THE STRATEGY PECULIARITIES IN THE PROTEST FOR SAVING URBAN FABRIC IN TBILISI*

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Abstract. After gaining its independence in 1991, Georgia faced significant challenges on all levels like all other post-communist countries. Therefore, against this background, care for urban historical and cultural heritage, and ecological health was less visible on the agenda. As a result of the Rose Revolution of 2003, various reforms were carried out. After strengthening state institutions, the re-urbanization of cities was gradually included on the agenda. At the same time, growing urbanization resulted in an acute shortage of green space and an uprising of the urban grassroots movements in Georgia. We have selected three cases of urban movement developed in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. "Save Gudiashvili Square," "Defend Vake Park,"and "No to Panorama Tbilisi!". Even though these cases occurred almost simultaneously, and the activists involved were quite the same, their achievements are different. The presented research attempts to determine the challenges that arose during the formation of the urban movement agenda and study the activism strategy and how it influenced the results of the movements. By triangulation of multiple methods – analyzing primary and secondary sources and interviews of involved actors –, we argue that the strategy of the movements played an important role, while not crucial, with regard to the studied civic activism.

Keywords: Urban activism, urban re-development, Georgia, political context, strategy, investment.

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Introduction

After seventy years of forced stay in the Soviet Union, Georgia regained its independence in 1991 and set the goal of building a democratic state. To achieve this goal, Georgia had to overcome many obstacles: social-economic problems, territorial and political conflicts, civil war, etc. Considering all this, for years, Georgia was considered as being among the failed states.[1] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, among other problems, one of the noticeable signs was the deformation of the urban environment. The desire to expand housing and rampant privatization heavily affected the state of cultural observation of the urban environment. However, in the period when people were fighting for survival, there was no room for post-materialist concerns, such as analyzed by Ronald Inglehart.[2] Anyone thinking about protecting ecological or cultural monuments under broken political institutions had to play with the non-institutional rules of the game and seek patronage.[3]

The opportunity for the emergence of an urban movement focused on policy change was accelerated by the shock wave of reforms after the Rose Revolution (2003), accompanied by the simplification of the regulations for business and attracting investment. President Mikheil Saakashvili stated, "Georgia needs 10 percent economic growth every year for the next ten to fifteen years to become like Singapore.[4] This idea of the "Singapurization" of the country allowed investors to implement business ideas at the expense of social spaces, especially in Tbilisi. Although public protests did not immediately follow these initiatives, the revolutionary government of Georgia had a significant vote of confidence under the

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[1] Georgia Ranks 60th Most Failed State, HumanRights.ge, 2006, accessed September 10, 2022, http://www.humanrights.ge/index.php?a=text&pid=6137&lang=eng.

[2] Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[3] D. Sitchinava, D. Chigolashvili, and N. Zazanashvili, *The city is ours! Urban protest and politics in Tbilisi* (Tbilisi: Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2016).

[4] საკავშირო ეკონომიკის სინგაპურიზაციას იმედოვნებს, 20 მარტი, 2012 [Saakashvili Hopes for the Singapurization of the Economy, March 20, 2012], accessed September 17, 2022, http://saqinform.ge/news/9418/saakashvili+ekonomikis+singapurizacias+imedovnebs.html.

conditions of high legitimacy. The government evaluated its policy as "an attempt to save the country."[5]

It should also be noted that public participation in this period was mainly limited to going to the elections and holding rallies. The protest repertoire was poor and mainly focused on the demand of government change.[6] Only since 2012 activism began to take a regular character and expanded thematically as well as its advocacy strategies.[7] Gradually, urban centers and public spaces become a critically important expression of local life and set a benchmark for the vitality of a particular city.[8] Added to this is the intensification of the sense of cultural identity and the need to control local politics, contributing to the emergence of urban movements in Georgia.

Thus, our study aims to analyze the methods used during the selected activist movements and provide an answer to the following question: how did the chosen strategy influence the results of the movements? During the selection of research cases, emphasis was placed on the movements in the urban center of Tbilisi. Three cases were selected from the existing movements: *Save Gudiashvili Square*, *Defend Vake Park*, and *No to Panorama Tbilisi!*. Several factors determined their selection. First, these movements are characterized by a certain periodicity. The involved activists are the same persons but with different roles. All three are cases well covered by the media and characterized by high public involvement. At the same time, all of them were driven by different trajectories, and the results were also different, making the comparative analysis more attractive.

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[5] საააკაშვილი მეორე ვარდების რევოლუციას იწყებს [Saakashvili starts the Second Rose Revolution], civil.ge, September 24, 2008, accessed August 13, 2022, https://old.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=19596).

[6] Agnes Gagyi, "Social Movement Studies for East-Central Europe? The Challenge of a Time-Space Bias on Postwar Western Societies," *Intersections, East European Journal of Society and Politics* 1, no. 3: 16–36, doi:10.17356/ieejsp.v1i3.93.

[7] Lia Tsuladze, Nana Macharashvili and Ketevan Pachulia, "SOS Tbilisi: Challenges to Environmental Civic Participation in Georgia," *Problems of Post-Communism 65*, no. 3: 1-17. doi:10.1080/10758216.2017.1308228.

[8] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Volume 1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 9.

Social Movements: Theoretical Aspects

Introducing the concept of urban social movements in the social sciences is associated with Manuel Castells.[9] For him, the urban social movement is the result of the unification of trade unions, political groups, and urban organizations.[10] Gradually, the study of the relationship between urban development and the growth of social resistance becomes even more relevant.[11] The study of urban or any civic activism is conducted from different points of view: for collective behavior theorists, people involved in civic activism are viewed negatively; they are framed not as political actors but as irrational actors and socially marginalized.[12] However, for many authors not supporting collective behavior theorists, people involved in social movements are considered wholly rational and thoughtful.[13] A different interpretation is provided by scholars focused on resource mobilization.[14] For example, for John McCarty and Mayer Zald, the aggregation of resources based on collective goals and some self-organization is essential for the success of social movements.[15]

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[9]   Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question. A Marxist Approach* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977).

[10] Chris Pickvance, "From Urban Social Movements to Urban Movements: A Review and Introduction to a Symposium on Urban Movements," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 1 (2003): 102–109, doi:10.1111/1468-2427.00434.

[11] David Slater, "Spatial Politics/Social Movements Questions of (b)orders and resistance in global times," in *Geographies of Resistance*, eds. M. Keith and St. Pile (London: Routledge, 1997), 258-276; Helga Leitner, Eric Sheppard and Kristin M. Sziarto, "The Spatialities of Contentious politics," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33, no. 2 (2008): 157-172, doi:10.1111/j.1475-5661.2008.00293.

[12] Steven M. Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism: The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, "Action Forms, Repertoires and Cycles of Protest," in *Social Movements: An Introduction,* eds. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 163-193.

[13] Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, *Collective Behavior. Englewood Cliffs* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972); John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Jersey: New Brunswick, 1987).

[14] John Wilson, *Introduction to Social Movements* (New York: Basic, 1973); Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?," *Comparative Politics* (1973): 425–47; William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1975).

[15] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212-1241, https://www.jstor.org/stable/i329018.

Drawing on the existing theoretical schools in the study of social movements, our research is mainly focused on using political process theory, according to which the political process mainly determines the outcomes of movements.[16] Alongside with the political process, the crucial importance has a proper framing process defined as "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and themselves that legitimated and motivated collective action."[17] Correspondingly, the framing process promotes the consolidation of actors and develops shared identities. The failure of citizens' mobilization when external factors are favorable usually results from unappropriated "master framing."[18] Protest strategy includes not only framing processes but also protest tactics.[19] For Tilly, the continuing repertoire is a component of tactics that can include demonstrations, rallies, strikes, or other similar types of actions.[20] Tilly attaches particular importance to an appropriately selected repertoire in the process of activism. However, it is not easy to choose a repertoire, especially to use new, previously unknown methods, as often innovative ways fail to achieve success.[21] Each theory is an ideal type that operates differently in distinct spaces. However, for critics of the Political Process Theory (PPT) theory, it focuses too much on the political process, and sometimes even the notion of political opportunities could be more specific. Simultaneously, much attention is paid to the government's readiness for change, when often this readiness does not exist, but movements still succeed. Thus, despite the wide variety of social movement theories, it is

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[16] Sidney Tarrow, *Struggling to Reform: Social Movements and Policy Change During Cycles of Protest* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[17] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6.

[18] David Snow and Robert B. Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, eds. Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[19] Neal Caren, "Political Process Theory," in *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology,* ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 3455–3458.

[20] Charles Tilly, *Why? What Happens When People Give Reasons… And Why* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[21] Charles Tilly, "To Explain Political Processes", *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 6 (May 1995): 1594–1610.

challenging to study the cases we have selected for research within the framework of a single model.

Research Methodology

We have combined the following qualitative research methods to respond to the mentioned research goals. We use the case study strategy defined by David Snow and David Trom[22] as a richly detailed and thorough, thick elaboration of the phenomenon. By triangulation of multiple methods, we have analyzed a wide variety of primary and secondary sources. In analyzing the secondary sources, we studied the vast Western literature on social movements and movements developed in Georgia. In addition, we have studied the decisions, statutes, treaties, agreements, or memoranda made at the central and local self-government levels related explicitly to the research issue. At the same time, we requested all the available documentation associated with the selected cases from the Tbilisi City Hall and the City Assembly, in order to analyze the communication between governmental circles and activists.

We have processed articles, interviews, and announcements published around the issue in the highest-rated online media in Georgia from 2009 to 2018 (244 pieces, statements, interviews, or information during movement development).[23] While information about events held during the studied movements was mainly spread through social networks, we analyzed the posts, calls, materials, comments, and reviews on various Facebook and Twitter pages using content analysis. This technique was suitable for the purpose of tracing debates and comparing the arguments of the involved sides.

The primary data came from thirty-eight semi-structured interviews conducted in order to fully recover the protest cycles during the research process. Eighteen women and eighteen men aged 20 to 60 have been interviewed (all had attained higher education). From the studied movements, respondents

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[22] David Snow and David Trom, "The Case Study and the Study of Social Movements," in *Methods of Social Movements Research*, eds. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Stagenborg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 146-172.

[23] We have examined news agencies: Netgazeti, Interpresnews, Civil.ge, For.ge; online publishing: Liberali, Tabula, et al.

were selected based on their engagement, functions, and attitudes: movement organizers, representatives of civil society organization and opposition political parties (none of the representatives of the ruling "Georgian Dream" party agreed to the interview), "rank-and-file" activists (periodically involved in different activities) and the investor. The anonymity of all respondents in the text is maintained. The interviews were conducted from December 2019 to August 2020, when none of the movements studied was active.

We identified a small set of *a priori* codes during the study's initial stage. These were based on media research and included assumptions about movement strategies, communication forms of involved actors, perception of the opposite side, and solidarity among the activists. The inductive codes created for the research were (1) level of engagement, (2) roles and responsibilities, (3) methods to protect or produce new order, (4) timeframe, (5) authority, (6) metaphor, (7) assessing others, and (8) self-assessment. By processing and comparing the primary data obtained from interviews, we could fully identify the origins and stages of the studied movements and meet the research goals.

Political Process and the Emergence of Urban Civic Activism

The origin of urban (and non-urban) movements has its determinants. While discussing these preconditions, different researchers underline different factors. Manuel Castells was the first to single out and introduce the notion of urban social movements.[24] They emerge from unifying trade unions, political groups, and urban organizations.[25] The study of the relationship between urban development and the growth of social resistance gradually becomes even more relevant. According to Pruijt, citizens try to gain control over their urban environment through urban social movements.[26]

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[24] Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question. A Marxist Approach* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977).
[25] Chris Pickvance, "From Urban Social Movements to Urban Movements: A Review and Introduction to a Symposium on Urban Movements," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 1 (2003): 102–109, doi:10.1111/1468-2427.00434.
[26] Hans Pruijt, "Urban Movements," in *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 5123–5127.

In post-communist countries in the late 1980s during the *glasnost* and *perestroika* reforms, civic activism developed on a solid national bias. It was driven by local dissidents fighting for independence and aimed to build a Western democracy.[27] Georgia was no exception in this regard. After gaining independence in 1991, Georgian authorities' urban policy was spontaneous and inconsistent, driven mainly by Soviet inertia.[28] Severe socio-economic problems began in Georgia, including a civil war in Tbilisi. In the given context, all types of civil activism were mainly aimed at implementing political changes.[29] There was no political will to involve citizens in city governing processes.[30] Even more, urban issues were not put on the political agenda, or, as Kubicki notes, urban development problems, and generally, "the question of cities was relegated to a side note in mainstream political discourse."[31]

Before that, due to the Rose Revolution of 2003, attitudes toward city politics changed. The post-revolutionary pro-Western government of Mikheil Saakashvili and the United National Movement (UNM) carried out rapid, accelerated, and fundamental reforms in all areas of public policy.[32] They supported rapid economic growth and foreign direct investments.[33] Growing urbanization increased the population of

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[27] Grzegorz Bakuniak and Krzysztof Nowak, "The Creation of a Collective Identity in a Social Movement: The Case of 'Solidarnosc' in Poland," *Theory and Society* 16 (1987): 401-429, doi:10.1007/BF00139488; Janusz Bugajski, *Czechoslovakia: Charter 77's Decade of Dissent* (New York: Praeger, 1987).

[28] Joseph Salukvadze and Oleg Golubchikov, "City as geopolitics: Tbilisi, Georgia – A globalizing metropolis in a turbulent region," *Cities* 52 (2016): 39-54, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2015.11.013.

[29] Olena Nikolayenko, "The Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation: Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine," *Comparative Politics* 39, no. 2 (2007): 169-188.

[30] Levan Khutsishvili, "Factors of Participatory Urban Policy: Urban Activism through the prism of Post-materialistic Theory Levan Khutsishvili," *Eastern Europe Regional Studies* (2018).

[31] Przemysław Pluciński, "Forces of Altermodernization: Urban Social Movements and the New Urban Question in Contemporary Poland," *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 29, no. 4 (2018): 699, doi:10.1007/s11266-018-0007-x.

[32] Sandro Tabatadze, "Party-Based Euroscepticism: The Case of Georgia," *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 30, no. 2 (2022): 239-260.

[33] Vladimer Papava, "Microeconomics of post-Soviet post-industrialism and the model of economic development of Georgia and Russia," *Journal of Business and Economics* 6, no. 5 (2015): 976-983, DOI: 10.15341/jbe(2155-7950)/05.06.2015/012.

Tbilisi almost twice and congested the city. As a result, massive construction projects began in Tbilisi. Although the city's budget increased, the unsystematic development seriously damaged the urban design and threatened cultural heritage and green zones.[34]

The urban policy mainly stayed the same even after 2012, when an opposition party, Bidzina Ivanishvili – Georgian Dream (GD), won the parliamentary elections. Although one of the election promises of the newly elected political team was to stop illegal constructions and restore the city's appearance, Tbilisi City Hall continued its pro-business policy. It is often pointed out that despite radically different political beliefs and platforms, the attitudes of both political forces toward attracting investment in the tourism sector and reorganizing the cities are similar. Accordingly, similar policies of both – acting and previous governments primarily served the interests of favored groups and befriended businesspeople rather than any well-thought-out urban policy.[35]

All studied movements began in this period of rapid urbanization. *Save Gudiashvili Square* and *Defend Vake Park* movements started during the UNM's rule and continued after GD came to power. In contrast, *No to Panorama Tbilisi!* started and completed during the administration of the GD.

Save Gudiashvili Square – Activism

Gudiashvili Square is a complex of buildings from the second half of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a high degree of authenticity. Gudiashvili Square is still one of the most important centers of the old city. The square and the buildings in it, bearing the status of a historically

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[34] Inga Grdzelishvili and Roger Sathre, "Understanding the urban travel attitudes and behavior of Tbilisi's residents," *Transport policy* 18, no. 1 (2011): 38-45, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2010.05.006.

[35] David Gogishvili and Suzanne Harris-Brandts, "Coinciding practices of exception in urban development: mega-events and special economic zones in Tbilisi, Georgia," *European Planning Studies* 28, no. 10, (2020): 1999-2019, https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2019.1701995; Joseph Salukvadze and Kristof Van Assche, "Multiple transformations, coordination and public goods. Tbilisi and the search for planning as collective strategy," *European Planning Studies* (2022): 1-19, https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2022.2065878.

valuable cultural heritage monument, required reconstruction. The UNM, which came to power in 2003, actively started restoration works of several old districts and streets of the city. Although the historical buildings of the square have been owned by the Old Tbilisi Rehabilitation and Development Fund and afterward sold to the investor Irao Magnat Group, no restoration or strengthening works were carried out.

As a result of this inaction, the condition of the historical buildings worsened even more. Due to the government's inattention to cultural heritage monuments, Tiflis Hamkari, a non-governmental organization founded in 2005, whose main goal was to preserve Tbilisi's cultural heritage, started the protest movement *Save Gudiashvili Square:*[36]

> "We went to the street because the government did not take any steps to save the square, and all the resources to negotiate with it were exhausted. It was the only way left" (Interview 30).

The movement lasted for nine to ten years and became one of Georgia's most prolonged and consistent urban activism campaigns. This movement had three distinguishable phases.[37] The first phase aimed to increase awareness of the square and its cultural-historical significance among the citizens. Even though the square is located in the historical and tourist part of Old Tbilisi, only a few people had information about its cultural and historical importance.

The transition to a new stage of the protest cycle in 2011-2012 had its causes. According to the entry in the Tbilisi Development Fund charter, the fund was supposed to

> "Organize close cooperation with the non-governmental sector, private agencies, public organizations, and mass media in the process of working on the city's development strategy, to involve them in the rehabilitation and development processes actively."[38]

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[36] ტფილისის ჰამქარი – Tiflis Hamkari, accessed April 20, 2021, https://www.faceboo k.com/pg/TiflisHamkari/about/?ref) =page_internal.

[37] Salome Dundua, Tamara Amashukeli and Sandro Tabatadze, "What makes social movements successful: The case of Gudiashvili Square," *Europe-Asia Studies* 74, no. 8 (2022): 1413-1432, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2021.2012559.

[38] Accordingly, framing the first stage mainly took the form of an educational campaign to raise awareness of the square among the citizens; article 2 of the charter of the "Tbilisi

However, the first stage of the protest cycle revealed a completely different situation. On the one hand, the fund delayed taking practical steps to fulfill its obligations. On the other hand, it was quite a closed structure and less open to cooperation with movement activists (Interview 1). On December 19, 2011, the information about the Gudiashvili Square development project prepared by the Austrian company Zechner & Zechner appeared on the internet and became the impetus for starting the new, second phase of the movement, *Strengthen Gudiashvili*.

According to the Austrian company's project, cultural heritage monuments should be replaced with new buildings. The square should have been turned into a shopping center.[39] At this stage, we can distinguish the organizer's movement strategy in two directions: on the one hand, negotiations and meetings with the ordering and performing companies, and on the other hand, further increasing the population's interest. Therefore, the tactics implemented by Tiflis Hamkari have somehow changed: the physical rescue of the buildings through permanent actions has become the primary framing. In the second stage of the protest, the movement maintained the main direction of the protest repertoire of the previous stage – a positive cultural and educational character. However, some changes could still be distinguished. For example, the repertoire acquired more protest charges than in previous years (interview 1). Furthermore, at this stage, the choice was more on spontaneous and unplanned activities. Because the actions of 2011-2012 had a permanent character, as they were held once every two weeks, the choice was made to present the square as a free space and the campaign as a free platform offered to artists.

Political changes were related to the transition to the third stage of the protest cycle, *I will wait for you in Gudiashvili Square*. After the government changed for the first time in the history of independent Georgia through elections (2012), the GD political coalition replaced Mikhael Saakashvili's government. However, the Tbilisi Mayor post and

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Development Fund", paragraph 2.3.13, accessed March 21, 2022, http://www.tdf.ge/images/kallyas_images/docs/cesdeba1.pdf).

[39] Gudiashvili Square renovation project, netgazeti.ge, December 20, 2011, accessed March 25, 2022, https://netgazeti.ge/news/12010/.

other vital positions at the local self-government level were still held by representatives of the UNM government.

The *I will wait for you in the Gudiashvili Square* campaign meant holding permanent protests on the square again. Because of the joint efforts of the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection, the organization involved in the process, and citizens, in 2013, Irao Magnat Group refused to implement the project. As the reason for terminating the contract, the Irao Magnat Group maintained that "the technical parameters agreed with the contract will no longer have government's support. The buildings around Gudiashvili Square and all real estate returned to the ownership of Tbilisi Development Fund.[40] In addition to the permanent meetings on the square, the movement's third stage was characterized by a new element – the beginning of cooperation with political parties and politicians. As a result of public meetings with the political parties participating in the elections and the Tbilisi mayoralty candidates regarding cultural heritage issues, the Tbilisi mayoralty candidates from the opposition parties signed the memorandum developed by Tiflis Hamkari." Thus, the politicians were obliged to save the square in case of victory in the local self-government elections. As the official candidate of the GD won the mayoral elections, the memorandum became the impetus for the beginning of the square restoration. After a long and detailed rehabilitation, Gudiashvili Square's restoration was finished in 2021.

Defend Vake Park – Activism

The park rehabilitation project triggered activism toward defending Vake Park (2013). According to it, the construction of a five-story hotel in the park was envisaged.[41] In this case, the investor is a local company,

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[40] კულტურა: "გუდიაშვილის სკვერის რეაბილიტაციის კონტრაქტი შეწყვეტილია" [Culture: "Gudiashvili Square Rehabilitation Contract Has Been Terminated"], April 19, 2013, accessed on February 20, 2021, https://netgazeti.ge/culture/21090/. Despite this, the government still did not rehabilitate the square.

[41] It should be noted that in this same territory from the Soviet period has been located the restaurant "Budapest." Eva Maghaldadze, "ვაკის პარკის დამცველების შუალედური

Tiflis Development. Although Vake Park has no cultural value, it remains an essential and significant recreational zone for Tbilisi's inhabitants. The announcement of a hotel construction during the presentation of the park rehabilitation project by the Tbilisi City government on October 20, 2013, caused a protest among civic activists.[42] In Vake Park, which had the status of "Recreational Zone 2," it was not allowed by law to build similar buildings. However, on November 25, 2011, the authorities changed the rules of governing and developing the Tbilisi territory, and the status of "Zone 2" was removed from Vake Park.

Soon after the information spread, a petition called *Defend Vake Park* was launched. Events of the same name were held near the City Council and Vake Park.[43] Though participants demanded a meeting with the city's acting mayor, their protest and demands were unsuccessful; as in the case of Gudiashvili's protest movement, "the government was not going to negotiate" (Interview 4). The protest was led by the association Guerrilla Gardeners, which organized a permanent camp near Vake Park. Activists were on duty in the park all day and night to prevent the investor from suddenly starting construction. The protest soon became permanent.

In 2014, civic activists tried to take the protest to court. Three lawsuits were filed in the city court, where the plaintiffs demanded the annulment of the construction permit. The City Court partially satisfied the plaintiffs' request, invalidated the construction permit, and returned the issue to the City Hall as undecided. It became known that the City Hall offered the investor a change of location, which was refused because the potential construction site was not specified.

However, later the Court of Appeal overturned the decision of the City Court, and the Supreme Court did not even admit the NGO Green

გამარჯვება" [The Middle Victory of Vake Park Defenders], *Liberali*, March 3, 2016, accessed April 11, 2021, http://liberali.ge/articles/view/21228/vakis-parkis-damtsvele bis-shualeduri-gamarjveba.

[42] Eva Maghaldadze, "შეხვედრა ვაკის პარკის რეაბილიტაციის პროექტთან დაკავშირებით" [Meeting Regarding the Vake Park Rehabilitation Project]," *Liberali*, October 20, 2013, accessed April 11, 2021, http://liberali.ge/news/view/9534/shekhv edra-vakis-parkis- reabilitatsiis-proeqttan-dakavshirebit.

[43] მოქალაქეთა პეტიცია "გადავარჩინოთ ვაკის პარკი" [Citizen's Petition: "Defend Vake Park," *Liberali*, December 24, 2019, accessed February 11, 2022, http://liberali.ge/news /view/10001/moqalaqeta-petitsia-gadavarchinot-vakis-parki.

Alternative's lawsuit. As a result, the construction permit issued in 2013 by Gigi Ugulava, the UNM Tbilisi Mayor, remained in force.[44] However, the situation changed after the GD's new mayor, Kakha Kaladze, came to power. On January 16, 2019, Kaladze said he would do everything to prevent Vake Park. Finally, due to negotiations with activists, investors, and the city government, it was agreed that no hotel or other type of building or structure would be built in Vake Park.

> "Vake Park won, and I want to congratulate you; I want to congratulate Tbilisi and the citizens of Tbilisi. Nothing will be built in Vake Park on this particular site. Thanks to all those people, those activists who have been involved and protected this particular green space since the first days." - Kakha Kaladze.[45]

No to Panorama Tbilisi! – Activism

Another movement – *No to Panorama Tbilisi!* also dealt with the city's historical and ecological issues. On March 25, 2014, the Georgian Co-investment Fund presented the half-billion-dollar investment project Panorama Tbilisi.[46] Soon, The Georgian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) stated that the mentioned project contradicts the regulations defined by the legislation and the guiding principles of the World Heritage.[47] In 2014, at

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[44] "მშენებლობის ნებართვა გვაქვს" - კომპანია ვაკის პარკში მშენებლობის გაგრძელებას გეგმავს ["We have a Construction Permit" – the Company plans to continue Construction in Vake Park], *Liberali*, January 16, 2019, accessed May 11, 2021, http://liberali.ge/ne ws/view/42510/msheneblobis-nebartva-gvaqvs--kompania-vakis-parkshi-msheneblobis -gagrdzelebas-gegmavs.

[45] კახა კალაძე: ვაკის პარკში სასტუმრო "ბუდაპეშტი" აღარ აშენდება [Kakha Kaladze: Hotel "Budapest" will no longer be built in Vake Park], Business Media, January 25, 2019, accessed April 7, 2021; https://bm.ge/ka/article/kaxa-kaladze-vakis-parkshi-sastumro-budapeshti-agar-ashendeba-/28887.

[46] პროექტ "პანორამა თბილისის" ამსახველი ვიზუალური მასალა [Visual Material Depicting the "Panorama Tbilisi" Project), *Liberali,* March 26, 2014, accessed April 16, 2022, http://liberali.ge/news/view/10562/proeqt-panorama-tbilisis-amsakhveli-vizualuri-masala.

[47] "პანორამა თბილისი" კანონმდებლობასა და მსოფლიო მემკვიდრეობის სახელმძღვანელო პრინციპებს ეწინააღმდეგება ["Panorama Tbilisi" is against the Legislation and Guiding Principles of World Heritage], April 23, 2014, accessed May 11, 2022, http://l

the meeting held in the City Hall, it was decided to change the site's status intended for the project, and instead of "Recreational Zone 3", the status of "Residential Zone 2" was assigned. As city planner David Bakradze stated, this "allowed them to build here everything they want".[48] As in both cases discussed above, there were practically no public project debates. As a result of the legislative changes made by the city government, the investor could start the construction of the project at any time, without even having a final project. On January 31, 2015, in front of the City Council, a rally was held against the still unapproved project – "No to Panorama!".[49]

Although there are some similarities in the development of previously studied projects, this case is distinguished for two reasons. Firstly, the Panorama Tbilisi is the largest project ever implemented in Tbilisi, and the planned investment of more than $500 million was unprecedentedly high for the Georgian reality. Secondly, the author and financial implementer of the project idea was the former Prime Minister, the founder of the Georgian Dream, party and an influential political figure, billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, according to whom, "if not his whim, no investor would agree to invest in this project."[50]

In September, international non-governmental organizations appealed to the Georgian government to react and stop the project.[51] In turn, the

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iberali.ge/news/view/10688/panorama-tbilisi-kanonmdeblobasa-da-msoflio-emkvidreobis-s akhelmdzghvanelo-printsipebs-etsinaaghmde.

[48] "პანორამა თბილისისთვის" საჯარო ტერიტორიის ნაწილს ლანდშაფტური ზონის სტატუსი შეეცვალა [Part of the Territory Needed for "Panorama Tbilisi" was changed to Landscape Zone Status), *Liberali*, December 26, 2014, accessed April 11, 2022, http://liberali.ge/news/view/14043/panorama-tbilisistvis-sachiro-teritoriis-natsils-landshaf turi-zonis-statusi-sheetsvala).

[49] საპროტესტო აქციის "არა პანორამას" მონაწილეები სოლოლაკის ქედისკენ მსვლელობას მართავენ [Participants of the Protest Action "No Panorama" are marching towards the Sololak Ridge], *Liberali*, January 31, 2015, accessed April 8, 2021, http://liberali.g e/news/view/14431/saprotesto-aqtsiis-ara-panoramas-monatsileebi-sololakis-qedisken-ms lelobas-martaven.

[50] Ivanishvili interview with *Guria News Agency*, July 28, 2015, accessed April 14, 2021, https://gurianews.com/?p=730368.

[51] საერთაშორისო NGO-ები პანორამაზე: ისტორიული დედაქალაქი, ამჟამად საფრთხის ქვეშაა [International NGOs on the Panorama: the Historic Capital, now under Threat],

NGOs involved in the protest filed a lawsuit against the construction in the Panorama landscape area. However, the court date was assigned so late that the lawsuit could no longer be taken into consideration due to the statute of limitations. In the end, the actions of the *No Panorama Tbilisi!* movement turned out to be fruitless, and the government was able to implement the planned project.[52]

Framing and Tactics

As it was noted above, appropriate strategy plays a significant role in the success of any social movement. Proper framing and tactics as the components of a long-term strategy in these three cases have not been uniform, nor has it always been consistent.

The *Save Gudiashvili Square* movement differed from other previous protests developed in Georgia. It was a movement without protest, without any rallies or political demands.[53] Despite its historical significance, the information about Gudiashvili Square among Tbilisi citizens was so scarce that, as one of the protest organizers noted:

> "People were asking us where Gudiashvili square is. How do we come to the action? "We explained that near the Purpuri Cafe. People knew where Cafe Purpuri was, but they did not know that it was on Gudiashvili square" (Interview 3).

Accordingly, the proper framing process has a significant influence. Firstly, the main direction of the framing process was to inform the population about the historical and cultural significance of Gudiashvili Square. For this purpose, various activities were held on the square, the

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Liberali, September 21, 2019, accessed April 18, 2021 http://liberali.ge/news/view/18371/s aertashoriso-NGOebi-panoramaze-istoriuli-dedaqalaqi-amzhamad-safrtkhis-qveshaa.

[52] "პანორამა თბილისის" საქმეზე საია-ს სარჩელი სასამართლომ ხანდაზმულობის მოტივით არ განიხილა [In the "Panorama Tbilisi" case, GYLA's claim was not considered by the court on the grounds of statute of limitations), *Liberali,* June 22, 2017, accessed January 11, 2022, http://liberali.ge/news/view/30043/panorama-tbilisis-saq meze-saias-sarcheli-sasamartlom-khandazmulobis-motivit-ar-ganikhila.

[53] Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, *Movimenti senza protesta? L'ambientalismo in Italia* [Movements without Protest: Ecology in Italia] (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004).

main goal of which was to bring its historical significance to the public. At the same time, providing information to citizens about these activities has acquired great importance. Social networks were selected as the primary means for this. A Facebook page was created for the campaign, where all available information was gathered. Also, the date and topic of the campaign were announced on this page. As a result of correct framing and consistent, uniquely positive information campaigns through TV and social networks, citizens' involvement in protest was quite active. It was not a protest with thousands of protesters. According to organizers, no one expected a cultural heritage theme to bring tens of thousands of people to the streets (Interviews 3, 1). Still, it maintained diversity by involving people of different social strata, ages, professions, genders, religions, and ethnicities.

The framing process in the *Defend Vake Park* case required the least effort. Vake Park, located in one of the most elitist areas of the city, was the only well-equipped park in Tbilisi that is not distinguished by the abundance of green spaces. In addition to the high awareness of this park among the city population, Tbilisi citizens have particular emotional sentiments toward Vake Park that date back to their childhood (Interviews 31, 5). Accordingly, in this case, the activists needed much less effort to inform the population adequately. Consequently, the attitude was that "Vake Park was saved by being Vake Park" (Interview 30) does not seem ungrounded.

In the case of *No to Panorama!* the framing process was different. Like the Gudiashvili Square movement, the population needed more information about the significance of that part of the old city where the Panorama project was planned to be built. However, unlike Gudiashvili, the number of citizens involved in the protest was relatively small. Several factors could have caused this. On the one hand, propaganda by the government to portray the benefits of construction was very active whereas on the other hand, there was a need for precise framing to raise public awareness and engagement. The propaganda of the goodness of construction was much more active by authorities than the "small education-oriented activities" made by the activists (Interview 23). Even the population that would potentially suffer due to the project implementation – was not intensively involved in the protest (Interviews 9, 32). At the same time, unlike the Gudiashvili Square case, nothing would be destroyed,

new facilities would build, significant investments would be made, and jobs would be created due to this project implementation. All these factors played an important role.

Consequently, the part of the population for which the re-modelling of the city is a source of benefit and economic prosperity has been overrun.[54] One of the manifestations of the lack of a *No to Panorama Tbilisi!* proper framing is that it was built more on an emotional charge than on pre-written, consistent activities because "something caused anger, and then we reacted angrily" (Interview 22).

The permanent rallies (held every two weeks) throughout the protest cycle were uniquely cultural, educational, and cognitive. Despite some differences of opinion around the protest repertoire, organizers univocally rejected all types of disruptive actions previously commonly used in Georgia: demonstrations, protest marches, roadblocks, and so on. They chose to present the square as a free space and the protest campaign as a free platform offered by the artists. As one of the organizers noted:

> "A constant component of the rallies was a concert. We organized live music concerts at every rally. The musicians participated in the activities, and the organizers paid only for the equipment. A separate place was set aside for children to learn sculpting and painting, familiarize themselves with Tbilisi's history and Gudiashvili Square, and exhibit their works. Materials needed for this activity: pencils, clay, papers, etc., were bought by us. Thus, we were reminding the city authorities that the city belongs first and foremost to the citizens" (Interview 1).

The protest repertoire included activities such as, for example, revitalizing empty houses through video projections, concerts, conducting a social campaign, meeting with interested parties, media communication, and preparing announcements and press releases. Thus, during the campaign, Gudiashvili Square became a space where anyone could express themselves in the way they wanted.

The protest repertoire in Vake Park, at the initial stage, was of a more traditional, disruptive type – rallies, pickets, setting up tents, and "breaking down the fences" (Interview 31). However, the form of activism changed.

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54 Massimiliano Andretta, Gianni Piazza and Anna Subirats, "Urban Dynamics and Social Movements," in *Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, eds. Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 200-215.

As in the case of Gudiashvili Square, the protest took a creative form: theatrical performances were staged, exhibitions and various creative lessons were held – drawing, the printing of stencils, open lectures, and seminars. According to the activists themselves, the transformation of the repertoire was influenced by the successful experience of an entirely positive type of activism repertoire in the *Save Gudiashvili Square* case "because people were tired of swearing and all this negative repertoire and this would not work anymore" (Interview 5). Thus, it became activism with a positive repertoire of "enthusiast people who wanted to change" (Interview 10). Such activities allowed citizens to express their attitudes and feelings towards the city because, as Castells notes, "people tend to consider cities, space, and urban functions and forms as the mainspring for their feelings."[55]

At the same time, the tactic of the protest organizers toward involving Vake residents in the protest was very active. Involvement included participation in concerts and other cultural events and support in critical moments. As one of the organizers noted:

> "For people in their 60s and 70s who did not care about social media, we made a network connection to Twitter. When we tweeted in case of danger, a message was sent to everyone connected to this network. Therefore, receiving an SMS means there is an alarm in Vake Park. If you are nearby and can, you should come. Thus, these people were included in the movement with this method. They realized we were there to protect their territory when they arrived and expressed their desire to help us. It was crucial to see someone willing to be there for twenty-four hours a day and devote time and energy from their life to protecting this place" (Interview 5).

In contrast to the above-mentioned cases, the message box of the actions against the Panorama construction was unequivocally negative. Interestingly, unlike the other two cases, the name of the activism itself was built not on the positive - defend or save something, but on neglecting to do something. It is true that "the repertoire of collective action will differ in different contexts."[56]

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[55] Manuela Castels, *The city and the grassroots: A cross-cultural theory of urban social movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[56] Kerstin Jacobsson, "Introduction: The Development of Urban Movements in Central and Eastern Europe," in *Urban grassroots movement in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Kerstin Jacobsson (New York: Routledge, 2016), 7.

In Panorama case existing inter-group differences influenced the strategy of activism. because "when there is a misunderstanding inside, one has to quarrel, the other to sing, the third to protect the pensioners, the fourth – Marx, nothing comes out" (Interview 22). Accordingly, the entirely negative repertoire of this movement was aimed at the complete political and moral discrediting of the supporters of the project and authority in general, as "it was ordinary bullying with attaching labels such as homeland seller, sold to the government, enslaved, and so on" (Interview 6).

Protest Organizing Structures: Monolithic or Split?

In the process of civil activism, the composition of the movement organizing structure often dramatically influences the determination of the strategy. The intra-group and inter-group connections of the selected movements' organizing structure allow us quite exciting observations. The Gudiashvili Square defending movement was organized by a single organization, Tiflis Hamkari, which maintained intra-group unity throughout the campaign. Also, the single organization "Guerilla Gardeners" initiated the Vake Park movement.

Ernesto Castaneda's advice not to describe movements as clearly cohesive and coherent is perhaps most notable in the case of *No to Panorama*![57] According to one of the protest organizers,

> "Politically and financially most powerful person in Georgian politics was the author and developer of the Panorama project idea. Only Guerilla gardening and Tiflis Hamkari could not defeat him. So, the great war was about to begin" (Interview 3).

As a result, the driving force of the process became *Ertad* (translated as "together") – the alliance of twenty-seven civil society organizations with different visions, ideological and political beliefs, and experiences. Despite this sharp inter-group differences, "we considered *Panorama* a topic we could turn a blind eye to and unite" (Interview 19).

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[57] Ernesto Castaneda, "Social Movements, 1768-2018," in *Analyzing Contemporary Social Movements*, eds. Charles Tilly, Ernesto Castaneda, and Lesley J. Woods (New York: Routledge, 2020), 167-177.

Nevertheless, the organizers' efforts to unite left-wing and right-wing activists failed. All the groups involved perceived the protest from their ideological perspective, reflected in the slogans and symbols. Active left-wing groups' appearance at protest meetings with red flags and signs became the subject of sharp inter-group confrontation. According to one of the organizers, "we were protesting urban issues, and there was no place for Marx's ideas or demonstrating someone's ideological platforms" (Interview10).

On the other hand, left-wing groups identified some activists as neoliberal forces who "everyone knows what they were fighting for – only buildings and landscapes and not surviving ordinary people" (Interview 30). Finally, the method used in the case of *No to Panorama!* - to unite people despite their political and ideological beliefs – did not work. So "this union was created and completed in *Panorama*" (Interview 22).

Although often the involvement of politicians and political parties in urban activism is considered positive, activists' attitude toward participation in the protest movement has not been uniform in the cases studied.[58] On the one hand, the people who planned and led the activism process realized that without the involvement of politicians, the movement's success was impossible. For example, in the case of *Panorama*,

> "There was a significant phobia – the fear of politicians. At first, I was like that, but after we met politicians, a few people and I would assume that we should call no one opposition party but any politician who wants to" (Interview 22).

In contrast to the organizers of the movements, in all three cases studied, the involvement of politicians in the protest campaign among ordinary activists was entirely unacceptable. The given attitude from the activists' side is not surprising, as the rate of trust in the Georgian party spectrum among the population of Georgia was very low – eight percent.[59] Because "there was no trust in politicians" (Interview 9), activists realized that the government could easily use the involvement of opposition political forces to discredit the movement and marginalize its members. It was an

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[58] Massimiliano Andretta, Gianni Piazza and Anna Subirats, "Urban Dynamics and Social Movements," 200-215.

[59] Caucasus Barometer 2015 Georgia, accessed January 11, 2022, https://caucasusbaro meter.org/en/cb2015ge/TRUPPS/.

objective point: the politicians who wanted to be involved in *Vake Park* and *Panorama* movements were "mostly UNM members and their remnants" (Interview 10). The only accepted way for politicians to be involved was "that they should take off a politician's hat and close the hat of a Tbilisian" (Interview 11).

Despite the above-mentioned facts, cooperation between politicians and activists still took place. In the case of *No to Panorama Tbilisi!* civil activists were receiving information about the discussion of the issue in the City Assembly from its opposition political party members. By obtaining the so-called permits, they could attend the gatherings while discussing the case and had very close coordination. The cooperation between the City Assembly opposition party members and the representatives of the society was very institutionalized in this process (Interview 33). As noted, institutional political actors are ready to help activists when they benefit from it. Gudiashvili Square's case is interesting in this regard.[60] Gudiashvili Square protest leaders had determined this moment in time, and before the Tbilisi Mayor elections in 2014, they changed their past four-five years-approach of non-cooperation with politicians. Publicly, in Gudiashvili Square, they signed memorandums with several Tbilisi Mayoral opposition candidates. Through this act, they pledged to meet the activists' demands in case of winning elections. Due to this step toward cooperation, the organizers of the activism faced a significant challenge because they were "sharply criticized by the young people who were supporting the movement" (Interview 3). Nevertheless, none of the organizers perceived this step toward cooperation with politicians as a mistake.

Activist Perceptions about the Results of the Movements

First, let us determine the results of these movements according to the involved persons. Suppose we measure it according to the achievement

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[60] Melinda Kane, "Social Movement Policy Success: Decriminalizing State Sodomy Laws, 1969-1998," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (2003): 313-334, doi: 10.17813/maiq.8.3.q66046w34wu58866; Paul Almeida and Linda Brewster Stearns, "Political Opportunities and Local Grassroots Environmental Movements: The Case of Minamata," *Social Problems* 45, no. 1 (1998): 37-60, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3097142.

of the goals stated by the activists. In that case, we can attribute the movement *Saving Gudiashvili Square* to the successful movement called "a great victory" (Interviews 1, 17). The campaign achieved the main goal: the square was preserved mainly in its authenticity and was wholly rehabilitated. At the same time, it also had a long-term result: "the protection of cultural heritage and the urban issue in general" (Interview 3) has become a political agenda item and significantly impacted the update of the re-urbanization theme among citizens. Unlike Gudiashvili's activism, the results of the *Vake Park* movement are vague. On the one hand, according to some activists, it was successful; as long as whomever comes to power, everyone should know - no one will be able to do what the previous government intended to do (Interview 5).

On the other hand, some of the activists are more skeptical – nobody can guarantee what could happen in the case of a new government accessing to power. The activists have lost in the legal dispute with the investor, and everything will depend on the "goodwill of new city authorities in the future" (Interview 22). Assessing the *No to Panorama Tbilisi!* case is also interesting: most movement organizers and ordinary activists perceive the movement as a defeated movement; even more, "it was a failure of environmental campaigns, in general" (Interview 25), and "authority repulsed us very easily – simply, ironed us and evaporated from sight" (Interview 22).

Nevertheless, let us consider the social movement as a resource for social change, giving the impetus to the emergence of public debate. There may be no entirely failed movements. The defeated movement can also contribute to the emergence of new movements. They could also constitute an example for future movements, and through them, ideas, coalitions, strategies, networks, and experiences are spread.[61] In this regard, the *Panorama* case is exciting. While it was a factually unsuccessful case, the participants' assessment of the results of *Panorama*-related activism is different. Some involved actors think that it is possible to

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[61] Raza Saeed, "Conceptualizing Success and Failure for Social Movements," *Law, Social Justice & Global Development Journal (LGD)*, no. 2 (2009). http://www.go.warwick.ac.uk/elj/lgd/2009_2/saeed; Michael Brown, "Measuring the Success of Social Movement Organizations," *Annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association* (Chicago, 2005), http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p85636_index.html April 1, 2008.

distinguish several positive outcomes, among which are the bias and shortcomings of the court, rising awareness of the media and citizens. Also, the unification of organizations with different political and ideological beliefs, which is rare in Georgia's civic activism scene. According to some respondents, the actual result is the discreditation of the government. It should be noted that the members of the opposite political parties mainly discuss the positive results of government political defamation due to the *Panorama* movement:

> "We showed the citizens what Ivanishvili was doing and how he did it as a politician. The damaged reputation of a person for whom public reputation should be necessary is not of minor importance" (Interview 5).

The actors' perceptions differ regarding the appropriateness of protest tactics and repertoire. According to some of the activists, the tactic of focusing mainly on street protests was wrong:

> "They [the organizers of *Panorama* movement] needed to be oriented correctly. Those focused on taking rallies in the streets. They do not spend time sitting down and searching within the law, writing, and filing timely claims. Accordingly, it was too late to go against the administrative laws already passed." (Interview 25).

In selecting the protest repertoire, on the one hand, the unity/difference of the organizing group, and on the other hand, the factor of the investor played an important role. In the cases of the Gudiashvili Square and Vake Park movements, the protest had a single-leader organization, and there was no petty narrow-minded confrontation or differing views toward using positive repertoire. Unlike them, in the result of intra- and inter-group differences, in the *Panorama* Tbilisi protest, "instead of having a positive energy, here (in Panorama Tbilisi), we would go and hit each other" (Interview 22). However, according to the protest organizers, the repertoire in the case of *Panorama* could not be similar to that of Vake Park or Gudiashvili Square. If, in these cases, an "ordinary" investor stood on the opposite side of the activists, in the case of Panorama, "we were dealing with such a strong enemy that we could not do anything with dancing or singing" (Interview 2).

Speaking of the reasons contributing to the results of all three movements, almost all actors indicated the role of the political situation in the country (see Table 1). In the case of Gudiashvili Square and Vaki Park, the change of government contributed to the success of the movement. *Panorama* "happened at a politically unprofitable time" (Interview 5). Nevertheless, all interviewed activists noted that, unlike the Gudiashvili Square and Vake Park movements, in the case of *Panorama*, the movement's organizers needed a clearer and better-defined action strategy:

> "Our biggest shortcoming was that we did not have any pre-written strategy. We were reactive and acted depending on what surprises the government offered us. All our actions were characterized by emotions and spontaneity" (Interview 12).

Conclusion

The main goal of the research was to analyze the main strategies of the selected movements and highlight how the movement strategies influence the outcome. Based on the analyzed data, we fond out that all three selected movements: *Save Gudiashvili Square, Defend Vake Park and No to Panorama Tbilisi!* developed over the same period of time, that is 2009-2016. The general actors – activism organizing NGOs and stakeholders were the same, but the action strategy and repertoire were different.

Analyzing these cases, the starting point is the actors' choice of how to achieve a civic goal by means of collaboration of advocacy groups and resistance or confrontation. Also, we have to consider the fact that these social movements occurred in environments where the Soviet and post-Soviet experience determines political culture, and cultural heritage or ecological issues are on the very bottom of the social life.

The essential factor is the constitution of the social movements. Thus, when movement members lack shared identity, values, and ideologies, being homogenous is considered more effective than being heterogeneous. Homogeneous groups easily define strategy, and a variety of followers cannot correct it, they manage to set long-term goals and collaborate with the decision-makers. The level of social capital is another additional variable influencing this process. *Save Gudiashvili*

Square and *Defend Vake Park* are the best examples of the above-described case, while the third was a controversial case: heterogeneous groups equipped with their controversial strategies attempted to be the leader of the movement; time and time again in the process they corrected the concerned tactic; they had different vision on the cooperation of the government; part of them wanted to use the best practice of Gudiashvili case, while the others thought that confrontation is the best way. The addressee of the negative messages were decision makers as politicians as well as persons. This fact determines personal unacceptability and decreases the chance of negotiation.

Development in more or less the same period is not the precondition for the positive outcome of the movements. Nevertheless, the unity of the internal and external factors was the primary determinant. The cases of *Save Gudiashvili Square* and *Defend Vake Park* were supported by the UNM government. Usually, resistance movements have more chance of positive influence if the government changes, especially if the opposition parties come to power. However, if the ruling party supports the initiatives, and if this ruling party has solid trust among the citizens, the chances of the movement's success are limited, as happened in *Panorama Tbilisi* case.

Also, correctly guided strategy plays an essential role in the results of the discussed movements. The best example to illustrate this point is the case of the *Save Gudiashvili Square* movement. Although the changes implemented in the political system significantly contributed to the movement's success, if it were not for the movement organizers' strategy, calculated from a long-term perspective, including changing tactics, suitable framing, and innovative protest repertoire, the movement would have hardly achieved its goal. As one of the protest organizers noted:

> "If we had not used the government change by using a properly planned strategy – today there would probably be a shopping center or some other modern building on Gudiashvili Square" (Interview 1).

A properly conducted strategy also played an essential role in the case of the *Defend Vake Park* movement. However, like the Gudiashvili square, this movement coincided with a politically favorable regime, and the organizers could use it more or less successfully.

The case of *No to Panorama Tbilisi!* is entirely different. On the one hand, the movement started and developed at a politically unprofitable time, when the newly arrived government was at the zenith of popularity. On the other hand, the disunity of the movement's organizers, the lack of a pre-calculated strategy, and the resulting inconsistent and largely spontaneous actions led to its failure.

Table 1

Main features of activist movements

Movements	Activism period	External factors	Internal factors
Save Gudiashvili Square	2009-2015	Favorable political context: Changing UNM Tbilisi Mayor and local government with GD Mayor and local government (2014)	Single organizing structure, positive repertoire, well-defined strategy, and proper use of political opportunities
Defend Vake Park	2013-2019	Favorable political context: Changing UNM Tbilisi Mayor and local government with GD Mayor and government (2014)	Single organizing structure, positive repertoire, well-defined strategy, and proper use of political opportunities
No to Panorama Tbilisi!	2014-2016	Unfavorable political context: a newcomer to power GD City Mayor and local government with quite a high level of citizen truth.	Organizing structure united multiple NGOs with different political ideologies, values, and visions, Sharp inter-group controversy's disruptive repertoire.

Table 2

Interview

Anonymized interlocutor	Reference
Civic activists, organizers	Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 17, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 34
"Rank-and-file" civic activists	Interviews 5, 9, 11, 15, 19, 20, 21, 24, 28, 29, 31, 32.
Political party members, deputies of Tbilisi City Council	Interviews 6, 13, 14, 16, 18, 33.
Investor	Interview 8