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**Europeanization as a source of frame resonance. The case
of Georgia's Shame movement and 2019 Gavrilov's night
protests**

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Россия будет свободной.

ABSTRACT

In 2017, 74% of young Georgians supported European integration; additionally, only 1% of them reported participating in a political protest or demonstration, echoing the Georgian scholars' argument about the low level of youth political activism in this country (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 69, p. 55; Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129). In 2019, the Shame movement formed by young people previously not involved in any political group organized the 94 days long protest known as Gavrilov night. Although it primarily did not concern a question of Georgia-EU relations, it employed various references to Europe and these relations (Sharashenidze, 2019; Kincha, 2020; OC Media, 2019b; RFE/RL's Georgian Service, 2019). The present research investigates the link between youth collective action and Europeanization in Georgia, taking the Shame movement and their 2019 protest as a case study. Based on a constructivist approach to Europeanization and Snow and Benford's Frame theory, it conceptualizes this link as a frame resonance. It centrally asks how Europeanization can contribute to the resonance of collective action frames developed by a youth social movement. The data utilized to address the research question was collected through interviews with two groups of respondents: a social movement entrepreneur (a leader of the 2019 Gavrilov night protest and Shame's founder) and young Georgian protest participants. Through Theoretical Thematic analysis, Shame's framing processes during the 2019 protests were analyzed and their collective action frames extracted. Through a combination of inductive and deductive Thematic analysis, six narratives on the Europeanization of the latter group were established. The final analysis conducted according to six indicators of frame resonance revealed that the most significant number of conjunctions (five and four, respectively) between the protesters' narratives and Shame's collective action frames was evoked by the narrative on obstacles to Europeanization and Existential threat.

Regarding the Europeanization's contribution to framing processes, the analysis revealed that during the 2019 protest, Europeanization, as constructed by the young Georgia's protesters, could contribute the most to the resonance of Shame's prognostic framing, represented by its solutions, tactics, and understanding of constraints. In this case, resonance was designated by four indicators out of six: frame consistency, empirical credibility, centrality, and narrative fidelity. The resonance between the young protesters' narratives on Europeanization and Shame's diagnostic frames was designated by two indicators of empirical credibility and narrative fidelity and one indicator (credibility of the frame articulators) for their motivational frames.

Keywords: social movement, frame resonance, Europeanization, Shame movement, 2019 Gavrilov protest, Georgia

ABSTRAKT

W 2017 r. 74% młodych Gruzinów poparło integrację europejską; dodatkowo tylko 1% z nich zgłosiło udział w proteście lub demonstracji politycznej, powtarzając argument gruzińskich uczonych o niskim poziomie aktywności politycznej młodzieży w tym kraju (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, s. 69, s. 55; Kakhishvili i Gogava, 2016, s. 129). W 2019 r. ruch wstyd utworzony przez młodych ludzi, którzy wcześniej nie byli zaangażowani w żadną istniejącą grupę polityczną, zorganizował 94-dniowy protest, znany jako noc Gawriłowa. Chociaż nie dotyczył przede wszystkim kwestii stosunków Gruzja-UE, zawierał różne odniesienia do Europy i tych relacji (Sharashenidze, 2019; Kincha, 2020; OC Media, 2019b; RFE/RL's Georgian Service, 2019). Niniejsze badanie ma na celu zbadanie związku między zbiorowym działaniem młodzieży a europeizacją w Gruzji, biorąc za studium przypadku ruch Wstyd i ich protest z 2019 r. Opierając się na konstruktywistycznym podejściu do europeizacji i teorii ramy Snowa i Benforda, konceptualizuje to połączenie jako rezonans ramy. Głównym pytaniem jest, w jaki sposób europeizacja może przyczynić się do rezonansu ram zbiorowego działania, opracowanych przez młodzieżowy ruch społeczny. Dane wykorzystane do odpowiedzi na pytanie badawcze zostały zebrane podczas wywiadów z dwoma grupami respondentów: przedsiębiorcą ruchu społecznego (lider nocnego protestu Gawriłowa w 2019 r. i założycielem Wstydu) oraz młodymi gruzińskimi uczestnikami protestu. W ramach Teoretycznej analizy tematycznej przeanalizowano procesy ramowe wstydu podczas protestów w 2019 r. i wyodrębniono ich ramy zbiorowego działania. Poprzez połączenie indukcyjnej i dedukcyjnej analizy tematycznej powstało 6 narracji na temat europeizacji tej drugiej grupy. Ostateczna analiza przeprowadzona według 6 wskaźników rezonansu ramowego wykazała, że największą liczbę spójników (odpowiednio 5 i 4) między narracją protestujących a ramami zbiorowego działania Wstydu wywoływała narracja o przeszkodach europeizacji i zagrożeniu egzystencjalnym. Jeśli chodzi o wkład europeizacji w procesy ramowe, analiza wykazała, że podczas protestu w 2019 r. europeizacja konstruowana przez młodych protestujących z Gruzji może w największym stopniu przyczynić się do oddźwięku prognostycznego ramowania Wstydu, reprezentowanego przez jego rozwiązania, taktykę i rozumienie ograniczeń. W tym przypadku rezonans został wyznaczony przez cztery wskaźniki z sześciu: spójność ramową, wiarygodność empiryczną, centralność i wierność narracji. Rezonans między narracją młodych protestujących na temat europeizacji a ramami diagnostycznymi Wstydu wyznaczono przez dwa wskaźniki wiarygodności empirycznej i wierności narracji oraz przez wskaźnik wiarygodności artykulatorów ram dla ich ram motywacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: ruch społeczny, rezonans ramy, europeizacja, Shame movement, protest Gawriłowa 2019, Gruzja

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ABBREVIATIONS

EU – European Union

EaP – Eastern Partnership

ENP – European Neighborhood policy

GD – Georgian Dream (a political party)

UNM – United National Movement (an oppositional political party)

IDP – Internally Displace person

INTRODUCTION

The research problem this thesis tries to address is to generate academic knowledge on the contribution of Europeanization to protest mobilization of young people beyond the immediate borders of the European Union. Thus, this thesis aims to explore the link between Europeanization and collective action. Drawing on Frame theory, it conceptualizes this link as frame resonance. According to Snow and Benford (1988), the concept of resonance explains mobilizing potency of a frame generated and employed by a social movement. This thesis views a social movement as a signifier of meaning; collective actions frames, produced by the movement, serve as an indicator of a successful assembling of meaning (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 136). The research question centrally asks how Europeanization can contribute to the resonance of collective action frames developed by a social movement.

I chose the case of Georgia's Shame movement ("Sirtskhvia") that organized the anti-occupational protests in Tbilisi in June-September 2019. The protest erupted on June 20th, 2019, after Sergey Gavrilov, a Russian MP from the Russian Communist Party, delivered a speech in Russian from a chairperson's tribune and occupied a chairperson's chair for the rest of the meeting during the 26th General Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy in Tbilisi (OC Media, 2019a). Georgia sets a compelling context for the case. 74% of young people living in Georgia supported European integration, while 80% of those from the capital city of Tbilisi shared this point of view in 2016 (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 69). A low level of youth political activism characterizes the country (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129; Kobakhidze, 2018). In 2016, only 6% of young Georgians reported participating in a public meeting, including only 1% participating in a political demonstration (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 55). Young people not involved in any political group formed the Shame movement; it organized the 94 days long protest that addressed an issue indirectly connected to Georgia's European aspirations. And yet it referenced to the EU and Europe, for instance, in the form of an EU flag or thematic hand-made banners (Sharashenidze, 2019; Kincha, 2020; OC Media, 2019b; RFE/RL's Georgian Service, 2019). According to the typology of social movement studies by Snow and Trom (2002, p. 158), Shame thus is a normal, representative case study as it can reflect the more significant social movement within society under investigation. Narratives about Europe are deeply embedded into Georgian national identity; this Georgian elite and popular political culture phenomenon are known to scholars as Georgian Europeanness (Nodia, 1998; 2016; 2018; Jones & Kakhishvili, 2016; Minesashvili, 2013; Jones, 2015). However, a mismatch between European and Georgian political elites' perception of the role of Eastern Partnership in the relations between the EU and its eastern neighbours characterizes current Georgia-EU relations (Kakabadze 2020, p. 13).

To investigate frame resonance, one should study frames' properties and explore "the broader cultural environment in which collective action framing takes place" (McCammon, 2013). As this thesis extends a concept of Europeanization to New Social Movement Theory, I refer to Europeanization as this "broader cultural environment". Thus, the first research sub-question was: what are the narratives of Georgian young protest participants towards components of Europeanization? This thesis applies a constructivist agenda to the study of Europeanization. Social constructivism concerns that the social realities are constructed and imaginary; it is suited for an analysis of subjective processes and such social ontologies as values, norms, identities, ideas (Bache et al., 2020, p. 50; Delanty & Rumford 2005, pp. 13-14, p. 17; Christiansen et al. 1999, p. 530, 538; Taras 2009, p. 7). The second research sub-question is: which collective action frames did Shame employ during the 2019 protests? Thus, to address the main research question, I investigated the narratives on Europeanization shared by Georgian young protest participants and Shame's framing processes of the 2019 protests. The potential contributions of this thesis are twofold. Firstly, it addresses a gap in English language literature research on the narratives of Georgian youth on Europeanization revealed when reviewing the literature on the topic. Secondly, this thesis helps create academic knowledge on an understudied phenomenon of political youth

activism in Georgia and the implication that Europeanization can have on it (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129).

The first chapter centres on Framing Theory, conceptualizing frame resonance and Europeanization. The following section describes the methodology. Chapter 3 focuses on the implications of the cultural tool kit concept, essential for constructing collective action frames, in Georgia's case. Chapter 4 delves into the relevance of the study of youth social movements in Georgia. Chapter 5 discusses the narratives on Europeanization by young Georgian protesters, while chapter 6 investigates Shame's framing processes, followed by a discussion about Europeanization as a source of frame resonance in Chapter 7. A conclusion and appendices follow this analytical part.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. The study of social movement and collective action

Tilly (1978, p.7) defined collective action as actions in pursuit of common interests. Collective action is deeply linked to social movements (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 19). Collective action by social movements can be explained with political opportunities structure on a macro level, resources and networks on a meso- (or organizational) level, with social construction processes on a micro-level (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 2). The latter explains the occurrence of protests. It is difficult to achieve a standard definition of the term “social movement” due to the diversity of approaches. Social movement scholarship has embraced Marxist, functionalist, structuralist, and constructivist approaches to the subject (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 2-17). This thesis draws upon a new social movement scholarship that considers a cognitive dimension of collective action. It appeared as a response to the social movement of the 1960-s whose emphasis was on identity, cultural, and moral questions that then-dominating theories, such as political process theory, failed to address (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 2-18; Williams, 2008, pp. 91-92). In general terms, it can be defined as a kind of collective actor; its goal is to achieve a change within a society or to resist such a change primarily through the means of public and collective protest that helps them to get seen and heard "beyond its own ranks" (Rucht, 2020).

1.2. Framing theory

Various disciplines, such as psychology, communication and media, political science, and sociology, frequently employ the concept of the frame (Snow & Benford, 2000). Scholarship on framing processes in relation to social movements have been developing since the 1980-s when three core conceptual articles on the topic related to the names of Snow and Benford were published (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford 1988; 1992). As for most of the studies of framing processes on sociology, Goffman (1986), who saw a frame as a "schema of interpretation", influenced their frame definition. It allows individuals to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" phenomena within their living space and the world as a whole (Goffman, 1986; Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). David A. Snow and William A. Gamson are usually associated with a study of frame perspective in relation to social movements (Gamson, 1992; Gamson & Meyer, 1996; Johnston 1995, pp. 217-218; Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 3). This thesis takes the former's approach that focuses on the strategic framing activities of social movements. According to Snow & Benford (1992, p. 136), social movements are "signifying agents" that conduct “meaning-work”. This work is “a struggle for the production of ideas of meaning” and their maintenance along with the state, media and countermovements. This thesis uses a conceptualization of this signifying work as framing. The task of framing is to get individuals “convinced that an injustice has occurred, persuaded that collective action is called for, and motivated to act if a social movement is to occur” (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 2). It has to focus on what is relevant for a participant to achieve depreciation of countermovement or opposing frames (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 3).

Snow and Benford (1992) refer to the products of framing activity as to collective action frames. Collective action frames are “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimize the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). They assign meaning to and interpret the events and occurrences, making one set of meaning more visible and relevant in a current situation by linking different parts of the scene (Snow, 2008, p. 384). By producing collective action frames, social movement activists aim to “punctuate or single out existing social conditions or an aspect of life and to define it as unjust, intolerable, and deserving of collective action” (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 137). In other words, collective action frames simplify the aspects of the outside world and frame grievances to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to gather bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists

“to encourage protest” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198; 2000, p. 614; Noakes and Johnston, 2005, p. 3; Tarrow, 2011, p. 144).

1.3. Construction of collective action frames

Noakes and Johnston (2005, pp. 7-8) argue that the construction of collective action frames involves framing strategy and framing content. The strategic construction of the frames combines the old and existing ideas while emphasizing specific issues, ideas, or beliefs. It tends to develop after the initial start of the movement. The first frames appear in the street as the protest mobilizes; thus, the initial framing is less attentive and self-aware. Activists of social movement organizations engaged in framing processes are usually referred to as "social movement entrepreneurs". Those are people who indicate strategic initiative in raising their voice regarding an issue or a cause, promoting their message, and pursuing a recruitment task. Their role in the framing process is vital if we build our logic on the assumption that the construction of the frames can be explained by investigating their purposeful creators. In the course of a protest, social movement entrepreneurs consciously produce collective action frames “in response to the styles, forms, and normative codes of the target audience” (Kubal, 1998, cited in Noakes & Johnston, 2005, pp. 7-8). They aim to mobilize people to engage in action and communicate their frames to current and potential constituents.

Framing strategy

Social movement entrepreneurs aim to reach consensus and action mobilization that are essential for participant mobilization campaigns. It can be done by pursuing core framing tasks (Klandermans, 1984, cited in Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 199). They include diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 199). Snow and Benford (1988, p. 199) argue that “the variation in the success of participant mobilization, both within and across movements, depends upon the degree to which these three tasks are attended to”. In other words, mobilization effort depends on how these framing tasks are developed and interconnected.

The diagnostic element refers to identifying an issue and the attribution of blame or causality (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 200). In other words, it indicates who is responsible for a social problem. It is a selective process; the problem that fits the chosen interpretation of reality tends to take over other potential sources of protest and mobilization that do not match one (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 75-76). Issue identification is a contentious process. It implies identifying actors who are entitled to speak up about a particular issue and impose and promote its interpretation and opinion.

The prognostic element “suggests solutions to the problem”, “identify strategies, tactics, and targets”, and tends to correspond with a diagnostic framing in the sense that the identification of specific issues limits possible acceptable explanations (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 201; 2000, p. 617). Social movements produce frames against the background of counter framing by their opponents and their implications. Counterframing considers the critics of logic and suggested solutions to a problem or a cause by social movement’s opponents. Therefore, “opposing framing activity can affect a movement's framings... by putting movement activists on the defensive, at least temporarily, and... by frequently forcing it to develop and elaborate prognoses more clearly than otherwise might have been the case” (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 617).

Motivation framing provides a "rationale for action" (Snow & Benford, 1988, pp. 201-202). In other words, if diagnosis and prognosis stood for consensus mobilization, it would not mean that consensus over issues and their solutions will lead to “corrective action”. Action mobilization is a condition for this, and action mobilization does not emerge from consensus. Motivational framing heavily generates incentives and motivation for action, “links the individual sphere with that of collective experience,” and relies on a symbolic elaboration (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 77-

78). It contributes to a purpose of an action, makes its goals legitimate and attainable, making the so far hidden outcomes worthy of the costs of the action.

Framing content

“Cultural fabrics” constructs collective action frames (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 7). The very process of people’s issues creation (frame diagnosis) stems from persistent “symbolic and cultural conflict between different actors” (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 65-66). For a study of framing processes by a social movement, this thesis uses Swidler’s interpretation of culture as “a tool kit” that is commonly employed in studies of framing process by social movements (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 2000; Della Porta & Diani, 2006). According to Swidler (1986, p. 273), cultural “tool kit” consists of components, such as symbols, habits, skills, stories, styles, rituals, and worldviews, that are means of solving a range of problems, particularly for construction and assembling of strategies of action. Institutional context is an essential part of framing content (Williams, 2008, p. 97). Institutional context is “conventionally thought of as the world of “social structures” such as politics, organizations, institutions, and the like” (Williams, 2008, p. 98). It argues the “contours of the institutional sites” and shapes how frames are being developed and what issues or causes are visible within a society (Williams, 2008, p. 98). Ekiert and Kubik (2001, pp. 24-25) also argue that one must elaborate on its political experience, the dynamics and results of political confrontation and their political, institutional, and cultural implications to explain a country’s distinctive development.

Social movement entrepreneurs need to align their ideas, values, and programs with the cultural stocks of their targeted audiences or connect new or disfavored ideas to the existing themes in their “tool kit” (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 9). “Potential constituents are more likely to embrace a frame that draws on beliefs and values that make up part of the target group's cultural tool kit” (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 14). For instance, social movements appropriate cultural symbols and narratives of a dominant group to provide their claims with cultural legitimacy (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 10). They also can apply and transform frames of past and concurrent social movements. The familiarity of these frames can positively impact the resonance (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p.10).

Constraints for frame construction

During the strategic construction of frames, cycles of protest are important. They can act as a constraint and a generator of new interpretive frames (Snow et al., 1988, p. 212). There is also a contest between competing frames produced by the countermovements, authorities (the state), the media (and other sources of information), and the market (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, p. 17). Tarrow (2011, p. 145) referred to this competition as a struggle for cultural supremacy. While countermovements and the state have a substantial impact on frame dynamics and a choice of the arena of conflict, especially if one is established by the elite and supported with its significant resources, the media produce their frames that have an impact on the construction of frames by all before-mentioned actors (Noakes & Johnston, 2005, pp. 17-19).

1.4. Frame resonance

Frame resonance is a key concept used to derive the research question. According to Snow & Benford (1988), the concept of resonance explains mobilizing potency of a frame. It involves “the ability of a collective action frame to resonate or appeal to a targeted audience”, it is one of the features of a successful collective action frame (McCamon, 2013; Snow & Benford, 2000, pp. 618-619). “The source of frame resonance lies in a conjunction of the content of framing and ideational elements in the wider cultural milieu” (McCamon, 2013). This conjunction depends on two factors: frame credibility and frame relative salience.

Frame credibility

Frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of the frame articulators or claims makers indicate frame credibility. Empirical credibility demonstrates a fit between the events and the frame; hypothetically, the more culturally believable and better proven is a suggested interpretation, the more credible the framing and broader attractiveness. The credibility of the frame articulators presumably depends on variables such as status and knowledge associated with persuasiveness. Works in the social psychology of communication argue that a person regarded as more credible is also perceived as more persuasive (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 621).

Frame relative salience

Its indicators are centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity. Centrality demonstrates “how essential the values, and ideas associated with movement frames are to the lives” of adherents (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 621). The more central or salient are the values, beliefs, and ideas of mobilization targets expressed in a frame, the more plausible is their mobilization (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 621). Experiential commensurability is a “screening mechanism” that allows the targets of mobilization to choose one collective action frame over another based on a personal experience of those targets (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 208). Narrative fidelity links a frame resonance with cultural narrations (folklore, stories, myths) included in cultural packages and employed to interpret the occurring events (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 210).

1.5. Europeanization

When investigating frame resonance, it is important to explore “the broader cultural environment in which collective action framing takes place” (McCammon, 2013). This thesis refers to Europeanization as to this “broader cultural environment”.

Europeanization is a “fashionable” term that lacks commonly accepted meaning, and its conceptualization is a tricky task (Radaelli & Pasquier, 2006, p. 36; Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 6; Radaelli, 2000; Bulmer, 2008). Dyson and Goetz (2002, cited in Bache et al., 2020, pp. 50-51) distinguish between first-generation and second-generation research of Europeanization. The former focuses on a top-down approach to this concept, explains domestic change by pressure and incentives of the EU, and sheds light on “more formal, observable consequences” of the EU membership or partnership. The “mainstream” scholarship on Europeanization that focuses mainly on institutional adaptation and employ a rationalist perspective to the subject can be attributed to the first-generation research (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006; 2017; Schimmelfennig, 2012; Börzel & Risse, 2009). Within the new institutionalist approach, the study of Europeanization is primarily related to the studies of European integration and governance on the EU member states. At the same time, in the last decades, its focus shifted to the countries beyond Europe and the EU, namely candidate countries waiting for EU accession, member states of Eastern Neighborhood, and later of Eastern Partnership. Defining Europeanization as a process of EU rules adoption, Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier (2006, pp. 8-24) offer three models of Europeanization: external incentives model, social learning model, and a lesson-drawing model. The external incentives model in which an EU conditionality is a crucial incentive for the adoption of EU norms and policy rules has been frequently employed by political scientists in the studies of accession states of Eastern enlargement, including Georgia (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2006, pp. 10-17; 2017). In this vein, scholars of Europeanization are following a rationalist logic of consequences. At the same time, those who focus on the models of social learning and lesson-drawing mostly rely on institutionalism's sociological or constructivist logic (‘logic of appropriateness’). In this case, the EU takes a more passive role in Europeanization through norm internalization and development of new identities (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 2; March & Olsen, 1998; Schimmelfennig, 2012, p. 5; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2017). Radaelli’s model also concerns informal assets, such as values, beliefs, norms, behaviour, and attitudes of individuals and groups, although only in the

context of public policy and governance (Grünhut, 2015, p. 165, p. 168; Grünhut & Bodor, 2015, pp. 15-16).

Although the institutionalist approach generated epistemological frameworks for understanding how Europe affects national politics, policies, and polities, it could not explain 'the continuous evolvement of Europe as an abstract entity perceived by different agents' (Grünhut, 2015, p. 168). Structuralist or institutional agendas approach a field of Europeanization with regard that perceptions of individual or group actors play a passive role in understanding the notion, which makes them irrelevant for such kind of research (Grünhut, 2015, p. 169). Thus, the second-generation research of Europeanization focuses on ideas, identities, and discourses, relying on a constructivist research agenda (Bache et al., 2020, pp. 50-51). This thesis conceptualizes Europeanization through "field experiences based on individuals' perceptions" (Grünhut, 2015, p. 169). In other words, Europeanization constitutes "what political actors make of it" (Radaelli & Pasquier, 2008, p. 35; Chitaladze & Grigoryan, 2015). Scholars emphasize the "fit" of a constructivist research agenda to the study of Europeanization (Bache et al., 2020; Grünhut, 2015; Smith, 2011). It permits us to grasp the transformative nature of the process as well as the "transformative capacity of societies" (Smith, 2011, pp. 684-685). Social constructivism concerns that the social realities are constructed and imaginary (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 17; Christiansen et al. 1999, p. 530; Taras, 2009, p. 7). Constructivists focus on social ontologies as values, norms, ideas, identities, collective identity formation and reconstruction, discourses, culture, and analysis of subjective processes (Bache et al., 2020, p. 50, Delanty & Rumford, 2005, pp. 13-14; Christiansen et al., 1999, p. 530, p. 538; Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001, p. 392). In this vein, the constructivist agenda on Europeanization focuses on analyzing values, norms, codes, customs, understandings, perceptions, and identifications shaped by Europeanization and impacted it (Grünhut, 2017, p. 165).

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Case selection

Snow and Trom (2002, pp. 151-152), in a guidebook “Methods of social movement research” conceptualize a case study of social movement as “a research strategy that seeks to generate richly detailed, thick, and holistic elaborations and understandings of instances or variants of bounded social phenomena through a triangulation of multiple methods that include but are not limited to qualitative procedures”. This research strategy is suitable for investigating a particular process or mechanism of the movement activity, such as framing (Snow, 2013). Study of framing processes involves revealing “an interpretative repertoire” of participants and leaders of SMO at a particular moment of reality (Johnston, 2002, p. 66). Case study of a social movement, in its turn, offers a framework for “richly detailed, “thick” elaboration of the phenomenon and the context in which it is embedded” (Snow, 2013). Literature review in Chapters 3 and 4 and empirical analysis in Chapter 5 provides such an elaboration by sketching a framing processes environment.

Shame movement is a normal or representative case study in which “fairly or reasonably” represents a larger social movement (Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 158). The low level of youth political activism characterizes Georgia (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129; Kobakhidze, 2018). In 2016, only 6% of young Georgians reported participating in a public meeting, including only 1% participating in a political demonstration (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 55). Meanwhile, 74% of young people living in Georgia supported European integration, while 80% of those from the capital city of Tbilisi shared this point of view in 2016 (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 69). Young people not involved in any political group formed the movement; it organized the protest that addressed an issue indirectly connected to Georgia’s European aspirations but yet referred to them (Sharashenidze, 2019; Kincha, 2020; OC Media, 2019b; RFE/RL's Georgian Service, 2019).

2.2. Semi-structured and Key Informant Interviews

I collected the data to study narratives on the Europeanization of youth Georgian protest participants and Shame’s framing processes via semi-structured interviews. The general reason to consider them as a research method was a scarcity of data in open English language resources and previous studies on the topic. The possibility that such literature exists in the Georgian language can not be ruled out; however, it would lay above the language capacity of the researcher. Interviews are a fundamental research method of generating empirical knowledge in the social sciences. They permit investigating “the meaning individuals attribute to the external world and to their own participation in it, the construction of identity, and the development of emotions” (Della Porta, 2014, p. 229, p. 231). Semi-structured interviews provide a researcher with the freedom to modify the questions if needed and allow the interviewees to reflect on their answers (Flick, 2009). This approach permitted me to ask new questions that were not preliminarily considered during the preparation for an interview. Frames can be properties of movements, individuals, and organizational forms of the movement itself (Snow, 2008, p. 387; Johnston, 2002). Thus, they would be found in the leaflets, records, slogans, banners, informational materials distributed by a movement, and in the heads of individuals (Snow, 2008, p. 387). I used a key informant semi-structured interview as a primary method of gaining information about the movement and its framing processes. Personal interviews are a common tool to gather information about the activity of social movements and investigate their mobilization strategies (Blee, 2013, p. 96, 603; Della Porta, 2014, p. 231). Key informant interviewing is a kind of semi-structured interviewing in social movement research. Derived from the anthropological field, this method helps “to gain access to insider understanding of social movement” and “to obtain descriptive information that might be too difficult and time-consuming to uncover” through other data-collecting techniques (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 105). This method helped gain information unavailable in open English language resources directly from the individual involved in the movement’s framing processes.

2.3. Sample and interviewing process

A total of nine interviews were conducted via ZOOM to address both research sub-questions (Appendix 3). I interviewed eight young Georgian protest participants to identify their narratives on Europeanization between May and June 2021. Respondents were contacted by email or private message. The selection criteria were nationality (Georgian), age (between 18 and 29), participation in protest events in Georgia, language (interviews could be held only in English or Russian, a researcher's native language). There is no explicit definition of youth in Georgian legislation. However, 29 years tend to be an upper line (Youth Policy in Eastern Partnership countries, 2018, p. 27). I chose the 18-29 age group to eliminate potential underage interviewees. Next, to present a case of the movement and investigate their framing processes, I conducted one key informant semi-structured interview with the 2019 protests leader and Shame movement founder. All interviews were conducted in English and then transcribed. Interviews lasted from around 30 minutes to 85 minutes, depending on the questions. Before the call, interviewees were asked to sign a Consent form (Appendix 5) that indicated how they would like to be addressed during the interview and in the research (name/pseudonym). 7 out of 9 recruits preferred to be addressed by a pseudonym for privacy reasons. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time without explaining a reason. They were provided with a Plain Language Statement to find detailed information about the study (Appendix 6).

Sampling

A snowball sampling was used to recruit young Georgian protest participants. Its main advantage for a researcher, working with foreign citizens in a foreign language, is that it recruits participants at minimum costs and efforts. To start a "chain referral", five participants from the target population were recruited based on the personal connections of the researcher. One of these participants did not fit an age criterion and thus could not be interviewed but referred to another person to continue the "chain referral". Having interviewed the rest, I asked them to help to recruit other participants from their networks. A total of four participants were recruited this way. This method was helpful as the researcher had limited personal connections with Georgian youth; the remote character of work (I was based in Poland at that time) made the recruitment process more complicated. However, the researcher managed to recruit participants with various experiences of protest participation; all of them attended the 2019 protests (Appendix 3).

A good selection of a key informant depends on an interviewee's position or role in a social movement. The main criterion was their amount of knowledge and willingness to participate (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 105). Purposeful sampling was used to ensure the relevance and validity of data derived from the interviews. Purposeful sampling is a technique of selecting the informants based on their potential ability to provide information on the phenomenon studied (Robinson, 2015). For that, I intended to interview only movement founders. The movement was first contacted by email, but due to the absence of a timely response, I then succeed in getting in touch with them through the Facebook page of the movement.

A brief description of the participants is provided further, according to the extent of their personality disclosure comfortable for them. Irakli, 26, Gvantsa, 23, and Levan, 23 are MA students. Mariam, 27, is pursuing her PhD. Irakli, Nino, and Ana work for Georgian NGOs. Levan also works as a digital copywriter, Nikoloz is a social media manager. They share different experiences of participation in a protest activity: for instance, Nino and Mariam reported attending two street protests while Dato and Irakli reported attending 40 and 50, respectively. Shota Dighmelashvili, Shame's co-founder and a leader of 2019 protests, works for an executive editor at Forbes Georgia magazine.

2.4. Interview questions

Interview questions for the part on narratives on Europeanization were guided by the research of foreign policy discourse of Georgian politicians where a researcher conducted 22 in-depth interviews to examine how European self-identification is constructed by Georgian politicians (Minesashvili, 2016). This research was carefully read several times and served as a source of inspiration when developing an interview guide. Therefore, questions on European and Georgian values, historical ties, and the EU-Georgia relations on the institutional level arose (Appendix 1). The interview guide for a Key Informant Interview was drawn upon Framing theory. I designed the questions to receive information on diagnostic, prognostic, motivational framing processes, and movement's background and structure (Appendix 2).

2.5. Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a key method of data analysis for both datasets. It serves for ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This method can be used within different theoretical frameworks; in a constructivist perspective, thematic analysis investigates the effect of discourses of a given society on events, meanings, or experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

When analysing narratives on Europeanization, this thesis used a combination of inductive and deductive Thematic Analysis (Appendix 8). The inductive TA is data-driven and means that some themes were extracted according to the content of collected data and were not predefined (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). The latter means that some themes were defined in advance by the researcher. The first analysis stage started with listening to the interviews, recorded via ZOOM, and transcribing them. After that, the interview transcripts were imported to a ‘QDA miner lite’, accessible computer-assisted qualitative analysis software. This software helped to ease the coding process by generating a shared set of codes and categories for several imported documents and by creating a coding book where all fragments highlighted according to one particular code are available at once. The second stage of analysis consisted of rereading the transcripts attentively several times, identifying the preliminary codes that would further facilitate identification of the themes, rereading the transcripts and matching their fragments with the newly emerged codes. Coding primarily relied on the semantic approach to Thematic analysis. They addressed explicit, semantic content of the interviews, such as “Hope”, when the respondents expressed hope that Georgia will join the EU. Latent coding was also applied to detect the meaning beneath the objective content of the interviews, such as “Ambivalence”. The next step was to group these codes around thematic categories. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82), a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set”. At the final stage, a report on the revealed narratives was completed.

Theoretical Thematic analysis (TTA), defined by an interest in Framing theory, was used to understand the movement's framing processes and extract collective action frames (Appendix 10). TTA aims at the “detailed analysis of some aspect of the data”, which are core framing elements that make up collective action frames in this case (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). The derived data were coded, summarized, and organized under themes identified through the reading of Framing theory. An interview guide was constructed, and then the final report was written. Having completed both datasets, I examined Europeanization as a source of frame resonance according to Snow and Benford's six indicators of frame resonance (see pp. 5-6 in Chapter 1). Those are frame consistency, empirical credibility, the credibility of the frame articulators, centrality, experiential commensurability, narrative fidelity.

2.6. Limitations

The country's selection - Georgia - is not pragmatic as a researcher does not speak Georgian and cannot conduct interviews in this language. Therefore, I analyzed only English language content.

I do not see this limitation as a source of false results or bias. In terms of statistics, the knowledge of English of a targeted group (young people living in Tbilisi) is relatively high (Caucasus barometer, 2019). Language limitation affects a choice of methodological tools that could be used, however. For instance, analysis of social media posts, leaflets, slogans, banners produced by a social movement and its adherents is another fruitful method of investigating collective action frames of SMO and their discursive practices (Ekiert & Kubik, 2001; Lukashina, 2013). The Shame produces social media posts in Georgian. A researcher rejected this method because of a lack of good computer software for translation and biased or false results due to potential coding/translation mistakes from Georgian to English or Russian.

The common limitation of collective action frame research is that it is almost impossible to reconstruct the unsuccessful frames that failed to mobilize potential adherents. Another limitation is connected to a past character of the events under investigation. Both datasets were based exclusively on the interviews conducted two years after the protests. The researcher should consider a possibility of bias, false memories, or that an informant will face difficulties recalling specific details. In this case, I used other available documents and resources to verify facts. The issue of representability of the results also should be addressed. The framing processes and frames were extracted based on one, although detailed and rich, interview. No broad generalization of narratives on Europeanization is possible due to the limited sampling either. However, the results help create a snapshot of Georgia's young protest community and its environment and guide further research.

Another limitation of this study is the scarcity of resources. Recruiting the participants remotely turned out to be a time-consuming task; the researcher had to limit the sample to save time for analysis. More interviews for the first part of this research on the narratives of Europeanization would be helpful for the validation of the results. The limitation of snow sampling is that data may be biased towards like-minded people sharing the same or similar networks and may leave other perspectives of Europeanization hidden. Even though most respondents are currently based in Georgia's largest city and capital, Tbilisi, they come from different parts of Georgia and have a different experiences of migration within the country and abroad, bringing different perspectives on the question under investigation. However, recruiting participants with more varied backgrounds could still be helpful.

The third feature of a social movement case study is a combination of multiple data-gathering methods (triangulation). Klandermans & Staggenborg (2002, p.15) argue that a multi-method approach in a social movement study “contribute different types of evidence and collective insights”. It was initially planned to employ various data sources and data analysis tools to extract collective action frames, such as semantic analysis of visual materials, to pursue completeness and achieve validity and holistic results (Breitmayer et al., 1993, p. 237). Due to the limitations that emerged in the course of work on this dissertation, I decided to focus on one method.

CHAPTER 3. GEORGIA'S CULTURAL TOOL KIT. BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES

3.1. Institutional context

3.1.1. "Georgian Dream" and Bidzina Ivanishvili

After the 2017 constitutional amendments, Georgia adopted a model of a parliamentary republic. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, it is a "democratic form of government in which the party (or a coalition of parties) with the greatest representation in the parliament (legislature) forms the government" (Augustin). Nodia (2018, p. 2) argues that Georgia is a state whose weak and unstable political institutions are exposed to being captured by oligarchs or autocratic leaders and have low trust among their population. A current ruling party of Georgia, centrist 'Georgian Dream', won its first parliamentary elections in 2012, the same year it was founded by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a local billionaire. It constituted a constitutional majority in the Parliament from 2016 to 2019. According to a recent Transparency International Georgia report (2020), Georgia's Parliament failed to "keep the executive in check" due to informal influences represented by Ivanishvili and his party. The transfer to a proportional parliamentary system was set for 2024, but after the 2019 Gavrilov's night protest, Shame demanded to organize the approaching 2020 parliamentary elections according to the new system. It was supposed to guarantee the more pluralistic parliament and the coalition government with enough opposition groups to end "Georgian Dream's near-total control over all branches and levels of government" (Ghvinadze & Linderman, 2020; Transparency International Georgia, 2020). Against a large-scale protest, 'Georgian Dream' agreed to satisfy the demand and hold the 2020 elections under a fully proportional system. However, the bill was rejected in November 2019 as 'Georgian dreams' MPs refused to vote. Ultimately it was adopted in spring 2020 after the involvement of the Western diplomatic corps in Georgia (Agenda.ge, 2020).

3.1.2. Abkhazia and South Ossetia occupation

Shame started as an anti-occupational movement. Indeed, a question of Georgia's two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, recognized as occupation by the EU in 2011, is one of the critical issues of Georgian statehood (Nielsen & Vilson, 2016, p. 54). The war with South Ossetia commenced in January 1991, following the proclamation of a South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic, and lasted till June 1992 (de Waal, 2019, pp. 142-143). The Dagomys agreement signed by Eduard Shevardnadze and Russian President Boris Yeltsin ended it. Russian involvement is explained by the fact that South Ossetians looked for Russian support in the war, which put the Georgian-Russian relations under threat of military conflict (de Waal, 2019, p. 146). After 1992, Georgia generally lost control over South Ossetia (de Waal, 2019, p. 164).

War in Abkhazia began in August 1992 and ended again under another Russia-brokered truce in July 1993. Russia has "much more at stake" in Abkhazia than in South Ossetia due to Russian location, resources, and sentimental, nostalgic attachment to Abkhazia that used to be a popular summer destination in the USSR (de Waal, 2019, p. 201). De Waal (2019, p. 162) argues that a question of Russian involvement dominates the discussions about this war. "Georgians say they fought a war not with Abkhaz but with Russians; the Abkhaz maintain that there was a Georgian-Abkhaz conflict independent of Russia and that Russia helped both sides of the war" (de Waal, 2019, p. 162). Jones (2015, p. 96) and de Waal (2019, p. 167) argue that the alliance of Russian politicians and local Abkhazian leaders during the war was aimed more at "exerting pressure" and "undermining Georgia and Shevardnadze" rather than Abkhazian independence. Russia used the ceasefire agreement to establish a Russian military presence in Abkhazia and Georgia as a whole. Shevardnadze had to accommodate the interests of Russia in the region and to agree on "humiliating terms" to establish peace, such as joining the Commonwealth of Independent States and renewing leases of Russian military bases (de Waal, 2019, p. 167; Nielsen & Vilson, 2016, p.

53). In 1999, negotiations between Abkhazia and Tbilisi over a "common state" were suspended, and Abkhazia declared independence following a referendum. Its results remained unrecognized by any international body till 2008 (de Waal, 2019, p. 169). Both regions also previously rejected an expanded autonomous status within the Georgian republic offered by its officials. In 2007, a potential expansion of NATO over Georgia and Ukraine and Kosovo's declaration of independence started to affect the situation around Georgia's secessionist regions (de Waal, 2019, p. 207). Russian authorities said that Georgian membership in NATO is a direct threat to Russia's state security. There was no unanimity regarding Georgian membership among NATO states (de Waal, 2019, p. 208). As a result, Georgia was offered a membership perspective without a clear indication of the date but rejected a concrete Membership Action Plan at the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008. Russian officials responded by authorizing direct governmental relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and offering them military assistance in case of foreign intervention (de Waal, 2019, p. 209; Nielsen & Vilson, 2016, p. 54). Inspired by a declaration of independence by Kosovo in 2008, both regions proclaimed independence. On August 7th, 2008, the five-day-long August War between Russia and Georgia erupted. The question of who started the war is painful and exposed to controversial narratives. Jones (2015, p. 242) argues that both Russians and Georgians were preparing for military action; however, it seemed that Saakashvili's government had no consensus on whether Georgia "was preparing to fight a war or to prevent one". War proceeded with an invasion of both breakaway regions and Russian troops reaching the Georgian towns of Gori and Poti. On August 15th, a ceasefire was mediated by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy (France then held the EU presidency). The truce was established "very much on Russian terms" as Russia received a de facto control over both breakaway regions and has deployed its troops there (de Waal, 2019, p. 216; Nielsen & Vilson, 2016, p. 55). The general international reaction to the war was weak, followed by a restoration of amicable relations between Russia, NATO, and the EU (Jones, 2015, p. 241). On August 26th, Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence. Two days later Georgian parliament accepted the resolution that Russia occupied both regions. In October 2008, the EU sent a monitoring mission to the administrative border between Georgia, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia, namely the EUMM Georgia (Machurishvili, 2021, p. 133). However, it still lacks access to these territories as Russia denies it. In 2011, the European Parliament issued a statement addressing Russia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia occupation (Nielsen & Vilson, 2016, p. 55).

3.1.3. A brief overview of Georgia – EU relations since 1991

As Europeanization is the focus of this thesis, it is relevant to trace the EU – Georgia relations briefly. According to Chkhikvadze (2013, pp. 53-55), during the first years of Georgia's independence, the European Union was keeping it "at an arm's length". Georgia was not a neighbour, and conflicts in this country and generally in the South Caucasus appeared distant for the European Union. Also, the EU was not pursuing a global player ambition at a time, favouring long-term cooperation with newly formed post-soviet states, while Georgia was interested in short-term results. Another reason is related to the domestic developments of Georgia. Run by the warlords and torn up by two consequent civil wars, Georgia could be barely called 'a a state' at a time (de Waal, 2019, p. 190; Jones, 2015, p. 53). The charismatic politics of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's first democratically elected president, was feeble as he was ousted and fled the country to Chechnya the same year he proclaimed Georgia's independence (Jones, 2015, pp. 51-53). In 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze, 62, the former Soviet minister of foreign affairs, was invited from Russia to take over the country. Under Shevardnadze's government, Georgia made its first successful ties with Western partners. It joined the United Nations in July 1992 and the Council of Europe in 1999. It was his accession speech to the Council of Europe where Zurab Zhvania, the former speaker of the Georgian parliament, coined a now oft-quoted phrase, "I am Georgian, therefore I am European" (Lejava, 2021, p. 1). Georgia participated in Western energy projects in

the region, especially with the United States and NATO, with which Georgia signed a partnership with (Jones, 2015, p. 85; de Waal, 2019, pp. 190-191; Nielsen & Vilson, 2016, p. 53).

The first legal framework of the EU – Georgian relations was set by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1996 and came into force in 1999. Still, it lacked a framework for conflict settlement activities in the region and mostly failed (Chkhikvadze, 2013, p. 55). In 2003, the Rose Revolution led by Mikheil Saakashvili ousted Shevardnadze. The former was soon elected a president. Saakashvili intensified the relations with NATO and the EU: since 2004, Georgia has firmly stuck to its "European choice" (Nielsen & Vilson, 2014, p. 11). The relations between Georgia and the EU have entered a new phase after 2004 Eastern enlargement. In 2004, Georgia became a part of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) launched to "create a ring of well-governed states" through promoting democratic governance, security, development, and stability on the east and south frontiers of the European Union (Chkhikvadze, 2013, p. 57; Nilsson & Silander, 2016, p. 49). The enlargement also increased the EU's dependence on the Russian supply of gas and oil, and Georgia revealed itself as a significant transit point of Caspian energy resources to Europe (Chkhikvadze, 2013, p. 57; Jones, 2015, p. 245). The interest of new member states such as Poland and Baltic countries in cooperation with Georgia and its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures was an essential factor too (Chkhikvadze, 2013, p. 58).

In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania, newly accessed to the European Union, received a shared maritime Black Sea border with Georgia, thus, the 2008 Georgian-Russian August war caused the EU's reaction (Nilsson & Silander, 2016, p. 49). It was a signal to the EU of Georgia's importance for its security and energy strategy (Jones, 2015, p. 245). At the same time, NATO's refusal to provide Georgia with the Membership Action Plan and the August war was a "strategic setback of the US policy in the region" (Jones, 2015, p. 241). The focus of Georgia's foreign policy consequently shifted away from NATO and towards the EU "as the only alternative for ensuring the security and territorial integrity of the country" as the EU mediated a ceasefire (Nielsen & Vilson, 2014, p. 13). Next year, a new Eastern Partnership policy designed by Poland and Sweden was established. Its goal was to pursue a more diversified policy towards EU's partners, to strengthen the ties between the six Eastern states of ENP and the EU, and to increase the legitimacy of the EU policy in the region (Korosteleva, 2011b, p. 243). Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus joined the initiative. In 2014, 'Georgian Dream' government signed a bilateral Association Agreement (AA) with the EU within Eastern Partnership policy. This document came into force in 2016 and shaped current relations between the EU and Georgia (Nodia, 2018, p. 1). AA is aimed at strengthened political association and economic integration (Europa.eu, 2016). EaP offers no membership incentive but concrete steps for deeper integration with the EU structures, promoting shared values, security in the region, and economic development via regional and bilateral cooperation (Putkaradze, 2019). Within the agreement, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) was established between Georgia, and the EU, followed by a visa liberalization regime, allowing visa-free travel between Georgia and the EU from March 2017 (Loda, 2019). Yet, there are critical stances. Sharashenidze (2019) argues that the EU response to the 2019 protests was, however, "sluggish, going no further than the release of tepid statements" while "the US took a clearer stand and called for dialogue and restraint on the part of the authorities". The 2020-2021 political crisis, caused by the 2020 elections and handled with the mediation of the European Union, enhanced the EU involvement in Georgian politics. Still, the developments of July 2021 marked a crisis in their relations (Kinch, 2021a; 2021b).

3.1.4. Constraints of Georgia-EU relations

The peculiarity of Georgia-EU relations is a mismatch between European and Georgian political elites' perception of the ENP and the Eastern Partnership in the relations between the EU and its eastern neighbours and on the future of the European Union itself (Kakabadze 2020, p. 13). Georgia's goal is EU membership, and like the other Eastern partners of the EU, it perceives the neighbourhood policy as "insurance" for the membership perspective (Putkaradze, 2019; Nielsen

& Vilson, 2014, p. 6). 41% of residents fully supported the membership of Georgia in the EU, while 32% more “rather support” it (Caucasus Barometer 2020 Georgia, 2020a). Most respondents believe the EU and the USA can currently give Georgia the best support rather than Russia; Georgian residents believe that their country will become more European (57%), will have more democratic values and institutions (53%), and will be better protected from Russia (45%) once it joins the EU (CRRC, 2020). However, Nodia (2018, p.2) argues that Georgia and two other EaP states that signed the Association Agreement are standing far from fulfilling the EU requirements for its future members. Georgian politicians demonstrated reluctance to specific costly and painful domestic reforms regarding the rule of law, human rights, and the judiciary system without an immediate membership perspective (Nielsen & Vilson, 2014, p. 12).

According to Korosteleva (2011b, p. 256), the Eastern Partnership model has “conceptual deficiencies”. The very concept of “partnership” is ill-defined; its limitation is seen as “partly inherited from the ENP”. It affects the process of “othering” (constructing “self” through “the other”), leaving room for action for another dominant regional player, Russia (Korosteleva, 2011b, p. 244; Makarychev, 2018). Nielsen and Vilson (2014, p. 7) compare Russia to “the elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about but cannot avoid either”; therefore, different positions of the EaP countries towards Russia affect the EaP’s legitimacy and effectiveness in the region. The EU failed to foresee Russia's reaction to its activity in the region that Russian authorities perceive as “near abroad”, their zone of interest and influence, leading to the conflicts in the eastern post-soviet domain that jeopardized European security (Nilsson & Silander, 2015; Chkhikvadze, 2013; Korosteleva, 2011b). However, the European Union remains the only alternative to Russian leverage for Georgia, even though “the EU has avoided any political action other than talk to back Georgia up” and has not eliminated tensions with Russia to date (Nielsen & Vilson, 2014, p. 12; Flenley 2018, p. 44). Scholars argue that the Eastern Partnership overall demonstrated a weak influence over partner states, including Georgia, leaving them “either fragile, undemocratic, economically underperforming, torn by frozen conflicts, or all four at once” (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2011, p. 150; Korosteleva, 2011a; Nielsen & Vilson, 2014; Makarychev, 2018, pp. 2-4).

3.2. Georgian Europeanness

Georgian “Europeanness” is an established phenomenon of Georgia’s cultural tool kit; it is usually understood as a combination of cultural affiliation and instrumental gains (Minesashvili, 2013, p. 6). Its foundation lies within Georgians' self-perception as a western nation while “West” and “Europe” are primarily compatible and synonymous terms for them (Nodia, 1998, p. 13). “Christianity, NATO, or democracy all are linked in Georgians' minds to their “natural home” – Europe” (Jones, 2015, p. 251). Identification with the West intensified once Georgia had stepped on a path of sovereignty mainly due to instrumental, practical reasons, although the West response to it was far from enthusiastic (Nodia, 1998, p. 42; Minesashvili, 2013, p. 8; Jones, 2003, p. 94). Only at the end of the 1990-s did Georgians have started to embrace “Western values for its own sake” (Nodia, 1998, p. 42). The perception of Europe as Georgia's protector from “existential threats” drives the prioritization of European and Euro-Atlantic integration (Jones & Kakhishvili, 2016, p. 24). However, Nodia (2016, p. 97) argues that Georgia is not entirely pragmatic as it only worsens “extremely bad” Georgia-Russia relations.

Georgian historiography opposes Christian, European Georgia to Muslim countries that it had to coexist, resulting in a construction of perception of Georgia as “Christian, European and a warrior-martyr” (Jones, 2015, p. 251; 2003, p. 87). Nodia (1998, p. 42) argues that in a contemporary Georgians’ mind, West is more associated with values including “ideal of the free, autonomous, self-sufficient human individual” and protection of Georgia rather than with Christianity. A definition of liberal and traditional Georgian national identity developed by Kakabadze (2020, p. 28) enriches this understanding of Georgian “Europeanness”. In his view, liberal Georgian national identity stands for the implementation of the European norms and standards; dichotomize the

relations between Georgia and Russia/Georgia's Soviet past; share a narrative that Georgia naturally belongs to Europe and is a part of modern Western civilization; promotes non-ethnic, civic membership. A populist Georgian national identity contrasts with a liberal one (Kakabadze, 2020, p. 28). Kakabadze argues that traditional and conservative values, inseparable from religion, are at the core of populist (exclusive) Georgian identity. It shares conservative, anti-western, anti-globalization feelings. It also perceives western civilization as "perverted and degraded" and associates Georgia with Orthodox Christian Russia, leading the Orthodox Christian world and romanticising the Soviet past.

The Georgian Orthodox Church

Jones (2015, p. 227) confirms that the preservation of Georgian national identity depends on the preservation of Georgian Christianity. Religion is "unavoidable in any discussion of political behaviour in Georgia over the last two decades" (Jones & Kakhishvili, 2016, p. 20). According to the CRRC survey, in 2019, 48% of Georgians reported it is vital to be a believer of the Georgian Orthodox Church to feel "truly Georgian" (Caucasus Barometer 2020 Georgia, 2020b). 71% of Georgian Orthodox Christians claimed to trust this religious institution (Caucasus Barometer 2020 Georgia, 2020c). Georgian state sees Christianity – and, consequently, loyalty to the Georgian Christian church - as "proof of its [Georgia's] Europeaness" (Jones, 2015, p. 228). It contradicts the description of liberal Georgian national identity, which stands for pro-Western democratic values and denies the vitality of the Georgian Orthodox church (Kakabadze, 2020, p. 28). Far-right Georgian groups, including those supporting the church, frequently acted as a countermovement at the protests and public events organized by social movements in Georgia, and the Shame is not an exception (Kuenning, 2019; Kvakhadze, 2018; Demytrie, 2018).

Discourses on Europeanization and European integration

Deeper Europeanization is likely to happen if a narrative about the EU integration dominates and is embedded into the domestic perception of the country's future (Flenley 2018, 48; Nielsen & Vilson, 2014, p. 11). Yet elite and popular discourses on Europeanization in Georgia are ambivalent and guided by utilitarian and identity factors (Tsuladze, 2017a; 2017b, p. 156; Tsuladze et al., 2016; Tsuladze & Osepashvili, 2021). In a study of Georgians' popular online discourses on Europeanisation, Tsuladze (2017a, p. 131) argues their European aspirations come alongside "doubts and fears of asymmetric power relations, diminishing national sovereignty, and declining national identity". These discourses have a twofold nature as they demonstrate that Georgians are ready to pursue their European aspiration on the international "front stage" while leaving their fears and doubt to the domestic "backstage" (Tsuladze, 2017a, p. 132).

Russia

Foundation for modern Georgian political life was created by the proclamation of independence from the Soviet Union on April 9th, 1991. Georgians share a narrative that their independence "had been stolen twice": by the Russian emperor in an 1801 seizure of Kartli-Kakheti (East Georgia) that led to gradual incorporation of Georgian territories into the empire by the second half of the 19th century, and then by Bolsheviks who took over the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1921 (de Waal, 2019, p. 39; Sartania, 2021, pp. 1-3). Proclaimed pro-Western by social democrats on May 26th, 1918, it was taken over by the Soviet army between February and March 1921 (de Waal, 2019, p. 62). Georgians tend to see their country's history through the lenses of a "victimized nation" that resisted neighbouring empires, primarily Russia (Jones, 2015). In this vein, embracing their "Europeaness", they framed the August 2008 war as Russia's "civilizational" attack on European values of democracy, sovereignty, and human rights (Jones, 2015, p. 241). The critical narrative for 2019 summer protests concerns a widespread perception of Russia as an occupier against the background that 'Georgian dream' has established a pragmatic, practical approach

towards Georgia-Russia relations, with “long-standing historical connections and a practical recognition of Russian power” at its core (Jones & Kakhishvili, 2016, p. 23, p. 38). When pro-Western social democrats proclaimed the independent Georgian republic in 1918, they saw it as a “European buffer against Russia” perceived as an orientalist, collectivistic state (Jones, 2015, p. 251). In the late Soviet period, Georgians emphasized their Europeanness by rejecting communism (Sovietism and Russia’s domination) rather than embracing their Christianity (Jones, 2015, p. 252).

CHAPTER 4. RELEVANCE OF YOUTH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN GEORGIA

Georgia's tradition of organized civic activity roots in charitable and self-help organizations that appeared in the second half of the 19th century after local government and educational reform, but it was eradicated during the Soviet times (Jones, 2015, p. 136). However, the roots of youth political activism can be traced back to the Soviet period of Georgian history (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129). One occasion is the students' protest on deprivation of Georgian language of a status of an official language in the republic (Jones, 2015, p. 221). Youth resistance is a starting point of a Georgian narrative on its modern history and a foundation of its modern statehood (Sartania, 2021, pp. 1-3). It is due to April 9th, 1989, when a peaceful protest of youth activists, hunger-strikers, and students on Rustaveli Prospect in Tbilisi was violently dispersed by the elite Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs troops (Jones, 2015, pp. 31-32).

Modern Georgian youth is characterized by a low level of political youth activism. According to the South Caucasus Regional Office of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung study of Georgian youth (2017, p. 55), only 6% of young Georgians reported participation in a public meeting regarding any issue in the last year. Only 1% reported participating in a political demonstration, while 2% participated in a social demonstration (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 55). Insignificant civic engagement of Georgian youth goes along with a relatively low interest in politics and low trust in local political institutions. In 2017, less than half of young Georgians (45%) were interested in Georgian politics (13% of them reported being “very interested”; 31% were “interested”) (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 48). Georgian youth tend to share distrust towards politically active young people as they generally regard politics as “dirty business” and believe that “personal, narrow” gains motivate those participating in politics (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 54). Against this background, it comes with no surprise that youth activism in Georgia is an understudied topic (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129), with most of the research papers on the “Kmara” youth movement active in 2003-2004.

Kakhishvili and Gogava (2016, p. 130) argue there are three stages of civic activism development in the history of independent Georgia. In the beginning, it was associated with “street politics” as leaders of political parties stood behind the organization of the protests that serve their political goals. This period lasted till the 2003 Rose Revolution. At the second stage, demonstrations still had a political character but were organized by ordinary citizens. “Kmara” (“Enough”), a youth movement active during this period, is worth mentioning. It significantly contributed to mobilising support for the then-coming democratic Rose Revolution, especially among apolitical youth (Kuzio, 2006, p. 365; Aliyev, 2020). Most studies on Georgia's youth activism were comparatively analysing “Kmara” and other similar case studies from Serbia and Ukraine, focusing on a repertoire of their actions, their role in peaceful revolutions and “electoral revolutions” that facilitated the termination of semi-authoritarian regimes (Kuzio, 2006; Nikolayenko, 2007; Bunce & Wolchik, 2006). A national-patriotic movement nevertheless copied the Western techniques of non-violent resistance (Kuzio, 2006, p. 369). For instance, its members accumulated people’s grievances by painting the word “Kmara” over surfaces in public places across the country (de Waal, 2019, p. 193). “Kmara” was associated with the group close to Mikhail Saakashvili, who came to power due to the Rose Revolution (Aliyev, 2020). It disappeared from a political landscape as soon as he came to the presidency. With its dissolution, youth participation in Georgian civil society decreased again (Aliyev, 2020).

In 2012, after the first peaceful transition of power in Georgia’s history, the third stage began, with social movements drawing their attention to various political, social, economic, and ecological (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 130). Although youth activism in Georgia is an understudied topic, an analysis of academic and media resources shows that there are various social movements involving young people (Kobakhidze, 2018; Dunbar, 2018; Kuenning, 2019; Jakeli, 2018; Kincha, 2020). Peaceful demonstrations and protest rallies are the dominant form of youth activism (Kakhishvili & Gogava, 2016, p. 129). Here are some instances. In 2016, students of the oldest and the largest Georgia’s university, Tbilisi State University, organized protests against alleged

mismanagement of the university funds (Kobakhidze, 2017). Later, they formed a movement named Auditorium 115 that organised protests regarding socio-economic issues in general, including labour rights of youth and the need of internally displaced persons after the 2008 August war (Kobakhidze, 2017). In 2015-2018, the White Noise movement ran mass street rallies and mobilised young, well-educated people (Krushynskaya, 2017; Dunbar, 2018). It demanded the legalization of drug use and filed constitutional cases against jail sentences for drug use; as a result, in 2016, the Constitutional Court legalized the recreational use of cannabis (Krushynskaya, 2017). In 2018, the White Noise movement took part in the organization of the Bassiani protests, “Dancing Revolution” or “raveolution”, a three day long rave protest in front of the Georgian parliament in Tbilisi where, as witnesses argue, young people were the majority of participants (Dunbar, 2018). The demand to stop the persecution of Bassiani, a prominent Tbilisi techno club where the police believed drug dealers and users were nesting, and to pursue drug legislation reform mobilized them. Despite the seemingly peaceful resolution of the conflict between the protesters and the government, a change of movement strategy was needed.

A substantial example would be a “Tbilisi pride” movement that seeks to create a safe environment for the LGBTQ+ community in Georgia, where only 23% of the population agrees that the rights of sexual minorities should be protected (Kuenning 2019; Tbilisi Pride website, 2021). In 2019, the movement held the first LGBTQ+ pride in Tbilisi, a series of events that would last a week and host international and local activists and experts. International organizations and NGOs, including the Council of Europe and the European Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup, took part in the negotiating process with the Georgian government (Kuenning, 2019). However, Tbilisi Pride’s final events were postponed because the Shame’s protest erupted. In 2021, it was again cancelled due to an outrageous reaction of Georgia's right forces; the police and organizers would secure the participants as the pride’s supporters and journalists were severely physically abused earlier that day (Kinch, 2021e; OC Media, 2021f).

CHAPTER 5. GEORGIAN YOUNG PROTESTERS' NARRATIVES ON EUROPEANIZATION

This thematic analysis aims to answer the following question: what narratives about components of Europeanization do young Georgian protesters who participated in the Gavrilov night protest share? Six themes emerged from data analysis collected through 8 semi-structured interviews (Appendices 3, 9).

5.1. Ambivalence

The central theme that emerged from all interviews concerns the ambivalent nature of understanding Europe and European values. It united two predefined themes, such as “What is Europe” and “European values”, that became sub-themes.

What is Europe?

The participants' answers on the question on how they would define Europe fall into three categories: Europe as a continent or as a space imagined in terms of culture; Europe as space where different values and rights are respected; Europe as the European Union, specific countries, or “modern democracies”. However, most interviewees tended to provide the researcher with an answer that fell into two or three before-mentioned categories, and that is how the macro-theme of ambivalence emerged. Two informants stated that this ambivalence is probably due to the role of context when trying to define what they mean by Europe. Irakli said that “it depends on who is asking, when it is asking, in what context is asking.” At the same time, Mariam believes the definitions would vary “depending on how you define it [Europe] culturally, politically, historically”. Irakli voiced that while European borders stretch from Ireland and the United Kingdom to all EU member states, “the countries who identify themselves as European countries” can be considered European too. Dato shared a similar opinion, stating, “Europe is not just a continent for me, it's more about values”. To use Nino's words, Nino, Mariam, and Ana believe that “When we say Europe, we mostly mean [it in] geographical terms”. Mariam’s answer demonstrated the participants’ tendency to realize that their understandings are constructed:

“It's geographical location [that] depends on what you tie with the name Europe... that would be the most neutral definition of it, and then Georgia also may follow under this geographic definition, but I think when you are talking about Europe in today's context, there is lots of political loading coming with that, [when] you say Europe, you mainly still mean democracies in Europe, and you normally would not consider the authoritarian regimes”.

Four respondents primarily associated Europe with the representation and promotion of specific values and human rights. Dato explained what he understands by them in the following way: “Europe is a place where everyone is treated equally, regardless of their differences. It's a place where [people of] very different cultures, societies, people with different values co-exists together in peace”. The respondents attributed human rights among the following groups: Georgian citizens, especially women and sexual minorities, and residents of the internationally recognized Georgian territories which are not controlled under the Georgian government, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. Surprisingly, none of the participants explicitly mentioned the problems with the rights of Georgia’s ethnic and religious minorities, such as the Azeri minority of southeast Georgia, refugees, or stateless people (OC Media, 2021b; OC Media, 2021c; OC Media, 2021d; Lortkipanidze, 2015). Only one participant mentioned labour rights, which echoes with the recent Georgian mining town of Chiatura hunger strikes and strikes of food delivery services workers in Tbilisi (OC Media, 2021e; Kincha, 2021c). Nikoloz admired the “solidarity with each other, the tolerance, the respect between the nations, and protecting human rights at all costs” that, for him, Europe stands for. Ana admitted that despite “these values unite all these countries... in some countries, they are not protected as well as in other ones” however. Three respondents also

highlighted that they could use the word Europe when referring to modern EU democracies located in the EU. When asked if Europe is the same as the European Union, most respondents shared that it includes but is not limited to 27 EU member states. For Irakli, Europe is “a larger concept than the EU itself” and “goes beyond the EU geographically, culturally”. For Mariam, the EU is “an organization which fights and guarantees peace and strong communication, visa-free travelling, and trading deals” that “represents the best of what Europe is”. Nikoloz explained that the EU is a political institution “but Europe is a more historical part of the world which then created the European Union”. Both Nino and Levan stated that Europe could constitute countries that do not belong to the EU. Despite giving quite explicit explanations why Europe is not limited to the European Union, all respondents during the interviews were using these words interchangeably, apparently, for the sake of convenience. At the same time, Mariam voiced that it is incorrect to use these words as synonyms.

European values

When discussing the definition of Europe, several respondents associated it with respect for people's rights and values they share, so they were asked to elaborate on them. Respondents' ideas have been articulated in the following ways: they named human rights, equality (Nino, Nikoloz, Ana); tolerance and acceptance (Dato, Nikoloz); solidarity (Nikoloz); other freedoms such as freedom of speech, expression, or will (Irakli; Dato; Ana; Levan); democracy, the rule of law and justice (Ana, Irakli); quality of life (Mariam, Ana); protection of environment and labour rights (Nikoloz). Irakli and Anna were the only ones to explicitly associate European values with European Union values of human dignity, democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law, and human rights (Europa.eu, 2021). That is how Levan summarized his understanding of European values, which mostly echoes the EU values mentioned above:

“Basically, all the values and all the rights that are important for a person, for an individual to flourish, self-realize in the society. When the state and the society together give you this opportunity not to become closed and reserved in yourself, but you go out without worrying about the consequences of what you say or what you write”.

This list illustrates visible issues on Georgia's current media agenda. Before the interviews were conducted in May-June 2021, news on long-term environmental protests against the construction of Namakhvani HPP in western Georgia; strikes by Tbilisi-based food delivery driver over a wage cut; an attack on the homosexual couple by an individual in the capital; not leaving aside enduring political crisis provoked by the allegedly rigged elections and economic crisis caused by the pandemics and months of suspended economic activity were hitting the headlines (Kinch, 2021c, 2021d; Agenda.ge, 2021; Civil.ge, 2020).

Even though what participants named the European values showed unanimity, it barely applies to their opinions on adopting and promoting the mentioned values in Georgia. Their answers were ambivalent: there were opinions that Georgia shares these values but meets lots of obstacles that weaken its commitment to them, and it takes effort to pursue them (Nino, Mariam, Ana); that Georgia does not fully protect these values, and neither it shows progress in their promotion (Ana, Nikoloz, Irakli); most participants were convinced that Georgia does its best for promotion of values; their opinions can be overall summarized by Irakli's words: “it could be much better, but it could be much worse”.

Nino, Mariam, and Ana believe that Georgia is slowly moving towards adoption of the European values. Salome ties it with the progress at the institutional level, whose purpose was to establish a common ground “so that we could have the same values”, namely the adoption of the 2013 anti-discrimination law. Mariam was proud that Georgia was doing well in fighting corruption over the recent years. Irakli and Nikoloz outlined that “Georgia does their best” for the promotion of European values. Irakli mentioned Georgia's front-runner position in the Eastern partnership, “very fair elections” Georgia used to have, and that Georgia was one of the first countries in Europe to

allow women to be members of a parliament without any quotas in 1918-1921. He stated, “Now it's a norm, but back then, it was not even a thing in today's developed European countries”. However, Irakli also noticed that the attempts “to do something about the rule of law or freedom of speech” did not succeed in Georgia.

“That proves how difficult it is to make progress in terms of developing all those values, even if you think that they are part of your culture, they do not come for granted, you need to fight for them, and very often it is very easy to lose”.

Levan gave recognition to the “very far from satisfactory” demand of both authorities and Georgian society for complying with the European values. He defined it as the “transitional phase”: “We are somewhere in the middle... And it is more like a stagnation, but the worst part is that it's not really moving forward even at a slow pace”. Dato mentioned another dimension stating that sometimes people claim to follow these values but “when it comes to practice, it's not quite correct in some cases”. For him, pro-LGBT and queer rights protests in Georgia that had both supporters and critics are examples of this observation.

Stating that Georgia is not “fully and entirely protecting human rights”, Ana pointed out its occupied territories. She voiced that Georgia failed to protect children's rights in Gali (Abkhazian’ Georgians common place of residence) for education in their native language or their freedom of movement. For her, only when protecting these rights Georgia can become “a part of the European family”, which, in its turn, will help Georgia to increase support to the population of now break-away regions. But now that European values may not be entirely “clear” for Georgians, “a notch and push” is needed to increase Georgia’s commitment to these values. She also believes that “the standards for human rights” are growing, and that is why Georgia so far fails to approach them thoroughly. An example by Dato could illustrate this case. While he believes the problem with Georgia’s religious minorities is “already solved” and the “aggressive groups who were kind of fighting against religious minorities... are no longer in the news”, the LGBTQ+ community in Georgia is still insecure and deprived of their constitutional right to freedom of expression.

Overall, Dato and Mariam outlined that the question if Georgia follows up on European values is “complicated”, “difficult”, “hard to answer”, and this quote would provide one of the possible explanations, why:

“When you look at public opinion polls, there is a huge divide over so many things, like in many countries. It is hard to tell if Georgia is unified, [is it] pro-something or not” (Mariam)

This leads us to a so-called “bubble” of like-minded people that two respondents mentioned. Surrounded by like-minded people, young Georgians “sometimes lose the sense of what is happening outside” of this bubble. They can not see the situation clearly, “because there are a lot more people who have completely different views on things” (Irakli). That is why Levan and Irakli believe that their opinions may be biased towards other groups of the Georgian population as they are making them “according to the bubble”. This bubble is created through social media communication, where, as Irakli said, are “Facebook friends which have a couple of thousand friends, and they also have a couple of thousand like-minded friends”.

5.2. Why Georgia is a European country

Most participants agreed that to consider any country European; one should first look at how it, to use Nikoloz words, “fits in this [European] society” by sharing European values and aspiration; the geographical or political argument was of secondary importance for them. Nikoloz believes that there cannot be “guidelines of how to be a European state”, stating that “Europe itself is very diverse, so we can't say that this one is European or this one is not”. As Levan explained:

"It's not where you actually are... It's all about the kind of values which you have and which you want to have in your everyday life. This is what makes a country more European or not. If you look at Cyprus, for example, geographically, they are in Asia, right? But they are a European country, and they feel this way".

While commonly agreed that Georgia is a European country, all respondents demonstrated awareness that this is a self-statement that does not necessarily comply with reality. Participants referred to this belief as "a state of mind" (Dato), "European mindset" (Nino), "an idea", "self-statement" (Gvantsa), "aspirations" towards Europe or European Union (Irakli, Mariam), "my desire, and my generation's desire to be part of Europe" (Levan), "in our understanding, in our dreams" (Ana) but not to as a fait accompli. But this self-statement, as they believe, will contribute to theirs and Georgia's prosperity which is associated, as Ana worded it, with being "a part of the European family". As Nino stated:

"I think what matters the most is what people think. This is the main factor contributing to the belief that Georgia is Europe because we choose our path and we think that we are Europe... if some scholars say that geographically Georgia is not Europe, it does not matter much as long as we have a European mindset".

"When I say that Georgia is Europe, I exaggerate a bit, because there is a lot to go, like tolerance to certain marginal groups is not still [there], and gender equality remains a problem. But I think what matters now is the aspiration to be part of what we call Europe, however, we define it" (Ana)

Mariam and Nino quoted public opinion polls to demonstrate that the Georgian population generally favours the idea of Georgia someday becoming a member of the EU in support of their claim.

Most informants' understanding of Georgian Europeanness was related to Georgia's state independence and two historical events, the proclamation of independence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918 and the bloodless 2003 Rose revolution. Ana, Mariam, and Levan linked being "born in the independent Georgia" with their belief that Georgia is a European country. Ana described it, stating: "I remember Georgia struggling to go farther from Russia [in the 1990s], and the only way of being far away from Russian and the only way of being a democratic sovereign country was to be part of the European family". Levan linked Georgia's independence to an ability of its citizens, namely of "his generation", to travel to Europe, make friends and study there, unlike it was during the Soviet times.

After the dissolution of the Russian Empire and the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918, Georgian leaders, educated in European countries, introduced a constitution that approximated it to Europe and its values, some participants voiced. Irakli and Nikoloz agreed that at that time, their country "was close to Europe" and its values, "even from today's perspective". But as Ana believes, "because of the Soviet Union, it just all stopped for 70 years". "After the Rose Revolution, it [Europe] became like the only road that Georgia ever wanted to follow", summarizes Mariam, and this road was leading "back in the direction of the first Democratic Republic of Georgia" (Ana). Three participants connected the effect of the 2003 Rose revolution on enhancing European aspirations of Georgian people with the relevant messages and ideas being "transmitted to the public", "popularized" (as Gvantsa put it), or "imposed" by political elites (Mariam). It went hand in hand with an education reform of then-new Saakashvili's government followed by a replacement of Russian by English as the mandatory second language at Georgian schools. Gvantsa believes "it was connected to Europeanization and European idea, and language played an important role as well". Two informants outlined the role of the often-quoted Zurab Zhvania's statement "I am Georgian; therefore I am European" in self-identification of themselves and Georgia as European (see p. 13 in Chapter 3). Ana shared that this phrase "largely defined" her childhood and her understanding "of where we belong as a country". Mariam mentioned that

after the Rose revolution, this phrase was encountered by her so frequently that it “engraved in the mentality that if you are Georgian, this means that you are already European”.

Four participants stated that Georgia is a European country because of its cultural, historical, and religious ties with Europe. Dato mentioned that ancient colonies, including the city of Phasis, today’s Poti, were found on the Black Sea coast by the Greeks. He pointed out that there used to be a large Greek diaspora in Georgia, but it faced poverty after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and had to leave the country; estimated around 100 000 people in 1989, only 5500 Greeks were remaining in Georgia in 2014 (Meissner, 2019, p. 3). Mariam and Nikoloz pointed out the religious ties of Georgia with Europe; Georgia is a “tiny piece of land of Christian population” together with Armenia in the South Caucasus (Mariam). However, Salome believes that “nowadays it [Christianity] matters less and less” in this regard.

Four participants claimed that personal experience of travelling around Europe and communicating with locals strongly contributed to their belief that Georgia belongs to Europe. While Dato did not see “any huge cultural difference” between Europe and Georgia, Levan believes the cultural differences are existent but are compensated by a similar “thinking”, “the same opinions and the same assumptions” thanks to which “the gap [between us] is not that big”. While Dato said that he “felt at home” like he “belongs there” in any part of Europe he travelled to, “to the north in Sweden or to the south in Malta”, Nikoloz believes Georgian people are “a way much open with each other” that makes them similar to the population of Spain, Italy, or Portugal and distinct them from Northern Europe.

The participants inevitably had to admit Georgia's ambivalent geographic and cultural position between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Irakli believes that “If we were on the other side of the Black Sea, there wouldn't be such a question”. Although Georgia is admittedly a “the focal point” (Mariam) or “junction of Europe and Asia” and received “a mix of Asian culture” (Gvantsa) that contributes, in their opinion, to its cultural diversity, participants tended to alienate themselves from what they saw as a non-European experience their country shares. Gvantsa pointed out that young Georgians “always try to underline that Georgia is a part of the European culture and European identity”. But even though Georgia has received lots of “European influence” (Mariam), there is still a “struggle to be a part of the European continent” (Ana). For a generation who witnessed the 2009 August war and is striving for the territorial integrity of their country, being a part of Europe is associated with peace and progress while being a part of the Middle East goes with “instability and conflict” (Mariam). This complies with an understanding of Europe/EU as a security and stability provider in Georgia. In this light, some informants referred to Georgia not as a South Caucasus state but as an Eastern European or as the Eastern Partnership one. Nino doubts that the South Caucasus can be considered a region in political terms because it lacks features that can unify Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. For her, they are “as different as it could be in terms of their aspirations, political systems. There are some similarities, like cuisine, maybe”. She stated that Georgia relates to Eastern European states “because of the similar struggles”. Gvantsa stated that Georgia belongs to Eastern Europe, stating: “When I think of Georgia, first I'd say that it is an Eastern European country, I'd not say that it is Caucasian, Asian or Eurasian country”. Dato, on the contrary, believes that Azerbaijan, along with Turkey, also belongs to Europe. Their attitudes towards the neighbours may vary, but the attribution of Georgia to Europe is constant: “If I go far from Georgia, to Asia, to the Middle East, I feel like coming from the outside”.

5.3. Existential threat

Whatever reason guided the belief of my informants that Georgia belongs to Europe, the attitude that the path towards Europe/European Union is the only one Georgia should follow was unanimous. It was referred to as “the closest” or “the best option” (Mariam, Levan), “the only way” to follow (Ana, Levan), “direction of developments” (Gvantsa) and “right direction” (Nino), “one for perfection” (Nikoloz). The reasoning behind it did not vary either. European cooperation is

perceived as “a matter of survival” of Georgian statehood, as Gvantsa and Levan put it, which is quite an encompassing definition.

“We need Europe and these values to survive, to be secure, to be more educated, to be more financially independent or politically independent, not to be afraid to go out, not to be afraid of being attacked militarily or economically or politically” (Levan)

My participants commonly associated the existential threat with Georgia’s northern neighbour, Russia. The breakaway regions ruining Georgia's territorial integrity, Russia's disinformation campaigns, borderization policy of Russian military forces in the breakaway regions and Russian presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and a threat of Russian military interference to Georgia were mentioned by the participants. Irakli and Dato were straightforward, characterizing Georgia as a “small, poor and isolated” country of 3.4 million people that “is getting smaller every week” but “would be already completely swallowed by Russia without the support of international society” and “can’t survive on its own”. Irakli believes that borderization policy still affects Georgian citizens’ decision not to provoke a war: “If we had at one moment decided to stop this crawling occupation, it would start the war again”. In this context, Georgia needs “to be part of something bigger” (Dato); “to be a part of the group, part of the squad”, “someone we can rely on in times of need” (Irakli). Most participants tend to see the European Union as this ally, as a guarantor of its territorial integrity, sovereignty, safety, security, and survival of a Georgian state. Just three informants also mentioned NATO. Gvantsa had the most distinctive position regarding it: “I think Georgia sees the EU as the path to democracy and economic development. For security, it moves to NATO”. Irakli also pointed out the fact that Georgia deployed troops to the NATO mission. Most informants did not consider Georgia's closest neighbourhood, perceived as “turbulent” (Ana) and “unfriendly” (Irakli), not only because of Russia, for a role of an ally. Mariam believes that in Georgia's immediate neighbourhood, consisting of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Russia, no state can serve as an example for Georgia in any regard. Irakli mentioned that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict makes it impossible to create an alliance with Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite Georgia's attempts “to be a stabilizing, neutral power” in this conflict. Although Irakli sees Turkey as “a huge ally”, he believes Georgia needs something to “attach to not only politically but mentally”. Thus, no options for finding allies among immediate neighbours naturally lead Georgia to the West, according to the understanding of my respondent. The following quotes summarize these positions:

“Georgia sees it as an either-or choice; it is either Russia or the West, Europe and NATO” (Gvantsa)

“I really want Georgia to be a part of the European Union because it is the only way for us to protect ourselves from Russia, except for NATO... If we join any of these big organizations like European Union or NATO, they will probably help us to protect our borders, internationally recognized borders” (Nikoloz)

It is interesting that few participants explicitly named Russia. It is probably due to a researcher’s nationality that was not hard to recognize for the participants or assumed that this answer was obvious. Who is to blame was made clear from the context of the conversation or after a specific question about Russia was asked. Ana used the euphemism “northern neighbour”. Irakli’s words are also illustrative. “We’re not located in the friendliest environment. We have some countries with whom we had bad experiences either in recent years or throughout history”, meaning what he referred to as Russian and then Soviet occupation and 2008 August war.

5.4. Quest for a better future

Throughout the interviews, this theme was evoked by most participants when explaining why they would like Georgia to maintain cooperation with the EU and potentially to become its member

someday. For them, it would grant Georgia benefits that it mostly lacks today, such as economic prosperity, promotion of democratization and human rights, political stability and the rule of law, “pragmatic”, as Mariam called it, desire for a better life, study and career opportunities. Overall, respondents believed that cooperation with the EU contributes to the democratic development of Georgia. Dato understood democratic development as “protecting the rights of everyone, accepting people regardless of their differences, and just co-existing in the society where you might disagree with people, but you still live with them in peace”. Nino called Europe “an external agent of Georgian democratization, modernization, and political stability”.

“Georgia definitely can do some stuff for itself without European Union, but it is going to be way harder, like creating a bicycle once again. If we’re closer to the European Union or Europe, it will help us to make these changes a way faster than we will do it by ourselves” (Nikoloz)

Four informants mentioned the benefits of the preferential trade regime between Georgia and the European Union regulated by the DCFTA. Ana claimed that the EU has already become Georgia's biggest trading partner, constituting 23% of its trade (Europa.eu), and grants support local enterprises. Dato believes if Georgia becomes a European Union member state, its competitive environment will contribute to the quality of Georgian goods, stating: “The quality [of Georgian products] is not good enough for the European Union, and we have to evolve it. I mean, when you are facing the fact that you do not have any other choice, you have to make better stuff, that helps you to develop”. Gvantsa shared a more sceptical attitude, however, saying that “free trading agreement... is not that used” and there is more potential to it.

Several informants pointed out the transformative role of Western/European education opportunities. Changes caused by the Rose revolution are associated with Mikhail Saakashvili's government “composed of young people who got educated in Western countries” in Gvantsa's eyes. Ana admired the youth programmes financed by the European Union that she was involved in her teenage years. Nino shared that her experience of studying at the exchange programmes in the EU countries positively impacted her career developments at home. Mariam believes that young Georgians see Europe as a place where one can get a good education and apply it for the country's good. She linked it to the brain drain problem, stating, “I want to see Georgia as a country that young people won't have to leave to get a better life, better education as well, [from where] people will not have to escape from”.

5.5. The EU-Georgia relations

Overall, the attitude of my respondents towards the present cooperation between Georgia and the European Union showed unanimity. Six Informants (Mariam, Kevan, Nikoloz, Gvantsa, Nino, Irakli) shared an opinion that Georgia, to use Mariam's and Nikoloz words, needs “a lot of transformations”, “reforms”, “political change” before it would be able to receive a membership perspective. Gvantsa was the most explicit about the kind of transformation that Georgia needs. For her, it is introducing the fully proportional parliamentary system so that power would not be abused “by a political party who has a majority for their benefits,” as it was in the case of the two latest Georgia's governments. Levan mentioned that he is sceptical about current Georgia's government promise to apply for the EU membership in 2024, stating: “I think for the next 15 years they won't even talk about such stuff... it's sad to say [things] like that, but it's very realistic”. Gvantsa also called it “a very long-term perspective”. Ana and Irakli believe, to use Schimmelfennig & Sedelmayer's term, in membership conditionality. They claimed that the long-term perspective is essential for motivating politicians and citizens to pursue meaningful and resultative cooperation with the EU. Nino and Irakli agreed that the membership perspective should be deserved and should not be taken for granted.

“I would not ever want Georgia to be in the EU just for the sake of being there. To be a member of the European Union means that you as a country are respecting human rights, embracing common values, ensuring a certain level of life for your citizens and so on. Taking steps in this

direction, whether it's an association agreement or something else, is just as important as being a member" (Nino)

Irakli, Ana, Mariam, and Gvantsa positively estimated current cooperation between the EU and Georgia by signing the AA, DCFTA and enabling visa-free travel to the EU. Their opinion on what response these moves received from the Georgian population varied, however. Mariam called them "a huge thing, really appreciated in Georgia", although Irakli notices that they are not "straightforward" for some part of the Georgian population. Nevertheless, all four agreed to use Mariam's words, that "one thing after another will bring Georgia closer to the European Union". A visa-free regime, introduced in 2017, was explicitly referred to as one of such things by most of my respondents. They enjoyed this opportunity from their personal experience. Dato appreciated that not only it made travelling more accessible and "different", as it enabled him to spontaneously plan his trips and got him rid of the necessity to apply for a Schengen visa for every consequent travel. Several respondents shared that a visa-free regime has brought Georgia to use Irakli's words, "very close to Europe mentally", or even "returned" it to Europe.

"Going through the gates with your Georgian passport - this is a bit pathetic, I guess - but it still felt like we went back to our historical place, where we belong" (Ana)

When entering the EU, travellers from Georgia and Ukraine and Moldova, granted visa liberalization in 2017 and 2016, respectively, are obliged to show supporting documents such as bank information or a return ticket (Civil.ge, 2020). Ana mentioned these "obstacles" when using a visa-free regime but offset them: the EU authorities do that to "make sure that you would come back to your country, whatever country it is". Mariam appreciated having the same benefits as the citizens of the EU member states, namely travelling in the Schengen area without a visa. In 2020, the EU tightened this regulation and published the specific list of documents that can confirm a purpose of a trip; before that, Georgian citizens could be rejected from boarding due to reasons that were not regulated, for instance, a booked accommodation seemed "too cheap" for an officer at the checkpoint (Pipia, 2021).

Gvantsa and Nini believe that another step making "Georgia closer to Europe" is the EU regularly expressing concern about the domestic affairs of Georgia. Both respondents mentioned that the European Union's concern was crucial in brokering the agreement between the "Georgian Dream" and governmental opposition in spring 2021, which ended the months of domestic political crisis. For them, the EU appears to be the force that Georgian authorities are accountable to, and that will reverse them if they lose their way to the direction the respondents want them to lead the country. Talking about the EU brokered deal, Nino believes that Georgians "can always count on their [the EU] help". Gvantsa said that the situation around the 2020 crisis was "openly criticized" by the EU, and "the EU also underlined that it affects the EU-Georgia relations". It was commonly unacceptable for the participants.

However, the fact that the Eastern Partnership does not offer a membership perspective to the partner countries bothers the respondents. Ana called it "disappointing". Gvantsa also named it "one of the biggest disappointments" for both Georgian academia and population for two reasons, stating: "For Georgia, the Eastern partnership is clearly a way to membership, but the EU underlines all the time that it is not a path to membership". Another reason for disappointment for these communities, as she put it, is that Eastern partnership "does not differentiate between front-running countries like Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia on the one side and Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia on the other". Gvantsa worried that "the EU has decreased its presence" in the neighbourhood as it "was almost absent" during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Dato said he fails to understand why "the European Union is so slow with the relationship with Georgia." Still, he can accept it as long as it leaves space for the European Union to deal with its domestic agenda and to grow "stronger" and "have more influence on the international politics", namely situation with Russia.

Two informants explicitly brought up an effect of the domestic EU agenda on Georgia's progress with the EU. Mariam made enlargement fatigue as an example. For her, the EU was “rushing on board” accessing Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 and now “have problems with the expansion in general”. Irakli agrees that Georgia's success with the EU depends on its efforts and the EU domestic affairs and resources.

“There are countries on the waiting list that have been waiting for quite a while now. I don't think it will be wise from the EU side to start this whole new process of Georgian membership when they still have states waiting. There is one country that has just left, and there are more things to settle. It's not like the EU is this almighty organization that can do anything. They also have a limited number of people working there; they also have limited funding”.

Nikoloz shared that the lack of membership perspective is “sad, disappointing, but understandable, not surprising”. He explained his reasoning by describing the EU as a “very self-concerned” organization, meaning it lacks response to the conflicts beyond its borders: “If something is happening outside of Europe, they are not really doing much about it”. He stated the EU “did almost nothing... could have done more at least in terms of the sanctions” for the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

How Georgia can contribute to Europe

The participants mentioned two reasons when answering how Georgia could contribute to the EU if it were to join the Union now. Gvantsa, Levan, and Nino believed that the key Georgia’s contribution to the EU would be “regional stability” and securitization of the immediate EU borders. The quote by Nino summarizes her and Levan’s points.

“It has to do with the enlargement that changed the EU’s external borders, and now some of the countries of the Eastern Partnership are either direct neighbours of the EU or are very close to their borders. Obviously, this means that the European Union would like its borders to be as secure as possible and to have neighbouring countries [that stand] close to European values... that are democratic” (Nino)

However, this stance was not illustrated by mentioning any specific military or security infrastructure that Georgia can offer to the EU now or any developments in this regard. It appears that in this case, the presence of the EU in Georgia and its neighbourhood is itself a source of "regional stability". Some participants were more explicit about what "regional stability" constitutes for them. For Levan and Gvantsa, it was Georgia’s “strategic” geographical location between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Gvantsa also stated Georgia's commitment to the “full partnership” with the EU, unlike Armenia and Azerbaijan, who are interested in the economic benefits of the Eastern Partnership. Explaining Georgia's unique position among the states in this region, Mariam suggested that the EU saw Georgia as “a shining spot of democracy” and a “little hope in an authoritarian-dominated region”, based on its positive developments after the Rose revolution. She described this region as follows: “There are no democracies in the South Caucasus. Armenia has started to democratize recently, but there is this terrible regime in Azerbaijan. Turkey is not doing great either. Then we have the Middle East, and we have Russia. So, all these bad examples, all authoritarian regimes across the Caspian Sea, the same picture in Central Asia”.

“If Europe succeeds today to make Georgia a full democracy, maybe neighbouring countries also will see that democracy is not that bad, so maybe we should invest more [in it], maybe Europe is not the enemy who is trying to take our nation's food and transform us into gays and lesbians, that it is something that can make us a better place for everyone”.

Ana, Nikoloz, Nino, and Irakli agreed the second potential contribution of Georgia is its cultural and historical heritage. It would enrich diversity which Irakli and Nikoloz saw as one of the main European values.

“It’s a combination of different countries, and even if those countries are neighbouring countries and share the border, you can move between countries and it doesn’t even feel like a border, despite you moving from one country to another, and you’re in a completely different cultural environment” (Irakli)

Ana believes Georgian accession to the EU will make the "European family and the EU family" more diverse by bringing to the EU new political processes, agriculture, and young professionals. For Nino, it is also a “wonderful cuisine” and “perfect destinations for your summer vacation”. Nikoloz pointed out that Georgia is “different from any other European country”, and it is crucial “to be a unique culture in your own way” to contribute to something else. In his view, lifestyle and Christianity together make Georgia unique. He described features of the Georgian lifestyle as being open-minded, “open with each other”, stating that it also links it to the population of Southern Europe, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. He sees the Georgian people as religious and "really nationalistic but not in a bad way, not in a Polish way, but in the way that they are really prouder of their history than other countries". Elaborating on what he meant by "Polish way", informant 8 mentioned "right-wing rise in the political parties" and "a bit fascist movements" that he encountered in Poland but "of course they exist not only in Poland... there are also some Georgian groups which support this idea". He stated that there are countries like Georgia where people love their history and culture “but not in a way that they feel superior”. For him, Georgia also will bring to the EU a new alphabet and a new language.

Half of the participants were straightforward to point out that Georgia can not significantly contribute to the EU economy. Irakli mentioned that Georgia is “not that attractive economically” for the EU as France and Germany. Dato, Mariam, and Gvantsa pointed out that Georgia is "poor", "not a rich country".

5.6. Obstacles to Europeanization

This theme emerged from the respondents' answers and was not predefined by the researcher. Participants named several reasons that prevent Georgia from what they referred to as adopting European values. These reasons can be grouped around the following sub-themes: Soviet leverage; government and political system; Georgian Orthodox Church; polarization of Georgian society; outdated school education.

Soviet leverage

Informants commonly agreed that 70 years of being a part of the Soviet Union hindered the adoption by Georgia of what they understand as European values. For five participants who evoked this sub-theme, this was the first reason to name when explaining Georgia’s modest progress in this regard, both population and political elites concerned. In their answers, the Soviet regime is referred to as an occupation that distanced Georgia from the European path it pursued when it proclaimed independence in 1918. There are lots of people living in Georgia who were brought up according to what Irakli referred to as the "Soviet values" and who make voting decisions according to them ("those values are still in the heads of a lot of people, especially the ones who lived under this rule for long"). He described people holding these values in the following way: “They do not understand why it is important to fight or freedom or to fight for fair elections; what is the point of fair elections if there is always someone who sits up there like Stalin whom they have never seen in their life but adored”; for him, what official European Union values that he would like his country to adapt are an alternative of these "Soviet values". Mariam traced the implications of the Soviet regime: “We didn’t have any experience of democratic institutions, civil society, how we should organize, how you should make your voice heard so that you have better

governance”. Irakli and Nikoloz believe generations who spent most of their lives under the Soviet Union rule struggle to adapt to the changes that modern Georgia needs to introduce like fair elections, regular democratic change of power, promotion of minority rights, and protection of freedom of expression for everyone. Irakli believes that the Georgian authorities seek the support of these people by satisfying their “Soviet-style directives” like regular pension rise.

“They also vote... Those governments, their main priority, unfortunately, is to stay in power. So, they will do whatever those people ask them to do if they want higher pensions, and they will put that as a priority, although it cannot come from thin air, you can not just print money”.

When discussing this obstacle, two respondents, Mariam and Nikoloz, were optimistic about how Georgia is overcoming it, however. Mariam said that the situation is “slowly changing”. At the same time, Nikoloz was hopeful, stating: “The changes are positive in general, and we are developing, and, at the end of the day, we will accept all these values by ourselves and not force each other what some politicians are trying to do”.

Government, political system

Four participants claimed that the actions of the two latest Georgian governments had been an obstacle to becoming a more European country. Dato and Gvantsa believe these are because their actions and claims have varied. The former mentioned that the government sticks to the discourse of protecting the human rights of every single individual. Still, in his opinion, these are just “very basic phrases”, and politicians are not doing “enough to have full freedom of expression for everyone”, for example, queer minorities. Instead of creating a safe environment for such groups, the authorities punish only specific individuals who “try to violate constitutional rights”. Gvantsa mentioned that “Georgian Dream”, the current ruling party, is “openly pro-Western and pushing for the EU policies” while “doing everything to deteriorate democracy... in the last few years, the democratic rating in Georgia is deteriorating more and more”. She referred to the 2020 political crisis, discussed in Chapter 3, and the following detention of Nika Melia, a leader of the largest Georgia's opposition party United National Movement in February 2021, as an example of such a deterioration. Gvantsa and Nikoloz expressed discontent with the current political and economic system of Georgia. Nikoloz worried that Georgia has turned into a “neoliberal and capitalistic” state, meaning that it is not protecting labour rights, referring to his personal experience. Gvantsa voiced a political system of Georgia to be changed because it is “constructed so that it can be used by a political party who has a majority for their own benefits”. As a result, one party can monopolize “the justice system, parliament, government... all the power”. She made an example of the previous government formed under the United National Movement party and the current one. In her view, the political system should be changed by shifting to a fully-proportional parliamentary system so that “no party could take advantage of it”. “If the government changes but they don't change the political system in Georgia, it will be a vicious circle”. These answers demonstrate that the respondents tend to self-distance themselves from high-ranking politicians, even considering their public commitment to the European aspirations. Only Irakli mentioned that the two latest Georgian governments have managed to normatively approximate Georgia to Europe as Association Agreement, DCFTA, and a visa-free regime that Georgia enjoys now were achieved during their rule.

Polarization of Georgian society

Three participants have addressed this issue. Irakli believes that Georgians “spent too much time fighting against each other” or “over stupid issues that should not be on the top of agenda today” on social media. For him, the example of such “stupid issues” can be a discussion about whether there should be a Father’s Day introduced in Georgia. Such things distract their attention from other important issues, “like when someone has received an appointment of a jury for life, but the

whole country is discussing something else on Facebook”. He pointed out that these people also allow their attention to be distracted by “groups”, like a right-wing “Georgian March”, who “do not care about what people are discussing, they are just paid to shift the focus of people’s attention, and people allow it because they are not really smart”. Irakli believes that the polarization of Georgian society was one of the reasons that led to “two civil wars in five years” after gaining independence “instead of building the country from scratch”. Ana expressed a similar point of view, saying that "domestic or international conflicts" shift the attention of Georgian people from thinking about human rights. Informant 6 argues that "political polarization is unbelievable" in Georgia, especially in the 2020 parliamentary crisis.

“Two main parties, the one in charge and the other one who is the biggest oppositional party. I mean, the gap between them and their supporters is huge. It is kind of conducting and operating on the principle [that] you either are with them or with us”.

The very opinions of my respondents about the "traditional" part of Georgian society can also serve as an example of polarization. Levan draws a line between “his generation”, young Georgians in their 20-s, and “very traditional, dogmatic” generations of their parents and grandparents. He described being “traditional” as unwillingness “to adjust to new things” and a desire “to go with the flow, with the same narratives and same exemptions as it was 50 years ago”. In his opinion, it affects the situation with human rights in the country and prevents Georgia from developing in the direction his generation would like. In his view, the most prominent “new thing” that these generations reject concerns the LGBTQ+ community.

“In Georgia, there is a huge anti-LGBTQ sentiment, with this excuse that Georgia is a traditional country, and we can't really tolerate people from these communities. There is only a family made from a man and a woman who are married and have children. This is what I mean by traditions; some dogmatic stuff is taken from our ancient heroes or our ancient history, that we are a very old country with a huge history, so we can't accept something [that] is changing”.

Levan was the only respondent to explicitly mention that politicians and decision-makers who share this "traditional narrative" also prevent the promotion of European values in Georgia, stating: “They are 40-50 [years] plus. They are part of that establishment that was raised with this kind of narrative. Even though some of them are not vocal about their perceptions and their attachment to this kind of narratives, deep inside, their policies and initiatives are really speaking for themselves”. Mariam mentioned that the third half of the Georgian population would not like Georgia to be a part of the European Union and "they also have their reasoning behind it". One of such reasons can be associated with what Ana and Salome, to use Ana’s words, defined as “a narrative that Europe will take our traditions and our so-called Georgianness from us”.

“Many people think that if we become a member of the European Union, its truly committed member, it will define us as a nation. Our statehood always had these several pillars, and one of them has always been that Georgia survived as an independent country, as an independent nation, and that our religion in our traditions and our language define us a lot. And that narrative that maybe Europe will take it away from us and not respect our independence, our integrity, our traditions is one of the obstacles why we are not fully committed to European values”.

While Nino believes this narrative is “disinformation”, Ana blames “strong” Russian propaganda in its circulation in Georgia.

Georgian Orthodox Church

The general topic evoked by the participants was that the church opposes the promotion of European values that the respondents believe is important for Georgia, namely rights of minorities and women's rights. Three participants echoed the thoughts of Kakabadze on the liberal national

Georgian identity that contradicts the vitality of the Georgian Orthodox church and does not consider it a cornerstone of Georgian Europeanness (Chapter 3). They would say that the Georgian Orthodox church is an obstacle on the way to, to use Irakli's words, "gaining European values". They pointed out that they share a critical attitude not towards the Orthodoxy itself but the institution. Nikoloz believes that the Georgian Orthodox Church misuses its leverage of the most trusted institution by the Georgian society and encourages schoolteachers not to discuss certain topics with children, such as LGBTQ+ rights or the rights of minorities.

Meanwhile, he recognises a "low demand" for such discussions at school from the society, stating: "Because of the demand, the politicians do not want to make really sharp decisions about it. Because [otherwise] their support goes low. And it's kind of a loop. Education develops, of course, but very slowly because of the church". Nino also pointed out that the church actively meddles in politics, although Georgia is a secular state.

"Politicians also know that if they want more votes, they also kind of need the support of the church too" (Nino)

For the same reason, Nikoloz described it as "these mafia guys which I personally hate". For Irakli, the Georgian Orthodox Church was discredited when he found out that most of its managers were employees of the institutions such as the KGB in the Soviet times. He believes that the church "dictates a lot of rules to the politicians" in their private or business interests.

Outdated school education

Irakli and Nikoloz believe that certain flaws in Georgia's education system prevent youth from acquiring European values. They associated these flaws with developing critical thinking and the skills of respectful discussion at school.

"If you look at the statistics on how the Georgian education system performs, we are pretty low at everything. We are low at science, at this component of reading. Youths have problems reading and analyzing what is in there, understanding what they have just read, and this is catastrophic because you cannot really have faith in a generation if they cannot read things and understand what they're reading" (Irakli)

Nikoloz believes that most teachers in Georgian schools teach "in a wrong way, in a Soviet way, it is different and older than today's education" meaning that teachers do not encourage open discussions in the class on "controversial topics" like issues of LGBTQ+ community. He believes that Georgia needs "a new system" of education where teachers won't be able to refuse a discussion on the topics that "can be very uncomfortable with them", or "new teachers".

5.7. Discussion

The analysis's results mostly comply with the previous studies on elite and popular discourses on Europeanization in Georgia. They also demonstrated ambivalent attitudes understanding of Europe and European values and are driven by utilitarian and identity factors (Tsuladze, 2017a; 2017b, p. 156; Tsuladze et al., 2016; Tsuladze & Osepashvili, 2021). The code indicating discontent of some respondents with asymmetrical power relations between Georgia and the EU emerged from the data. Regarding the "fears of declining national identity", two participants referred to it as Russian disinformation and propaganda, doubting their validity, unlike Tsuladze's research (2017a). Thematic analysis revealed six themes and eight sub-themes. Those are Ambivalence (sub-themes: "What is Europe", "European values"); Quest for a better future; Existential threat; Why Georgia is a European country; EU-Georgia relations (sub-theme: How Georgia can contribute to Europe); Obstacles to Europeanization (sub-themes: Soviet leverage; Government, political system; Polarization of Georgian society; Georgian Orthodox church; Outdated school education).

The major thread of all eight interviews concerned the existential threat to Georgia coming from the Russian Federation. Participants commonly highlighted that Georgia is located between hostile Russia. For them, it threatens Georgia's territorial integrity by supporting and recognizing break-away regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, implementing borderization policy. It is also meddling into its domestic affairs by financially supporting certain groups and politicians or exercising disinformation campaigns "that Europe will steal our so-called Georgianness from us", "will not respect our independence, language" and traditions.

When asked how Europe can contribute to Georgia or why Georgia needs to be a part of Europe, most respondents explained that Georgia is an immediate neighbour of the European Union. It would be interested in maintaining peace in its neighbourhood. Participants commonly saw the European Union as a guarantor of their territorial integrity and democratic development, similar to Jones & Kakhishvili's argument (2016, p. 24) about "the perception of Europe as Georgia's protector from "existential threats". Against this background, there were few critical voices. They stated that the EU is preoccupied with its domestic agenda and lacks response to the conflicts in its neighbourhood, including the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Another argument was that it is trying to overcome the consequences of the "rush" 2007 enlargement into the Balkans. One participant was afraid that this might weaken the EU presence in its Eastern neighbourhood and Georgia. Cooperation with NATO is also seen as the path to state security by three respondents.

Interestingly, when asked how they would explain the meaning of the word Europe, the participants gave ambivalent definitions. They named three key pillars of Europe— Europe as a space imagined in terms of culture; Europe as a space where different values, rights are respected; Europe as the European Union, specific countries, or "modern democracies". Only one informant mentioned that there are no specific "guidelines of how to be a European country". The respondents showed unanimity when explaining that any country can be considered European if it "feels this way" or "fits in the society". The former indicator correlates with their reasoning of why Georgia is a European country. When next asked to argue their position why Georgia is a European country, most participants said that it is primarily their self-conviction (self-statement, "European mindset", exaggeration) that lays behind this statement. For them, the future of Georgia as a part of the European Union was associated with a better lifestyle, study and working opportunities, the better economic performance of Georgia, democratic development.

"Fit in the society" was the second indicator of Europeanness outlined by the participants; one of the indicators of this "fit" for them was the promotion and adoption of European values. The idea of European values was broad. Only two participants explicitly said they understand European values as official EU values, although what other informants mentioned mostly semantically corresponds with the European Union values. They have been articulated as human rights, equality, human dignity, and freedom of expression. The respondents attributed human rights among the following groups: Georgian citizens, especially women and sexual minorities, and residents of the internationally recognized Georgian territories which are not controlled under the Georgian government, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. Surprisingly, problems with Georgia's ethnic and religious minorities, refugees, or stateless people were not evoked by the participants. Only two participants explicitly mentioned that a question about Georgia adopting these values is "difficult" and "controversial" because Georgia is a polarized country, and "it is hard to tell if Georgia is unified, [is it] pro-something or not". This observation could be extrapolated over other participants' answers because their answers did not lend themselves directly to one category.

On the one hand, Georgia is seen to share these values, but many obstacles prevent its commitment to them, or it takes effort to pursue them (Salome; Mariam, Anna, Irakli). On the other hand, Georgia is said to not fully protect these values or stagnate (Ana, Nikoloz, Irakli); overall attitude can be summarized by Irakli's words: "it could be much better, but it could be much worse". Thus, the common attitude towards this question does not fully echo Nodia's argument (1998, p. 42) that Georgians have started to adopt Western values for their own sake since the 1990-s; the attitude of half of the participants was that Georgia is struggling with their adoption.

Half of the participants stated that Georgia is a European country because of its cultural, historical, and religious ties with Europe. Respondents showed controversial stances towards the role of Christianity in this regard: some believe that it still links Georgia to Europe. In contrast, others voiced that religion has lost its primary meaning as a cornerstone of Georgian Europeanness. That correspondent with Kokabadze's model of liberal Georgian identity (2020, p. 28) and Nodia's argument (2016, p. 97) that Georgians tend to associate their Europeanness with Christianity less nowadays.

Most informants' understanding of Georgian Europeanness was informed by the experience of Georgian independence in 1918-1921 when the Democratic Republic of Georgia existed. By the 2003 Rose revolution, Georgia has firmly stepped on the path to Europe. The respondents tended to emphasize their Europeanness by rejecting communism, which complies with the same observation by Jones (2015, p. 252). They referred to the Soviet period of Georgian history as to Soviet occupation that hindered the cooperation of Georgia with European countries for 70 years. Another example is their personal experience of being born in independent Georgia in the 1990s. It echoes the observation that identification with the West intensified in the first years of independence (Nodia, 1998, p. 42; Minesashvili, 2013, p. 8; Jones, 2003, p. 94).

Most participants straightforwardly said that Georgia is not ready to join the bloc; four of them mentioned that it enjoys slow but steady developments in this regard, mentioning signing an Association Agreement that enables visa-free travel to the EU and DCFTA. Half of the participants expressed disappointment by the absence of the membership perspective, however. Only one participant confirmed that the mismatch between Georgia's membership expectations from the Eastern Partnership and the EU position about it, discussed in Chapter 3, is one of the sources of this disappointment. All participants expressed hope that Georgia eventually will become a part of the EU, even though one participant was sceptical about the timing promised by the current Georgian government. When explaining the potential contributions of their European aspirations, young people evoked a quest for a better future, associating it with Georgia's economic prosperity, investment attractiveness, political stability, and personal gains such as higher salaries, study and career opportunities.

Another common thread that emerged from the data concerns obstacles that Georgia faces on the way to becoming more European. Those obstacles are Soviet leverage, government and political system; Georgian Orthodox Church; polarization of Georgian society; outdated school education. Some respondents feel that 70 years of being a part of the Soviet Union left elderly generations who struggle to adopt European values. It hinders the speed with which the country adapts to the changes that they believe are necessary, such as freedom of expression for LGBTQ+ people. One participant worries that this observation applies not only to ordinary people but to the politicians too. Several participants believe that the political system of Georgia is an obstacle in itself as it permits one party to "monopolize the power", and the last two Georgian governments were named as an example. Several informants also saw the current Georgian Dream government and Georgian Orthodox church as obstacles, stating that the former allows the latter to meddle into domestic politics. Otherwise, the Church, being the most trusted institution in the Georgian society, can affect the party's ability to stay in power. Another thread that emerged from the data and supplemented the discussion in Chapter 3 is the participants' stance that Georgian society is polarized. This stance has been articulated through the opinion that Georgians draw too much attention to minor issues or allow them to distract their attention from important questions or are strongly divided along party lines. Related to this stance is another obstacle of school education that is not complying with the necessity to teach children critical thinking. Another opinion was that Georgians are too drawn on international and domestic politics and do not pay enough attention to the implementation of human rights, especially in the occupied regions.

CHAPTER 6. THE SHAME'S COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES DURING THE 2019 PROTESTS

This chapter is informed by Framing theory addressed in Chapter 1. After a brief descriptive presentation of the movement, the framing processes by Shame during the 2019 Gavrilov protests are discussed.

6.1. The 2019 Gavrilov night protests and the case of the Shame movement

What triggered Georgian citizens to react in June 2019 happened during the Inter - Parliamentary Assembly session on Orthodoxy. Held by the ruling party 'Georgian dream' in the Parliament of Georgia, the session was chaired by Sergei Gavrilov, a Russian State Duma MP and a member of the Communist Party of Russia. He made a speech in the Russian language sitting in the chair of the Speaker of the Georgian Government (OC Media, 2019a; Jishkariani et al., 2021, p. 6). It irritated the representatives of governmental opposition, and people started to gather outside of the Parliament. Gavrilov was then escorted from the building. By 19:00 of June 20th, thousands of young people gathered in front of the Georgian government protesting. They claimed that earlier, Gavrilov endorsed Abkhazia's proclamation of independence and participated in hostilities there back in the 1990-s; therefore, according to Georgia's Law on Occupied Territories, he should have been denied entering Georgia in the first place (Jishkariani et al., 2021, p. 6; OC Media, 2019a). Around midnight, having been denied access to the Parliament, protesters tried to storm the building but unsuccessfully. The protest ended with a violent crackdown of the Ministry of Internal Affairs police units and other law enforcement divisions. Rubber bullets, tear gas, and water cannons were used to disperse the protesters without warning (OC Media, 2019a; Jishkariani et al., 2021, p. 6). On the night of 20-21 June, 275 people were injured; two participants lost one eye due to the medical trauma received during the dispersal. Two hundred five protesters were arrested, 19 charged with group violence after June 20-21 (Civil.ge, 2019e; 2019f). Irakli Kobakhidze, the Chairman whose seat was taken by Gavrilov, resigned on June 21st (Civil.ge, 2019g). In June 23d, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, responded to the events by introducing a temporary ban on flights to Georgia from Russia and vice versa; this ban is valid to date (Civil.ge, 2019h). On the fourth day of protests, Bidzina Ivanishvili, the chair of the Georgian Dream party, announced that the next parliamentary elections would be held through the proportional party-list on June 24th (Civil.ge, 2019c). However, the protest did not wrap up. It lasted for 93 consecutive days till September 20th. It ended with the "together against the one" rally, when Shame announced that with wrapping up the protest, they started to mobilize people for the 2020 parliamentary elections (Civil.ge, 2019a).

The Shame movement

The Shame movement has been spontaneously formed with the start of the Gavrilov protests in June 2019 guided the campaign for 94 days till September. One of its future founders published a Facebook event inviting Georgians to protest at the Parliament on June 20th after working hours. Most of its 16 founding members were not acquainted before the Gavrilov night. As one of the founders put it, the movement "doesn't have official members but lots of followers who participate". Due to its non-hierarchical horizontal structure, it takes 16 founders to make vital decisions. They also involve the public in the decision-making process via their private Facebook page followed by 20 000+ people. As stated by Shota: "We have democracy in place for the very important decisions". Founders divide themselves into task groups depending on the project. Having started as an anti-occupational movement, it now develops in several directions. One of them is to engage young people to participate in the elections. Before the 2020 parliamentary

elections, the Shame organized a campaign encouraging young Georgians to come to the poll stations. According to Shota, “61% of this age group participated in the last elections, but in the recent 2020 elections, it was up to 69%”. Another direction of their work concerns the creation of media content about the current issues of Georgia, such as the so-called corruptive “judiciary clan”, juries who receive lifetime appointments and are reportedly affiliated with the “Georgian Dream” party (OC Media, 2019c). At the time of writing, the first episode of this series has received around 600 000 views on Facebook, “which is great because we are only 3,7 million nation, 4 million people speaking this language” (Shota). One of their recent campaigns was aimed at disadvantaged groups of the Georgian population who depend on state welfare of 50 lari for those living above the poverty line. The Shame has engaged with around 50 large private businesses in Georgia and around 500 volunteers to provide these people with clothes, medicines, food. Shame helped out 50 shelters and 3000 families that constitute 10 000 people; an average value of one humanitarian package was 100 lari. Another direction of their activity still concerns the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Their recent project aimed at COVID-19 related issues: “People who are living in the conflict regions, they could not go to the territory controlled by Georgia to take medicine because they had to quarantine two weeks, and lots of people died after crossing the river illegally, and they drowned” (Shota). Their project resulted in opening a medical camp by the line between Abkhazia and the territory controlled by the Georgian government, where those people could seek help from volunteering doctors. The movement used fundraising to sponsor this project and purchase medicaments. The Shame also cooperates with other Georgian social movements like Tbilisi Pride (see p. 18 in Chapter 4).

6.2. Diagnostic framing

The task of the diagnostic framing is to identify the issue that will drive a mobilization campaign (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 200). The Facebook event was published on June 20th by one of the future founder members of Shame, inviting people to protest in front of the Parliament after working hours. On the first day, the protest had no specific demand. It aimed at expressing anger and dissatisfaction over the situation: “People felt a need to go into the streets and to protest, they were just mad that they saw Gavrilov in the seat of the chairman” (Shota). According to Shota, for protesters, Gavrilov became a “living metaphor [of] Russian influence”, “a symbol of the occupation”. This leads us to the first problem of Russian occupation of Georgian territories that triggered the initial, spontaneous cycle of the protest. Another Shota’s articulation of this problem was to refer to it as an “existential threat” to Georgia’s sovereignty coming from Russia. He stated:

“We have wounds from this war in 2008 between Russia and Georgia, and 20% of our country is occupied, and we have a crawling occupation. People get kidnapped, these illegal borders are going through the private property of people who live there, they have to be displaced”.

This “infinite struggle” against Russia has lasted for at least three centuries: “Before that, the Russian empire was occupying Georgia, and now Putin is occupying Georgians” (Shota). During the protest, another related problem of Russian influence over Georgian politics revealed itself, to use Shota’s naming. He summarized it: “The major problem is Russia who wants to turn Georgia into its backyard... into a failed satellite state”. Shota mentioned several conceptions about the ways of achieving that. Russia-sponsored media propaganda campaigns aim to sow confusion regarding the EU-Georgia partnership and negative attitudes towards it among the Georgian population. Another source of influence comes from Georgia’s anti-Western political parties sponsored by Russia. According to him, these actions polarize Georgia’s society and hinder its inherently European identity.

The events of June 20th-21st invoked the protest organizers to a frame extension. Frame extension concerns expanding a primary framework of a social movement by adopting the interests/values of their potential constituents or make its activity more congruent with their interests to enlarge its participant pool (Snow et al., 1986, p. 472). This is how Shota described this process:

“After June 20th, we could hit the streets again and demand to step down from this and that, like it has been done before, but it did not give results because the ruling party may change, but the ruling party never changes. It is mostly due to systemic imbalance; the party has a constitutional majority in the parliament mainly because of this weak electoral system. If you become a ruling party, you have it all. It was a zero-sum game. We tried to cure the roots of the protests and placed the demand of proportional election”.

Therefore, the second problem concerned Georgia’s flawed parliamentary system that inevitably leads to one-party rule. In 2019, 75 out of 150 Georgian MPs were selected according to the majoritarian system while the other half was selected according to the proportional one. However, “the opposition practically never was able to secure the majoritarian deputies. So, the ruling party always had this advantage” (Shota). It has resulted in the domination of a leading party over executive and judicial branches of power and corruption among majoritarian MPs. When explaining how he sees the flaws of this system, Shota told a story about the majoritarian from the town of Gori.

“Gori is a city with a budget of 30 million lari. It is around \$10 mln. The majoritarian deputy from the ruling party, who used to be majoritarian during the former government, got 100 mln worth of public procurements, which Transparency International reported. So, we have a municipality with a 30-million-lari budget and the guy who accumulated the worth of 100 mln lari through his companies with the public procurements, the tenders which are funded through the state budget. This is the perfect example of why the majoritarian system was bad for Georgia”.

Another diagnostic framing task is to attribute blame or causality for the diagnosed problem, in other words, reveal those responsible for it (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 200). The previous example falls into widespread discontent with long-standing corruption and the unaccountability of the ruling class. Aside from Russia, whom Shota appointed responsible for both problems, another attribution of blame was towards Bidzina Ivanishvili and his ‘Georgian Dream’. Two reasons for that have been formulated. There is a conception that the “Georgian dream” exploits the flaws of Georgia’s majoritarian system yet following the path of the former UNM government. Another reason concerned Ivanishvili’s anticipated personal connections with Russian authorities and business interests in this country. Ivanishvili, perceived as Georgia’s “informal ruler” who “captured” the state, and owns his puppet parliament, is associated with Russia, where he earned his fortune. According to Shota, the movement's founders and protesters believed that having this person in charge may explain why Russia meddled in Georgian politics.

“His whole business was in Russia; the wealth was there, he had to take this wealth from Russia. It does not simply happen like that with Putin because he loves to imprison the oligarchs. People think that there might have been some deal or arrangement [between them]”.

As a result:

“It is a constant threat from Russia, but the acting ruling party is, sometimes people feel that they are playing along with Russia because they are either afraid of them or bought by them, this current ruling class”.

Another diagnostic framing task is identifying who is suffering from the diagnosed problems (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 200). When asked about it, Shota's first answer was "basically all the people in Georgia". Shota presented these three problems as something that bothered most Georgians and did not question the same/similar interpretation of the event and the protest by other groups. For instance, he mentioned that Russian influence over Georgian politics hinders Georgia's investment attractiveness. His second answer concerned internally displaced people from Abkhazia and South Ossetia; this group accounts for at least 370 000 people (IDMS, 2012).

6.3. Prognostic framing

The primary task of prognostic framing is to suggest solutions to the diagnosed problems (Snow & Benford 1988, p. 201; 2000, p. 617). Shame expressed its solutions in the demands. The second protest's stage offered three of them: a demand of holding the 2020 parliamentary election according to the proportional system; resignation of Giorgi Gakharia, the Minister of Internal Affairs, held responsible over the June 20th police crackdown on the peaceful protesters; release of people detained by the police and detention of law enforcement employees who exceeded their duties on June 20th (Civil.ge, 2019).

Shota believes Shame managed to mobilize people to join the protest mostly due to the demand for proportional elections. It "channelled" their anger into the productive claim, addressing the problem of the captured state: holding the next elections according to the system that will help decrease the influence of Ivanishvili's "Georgian Dream" over the Parliament government and judiciary. This solution primarily addressed the problem of the captured state. Still, the issue of Russian influence on Georgian politics would be addressed too due to the reported personal connection between "an informal leader" and Russian authorities. However, the protest continued when Ivanishvili made political concessions by announcing the plan to hold the next parliamentary elections through the proportional party-list on June 24th (Civil.ge, 2019c). Media observers noticed this could be due to the second demand of Gakharia's resignation that was not satisfied (Civil.ge, 2019d.). But, as Shota stated, it was symbolic for the protest organizers. "We did not see the resignation of the Minister of Internal Affairs as the solution, because it does not make any sense who is the manager because of this informal influence [by Ivanishvili] ... They are not the decision-makers, they are just puppets" (Shota). Indeed, in September 2019, Ivanishvili nominated Gakharia for the position of prime minister. He held for 1,5 years and resigned voluntarily at the peak of the crisis provoked by the 2020 parliamentary elections (Civil.ge, 2019b). The situation around the third demand is complicated even two years later. Most prisoners were released after the 2021 EU-bargained deal between the ruling party and the opposition, which was one of the conditions. At the time of the writing, only one detainee stayed imprisoned; many were released after plea bargains (Civil.ge, 2019b). Shota also articulated another solution to the problems of Russian influence on Georgian politics and one of existential threat through being a "part of the larger European family" understood as Georgia's association with the European Union or NATO.

"We need support from the West to survive and sustain this existential threat. We had not only political necessity to integrate to the West and be a part of NATO or the European Union... We see it as our historic mission to rejoin this larger European family and also to deliver ourselves from the Russian influence".

Prognostic framing also identifies the movement's strategies and tactics (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 201; 2000, p. 617). During the spontaneous cycle on the first day of the protest, the tactic was to protest in front of the Parliament, the common place of any Tbilisi protests. After that, several tactics were introduced, although the place of the collective action was not changed. First, 16 founders put democracy in place. The primary demand of proportional elections was chosen after

“small democratic procedure” (Shota) of public voting from other several demands on the movement’s Facebook page (back then, Shame was not yet referred to as a movement but as an anti-occupational campaign). It had around 10 000 subscribers. The next tactic was concerning the sustainability of the protest and the demands: “We said that the demands would not be changed, no matter what, and each and every day we will protest until all demands are satisfied” (Shota). The third tactic concerned the form of the protest. The Shame founders chose “something in the middle between a fully apolitical protest and the protest overrun by the politicians” because, according to Shota, both these options ended up with a failure earlier in Georgia. As a result, most speakers at the protest were the representatives of Georgian civic society and domestic and international NGOs, such as Transparency International and Open Society. Shota says that they wanted to sustain the movement’s “civil identity”. They aimed to make civil society's voice heard by all protestants, including politicians from the former UNM government about whom these NGOs did many critical reports. NGOs were invited to present their ideas on systemic solutions to Georgia’s issues.

“The main actors of these civil societies like NGOs are way more advanced than the political parties that chose to use the language of hate, to please everybody, to play on the dark (urges) embedded in the soul of the poor people. It used to buy them love from the general public. Politicians are populist like everywhere in Georgia... We were acting as a bridge between the political parties and the civil society organizations and even between the political parties themselves too. The guys did not stand on the stage before then”.

Before being allowed to speak at the protest, Georgia politicians had to comply with several requirements. The political party or a politician should be pro-Western and support the Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia and association with the EU. “Euro-Atlantic integration is enshrined in Georgian constitution, and it is a will of Georgia’s public civil society because with the retreat of the West, this vacuum is always filled with Russia in this region” (Shota). Another conditionality was that neither of the politicians could change or question the demands placed by the movement when speaking publicly. Every party was to receive only one speaker at the protest. Shame imposed a selection of candidates from the political parties who get to speak at the rally. By this, the Shame tried to “make Georgian politics more civilized” (Shota).

“We deliberately invited women leaders. From the biggest oppositional party, the United National Movement, their leader [Nika Melia] was not present on our stage because we did not like him, and young people don’t like him. We chose Khatia [Khatia Dekanoidze is a Georgian government official. She joined the Georgian Parliament as a member of the UNM in 2020], a female leader because she was the one who could communicate with us. Her value in the party went up...”

We kind of smashed the list in a way that these party activists had to listen to leaders from the LGBTQ+ community as well, because we have problems with equality. Equality is a big problem for Georgian politics. Georgian politicians always are shy about expressing support to minorities, especially sexual minorities. We used the occasion to bring our values to the protest”.

Participation of politicians and the political parties in the protest contributed to the number of participants as their followers and activists also joined the Shame protest. When not complying with the conditionalities, politicians were not allowed to get up on stage. For this purpose, private guards were hired by the movement founders to secure the area.

Constraints for construction of frames

An important part of a social movement's prognostic framing refers to counter framing by their opponents (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 617). In other words, social movement entrepreneurs must consider their diagnostic and prognostic framing, i.e., problems and their suggested solutions. Shota's interview provided some insights into the effect of governmental counter framing through media, counter-protest, and police on Shame's framing processes. Another discussed constraint concerns cycles of protest.

Media. It was important for the Shame to preserve their civic identity, not affiliate with any existing political force, and stick to their initial demands. Once offered informal negotiations with the government, the Shame founders refused to talk. As Shota recalled this conversation: "Here are our demands, we have nothing to talk about until they are satisfied. We represent our followers, people who have trust in us, and if we talk, we will talk with the cameras". Otherwise, it could negate their mobilization efforts among young people. Government media were trying to attribute the protest to some political parties; Shota mentioned people unfamiliar to the Shame founders, "speaking in the government media, proposing the government to discuss stuff". As summarized by the protest leader: "How we knew that the problem was about to begin, government media cameras were lighting up, and we knew that there was a spotlight where something should happen".

Countermovement. A concurrent protest in July 2019 presented this. As Shota stated, the counterprotest consisted of people from Georgia's regions taken to Tbilisi "to beat up LGBTQ people, and the church promoted it". They believed the government organized it means because the state employers were among those taken to the capital. The purpose of the "counterprotest" was to disperse the protest organized by Shame. As Shota describes this confrontation:

"Police came to us and said: you are a peaceful protest, they are a violent one, now they will attack you, and we will not protect you; we can not protect you. They came to me personally and said that there would be blood on your hands if you do not disperse this protest. We said that it was their job to protect us, that's why we pay the police, and that's why we are paying the taxes".

He asked the protesters to raise up their hands, chant the word "peace", and confront the countermovement; the police had to put the buses between two crowds. Shota described it as "the border between North and South Korea, because there were literally people having fun on our side, while on the other side were angry people".

Police. According to Shota, cooperation with the police guarding the area around the Parliament was far from satisfactory. He mentioned that his associates could be detained for chanting slogans, such as "You are the slaves of the regime". At the same time, police officers would not react to the attacks or push initiated by the countermovement participants. As Shota recalled, the policemen told him once: "It [the push] did not hurt". The Shame response was to hire private guards to protect themselves and to eliminate the chances of provocation.

Cycles of protest. Two cycles of protest could be identified from the derived data: the first one happened on the first day of the protest and was spontaneous; the second one is marked with placing the demands by the Shame and employment of their tactics of protest. However, further data collection and research would be needed to enrich this picture as the methods used in this research did not aim at the detailed examination of this phenomenon.

6.4. Motivational framing

Motivational framing provides potential adherents of a social movement with a "rationale for action" (Snow & Benford, 1988, pp. 201-202). Most importantly, it "links the individual sphere with that of collective experience", contributing to the legitimacy of collective action (Della Porta

& Diani, 2006, pp. 77-78). The social movement entrepreneurs targeted young people with the message that the Shame protest was not affiliated with any political party. They also appealed to the demand chosen by their potential adherents via Facebook, altering the majoritarian parliamentary system leading to one party/constitutional majority rule. This was crucial for gaining young protesters' trust:

“The politicians are not popular, and young people prefer not to engage with them because they hate the politicians... Young people were feeling quite nihilistic, and young people hate the whole political spectrum... They don't trust the politicians, and that's why they wanted to redistribute the power among them... to share it among them to have a multiparty government” (Shota).

For this purpose, the movement founders introduced ground rules for the participating politicians described above. Civic identity of the Shame movement was declared by inviting over the representatives of Georgian civic society to speak at the protest; according to Shota, they accounted for 70% of speakers during 94 days of protest.

Framing processes	June 20-21, 2019	June 22 – August, 2019
Diagnosis (problem)	Russian occupation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Captured state <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● flawed electoral system - one party rule ● Bidzina Ivanishvili ● police crackdown of June 20-21, state was not held accountable 2. Russian influence on Georgian politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● disinformation campaigns in Georgia ● financial support of pro-Russian political parties ● alleged personal connections of Ivanishvili with Russian authorities 3. “Existential threat” from Russia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, recognition of their independence, various support, borderization, people abduction
Prognosis	<i>Tactics:</i> Street protest Mobilization via social media	<i>Solutions:</i> Systemic change Reference to Europeanization <i>Tactics:</i> Vote for the demands via social media Sustainable peaceful protest Unchangeable demands and no informal negotiation with the government Limited engagement with politicians Promotion of “good values” (women rights, LGBTQ+ rights) Bridging politicians and civil society speaking at the protest
Motivational framing	An opportunity to express anger and disappointment over the situation	Civil society protest Distribution of power among untrustworthy politicians

Table 1. Elements of framing processes by Shame during the 2019 summer protests

CHAPTER 7. EUROPEANIZATION AS A SOURCE OF FRAME RESONANCE

In this section, the main research question is discussed: how Europeanization contributed to the resonance of collective action frames, developed by Shame, and their mobilisation targets, Georgian youth. The collective action frames have been observed considering the Georgian youth's narratives about components of Europeanization. 6 indicators of frame resonance, described in Chapter 1, drove this analysis to reveal the sources of resonance among these narratives. The results presented in Table 2 represent Europeanization as a source of frame resonance during the 2019 protest. The report also discusses the conjunctions that do not include concern Europeanization directly. It is noteworthy that the presented results of the analysis concern only the data derived to address the two research sub-questions of this thesis. It does not eliminate the chance that other possible conjunctions can be revealed in further research.

7.1. Frame credibility

Frame consistency

Based on the gathered data, Shame's framing processes showed consistency. Having identified a problem of the captured state, they offered parliamentary elections according to the new system as a solution and stuck to it after Ivanishvili's formal promise of it. It corresponds with the narrative on obstacles to Europeanization (sub-theme "Government, political system"). The same applies to a reference to Europeanization, which was offered as a solution to Russian influence on Georgian politics and existential threat. Conjunction in how both a social movement entrepreneur and the respondents understand this reference was revealed, contributing to frame consistency. Shota mentioned both cooperations with the EU and NATO, while most participants mentioned the EU integration, and three of them mentioned NATO. All participants also fancied the idea of EU/European cooperation being necessary for Georgia. Europeanization, thus, could hence contribute to frame resonance through frame consistency of prognostic frames.

Empirical credibility

Empirical credibility stands for a fit between the events and the frames: the more culturally believable and better proven is a suggested interpretation, the more credible the framing and broader attractiveness (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 621). The conjunction was found between the "broader cultural environment", i.e., narratives on Europeanization, and Shame's framing concerning the events that evoked the protest. Shame's frames on the Russian influence on Georgian politics and existential threat resonated with the narrative of existential threat to Georgia coming from the Russian Federation, evoked by the respondents during the interviews. Two respondents and the protest leader articulated Russian influence through a reference to Russia-sponsored disinformation campaigns that increase polarization among political elites and the population. A frame on the Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and related issues, i.e., a question of Georgia's territorial integrity, fits into the narrative on existential threat evoked by the respondents. The only difference would be the interviewed respondents tended not to differentiate these two problems as Shame. The purpose of frame clarity that leads to a successful mobilization campaign can explain it. Most respondents and the protest leader tended to see the European Union as the closest ally and a guarantor of Georgia's territorial integrity in light of the existential threat from Russia. Therefore, Europeanization contributed to frame resonance through

empirical credibility of prognostic framing, i.e., shared interpretations of the key events that led to the protest and suggested solutions to the problem of Russian influence on Georgian politics. Europeanization could contribute to the resonance of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing as the frames fit the dissatisfactions of young protesters, articulated as obstacles to Europeanization. Half of the respondents saw the last two Georgian governments as an obstacle to Georgia-EU cooperation. It echoes the diagnostic frame of a captured state. However, only one interviewee's answer entirely fits a key prognostic frame of systemic change through parliamentary elections employed during the protest. Gvantsa believed that it should be so that "no party can take advantage of it". There is also a conjunction between the social movement entrepreneur and the respondents' understandings of the Soviet period of Georgian history. From the respondents' side, it was embedded in the narrative of why Georgia is a European country. For Shota, it was somewhat significant when interpreting Gavrilov's appearance in the Georgian Parliament and formulating Russian influence and existential threat problems. Gavrilov was a member of the Communist Party of Russia, whose predecessor governed Georgia for 70 years. Shota and five respondents explicitly referred to this period as to the Soviet occupation, stating that it impeded Georgia's reunion with Europe marked by the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia with its European-aspirated constitution. Thus, in this case, Europeanization could contribute to the resonance of a diagnostic frame via self-identification as European/a part of Europe through othering a Soviet period of Georgian history shared by the protesters and the social movement entrepreneur.

Two respondents tended to self-distance from the current 'Georgian Dream' government and disapproved of its actions. It resembles the movement's tactic to deny any negotiations with the government and to manage the participation of politicians in the protest, identified in the process of prognostic framing. It also resembles Shota's conception about the Shame's potential adherents who, as he stated, distrust politicians and fits the motivational frames detailed above. Shota mentioned that the Georgian Orthodox church promoted the countermovement to Shame's protest, demonstrating that the church was opposed to the protesters and Shame. Three respondents explicitly expressed a negative attitude towards the former institution, stating it is an obstacle to the Europeanization of Georgia. They blamed it for deliberately impeding European values by promoting heterosexual marriage and non-tolerance towards sexual minorities. This conjunction also could contribute to the empirical credibility of framing.

The credibility of the frame articulators

One can suggest that a tactic to invite only pro-Western politicians to speak at the protest could contribute to Shame's credibility and, therefore, frame resonance. This tactic appealed to the knowledge of its potential adherents, who the founder believed share distrust towards Georgian politicians. The actor's knowledge is a common variable when assessing the credibility of frame articulators (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 621). The fact that all the interviewed respondents expressed pro-European views could speak in support of this argument. A deeper investigation would be needed to examine which factors contributed to the movement's credibility in the participants' eyes.

Frame relative salience

Centrality

Centrality demonstrates “how essential the values, and ideas associated with movement frames are to the lives” of the adherents (Snow & Benford, 2000, p. 621). A reference to Europeanization (as a return “to a European family” via Georgia’s potential integration to the EU) was one of the key solutions offered by Shame to its potential adherents. The discussion in Chapter 3 demonstrates that this reference enshrined in the phenomenon of Georgian Europeanness is central for Georgia’s elite and popular political culture. The analysis of data collected for this thesis could also confirm this assumption. The respondents prioritized the Georgia-EU association in the narratives on a quest for a better future and existential threat evoked during the interviews. Thus, Europeanization could contribute to resonance through the centrality of frames effectively employed in prognostic framing.

Experiential commensurability

Experiential commensurability permits the targets of mobilization to pick one collective action frame over another based on their personal experience (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 208). The social movement entrepreneurs targeted their potential audience by organizing a protest that fitted two criteria: it was not apolitical and was not overrun by the politicians as they did not believe in their efficiency. As an example, Shota mentioned a failed 2018 drug protest for the legalization of drug use (see p. 18 in Chapter 4), which organizers dispersed after the latter’s informal meeting with the government officials who formally satisfied their demand by a promise of a special committee. Neither the movement’s founders wanted it to be affiliated with any existing political force or negotiate with the officials in a way other than public. This approach considers the perceived personal experience of the potential adherents, their disappointment over the failed Georgian dance revolution, and their hatred towards local politicians. That contributed to the experiential commensurability of the collective action frames developed and employed by the movement. Potential adherents got to choose between the collective action frames, used during the previous protest and the ones employed during the current one, in favour of the latter.

Narrative fidelity

Narrative fidelity links frame resonance to cultural narratives (folklore, stories, myths) from cultural packages employed to interpret the occurring events (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 210). The othering of Georgia’s Soviet past and Russia are embedded into liberal Georgian identity whose description generally fits the stances expressed by most protest participants in narratives on why Georgia is a European country and existential threat (Kakabadze, 2020, p. 28). As detailed earlier in the section of empirical credibility, Shota also appealed to them when diagnosing the problem of existential threat (since Russian occupation of Georgia lasted at least three centuries) and Russian influence on Georgian politics (since Russia-sponsored anti-Western information campaigns worsen polarization of Georgian society and hinder its European identity). This narration could contribute to resonance through narrative fidelity as the protestants and the social movement entrepreneurs employ similar cultural packages to interpret the events.

As follows from Shota’s explanations, the phenomenon of Georgian Europeanness discussed in Chapter 3 could contribute to the narrative fidelity of Shame’s frames. One of the dimensions of

Georgian Europeanness is that the West (synonym for Europe in Georgia) is associated with promoting individual human rights (Nodia, 1998, p. 42). Several respondents saw the link between promoting what they understand as European values, namely women's and LGBTQ+ rights, and their understanding of Georgia as a European country. The movement used the protest as an opportunity to "promote the good values" (Shota), such as respect for women and LGBTQ+ rights, making the representatives of both groups visible and heard at the protest. This tactic emerged during prognostic framing appeals to the Georgian cultural toolkit and resonated with the respondents' understanding of Georgia as a European country. In this case, Europeanization contributed to resonance through narrative fidelity that impacted a choice of the protest tactics.

Framing process	Indicator of frame resonance	Element of framing	Narrative	Conjunction (source of resonance)
Diagnostic framing	Frame consistency	Frame: Captured state	Obstacles to Europeanization: government, political system	Dissatisfaction with the politicians
	Empirical credibility	Frames: Russian influence on Georgian politics; Existential threat	Existential threat	Same interpretations of threat: occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and related issues, military interference; Russia-sponsored disinformation campaigns (articulated as Russian influence by Shame)
			Why Georgia is a European country; Obstacles to Europeanization: Soviet leverage	Soviet occupation
Prognostic framing	Frame consistency	Frame: Reference to Europeanization	Existential threat; Ambivalence: What is Europe?; Quest for a better future	Similar interpretation of Europeanization as Georgia-EU/NATO cooperation
	Empirical credibility	Frames: Russian influence on Georgian politics; Existential threat	Existential threat; Quest for a better future	EU as the closest ally and a guarantor of Georgia's territorial integrity and future prosperity
		Tactics: no informal negotiation with the government, limited engagement with politicians	Obstacles to Europeanization: government, political system	Dissatisfaction with the politicians, distrust to authorities
		Constraint for frame construction: Georgian Orthodox Church	Obstacles to Europeanization: Georgian Orthodox Church	Distrust to the institution; Christianity vs Georgian Orthodox church

		Reference to Europeanisation	Why Georgia is a part of Europe	Christianity as a cultural, historical link to Europe
	Centrality	Frame: A reference to Europeanization	Quest for a better future; Existential threat	prioritization of the EU-Georgia cooperation
	Narrative fidelity	Tactic: Promotion of “good values	Ambivalence (sub-theme: European values) Why Georgia is a European country	Appeal to the cultural package of a European self-identification of Georgia
Motivational framing	Credibility of frame articulators	Tactic: only pro-Western politicians to speak at the protest	Obstacles to Europeanization: government, political system	Dissatisfaction with the ruling reportedly pro-Russian “Georgian Dream”

Table 2. Europeanization as a source of frame resonance: results of the analysis

CONCLUSION

I set out to answer the following research question: how Europeanization can contribute to the resonance of a youth social movement's collective action frames. The aim was to generate knowledge about how Europeanization can contribute to the protest mobilization of young people beyond the immediate borders of the European Union in Georgia, a gap revealed during the preliminary research. To answer the research question, I apply a theoretical framework of Frame theory up by David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford to the case of Georgia's youth Shame movement. This thesis understands Europeanization as "what political actors make of it", employing a constructivist agenda to the concept (Radaelli & Pasquier, 2008, p. 35; Chitaladze & Grigoryan, 2015). In this case, young Georgian protest participants represent political actors. To address the revealed literature gap on the understandings and constructions of Europeanization by contemporary young Georgian protesters, I investigate these narratives and treat them as a "broader cultural environment" in which the construction of collective action frames by the Shame took place to study frame resonance (McCammon, 2013). However, based on existing literature, I supplement my findings with an expanded presentation of Georgia's cultural and political context, important for the movement's framing processes. Where relevant, I sought evidence for my findings in the previous studies.

A total of nine semi-structured interviews, organized in two different datasets according to each research sub-question, were conducted. The first research sub-question explores the attitude towards the Europeanization of young Georgian protesters. This dataset used snow sampling and consisted of 8 interviews. I used a combination of inductive and deductive Thematic Analysis in which I assigned codes to different parts of the interview transcripts and then grouped them into thematic categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Regarding the second research sub-question, I use a case study of a social movement as a research strategy. It fits an analysis of the movement's framing processes and reveals "an interpretative repertoire" of the movement's leaders (Snow, 2013; Johnston, 2002, p. 66). Due to the language limitation of the study, past character of the events under investigation, and a scarcity of information on this topic, a key informant interview with the leader of the 2019 protests, the Shame's founder was conducted. Only one interview constitutes the second dataset. More interviews were not possible to organize due to the time constraints from both sides, the complicated socio-political situation in Georgia in which the movement was actively involved, and complexities related to the remote recruiting of the participants. I use Theoretical Thematic analysis (TTA) driven by Frame theory to discuss the movement's framing processes and extract collective action frames (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final analysis reveals how the protesters' narratives on Europeanization can be a source of the resonance of the Shame's frames with their targeted audience by searching for conjunctions between them according to six indicators of frame resonance (McCammon, 2013).

My analysis revealed that the most significant number of conjunctions (5) between the protesters' narratives and Shame's collective action frames was evoked by the narrative on obstacles to Europeanization. There were three for sub-theme on "Government, the political system"; one for sub-themes on "Georgian Orthodox Church" and "Soviet leverage". The narrative of Existential threat evoked four conjunctions. The narratives on "Why Georgia is a European country" and "Quest for a better future" evoked three conjunctions each. There were two conjunctions with the narrative on Ambivalence (one for each sub-theme, "What is Europe" and "European values"). Regarding the Europeanization's contribution to framing processes, the analysis revealed that during the 2019 protest, Europeanization, as constructed by the young Georgia's protesters, could

contribute the most to the resonance of Shame's prognostic framing, represented by its solutions, tactics, and understanding of constraints. In this case, resonance was designated by four indicators out of six: frame consistency, empirical credibility, centrality, and narrative fidelity.

- a) **Frame consistency.** Shame stuck to a reference to Europeanization as to their solution to the problems of Russian influence on Georgian politics and existential threat during the 2019 protests. It could contribute to resonance as their articulation of Europeanization was congruent with the respondents' one.
- b) **Empirical credibility.** There is the harmonious articulation of Europeanization by the respondents and Shame. Shame's founder viewed it as cooperation with the EU and NATO. Six participants saw it as the EU integration, while NATO was also mentioned three times in combination with the EU. Both sides saw the European Union as the closest ally and a guarantor of Georgia's territorial integrity, considering the Russian occupation of Georgian territories. They shared a similar interpretation that the EU integration helps Georgia to "return to Europe". It reflected in Shame's tactics. Only pro-Western politicians supporting integration with NATO and the EU were allowed to speak at the protest. The protest leader and four respondents shared an interpretation of Georgia's being a part of Europe due to various historical arguments. There was a conjunction of the opinion of the leader and one respondent that one such argument is Christianity. Another source of empirical credibility would be a distinction between Christian religion and Georgian Orthodox Church, shared by three participants and found in the words of the protest leader who named Christianity as a source of Georgian Europeanness by seeing the institution as a constraint during the protest. Interestingly, it contradicts Jones's argument (2015, p. 228) that loyalty to the Georgian Christian church is understood as "proof of its [Georgia's] Europeanness" but confirms an argument about liberal Georgian national identity from Kakabadze's recent research (2020, p. 28).
- c) **Centrality.** When demanding parliamentary elections according to the proportional system and redistributing power among politicians from different parties, Shame vowed a government that would not be a "puppet" of the Georgian oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. For the movement, he is notorious for its business ties with Russia for Georgians. His ruling party kept a pragmatic attitude towards cooperation with this country to the deep concern of Shame and their adherents, which "automatically" makes someone anti-Western. Thus, a reference to Europeanization was one of the key solutions suggested in the protest, an alternative to Russian influence on Georgian politics and the existential threat associated with the acquiescence of the current party. This resonated with the respondent's common attitude as they prioritized the Georgia-EU association and promotion of what they referred to as European values in several narratives.
- d) **Narrative fidelity.** Shame used the protest to promote "good values", such as respect for women and LGBTQ+ rights, making the representatives of both groups visible and heard at the protest. Several respondents saw the link between promoting what they understand as European values, namely women's and LGBTQ+ rights, and their understanding of Georgia as a European country. It also appeals to Georgian Europeanness, the phenomenon of Georgian political culture associated with promoting individual human rights (Nodia, 1998, p. 42). This tactic could make the Shame's protest look more congruent with their values and interests as the movement appealed to a cultural package important for the European self-identification of Georgia. Another example is an appeal to the EU and NATO under one name of Europeanization when suggesting solutions by Shame and three respondents. It can be explained by Nodia's argument (1998, p. 13) about instrumental gains of Georgian Europeanness and synonymous meaning of "Europe" and "West" for Georgians; Jones (2015, p. 251) also stated NATO's linkage to Europe in Georgians' minds.

In terms of the constraints for frame construction, three participants articulated the Georgian Orthodox Church as an obstacle to Europeanization. Shame believed this institution, together with the government, were involved in the organization of countermovement during the Shame's protest, thus acting as a constraint for frame construction, associated with the prognostic framing. The resonance between the young protesters' narratives on Europeanization and Shame's diagnostic frames was designated by two indicators of empirical credibility and narrative fidelity. Shame's diagnostic frame on existential threat resonated with the narrative of existential threat evoked by the respondents. Both understood it as a threat of Russian military interference and Russia's occupation of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The respondents also mentioned Russia-sponsored disinformation campaigns in Georgia as a part of the "existential threat" package, and Shame articulated it in the problem of Russian influence on Georgian politics. Another indicator of frame resonance here would be that they employed the same cultural package for interpretation (narrative fidelity). The Shame's frame also fitted some of the dissatisfactions of young protesters, which they articulated as the obstacles to Europeanization, which contributed to resonance through empirical credibility. Shame's diagnosed Georgia as a state captured by the flawed one-party rule of the former UNM government and the current "Georgian Dream" one. It echoed the opinion of four respondents who named both these governments the obstacle to Georgia's Europeanization. This observation confirms the statement that Georgia youth tend to distrust politicians and avoid politics, also confirmed by my findings, as those are a government whose term was marked with the most significant progress in Georgia-EU relations, such as joining the EP, implementation of the AA, DCFTA, and free-visa regime (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p. 54). Shame's leader and five respondents explicitly referred to the Soviet period of Georgian history as the Soviet occupation, stating that it stopped Georgia's reunion with Europe. This reunion for them was marked by the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia with its European-aspirated constitution. For Shame, it was somewhat essential for diagnosing the problem of existential threat; respondents evoked it as a sub-theme of Soviet leverage in the narrative of obstacles to Europeanization and while explaining why Georgia is a European country. The resonance between the young protesters' narratives on Europeanization and Shame's motivational frames was designated by the indicator of the credibility of the frame articulators. Credibility is commonly associated with such variables as status and knowledge; although the movement was spontaneously formed during the protest, they benefited from their understanding of their audience. Shame appealed to their knowledge of the potential pool during the process of motivational framing, targeting their potential adherents with the message that the protest is pro-Western, and only pro-Western politicians were allowed to speak up at the rally. All eight respondents expressed pro-Western stances regarding Georgia's future that could contribute to the credibility of frame articulators and, therefore, frame resonance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview guide for the research sub-question 1

1. What is, in your opinion, Europe? Is it the same with the European Union?
2. Would you say that Georgia is a European country or a part of Europe? What is, in your opinion, the main factor contributing to the belief that Georgia is Europe?
3. What do you feel about the fact that there is no membership perspective for Georgia at the moment? Is cooperation with the EU still important?
4. Why does Europe need Georgia, and why does Georgia need Europe?
5. What are European values? Does Georgia accept European values, in your opinion?
6. What are the obstacles on the way to adopting European values, becoming more European?
7. What are, in your opinion, the most important historical ties between Georgia and Europe?

Appendix 2: Interview guide for the research sub-question 2

Interview guide for a social movement leader (drawn on Framing theory)

2019 Gavrilov's night protest

1. **Diagnosis** – identifying a problem
 - What was a key problem(s) that mobilized people to participate in the 2019 summer protests?
 - What created this problem/s?
 - Who suffers from this problem/s?
 - What were your demands during the protests? How did they change as the protest evolved? What events influenced these events? What can you tell about the events of June 20-21, 2019? To what extent did it mobilize people to join the protest?
2. **Prognosis** - solutions to the problem; strategies, tactics, and targets
 - What solutions to the issues that we discussed above did you offer during the protest?
 - Who was your target, who could be appointed as responsible for the solution of the problem (s)?
 - What did you do to facilitate the resolution of those problem(s) discussed above?
 - What was the goal of the movement back then?
 - Did the movement collaborate and cooperate with other Georgian organizations of any kind (political, social, NGOs) during the protest? If so, how did it contribute to the resolution of the discussed problem(s)? What were the results of this cooperation?
 - Who was your targeted audience when you were creating different messages (speeches, banners, social media posts) during the protests?
3. **Motivation**
 - How did you mobilize people to participate in the protests?
 - Were those mobilization techniques changing over time, depending on a cycle of a protest? If so, how were they changing?
 - Are there any strategies that the movement used to foster political participation among young Georgians during the protests? If so, what strategies were they?
 - What is a governmental response to Shame movement activity? Is there any specific narratives government is using speaking about Shame movement?
 - Did participation in the protest impact your or your associates' personal life, education, or career?
4. **Background:**
 - How, by whom the Shame movement has been formed?
 - Where does the movement stand ideology-wise?
 - What is the goal of the movement now? Was it changing during these two years?
 - How do you see the structure of the movement, and how many members do you have?

Appendix 3: List of interviewees

Code	Name/ pseudonym	Sex	Age	Protests attended (number)	2019 protests, days attended	Place	Date of the interview
1	Irakli	male	25	40	30	ZOOM	May 25 th , 2021
2	Dato	male	27	50	50	ZOOM	May 27 th , 2021
3	Mariam	female	28	2	2	ZOOM	June 1, 2021
4	Ana	female	27	15	25	ZOOM	June 2, 2021
5	Gvantsa	female	23	5	10	ZOOM	June 2, 2021
6	Levan	male	23	5	25	ZOOM	June 3, 2021
7	Nino	female	27	2	1	ZOOM	June 3, 2021
8	Nikoloz	male	22	35	14	ZOOM	June 11, 2021
9	Shota Dighmelashvili	male	n/r	n/r	n/r	ZOOM	June 10, 2021

Appendix 4: Glasgow University Ethics approval



School of Social &
Political Sciences

School Ethics Forum for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human

Subjects

Notification of Ethics Application Outcome – UG and PGT Student Applications

Application Details

Undergraduate Student Research Ethics Application Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application

Application Number: PGT/SPS/2021/021/IMCEERES

Applicant's Name: Anna Efimova

Project Title: A case study of a youth pro-European liberal movement in Georgia

Application Status: Fully Approved

Date of Review: 04/05/2021

Start Date of Approval 04/05/2021 End Date of Approval 31/12/2021

NB: Only if the applicant has been given approval can they proceed with their data collection from the date of approval.

Fully approved

Means that the applicant can proceed with data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Amendments required

Where amendments are required by reviewers, applicants must respond in the relevant boxes below to the recommendations of the School Ethics Forum and provide this as an 'Amendments Response' document to explain the changes made to the application as well as amending the documents, as relevant. Changes to the application form or supporting documents should be highlighted either in **block highlight** or in **red coloured text** to assist the reviewers. All amended application documents should then be sent to the ethics administrator by the Supervisor for the approval of the SEF before data collection can proceed.

Rejected

If your application is Rejected a new application must be submitted to the School Ethics Forum. The reviewer feedback below will indicate whether a similar future project is likely to be supported. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document provided as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated. The new application forms should be signed off and submitted to the ethics administrator by the Supervisor.

REVIEWER MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS	APPLICANT RESPONSE

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REVIEWER MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS

APPLICANT RESPONSE

--	--

ADDITIONAL REVIEWER COMMENTS

APPLICANT RESPONSE

--	--

Consent Form

Title of Project: A case study of a youth pro-European liberal movement in Georgia

Name of Researcher: Anna Efimova, MA in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (University of Tartu, University of Glasgow, Jagiellonian University)

Name of Supervisor: Prof dr hab Zdzisław Mach, Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland)

Name if co-Supervisor: Prof. David J Smith, University of Glasgow, UK

Basic consent clauses

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Confidentiality/anonymity clauses (please tick an appropriate box)

I agree to be referred to by pseudonym during an interview and in any publications arising from the research.

or

I agree to be identified by name during an interview in any publications arising from the research.

or

I agree to be identified by name during an interview and by pseudonym in any publications arising from the research.

Clause relating to data usage and storage

The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.

Refer to Privacy Notice

I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

Consent on method clause

I consent to interviews being audio-recorded.

I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will not be returned to participants for verification.

Consent clause (please, tick an appropriate box)

I agree to take part in this research study

I do not agree to take part in this research study

Name of Participant Signature

Date

Name of ResearcherSignature

Date

..... End of consent form

Appendix 6: Plain Language Statement



College of Social Sciences

Title of Project: A case study of a youth pro-European liberal movement in Georgia

Name of Researcher: Anna Efimova

Degree for which the research is being undertaken: MA in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (University of Tartu, University of Glasgow, Jagiellonian University)

Name of Supervisor: Prof dr hab Zdzisław Mach, Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland)

Name if co-Supervisor: Prof. David J Smith, University of Glasgow, UK

Plain Language Statement

Dear Sir/Madame,

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

Cooperation with the European Union and Europeanization is one of the major directions of Georgian politics, both domestic and foreign, although it appears to have a façade character. Their narrative of Europeanization and the idea of Europe of foreign policy officials and young Georgians are widely researched. However, scholarship on domestication of idea of Europe by social movements is lacking.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how the idea of Europe is being domesticated by social movements in Georgia and what strategies they use to deliver its message to an audience. I will conduct a thorough review of social movement members' interpretations of Europe and European values and how they deliver their ideas to your supporters and to people of Georgia. Duration of the study is 29/04/2021 – 31/09/2021.

You have been chosen for this study as you are a representative of politically active Georgian youth from 18 to 29 years old and have an experience of participation in protest activity.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Potential participants willing to take part in the survey are kindly asked to contact a researcher (me) by replying to this email. If you agree to take part in the research, you will be involved by participating in a semi-structured telephone interview via ZOOM.

Before participating in an interview, a participant will be provided with a Consent form and will be asked to sign one and send out a scanned signed copy to a researcher. Electronic signature is eligible too.

Expected duration of an interview is 40-70 minutes. The final duration depends on the length of the answers a participant provides. The interview will be conducted in English via ZOOM and audio-recorded.

No further participation other than in an interview is expected. An interview will be transcribed by a researcher, a participant will not be provided with a transcribed version of a text with a verification.

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed due to the limited size of the participant sample. Your consent to being named by a name or a pseudonym of their choice in the research is welcomed.

A thesis, completed and defended in September 2021, will be available online through a depository of University of Tartu, Estonia in fall 2021. Once it happens, a participant of the study will be provided with an electronic form of a master thesis (pdf) by email.

Data obtained will be destroyed after the completion of the study which is scheduled for September 30th, 2021 by deleting it from a storage (a secure password-protected One Drive of the University of Glasgow).

The project has been reviewed by the School of Social Sciences Ethics Forum.

Contact for Further Information

Name of Researcher: Anna Efimova, anna.efimova@student.uj.edu.pl

Name of Supervisor: Prof dr hab Zdzisław Mach, Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland), zdzislaw.mach@uj.edu.pl

Name of co-Supervisor: Prof. David J Smith, University of Glasgow, UK, David.Smith@glasgow.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the [School of Social Sciences of University of Glasgow, UK](#)

Ethics Officer **Susan Batchelor**

email: Susan.Batchelor@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 7: Interview with Shota Dighmelashvili, the leader of the 2019 Gavrillov night's protests

Informant 9

Shota Dighmelashvili is a co-founder and activist at the Shame movement. He was a leader of the 2019 summer protests in Tbilisi. He is also a co-founder of two Tbilisi-based NGOs (Governance monitoring Center; Shame movement) and an executive editor at Forbes Georgia magazine. This interview is undisclosed as the informant did not insist on anonymity and allowed the researcher to address him by his real name during the interview and in the other material related to this thesis.

R.: I would like to kick us off with the background of the movement. I am not Georgian, and I can not read in Georgian, so the only material that I could use to prepare for this interview was in English, and it was quite limited. So, I would like to ask about the background, and I am sorry in advance if these questions seem stupid or superstitious.

I.: No worries, thank you for your interest in the subject. The fact that you did not find the informant already speaks for itself. We need more attention for that, thank you for your interest in the subject.

R.: it is really nice, thank you, Let's start with the very beginning. I know how the Gavrillov protest erupted, the story behind it, his visit, and why people were showing lots of anger towards him. Can I ask you how and by whom the movement was formed back then? I know it was developed gradually in the course of the protest, so you can start with the very beginning.

I.: The Shame movement started as a reaction to the story about the arrival of Gavrillov, as an anti-occupational movement. 16 founding members did not know each other before the protests. Personally, I knew some other members, but not all of them, I did not know the majority. The protest started as like a (unclear) in a really polarized environment. When people hit the streets, we tried to channel this anger into some productive demand, which is in our case, proportional elections. Our electoral system was (unclear) the way developing countries. This majoritarian system did not work in any post-soviet country because most majoritarian states do not base their policies on party platforms. There are just a few bills of some consistories. For example, there is a typical example of a majoritarian deputy Poliani who was a majoritarian deputy since Shevardadze's time. He is always with the ruling party. What the ruling party does is they buy these majoritarian deputies, and then they get heat packs in the form of public procurements. Another example is this majoritarian from Gori. Gori is a city with a budget of like 30 million laris. It is around \$10 mln. And the majoritarian deputy from the ruling party, who used to be a majoritarian during the former government too, got 100 mln laris worth public procurements, which Transparency International reported. So, we have a municipality with the 30 million laris budget and the guy who accumulated the worth of 100 mln lari through his companies with the public procurements, the tenders which are funded through the state budget. This is the perfect example of why the majoritarian system was bad for Georgia. To give you a bigger picture, we have 150 members, and 75 of them were chosen by this majoritarian rule. Another 75 were chosen according to the proportional system. The opposition practically never was able to secure the majoritarian deputies. So, the ruling party always had this advantage. This one-party rule which has been cursing Georgia since it gained independence from the Soviet Union, could make sure

by the change of the system through this systemic reform, through the proportional elections. Replacing this rigged electoral system was a huge part of it. When the protest erupted, we tried to place the demand. You know about the terrible crackdown on 2019, June 20th, when Gavrillov gay arrived, right? [connection problem] People hit the streets, there was brutal violence, police deliberately hurt people in the hands, in the eyes, and up to 40 journalists and 250 people were hurt. After this escalation... originally, the protest was a Facebook event published by one of the founder members of the Shame movement, but of course, politicians took the scene on June 20th, and we kind of lost. When we arrived at the sights, politicians already held the scene, and then this terrible crackdown happened. On June 21st, we said that we would hire the private guards to guard the scene, we placed out demands, and we said to the politicians: okay, if you want to participate, be our guests, but you will have no favouritism from us. There should be some conditionalities. First, you should be pro-Western because Euro-Atlantic integration is enshrined in the Georgian constitution, and it is a will of Georgia's public civil society because, with the retreat of the West, this vacuum is always filled with Russia in this region. The subject of Eurointegration is of immense importance for us. It is like our existential threat that we do not manage to integrate better – I mean military alliances as well, and we have a dream of being part of the EU, not sometime soon but still. So, our conditionalities were that we had placed the demands, and neither of these politicians can add something to them or subtract them. If they want to participate, they can, and then the whole political sector will participate, but we choose who gets to speak from them. If one party gets one speaker, every other party gets one speaker. And we used this opportunity to empower women from the bigger parties. We deliberately invited women leaders, and we kind of smashed the list in a way that these party activists had to listen to leaders from the LGBTQ+ community because we have problems with equality. Equality is a big problem for Georgian politics. Georgian politicians always are shy about expressing support to the minorities, especially the sexual minorities. We used the occasion to bring our values to the protest. We had a protest that lasted 94 constitutive days, and we succeeded; now, we have a nearly proportional system. It will be fully proportional. [connection disruptions]

R.: Okay, thank you. I have the questions regarding what you have just told me. In the beginning, you mentioned that at the very start, you chose to identify yourselves as an anti-occupational movement. Could you please explain what the reasoning behind it was?

I.: I should be clearer. It started as an anti-occupational movement because of the subject of the protest. People were mad because they saw a member of the Russian Duma, who is from the communist party, who has fought against Georgians back in 90-s. He was a symbol of the occupation because he was from the Communist Party, he was invited to the parliament, and he sat in the chair of the chairmen of the Parliament. People were raged because we have wounds from this war in 2008 between Russia and Georgia, and 20% of our country is occupied, and we have a crawling occupation. People get kidnapped, these illegal borders are going through the private property of people who live there, they have to be displaced. We have more than 300 000 internally displaced people who had to leave their houses. The major problem is Russia who wants to turn Georgia into its backyard. It was not a problem in recent years or the Soviet Union; it started away before that. Since 1918, we had three years of brief independence and then were caught by Russian occupation. It is Georgia's infinite struggle of being out of this infinite influence of Russia, it is our historical struggle. When people saw this Russian Duma guy sitting in the parliament chair, the reaction to that was against the occupation. The protest was against the occupation. But then we tried, after the June 20th – okay, we could hit the streets again and demand to step down

of this and that, like it has been done before – but it did not give results, because the ruling party may change, but the ruling party never changes. It is mostly due to systemic imbalance; the party has a constitutional majority in the parliament mainly because of this week electoral system. If you become a ruling party, you have it all. It was a zero-sum game. We tried to cure the roots of the protests and placed the demand for proportional election. So, the protest started as an anti-occupational protest, but it was more the protest for systemic change since the very next day.

R.: Okay, can I clarify, I have seen publications in the media where the Shame movement was addressed as an anti-occupational one; is it correct?

I.: It is one of the things we do. We help out people from displaced regions, people living beyond these illegal borders. We have humanitarian projects as well. But Shame movement is more than that. It is like a youth movement for systemic changes, and anti-occupational activism is the only one branch of this activity.

R.: I have also seen that you have been frequently addressed as a pro-European movement, is it correct?

I.: I would say that it is generally pro-Western because, as I have already said, we are a nation of 3 million people, and we have a huge Russia as the neighbour who wants to turn us into the failed satellite state. We need support from the West to survive and sustain this existential threat. Historically, we define ourselves as a part of a larger European family, an ancient Christian nation in a very harsh region. Whether invasions were coming to Europe in history, they had to test on Georgia because of its geopolitical positioning. All the empires – Persians, Arabs, Ottomans and so on. Georgia preserved its own identity; first of it was a Christian identity which came with a price. Even during these three brief years of independence when we were split from the Russian Empire, in 1921 we already had a constitution which was one of the most advanced worldwide, because it had [connection disruption], women had a right to vote, so it was more egalitarian, public intellectuals and politicians in Georgia were educated in Europe, and then they fled to Europe again. We had not only political necessity to integrate to the West and be a part of NATO or the European Union. [connection disruption due to the incoming call by the informant] We always saw it as our historic mission to preserve or Christian identity and bound to the West. Georgia is between Europe and Asia. It was historically surrounded by the Muslim empires. We see it as our historic mission to rejoin this larger European family and also to deliver ourselves from the Russian influence.

R.: Great. I have been listening to you and made some notes, I am trying to identify the problem that mobilizes people to participate in the protest. If you don't mind, I will just name these problems as I understood them, and you will say if I am correct or not.

I.: Sure.

R.: The first problem was with the parliament and system itself, it needed change.

I.: We should divide it into two parts. The protest happened not because the systemic changes were needed; we offered it as a solution and communicated it to the general public as the solution. We mobilized people under this demand afterwards, but on June 20th, people felt a need to enter the streets and protest. There was no demand; they were just mad that they saw Gavrilov in the sit of the chairman. This was the only reason why people got out. Then, after the crackdown, we had another reason.

R.: Do you remember when you started to refer to this problem to mobilize people, to systemic change?

I.: Practically the next day. There was a crackdown, right, and we had a huge Facebook group consisting of more than 10 000 people. We proposed a poll in this group, what our demand should be, who should be our speakers and so on; it was like a small democratic procedure; people voted for this main demand about proportional elections.

R.: What were your other demands during the protests from the very beginning till the end?

I.: We stick to the demands. We placed three demands: about proportional elections, then resigning of the Minister of Internal Affairs. What you should understand about Georgia is that we have our state captured by this one billionaire guy who runs the country; the parliament is his puppet. To have one person displaced [does not make sense], but we felt that this symbolic price should be paid. We did not see the resignation of the Minister of Internal Affairs as the solution, because it does not make any sense which is the manager because of this informal influence that I mentioned before. They are not the decision-makers; they are just puppets. But we needed this kind of symbolic gesture. It was not the most important demand. We had three demands – resignation, the freeing of the people who were detained during the crackdown of June 20th, and the main one about the proportional elections. We said that the demands would not be changed, no matter what, and each and every day we will protest until all demands are satisfied. And we were there for almost 100 days.

R.: I see there are probably more main problems that mobilized people to participate in the protests: Russian and Soviet leverage in Georgia and Georgia's struggle for independence, promotion of European values, the third one is Eurointegration, and the fourth one is a change of system. So, I see those are the problems that drove people into the streets, is it correct?

I.: We could broadly say [it is] Russian influence in Georgian politics. We could generalize. But the promotion of the values was not the reason why people came out. We used the occasion to promote these good ideas. But it is not why people hit the streets. People hit the streets on June 20th because we saw, as a living metaphor, Russian influence in the parliament. The wounds of the civil wars that we had in the 90-s and that was also influenced by Russia because after the [dissolution of] the Soviet Union, it left these, metaphorically speaking, time bombs, separatists in Georgia. When people hit the streets, it was against the Russian influence on Georgian politics, and then we turned it into the demand of systemic changes. When people protest against Russian influence, it automatically implies that they are pro-Western. It is in our constitution, 80% of Georgians, we had a referendum, it is enshrined that we will be [pursuing] Euro-Atlantic integration, it is a critical majority of Georgians. When people protest against Russian influence, it automatically implies that they want to be a part of the so-called "free world".

R.: Does it mean that they are trying to overcome Soviet leverage in Georgia?

I.: Not only Soviet but post-Soviet one as well because Russia is continuing the process of Soviet occupation. Before that, the Russian empire was occupying Georgia, and now Putin is occupying Georgians. It is not only Soviet. It is Russia invading Georgia for at least the last couple of hundred years. Now they use not only this military occupation [unclear]. It all started a way before all these conversations about Russian influence in the US elections, before it all started in the West. We are on the first line of propaganda. The sentiment of being free from the Russian influence in Georgia is huge. Now Russia is trying to put a pro-Georgian thing, propaganda which means that okay, we don't need Russia because they understand that in Georgia, they can not sell being in Russia. A new way for them is to say no to Russia but to the West as well. I would identify two major problems. They were protesting against Russia meddling in Georgian politics, and the second thing is the protest for systemic reforms.

R.: We have identified two problems that guided people into the street. Who could be appointed as a responsible for these two problems? Who is responsible for their solution?

I.: The ruling party plus Russia. It is a constant threat from Russia, but the acting ruling part is, sometimes people feel that they are playing along with Russia because they are either afraid of them or bought by them, this current ruling class. Bidzina Ivanishvili, or informal ruler, is a billionaire from Russia. One can not earn their fortune in Russia, then move to Georgia, and have no connection with Russia, right? His whole business was in Russia; the wealth was there, he had to take this wealth from Russia. It does not simply happen like that with Putin because he loves to imprison the oligarchs. People think that there might have been some deal or arrangement.

R.: Okay, my next question will be again about those two major problems: who or what suffers from them?

I.: All citizens of Georgia suffer from the occupation because when you have 20% of your country occupied, it means that you don't have political stability, and you can not attract the investments, and so on. The economy suffers, and the whole population suffers from that. And internally displaced persons suffer because there is like 10% of the population, around 300 000 people out of 3,5 million people. They lost everything they had. It is a problem of each and every citizen.

R.: I also was thinking about young people because they were the majority of the participants in that protest. Was there any narrative about young people suffering because of these problems?

I.: Yeah. Young people [connection disruption] the whole political ruling class, the whole political spectrum. We had the former government, which was problematic because of the human rights issues. We have the acting government that came with a promise that they would resolve those issues but did not resolve anything. More than that, they have all the systemic crimes that the former government has done. [connection disruption] The acting government did not repeat the successes of the previous government but repeated all its failures. People, especially young people, were really nihilistic because the level of polarization was very high because of these big parties' politics which Russia also fueled because Russia also spends lots of money on polarization in Georgia; that's how they meddle in the politics. The West has also experienced the effects of this polarization through inauthentic behaviour online. Young people were feeling quite nihilistic, and young people hate the whole political spectrum. Of course, they hate the current government, but they also don't trust the former government as well. And these systemic changes create a framework for the acting government and for the future government, which will come from the existing political spectrum and us, untrustworthy individuals. That's why people held the demand of the proportional elections; that's why they stood almost 100 days for this. Young people wanted to change the system leading to one-party rule and a constitutional majority. When you have this system, there is one ruling party deciding everything, the power is not shared between the parties. They don't trust the politicians, so they wanted to redistribute the power among them. The power corrupts. They did not trust this political spectrum, but they wanted to share it among them to have a multiparty government.

R.: Thank you, now I understand. You have mentioned that young people in Georgia are mostly apolitical. Simply speaking, I wonder how did you make them active, how did you mobilize them to join the protest?

I.: We proposed the solution. First of all, they saw that the existing political spectrum did not overrun the protest. We had our own ground rules for the politicians to participate in the protest, but civil society was the organizer. Of course, the propaganda worked and tried to attribute the protest to this or that party, but we tried to preserve our civic movement identity. That was one of

the reasons why young people were not afraid of joining the protest. As I already mentioned, the politicians are not popular, and young people prefer not to engage with them because they hate the politicians. And also, this polarization when your actions are attributed to this party or that one, all this rage and hate, no one wants to be a part of that. When we proposed a civic platform, politicians were there too. 70% of speakers were representatives of civic society. We did have politicians, but we hate [unclear] politicians who were standing on our stage, and we did not have any favourites because all had the same rights there. We guarded the scene, and the politicians could not come [connection disruption]. We set strict ground rules for the politicians, they were part of the protest, but there were not favouritism, it was hard to attribute the protest to any political party because each political party had the same terms and conditions. We said: if one party gets one speaker, all parties get one speaker, the same number of speakers. We could choose the speakers and choose the less provocative ones from these political parties. It was easier for us to mobilize young people. Political parties could not do that. We had an experience of a fully apolitical protest but it was a failure as well. What we chose was something in the middle between a fully apolitical protest and the protest overrun by the politicians. We had something in the middle. We had terms, and if they signed to these terms, they could be part of our protest. It benefitted us because all these parties have their activists, and the ruling party loves to count the heads, so that was a mutually benefitted partnership. We preserved the identity of a civic movement, and that's how me managed to engage with young people.

R.: Thank you. You mentioned an experience of a fully apolitical protest. Can you please explain what was it?

I.: I mean the Bassiani protest. I was part of the organizational team back then too. Because of this hatred towards the politicians... I was for coordination of united forces, but the majority of organizers were against it. But at the end they miserably failed, that's why we chose another path.

R.: Thank you. Shota, I think I have maybe a couple of questions left, do you have a bit more time? Great. You were talking about the politicians who participated in the protest, and I am curious if any other organizations – movements, NGOs – also participated.

I.: We were close to the NGOs than to the political parties. As I said, we had to hire private security, and it was not only for protecting us against this so-called counterprotest. The ruling party is always mobilizing some people who attack the peaceful protesters... But for protecting from the politicians who were participating in this protest because political activists want to set their own leaders on the stage. We said no, we pick the speakers from your party. From the biggest oppositional party, the United National Movement, their leader [Nika Melia] was not present on our stage because we did not like him, and young people don't like him. We chose Khatia [Dekanoidze], a female leader because she was the one who could communicate with us. Her values at the party went up. That's how we tried to empower minorities, women and to make Georgian politics more civilized in general. What were you asking again?

R.: I was asking about your partners...

I.: We were open for all civic society organizations, and the main speakers of the protest were from the NGOs. The problem with the politicians and the NGOs is that those bigger NGOs, such as Transparency International, Open Society foundation, they were always writing these positive papers, promoting good values, fighting against corruption against the former government too, But now these former government guys are at the protest, and we kinda felt the need for all of the people arriving in the protest to hear the voice of the society, because the civil society organizations and the main actors of these civil societies like NGOs are a way more advanced than the political

parties that chose to be use language of hate, to please everybody, to play on the dark (urges) embedded in the soul of the poor people. It used to buy them love of general public. Politicians are populist like everywhere in Georgia. What we tried to do is to present these civil society organizations and to present their solutions, systemic solutions to the general public and politicians who participated in the protest. We were acting as a bridge between the political parties and the civil society organizations and even between the political parties themselves too. The guys did not stand on the stage before then. We kind of united the oppositional spectrum because before that, they were using this hate language against each other, there was no occasion when they stood on the same scene. It was a bridge between them, consolidation of the platform, and also the bridge between civil society organizations and the political parties. But civil society organizations got way more speakers, up to 70%.

R.: What were their presentation about? Could you give a more specific example?

I.: It was a 100 day-long protest, so we talked about practically everything, each and every problem. We had a discussion about minority rights, economic and political decentralization, systemic solutions to judiciary reform, self-governance—lots of topics every day.

R.: Okay. I also wanted to ask you about the counterprotest that you have mentioned. Could you elaborate on that? What do you mean by counterprotest?

I.: It is a weapon in the arsenal of not only our government but the Russian Duma as well. To go back to this Bassiani protest, what happened there. There were young people protesting, and when the government wanted to disperse the protest, they brought these ultra-nationalist groups that are ultimately controlled by it. These paid groups are very violent, they attacked and abused people physically, and when you have a peaceful protest, they bring this violent protest and say: okay, now you have to go home because we can not defend you. This is what happened in our case as well. It was really well-organized because they gathered people from all the regions of Georgia, put them in the buses, they told them that they were going to the capital to beat up LGBTQ people, and it was promoted by the church. The government is influenced by the church and vice versa. They gathered people who did not know much about the protest and brought them to the capital near the Parliament. Then they tried to play the same trick: police came to us and said, okay, you are a peaceful protest, they are a violent one, now they will attack you, and we will not protect you, we can not protect you. Of course. They came to me personally and said: if you do not disperse this protest, there will be blood on your hands. We said that it was their job to protect us, that's why we pay the police, and that's why we are paying the taxes. I said that it is not how it is gonna work. I ordered my people, people who were participating, to raise up their hands, we chanted "peace" and confronted this group, chanting "peace", and marched to these violent guys. Then the police put the buses between our two protests, and it looked like the border between the North and South Korea because on our side, there were literally people having fun, while on the other side were really angry people. Police on our side were in their regular outfits, and on their side, they had the shields and helmets, and it was July, so hot. They had now to take action. It was a really historic day for the Georgian protest because it was the first occasion when the peaceful protest prevailed. Those yellow buses have become symbolic since then precisely for this reason, because the government would bring these yellow buses. Then the government media painted the picture that some LGBT queer guys, drug addicts, youngsters were protesting, and the Georgian population was outraged; they began protesting, and then they left. It was the first time when we said "no", and we won. They had to leave the place, and we held out the ground.

R.: I wonder if there were any other responses to the protest from the government in any form.

I.: Sure, it was provocation each and every day, aggressive people, some people saying that they were the part of the protest movement, speaking in the government media, proposing the government to discuss stuff, but we did not know them, and they were saying that they are organizers of the protest. Violent people and groups... How we knew that the problem was about to begin, government media cameras were lighting up, and we knew that there was a spotlight where something should happen. What we did, we tried to cooperate with the police to prevent the thing from happening. But we had to force the police to react. There was one moment when there was this guy in the counterprotest; this guy worked in the local municipality, these guys were individuals who did not like this or that [unclear]... Practically, when you look at them, they all mainly made protesters, and when the media were asking them why they came to the protest, they can not give any informed answer. One of these angry municipality workers attacked one of the protesters who was standing nearby, and he accidentally hit the police who was also standing nearby. I was standing there nearby myself with a group of peaceful activists, and we said: okay, you are (unclear) us from the sidewalks, we don't even verbally abuse you. When we say that you are the slaves of the regime, you arrest us. Now the guy comes and hits you, but you don't arrest him; what's the point? He said that it did not hurt. That's the level of cooperation of the police. But we still tried to reach them (unclear). We had the private guards as well, and we managed to avoid all these excesses and violence. There was some interference from the government side. There were many threats, and many people were arrested; one of the guys was arrested but the gun was planted. Georgia police has very harsh anti-drug rules, that's how they blackmail you, and it is very easy to plant the drug, because it is very small, and you get a sentence from 8 to 12 years. There were threats towards the organizers of the protest, like "now you have a family, and you have to take care of yourself". It is a part of the game, and it did not work ultimately. There were informal propositions of dialogue, not through the media. They proposed to us, and we said: here are our demands, we have nothing to talk about until they are satisfied. We represent our followers, people who have trust in us, and if we talk, we will talk with the cameras, and so on. Of course, they did not agree to it. But they did not propose a dialogue formally.

R.: Okay, I understand. Shota, I have a couple of small questions more, if you don't mind. Can I ask where the movement stands ideology-wise?

I.: I would say [we are] centrist because, after the 70 years of Soviet rule, people in Georgia are fed up with socialism. As I already said, it is a diverse group because we did not know each other before everything started. Some of them are maybe a little left-wing. But we are mainly, I'd say, center-right.

R.: Okay, and how many people are in this group?

I.: there are 16 founding activists, but we don't have official members but lots of followers who participate, so we try to be open... when we have to make serious decisions, we try to involve the general public, mainly our supporters. We have a big Facebook group consisting of up to 20 thousand people now. A group of up to 20 000 people can not be called private, but formally it is a private group on Facebook. When we have these hard decisions to make, we try to involve as much people as we can, organize public opinion polls and so on.

R.: Which structure do you have? Is it hierarchical?

I.: We have a horizontal structure. Most of us came from the public sector and used to work in companies, and it is really easy for us to divide ourselves to little task groups. All the major decisions are made democratically. We are a functioning organization, and we have to have a CEO now, but we make all decisions in a group of 16 people. Nine of them is already enough to make

decisions. We haven't had a situation where there was a division of opinions so much. When there is an important decision to be made, we ask the general public, our followers, and then we divide the work between ourselves. Personally, to these days, I am too shy to be referred as an activist, because I am an editor of the magazine and had a couple of businesses before. Some people in the movement are from the communication or creative sphere or have their own companies. So, most of us come from the private sector, and we are used to work in a way companies work, form the departments and so on. These departments form really naturally. The main problem of the organization with the horizontal structure is a division of the opinion, but it really was not the case for us. We are functioning since 2019 and we have not experienced such an occasion. We have democracy in place for the very important decisions, and we divide the smaller ones among us and work.

R.: Okay. At the beginning, you mentioned that the anti-occupational dimension is just one dimension of your activity. Could you please briefly tell me about the others?

I.: I will boast some of our achievements now. When we had our demands satisfied, we had now a nearly proportional election, 112 deputies were elected on this proportional basis and only 30 of them [were elected] on a majoritarian basis. We did not personally participate in the elections but what we wanted is to engage young people, because there was this disengage in the politics. We organized a big campaign to engage youth into the elections, the age group from 18 to 35 to get them out to vote. The results were really good. In 2016, only 71% (61?) of this age group participated in the elections, but on the recent 2020 elections, it was up to 69% (79?), so it was like 9% up. It was one thing that we did. Another problem is in judiciary, the judiciary clan. In all the opinion polls judiciary clan does not come up as a priority for a general public. We have a corrupted judiciary, but people think that the other problems are more important, such as unemployment. As we understand, without judiciary, there is no country, so we try to bring it up as the priority and we have created the content and distributed this content in the media. It has the astonishing rating now. 70% of share [unclear]. In Georgia, the first episode had more than 600000 views only on Facebook, which is great because we are only 3,7 million nation, 40 million people speaking this language. Also, we have gathered up to 500 volunteers who wanted to participate and bring food... I should tell about the welfare for people living below the poverty line in Georgia, which is 50 lari per month. 20% of the Georgian population live below the poverty line; practically every fifth person is really poor. When corona hit, with all these regulations, when everything, all businesses were shut down, it was a really dramatic situation. We decided to help out. We gathered 500 volunteers who personally participated, we had up to 50 companies who participated, and we managed to provide more than 10 000 people with clothes, medicines, food, and more than 50 shelters. Private companies, for example, Coca-Cola, gave us the refrigerators, and we could keep some of or food to be delivered. The average value of the package was 100 lari value while the welfare is 50 lari, twice as much. We went up to 3 000 families. Lots of groups tried to have these humanitarian, voluntary projects, but nobody kept such a scale. Other branches... Also, these people living beyond the illegal borders some of them are being kidnapped. We had even to buy out one of these people from the occupational forces. We have people who are living in the conflict regions; they could not go to the territory controlled by Georgia to take medicine because they had to be quarantined for two weeks, and lots of people died because they had to cross the river illegally and they draw. What we did... We found a group of volunteering doctors set up a medical camp beyond the occupational line. We fundraised from [connection disruption] for the medicine, and we helped out people living in such regions, and they could go there, get examined, get a necessary

medication. There are lots of directions; we create lots of content and try to push for systemic changes to promote ideas and values. We help out minority groups such as LGBT groups, Tbilisi pride; for example, they are planning the march in June, and we are co-organizing. [end of the recording]

Appendix 8: Coding book for the research sub-question 1

THEME: AMBIVALENCE

Sub-theme: What is Europe

- Europe vs the EU

Respondents reflect on if Europe and the EU coincide.

- Role of context

Respondents mention that a definition of Europe depends on the context which this term is discussed in.

- Europe can be different

Respondents mention that Europe is not homogeneous.

- Europe as a continent, geographical term

Respondents were asked to explain how they would define the word Europe and what they mean by it, mentioning that Europe is a geographical term.

- Europe as values, rights, identity

Respondents were asked to define what they mean by Europe, say that they associate Europe with values, human rights, respect for human rights.

- Europe as a unique political space, democracy

Respondents were asked to define what they mean by Europe and say that Europe is a special political entity.

- Any country can be European

Respondents say that any country can consider itself European and name the reasons why.

Sub-theme: European values

- What are European values?

Respondents define what do they understand by European values.

- Ambivalence

Respondents indicate that the nature of the support of the European values is ambivalent; it is difficult to maintain these values and why.

- Georgia does its best for promotion of values

Respondents mention that despite limited progress in promoting and adopting European values, the country does its best.

- Georgia's achievements

Respondents mention Georgia's stories of success on its way of promoting and adapting European values.

- The bubble of like-minded people

Respondents say that they live in their own "Europeanized" bubble, but the situation is different outside of it.

THEME: WHY GEORGIA IS A EUROPEAN COUNTRY

- European self-statement

Respondents indicate that it is not an actual state of affairs in the EU-Georgia relations but how a country or population see itself about Europe is what matters.

- Government imposing an idea of Georgian Europeanness

Respondents say that authorities were promoting the idea of Georgian Europeanness.

- Georgia is a European country

Respondents name reasons why they see Georgia as a European state.

- Personal experience

Respondents share their observations on why Georgia is European, similarities between Georgia and European countries based on their personal experience of Europe.

- Similarities between Europe and Georgia

Respondents elaborate on similarities between Europe and Georgia that they have noticed.

- Born in independent Georgia

Respondents mention that being born in independent Georgia is important and contributes to the belief that Georgia is European.

- Georgia between Europe and Asia

Respondents mention that Georgia is located between Europe and Asia, that is why it is complicated to define it as a particular region; they also outline that Georgia does not belong to Asia, in their opinion.

- Hostile neighbourhood environment

Respondents say that neighbourhood countries are alien-minded; Georgia has no political role model in the regions, unlike Europe/the West.

Historical ties

- Ancient Greece

Respondents mention Georgia's ties with Greece in ancient times.

- France, Germany

Respondents mention that Georgia used to have relations with France and Germany before the Soviet occupation.

- Christianity

Respondents mention the role of Christianity in the Georgia-Europe ties.

- Common past

Respondents say that Georgia is a part of Europe due to their historical, cultural ties

Return to Europe

- Georgian Democratic republic of 1918-1921

Respondents connect the modern developments of Georgia to the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia of 1918-1921.

- The 2003 Rose revolution

Respondents indicate that this event contributed to promoting the European values and Europeanization in the country.

THEME: EXISTENTIAL THREAT

- Survival, security, stability

Respondents say that Georgia needs Europe to survive, secure itself, not have issues with its neighbours for the preservation of their statehood, stability.

- Russia, occupation, war

Respondents elaborate on a different issue related to Russia-Georgia relations and the role of Russia in Georgia's cooperation with Europe.

- Allies

Respondents say that Georgia needs allies to rely on in difficult times.

- Cooperation with the US and NATO

Respondents elaborate on the role of NATO and the USA in Georgia; that it is the trusted institution.

- EU/Europe as the only alternative

Respondents say that cooperation with Europe is the only alternative for their country.

THEME: THE EU-GEORGIA RELATIONS

- Georgia is not ready to be a part of the EU

Respondents indicate they believe that Georgia does not comply with the EU requirements so far, there is a lot of things to achieve first, therefore it makes sense that Georgia is not offered a membership perspective at this moment.

- Domestic EU agenda, enlargement fatigue

Respondents say that the EU has its own domestic agenda to cope with in the first place, like Brexit, enlargement fatigue, or accession of the states that have been waiting for it longer than Georgia; Georgia is not the first priority.

- Visa free regime

Respondents say what visa free regime has brought Georgia mentally closer to Europe.

- AA, DCFTA

Respondents mentioned different official documents regulating cooperation between the EU and Georgia within Eastern Partnership policy (Association Agreement, DCFTA)

- Driver of change

Respondents say that membership perspective is important and would change the situation in the country.

- Travelling before visa liberalization

Respondents tell about their experience of travelling to Europe before the introduction of visa-free regime with the EU.

- Slow but steady changes

Respondents indicate that the changes brought by the EU-Georgia cooperation may seem slow and not straightforward but is beneficial.

- Hope

Respondents express hope that Georgia will join the EU at some point.

- The membership perspective needs to be deserved

Respondents say that Georgia can not be granted with a membership perspective if it does not not comply with the EU requirements.

- Government achievements

Respondents say former and current authorities contribute to cooperation with Europe.

- The EU support

Respondents mention that the EU expresses a certain stance on the developments in Georgia and participate in these developments (crisis resolution etc).

- Disappointment

Respondent mention that they are disappointed or struggle to understand why Georgia is not offered a membership perspective.

- Discontent with the EU

Respondents say that the EaP states that have signed an AA with the EU should enjoy a more differentiated policy from the EU; that there is a general disbalance of power in these relations.

Sub-theme: How Georgia can contribute to Europe

- Uncertainty

Respondents express uncertainty when it comes to accessing what Georgia can bring to Europe, why Europe may need Georgia close.

- Diversity

Respondents indicate that Georgia can bring diversity of various forms to the EU.

- Regional stability, security

Respondents say that the EU needs Georgia to guarantee stability in its immediate neighborhood.

- The South Caucasus

Respondents mention the role of Georgia in the South Caucasus region for the EU.

- Georgia as a weak state

Respondents mention that Georgia is a small and economically underdeveloped country.

THEME: QUEST FOR A BETTER FUTURE

- Economic development

Respondents say that cooperation with the EU brings Georgia economic benefits.

- Geographical proximity

Respondents say that the choice between the EU and NATO is conditioned by a geographical proximity of Georgia to Europe; America is too distanced.

- Quality of life, better life

Respondents say that they would like their country to be a part of Europe because it brings a better quality of life, democratization etc.

- Better education, study opportunities

Respondents say that they associate Europe with study opportunities and good education.

- Democratization, human rights, values

Respondents say that cooperation with Europe makes their country more democratic, more open to resolution of human rights issues, more open towards European values.

- Ideal Georgia

Respondents share opinions on how they would like their society to look like, according to which values should it live.

THEME: OBSTACLES TO EUROPEANIZATION

Sub-theme: Polarization within Georgian society

- Polarization

Respondents say that Georgian society is polarized, and it is hard to come to an agreement, which prevents development of the country; current agenda is not always important and does not serve interests of the country.

- Traditions

Respondents say that Georgian traditions are preventing country from becoming more European.

- Russian propaganda/disinformation

Respondents mention that Russian propaganda plays a role in a spread of a belief that European integration will take away Georgia traditions and "Georgianness".

Sub-theme: Outdated school system

- Education system

Respondents indicate that education system of Georgia needs change in order to promote European values among young people.

Sub-theme: Government, political system

- Self-distance from the government

Respondents express opinions that demonstrate their tendency to distance themselves from the actions or decisions of the current authorities; disbelief towards them.

- System needs change

Respondents say that a change of political system in Georgia is needed.

- Deterioration of democracy

Respondents critically assess a role of a current Georgia's government in cooperation with the EU and democratization of the country in general.

- Discontent with a state of current affairs

Respondents talk about aspect of life in Georgia or issues that bother them, and they are not happy about.

- Government is not doing enough

Respondents share their opinion on how the Georgia's government deals with social and political issues in the country.

Sub-theme: Georgian Orthodox Church

- Georgian orthodox church

Respondents say that Georgian Orthodox church promote traditional values that prevents Georgia from becoming more European.

- Georgian church meddling into politics

Respondents say that it is an institution that meddles into politics and nothing to do with religion or Christianity.

- Georgian church vs Christianity

Respondents say that Georgian orthodox church is an institution that has nothing to do with Christianity.

Sub-theme: Soviet leverage

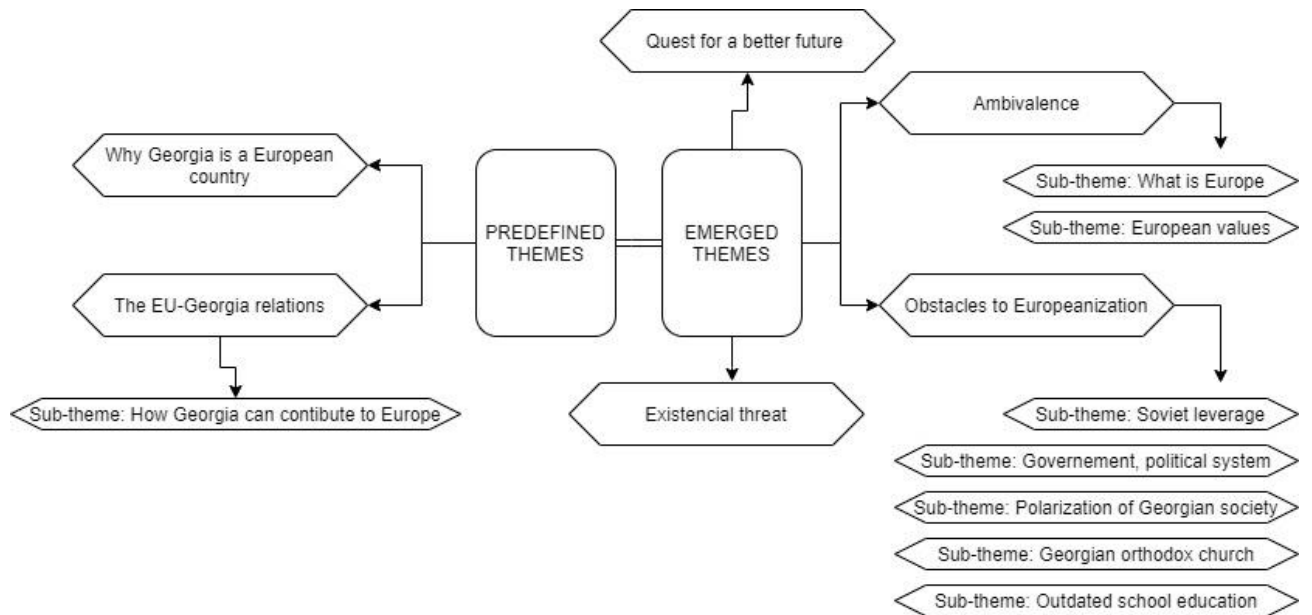
- Generation gap

Respondents outline that their choices and attitudes differ from the ones of older generation; this generation is described whether as Soviet or traditional, both characteristics prevent a promotion and adoption of European values.

- Soviet occupation

Respondents say that the Soviet occupation was prevent Georgia from integration with Europe for 70 years.

Appendix 9: Predefined and emerged themes in the Thematic analysis for the research sub-question 1



Appendix 10: Coding mechanism for the research sub-question 2

1. Diagnosis

The informant talks about processes that constitute the diagnostic framing (identification of the problem).

2. Prognosis

The informant talks about processes that constitute for prognostic framing.

3. Motivational framing

The informant talks about the processes that stand for motivational framing.

4. Description of the movements' activity

The informant describes the activity of the movement, talks about its structure etc.

5. Countermovement

The informant talks about constraints, other framing actors, such as government, countermovement, state media.