of the respondents argue that the situation has changed since the Rose Revolution. With this being first major political crisis resolved peacefully, Georgia has become a model of peaceful revolution, acquiring much-needed worldwide positive media coverage and achieving a positive image in the international community.

> R10: Before the Rose Revolution nobody respected Georgia, nobody even knew Georgia existed. If before you were ashamed to be Georgian, now people regained the hope and pride in our country and others respect us. Now you can say how beautiful Georgia is and there is no other place like this. Tbilisi is beautiful city and at last we have normal roads.

> R9: People really got their faith back. They move forward, they fall down but they eventually stand up, and now they know that there is a solution to this dreadful situation. Everything was grey before, now it is bright and radiant! It is absolutely normal for people to be proud of their government and this is the first time we have this opportunity.

Respondents mentioned above credit the Rose Revolution in generating national pride that was non existent in the post-Soviet Georgia. In a diverging view, however, R3

university professor of Georgian origin expressed an opinion that national pride is confused with the fear to criticize government of Saakashvili that is always portrayed as efficient and progressive.

> R3: I think today's situation in Georgia resembles somewhat what was happening in the Soviet Union in 1937 marked by large scale repressions. Of course this comparison might seem bit exaggerated, but people are afraid to speak their minds about everything that concerns government. And this absence of critique is confused with national pride. I don't think in three years from the Rose Revolution so many things have changed that now we can be proud and happy. Major changes need more time than that and the problems that Georgia faces can not be solved that easily. What I am trying to say is that the government is eliminating any possible source of critique and Rustavi 2 plays a key role in it, by broadcasting incriminating phone conversations of the people who dare to criticize Saakashvili and his entourage. I guess if they listened to what I say now I would have problems too.

It is rather interesting to note that some of the respondents mainly from ethnic minorities – two of them Azeri (R8, R9) and one Ukrainian (R11) – indeed abstained from making explicit critical comments about the government. For instance R11 requested her interviews not to be tape recorded as she feared government might have accessed the tapes where she would criticize them. It seems rather ironic that the government that came to power after the Rose Revolution and promised much needed democratic changes instead uses media as a tool for silencing critical voices. Current policy of the new government is inconsistent with the values that they were initially promoting.

Overall concerning national pride, among interviewees, representatives of ethnic minorities (R10, R8, R7) and younger Georgians (R1) believe that the situation has indeed changed and there are reasons to be proud of their country. Respondent R4, who is an ethnic Georgian, however, indicated that national pride is generated more by the illusion created by the government and not by actual changes. Finally, R3 who is ethnic Georgian university professor sees the emergence of national pride as generated by the fear to criticize the government.

4.3. Unity

In this part of my analysis, I will discuss how interviewees of Georgian and different ethnic backgrounds have negotiated a discourse on the unity of the Georgian people. I am particularly interested how informants defined Georgian-ness and the elements associated with it, in addition to how categories of exclusion and inclusion have been created and how they differ from those disseminated by the media during the Rose Revolution. Finally, I would like to explore whether or not the post-Rose Revolution national identity has become inclusive of Georgia's multiethnic nature.

4.3.1. Discussion of Georgian-ness

In the discourse on unity of the Georgian national identity disseminated in the media during and after the Rose Revolution, visions of unity were largely flagged through Christianity, viewed as an integral part of the Georgian national identity. I was interested to discover the position of interviewees towards this issue. Several of the ethnic Georgian interviewees (R1, R2, R3 and R4) see Christianity as an integral part of Georgian national identity.

> R1: For us religion and the independence of Georgia have been closely interrelated since ancient times. Christianity was a state religion in the Georgian Kingdom and was a unifying force stronger than anything else: for the unity of Georgians and for maintaining our culture, Christianity is crucial. It is part of being Georgian, like a guide for living in Georgia. The way I see it, there is a spiritual link between being Georgian and being Christian Orthodox.

> R2: For me, being Georgian and being Christian orthodox are identical concepts. From ancient times Christianity has saved Georgia. People were given faith and this gave them the desire to defend their country. Queen Tamar led her army with the cross is her hands and this reinforced love for the homeland. The national identity cannot change, it comes from ancient times and it is unique and Christianity is integral part of it.

However, not all Georgian interviewees believe that Christianity is the essential part of Georgian national identity.

> R5: I don't know why people say that being Georgian and being Christian Orthodox is the same thing. I think it is wrong and I don't understand it. Some pseudo-patriots even claim that you betray your country if you are not Christian Orthodox. I don't know how people can believe in it?! For example many great Georgians were not Christian Orthodox so know we should hate them for it?! I guess people that say things like that are extremely uneducated.

As the link between being Georgian and being Christian Orthodox is so largely emphasized in everyday life that the representatives of ethnic minorities who are truly willing to integrate into Georgian society recognize Christianity as the integral part of Georgian lifestyle. For example, R8 is 60 year old Geography teacher of Azeri origin fluent in Georgian, born and raised in Tbilisi and is practising Muslim but occasionally attends Orthodox Church.

> R8: Our family lives according to the Georgian traditions. Azeri traditions are not bad either, but we have to adapt to the culture of the country where we live. I don't want somebody judging me because of the way I talk, dress or act in society. I have tried to get closer to Georgian culture. I go to mosque *and* I go to Church. My church is Sioni and when I go there, I light two candles and ask God for prosperity and peace in Georgia. Nowhere it is written that the Azeri and Georgian Gods are different. If I go to mosque once I will go to church twice, so what if I am Azeri?!

From R8's account, we can see that going to church for her is not as much religious practice as cultural and social part of the life. For this respondent, who is willing to integrate into Georgian society and does not want to be perceived by Georgians as the "other" going to church as ordinary Georgians do is a sort of social practice that helps to build an understanding of the nature of Georgian national identity; At the same time, this practice overcomes an obstacle to inclusion into Georgian society. In being excluded and tagged as "other" primarily because of her religion, the Muslim respondent quoted above has chosen to transform going to church into a social and cultural practice that allows her the opportunity to smoothly integrate into Georgian society by doing something that according to her every Georgian does: going to church.

Another element prominently invoked alongside Christianity as an integral part of Georgian national identity by the interviewees has been Georgian culture.

> R5: I think it is our culture that defines what it is to be Georgian. Government tradition was always weak in Georgia so the only thing that was powerful and original has been our culture. It is very important to us; I guess this is the only thing with which we actually succeeded and makes us proud. Religion is purely spiritual but culture is a larger part of life, you live in it and experience it every day.

Oddly enough most of the respondents including representatives of ethnic minorities, some of them not Christian, named Christianity as a defining element of Georgian national identity. For instance, R5 and R6 argued in favour of Georgian culture as the most important element around Georgian national identity.

4.3.2. Multiethnic reality

In this section I shall discuss whether or not the multiethnic reality of Georgia is recognized and accepted by the interviewees in everyday practices. I will also discuss the question of whether the post-Rose Revolution national identity has embraced its multiethnic nature. While doing a critical discourse analysis of the Rustavi 2 media archive, I was astonished to discover that throughout the coverage of the Rose Revolution no information was provided on the participation of ethnic minorities or their position on what was happening during the events. Therefore, I was interested to discover how interviewees both Georgian and of ethnic origin reflected on this issue.

One of the respondents of Armenian origin (R10) noted that participation in the events of the Rose Revolution by representatives of ethnic minorities was an individual choice. These people did not go to the demonstration as a community but rather as individuals. Many of the respondents, both ethnic Georgians and representatives of ethnic minorities, expressed an opinion that the passivity of ethnic minorities during the Rose Revolution was connected to the fact that they were not fully integrated into Georgian society due to many factors, one of them being absence of knowledge of the Georgian language.

> R4: Ethnic minorities are not integrated, that's why they can not participate in events like the Rose Revolution. For example, the Azeri community in Marneuli[13] is better informed on what is happening in Azerbaijan than in Georgia. I don't think the Government does much to integrate them more fully. Of course, the biggest problem is the language as they don't speak Georgian.

The language barrier is indeed a major, as in regions with large national minority groups such as Marneuli with predominant Azeri and Axalqalaqi with predominant Armenian population. In these regions Georgian language is not spoken at all as these people communicate in Armenian, Azeri or Russian and as the result are isolated from the rest of the Georgia.

> R5: We did not create any conditions to integrate national minorities. It is not their fault that they don't know Georgian. Many so-called "patriotic" Georgians think this problem can be resolved violently, but in reality the government has to take more serious steps to finally integrate these people and replace the Russian language with Georgian. I know it is a painful process but Georgians are responsible for teaching ethnic minorities our language.

Representatives of ethnic minorities whom I have interviewed recognized that Georgia is not ready to embrace its multiethnic nature, although some attempts were made after the Rose Revolution. As R7, a lawyer of Armenian origin explains, the first step in integration has to be teaching ethnic minorities Georgian.

> R7: I guess overall the situation remains the same, but at least now some attempts are made to improve the situation. But there are major problems like that the Armenian Church does not have juridical status in Georgia. Let's alleviate this problem and Armenians will be the first to support the Georgians. Georgians gave homes to our ancestors escaping Turkish genocide, and we remember this and we are grateful. I have a job because I know Georgian and in Tbilisi I had a possibility to learn it, but people in the regions don't have this possibility right now. We are ready to be integrated into this society but we should be taught Georgian.

[13] Marneuli is the city with the biggest population of Azeri origin.

The Armenian community is the largest minority and the most talked about in Georgia. As one of the Georgian respondents (R4) suggested, the attitude towards Armenians and difficulties in integration are historic.

> R4: I guess the Armenian national identity is too strong and it threatens Georgians – that's why we have problems recognizing them as full citizens and always thinking of them as visitors. I doubt somebody with Armenian origin would be capable of having a political career here, as no matter what the government says, people will always see them as a threat.

Members of the Armenian community have suggested that this negative attitude towards Armenians has been created and reinforced by Georgian media, which presents Armenians as anti-Georgian.

> R7: Newspapers often write that Armenians fought against Georgians in Abkhazia. I suppose some individuals really did, but not all Armenians in general. I am a human being first and then I am an Armenian.

Several of the ethnic Georgians respondents (R1, R2, R3) interviewed, in contrast to the representatives of ethnic minorities, believe that ethnic minorities already are perfectly integrated into Georgian society and that these issues are brought up constantly after the Rose Revolution because this is what the international community wants to hear.

> R1: Personally, I think that there are no ethnic minority problems in Georgia at all. We are known to be a tolerant nation. At least all of the people around me are like that. Look what is happening in Russia now – that would have never have happened here. There are no skinheads or radical nationalists in Georgia at all and even if they existed nobody would have taken them seriously. I mean all this discrimination is not true, for example have you ever heard of an Armenian being discriminated against in Georgia?! I certainly haven't.

While some of the Georgian respondents argue (R1) that ethnic minorities are perfectly integrated, respondent R2 who is Georgian linguist argues that integration should happen through the assimilation and demands from ethnic minorities to renounce their cultural heritage and adhere to Georgian one.

> R2: We can talk as much as we want but for majority of ethnic minorities Georgia does not mean anything. They just don't care about our country. They need Georgia when everything is good here, but once problems begin they just leave. Only Georgians really care about our country. I don't trust members of ethnic minorities that are not assimilated, because they don't consider Georgia as their homeland. So if they really want to integrate than they should assimilate. At this point this is the only solution, maybe in couple of years this will change and ethnic minorities will love Georgia without assimilation but now it is impossible.

R2's opinion on ethnic minorities was not shared by other respondents. However, some of ethnic Georgian respondents (R1, R3) and Azeri respondents (R8, R9) denied any serious issues with the integration of ethnic minorities. Others mentioned problems such as language barrier and cultural differences (R7, R4). Finally, one of the Georgian respondents (R6) noted that Georgia is defined by its multiethnic minority although the majority of people have problems recognizing this.

> R6: If we go back to the sources of Georgian nation we can see that it emerged from two completely different ethnic groups– Kolhis and Iberis– so from the beginning Georgia was multiethnic. As far as I am concerned, Georgia can exist only as the multiethnic state and it would be good if the news government tried to embrace this nature of Georgia.

Overall, majority of interviewees from different ethnic backgrounds, age groups and occupations (R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R10, R11) recognized difficulties associated with the integration of ethnic minorities. Part of the respondents R1 who is Georgian and R8, R9 who are Azeri dismissed any problems recognizing Georgia's multiethnic reality. In contrast, R2 who is ethnic Georgian expressed an opinion that integration is impossible without assimilation. From above we can create a picture that many respondents realize the importance of ethnic minority integration however not much has been done to address the situation, while media completely ignores these issues and even sometimes aggravates the situation as R7 noted. As ethnic minorities were excluded from the Rose Revolution coverage, their voices were and unfortunately still are silenced in the media and political discourse around Georgian national identity. Due to this discursive exclusion problems of integration are not addressed and even silenced.

4.4. Conclusion

The semi-structured interviews analyzed in this chapter provided a different type of qualitative data from the critical discourse analysis of the Rustavi 2 media archive. The interviews provided more personal definitions of the Rose Revolution and analysis of the role of Rustavi 2 within these events. Most importantly, commentaries on the respondents were made three years after the Rose Revolution. This time gap was crucial as the vision of the Rose Revolution and Rustavi 2 after three years was redefined for several respondents.

In the first part of this chapter the opinions expressed by the respondents were highly influenced by the age, occupation and ethnic origin. For instance younger respondents were more positive towards Rustavi 2, but they still brought up propaganda and visual manipulation in their discussions. Older respondents on the contrary were highly critical of Rustavi 2's coverage, blaming the channel for staging the revolution. Meanwhile the majority of the representatives of ethnic minorities praised Rustavi 2's coverage for being truthful. These patterns of similarities and differences might be explained by the professional background and age of the interviewees. Three of the younger respondents were in the media field, whereas older respondents work almost exclusively in the education sector, part of them being university professors and the rest school teachers.

In the second part of this chapter I discussed the changes actively flagged by the media and introduced after the Rose Revolution. Among discussed issues were: European integration, introduction of the new national symbols and the rise of the national pride. Patterns in the interviews were similar to those in the first part of this chapter, except for the questions of European integration where all the respondents expressed similar opinions. In the rest of the questions concerning national symbols and rise of national pride, younger respondents of both Georgian and ethnic origins described them positively; In contrast older respondents expressed negative opinions concerning these issues.

The third part of this chapter was dedicated to the discussion of Georgian-ness and the multiethnic reality of Georgia. Majority of the respondents invoked Christianity and Georgian culture as the main components of the Georgian national identity, the same elements that were flagged in the discourse disseminated on Rustavi 2. Regardless their ethic origin, age and occupation most of the respondents in exception of two respondents (R1, R2) recognized difficulties associated with acceptance of Georgia's multiethnic reality alongside integration of ethnic minorities.

Finally, interviews enriched more general data provided by critical discourse analysis of the Rustavi 2 media archive that did not include opinions of the ordinary Georgians. Although data obtained by the interviews is only exploratory it still provides an insight into the post-Rose Revolution situation regarding reconstruction of the national identity.

5. Conclusion

In this research, I have explored how Georgian national identity was reshaped within discourse through the participation of the media (notably TV channel Rustavi 2) after the Rose Revolution that took place in November 2003. Within this research, I have identified and analyzed dominant discourses on the post-Rose Revolution Georgian national identity which were mobilized and disseminated by the media. These discourses included transition from "old" to "new" Georgia, introduction of the new national symbols, post-Rose Revolution political narratives, unity, Christianity and Georgian culture. While analyzing these discourses I have also identified discursive "gap" in the media coverage concerning the participation of ethnic minorities in the Rose Revolution.

The first part of my research was dedicated to the critical discourse analysis of the Rose Revolution media coverage on the key dates of November 22nd-23rd 2003. This particular analysis was multidimensional and mediated connection between language, everyday practices, social, political, cultural and historical contexts (Fairclough, 1995). Although, media occupied an important place in this research I chose not to concentrate solely on the media and include everyday practices that continually shape national identity together with the media.

In the second part of my research I have explored on a small sample of 11 interviewees with different ethnic backgrounds, how they interiorized and negotiated dominant discourses on Georgian national identity disseminated and flagged by the media during the Rose Revolution. This part of my research was dedicated to personal perspectives on the Rose Revolution and discussion of the Georgian national identity three years after the events of November 2003. Differently from the formal portrayal of the Georgian national identity flagged in the media, interviewees discussed their personal perceptions of the Rose Revolution and Georgian national identity in general and changes noticed in everyday practices.

As this research was centered on a study of both media and everyday practices that influenced discursive reconstruction of Georgian national identity after the Rose Revolution I chose to integrate elements of Michael Billig's Banal Nationalism and flagging homeland that argues that national identity is embedded within everyday routines (Billig: 1995). To cover both everyday practices and media in the complex process of Georgian national identity reconstruction after the Rose Revolution I chose to combine two methodological approaches, critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews. The critical discourse analysis of a media archive was set out to identify and analyze dominant discourses on Georgian national identity disseminated by Rustavi 2; this coverage, as I argue, provided an official vision of the post-Rose Revolution national identity. Interviews on the contrary, provided qualitative personal insights into the post-Rose Revolution national identity and gave me an opportunity to question Georgian national identity and the role of Rustavi 2 three years after these events.

Although, many studies have been conducted on national identity and the media (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Schlesinger, 1991; Morley & Robins, 1995; Higgins, 2004; Brookes,1999; Barker,1999, 1997; Erjavec, 2003;) none of them have studied media led peaceful Revolutions like the Rose Revolution. As the Rose Revolution is a relatively new phenomenon and has not received significant scientific attention, this exploratory research will help to clarify some aspects of the peaceful media-fuelled revolution in a post-Soviet country. Although as mentioned above, this research is exploratory and was conducted on a very small sample it still provides an interesting discussion of the link between media and peaceful revolutions that happened in Georgia, Ukraine and Kirgizstan and were initially seen as a significant step towards the adoption of the democratic values in the newly democratic post-Soviet countries.

In the case of Georgia, aspirations associated with the Rose Revolution that proved to be an exclusively non-violent and powerful event, were severely damaged in November 2007 when the government that came after the Rose Revolution violently dispersed peaceful demonstration of the opposition supporters. Recognizing the force of the media, the government closed Imedi TV that supported opposition forces and on regular basis

broadcasted statements of the opposition leaders. In fact the government that came with the promise of democratic changes threatened the freedom of speech with closure of Imedi TV and brutally ended peaceful demonstration. After the events of November 2007 success story of Georgian Democracy was reviewed in different light.

As this research has exploratory character, I was unable to make broad conclusions on the Rose Revolution and the media participation within these events. However, this research sheds light on discourses surrounding the Rose Revolution in Georgia, and opens the door for the future researches oriented towards better understanding phenomenon of the media led peaceful revolutions that took place in 2000-2005 in post-Socialist and post-Communist countries like Serbia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

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Annex 1

List of respondents

Respondent	Gender	Age	Occupation	Ethnic origin
R1	Female	23	Journalist	Ethnic Georgian
R2	Female	59	Linguist	Ethnic Georgian
R3	Female	51	University Professor	Ethnic Georgian
R4	Female	22	Student in Journalism	Ethnic Georgian
R5	Male	39	History Teacher	Ethnic Georgian
R6	Male	52	University Professor	Ethnic Georgian
R7	Male	25	Lawyer	Armenian
R8	Female	60	Teacher	Azeri
R9	Female	31	Teacher	Azeri[14]
R10	Female	23	Graduate Student in Media Studies	Armenian
R11	Female	60	Chemist	Ukrainian[15]

[14] This interview was conducted in Georgian, although respondent had difficulties but declined to switch to Russian.

[15] Interview was conducted entirely in Russian and interviewee requested our conversation not to be tape recorded.

Annex 2

Key dates in Georgian history

11-13 centuries A.D. – **the Golden Age of Georgian Kingdom**

1801 – **Occupation of the Georgian Kingdom by the Russian Tsarist Empire**

1918-1921 – **Restoration of the Georgian independence – First Georgian Democratic Republic**

1921 – **Bolshevik Russian Occupation**

1922 – **Foundation of the Soviet Union and incorporation of Georgia as a Soviet Socialist Republic**

1987-1988 – **Rise of Georgian National Liberation Movement**

April 9th 1989 – **Attack of the Soviet Army against peaceful demonstrators on Tbilisi, Georgia**

1991 – **Second Restoration of the Georgian Independence**

Key Dates of the Rose Revolution

November 2nd 2003 – **Parliamentary Elections**

November 21st 2003 – **First large scale demonstration demanding resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze held in the capital Tbilisi**

November 22nd 2003 – **Storming of Parliament by the Opposition Forces**

November 23rd 2003 – **Culmination of the Rose Revolution**

Annex 3

TV networks and newspapers operating in Georgia in November 2003

TV networks

Rustavi 2 – private TV network presenting openly pro– opposition coverage of the Rose Revolution

1st Channel – now Public Broadcasting of Georgia presenting openly pro– government coverage of the Rose Revolution

Imedi – newly established private TV network presenting neutral coverage of the Rose Revolution

Mze – private regional TV network broadcasting only in the capital Tbilisi presenting neutral coverage of the Rose Revolution

Kavkasia – private regional TV network broadcasting only in Tbilisi

Iberia – private regional TV network broadcasting only in Tbilisi presenting pro– government coverage of the Rose Revolution

The Press

24 Saati – private daily national newspaper belonging to the same media conglomerate as TV station Rustavi 2

Sakartvelos Respublica – pro-government daily national newspaper

Akhali Versia – private weekly national newspaper

Rezonansi – private national daily newspaper

Kviris Palitra – private weekly national newspaper