

The Formation of a Master Narrative in post-Rose Revolution Georgia

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After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new independent states refused to use the existing version of the assessment of historical facts and proposed a new, national interpretation. The consolidation of the nation around new ideals and the formation of new identities which would confront the Soviet one was the main challenge of this process. A new, national version of history was considered an additional resource for the state-building process and binding the new national identity. The above-described picture precisely reflects the situation in Georgia as a post-Soviet state. In addition, the applicability of the issue of the historical memory in Georgia is even strengthened by national peculiarities.

Back then, the Soviet leaders actively used this, and created the myths of Soviet heroes and traitors which were reflected in daily life. Therefore, the re-evaluation of these narratives and replacing them with new ones is some sort of continuation of this “tradition.” Similar types of transformation have a systemic, and, at the same time, cyclical nature and allow us to discuss the trends of the politics of memory in Georgia. In addition, during a transitional period, the politics of memory has to be brought into line with the difficult geopolitical situation. According to some authors, collective memory is not a process of remembering, but a kind of projection of how a given society sees the future (Nazaraev, 2006). Therefore, it is given prime importance in the determination of political benchmarks.

The present research is based on Halbwachs’ concept of collective memory, according to which memory is seen as a social process (1992). Insofar as it will study a top-down memory construction process, which in turn implies the process of the formation of narratives by the dominant groups of a community and then providing them to that community.

In the 1980-90s, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there was some progress made in terms of understanding the Soviet past of Georgia. However, this was mainly related to the activities of researchers, which were carried out as part of the educational policy and were mainly reflected in history textbooks. Politicians were less involved in the process of formation of collective memory in this period, which was expressed in a lack of interest in the appropriate “sites of memory,” the reduced use of history in political discourse and less attention paid to the formation of alternative narratives. At least three phases of the politics of memory may be indicated in Georgia, which correspond to the periods of rule of the first three presidents of Georgia, and which differ by their degree of severity and strategies of memory construction. During the periods of rule of Georgia’s first two presidents, there was an attempt made at transformations of the collective memory. However, increased interest in the system’s use of history is observed only after the 2003 Rose Revolution (Abashidze, Dundua, Karaia, 2017)

The government which came to power through the Rose Revolution in 2003 had a good starting position, as far as it enjoyed the high trust and support of the public, unlike the discredited previous government. This created one of the main challenges for the new government to dissociate itself from the old, to overcome the negative legacy of the past, as well as to determine whether the new phase would be the successor of the old one or whether state-building would commence anew.

This issue was easily solved by choosing a strategy of distancing from the past, in particular, according to the official discourse, the new phase of state-building had begun, which essentially meant the re-

establishment of relations both inside and outside the country, the reformation and creation of institutions, promotion of the formation of a new mentality. Also worth noting is that the new government placed the focus on the construction of civic nationalism, aiming at the unification of the entire society. This required the internalization and understanding of common values and the past, which Assmann (2006) called the national memory.

When analyzing the politics of memory in 2003-2005 we have placed the emphasis on several topics which dominated in President Mikheil Saakashvili's (2004-2013) discourse. These topics may be considered as indicators on which the analysis of the politics of memory after the Rose Revolution in Georgia has been based. These topics are: the attempt to construct a new identity with new symbols, to recall specific facts of the past and their respective interpretation, to transform the attitude towards the Russian Federation and the perception of it not as a partner but a historic adversary. One of the factors promoting the starting conditions for the "new era" was a certain messianic perception of the government, according to which a new force had emerged in the country in the most difficult situation, and this force was destined to rescue the state and to take it away from the situation in which it had been for almost a decade.

The public mood was accompanied by the charismatic qualities and self-perception of President Saakashvili. He stated that the nation had a unique opportunity at this point to enter history as the "generation, by whose efforts and direct participation Georgia has reunited for the first time after David the Builder's era" (Saakashvili, 20.11.2005). Such statements were accompanied by the government's commitment to symbolist and commemorative activities. If we use Assmann's concept of the possibility of transformation of memory from potential to actual (2006), the post-revolutionary government focused just on this policy. Historical facts were to be a part of everyday life. This particular treatment of the past was emphasized almost in all areas, with respect to all matters. The "heroic," "martial," "indomitable" and "unconquerable" past of Georgia provided the basis to justify any decision made by the government. The purpose of these activities, as mentioned above, was to consolidate the society and to preserve the existing legitimacy benchmark of the rulers. Worth noting was the attempt to create "a new Georgian identity" using two basic strategies: emphasizing the symbols and applying to the past that, according to an ethno-symbolic approach, always accompanies nation-building. Also worth noting is a trend that has been observed both in Georgia and in other newly independent states: in the absence of a long history of independence, the focus is placed on the nation's history so as to reinforce the society (Spiner-Halev, 2008, p. 604).

The allegory of overcoming a difficult period and starting the struggle to regain former glory may be seen in the inauguration oath delivered by Saakashvili during his first presidential term at the tomb of David the Builder, who succeeded in uniting the country and rescuing it from a severe situation. A further symbolic expression of fundamentally distancing the country from the past was the creation of new state symbols, where the new coat of arms, flag and anthem emphasized the heroic past of Georgia and the great battles of our successive predecessors. The government tried to consolidate society around a single goal, because state symbols were to reflect the main slogan "United we stand." The government also created new symbols that expressed the idea which had brought them to power after the revolution, and at the same time carried a messianic spirit. One such symbol was the monument of liberty (St. George's statue) officially unveiled on Freedom Square to commemorate the third anniversary of the Rose Revolution, which allegorically showed that on this day of "giorgoba" (St. George's Day, celebrated in Georgia on November 23rd) Georgia defeated evil, left a difficult stage in the past and faced an age of new victories and progress.

The second trend followed by government policy was the special attitude towards historical heroes. This trend revealed itself in the "invention of the past," which – if considered within Eric Hobsbaum's theory (1983) – aims to stir up faith in the community and its consolidation. If we view the strategies of memory, they come close to the creation of myths about the Founding Fathers, in that by recalling those heroes the public is told how Georgia could have been saved against the background of such hardships. At the same time, based on the experience of those heroes, present and future action plans are outlined. If we survived then, we will survive now – this is a new formula for success.

In addition to historical heroes, another interesting strategy was the one connected to the revelation of contemporary heroes. Referring only to the historical past was not enough to change the mentality of society and consolidate it. The demonstration of heroes of our time would be an indicator of progress, showing that inertia of society has ended and that everyone should get involved in this process. “The real heroes of the new Georgia” (Saakashvili, 24.02.2005) might be both ordinary people, non-corrupt state officials, parents who send their children to the army (Saakashvili, 26.05.2004), and also true heroes who sacrificed themselves for the unity of Georgia.

However, in parallel with the heroic past, the discourse also included characters which created a threat to sovereignty, and according to the official narrative, society needed to keep them in mind. During the transitional period we needed to be careful to avoid such precedents. The insecurity intensified in 2005, when the people who were associated with Soviet intelligence service appeared on the political scene and started anti-government activities. This was all exaggerated by the tense relations with the Russian Federation. Against this background, the politics of memory became more active and it became a part of the state security policy.

A large part of the main challenges facing the government was related to the Russian factor, as Russia was involved in provoking the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts. The country’s socioeconomic situation was also related to the Russian issue, as the Russian Federation was the main market for the sale of goods produced in Georgia. All this was added to by the large number of expats from Georgia to the Russian Federation who supported their families from there, and in that way strengthened the country’s economy. One of the main suppliers of energy resources was also Russia. In addition, Russian military bases were dispatched on the territory of Georgia.¹ Therefore, regulating relations with Russia and seeking a common language with it was the main direction of state policy. Articulation of the issue of relations with Russia in governmental discourse was made in a neutral manner. Of course, they could not avoid the fact that some politicians of the Russian political elite were hostile to Georgia, but the focus was still put on the progressive part of Russian politicians who understood the importance of peaceful relations with a neighbor. When recalling the Soviet period, the accents were placed only on a fallacious mentality.

Attempts to strain relationships with Russia and, hence, to reassess the common past in a different way, began in 2005. One starting point was the energy crisis, when – as a result of a committed subversive act – almost the entire population of Georgia had electricity and gas supplies cut off. The Georgian authorities assessed Russia, who was the energy provider, as an “unreliable and untrustworthy partner” (Saakashvili, 22.05.2006). The discourse also included the term “enemy” in the face of whom the public and the country should unite: “Our patience is not limitless ... we will come back, so the only question is – when? Soon. To spite the enemy and for our happiness!” (Saakashvili, 5.10.2005). Relations were further aggravated by the deportation of Georgians from Russia and an embargo imposed on Georgian products. As a result, the assessment of Georgian-Russian past experience tightened. For example, if in 2004 when speaking about the external forces involved in the conflict in Abkhazia, the President of Georgia focused on the North Caucasus locals, at the end of 2005 he used the term “annexation by Russian Federation” when referring to Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In February 2006, the President paid tribute to the memory of the cadets who died in February 1921. In his speech, for the first time, he articulated the most radical assessment of Soviet rule, which “completely demolished, destroyed Georgia and removed it from the path of European development” (Saakashvili, 25.02.2006). At the same time, the President noted that there were some people who celebrated Red Army Day on February 23 and there were people who celebrated the hero cadets and that the border between the future development of Georgia and stagnation crossed just here. Georgia also had to make a choice which

¹ These bases had been located on the territory of Georgia since the Soviet Union period. After the collapse of the Soviet Union they were transformed into the bases of the Russian Federation. President Zviad Gamsakhurdia announced them an occupying army, but after withdrawal of Gamsakhurdia from power, the status of an occupant was lifted from them and they remained on the territory of Georgia.

day it would celebrate. The focus on the choice between Russia and Europe made in this speech, the parallels between the past and present revealed a new source of threat. The greatest threat came from the north, as it used to be for the Independent Republic of Georgia from Soviet Russia in 1921. In spite of the 85-year difference, the methods used by Russia, were similar. In particular, Sergo Ordzhonikidze (a Georgian Bolshevik) brought the 11th Army into Georgia to help the rebels. Georgia faced the same problem, as “they” (politicians in the Russian Federation) began to talk about the difficult situation in Georgia and might give birth to a “new Ordzhonikidze.”

In the first stage after the Rose Revolution, the politics of memory focused on both domestic and foreign policy, in the light of the situation. In particular, for the unification and consolidation of the society, the examples of the past were effectively used and historical references were created through the concept of “heroes of our time” and “for the first time in Georgia.” As for foreign policy, the new narrative of collective memory did not provide a concept of the enemy. The period of being in the Soviet Union was evaluated as a stage of the formation of a “negative mentality.” Relations with neighbors were to have no effect on the official narrative of past.

Collaborationism and the possibility of finding an alleged Russian foothold in Georgia was the threat which forced the government to start the building of a new collective memory. Accordingly, this stage was crucial in the context of the politics of memory in 2003-2012. The strategy of a nation fighting for freedom and searching its founding fathers was replaced with the concept of scarification.

Due to the change of priorities, it became necessary to create “memory sites” (Nora, 1989) which were to be a constant reminder to the public that it is the victim, and that the offender must be named. The mainstreaming of the Russian occupation theme and the attempts to root it in the society was so intense that it may be called a “hegemonic” narrative, according to which the collective memory does not include merely remembering. It is more associated with the material consideration of memorable facts, in particular: “What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds” (Sontag, 2003, p. 76). The occupation was referred to in Georgia during that period precisely as an image creation process. The occupation theme appeared in public with varying intensity, but its formulated unified perception was not available. It was not a part of the collective memory.

At the memorial commemorated to the cadets who died in the fight with the Red Army in 1921, Saakashvili also noted that, on May 26, the Soviet Occupation Museum would be opened, which would remind the public of the severity of the Soviet Empire rule in Georgia (Saakashvili, 25.02.2006). With this statement he promoted the occupation as a “memory project” commenced in Georgia. Using Sontag’s theory, we have a complete picture of the creating of a hegemonic narrative because the government started to create those “pictures” which made the memory of the occupation a part of real life and expressed it in everyday life. An example of this was the Occupation Museum, which was created based on the experience of the Baltic States. This had symbolic importance and was another indicator of the emphasis placed on the European orientation of Georgia. By its historical narrative, Georgia was seeking integration in the European family.

Later, the memory of the occupation was formalized at legislative level. In 2010, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a resolution which officially declared February 25 the day of Soviet occupation. Under the parliamentary resolution, the government was entrusted to prepare a variety of activities to mark this day each February 25 and to lower flags across the entire territory of the country (Civil.Ge, 21.07.2010.). Particular emphasis was placed on marking these days in schools. On the initiative of the Ministry of Education, students were taken to the Occupation Museum; they held various competitions and listened to lectures/seminars.

Based on the above, we can state that the Occupation Museum officially distanced the history of Georgia from the Russian narrative of Soviet history. At the same time, this path was chosen for two reasons: first, the occupation became a part of the public memory, and secondly, in this way Georgia was joining that part of Europe which did not share the values of the Russian Federation.

The basic goals set out by the proponents of “transitional justice,” in addition to the punishment of wrongdoers, are as follows: to “teach lessons” about the past; to reassure the public that the past will not be repeated and to remove those implicated in the abuses of the old system from the new (Curry, 2007, p. 59). For this reason, society used a lot of methods including that of lustration, often used in former Soviet countries. According to the data, the implementation of lustration legislation is politically motivated (Ellis, 1996, p. 196). In the Georgian case, the lustration bill became an effective weapon for officials against their opponents. Even at the initial stage, the process of looking for lustration was not a “victim oriented process.”

One of the promises prompting Saakashvili’s team to come to power was the adoption of a law on lustration and the removal from power of people connected with the Soviet secret services. A condition for catharsis was provided, in the hope that the team that came to power was composed of young people, who should not be connected with the Soviet Union past.

After the change of government, in 2004 the possibility of adoption of the promised lustration law was discussed, but over time the intensity of discussions and interest in this issue varied, depending on the relationship between the representatives of the political elite. However, the fact is that a unanimous will to adopt the law did not exist at that time. On February 17, 2004, Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania articulated the idea, according to which the new cabinet of ministers would support the new lustration law, which was to be developed under the leadership of Zurab Adeishvili, who was nominated to the position of security minister. During the public presentation of the minister, President Saakashvili stated that “the new Georgian state shall in no way be obliged to keep USSR-era cases confidential” (Saakashvili, 17.02.2004). The new minister was publicly instructed to open the former Soviet KGB archives from 1920-1930 the next day, and to publish the list of Georgian agents of the Soviet intelligence service. He also added that at the time of his being the minister of justice he had seen those lists and he knew that those lists mentioned quite well respected people. This statement demonstrated that government was ready to adopt the law at all levels, but nevertheless, such a document was not prepared.

Saakashvili’s statement on the one hand was an attempt to execute a pre-election promise about the adoption of the lustration law, but at the same time it contained some properties of a politically-motivated decision, as a part of the intellectuals and politicians did not agree with the reforms implemented by the president, and, therefore, the declaration of opening the archives was seen as a kind of punishment for non-loyalty. In addition, making such a statement the president demonstrated that he was not against the adoption of the lustration law, and if the law was not prepared, he would promote the archive publication process.

The final bill, agreed and approved after two years, was presented to the Parliament by MP Gia Tortladze. The proposed draft was based on the experience of the Czech Republic and Lithuania. The lustration law, which was adopted under the name of the Freedom Charter, was based on three fundamental principles. These include: strengthening national security, prohibition of Soviet and Nazi ideology and prohibition of any symbols associated with those ideologies, and the creation of a special commission which will draw up a “Black List” of suspects in secret cooperation with the intelligence services of foreign countries (The Freedom Charter, Article 1).

According to the initiator of the bill, the name of the Freedom Charter derived from the fact that it was much more than a lustration law. The Freedom Charter was to free society from the threat of terrorism (in that period a series of acts of terrorism took place in the town of Gori and surrounding areas, and when investigating them the authorities talked about a “Russian connection”), from ideological influence and those symbols which reminded the society of it, and could “even strengthen” Soviet ideological attitudes. The lustration law was the result of a compromise. The bill contained a far more extensive list of former officials to be investigated within the lustration framework than the list in the Freedom Charter. The author of the bill, Gia Tortladze, explained the reduction of the list by the fact that the members of the parliament applied to the leader of the government asking for some names to be withdrawn, otherwise they would issue an ultimatum and leave the parliament. “I have chosen the law to be adopted partially, rather than have it fail.”

Therefore, the slowdown or activation of public interest in lustration was directly related to the state of security. One of the means of combating the image of the enemy and its potential impact was the creation of a collective memory and lustration, in order to oppose the enemy not only via government and legislation, but to make it unacceptable to society. The process of lustration was never “victim oriented.” In the 1990s the demand to remove those implicated in the abuses of the old system from the new one dominated, later this transformed into a claim that the past would never be repeated.

The issue of Stalin as a leader, and the Georgian heroes of the Second World War, can be seen in terms of attempting to replace symbols and promote new ones. At the same time, this issue could be considered in the context of de-russification, of liberation from the Russian narrative and attempts to join the European family. Saakashvili’s government was inconsistent in the assessment of Stalin and attitudes changed in accordance with the agenda of their politics. The first phase of the attitude of the government towards this issue may be called a “strategy of silence” (Connerton, 2008) where they did not want to activate the public memory of something, but on the other hand did not urge forgetting.

The assessment of Stalin became strongly negative after the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and was associated with the issue of the justification for the Stalin monument in the central square of Gori, the most war affected town. The statue of the Soviet leader ought not to exist in a town which had been consistently and relentlessly bombed by Russian aggressors during the war. Stalin’s statue also opposed the government’s official policy, which stipulated a reassessment of the past and the crushing of the Soviet mentality in society. President Saakashvili stated that in the 21st century, a time when Georgia had an independent history, an occupation museum and monuments of the occupants should not exist simultaneously, as this was profoundly inconsistent with the mentality of a free state and state priorities (Civil.ge 25.06.2010).

The issue of dismantling of Stalin’s monument in Gori extended to other monuments in several towns in Georgia, and the discussion of the existence of Stalin’s monuments in Georgia in the general context of legitimacy began. The process of dismantling the monuments started from Gori; the monument was dismantled at night without prior notification and secretly moved from the town center. Similarly, the process of the removal of monuments took place in different towns and cities of Georgia, in particular, in Tkibuli, Kutaisi, Telavi and Akhmeta. A part of this policy was the idea of changing the concept of the Stalin museum in Gori, which was to be transformed into a museum of Stalinism and the installation of a memorial to the people who died as a result of Stalin’s Soviet repression in place of Stalin’s monument (personal communication with Georgian politician). However, this idea was not realized during the period of Saakashvili’s presidency.

Despite the special attitude of the government towards historical heroes after the Rose Revolution, the soldiers who died in World War II were not put on the list of national heroes, because they served the Soviet system, which according to the government’s opinion had nothing in common with Georgia. This perception was also related to foreign policy issues, because official Russia harshly responded to such statements. For example, substituting symbols was expressed by the explosion of the World War II Memorial in Kutaisi and the beginning of construction of the new Parliament building in its place. In response to this action, the Russian authorities erected a monument in Moscow whose symbolic meaning was “We were together in the struggle against fascism.” The composition reflects the photo where the Georgian Meliton Kantaria and Russian Mikhail Yegorov plant the Soviet flag on the Reichstag, and the memorial demolished in Kutaisi is reflected on the reverse of the composition.

An attempt at distancing the Russian narrative was expressed in the government’s statement to celebrate the end of World War II on the date of May 8. The Second World War is perceived differently in the former Soviet Union space than in the rest of the world. For the Soviet Union, and its successor – Russia, it is the Great Patriotic War, while in the Western sense it is the Second World War, when Hitler was defeated and the humanity survived a massive catastrophe. This different perception is exacerbated by the fact that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe equated German Nazism and Soviet Stalinism, and condemned both of them, setting out the August 23, the date of signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, as the

Day of the Victims of Totalitarianism. In Georgia, amid the rewriting of the post-Soviet narrative and distancing from Russia, there was raised a question of how and when this day should be celebrated: as the Second World War or as the Great Patriotic War.

The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that in 2009, the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev congratulated the Georgian people and veterans of the 64th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, and stressed that he wished peace, wellness and concord to the Georgian people. The greetings referred to the “common historical past, the traditions of friendship and good neighborhood” as the prospect of restoring the current tense relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation. The absence of the current Georgian government in this discourse stepped up the tension and finally put the question of when to celebrate the holiday, on May 8 or 9?

This was added with one more aspect of the reason for marking May 8 or May 9 in Georgia: to celebrate the victory over the fascism, or to honor Soviet Victory Day?! The first question was how to celebrate membership of Stalin’s coalition and service in the Red Army with the status of being not a free, but a conquered country, the more so that Georgians fought in the opposing Nazi army as well. If the Georgians who had fought together with the Germans thought that by the victory of Nazism they would restore the independence of Georgia, the fighters from the Soviet side, according to the government’s statements, lacked any national goal. Therefore, the process of making Stalin, World War II and the Georgian heroes who participated in it a part of the new collective memory was related to a change of foreign policy priorities. The narrative approved by the legal successor of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, as the occupant-country was unacceptable. The new Georgian narrative emphasized the “non-Georgian nature” of Stalin and the European concept of vain sacrifices made for World War II, and equating communism and fascism.

During the calls for a reassessment of values and a governmental interpretation of the events, the permanent focus was put on the study of the history of relations with Russia and the necessity of their evaluation. The development of a document in an effort to support the introduction of a hegemonic narrative was to simplify the process further. The classical expression of this was the creation of the “Commission for Establishment of the Historical Truth.”

“In many cases nations and societies began to create a collective memory after tragic and bloody occupations, in order to promote the national identity shattered by occupation and to establish national integrity... This process has failed in Georgia, and as a result of this it now faces the threat of the appearance of collaborationists” (Rukhadze, 2010). This was main thesis of the article by Vasil Rukhadze- (Phd students of Kent University (USA); near future head of the commission) which antedated to the establishment of above mentioned commission. In this article, government had a key role in the process of creation of the collective memory against the 200-year rule of Russia, which triggered a boom in the society. The author considered that a necessary step to respond to this challenge was to create a commission for the establishment of historical truth. Rukhadze’s publication preceded the statement by Saakashvili on the establishment of the commission, that was only coincidental as Rukhadze stated (personal communication with Rukhadze), but this fact, and the government’s attitude towards the necessity of creating a collective memory, coincided with each other.

In accordance with the Statute of the Commission, it was to study the historical memory of Georgia of the 19th-20th centuries, the 200-year policy of the Russian Empire in Georgia and its consequences and prepare a report based on comprehensive scientific and historical research, which would provide a full description of the facts of historical violence suffered by Georgia during the imperial and Soviet occupation. The creation of the commission and its accelerated pace of work became one of the main reasons of the public criticism.

According to the head of the commission, a 105-page paper was created, which describes the history of Georgia from the 18th century to the collapse of the Soviet Union (personal communication with Rukhadze). However, some interesting trends were highlighted in the discourse of the commission members: 1) The contribution of Georgians to the process of implementing the occupation and Soviet repressions; 2) The

need to familiarize public with history since they do not know it; 3) The necessity to make certain conclusions from the past in order not to repeat this in the future. Accordingly, the government's discourse and attitudes towards the Russian Federation and collaborationists received a higher degree of legitimacy by this document, as it showed the picture which resulted from 200 years of Georgian-Russian relations based on the sources and a scientific approach. Updating memory and its use in the state-building process is a highly topical issue. Its relevance is especially highlighted by the fact that the country now faces the same challenges as it did years ago and demonstrates a particular attitude towards its own past. The case of Georgia meets all of the above requirements, as the issue of the identity which was interrupted after the collapse of the Soviet Union and state-building were put again on the agenda. One of the typical features of Georgia was the absence of an inheritance in the state building process, in particular, since the restoration of independence, each president began the process of building anew, that in turn affected the process of understanding of the past and the formation of the politics of memory, its nature and strategy.

Based on an analysis of the available data, several main conclusions were developed. The politics of memory in Georgia is approached top-down. The main direction of the memory is an attempt to implement a hegemonic narrative through strategies of symbolization and victimization. The choice of memory strategies is influenced by foreign policy priorities. The two above-mentioned policy directions of the politics of memory were conditioned by foreign policy. In particular, after the Rose Revolution, President Saakashvili held out the hand of friendship to the President of the Russian Federation and offered to start relations anew as equal partners. The reappraisals of values, and a change in mentality were the topics, which secretly indicated the negative experience. The worsening of Russian-Georgian relations, which started from the sabotage of energy carriers connecting Georgia and Russia and the mass deportation of Georgians from the Russian Federation, was reflected in the government discourse.

Based on the above hypothesis, we may say that the politics of memory established in Georgia in 2003-2012 was based on the selection of facts from the past, subject to the political agenda, their appropriate interpretation and the delivery of them to the public in the form of various products. These periods are also characterized by the so-called hegemonic narrative, for the popularization of which all means, beginning from the monuments to movies, were actively used. However, the politics of memory was designated not only for domestic use, but contained a message for foreign countries. In particular, through this politics the government of Georgia aimed to become a member of the European family, as its narrative was similar to the narrative of Eastern Europe, and was contrary to Russia, which in this case, appeared as the Soviet Union's immediate successor, continuing the legal personality and politics of the Soviet state.

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