"*Europe is Awakening*": Diffusion and Adaptation of National-Populism

Case Study: Georgia- *Georgian March*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on reconceiving populist units not as evolving detached from one another, but rather influencing and providing discursive frames for each other. Thus, it proposes that, in the context of globalization, the processes of diffusion and adaptation should be taken into consideration in regard to the emergence of populist units across different cultural, historical and political contexts. In doing so, the thesis follows the national-populism framework and deploys a transnational approach in order to demonstrate how and in which circumstances the 'success' of national-populist politics elsewhere can influence the emergence of embryonic populist units in other, socio-culturally different national contexts and how the adaptation of exclusionary discourses is taking place. The research questions are addressed via examining the recently emerged social movement in Georgia- *Georgian March*. In order to track the process of diffusion and explain it, the thesis draws upon the methodological framework from Social Movement Studies and combines it with the Historical-Discourse Analysis approach. Analytically, three main discursive fields of *immigration, "foreign influence"* and *family and Christian values* are outlined. The main tool for empirically approaching the theoretical assumption is an analysis of the movement's discourses and incorporation of *the West* in it. The following key findings highlight hierarchical and proximity models of diffusion and sum up as follows: Firstly, the movement constructs a "double face" of Europe through which a 'progressive' image of the West is positioned for legitimizing their national-populist discourses albeit with subtly endorsing traditional right-wing anti-Western discourses; Secondly, not only do the discourse fields resemble other national-populist cases, but also discursive strategies, practices, and even exact phrases are copied from them; Lastly, considering intentional avoidance of associating with Russia, the strategic adaptation is central to the diffusion process in this case and indicates the front stage populist logic of Georgian March.

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Introduction

Following 'post-truth' in 2016, Cambridge Dictionary announced populism as the 'Word of the year' in 2017. Several months later, a Master Class named "Populism and Right-Wing Politics" was held at Central European University, where the prominent scholar in the field, Ruth Wodak, conducted a series of seminars introducing right-wing populist (RWP) discourses and strategies in European and US contexts. Not only did different cases presented by Nationalism Studies students reveal close similarities, but also Wodak herself concluded analysis of the Austrian Freedom Party and its discourses by underlining the international character of those discursive strategies. Similarly to what she noted while talking about the exclusionary discourses of FPÖ, I also "guess it is not an Austrian phenomenon".[1]

At the same time, an increasing number of studies note that right wing parties achieving comparative success across Europe, "does not match up with classical attributes of right-wing extremism".[2] Populism, although recognized as a "politically contested concept",[3] has generally come to the fore of the studies that examine the prominent political concerns about the crisis of post-World War 2 liberal order. The spectre, 'populism', which in the field's pioneering literature was perceived to be "haunting Europe"[4] some five decades ago, appears to now be a point of convergence for intensified discussions around the victory of Trump, Brexit, the success of Syriza in Greece, and authoritarian political directions Orban and Erdogan are taking in their states.

[1] Ruth Wodak, "Populism and Right-Wing Politics: Rhetoric and Discourse" (Budapest, CEU, 21.03.20018).
[2] Jerome Jamin, "Two Different Realities: Notes on Populism and the Extreme Right," and Bulli and Tronconi in Andrea Mammone, Emmanuel Godin, and Brian Jenkins, *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe: From Local to Transnational* (Routledge, 2012), 89..
[3] Jan-Werner Müller, *What Is Populism?* (Penguin UK, 2017), 9.
[4] Ghița Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (Macmillan, 1969),2.

While populists enthusiastically campaign against globalization processes, populism itself has been evolving as an increasingly globalized phenomenon. In addition to the resemblance of discourses, in 2016 Le Pen called Trump's victory in the US a "global revolution" and "a victory of the will of the people over elites".[5] On the periphery of Europe, in Georgia, the leader of the newly emerged right-wing social movement[6]- *Georgian March*, referred to the 'awoken West' of Marie Le Pen, Heinz-Christian Strache, Viktor Orban and Trump as the inspiration for them. Some prominent scholars such as Jens Rydgren[7] have even gone so far as to wonder why in some countries populist parties have not yet taken root, which further indicates the pace of populism's spread across democratic states.

However, perhaps not many concepts in the academic as well as in public discussions are meant to reflect on such dispersed phenomena as populism. The word *populism* is deployed in dissimilar public and scholarly discourses: from disparaging an opponent politician, to referring to the radical form of democracy or from labelling the political parties as radical right Jobbik, or as left-wing, Syriza, to even questioning its analytical value *per se*. What is more, the existing studies around the issue have hardly reached a consensus over the conceptualization of populism, w hich causes further analytical and methodological confusion over the phenomenon.

Studies concerning populism often align the phenomenon with several (sometimes even contradictory) ideological elements, geographical areas and/or historical periods. Consequently, on the one hand we speak about waves of populist mobilization from a historical perspective; agrarian populism and socio-economic populism; ethnopopulism and national-populism; right or

[5] Federico Finchelstein, *From Fascism to Populism in History* (University of California Press, 2017), 158.
[6] At the time of writing Georgian March still represents a social movement, although the leaders have announced that the movement will turn into a political party.
[7] Jens Rydgren, "Sweden: The Scandinavian Exception," in *Twenty-First Century Populism* (Springer, 2008), 135–150.

left-wing populism, and on the other hand, Latin American, Russian, US, Eastern and Western European populisms and so forth.

This tendency of clustering 'populist cases' in space and time, around ideological outlooks implicitly suggests that we might need to reconceive populist units not as discrete formations evolving independently of one another, but rather as common trends bound by inspirational links and transnational influences. Drawing upon the different epistemological means to populism, I follow the framework of national-populism and attempt to deploy a transnational approach to comprehending the emergence of similarly labeled units across different socio-political and national-historical contexts. The immense scholarship providing a valuable insight into the study domain has so far overlooked the context of the irreversible interconnection and interdependence within the globalized world, where processes, including emergence of alike populist units, are informed by developments elsewhere.

I propose that in the context of globalization, not only domestic structural and opportunity factors, but also transnational diffusion of ideas and practices provide a fertile ground for populist discourses to emerge and find a legitimacy within a society. Hence, the similar populist units, clustered around ideological outlooks should be examined within a broader context and analyzed in interconnection. In this matter, European integration on the top of the increasing role of non-traditional media acquires particular analytical importance in the context of 'borrowing of populism' via its cross-national diffusion.

With the intention to contribute to this, comparatively disregarded, research track, through the thesis I focus on understanding the spreading and adaptation of national-populism across different socio-economic, geographic and cultural settings by examining the case of the recently emerged national-populist social movement - *Georgian March*. For this analytical purpose, I adopt the

theoretical and methodological frameworks from social movement studies in the context of globalization and combine them with the Historical-Discourse Analysis (HDA) methodological approach. Hence, I scrutinize diffusion of ideas and processes of reciprocal perceptions through analyzing the borrowing and strategic adaptation of discourses, style, and strategies.

Inspired by the works of scholars such as della Porta, McAdam and Rucht, who, in understanding the spread of social movements, highlight the importance of diffusion processes and "relational and non-relational channels responsible for borrowings across the new [social] movements",[8] I deploy a parallel transnational history in comprehending the emergence of the populist unit in the context of ever-increasing interdependence and global transfer of ideas. I explain how 'success' of national-populist politics elsewhere can influence an emergence of embryonic units in other, socio-culturally different places and how adaptation of exclusionary discourses is taking place. In this sense, the study demonstrates diffusing national-populism to the Georgian case with the focus on its adaptation to historically rooted ethnic nationalism. Insofar as there are methodological constraints to research the direct diffusion of populism in this case,[9] the focus of this study is on understanding indirect (non-personal/discursive) diffusion and borrowing processes.

The Georgian case illustrates an emergence of the national-populist units following the rise of exclusionary populist ideologies throughout the 'Western liberal democracies'. In these terms, this study scrutinizes the right-wing social movement named "Georgian March". Excusive nationalism being the main ideological layer of the movement, populism makes a considerable

[8] Doug McAdam and Dieter Rucht, "The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas," (1993): 62.
[9] Direct links of these formations are either hidden or non-existence besides public praising of one another. The exception could be the populist party-families represented at EU, although even there not all the parties are included or explicitly linked to one another.

appearance through their discursive strategies and topics, and *recontextualizing* traditional ethno-nationalistic and anti-Western sentiments.

The movement emerged in July 2017 and since then managed to not only affect some political decisions in the country, but more importantly to seize the picture of 'nationalist' [Erovnuli] power and propose issues for the public discussions over normative issues that, most of the time, lead to public polarization. Following the timeline of the events organized by Georgian March, the thesis locates three main discursive fields and respective topics deployed by the movement. Alongside anti-immigration, which, in this form, is a novel matter in Georgian nationalism and the foremost mobilizing issue for this movement, Georgian March also constructs discourses related to Christian and family values, and 'foreign liberal influence'. Within each of these discourse fields the movement's leader, as well as the official Facebook page constantly refer to the "Western examples" and "success stories" of European and North American national-populists.

These references to "Western cases" become of special importance against the background of traditional conservative and right-wing discourse in Georgia developed in the early 2000s about the 'liberal (therefore striking) West', which is now preserved, yet supplemented with a discourse about the 'awoken West' within the Georgian March's discourses. During the EU integration processes, intensified since 2003, master political narratives in the country established a positive connotation of Europe aligning it to 'progress' juxtaposed to Russia and its traditional rule over Georgia.

National-populist discourses of Georgian March are different from traditional right-wing rhetoric in that they comply with dominant political discourse affiliating the West with progress, but in these terms, the 'new version' of 'real' West is created and presented through Orban, Le Pen,

Trump or Strache. They are portrayed as 'good' and exemplary within the Manichean rhetoric of the movement.

Explaining the reasons behind this double construction is one of the aims of the thesis and links to the main theoretical assumption concerning the diffusion. For Georgian March, I propose, this type of 'progressive West', "protecting its culture and national identity against liberalism, multiculturalism and foreign influence" becomes a tool for legitimizing exclusionary populist discourses that they try to politicize. In these terms, diffusion and borrowing of national-populism definitely is about the common 'other', but it goes beyond and implies a similar set of logic; master frames; discursive strategies and sometimes even the content. However, it should be emphasized that the adaptation process involves modification and adjustment to the local givens. This is where analyzing construction of "double Europe" in Georgian March's discourses acquires special illustrative function following its historical and political connotations. Moreover, even though the movement's name as well as some of the political demands (e.g. prohibition of financing NGOs – "foreign agents"- from abroad) resemble the Russian discourses from recent years, Georgian March avoids referring to the practices of the northern neighbor, which is explained by the negative normative connotation that Russia carries within the public discussions in Georgia.

Hence, the thesis aims at paving the new research track in the studies of populism and rethinking the role of globalization processes within this domain; It further locates the emergence of national-populism in Georgia into the "global rise of populism" and comprehends adaptation of the discourses and framing events happening 'in the West' by Georgian March. A three-stage methodological framework serves as an analytical track throughout the thesis for marking the diffusion of national-populist exclusionary discourses. The main tool for demonstrating not only the mere fact of diffusion, but also the circumstances under which it takes place, lies in illustrating

the discursive construction of "double Europe" by the movement, reflected throughout each discourse field.

The structure follows the theoretical assumptions levelled above. Consequently, the theoretical framework establishes national-populism as an analytical reference and literature review paves the way to the missing link within the 'populism emergence' studies. The chapter that follows constructs the methodological frame adopted from Social Movement Studies and identifies the main analytical strategies in this sense, conjured with the HDA approach. The subsequent historical background serves to introduce the reader to the contextual particularities of historically developed nationalism by marking out the main inherent elements throughout the three previous waves of nationalist mobilization. In doing so, the chapter underlines the position and connotation of 'the West' within the nationalist sentiments mobilized in different historical periods. Proceeding to the analysis, *Chapter 4* summarizes the contents of Georgian March's discourses following the timeline of events and marks three general discursive fields, with the respective topics, that lead to consequent discourse analysis. Within the latter, discursive tools for constructing 'double Europe' and substantiation of diffusion, including borrowed discursive strategies, come to the fore of analysis.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Almost all the European states have seen a rise of right-wing political parties and movements since the first electoral success of France's Front National in France in 1984. Far right units across Europe have carefully refined their programs adopting national-populist and chauvinistic slogans and with them subtler forms of exclusion and racism.[10] Considerable scholarship has been devoted to explaining this phenomenon, which perhaps reflects what Taggart classified as 'new populism'.[11] As Pelinka notes: "The contemporary success of far right is based on its ability to become populist".[12] To put it boldly, in addition to the five common features of the extreme-right wing family, identified by Mudde in the mid-90s,[13] populism has come to the fore reshaping *nationalist, xenophobic, racist, authoritarian and anti-democratic* sentiments. Populism is perceived as an inevitable perspective in studying the contemporary right wing in Europe.[14]

Populism, although becoming increasingly central to academic and political discussions in the last decade, has been a concerning issue in the twentieth century too. One of the pioneering volumes on populism by Ionescu and Gellner in 1969 opens with the reinterpreted line from the widely known Communist Party Manifesto: "A Spectre is haunting the world- *Populism*".[15] Populism's alleged threat to 'the world' might still be questionable in 2018, but the fact that Cambridge Dictionary announced populism as the 'Word of the year 2017' only legitimizes commonly cited

[10] Ruth Wodak, "Anything Goes. The Haiderization of Europe," *Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse*, 2013, 23–37.
[11] Paul A. Taggart, *Populism*, Concepts in the Social Sciences (Buckingham : Open University Press, 2000).
[12] Anton Pelinka, "Right-Wing Populism: Concept and Typology," *Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse*, 2013, 12.
[13] Cas Mudde, "Right-Wing Extremism Analyzed," *European Journal of Political Research* 27, no. 2 (1995): 209–2015.
[14] See Marco Tarchi,. "Italy: A country of many populisms." *Twenty-First Century Populism*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2008. 84-99.
[15] Ionescu and Gellner, *Populism*, 1.

expressions such as "Age of Populism" by Ivan Krastev[16] and "Populist Zeitgeist", coined by the distinguished researcher in the field- Cas Mudde.[17] However, Mudde himself critically responded to this announcement by claiming that it was *nativism*, rather than populism, that academics and politicians were debating intensively in 2017.[18]

The conceptual confusion, perhaps as enduring as the phenomenon itself, has concerned many and despite the increasing academic attention devoted to this study domain, populism still remains one of the most debated phenomena. Jan Werner- Müller, among others, accentuates an absence of "anything like *theory* of populism" [19] or any conceptual consensus in these terms. At the same time, I propose, it is crucial to assess not only the conceptualization but also the approaches to studying it in order to: 1) avoid stretching its meaning beyond an analytical value, [20] yet not missing what Mény and Surel call a "crucial specificity of populism"; [21] and 2) comprehend an emergence of similar units, characterized as populist, across the different socio-political and cultural contexts.

Throughout this chapter, I will attempt to create a conceptual framework and outline theoretical discussions in the study domain. In doing so, I will map different traditions and epistemological approaches to studying populism and demonstrate the importance of focusing on national-populism as a category of analysis instead of *populism*. Further, I will elaborate on the importance

[16] Ivan Krastev, *'NATO in the Age of Populism'*, 2007;
[17] Cas Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 541–563.
[18] Cas Mudde, "Why Nativism, Not Populism, Should Be Declared Word of the Year | Cas Mudde," the Guardian, December 7, 2017, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/07/cambridge-dictionary-nativism-populism-word-year. Accessed on 10 Apr. 2018.
[19] Müller, *What Is Populism?*, 2.
[20] Benjamin De Cleen, Jason Glynos, and Aurelien Mondon, "Critical Research on Populism: Nine Rules of Engagement," *Organization*, (2018).
[21] Yves Mény and Yves Surel, "The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism," in *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (Springer, 2002), 17.

of the comparatively disregarding the transnational approach in the domain, especially when it comes to exploring the emergence of the new 'populist' powers within the context of globalization.

Conceptual Bewilderment of Populism and the Framework of *National-Populism*

Conceptual clarification has a determinative role in terms of subsequent methodological and theoretical approaches. As Peter Wiles has justly pointed out, each time the given definition of populism is consequent to the academic axe of the researcher. [22] However, there are commonalities to be drawn from each approach indicating the "essential specificity of populism". At the same time, analyzing different theoretical approaches to populism leads to comprehending relevance of national-populism as an analytical framework for this study.

Through treating populism as *a syndrome* in contrast with *doctrine*, authors apply empiricism and underline the opportunistic and flexible nature of populism. In the same vein, Wiles himself lists twenty-four items to characterize populism. He perceives it as a *syndrome* following major premise of a virtue residing in *the simple people*, who are also the overwhelming majority and hold collective traditions. Canovan, inspired by Wiles, has created seven analytical compartments in an attempt to establish a general yet coherent conceptualization of *populism*. By drawing upon 'the broad distinctions' of agrarian and political populisms, further subdividing them respectively into three and four types, she managed to underline historical commonalities and interconnections among these theoretical categories. Nonetheless, she was still not tempted to put everything under one category, but rather to cluster different "populist syndromes". [23] Even so, her "populist syndromes" correspondingly highlighted *romanticization of common people*, a *charismatic leader*

[22] Peter Wiles, "A Syndrome, Not a Doctrine: Some Elementary Theses on Populism," *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics*, 1969, 166.
[23] Margaret Canovan, *Populism* (New York : Junction Books, c1981.), 289–93.

and *opposition to technological progress and elite*, which she sums up in two common elements of populism: appeal to "the people" against established structures and dominant ideas/values of society. [24] These elements are useful to keep in mind when seeking to establish analytical boundaries of populism within the patchworks of ideological units (e.g. national-populism).

Post-structuralists base their analysis on *populist discourses*. Through this approach, populism is treated as a discourse and methodological measures, such as qualitative discourse analysis, quantitative content analysis and perhaps a mix of these two - holistic grading- are applied. Ernesto Laclau is perceived to have had an exceptional influence on the ideational approach to populism. [25] Together with Mouffe- another exceptionally important contributor to the field- they have applied the fundamental logic of antagonism from "The Concept of the Political' by Carl Schmitt to populism. Hence, they underline that populists find it significant to construct an identity through creating antagonism between 'us' versus 'them'. In other words, "the people", which appears to be a *nodal point*[26] of populism, lacks a fixed referent and is articulated by populist politicians via naming the 'other'- the antagonist group. [27] Here more clarification on a 'construction' would be needed: it does not imply creation of entirely new entity, but rather building upon or reframing the existing, socially constructed identity, be it ethnic, national or even transnational (e.g. 'European'). The content which nodal points acquire, is usually dependent on other elements populism is aligned with (nationalism, socialism etc.).

[24] Canovan, *Populism* Conclusion; Margaret Canovan, "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy," *Political Studies* 47, no. 1 (1999): 2–16.
[25] Carlos Meléndez and Cristóbal Kaltwasser, "Political Identities: The Missing Link in the Study of Populism" (2017).
[26] *Understood as "the main point of reference". See more about comparison of Nationalism and Populism through their nodal points in* Benjamin De Cleen and Yannis Stavrakakis, "Distinctions and Articulations: A Discourse Theoretical Framework for the Study of Populism and Nationalism," Javnost-The Public 24, no. 4 (2017): 301–319.
[27] In Francisco Panizza, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy* (Verso, 2005).

Another commonly used approach perceives populism as a *political style*. In these terms, Moffitt in his recent book analyzes the manifestation of populism and populist performance across different socio-political contexts and treats populism as a global phenomenon. [28] Moreover, he challenges previously shared assumption about the crisis being prerequisite for populism. Instead, for him, *mediated and articulated crisis* is an internal, indispensable component of populist political style. Along with *the media*, a crisis provides another stage for the populist leader's performance. [29] Through this approach, flexibility and opportunism of the leader seem to be an important component of analysis. Even though Moffitt seeks for the common elements of 'populist style', he does not devote much attention to left-right ideological distinction.

When approaching populism as a *political strategy*, Kurt Weyland treats the concept in political-organizational terms. In this way, understanding an adoptability and flexibility of populist strategy is feasible, insofar as it is basically deployed by politicians to capture power via mass support. [30] After all, treating populism in the context of 'flexible strategy' also arrives at pointing out an *appeal to the 'common people'* and *anti-establishment sentiments* as the central elements of less institutionalized populist strategy. [31]

Flexibility and difference in degree of populism is also an important point for scholars treating populism as a *communication style and its frame.* According to Jan Jagers and Stefan Walgrave, by identifying with people, populists tend to justify their actions. [32] These authors have also

[28] Benjamin Moffitt, *The Global Rise of Populism : Performance, Political Style, and Representation* (Stanford University Press, 2016).
[29] Benjamin Moffitt, "How to Perform Crisis: A Model for Understanding the Key Role of Crisis in Contemporary Populism," *Government and Opposition* 50, no. 2 (April 2015): 189–90.
[30] Kurt Weyland, "Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics," *Comparative Politics*, 2001, 16.
[31] {Ibid}
[32] Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave, "Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties' Discourse in Belgium," *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3 (2007): 319–345.

elaborated on the difference between 'thin' and 'thick' populisms. While references to *the peopl*e already constitutes a 'thin' populism, in case of the 'thick' populism elements of anti-establishment and exclusion should be also visible.[33] The claims about variety and degree are important assumptions to keep in mind when analyzing populism in conjunction with other ideological elements, such as nationalism. Andzej Zaslove has also indicated that alongside the forms it takes, populism also varies in degrees.[34]

The idea of 'thin-ideology', prevalent throughout the last years, underlines that populism is more than a political strategy or style although it does not appear alone as a separate ideological unit. Perhaps the most cited analysis of populism as a thin ideology belongs to Cas Mudde and Kristobal Kaltwasser, who offer a minimalist conceptualization of populism via examining its core elements- 'the people'; 'the elite' and 'general will'. Nonetheless, it is always attached to existing ideological families, it appears to be "*a kind of mental map through which individuals analyze and comprehend political reality*".[35] Without using the terminology of Mudde, four decades earlier, MacRae in 1967 was actually talking about thinness of populism, naming it "*poor, if significant, thing*",[36] which is often an amalgam with nationalism or even Marxism.

At the same time, it has been an important task for researchers to achieve a general and complete understanding of populism, which is also worth considering if we are careful about losing specificity of populism within other ideological units. Despite the label populism acquires within the demonstrated approaches, the central elements derived from different perspectives tend to be concessive, leading to consensus over central analytical concepts.

[33] Jagers and Walgrave.
[34] Andrej Zaslove, "Here to Stay? Populism as a New Party Type," *European Review* 16, no. 3 (July 2008): 319–36,.
[35] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. (2013):499.
[36] Donald MacRae, "Populism as an Ideology," *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics*, 1969, 162–63.

Considering the theoretical discussions from different scholarly approaches described above, there are omnipresent elements of populism that are similar throughout the patchworks of ideologies. Even Muller, expressing his skepticism about populism being a doctrine, accentuates *anti-elitism* and *anti-pluralism* as the common components for populism on different ends of the political spectrum. For him, populism is focused around the notion of 'the people' and is a '*moralistic imagination of politics'*, [37] by which he speaks of bellicose language and Manichean division between pure people and corrupt *elite*. For Taggart, populism is an ideology lacking core values and having the chameleon affect over dissimilar contexts, it opposes representative politics, concentrates around the sense of crisis and idealizes the 'heartland'- an evocation of that life and those qualities worth defending[38]. Moreover, the articulation of crisis and polarization of society alongside the normative divisions also constitute specificities of populism.

However, considering the importance of comparative and cross-national studies, similarly labeling different units as *just* 'populist' leads to at least a twofold problem: one is theoretical, related to further conceptual incoherence, and the other is analytical- populism losing its analytical value in the process of expanding its conceptual applicability. As Rydgren argues, most of the times populism is rather a secondary feature of the units commonly referred to as 'populist'. According to him, in setting their agenda populism is not a determinative ideology for 'populist' powers, but rather those other elements with which populism is aligned with.[39]

Due to its ideological 'thinness', studying populism appears to be more feasible in a nexus with other ideological units albeit considering its essentiality. Hence, interpretation of the elements of

[37] Müller, *What Is Populism?*, 19.
[38] Taggart, *Populism*, 95.
[39] Michał Krzyżanowski and Ruth Wodak, "Right-Wing Populism in Europe & USA: Contesting Politics & Discourse beyond 'Orbanism' and 'Trumpism,'" *Journal of Language and Politics* 16, no. 4 (January 2017).

populism and construction of antagonism between 'the people' and 'the elite' mainly depends on the ideological element it is aligned with. [40] De Cleen et.al. in their recent work have convincingly proposed to be cautious about "the architecture of populist politics" and always clarify whether it is populism or other elements in the ideological center of the study unit.[41]

However, as mentioned above, populism has become an important component of traditional right and left wing politics and has perhaps transformed them into new ideological entities. Although the main ideological layer through national-populism, in the case of Georgian March (as in other European and US cases too)[42] is rather nationalism, populism constitutes the new frames of making sense of a traditional nationalism. In other words, it is significant to approach populism as a generic phenomenon, yet in a nexus with other ideological elements due to its 'thinness'.

In defining national-populism, I follow the conceptualization offered by Brubaker,[43] who writes in response to the remarkable works in the field (mainly of Taguieff 1995; Mudde 2004; Müller 2016). *National-Populism* is defined by confronting polarization between "us" and "them". The author underlines vertical and horizontal dimensions of the polarization offered by Taguieff.[44] In the former, national-populists tend to claim representation of "the ordinary people" vis-à-vis "elite", both the categories being constructed through discourses. As for the horizontal extent, a clash is perceived to be happening between "people like us" sharing and praising our way of life and "outsiders"- not only outside of the 'national borders', but also those who might be living

[40] Mény and Surel, "The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism."
[41] De Cleen, Glynos, and Mondon, "Critical Research on Populism: Nine Rules of Engagement," 6.
[42] De Cleen. Populism and Nationalism
[43] Rogers Brubaker, "Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (June 21, 2017): 1191–1226.
Further analysis of the concept: Rogers Brubaker, "Why Populism?," *Theory and Society*, accessed December 15, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/34970278/Why_Populism.
[44] André Taguieff,."Political Science Confronts Populism: From a Conceptual Mirage to a Real Problem," accessed December 15, 2017, http://journal.telospress.com/content/1995/103/9.

among us, but be a threat to *our* culture, customs, and lifestyle. Thus, "*power back to the people*" conveys an all-changing embedded element: "only some of the people are really the people".[45] Depending on the other elements ascribed to populism, specific segments of population are stigmatized and excluded from 'the people' as a threat to and a burden on society.[46]

Populism in Central European countries formed mainly in national-populist frame. Wodak outlines four Criteria for right-wing populist discourses: Nativism ("national heritage", "blood and soil"); 2) Anti-elitism (construction of conspiracies); 3) Authoritarian appeals (undermining liberal-democratic institutions, calling for referenda and endorsing Lakoff's 'strict father' approach); 4) Conservative values (family values and Christianity) OR Welfare chauvinism. This is true of Georgian March as well, which builds upon the traditional nationalist and conservative sentiments albeit recontextualizing them in anti-elitist terms and demands massive public engagement via (online) polls and referenda. In these discursive processes construction and of each element is particularly important.

Hence, within national-populism even the members of national or ethnic groups are labeled as the governmental or intellectual elites and defined as traitors because of their cooperation with 'foreign' powers and allowing multiculturalism, new immigration and liberal influences in nation-state. In these terms, the language towards national minorities is softened, at least on the front stage discourses, insofar as they are together with 'indigenous people' against these 'bigger cruelties'. Similarly to "the people" these threats are also subject of construction.

[45] Müller, *What Is Populism?*, 21.
[46] Jagers and Walgrave, "Populism as Political Communication Style," 324.

A Road Less Traveled- The Role of Diffusion in Studies of Populism

To refer back to "age of populism", the prevalent emergence of populism, in its different forms, have concerned academics to search for explanations not only for its meaning but also for the reasons behind the emergence and electoral success of the units characterized as populist. Scholars have been clustering and analyzing the *populist* cases or party families alongside the ideological outlooks and/or geographical spaces underlining the common repertoires, discursive frames and political strategies. In these terms, Mudde[47] has been providing a valuable insight into the right wing populist party families throughout Europe, inspiring many researchers to investigate their common discourses,[48] recruitment and organization strategies, and common opportunity structures determining their success.[49] Brubaker in his recent works has adopted the expression of "family resemblance" firstly used by Umberto Eco in reference to Ur-Fascism. Besides neofascism, this concept have been applied to different study domains including inquiries about antisemitism and "rounds of discourses" in that sense.[50] In case of populism, Brubaker outlined the converged elements of right-wing populist groups in Euro-American contexts. [51]

This tendency of clustering populist cases implicitly suggests that we might need to rethink populist units as the discrete formations evolving independently of one another. Instead, more attention needs to be devoted to the inspirational links and relevance of the transnational influences in this matter. Transnational analysis as understood here sheds the light on the role of cultural,

[47] Cas Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 541–563; Cas Mudde, *The Populist Radical Right: A Reader* (Taylor & Francis, 2016);.
[48] Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean* (SAGE, 2015); And Ruth Wodak, Brigitte Mral, and Majid KhosraviNik, *Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse* (A&C Black, 2013).
[49] Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (Springer, 2007).
[50] András Kovács, *The Stranger at Hand: Antisemitic Prejudices in Post-Communist Hungary*, vol. 15 (Brill, 2010), 27–30.
[51] Rogers Brubaker, "Why Populism?," *Theory and Society*, accessed March 15, 2018.

political or historical links and studies processes in connection to one another. Thus far, this approach gets least of the academic attention, even within the increasing popularity of comparative studies in the domain. The exception is Rydgren's work: "Is Extreme Right-Wing Populism Contagious?", where he underlines the importance to include diffusion and adaptation of master frames in studying extreme right-wing.

In an attempt to understand what unites right-wing populist parties in Western Europe, Ivarsflaten's comparative cross-national study of seven Western European right-wing populist cases arrives at the conclusion that out of three grievance-mobilizing issues (the other two being economic changes and political corruption), immigration has proven to be decisive for the success of these parties throughout 2002-3.[52] The conclusion proved applicable to even earlier case of Front National (FN) in France, which managed to trigger public fear over the immigration issue in the early 80s connecting it to most social problems and locating it within anti-establishment appeals.[53]

Insofar as this shift alongside detaching itself from traditional xenophobic anti-semitic sentiments, proved successful for FN (corresponding to an increase in electoral support throughout 90s), it became a new frame for other right-wing parties elsewhere.[54] The case of Jorg Heider- the former leader of the Austrian Freedom Party- demonstrates the resemblance with FN in the same sense. [55] Ruth Wodak, although claiming that the coded language have just moved anti-Semitic and xenophobic discourses to the back stage from their front stage politics, have labeled this shift

[52] Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, "What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe? Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 1 (2008): 3–23.
[53] Michelle Hale Williams, "DOWNSIDE AFTER THE SUMMIT," *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe: From Local to Transnational* 16 (2012): 263.
[54] Jens Rydgren, "Is Extreme Right-Wing Populism Contagious? Explaining the Emergence of a New Party Family," *European Journal of Political Research* 44, no. 3 (May 2005): 413–15.
[55] Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*, 2.

as *'the Heiderization of politics'* relating it to Heider's political rhetoric and style.[56] Griffin's British National Party also applied modifications like amending "race" in their discourses with "identity" and focusing on mobilizing local grievances. Mammone labels such modifications as a "hallmark of success" of extreme-right parties *in Europe*.[57]

Hence, the right-wing populist formations have been studied not only in a context of alike issues they tend to securitize, but also under geographical labels (e.g Western and Eastern European, US etc.) and models of populisms ("Trumpism" or "Orbanism"[58]). As mentioned above, Moffitt in his recent book also seeks to outline commonalities of 'populists' from 28 different contexts.[59] However, the emergence of these similar units is always explained within the domestic context. By 'emergence' I do not only refer to the representation in governing bodies or electoral support (for which a large number of studies have been done), but first and foremost an appearance- 'birth' - of the national-populist groups on the political horizon and their involvement in political issues.

Even though Wodak as well as Mudde and Kaltwasser [60] outline an absence of a universal explanation and direct to the context-dependence when it comes to comprehending resurgence of populist units, there are some commonalities among the analyzed prerequisites for populism. Most of the researchers being concerned about emergence of populism connect it to the representative (noted as by Taggart,[61] Pelinka,[62] and Müller[63]) or liberal democracy (Mudde and Kaltwasser)[64] not as merely external but accompanying phenomenon of populism's emergence. For them

[56] Wodak, "Anything Goes. The Haiderization of Europe."
[57] Andrea Mammone and Timothy Peace, "CROSS-NATIONAL IDEOLOGY IN LOCAL ELECTIONS," *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe: From Local to Transnational* 16 (2012): 291.
[58] Krzyżanowski and Wodak, "Right-Wing Populism in Europe & USA."
[59] Moffitt, *The Global Rise of Populism*.
[60] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 97.
[61] Taggart, *Populism*.
[62] Pelinka, "Right-Wing Populism."
[63] Müller, *What Is Populism?*
[64] Mudde and Kaltwasser, *Populism*, 2017.

populism emerges within democracies as a "shadow"[65] or "illiberal democratic response" [66]. To add more preciseness to this claim, not only are 'established' democracies perceived to be offering the fertile ground for populism, but also a transition to or an appeal to democracy as the dominant narrative (on the level of ideas) might pave the way to populism.

Besides the focus on the general democratic environment, usually authors outline demand and supply factors for populist movements to emerge and succeed. Thus, emergence and success of populism within the different ideological units is understood in the context of an "interplay between *structure*[67] and agency".[68] In these terms, socio-cultural and economic conditions are central to the analysis.[69] The breakdown of social order (sharp economic decline/crisis) accompanied with a distrust towards the present political establishment to resolve it, are labeled as the important accelerators for populism to grow. The latter is the case in Georgia as the general distrust of political parties has increased from 18% to 40% in the period of 2012-2017.[70]

De-legitimization of existing political parties through lack of trust is a central component analyzed through the literature on the rise of populism. Albertazzi and McDonnell explain the rise of populism in Western European democracies as "a reaction to the failure of traditional parties to respond adequately in the eyes of the electorate to the series of phenomena".[71] These *phenomena*

[65] Müller, *What Is Populism?*, 20.
[66] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat Or Corrective for Democracy?* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 23.
[67] ***Opportunity Structures** *are "the specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others".* Source: Kitschelt,"Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest," 58.
[68] Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*, 9.
[69] Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest"; Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist," 200.
[70] "Caucasus Barometer 2017 Georgia," accessed May 18, 2018, http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2017ge/TRUPPS/. *Note: The sharp decline of trust happened in the expanse of people previously taking a stance within "neither trust nor distrust", which speaks of the role of agency in mobilizing public attitudes towards the establishment.*
[71] Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*, 1.

are flexible themselves and might vary from domestic socio-economic issues and corruption to cultural globalization. By the same token, Laclau and Mouffe underlining preconditions of populism, emphasize the mentioned complexity of socio-economic issues and an institutional system, which is unable or unwilling to address them. Here birth of populism is connected to the inclusion of the 'excluded' part of society within the unity of "the people".[72] However, this feeling of exclusion and their particular demands, which are not met by the establishment are 'awoken' and mobilized from outside of this segment.[73] In construction of critical situation, agency's artifice to use "a crisis of public knowledge", as Brubaker calls it, creates a feasible opportunity for populists and specifically to the populist right to get legitimacy.[74]

Hence, a failure of representation or the feeling of being disenfranchised from socio-political benefits, creates fertile ground for emergence of the populist groups. However, as mentioned above, triggering of the crisis itself is an important part of populist politics. As Damir Skenderovic concludes his analysis of Swiss right-wing and its potential to succeed: "radical right-wing populist parties are in many ways both the designers and builders of their own success".[75]

In addition to this, the scholars taking a functionalist approach, speak of "external" and "internal" factors facilitating the emergence of populism. As for the 'external' factors, Angus Steward brings an example of Russian populism, on the one hand, a response to the variety of West European socialist doctrines, and Peronism in South America, on the other, being influenced by Italian Fascism. As he maintains: "Frustrations arising at various points in the development process…. are important general determinants of the emergence of populist movements".[76] He convincingly

[72] Ernesto Laclau, "Populism: What's in a Name?," *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy* 48 (2005).
[73] Panizza, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, 10 Introduction.
[74] Brubaker, "Why Populism?," 41.
[75] Skenderovic in Mammone, Godin, and Jenkins, *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe*, 221.
[76] Angus Stewart, *The Social Roots* (Macmillan, New York, 1969), 190.

points out that social groups are mobilized by the exposure to a more developed society. Therefore, according to him, populist movements emerge in the context of a demand for modernization or the reconstruction of the economic or political systems. What is more, he claims that traditionalism and modernism create populist ideological *synthesis*. This factor is especially prevalent in discourses of the recently emerged Georgian March.

In the same vein, the modernization theory locates populism within the context of the articulated anxieties and 'resentments' directed at the modernization challenge. Basing his analysis on Latin American cases, Germani offers historical insight and argues that the modernization process paved the way for populism during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[77] Lipset even calls those attracted by populism "psychologically homeless" alongside with "economically insecure, unsophisticated, authoritarian personalities".[78]

Beyond the 'modernization glasses', Meléndez and Kaltwasser offer groundbreaking observation of an "antiestablishment identity" through examining tendencies in voting behavior in Chile. In this matter, the authors develop empirically backed theory suggesting that the antiestablishment political identity is an essential prerequisite for populism to succeed.[79] By the "antiestablishment identity", they refer to a considerable drop or decline of the trust towards all mainstream parties. This process has also been referred as 'political malaise' in the literature.[80]

As Adorno noted, "Identity is the prototype of ideology" [81] and indeed, the *populist identity*, so to call to the combination of an "antiestablishment identity" and the role of agency, is an important

[77] In Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Populism* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 5.
[78] Seymour Martin-Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics* (New York: Doubleday and, 1963), 178.
[79] Meléndez and Kaltwasser, "Political Identities."
[80] For example Albertazzi and McDonnell, *Twenty-First Century Populism*.
[81] Theodor W. Adorno, "Negative Dialektik," *Frankfurt Am Main* 21980 (1966): 151 in; Ruth Wodak, "Language, Power and Identity," *Language Teaching* 45, no. 2 (2012): 215–233.

if not essential the setting for embryonic movements to speak up and mobilize. Generally, an economic decline or recent economic crises, migration and the feeling of political and socio-economic exclusion triggered in some segment of society were labeled as the combination of facilitating factors in reference to the 'classic populism' of the late 1950s and 70s.[82]

The media, accelerating or hindering chances of populists, appears on all the above-mentioned levels as a framer of the issues and a stage for populists. Mazzoleni, among others, points out that media affordances and increasing platforms for self-mediation are salient factors for explaining emergence and success of populist ideologies.[83] This is especially relevant for the subject of this study, insofar as social media appears to be an important platform for not only mobilizing public grievances, but also for constructing discourses or addressing to 'the people' via online polls and live streaming.

Thus, objective and constructed factors are brought together in explaining the rise of populism, which indeed helps to comprehend the process of populism emergence. However, under the givens of an increasing interdependence and 'open borders' for ideas and practices to 'travel', one needs to be critical towards the locality of populism's emergence.

The issue of borrowing an idea of populism via its cross-national diffusion is rarely, if ever, academically studied. So far, studies of diffusion process have been somewhat supplementary throughout the studies of nationalist mobilization, rise of populism in its different forms or protest campaigns. In addition to that, the conditions for diffusion and the process per se, have even rarely become a central point of analysis. In the context of right-wing populist parties, Rydgren has opened up a path to study the role of diffusion of ideas and practices. His work, however, is an

[82] Torcuato S. Di Tella, *Populism and Reform in Latin America*, 1965.
[83] Gianpietro Mazzoleni, "Populism and the Media," in *Twenty-First Century Populism* (Springer, 2008), 49–64.

exception to the general lack of attention to how 'success of national-populism' elsewhere can become a favorable condition in other contexts. Globalization is not only creating 'losers' as the supporters of populist parties, but it also fuels it via transparency of the ideas and increasing interdependence of issues happening, from a first view, on a local level. From the three main types of populist mobilization, I will be focusing on 'bottom-up populist mobilization' other two being top-down personalist leadership, the mixed form of the political party identified by Mudde and Kaltwasser.[84]

I propose that in the context of globalization, the emergence of populist movements and parties should be located within a broader context and analyzed in interconnection. European integration, increasing role of non-traditional media and transnational flow of ideas and practices should also be considered among the structural factors [85] creating a fertile ground for populism to emerge. By demonstrating the existing perspectives on this matter, I attempted to highlight an absence of the broader issue concerning 'borrowing of populism' via its cross-national diffusion.

Taking the theoretical framework of national-populism and locating it within an ever-increasing process of globalization, I adapt methodological framework developed within the Social Movement Studies. This framework is useful for the present theoretical discussion for at least two reasons: Firstly, it takes globalization as the point of departure and offers an insight into an interdependence between local and international affairs; And secondly, it is concerned with not only inter-social-movements links (transnational interaction), but also with relations between social movements and governments from different national contexts (cross-level), their parallel developments and ideological exchanges vis-à-vis direct or indirect links among them.

[84] Mudde and Kaltwasser, *Populism*, 2017.
[85] Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest", 58.

Chapter 2. Methodology

Globalization as Giddens put it, "links distinct localities in such way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa".[86] The process has been intensifying since the 1980s, which marked the technical revolution and consequent borderless flow of information. In the cultural sense, as della Porta and Kriesi note, Western values and belief systems spread via science, professions and entertainment industry.[87] The new century brought the role of social media to the fore of global communication. Facebook and Twitter posts easily move from the cyber space to the actual politics and increasingly affect social life in many places of the world. At the same time, globalization, as it transforms everyday life, is perceived to accelerate local mobilizations in defense of traditions against the "foreign intrusion". Moreover, globalization, facilitating "travel of ideas", results in cross-national similarities in these actions aiming at preserving traditions.

Building off the study of McAdam and Rucht, which itself is based on Strang and Meyer's[88] earlier work, I will adopt theories explaining the diffusion of social movements in the context of globalization developed by Donatella della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi[89], and Sarah A. Soule et. al [90] that demonstrate how themes, frames, action repertoires and strategies are diffused cross-nationally. The frames are interpretative and include the way actors articulate and codify issues, problems and their solutions, target outsiders and responsible parties and mobilize political

[86] Anthony Giddens, *As Conseqüências Da Modernidade* (1990), 64.
[87] Donatella Della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi, "Social Movements in a Globalizing World: An Introduction," in *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (Springer, 1999), 4.
[88] David Strang and W. Meyer, "Institutional Conditions for Diffusion," *Theory and Society* 22,4 (1993): 487–511.
[89] Della Porta and Kriesi, "Social Movements in a Globalizing World."
[90] Rebecca Givan, Roberts, and A. Soule, *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects* (2010).

claims.[91] Involving emitters and adopters, diffusion can be direct (when actual relation among units is happening) and indirect (non-relational, through mass media or other means). These channels are not mutually exclusive, and might be facilitating the process of diffusion simultaneously. In these terms, the theories outline transnational and cross-level interactions, both of them being relevant for this study *(see Figure 1*).

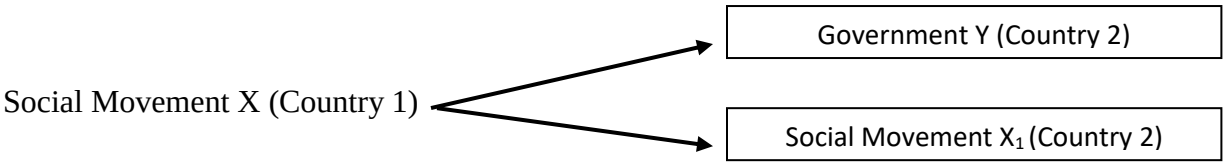


Figure 1. Transnational(X+X1) and Cross-level (X+Y) interaction.[92]

Furthermore, McAdam and Rucht,[93] among others, elaborate on conditions where diffusion is likely to happen and three dimensions that have to be demonstrated in order to mark the processes of diffusion and adaptation. In terms of the conditions, *hierarchical* and *proximity* models are highlighted. The former stand for adopting ideas and practices from the advanced units who proved themselves successful. In this case, "the more important unit is taken as the reference group by the less important units in the set".[94] Moreover, construction of similarities with more 'advanced' cases serve to create legitimacy for political claims and protest strategies. The latter emphasizes spatial and cultural proximities as the accelerators for establishing links and adopting practices.

[91] Givan, Roberts, and Soule, 2.
[92] Based on the Figure 1.1 in Della Porta and Kriesi, "Social Movements in a Globalizing World," 5.
[93] McAdam and Rucht, "The Cross-National Diffusion of Movement Ideas."
[94] Della Porta and Kriesi, "Social Movements in a Globalizing World," 7.

Above all, an initial stage of diffusion is established through minimal identification (*institutional equivalence* [95]) of an emitter with adopter and framing of the (symbolic) analogical situation in other countries. Here 'adopter' is an active interpreter/'translator', who constructs, articulates and frames imported ideas according to the contextual settings. Adaptive form of cross-national diffusion stands for the predominantly active role of the adopter in the process.[96] For this case study too, diffusion is not a passive process of spreading, but Georgian March interprets and strategically adopts discursive fields, political and discursive strategies, language etc. As Snow and Benford conclude, in cross-cultural borrowing, the objects of diffusion are "strategically tailored or fitted to the target culture".[97] Hence, strategic selection and promotion of ideas, frames and discursive repertoires should be considered as the focal part of the borrowing and adaptation process. Frames are supposed to fill the collective struggles with meaning and simultaneously, build legitimacy and recognition.[98]

As far as methodological tools are concerned, the theory underlines three dimensions that should be demonstrated for marking the diffusion. I will address each dimension, which involves deploying a triangulation of methods.

1- *Temporal sequence*- meaning that temporal course of collective action among adapter and transmitter are consistent. For this study, I will systematically analyze emergence of Georgian March, reframing, borrowing and adapting the discourse topics by this movement within the broader context of success of right-wing populist units elsewhere and discourses deployed by them.

[95] Strang and Meyer (1993).
[96] Della Porta and Kriesi, "Social Movements in a Globalizing World".
[97] David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Alternative Types of Cross-National Diffusion in the Social Movement Arena," in *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (Springer, 1999), 38.
[98] Givan, Roberts, and Soule, *The Diffusion of Social Movements*, 4.

2- *Apparent borrowing of core elements*: similarities in identity components and problem-definition components. In terms of the former, identifying with counterparts is in line with the construction of the own collective identity. This process includes justification of using transmitter models for one's own actions. By the same token, the problem-definition component relates to the adaptation of the frames for defining issues. Here historical-discourse analysis approach, allowing to observe and explain reconstruction and *recontextualization* of discourses by Wodak [99] is applicable.

Precisely, I turn to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method within the historical-discursive approach, developed by Wodak and Reisigl.[100] Consequently, not only a conceptual meaning of the text will be taken into consideration, but the way it is delivered and adjusted to domestic cultural and historical context. In addition to highlighting *nomination and predication* strategies, this approach is relevant for the study as it assists to systematically analyze the *argument schemes*[101] in compliance with the lists of topos, suggested by Wodak and Boukala.[102] Within CDA, *Topos* create and guarantee the link from argumentation to conclusion.[103]

Whereas legitimization is an inseparable part of political discourses in general, it acquires special importance for right-wing populist powers, which are in opposition. For them, mobilization of public resentments is the central aspect of their securitizing politics. In this matter, I adopt the framework created by Wodak and Van Leeuwen[104] for analyzing language of legitimization. They

[99] Ruth Wodak, *Discursive Construction of National Identity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009).
[100] Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl, *The Semiotics of Racism. Approaches in Critical Discourse Analysis.* (Passagen Verlag, 2001).
[101] "Strategy means a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim." *From Reisigl, Martin, and Ruth Wodak. (2009) "The Discourse-Historical Approach."*
[102] Wodak Ruth and Boukala Salomi, "European Identities and the Revival of Nationalism in the European Union," *Journal of Language and Politics* 14, no. 1 (May 26, 2015): 87–109.
[103] Wodak and Reisigl, *The Semiotics of Racism. Approaches in Critical Discourse Analysis.*
[104] Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*.

highlight the following four categories: *authorization*, *rationalization*, *moral evolution*, *and mythopoesis*. The first stands for legitimization by "referring to authority, be that a person, tradition, custom or law." Rationalization is linked to using knowledge claims or arguments, while moral evolution means referring to values. The latter stands for using fragments from the past or narratives about the future in an attempt to legitimize their political decision. Noteworthy that Wodak also underlines contextual dependence of these tools of legitimization, which highlights the relevance of Historical-Discourse Approach (HDA).

HDA consists of two analytical levels: *entry-level* and *in-depth* analysis. The former allows to thematically categorize a discourse topic, whilst the latter stands for the detailed, micro analysis of structure and content, discursive strategies and argumentation schemas that are realized through the genres such as interviews, web-pages etc. In-depth analysis is highly-dependent on context, which can be approached via a four-fold model offered by Wodak. According to this model, historical background of the party (here a movement), discussions around a specific discourse/event, the particular material (text) and finally, influential interdiscursive relations are taken into consideration.[105] Borrowed and modified items might include protest forms, slogans, general repertoire, and importantly for national-populism, appeals to democracy. It is worth to mention that borrowing and adaptation comes in hand with the traditional historical repertoires.

3. Means and channels of diffusion- Identifying the means of diffusion is equally important. Here the role of globalization and technological modernization comes to the fore, furthering the multidimensional role of traditional as well as new types of media. Especially in the context of globalization, borrowing through indirect diffusion is a prevalent process via multiple channels such as the internet and global media. Non-relational channels might also include newspapers,

[105] Wodak, 51.

radio, scholarly and popular writings. Besides illustrating the new platform of communication offered by mass-media, its role in shaping and articulating the success of populists across the Europe is noteworthy. Through the media, interpretative frames are created or at least promoted. For this case, an indirect learning process and strategic framing of the issues happening elsewhere are central points of analysis. The media (especially social media) also offers a platform for diffusing visual elements and other non-verbal forms of expression from one context to another. In these terms, means and forms of protesting, used visual effects and their demonstration will be taken into consideration while analyzing the process of diffusion and adaptation.

In order to demonstrate borrowing through diffusion and explain the process, I will firstly create a timeline of the actions (protests/marches/announcements) of the movement starting from the first organized march in July 2017 until March 2018- announcing transformation into the political party and the latest protest at the time of writing. Secondly, I will analyze discursive fields and strategies in depth with the special focus on incorporation of *the West* in it.

Considering that there is neither manifesto-like document, nor any other publicly available program of the movement, I will work with the transcripts of the interviews with the movement's leader- Sandro Bregadze - published by different Georgian informational portals (online newspapers, informational agencies) alongside the Facebook posts by him and Georgian March's official Facebook page. In the case of latter, the material of analysis will be timeline posts between July 2017 and March 2018. These materials are selected according to two criteria: 1) *temporal*- interviews and Facebook posts published in close dates of an event/protest; and 2*) thematic*- explicitly or subtly related to the subject of an event and in reference to the Europe/US/Occident. In order to distinguish between media discourse and the discourse of the movement (by its leader), only the quoted part of interview texts i.e. respondent answers are used for the analysis.

Chapter 3. Historical Background

History of Nationalism in Georgia- What is New about it?

Nationalism remains the main ideological layer of Georgian March, although in its modified national-populist form. Until now, nationalist mobilization in Georgia, historically speaking, went through at least three main waves. In order to comprehend historical legacies in contemporary, to say the fourth wave, national-populism of Georgian March and demonstrate the new elements adapted to the local context, I will trace the waves of nationalist mobilization in history and underline the main elements developed through each wave.

The first national project dates back to the late nineteens and early twentieth century and is labeled as *Cultural Nationalism*. In addition to tagging it as *Cultural*, Davitashvili[106] also underlines liberal and democratic principles in the basis of this national project that later found their way into the first constitution adopted in 1921. Not only was this constitution highly progressive, but it also reflected the inclination of early nationalists to build upon European practices and institutional arrangements. With aspirations towards Western civilization, construction of national identity based on the common culture, history, and education in Georgian were the main elements of this earlier national project.

This first attempt to construct a national project was cultivated by a group of intellectuals educated in Russia known as the generation of *Tergdaleulebi* (ones who had drunk waters from the bordering river 'Terek'). Inspired by Western liberal ideas, this generation aimed at uniting a deeply divided society and creating a consciousness of commonality via spreading literacy. In this matter, they reformed the language from an archaic form to the commonly spoken, 'low',

[106] Zurab Davitashvili, *Nationalism and Globalization*, 1st ed. (Tbilisi: Metsniereba 2003).

Georgian. Thus, the first national mobilization was rather aiming at construction of a cultural "imagined community" than political separation from Tsarist Russia.

In general, European civilization was an inspiration for authors of the first Georgian national project. They believed, however, that in the 1880s the road to Western civilization was reachable through Russia- the imperial ruler. In 1901, *Iveria*- the most 'nationalistic' newspaper edited by Ilia Chavchavadze (often referred to as the "founding father" of Georgian nationalism), reflected loyalty towards "Russia, our imperial ruler".[107] As Sabanadze puts it, "Russia was also seen as a Christian and hence, European power, which brought to the country not only peace but also development and a degree of Europeanization."[108] However, by the first decade of the twentieth century, nationalist sentiments started to encompass harsher criticism of imperial center, yet neither newspapers nor public speeches by nationalists endorsed political separation from Tsarist Russia.

Only after the Bolshevik revolution and later *Sovietization* of Georgia, this appeal to Western civilization and imperial rule became juxtaposed to each other. In other words, Russia could not be perceived as a way to 'European development' any more, but rather an alternative to it. Subsequent seven decades of communist rule and Cold War circumstances influenced not only the economy, social order and culture in Georgia, but more broadly, transformed the system of thoughts and attitudes towards the own nation.

Soviet nationality policies have had a considerable impact on the type and development of the national project in independent Georgia. For this reason, studies about the national project of the

[107] Ilia Chavchavadze *Sruli Krebuli*, vol. 3, Tbilisi: Metsnierebata Akademiis Gamomtsemloba: (1953) 37. In Sabanadze, "Globalization and Georgian Nationalism,".
[108] Natalie Sabanadze, "Chapter 4. Globalization and Georgian Nationalism," in *Globalization and Nationalism : The Cases of Georgia and the Basque Country*, Hors Collection (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), 12.

1990s indicate 're-invention' and 're-imagination' of the post-Soviet Georgian nation.[109] Although imposed modernization, forced Russification, formal atheism and the classless society created the image of Soviet regime as an enemy of nationalism, in fact, nationalism was not intended to be eliminated under Marxism-Leninism. 'Nationalisms' of member republics were rather understood as Orthodox- compatible with the regime, and Unorthodox- incompatible for the Soviet rule.[110] The differing factor among these categories is the political premise included in Unorthodox nationalisms (with Russian exception). Otherwise linguistic and cultural diversities, thus "Orthodox" national belonging, were enthusiastically promoted through the 'affirmative action empire' during the 1920s and early 30s.[111]

Soviet approach to nationalities created a fertile ground for ethno-nationalism in Georgia in the 90s via promoting an ethnic consciousness and politicizing ethnic diversity. According to Suny, this approach came into being through: attaching ethnicity to territory; endorsing local language and emphasizing (sometimes creating) elements of the unique culture.[112] As Yuri Slezkine claims, during the Stalinist period, national identities surpassed class-based quotas and the national histories were meant to provide legitimacy for the Soviet system itself.[113] Within this framework, endorsement of national histories and cultures came to the fore of the political means.

[109] Nutsa Batiashvili, "2011 November 'Re-Imagining Nationness, Re-Inventing Tradition: Modernity and Nationalism in Post-Soviet Georgia' Conference on 'Post-Soviet States:Two Decades of Transitions';
Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[110] Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, 2. ed (London: Routledge, 1998), 245.
[111] Terry Dean Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Cornell University Press, 2001).
[112] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford University Press), 101.
[113] Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 02 (1994): 420.

During Stalinist rule, politically suppressed nationalism took the shape of cultural pride in the member republics and national histories and art became central points of Soviet politics. Folk Nationalism, as Sabanadze labels Georgian nationalism developed during this period, was informed by the primordial myths praised through the new national historiographies. As Tom Nairn notes, "ethnolinguistic culture without political nationalism was the only permissible, healthy nationhood".[114] Georgian folklore, dance and romantic poems, especially Vepkhistkaosani (*the Knight in the Panther's Skin*) were spread all over the Union marking the exclusiveness of Georgian culture. In these terms, recall of the historical 'Golden ages' (of *David the Builder*) and/or historical figures (*Rustaveli, Tchavchavadze*) became essential to the folk nationalism, maintaining its legacies in the modern national projects in Georgia.

The "ideal form of new historiography" throughout the Soviet republics, encompassed five elements[115] that are relevant in understanding particularities of ethno-national mobilization in the 90s. Firstly, great leaders and historical events became paramount within the national histories. In the Georgian case, this explains the revival of David the Builder's cult from the eleventh century and the creation of a huge volume of historical novels about him. Secondly, historiography acquired a teleological reason so that the state would have "a historical and progressive mission".[116] However, this 'mission' was largely related to culture rather than the state or politics. Thirdly, instead of economic history, the focus shifted towards dynastic periodization, which, it can be argued, further highlighted nationalist element in the Soviet historiography. Fourth, pre-revolutionary and Soviet history were brought together so that differences between these two periods were blurred. As Nino Chikovani observed, from the 1930s on, the "History of the USSR"

[114] Tom Nairn, "Demonising Nationalism," *London Review of Books*, February 25, 1993.
[115] Harun Yilmaz, *National Identities* in *Soviet Historiography: The Rise of Nations Under Stalin* (2015), 8–9.
[116] Yilmaz, 8.

started to become the focal point of research and teaching, although "The History of Georgia" framed within the common Soviet history was still a subject taught in secondary schools.[117] Related to this, the fifth point refers to the paradigm of "lesser evil" and appeals to the colonial rule of tsarism and historical relations between Russia and other communist republics. In other words, Russian imperialism was historically justified in the context of a non-existing better alternative. The manual for historians was created by Stalin himself with Zhdanov and Kirov in 1935. Thus, As Nikolai Ustrialov, an enthusiastic believer in National Bolshevism, reversed the banal slogan- the Soviet Union was "Socialist in form, Nationalist in Content".[118]

The experience of the Soviet regime and its nationalities policy not only prepared fertile ground for nationalisms to become the main ideological drive, but also influenced the course and type of nationalism on ethnic and civic dimensions. According to Suny, ethno-nationalism became the "ideological choice" and the notion of "autochthonous population" acquired essential place in the new national project. [119] The issue of immigration would only appear in the context of maintaining majority of ethnic, kin-related Georgians. The leader of the nationalist movement in the 80s and the first president of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia noted in his speech in 1990: "The special law should be enacted which will limit the uncontrolled migration and the demographic expansion of the *alien nations* in Georgia" (Emphasis added).[120]

[117] Nino Chikovani, "The Georgian Historical Narrative: From Pre-Soviet to Post-Soviet Nationalism," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 5, no. 2 (July 2012): 110.
[118] Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, 238–40.
[119] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Provisional Stabilities: The Politics of Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *International Security* 24, no. 3 (2000): 177.
[120] Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1990). Spiritual mission of Georgia . In Chikovani, "The Georgian Historical Narrative," 113.

Accordingly, the nationalist project of the 1990s is frequently labeled as *an ethnic* type of nationalism[121] based on the following elements: Georgian language, ethnicity, Orthodox Christianity and blame-shifting to the external powers.[122] In this sense, as Schopflin explains ethno-national projects of the post-Soviet countries were informed by and simultaneously juxtaposed to communist rule. The 'new nationalisms', as he calls it, were only legitimized in ethnic terms against the background of destroyed civic society and suppressed national feeling, leaving room only for the ethnic belonging as the core mobilizing criteria.[123]

In juxtaposition to the communist rule and Soviet formal atheism, Christian Orthodoxy played a special role in 're-inventing' Georgian nation. Gamsakhurdia, published "The Divine Mission of Georgia", which not only excluded ethnic minorities from the normative model of the nation (except ones "who are legally residing on the territory of Georgia and contribute to the struggle of the Georgian nation for freedom and independence"),[124] but also incorporated the Orthodox Church as an ethnic marker of *Georgianness*. "Re-adoption of emotionally and symbolically charged signs"[125] took place in the context of Orthodox Christianity. People started to attend church services massively and (re)constructions of churches were taking place all over the country. The special role of the Christian church was accentuated in the constitution adopted in 1995 too.[126] Nowadays, national-populists incorporate this element of religiosity in their story of raison d'être

[121] Ethnic nationalism as based on believing in kin and blood ties, and civic as- "community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values" Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (1995), 6–9.
[122] Nino Chikovani,: 107–15. Also, Irakli, Chkhaidze. "Georgian National Project in the Context of Ethnic an Civic Nationalisms" Civilization Researchers, no,7. (2009): 62-64
[123] George, Schopflin. Nationalism and ethnic minorities in post-communist Europe. (1996) ,153-54.
[124] Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1990). Spiritual mission of Georgia. in Chikovani, "The Georgian Historical Narrative."
[125] Eric Hobsbawm, *Introduction: Inventing Traditions*, 1983.
[126] "Constitution of Georgia of 24 August 1995. Country: Georgia. Subject(s): Constitutional law. Type of legislation: Constitution. Adopted on: 1995-08-24.,".

and attempt to link it strongly to broader terms like the *Nation, Georgianness* or *Cultural Values* of the country.

Besides opposing Communist restrictions, content of the post-Soviet nationalist projects directly revealed legacies of the Soviet nationality policies. In these terms, the issue of the territoriality appeared in the context of strengthened feeling towards and attachment to 'Georgian lands'. The nationalist movements in the late 80s would mobilize around the appeal to prohibit selling Georgian lands to foreigners. In May 1988 there were protests in southern part of Georgia, bordering Azerbaijan, about foreigners (mainly Azeri people) purchasing land on Georgian territory.[127] Thus, the issue of 'Motherland' also became a central politicized element of the 'second wave' nationalist mobilization in Georgia.

It is noteworthy that the mentioned narrative of 'protecting Georgian lands' is still an important mobilizing factor for Georgian March nowadays.[128] Also similarly to Georgian March, nationalists back then would accuse everyone opposing their ideas in treason and enmity. Not only were political decisions normatively approached but also plurality of ideas openly rejected. Conspiracy theories became the main argumentative strategies for the nationalists. Particularly, the leaders would blame the Kremlin and its influence for internal socio-economic and political problems. Hence, initially liberal-democratic and cultural national foundation transformed into ethno-centric and radical nationalist sentiments by the 90s.

As for the attitudes towards the West, in opposition to Communism and the Kremlin, nationalists maintained the positive connotation of the West in their discourses. However, the fascination with

[127] Irakli Chkhaidze, "From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism: Dynamic of the National Project in Post-Soviet Georgia. 'ETnikuridan Samoqalaqo Nacionalizmisken: Nacionaluri Proeqtis Dinamika PostsabWoTa SaqarTveloSi'" n.d., 46.
[128] "Our Vision & Program | Alliance of Patriots of Georgia" (Alliance of Patriots of Georgia), accessed October 4, 2018, http://patriots.ge/our-vision-program/.

the West was mainly informed by the hope of protection and endorsement, which as Sabanadze puts, "proved to be misguided".[129] Subsequent civil war, ethnic tensions, and deteriorated socio-economic situation contributed to lost political legitimacy of the nationalists.

From 1993 onwards, as Shevardnadze (the former foreign minister of the Soviet Union) started to form the government, ethno-national feeling commenced to shift towards the civic nationalism.[130] However, accumulated ethno-nationalist sentiments did not disappear in line with the Georgia's involvement in globalization processes, including an international recognition and membership of international organizations. It rather transformed in the context of the perceived cultural and religious threats. Hence, in the beginning of the 21st century, the backlash to globalization with strong anti-Western attitudes on the one hand, and civil, liberal and multi-ethnic nationalism on the other, emerged concurrently.

The re-emergence of nationalist sentiments, marking the third wave of the nationalist mobilization, revealed itself in two different forms, both being informed by the globalization processes. In case of the former, discourses were shaped by national-conservative and populist ideas with an ethnoreligious orientation. In this context, the Christian Church and related sentiments appeared in the center of discourses in order to frame the cultural and moral threat striking Georgian Christian identity. In contrast to the nationalists from the 90s, the conspiracies then addressed 'globalization forces' as opposed to the traditional scapegoat- Russia, which reclaimed its status as the 'Christian ally' in the fight with *Westernization*.[131] According to Davitashvili, spread of liberalism, or particularly of the 'Western values' in non-Western states, is often perceived as

[129] Sabanadze, "Chapter 4. Globalization and Georgian Nationalism," 64.
[130] Chkhaidze, "From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism: Dynamic of the National Project in Post-Soviet Georgia."; Davitashvili, *Nationalism and Globalization*.
[131] Sabanadze, "Chapter 4. Globalization and Georgian Nationalism."

Westernization and new imperialism that further accelerates nationalist or religious fundamentalist backlash.[132] This proved to be the case for anti-globalization discourses in Georgia.

This anti-globalization nationalist mobilization addressed popular resentments and mobilized fears of losing Georgian, Orthodox identity. Although failed to maintain either visibility or political influence back then, it perhaps created a fertile ground for the current national-populism by shaping a '*populist identity'* in society. Thus, this short-term, politically unsuccessful nationalist backlash resembles current national-populism, although the latter reveals modified discourses in the context of the foreign threat and perceptions of *the West* and Russia, at least throughout the frontstage discourses.

As for the inclusive nationalism developed in the same period, the official governing elite, led by Mikheil Saakashvili (in power since the Rose Revolution in 2003), endorsed a liberal national feeling via incorporating ethnic minorities and recontextualizing inherent national sentiments. This government managed to establish unquestionable political course towards the West and thoroughgoing involvement of the country with globalization. Traditional positive perceptions of the West acquired the special place not only in political but also in the everyday public discourses.

The famous phrase firstly uttered at the European Council General Assembly by the Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania- *"I am Georgian, therefore I am European*"- was continuously heard from the popular media and mirrored general stance of the governing elite. During this period (2004-13), public support towards integration in the European Union and NATO reflected monopolized political discourse and reached unprecedented levels (ranging from 70-80%) maintining stable up

[132] Davitashvili, *Nationalism and Globalization*, 272.

until 2015.[133] It is important to note that this process went in juxtaposition to the deteriorated relations with Russia and negative normative connotation attached to the Northern neighbor. The fragment from one of the most famous speeches of Saakashvili illustrates this juxtaposition that was part of governmental narratives for about 10 years already: "*The very moment we slow down our European and Euro-Atlantic integration, our independence and our sovereignty will be hungrily swallowed by a former Empire that has an unmistakable tendency to misunderstand the concept of borders."*[134]

In addition to the omnipresent Western aspirations and rethinking of the Russia's role in future development of Georgia, elevation of own nation also became one of the main elements of the civic nationalist mobilization. Saakashvili himself promoted the *banal nationalism*[135] by changing the national flag, anthem and national celebrations in compliance with an embedded national history and praised national figures. The new flag with five crosses was associated with Christianity, highlighting the importance of it for Georgian nation. However, through these national discourses, the governmental elite with emerging non-governmental sector managed to adjust the above-mentioned legacies of Soviet rule (ethno-national orientation and folk nationalism) to the liberal and civic principles.

These pro-European and pro-globalization discourses were predominant for two reasons: 1) The lost legitimacy of the ethnocentric nationalism from the 90s, and 2) An intense promotion of the country's external political orientation. Although, according to Team Populism dataset, some degree of populism revealed throughout the *campaign* and *ribbon-cutting* speeches by Saakashvili

[133] "Caucasus Barometer 2015 Georgia," accessed May 1, 2018, http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2015ge/EUSUPP/.
[134] Mikheil Saakashvili, "Speech given at Administration of President on 9.02.2013.," . Speech archived by the Comparative Populism Project. *Team Populism.*
[135] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (sage, 1995).

himself, [136] the above-mentioned preconditions practically excluded a political representation or long-term public appearance of the traditional ethno-nationalist or right-wing populist parties on the political arena. Instead, these units aggregated within a non-political sector forming non-profit organizations or social movements, although rarely raising a voice independently. The situation only started to change under the current government of Georgian Dream coalition, which maintained a pro-European political stance and simultaneously promoted attempts to settle relations with Russia. The first political party with right-wing nationalist outlook- Alliance of Patriots- appeared by 2014 and already achieved a representation in the parliament by 2016.

Since 2016 parliamentary elections in Georgia, when the Alliance of Patriots managed to get into parliament with six members, the "populist Zeitgeist" (perhaps in national-populist form) has been revealing itself in Georgian socio-political arena too. In these terms, by July 2017, the social movement under the name "Georgian March" filed across the avenue named after David the Builder, chanting anti-immigrant and national-populist sentiments. Since then, the movement established itself mainly around the discursive fields of immigration, elite corruption, anti-establishment and foreign influence, national identity and family values, anti-multiculturalism and anti-liberalism. Even though they have not achieved an electoral success, the emergence of this movement have indeed influenced the emergence of national-populism in the country. As Wodak notes, usually even the mainstream parties take over the popular policy proposals by these units in order to prevent their political success. She calls the process "normalization of right wing populist policies" for which Georgian March is a frontrunner in contemporary Georgia. [137]

[136]The study concludes that populism was mostly revealed through campaign speeches during the 2003 election campaign. Kirk Hawkins and Bojana Kocijan, "2013 Central and Eastern Europe Populism- Data" (Team Populism, 2013), https://populism.byu.edu/Pages/Data.

[137] Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*, 184.

Although the leaders have announced the movement to be *pro-Georgian*, juxtaposed to 'pro-Russian' or 'pro-European', ambivalent references to *the West* have been accompanying part of their discourses. Georgian March combines different far right and conservative units that were not represented on either political or public arenas before. It also includes the organization *Nationals* [Erovnulebi] led by Sandro Bregadze, perhaps the most enthusiastic initiator and claimed leader of Georgian March as well. Bregadze himself held the position of deputy minister in Diaspora Issues for two years under the current government until February 2016. His claimed reason for resigning was related to, as he put, "constitutionally normalizing same-sex marriage". According to him, he could not tolerate it and "compromise his principles".[138] Since then, having moved to the public sphere, he has been actively engaged in public discussions around constitutional amendments. In these terms, his team insisted on précising the concept of 'Family- as a union of man and woman' in the constitution and amending the article concerning foreigners' right to own land in Georgia. In reference to the latter, they insisted on a complete and unconditional prohibition of selling land to foreigners.

Bregadze and this team, who became organizers and members of Georgian March, asserted on these amendments by the name of 'Georgian people' [139] and collected signatures from the population that appeared to have an impact on political decisions. The political influence revealed in the emendation in *article 30* on 'Rights to Marriage' that is included in the constitutional decision of May 3, 2017 specifying *family as a union of man and woman.* As for the latter appeal,

[138] "Sandro Bregadze Has Resigned from His Position.," Newsportal, Tabula.ge, February 19, 2016, http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/104828-sandro-bregadze-saxelmtsifo-ministris-moadgilis-tanamdebobidan-gadadga Accessed 20.04.2018 .

[139] However, latest public research revealed that the number of people advocating that foreigners should not have a right to own land in Georgia have decreased (since 2015, from 17% to 8%) and the opposite idea became more popular in 2017. Source: The Caucasus Research Resource Centers, "Who should be owning land in Georgia? How have attitudes changed since 2015 until 2017.," *CRRC Blog*".

the parliament did not confirm a complete prohibition, but specified a need for the land for sale to have a *special status*.[140] Again, this comes in compliance to the picture described by Wodak in the following way: "almost the entire political spectrum moves to the right".[141]

Georgian March, as a social movement, firstly appeared publicly with anti-immigration and anti-governmental protest, without explicitly excluding ethnic minorities or overt anti-Western attitudes that makes them different from ethno-nationalists or anti-globalists from the 90s and 2000s in Georgia. At the same time, the above-mentioned folk nationalism and its elements formed under Soviet rule and revealed in the 90s, still maintains its legacy throughout their discourses. In these terms, the symbol of the movement (flag with a cross and unicorn) is adopted from the one of David the Builder. Moreover, Christian Church is perceived as a foremost institution in the country throughout Georgian March's national-populist discourses. At the same time, Georgian March associated itself to the national-liberation movement from the 80s and 90s and named persons like Gamsakhurdia as their role models. At the first march in July 2017, Bregadze started his speech with the following words: "Today here begins the new national-liberating movement". By this, he associated the newly born Georgian March to 'national awakening' from the past.

Accordingly, the current rise of nationalism in Georgia picks up from the ethnic nationalism of the 90s and early 2000s, but, I suggest, also adopts a populist stance, politicizes immigration issue in totally different frame, seeks legitimacy in *the West*, and opposes globalization with the means and products of globalization itself. Populism became an important part of the nationalist sentiments

[140] Retrieved from an official web-page of Legislative Herald of Georgia. Available at: https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3656689 Accessed on 20 Apr. 2018
[141] Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*, 184.

revived by Georgian March. *The West*, as mentioned above, almost always, in one way or another, played a considerable role in construction of Georgian nationalist projects.

Notion of *the Occident* in the General Socio-Historical Context

The West, Europe or the Occident might be interchangeably used throughout the study insofar as, following Nodia, historically the Occident in Georgian public perception has been associated with symbolic meaning of Europe and the US without precisely distinguishing between 'European' or 'American' under the prism of *the Occident*.[142] However, in the context of EU integration processes, the elite political discourses in Georgia since 2003 Rose Revolution have been contributing to the creation of new "European" discourses. This, in conjunction with stably high public support towards the EU and intensified informational projects within Eastern Partnership program, have presumably resulted in bringing Europe in the center of the Occident within the popular perceptions in Georgia.

At the same time, historically speaking, the 'Western orientation' of Georgian national consciousness has been consistent yet attended and sometimes even informed by uncertain attitudes towards Russia.[143] As discussed above, even the authors of the first, labeled as liberal, nationalist project perceived Western civilization accessible for Georgians only through Russia back then.[144] Alongside temporal and geopolitical changes, this belief transformed into seeing the West and Russia as the two alternatives of development. At the same time, cultural and religious links to Russia have not lost relevance for some segments of society. As the research reports on anti-Western attitudes by Media Development Foundation (MDF), in contrast to the late nineteenth

[142] Ghia Nodia, "The Georgian Perception of the West," *Commonwealth and Independence in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, 1998, 12–43. Nodia.
[143] Sabanadze, "Chapter 4. Globalization and Georgian Nationalism."
[144] Nodia, "The Georgian Perception of the West."

century, Russia is not perceived as a route to Europe but rather an alternative to it.[145] Nowadays, this attitude is revealed in the elite discourses within "*returning to historical roots-to Europe*" rhetoric. For instance, the fragment of speech delivered by the current prime minister: "*Georgia has returned to its European roots, and this is where we intend to stay*", resembles one by Saakashvili several years ago: "*This is not, of course, a new path for Georgia, but rather a return to our European home and our European vocation-which is so deeply enshrined in our national identity and history*." [146]

Within these "pro-Europeanization" discourses, the issues started to be comprehended in the context of 'a progressive route' (towards the West) versus 'regression'- mostly related to the conformity towards Russian imperialism. In these terms, an illustrative example would be the attempts to raise awareness about non-traditional sexual orientation with actively referring to 'progressive changes', which became linked to *the West* and provided a direct source for conservative powers to associate 'imposition of values' to the West. This issue exemplifies the wider tendency of associating anti-Western sentiments to the cultural and identity threat.

The above-mentioned research of MDF indicates that anti-Western attitudes in media are mainly (32.7%) "concerned with the issues of identity, human rights and values." A dominating view was that the West tries to impose homosexuality, incest, pedophilia, zoophilia, perversion and fights against national identity, traditions, Orthodox Christianity, family as a social institution." [147] Other

[145] "Anti-Western Propaganda, 2016," Research (Media Development Foundation), accessed April 15, 2018, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/65.
[146] Saakashvili, "Speech given at Administration of President on 9.02.2013." Archived by Team Populism-Comparative Populism Project.
Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia. Speech at Independence Day 2016. "Georgia Celebrates a Quarter Century of Independence" accessed April 10, 2018, Available at: http://gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=399&info_id=55760.
[147] "Anti-Western Propaganda, 2016."

anti-Western tendencies revealed in media resemble the issues that Georgian March is trying to securitize. In these terms, the most obvious examples are the following: prohibition of foreign finances to NGOs (which work for the 'foreign interest' in Georgia); association of the EU and Visa waiver with obligation to receive immigrants (therefore increase the threat of terrorism); and skepticism towards EU/NATO-Georgia relations. Hence, from the list of socio-economic challenges by Pels,[148] *fears of losing old traditions, values and national autonomy* [149] with the disgust of established parties and corruption are salient discursive elements to be analyzed.

However, discourses of Georgian March differ from traditional anti-globalists' anti-Western sentiments by persistently referring to the Western examples in its positive affiliation. At the same time, it constructs the own vision of the West and in this way maintains and subtly endorses traditional anti-Western discourses that have moved to the backstage for Georgian March. I propose, this type of 'progressive West' becomes a tool for legitimizing prejudiced and discriminatory language, yet upholding the anti-Western attitudes. Below I analyze discourses of Georgian March and incorporation of *the West* in it.

[148] In Wodak, *The Politics of Fear*. In Wodak.

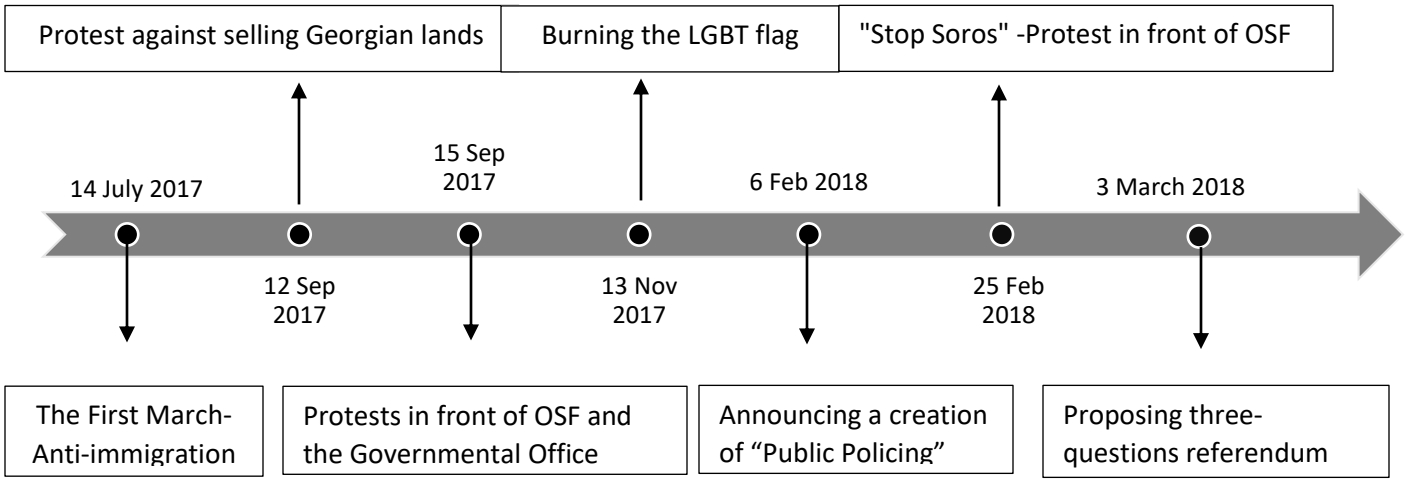
[149] "Fear, thus, have expanded in its meaning towards becoming a frame of looking at public affairs, constructing identities and blaming others for the unfortunate conditions".. (David Altheide in Wodak, 2015)

Chapter 4. Discourse Analysis of Georgian March

Mapping the discursive fields of Georgian March

In order to map the discourse fields deployed by Georgian March, I follow the timeline of the movement's actions since the first mass protest. Figure 2 describes the activities of Georgian March on the temporal continuum.

Figure 2. Timeline of Events by Georgian March



The first public appearance of Georgian March is related to securitization of immigration issue, which, in this form, has never been part of the nationalist discourses in Georgia before. However, mobilization of anti-immigrant grievances around security issues proved successful as considerable number of people gathered on the avenue named after the monarch David the Builder. Many bars and restaurants owned by people of Turkish and Arab origins have been situated on this avenue for several years now, but became an issue of wider public discussions simultaneously with appearance of Georgian March.

The anti-immigration discourses are important not only for analyzing construction and legitimization strategies in reference to anti-immigrant prejudices, but also for comprehending discourses concerning the emergence of the movement. Two weeks before the protest, Bregadze published a post on his Facebook page, where he made parallels with French Front National as an immutable necessity against liberals and globalists, and creating a new reality- "changing Europe's fate". According to him, the need to create "Georgian Front National" appeared in Georgia nowadays.[150] Using *moral evolution* and *mytophoesis,* Bregadze attempts to legitimize announcement of the new power, which will replace the "stinking system" and create a foundation for "national, just and equality-based" state. In this way, references to the West have occupied a considerable part within the movement's discourses.

The following event addressed the earlier demands concerning prohibition of selling Georgian lands to foreigners, although then in connection with anti-immigrant discourses. Organizers of Georgian March accused "Georgian Dream"- the governing coalition- in betraying Georgian people by maintaining rights of foreigners to buy Georgian land in some occasions. The issue was framed within anti-immigration discourses and involved topics such as demographic problems and "another occupation". It is important to mention that the leader of Georgian March underlined Russian occupation within these discourses in an attempt to equalize importance of these two issues and to avoid affiliation with Russian government (which has been part of the public discussions since the appearance of the movement).

The subsequent massive appearance of Georgian March was related to a protest against the Open Society Foundation (OSF) branch in Tbilisi "for undermining the Georgian nation". During the

[150] Sandro Bregadze's Facebook Page. [Facebook post] 18 Jun. 2017, Update time: 0:46.

same day, the protesters moved to the nearby office of the representative (city hall mayor candidate) of the current government in order to protest "the fact that they lied to Georgian people". The logic of conducting these two protests simultaneously, was revealed in their speeches and later posts labeling the governing elite as "Soros slaves", who operated against Georgia in favor of 'foreign interests'. Scapegoating Soros and OSF has been an integral part of the general discourses by the movement, despite the issue they are addressing. Soros has been 'accused' of intervening in internal affairs, arranging the color revolution in 2003,[151] and managing media that then "promotes homosexuals, encourages cursing of the church and all the vileness". [152] The movement conducted two protests with the same content in September and later on, in February. In a broader sense, this discourse addresses high belief of Georgian public about existence of non-formal governance and associated dissatisfaction. [153]

Besides the affairs of domestic dissatisfaction, Georgian March's Facebook page and the leader continuously referred to the Europe in their mobilizing appeals. Similarly to the anti-immigration sentiments, the expression "Europe is Awakening" was actively used before the anti-Soros and anti-OSF protests (see Figure *4).* This discourse field also included the stories related to Central European University (CEU) "closure". It is worth mentioning that one of these posts actually reflected the protest in support of CEU, but was reinterpreted in the opposite way (see Figure *3).*[154]

[151] This fact for the movement has a negative connotation, as they perceive that this revolution brought Saakashvili in presidency, which was "a big malice". Source: Bregadze- interview with Dalma News, October 2, 2017.
[152] Bregadze- interview with Dalma News, October 2, 2017.
[153] CRRC Georgia, "Who takes political decisions in Georgia? What do people think?," *CRRC Georgia Blogs* (blog), accessed May 11, 2018, http://blog.crrc.ge/2017/08/blog-post.html.
[154] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 15 Feb. 2018. Update time: 13:12.Last seen on 30 May 2018.

Thus, besides framing events happening elsewhere, sharing unvarified and objectively inacurate information is also an integral element of the discoursive strategies used by Georgian March.

Figure 4 Screenshot 1 "Europe against Soros"[155]

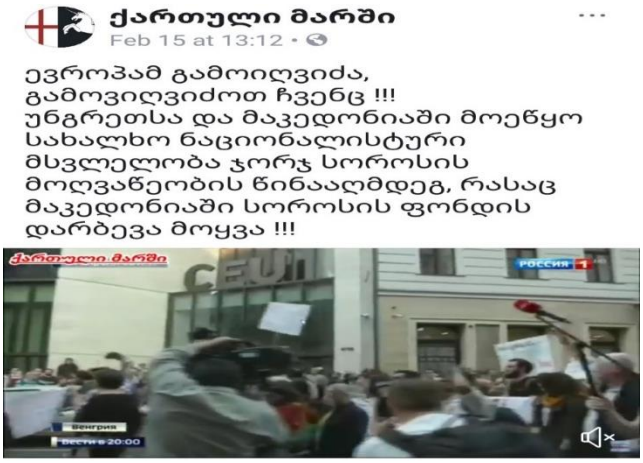


Figure 3, Screenshot 2 "Europe has awoken, we should as well!!!

Text (first paragraph): " *Attention!!!*

Europe supplanted Soros foundation with the accusation of violating its sovereignty".

Text: *"There were public protest movements in Hungary and Macedonia against George Soros, which resulted in ravaging Soros foundation in Macedonia!!!".*

Homophobic sentiments had previously been part of anti-Soros and anti-"foreign influence" discourses, but intensified in the response to Kashia's (the captain of national football team) decision to wear a colorful armband in support of LGBT rights. After this game in Netherlands, Georgian March did not delay its backlash. Mobilizing resentments over threats to family values and "homosexual propaganda" intensified throughout the official Facebook page of the movement as well as in Bregadze's personal interviews. In addition to "liberal dictatorship" and the "threat to Christian values", the leader framed this issue in the context of demographic problems,

[155] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 15 Feb. 2018. URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/photos/a.184266188783984.1073741827.183431302200806/2330958305676686/?type=3&theater Accessed 10 May 2018

"imposed regulations" and "Soros agents". In these terms, the slogan – "*Homosexual propaganda*"- is ascribed to the liberal media in Georgia that, according to the movement, is owed and tasked from Soros (See Figure 5, *Text under the picture: "The best tool to influence mass ideology is Television."*).[156]

Figure 5, Screenshot 3: Soros and Georgian Media

Another national-populist move of Georgian March was to announce the creation of so-called 'Public Policing' with the aim to control the "criminal behavior of *illegal* migrants". This goes in line with, what Eatwell describes as defuse of racism charges via distinguishing between the 'good' and 'bad' immigrants and attaching them normative labels.[157] Two weeks before this announcement, the Facebook page of the movement intensified posts with anti-immigrant sentiments and references to the Europe. One of them reflected Viktor Orban's words under his picture: "*We do not perceive Muslim migrants as refugees, we perceive them as the Muslim conquerors.*"[158] In these terms, Orban's persona is referred to as an authority and his words are

[156] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 20 Nov. 2017. URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/photos/a.184266188783984.1073741827.183431302200806/2053280400 11132/?type=3&theater Accessed 10 May. 2018

[157] Roger Eatwell, "Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain," *The Political Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (2006): 204–216.

[158] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 22 Jan. 2018. URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/photos/a.188087905068479.1073741829.183431302200806/2252608913 51180/?type=3&theater Accessed 19 Apr. 2018

framed as a legitimization for the anti-immigrant sentiments of Georgian March. In a subsequent interview with Primetime, Bregadze tried to legitimize 'Public Policing' by referring to 'Europe' as if this practice already had been in many European states. He further claimed to be in contact with "foreign friends in the US, France and Germany", who trained them in this practice. [159]

Other 'European examples' were replicated throughout the Facebook posts of the movement a day before this announcement. One of them reflected Berlusconi's picture (Figure 6)[160] and his anti-immigration phrase accompanied by a sarcastic comment in the end ("*Look at this xenophobe*") as if Berlusconi- former PM of Italy-cannot be accused for xenophobia and neither should Georgian March be. Similarly, as *Figure 7 below*[161] shows, the idea of 'Public Policing' is equaled to the one 'operating' in Paris. Thus, it is 'European' and therefore, 'legitimate', even though the video reflects violence in contrast with 'civilized' forces, as Bregadze interpreted it. Using framing strategies, the movement tried to legitimize 'public policing' initiative by interpreting and attaching it to the Western practice.

[159] Sandro Bregadze, How will "Georgian March" control "illegal migrants"?, interview by Salome Chaduneli, Primetime.ge, February 12, 2018, Hyperlink . Accessed 11 May, 2018..
[160] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post (shared)] 5 Feb. 2018. Last Seen on: 20 Apr. 2018
[161] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post (shared)] 7 Feb. 2018. Last Seen on: 29 Apr. 2018

Figure 6, Screenshot 4
"Berlusconi about immigrants"

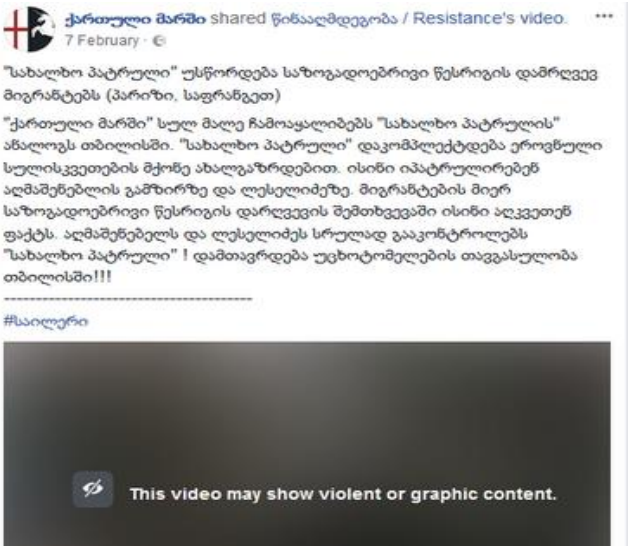


Figure 7 Screenshot 5-
"Public Police" in Paris and in Tbilisi

Figure 6 Text: Former prime minister of Italy announces that 600,000 illegals should be deported [smile]

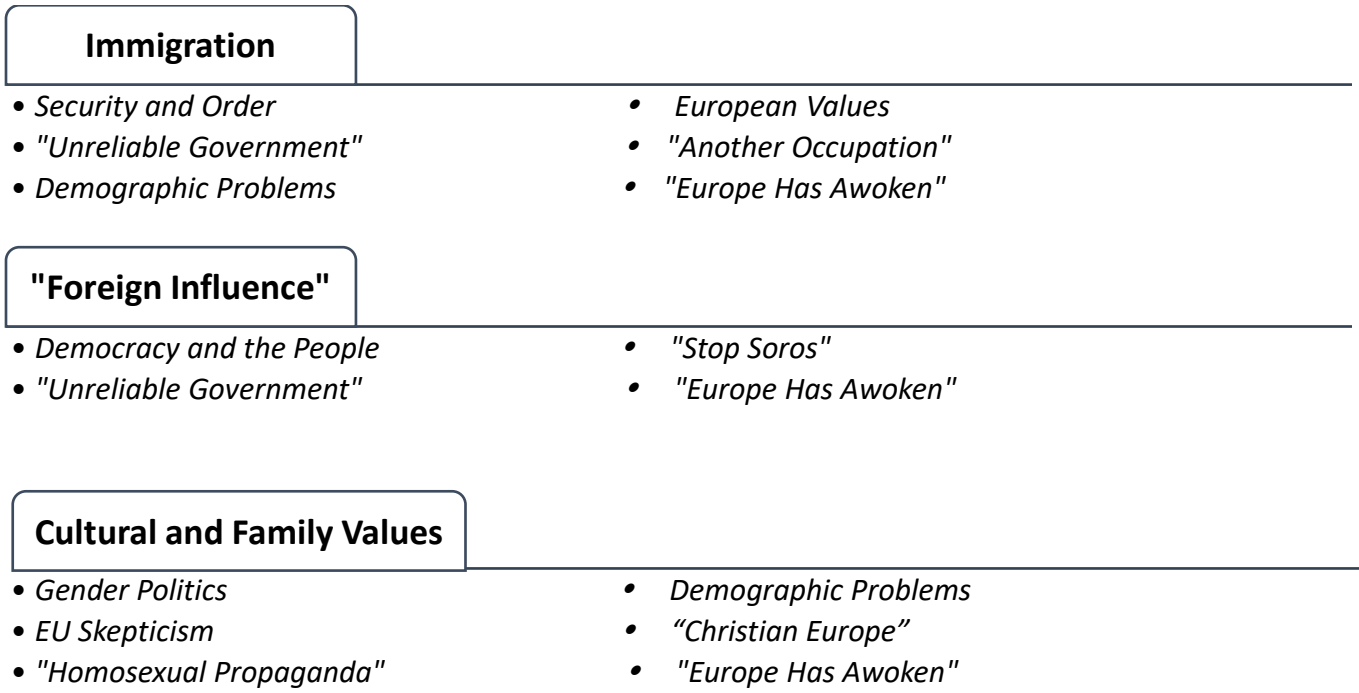
Look at this xenophobe!!!

Figure 7 Text: "Public Police" is dealing with public-order-ruining migrants (Paris, France)

"Georgian March" will soon form an analogue of "public police" in Tbilisi. It will be staffed by youngsters with national spirt. They will be patrolling and entirely controling Aghmashenebeli and Leselidze Streets in order to put a stop to breaking public order by immigrants! Self-conceit of foreigners will end in Tbilisi !!!

Finally, in addition to the frequent online polls concerning political decisions, Georgian March proposed to conduct referendum throughout the country, which, in a sense, summarized some of the mentioned demands of the movement. Three-question referendum was supposed to give decisive power to the people over the issues of financing non-commercial agencies from abroad, adding indication of ethnicity on personal ID (removed in the 2000s) and reducing a bank loan rate till 8%. The latter socio-economic issue goes in hand with the anti-elitist discourses that continuously underline disparity between governmental salaries and salaries of the people. Figure 8 summarizes the discourse fields and topics described above.

Figure 8, Discursive Fields and Topics



Discursive Field 1- Immigration

Europe has been a central point of reference throughout this discourse field. *Topos of analogy and reality* [162] are simultaneously deployed in discourses about 'Europe is awakening'. Bregadze frequently refers to the issue of immigration in his interviews when asked about the reasons for establishing Georgian March, as if "the same is happening in European states" and "Europe is awakening". This expression is also frequently used as a headline to posts on the official Facebook

[162] The *topos of reality* is rather a tautological argumentation scheme that can be paraphrased as follows: because reality is as it is, a specific action/decision should be performed/made. Wodak Ruth and Boukala Salomi, "European Identities and the Revival of Nationalism in the European Union," *Journal of Language and Politics* 14, no. 1 (May 26, 2015): 87–109.

page of Georgian March. In the first case (*topos of analogy*) references are made to especially Viktor Orban, the Polish government (Law and Justice Party), Front National and Le Pens, Nigel Farage, German *Pegida* and Alternative For Germany (AfD). The same headline is used on the video of the Flemish youth group "*Schild & Vrienden*" expressing far right, Eurosceptic sentiments and tearing up the EU flag in the video. As for the *topos of reality*, another expression- 'Sane (healthy) Europe'- is positioned on top of the posts reflecting cadres from polish nationalist movement on 11th of November, with a special emphasis on their poster "My Chcemy Boga" (*We want God*).[163] Furthermore, this phrase precedes the post *framing an event* from Hungary *(metonymical reference)*:

> A healthy Europe [winking smile]. "Hungary: in order to increase population we need to improve friendly politics towards families instead of mass migration."[164]

Hence, using argumentative strategies, the movement appeals to the 'progressive' and exemplary image of Europe. Thus, an empty signifier - 'European values' carrying a positive connotation in public and political discourses in Georgia during the EU integration processes, is being affiliated with *signifieds* of nationalist government, exclusionary politics, following the 'people's will', anti-immigration and defending Christianity. At the same time, these two expressions indicate the hidden anti-Western message of Georgian March. Particularly, the metaphor 'awoken West' underlines that it has been 'sleeping', not being conscious of the cultural threats coming from immigration or 'forgetting the Christian values'. Yet, not the whole of Europe falls under this

[163] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 11 Nov. 2017. URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/photos/a.184266188783984.1073741827.183431302200806/20254606955996/?type=3&theater Last Seen on: 15 Apr. 2018

[164] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post (shared)] 23 Dec. 2017. Update time : 16:30 Last Seen on: 20 Apr. 2018

label, but strategically selected leaders. Orban appears to be the most frequent point of exemplary references.

The 'progressive' Europe is being *recontextualized* too. Anti-Western sentiments are provoked systematically through the movement's Facebook page. This process is mainly taking place via *topos of threat,*[165] in the sense that 'this Europe' has chosen multiculturalism and liberalism and resulted in a "fatal situation". Thus, the former is responsible for "criminality and destruction" there. In this construction, the 'good' Europe does not allow immigrants for the sake of security, while in the other criminality has increased because of not taking measures.

Below I analyze several occasions when the anti-immigrant rhetoric is systematically exposed in hand with anti-Western attitudes. The Facebook page of Georgian March occasionally shares videos reflecting chaotic or criminal behavior 'in Europe' involving people with, for example, dark skin or long beard. In most of the cases, the discourses are framed in a way to legitimize the connection of immigration with criminality. For example, the post from January 6, 2018 reports the following: "According to German governmental research, the increased number of violent crimes is related to mass migration." [166] Although the news actually does not speak of the above-mentioned correlation,[167] an incorporation of the high percentage and the reference to the 'research' serves to strengthen the association of immigration with criminality. Thus, *framing of the narration* serves to construct the *topos of example.* The same type of 'news' was shared on

[165] The *topos of danger* or *topos of threat* is based on the following conditionals: if a political action or decision bears specific dangerous, threatening consequences, one should not perform or do it. Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism* (Routledge, 2005), 79.

[166] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post (shared)] 6 Jan. 2018. Update time : 19:10 Last Seen on: 15 Apr. 2018

[167] This is a headline of the news, which continues in a quite different way: "*Criminologists, studying the Lower Saxony region, concluded that during the migration crisis period, the number of violent crimes has increased by 92.1%".*

Georgian March's page three days before in reference to London, reporting "increasingly insecure" environment there during the "mass migration". Another alike post, supposed to trigger readers' emotion, concerned Italy. The following text: "A migrant sneaked in the hospital and tried to rape a pregnant lady in Italy" was attached to a picture reflecting a white female and dark skinned hand of a rapist.[168] To sum up, timing of the posts and the coherence of similar statements serve to negate liberalism and multiculturalism of 'this West' and reinforce traditional anti-Western attitudes. Framing of the events and narrations through *topos of example* fall under the same legitimization category- *rationalization*.

Simultaneously, the movement constructs anti-immigrant discriminatory language in reference to the EU. Another set of posts build anti-EU discourse via endorsing the belief that the EU will compel Georgia ('as well') to receive migrants for the price of Visa Waiver. These sentiments are best demonstrated through the post reflecting the picture of Olaf Scholz with the quote: "*In the case Poland and Hungary do not start receiving migrants, Germany will reduce financial transfers to the EU budget*".[169] At the same time, the movement does not explicitly neglect Georgia's aspiration to the EU or NATO, but rather attempts to foment skepticism via *topos of example.*

Hence, the argumentative and framing strategies are constantly deployed in reference to the West (Europe) and anti-immigrant language. The main demands of Georgian March floated during the protest- *aggravation of migration politics and deportation of all 'illegal migrants'*- were legitimized with the claim that "we should live with European values". Bregadze further maintained in the interviews:

[168] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post (shared)] 6 Jan. 2018. Update time : 07:03 Last Seen on: 15 Apr. 2018

[169] Ibid. 6 Jan. 2018. Update Time: 18:44 Last Seen on: 15 Apr. 2018

> The fact that the US hardly allows citizens of Eastern Europe and Asia to enter the state does not mean their government is xenophobic, they are just securing their citizens. See what is happening in Europe, receiving Syrian refugees increased the level of criminality there". [170]

Thus, he deploys both, *topos of analogue* and *topos of example*[171] in reference to the West. Using *rationalization* strategy he tries to legitimize the content of the anti-immigration appeals. Simultaneously, he refers to the events in the West in an attempt to deny *xenophobia* in the movement's actions and frames it as an issue of security ("securing their citizens"). In addition to this statement, the fourth point of the petition read during the anti-immigration protest reflected their demand "to adjust immigration policies to European standards". Thus, 'European values' are intended to be used as an argumentative strategy of *moral evolution*, although, as analyzed above, the notion of 'European values' is *recontextualized* too.

Alongside referring to the "western analogues and examples", the movement used local context for mobilizing resentments. As Wagner has put it, particular events and development of discourses greatly affect triggering anti-immigrant prejudices.[172] Thus, in this case, the claimed reasons behind the necessity of creating a 'national power' were framed as 'urgent' and based on the case of an Iranian man, blamed for raping juvenile boys in one of the regions of Georgia. This case was *synecdochally* used in the slogans such as "*We will clean our streets of foreign criminals*". In this way, the leader generalized one Iranian man to the whole outgroup and categorized it by *criminalization* strategy (*foreign criminals*) on the one hand, and created in-group bond, a collective singular (we), on the other.

[170] Liberali.ge, "' Our criminals are enough for us'- Sandro Bregadze about the demands of 'Georgian March,'" Newsportal, Liberali.ge, July 5, 2017, http://liberali.ge/news/view/30249/chven-chveni-kriminalebits-gveyofa--sandro-bregadze-qartvelta-marshis-motkhovnebze Accessed 16 Apr, 2018.
[171] Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (Sage, 2009), 13.
[172] Ulrich Wagner, Oliver Christ, and Wilhelm Heitmeyer, "Anti-Immigration Bias," *The Sage Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination* 1 (2010): 361–376.

Besides the borrowing *anti-immigration* discursive field that have been the "hallmark of success"[173] for right-wing populist parties throughout the last three decades, the movement also adopted discursive strategies (association of 'illegal' immigrants with criminal behavior), topics (illegitimate/unreliable government) and language too ("foreign criminals"). In these terms, with alike slogan (*Wir säubern Graz - Wir fegen das Übel aus der Stad*t [We clean Graz - We sweep the evil out of the city]), Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) opened their campaign in 2006.[174] Considering an absence of obvious links, these similarities indicate indirect transnational diffusion of national-populist anti-immigration discourses.

Moreover, in terms of borrowed language, the movement's initiative about "Public Policing" was legitimized by not only references to 'the counter-initiative in Europe', but also by the borrowed anti-immigration language. Discourses around the proposed initiative would not only nominate/categorize *foreigners* as outgroups and predicate them deprecatorily by locating "foreign illegals", "criminals" and "terrorists" in a *chain of equivalenc*e, but also emphasize the inability of the government to secure the people and control the "*flow* of terrorists and criminals" [175] ('flow' is a commonly-used magnifying hyperbole in discourses by Orban, Strache, etc.). Consequently, the movement attempts to legitimize national-populist discourses via framing "European examples" and adopting anti-immigration rhetoric, unaccustomed to right wing discourse in Georgia before.

[173] Mammone, Godin, and Jenkins, *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe*.
[174] "BZÖ startet Kampagne 'Wir säubern Graz - Wir fegen das Übel aus der Stadt,'" OTS.at, accessed April 15, 2018, https://bit.ly/2sBapGC.
[175] Liberali.ge, "'Georgian March' Is Going to Create 'Public Police' in Order to Control 'Illegal Immigrants'.," Newsportal, Liberali.ge, February 6, 2018, http://liberali.ge/news/view/34135/qartuli-marshi-gegmavs-ukanono-emigrantebis-gasakontroleblad-sakhalkho-patruli-sheqmnas Accessed 20 April, 2018.

Concisely, intensified anti-immigration discourses just before and after announcing a 'public policing' idea on the one hand serve to construct and reinforce prejudices about the outgroup and legitimize discriminatory strategies via framing discourses and events in the West, on the other. Sandro Bregadze would continuously refer to "European practice" in legitimizing the initiative throughout the interviews:

> This will be *civilized, European and modern*, because we have worked on tactics with our European friends. We want to create this for benefiting our population. We are fighting for pure, Georgian, moral Georgia and I am sure God will be on our side.[176] *(Emphasis added)*

In these terms, 'the European' is associated with 'modern' and 'civilized', which is supposed to habitually legitimize the populist idea, which otherwise might be related to destruction or de-legitimization of the government. Bringing up the examples from the 'Civilized West', in a sense, neutralizes and denies the accusation towards them being a regressive, 'dark' power. What is more, the n*egation* of foreigners as "illegal criminals" and *social problematisation* of the immigration issue is supposed to be justified by attaching it to the "fight for moral Georgia", "European practice" and "benefits for population". Moreover, Bregadze is creating an image of the movement as "consisting of people" and "working for people" whilst the higher moral aim is connected to 'Georgian Georgia'. Using discursive strategies of *nomination and predication*,[177] his ambiguous, seemingly positive rhetoric is supposed to cover up a discriminatory content of the initiative, which is directed to the metonymically constructed group of "foreigners" and is endorsing prejudice towards them being 'supposedly' criminals.

Thus, anti-immigrant, national-populist discourses of Georgian March, which have not been, in a similar way, part of the nationalist sentiments in Georgia before, results from a strategic adaptation

[176] Sandro Bregadze, How will "Georgian March" control "illegal migrants"?, interview by Salome Chaduneli, Primetime.ge, February 12, 2018, Hyperlink. Accessed 16 Apr, 2018.
[177] Wodak and Reisigl, *The Semiotics of Racism. Approaches in Critical Discourse Analysis.*

and indicates indirect cross-level diffusion of the discourse field, slogans and used language. Within these discourses, new national boundaries does not exclude ethnic minorities, as before, but shift towards vertical exclusion of 'unreliable government' and horizontal exclusion of immigrants (mainly Muslim immigrants). Construction of the double face of the West serves a mobilizing and legitimizing tool within Georgian March's discourses.

Discursive Field 2- 'Foreign Influence' and the Local Establishment

When asked why Georgian March was fighting against George Soros, Bregadze turned to the habitual populistic dichotomy of 'nationalists' and 'enemies' and labeled Soros as the biggest enemy of the "Georgian people and Georgia". In this case, similarly to the migration issue, he referred to Hungary, having "prohibited his activities and announced Soros as *persona non grata* in the country".[178] In order to legitimize this proposal, Bregadze referred to the 'Europeanness' of Orban and therefore tried to frame the issue via *authorization*: "*Prime-minister Orban is an awarded European leader*." [179] This strategy complies with the discursive construction of 'new progressive Europe'. In these terms, 'Hungary' is an exemplary case from Europe. It is typical in the movement's discourses that the place is metonymically used for referring to the person and vice versa.

Within this discourse field, Georgian March strategically adopted discursive schemes avoiding any anti-Semitic references. In contrast with other far-right movements, in Georgia as well as in other European countries, Georgian March circumvented 'Jewish conspiracy' altogether in their rhetoric. Their Facebook page has been actively publishing caricatures of George Soros under

[178]Bregadze, Georgian March' Against George Soros- Interview with Sandro Bregadze.
[179]Ibid. Bregadze.

headlines such as "Eastern Europe against George Soros"[180] and "Europe has awoken", in an attempt to legitimize their appeal to close down OSF office in Georgia. The claim was presented as "the will of the people" and proposed to be decided through a referendum. Using *topos of analogy*, the movement tried to legitimize this appeal:

> If the government will not take the people's will into consideration and will not prohibit activities of Soros in Georgia, as happened in Hungary, Austria and Israel, then protests by Georgian March will be harsher!.. Georgian March will propose the referendum for prohibiting activities of Soros and other NGOs that are financed from abroad, as they are pursuing a foreign interest in the state, intervene in sovereign governance and *hinder a democratic development of Georgia.* [181] (Emphasis added)

The initiative to decide this issue via referendum was attached to the "democratic development of Georgia". The populist appeal for a better democracy is therefore concomitant with a prohibition of foreign finances in the non-governmental sector and linked to the 'successful practices' from Eastern Europe and Israel. It is significant to notice that no reference was made to Russia, although the same proposal, using an alike argument of "foreign agents" that intervene in domestic issues, backed up the constitutional amendment in Russia in July 2012.[182] The fact could be explained by the above analyzed connotation of the West and its juxtaposition to Russia within the public and political discourses throughout the last two decades. In other words, Georgian March avoids any association with Russia and therefore to 'regress', whereas actively attaches its political decisions to the West, therefore to 'progress'.

[180] Georgian March's Facebook page [Facebook Post]. 15 Feb.2018 (11:03). URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/videos/233113420565927/ Accessed : 15 Apr. 2018

[181] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 11 Feb. 2018. Update time : 19:00 Last Seen on: 7 May 2018

[182] The State Duma, "Bill No. 102766-6, On the Introduction of Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation with Regard to the Regulation of the Activities of Non-Profit Organizations Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent" (The State Duma Official Web-Page), accessed April 10, 2018, http://asozd2.duma.gov.ru/main.nsf/%28SpravkaNew%29?OpenAgent&RN=102766-6&02.

Hence, within this discourse field the movement constructs mobilizing *fear of losing values and national autonomy.* It is important to note that these fears have been part of the anti-Western sentiments in the country,[183] although Georgian March filled the popular dissatisfaction caused by "foreign influence on domestic decision-making" with anti-Soros and "foreign agents" rhetoric. In this matter, appointing a new ombudsman in November 2017 was protested by the movement and evaluated as "Governmental betrayal of Georgian people" by choosing "Soros's agent". [184] Thus, conservative appeals are attached to similar protests in other national contexts and used for legitimizing local political decisions.

In terms of diffusion of similar rhetoric, Georgian March has adopted the Hungarian example and used it as a legitimizing tool for its national-populist discourse. 'Anti-Soros' posts especially intensified by the time of the second protest on 25th of February, for which the expression and even the symbol of the event-*"Stop Soros*"- were copied from the billboards spread around Hungary during the parliamentary election campaign in 2018. [185] Using *authorization*, the movement's Facebook page published several posts notifying that "Austria has given a 28 day limit to Open Society to leave the country" with the accusation of breaking state sovereignty and intervening in internal issues. It was several days after, when Georgian March, deploying the *topos of analogy* of reasons, publicly announced the proposal to put up the referenda through which "Georgian people" would force the government to do the same as "European countries" (and Israel too) are doing. In

[183] "Anti-Western Propaganda. Media Monitoring Report 2014-2015," Research (Media Development Foundation), accessed April 15, 2018, http://mdfgeorgia.ge/eng/view-library/15; "Anti-Western Propaganda, 2016."
[184] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post] 29 Nov. 2017. URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/photos/a.184266188783984.1073741827.183431302200806/208113369732599/?type=3&theater Last Seen on: 7 May 2018
[185] For comparison see: The poster used by Fidesz- Hyperlink and the poster used at the Facebook event and protests of Georgian March: Hyperlink.

these terms, anti-establishment discourses are again aligned with foreign threat in mobilizing dissatisfaction towards the 'unreliable government'.

Discursive Field 3- Cultural and Family Values

Another discourse field deployed by Georgian March concerns homophobic mobilization over *fears of losing values.* This field is closely connected to the above-analyzed discourses about 'foreign agents'. Populist dichotomy between true Georgian people and the traitors is also provoked. In these terms, not only the national others or foreigners are excluded from 'the people', but also those living among Georgian society, although still being outsiders. The latter segment is assigned to the label -'Liberal-Sorosist' and 'traitors':

> Georgian media is hiding truth from the people. No matter how long Georgian *Sorosist* media will block Trump and the victories of nationalists in Europe, these victories are like a tsunami, which will arrive to Georgia and overflow *Liberast-Sorosist* monstrosities… Be afraid traitors!!! (Emphasis added) [186]

Generally, the success of, as Bregadze calls them, "national, honest and faithful [religious] powers",[187] in Europe and the US is labeled as an 'achievement' throughout the movement's discourses. Moreover, deploying *topos of analogy*, the resurgence of 'nationalists' is framed as a motive for hoping that the same will happen in Georgia. The West, in case of constructing the 'common enemy' (Soros), appears to be exemplary. Furthermore, construction of the similarities

[186] Bregadze Sandro's Facebook page. [Facebook Status Update] 6 March, 2018. Shared on http://alia.ge/news/8308 Retrieved: 15 Apr. 2018

[187] Sandro Bregadze, Sandro Bregadze: "US President is not financing us, but we are in contact with his administration"., Akhalitaoba.ge, November 6, 2017 Hyperlink, Accessed 16 Apr.2018.

among 'the Western' powers and Georgian March serves to gain legitimacy in accordance with the popular connotation of 'the West' in Georgia.

At the same time, within the homophobic discourses, the movement implicitly endorses the anti-Western sentiments identified by Media Development Foundation (MDF) and therefore maintains the tendency of constructing the double face of *Europe*. In this context, Georgian March has provoked traditional anti-Western thoughts about the 'expanse' of the Visa waver. The Facebook page of the movement published the video with the title: "*A shocking confession: Georgia and Moldavia got Visa waver in the expanse of promise to legalize homosexuality…*".[188] As discussed above, the movement has been constructing and endorsing a link between the normative issues, such as the threat to Christian identity on the one hand, and European integration on the other. In these terms, another post published several days later signaled the following: "Georgia is becoming a shelter for foreign LGBT people… *Bravo! Is this an aspiration to Europe?".* [189] Hence, Georgian March sarcastically connected the sensitive issue to the country's political course and simultaneously denounced it in a subtle way. In this way, the anti-Western attitudes, although revealed elusively, have been an accompanying part of this discourse field yet with preserved face of the 'awoken West'. The latter, as analyzed above, has been referred to within the argumentative strategies and *topos of analogy* for legitimizing national-populist exclusionary language.

[188] Georgian March's Facebook page [Facebook Post(Shared)]. 15 Dec.2017. Update time: 11:59. Accessed : 10 May 2018

[189] Georgian March's Facebook page [Facebook Post]. 21 Dec.2017. Update time: 11:27. Accessed : 10 May 2018

Figure 9, Screenshot 6 - Orban about traditions and family values

The text on the post:

> "*Prime-Minister of Hungary: Silent majority, for whom traditions and family values are important, will defeat the global empire. According to Orban, in the ideological clash there is population, which "is fighting for the family, loves the homeland and secures Christian roots" on the one side and Global elite with network of Soros agents, on the other side. The spirit of this era indicates that silent, anti-globalist majority will achieve the glory in this clash"*.[190]

This text accompanying Orban's picture *interdiscoursively* reflects on Bregadze's frequent claim about the rise of national consciousness Europewide in response to the prevalent '*liberastism'*. This term is a combination of a liberal and a pejorative jargon of homosexual male in Georgian language. In addition to media and the governing elite, who permit "foreign influence", NGOs are another point of attack in this context. According to Bregadze, they are serving foreign interests in the country and undermine Christian identity. Hence, in the *chain of equivalence* homosexuality is linked with immorality, foreign influence and deprivation of national and Christian values.

[190] Georgian March's Facebook Page. [Facebook post] 19 Nov. 2017. URL: https://www.facebook.com/qartulimarshi/photos/a.184266188783984.1073741827.183431302200806/2049902433782 45/?type=3&theater Retrieved on: 15 Apr. 2018

In terms of borrowing, Bregadze constructed the image of 'clash' between national ideology and "liberast-Soros" powers similar to the Orban's rhetoric. As he maintained through his Facebook posts published later on:

> Victory of national ideology is inevitable. No matter how hard *Liberast-Sorosist* powers try, no matter how much money they spend, their defeat is a historical necessity.[191]

This marks borrowing of the discourses created somewhere else and simultaneously attempting to legitimize it via moral evolution and narratives about the future (*mythopoesis*). This example mirrors the general strategy of Georgian March for using "awoken West" and the discourses of 'successful' national-populists from the West. Temporal sequence of announcements by Orban and Bregadze, and similarity of the content demonstrates the process of diffusion taking place within the media platform.

Diffusion and adaptation within this field as well are strategic processes dependent on the contextual variables. Even in the context of Christian values, being the central point of homophobic discourses, the movement has not applied the traditional anti-Western discourses that would position Russia as the 'lesser evil' to align with in defending Christianity. Even the expression, 'homosexual propaganda' resembles discourses in Russia in 2012 within the politics of "Returning to traditional values", through which "foreign agents" and "propaganda of homosexuality" were banned on a constitutional level.[192] However, despite the alike content and similar expressions used in both cases, the Russian case has not become a point of reference in homophobic discourses of Georgian March. Instead, the movement has been trying to find a

[191] Bregadze Sandro's Facebook page. [Facebook Status Update] 6 March, 2018. Shared on http://alia.ge/news/8308 Retrieved: 15 Apr. 2018

[192] Emil Persson, "Banning 'Homosexual Propaganda': Belonging and Visibility in Contemporary Russian Media," *Sexuality & Culture* 19, no. 2 (2015): 256–274.

legitimization again in "Christian Europe". In this case, Orban is still a legitimate point of reference within the category of *authorization (see the* Figure 9 *above).*

Recontextualizing European Values

"European Values" occurring outside of the analyzed discursive fields also serve to reinforce traditional anti-Western rhetoric. This process goes in line with recontextualizing an image of 'the West' and using it for legitimizing national-populist discourses on the front stage discourses. The values such as *democracy, freedom of expression,* or *multiculturalism*, traditionally associated to the West, are denounced cynically throughout the Facebook page of the movement. In this matter, the post from January 4, 2018 starts with a sarcastic headline: "Western Freedom of Expression [winking smile]", followed by the shared news from *Alt-Info*[193] about Emanuel Macron "planning to confirm the law which will impose censorship on media and block "Fake News" (originally in quotes).[194] A post with the same content was shared a day before just about Germany (*metonymical reference*) approving the law which would impose censorship on the internet. In this case, the headline is still sarcastic and goes: "European Democracy!!!".[195] In this way, the movement attempts to recontextualize and denounce value-based vision on Europe, which has been a considerable part of the dominant discourses in Georgia especially since 2003.

In addition to *democracy*, multiculturalism is also being condemned with the *topos of example*. Particularly, the Facebook post update reads that there were 140,000 police officers mobilized on New Year's Eve in Paris and ends with the remark "*So this is a multicultural France*". The same day, the page shared a video reflecting an unverified images of public fight in Paris and underlined

[193] *This news portal is predominantly shared and promoted by the members of Georgian March.*
[194] Georgian March's Facebook page. [Facebook post (shared)] 4 Jan. 2018. Time: 23:18 Last Seen on: 15 Apr. 2018
[195] Ibid. 3 Jan. 2018. Update Time: 12:55. Last Seen on: 15 Apr. 2018

again how the "*multicultural and feministic*" New Year's night looked like in this city. Using *fallacy of multiculturalism*, the above-mentioned discourses endorse anti-Western prejudices via emphasizing the 'consequent insecurity' and 'authoritarianism' (reference to censorship) of *the West*. These posts fall under the general tendency of devaluing 'liberal West' and reevaluating its progressivism in the context of 'nationalist powers'.

In contrast with the traditionally anti-Western sentiments in Georgia emerged in response to the country's increasing involvement in globalization processes by 2000s, Georgian March now promotes anti-Western attitudes by the means of globalization and *authorization* of 'the west' itself, yet keeping the image of *the West* as a cultural threat to the country. In this sense, the official Facebook page of the movement publishes picture of Orban with the following quote: "*Receiving the Western-European liberalism would be a spiritual suicide and an attack to national-Christian identity."* [196]

[196] Georgian March's Facebook page [Facebook Post(Shared)]. 30 Nov.2017. Accessed : 10 May 2018

Conclusion

The thesis follows the main theoretical assumption about diffusion and adaptation of national-populism in the context of globalization as yet an unexplored perspective in regard to emergence of populist units. In doing so, it firstly establishes the theoretical framework, positioning *national-populism* as a category of analysis and examines the birth of *Georgian March* within the mentioned theoretical proposal. The movement, promoting exclusionary politics within the national-populist perspective, appeared in the Georgian socio-political platform following the increased representation of national-populists in the 'Western states' and an immense media and scholarly attention to this phenomenon. Considering the contextual connotation of *the West* in Georgian socio-political and right wing discourses on the one hand, and constant references to *the West* in Georgian March's discourses on the other, the main tool for empirically approaching the theoretical assumption is an analysis of the movement's discourses and incorporation of *the West* in it.

Creation of a historical-discursive four-fold frame and following a timeline of the movement's actions leads to establishing the three main discourse fields of the movement: Immigration; "Foreign Influence", and Cultural and Family values. It is important to mention that social media serves as a significant platform for constructing these discourse fields and more importantly, as a channel of diffusion.

The content of discourse fields and political claims resemble the established anti-Western right wing and conservative discourses in Georgia that have been identified and classified by Media Development Foundation since 2014. However, the usage of *the West* in the movement's discourses is also argumentative and mainly reflects strategies of *moral evolution, rationalization*

and mythopoesis. In other words, traditional 'progressive' image of the West is positioned for legitimizing national-populist exclusionary discourses albeit with a construction of the double image of Europe. If one face is subtly, yet negatively presented as 'multicultural', 'immoral', and 'liberal' (in pejorative sense), another 'real', 'sane' and 'awoken' Europe is shown as exemplary. This process comes in compliance with the embedded connotation of *progressive West* in Georgian popular consciousness in the context of 'Europeanization' and simultaneously meets the conservative appeal of the movement. While the movement uses the positive connotation of the West on the front stage discourses, it also deploys *topos of example* in order to advocate traditional anti-Western discourses concerning liberalism, multiculturalism, foreign cultural influence and the European Union's 'plans' on Georgia. In these terms, it also recontextualizes traditional understandings of the 'European values' and pejoratively refers to the "European democracy" and "freedom of expression".

In terms of the substantiation of diffusion, the leader of the movement frequently emphasizes the rise of nationalism in Europe and the US, makes parallels with Front National, Orban, Heider and Strache, Trump, Berlusconi and the Polish government in an attempt to present the aims of *Georgian March* as progressive, 'real European' and democratic. Immigration discourses, as the predominant subject of the first appearance of Georgian March, are mainly constructed through the language developed elsewhere and in this form, mark the novel issue for Georgian nationalism in a historical perspective. 'Anti-Foreign-Influence' and 'Anti-Soros' protests are also supplemented by slogans and visual elements used through the parallel campaigns, mainly, in Hungary. Not only do the discourse fields resemble European right wing populist cases, but also discursive strategies (e.g. Manichean construction of an ideological clash); practices (e.g. polarization of society on moral issues and proposing referenda) and, in some cases, exact phrases

and terms are copied from them. Viktor Orban is cited and mentioned in most cases, which highlights both hierarchical and proximity models of diffusion.

The strategic adaptation is central to the diffusion process in this case. Even though some of the identified discourse topics and the content of the exclusionary political demands resembles not only European but also (and sometimes even more closely) Russian discourses, the movement avoids any references to the Russian cases within the legitimizing strategies, due to the unpopularity of Russian affiliation in the wider public. This factor not only adds up to approaching the framing of 'the awoken Europe' within the legitimization strategies but also underlines the logic of the front stage populist politics deployed by Georgian March.

To sum up, all three dimensions marking the diffusion process are demonstrated and the circumstances under which it takes place are also explained through the historical and political contexts. Recontextualization of the West and construction of the 'double face' of it throughout national-populist discourses of Georgian March are salient elements of Georgian right-wing populism emergence and speak for the broader issue of *'populist Zeitgeist*', its diffusion and adaptation particularities.

Implications

One of the main implications of this study for the research domain is related to rethinking the rise and success of national-populists in Europe in the context of European integration not merely as an economical, but also as a cultural and political process. In other words, interdependence within Europe should not only be seen through economic commonality, but also within the lens of interdependence of political processes and a favorable platform for an exchange of ideas and practices. In this sense, an increasing representation of national-populist powers in European states

should also be discussed in the frames of influencing discourses in peripheral 'Europeanizing' states and embryonic formations there. It would also be a great contribution to further scrutinize the diffusion of visual elements between the national-populist groups and their convergence around the practices, slogans and the ways of protesting on the larger scale and in the historical perspective.

While the thesis, in support to the theoretical assumption, demonstrates the case within an exclusionary national-populism framework, it does not touch upon other forms of populist politics. In these terms, it would be useful to check its validity on more inclusive forms of populism and examine the relevance of mutual references and legitimizing strategies in that sense.

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