GEORGIAN EUROPEANIZATION: AN IDEATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

GEORGIAN EUROPEANIZATION: AN IDEATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

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This thesis explores the 'multiple' aspects of the Georgian Europeanization, which goes beyond the institutional integration and domestic change in accordance with the EU acquis between Georgia and the EU. This study unravels both normative/ideational and practical/institutional elements of the Europeanization path of Georgia from a social constructivist perspective. It argues that while the ideational dynamics of the Georgian Europeanization address various representations/articulations/references about how the 'idea' of Europe and 'Georgian Europeanness' are re/constructed in different 'critical junctures', the institutional aspect of Europeanization focuses on rather contemporary dimension with the institutional cooperation between the EU and Georgia, pertinent to legislative, administrative transformation/convergence to the Europe/EU. In order to analyze the Georgian Europeanization as a case study, this study focuses on the 'ideational construction of Europe', 'Rose Revolution', 'Multiple Pathways to Europeanization' and 'the role of the EU as a Soft Power vis-à-vis the other international actors'. It is concluded that the Georgian Europeanization as a single case demonstrates indicators of a selective Europeanization process and without taking the post-Soviet transition problems into account, the Georgian Europeanization, both ideational/normative and institutional levels, could not be analyzed thoroughly.

ÖZ

GÜRCİSTAN'IN AVRUPALILAŞMASI: DÜŞÜNSEL VE KURUMSAL BİR ANALİZ

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Bu tezin amacı kurumsal bütünleşme ve AB müktesabatına uygun olarak yapılan iç değişikliklerin ötesine geçen Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecininin 'çoklu' yönlerini incelemektir. Bu çalışma, toplumsal inşacı yaklaşıma dayanarak Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinde sahip olduğu normatif/düşünsel ve pratik/kurumsal dinamikleri ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, bir yandan Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin 'Avrupa fikrinin' ve Gürcistan Avrupalılaşmasının farklı temsiller/ifadeler/referanslarının 'kritik dönüm noktalarında' nasıl (yeniden) inşa edildiğine ve bu süreçlerin düşünsel dinamiklerine değinmektedir. Öte yandan, Avrupalılaşmanın kurumsal yönüne odaklanarak, AB ile Gürcistan arasındaki yasal, idari dönüşüm/yakınlaşma kurumsal işbirliği çabalarını ele almaktadır. Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşmasını bir vaka analizi olarak inceleyen bu çalışma, 'Avrupa'nın düşünsel inşası', 'Gül Devrimi', 'Çoklu Avrupalılaşma süreci', 'AB'nin diğer uluslararası aktörler bağlamında sahip olduğu yumuşak güç', 'gibi konulara odaklanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci 'seçili' (selective) bir Avrupalılaşma örneği olarak öne çıkmaktadır ve sovyet-Sonrası geçiş dönemi zorlukları göz önünde bulundurulmadan Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin hem düşünsel/normatif hem kurumsal dinamiklerini analiz etmek mümkün görünmemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşması, Avrupalılaşma, Sovyet-Sonrası Geçiş Dönemi, Toplumsal İnşacı Yaklaşım, Gürcistan.

To My Beloved Family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA   Association Agreement

CEEC   Central and East European Countries

CIS   Commonwealth of Independent States

CoE   Council of Europe

CRRC   Caucasus Research and Resource Center

CSTO   Collective Security Treaty Organization

CUG   Citizens' Union of Georgia

EaP   Eastern Partnership

EC   European Commission

ENP   European Neighbourhood Policy

EU   European Union

EUBAM   The European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine

EUMM   EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia

IRI   International Republican Institute

MAP   Membership Action Plan

NACC   North Atlantic Cooperation Council

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NDI   National Democratic Institute

NED   National Endowment for Democracy

NGO   Non-governmental Organizations

OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
SEA	Single European Act
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
UN	United Nations
UNM	United National Movement
VLAP	Visa Liberalisation Action Plan
VLD	Visa Liberalisation Dialogue

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing the Study

Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union on April 9, 1991, when its first president Gamsakhurdia made this statement: "[T]his will be the day of restoration of Georgian independence because it was on this day that people taking part in a demonstration perished in the struggle for freedom and independence".[1] He referred to the April 9 tragedy of 1989 as a symbolic day of rising up against the Soviet Union (Wheatley, 2005: 42).[2] The Georgian independence movement had evolved around dissident leaders and groups in late 1980s as a result of the relative freedom that Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* brought.[3] Parallel to that, Georgia became one of the first Soviet constituent republics to articulate its independence from the Soviet Union following the Baltic States (Nodia and Scholtbach, 2006: 8).

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[1] April 9th is now commemorated as the Day of National Unity, *Erovnuli ertianobis dghe*, an annual public holiday.

[2] The April 1989 events symbolized a major breakthrough for the Georgian national movement against the Soviet authority, as the Soviet administration lost its legitimate ground in the eyes of the Georgian population. During the course of the events, almost 200,000 people were on the streets for the Georgian independence. On 9th of April, 1989, they had to encounter with the swift attacks of the Soviet troops directed to the demonstrations. Twenty-one people, mostly women, were killed and hundreds of activists were injured as a result of the Soviet attack also referred as the Tbilisi Massacre. After the events, the national independence movement gained momentum and on April 9, 1991, in the second anniversary of the tragedy, the Supreme Council of Georgia declared Georgian sovereignty and independence from the Soviet Union based on the results of a nationwide referendum.

[3] Gamsakhurdia's success in organizing massive pro-independence rallies with using a hard-liner nationalist and anti-communist discourse put him forward among other dissident figures See: (Suny, 1994)

Georgia entered into a new phase with its independence period, which comprised of both state and nation building processes and related hardships to achieve democratic, market-oriented modern state. Despite its effort to forge a modern statehood, Georgia had gone through series of problems immediately after its independence, i.e. a coup, a civil war, and the impact of two secessionist wars with Abkhazians and Ossetians, just during an economic downfall and broken infrastructure were still discernible in the country. Nevertheless, after it solved its 'national question' that had been fought for centuries, a process of re-construction of its national identity as well as its foreign policy that defined the country's direction 'back to Europe' has begun. In other words, the independence of Georgia from the Soviet Union in 1991 restored the idea of 'return to Europe,' marked by the Georgian political elites, while addressing the de-Sovietization process in the Georgian political discourse.

Following the independence, the idea of 'belonging to Europe' started to be associated with the European Union (EU). Georgia's leaders began establishing bilateral relations with the EU, and more importantly, EU's institutional structure, while initiating the transformation of its political and legal system through approximating with the EU *acquis communautaire.* After long years of detachment from the West/Europe, relations between Georgia and the EU intensified through the second half of the 1990s, starting with Georgia's membership in the Council of Europe, and the signing of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1996 (which entered into force in 1999). In regards to PCA, the protection of democratic principles, human rights and market economy were underlined as the 'essential elements' of Georgia's membership in the Council of Europe (Council of the European Union, 1996: Article 2). In other words, with the independence, the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanization have become associated with achieving a democratic, welfare state, accompanied with rule of law and functioning market-economy as a part of the post-Soviet transformation process.

Moreover, from a wider framework, it is notable that Georgia aimed at becoming a part of the international system and strengthening its ties with the international

organizations to reinforce its international legitimacy as well as overcoming the difficulties that stemmed from the post-Soviet transition. Hence, as a newly independent state, Georgia became a member of the United Nations (the UN) in 1992 and the Commonwealth of Independent States (the CIS) in 1993; took initiatives towards establishing GUAM in 1997, a platform of regional cooperation between Georgia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; began to build ties with the Council of Europe (the CoE) in 1999, all of which paved the ground for promoting democratic and economic transition processes as well as reinforcing the Euro-Atlantic orientation of the country.

During the 2000s, relations between Georgia and Europe gained significant momentum due to 'critical junctures' that both sides experienced. In 2004, the EU realized its largest single enlargement towards the 'East', to the Central and Eastern European countries[4] embracing its former communist neighbours (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005: 3-29; Toshkov et al., 2014). Eastern enlargement inevitably raised new questions about 'European identity,' such as "who the Europeans are" and "what kind of values characterize Europe" (Sjursen, 2008). Nevertheless, the EU had gone through one of the most critical milestones in its history with the Eastern Enlargement in terms of its re-unification and overcoming its East–West gap in democracy (Sedelmeier, 2014).

Meanwhile, a new era was on the horizon for Georgia with the leadership of the pro-Western young reformers. The Rose Revolution of 2003 that came more than 10 years after the proclamation of independence, was defined as the final break up with the Soviet past and its remnants, which brought about a clear manifestation of Georgia's self-identification with Europe and convergence with Europe/West, both at the ideational level and at the institutional level. Along with the Rose Revolution, the European integration is portrayed as 're-uniting' with Georgia's 'real path', after a long period of 'interlude' due to the historical circumstances/hardships, such as the

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[4] On 1 May 2004, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the EU alongside Malta and Cyprus.

constant struggle for the territorial survival amidst various empires and forced incorporation into the Soviet Union (Kakachia and Minesashvili, 2015: 171). The new government, which put an end to the remnants of old-*nomenklatura,* had arisen with a strongly reform-oriented agenda about Georgia's nation and state building, with a precise objective for setting out a plan to realize economic liberalization, anti-corruption, institution building and re-establishment of Georgia's territorial integrity (Nilsson, 2008: 89).

Nevertheless, President Saakashvili's strong pro-European/Western political discourse with its de-Sovietization elements led to 'othering' of Russia and caused tensions in Russian–Georgian relations, which led to the unprecedented 2008 Russian Georgian war (Rumer, 2016).[5] This military conflict was perceived as a relatively 'small-scale' event on the global scene, however, its symbolic meaning was important for Georgia and it was of particular importance for Georgia's European aspirations as well as its expectations from the EU (Tarkhan-Mouravi, 2012: 54). Following the events, the EU remained ineffective and it was not able to meet the expectations of Georgia as opposed to the Russian aggression, except the initiatives taken by the leadership of France, holding the EU presidency at the time, to prevent the acceleration of the conflict (Fuller, 2008).[6] Still, Georgian Europeanization had not stalled, rather it entered into a new phase with the Eastern Partnership in 2009, followed by the negotiations for the Association Agreement in 2010, which entered into force in 2014 (EU/Georgia Association Agreement, 2014). It is notable to underline that Georgia recently made an important progress in its route towards Europeanization in March 2017, when the EU granted visa-free regime for Georgian citizens to enter the Schengen Area, as a result of a prolonged political

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[5] Before the 2008 Russian–Georgian War, Georgia and Ukraine were expected to be offered Membership Action Plan (MAP), which was seen as a step toward membership in the April 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit. However, the Russian administration repeatedly articulated that they would not tolerate further NATO enlargement into the former Soviet space. See: (Rumer, 2016)

[6] Despite its ineffectiveness, the UN/OSCE/EU facilitated Geneva talks between Russia, Georgia, the United States, and the representatives of the UN, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in October 2008. See: (Fuller, 2008)

process and series of reforms, which started in June 2012, under the framework of the EU–Georgia Visa Dialogue.

1.2 Examining Georgian Europeanization from a Social Constructivist Perspective

Despite the significance of strengthening institutional ties between the EU and Georgia, Georgian Europeanization would require more encompassing examination, which is not limited with institutional adaptation and domestic change, since it also embraces rather normative/ideational elements embedded in Georgian identity, and dates back long before the post-Soviet independence. In other words, the 'idea of Europe' and 'Georgian Europeanness' have its roots prior to establishing relations with the EU, as the main components of Georgia's foreign policy orientation after the independence. In this regard, Georgian Europeanization reveals both ideational/normative and practical/institutional elements, which can be identified as two constituting components of the Europeanization path of the country.[7] With respect to its ideational elements, Georgia has defined itself historically connected to Europe especially in terms of of geopolitical, political and cultural aspects, and as a part of the European civilization through its Christianity, cultural values and forms of ownership (Kakachia, 2013: 41-51). As a 'buffer state' surrounded by various empires, Georgia has been in a vulnerable position with long-term 'territorial' concerns and it was vulnerable to different 'cultural impositions.' All these helped determine the country's foreign policy orientation and its self-identification with Europe as well as its Europeanization path after gaining its independence from the Soviet Union.

Drawing on a social constructivist perspective, Alexander Wendt proposes that "identity is at base a subjective or unit-level quality, rooted in an actor's self-understandings" (Wendt, 1999: 224). He follows, "the meaning of those

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[7] For further analysis on the concept of 'Europe', please see: (Davies, 1996; 2006; Geremek, 1996; Heffernan, 1998; Heikki, 1998; Pounds, 1990; Rietbergen, 1998). For a good overview of defining the borders of Europe throughout history, but without a focus on the relevance for Georgia or the Caucasus as a whole, see: (Parker, 1960: 278-297).

understandings will often depend on whether other actors represent an actor in the same way, and to that extent identity will also have an intersubjective or systemic quality" (Wendt, 1999: 224). Pursuant to what Wendt proposes, identities are forged in relation to what constitutes 'others' and therefore cannot be 'constructed' solely by the 'self' alone, yet, it is formed through who possess 'counter identities' (Wendt, 1999: 224). Interestingly, the 'Georgian Europeanness' has not been constructed as a result of an interactive process between Georgia and Europe due to rather late direct encounter between Georgia. Nevertheless, 'the idea of Europe' obtains multiple meanings/references, addressing the Georgian political history and collective memory and it has been reproduced vis-à-vis changing 'characterizations/representations' of what constitutes the 'other' in different political contexts. In this constellation, 'belonging to Europe' seems to take a major domain in the Georgian political discourse, as a part of the Georgian 'significant we', taking its appearances in the reflection of what constitutes 'the other', which are mostly identified on the grounds of occupying forces that impeded Georgia's territorial integrity and achieving 'modern' statehood. Moreover, as it is stated above, the political discourse about the Georgian self-identification with Europe, i.e., 'Georgian Europeanness' and 'belonging to European family', are closely interrelated with what Europe and the EU represent for Georgia as well as how the idea of 'belonging to Europe' is attached to the 'ideational' elements of 'modernization', 'enlightenment', and 'territorial integrity' in parallel to the post-Soviet state and nation building process of the country.

The 'mainstream' Europeanization literature mostly focuses on the studies about the institutional adaptation and/or change in core institutions, policy processes, and actors as a result of the EU membership process. In other words, the Europeanization scholarship predominantly focuses on the Europeanization processes of the member and/or the candidate countries that obtain rather 'realistic' perspective about the EU membership (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Lavenex, 2004, 2008; Weber et

al., 2007).[8] The conceptual evolution of the Europeanization can be traced from the early integration theories, based their argumentation and scientific enquiry on the grounds of the international cooperation and the regional integration between European nation states (Diez and Wiener, 2003: 8). The signing of the Single European Act (SEA) in 1986 and end of the Cold War laid the ground for the 'contemporary' Europeanization/European integration debates. Following the SEA, there were multiple theorization attempts such as supranational institutionalism, multi-level cooperation and governance framings in a comparative perspective of neo-institutionalism. For instance, in order to examine the effect of the relations and cooperation between supranational and national institutions, and examine the problems that stemmed from the 'cost of adaptation,' the academic literature drew attention to the analysis of whether these processes would indicate harmonization/disharmonization, convergence/divergence (Grünhut, 2017: 157-176).

While Europe and Europeanization started to obtain 'multiple' meanings and interpretations inside and outside of the EU borders, a 'constructivist' and/or 'sociological' approach became more visible in the EU studies. They brought about a 'more' agent-based perspective, which considered 'Europe' as both a scholarly concept and a political project, and more than a post-Westphalian integration and establishment of superstructures. Inspired by the discipline of IR, this 'shift' that was later called 'constructivist turn' exposed two different theoretical reasonings between rationalists and constructivists, and it was identified as 'the great debate' in the EU Studies (Checkel, 2001a; Jupille, Caporaso and Checkel, 2003; Radaelli, 2004; Börzel, 2004; Schimmelfennig, 2010; Pollack, 2001; Checkel 2005).

With the 'constructivist turn' in the EU studies, the EU and Europeanization started to be elaborated outside the limits of political, economic, social and cultural harmonization/convergence processes, all of which focus on a rather narrow, EU-

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[8] In fact, the scholarly attention towards 'third parties', i.e., the partnering countries through European Neighbourhood Policy in its 'South' and 'East' is rather new. See: (Schimmelfennig, 2009; 2010: 319-339).

centered institutional interpretation. Instead, the new 'constructivist' perspective called for a more 'pluralist' ground to move beyond the narrow conception of ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints of the previous theorization attempts. The constructivist accounts focus on analyzing values, norms, codes, customs, understandings, perceptions and identifications of actors, as aspects that would be shaped by Europeanization, and which would have an impact on the process of Europeanization (Grünhut, 2017: 165). In order to employ a social constructivist analysis, elaborating normative and cognitive structures, i.e., ideas, discourses, identities, narratives, individual and collective agency of constitution etc. (self/in-group and other/out-group), carry much importance that will help transcend beyond rather 'ahistorical' and narrow, as well as EU-centered, spatio-temporal conceptualization of 'mainstream' Europeanization, which is mostly limited with the EU member states (Wallace, 2000: 369-382; Flockhart, 2010: 787-810; Flockhart, 2008: 1-37).

Considering the complexities of Georgian Europeanization, the 'mainstream' Europeanization literature remains inadequate to reveal the impact of Europe on socialization and identity-shaping effects on national agents, and ignores the 'intersubjective' meanings/representations and 'shared ideas' lying behind Georgian Europeanization. In this regard, employing a social constructivist angle towards Georgian Europeanization would shed light on multiple elements of these very complex processes, which transcends beyond examining 'institutional' framework by putting forward the 'ideas', 'interests', 'discourse', 'shared culture', and 'self-identification' to/with Europe in different 'critical junctures.' In fact, it offers rather 'reflexive' analytical terrain for elaborating 'ideational' and 'normative' foundations that help to realize that there are many 'Europe', many 'Europeanization', and many 'Europeanness'; hence, the 'mainstream' Europeanization view would remain misleading, while it constrains the EU's actorness and self-understanding.

In the light of these, this dissertation investigates the 'multiple' aspects of Georgian Europeanization, which goes beyond the institutional harmonization and

convergence pertinent to any domestic change. Employing a social constructivist angle, this dissertation argues that Georgian Europeanization is intricately intertwined with both normative/ideational and practical/institutional elements; while the former elucidates various representations/articulations/references about how the 'idea' of Europe and 'Georgian Europeanness' are re/constructed in different 'critical junctures', the latter focuses on rather contemporary dimension with the institutional attempts between the EU and Georgia, pertinent to legislative, administrative transformation/convergence to the Europe/EU. Objectives of the dissertation are twofold: first, to provide a social constructivist angle towards Europeanization, while defining the limits of the existing theoretical approaches with their narrow geographical and historical scope as well as their limited examination about the ideational structures of Europeanization. Secondly, it aims to analyze Georgian Europeanization as a case study and disentangle both 'ideational/normative' and 'institutional' aspects of the process of Europeanization, while taking into account the difficulties that stem from the post-Soviet transition process, by providing empirical findings derived from the field research.

1.3 Methods

This dissertation analyzes the Europeanization in Georgia from a social constructivist perspective as a single case study. The multiple dynamics and interdependencies of Georgian Europeanization are elaborated considering how the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness are re/constructed in different 'critical junctures,' which resonated on the 'returning to Europe' discourse during the post-Soviet transformation with the independence of Georgia in 1991. This dissertation primarily aims both to investigate 'ideational'/'normative' elements that 'attribute' multiple meanings to Europe and the EU, without neglecting the importance of the institutional cooperation, administrative and legal changes during the Europeanization process in Georgia. In relation to these, the concepts such as 'shared values' 'cultural belongingness' 'returning to Europe', Georgian 'self' and 'other', 'national identity', 'post-Soviet transformation' are examined. To that end, various

articulations, representations, discourses pertinent to Europe and 'being European' are evaluated, while investigating how 'we' and 'other' are constructed vis-à-vis the 'Georgian Europeanness' and what kind of dynamics lie beneath the Georgian Europeanization path.

The empirical data that this dissertation is based on was obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in Tbilisi, Georgia between 2014 and 2017. Expert interviews lend researchers a hand to obtain useful information and elucidation of the issue under investigation (Bogner and Menz, 2009: 47). The semi-structured in-depth interviews with experts allowed me to acquire 'first-hand' data and enabled this study having inside knowledge about the dynamics of Georgian Europeanization. In doing so, the data gathered during the field research was indeed based on respondents' own perceptions, experiences and their refined knowledge about the subject matter. In addition, the respondents' expertise would help me to grasp more vivid examples regarding the Georgian case, while offering me alternative pathways to leave out any fallacy derived from 'Euro-centric' inclination of the Europeanization literature. As a researcher, the semi-structured interviews would allow me to modify/alter the questions addressed to the interviewees, if they are not clear or outdated during the interview in the course of the field research, while also offering me chance to add/reconstruct new question themes to the research regarding to the information provided by the interviewees that were not considered in the preliminary research (Fylan, 2005: 67).

Nevertheless, there were some 'politicized' interpretations about the Georgian Europeanization, especially in relation to the strategies of the ruling party, Georgian Dream, towards Europe. The analysis of some of the respondents, who have affiliations with the opposition parties, seemed inclined to criticize the position of the government with easily 'identifying' them as less 'pro-European' as compared to the previous Saakashvili government. In order to overcome this problem, I reformulated some of the questions and I added some additional questions in order to extract more neutral interpretation. During analyzing the findings, I tried to refine their assessment

with a less politically-loaded and more neutral perspective, with comparing the issues and political events that they underlined to show the reluctance of the Georgian Dream Party about Europeanization, with the other interviewees' analysis about the same subjects.

1.3.1 Fieldwork Planning and Process

The initial idea of this dissertation, i.e. investigating Georgian Europeanization path, had first emerged between 2009 and 2010, when I was conducting expert interviews for my master thesis, which is based on 'Political Parties and Democratization in Georgia.' As I acquired more insights about Georgia and its self-identification with Europe as a result of my field research, I started to develop more and more interest, and more questions, about how the idea of Europe has been constructed by Georgians and how it becomes a part of the Georgian state's political discourse after the independence, and reached its culmination point with the Rose Revolution in 2003.

Before going to my first field research in 2014, I had the chance to acquire certain knowledge about people who held key positions about the Europeanization process of Georgia thanks to the people I got acquaintance during the field researches for different projects and my master thesis in Georgia. My research sample is based on two factors: expertise and knowledge about Georgian Europeanization and the EU–Georgia relations, involvement and cooperation with the EU bodies. In that regard, I planned to select experts from the relevant civil society organizations, political party representatives, MPs, state officials and academicians, who are involved in the Georgia's Europeanization process and the relations between Georgia and the EU.

In terms of the questions that were selected for these interviews, I paid attention to focus on three points to investigate the determinants of the Georgian Europeanization, which are pro-European discourse, 'ideational' and 'institutional' dynamics of Georgian Europeanization, and the role of the Rose Revolution. Regarding my theoretical framework and the intricacy of my subject matter, focusing

not only on institutional and legal cooperation but also elaborating how the idea of Europe are perceived/constructed carried much importance to examine Georgian Europeanization within a large framework, that enabled me to overcome the difficulties derived from possible narrow 'institutionalist' framework. Against this backdrop, I carefully tried to design my questions to not only cover the contemporary relations and institutional attempts between Georgia and the EU, but also the political events that took place between the two in order to be able to reveal possible historical patterns that would illuminate the different time phases in the Georgian political history in the context of Europeanization.

1.3.2. During the Fieldwork

Regarding my case study, as it is mentioned above, I had four field research opportunities in Tbilisi, Georgia, between 2014 and 2017 each lasting approximately around a month in the field. I conducted my first fieldwork between November 7th and December 3rd, 2014. Prior to my first fieldwork, I arranged several expert interviews with specialists on Georgian Europeanization process through my personal network that I had acquired during my earlier researches. My second field research had taken place between September 26th and October 31st, 2015. During my second field research, I paid attention to have interviews with the leading NGO experts who are closely working on the EU-Georgia relations and have an active role in attending bilateral meetings and who have been observing Europeanization process in Georgia with regard to legal and administrative changes that were taking place. I had conducted my 3rd field research between November 19th and December 9th, 2016. During my third field research, I decided to contact politicians from the Georgian Dream Party, in order to acquire first-hand knowledge about the government's position and strategies for furthering the relations between Georgia and the EU. My last field research took place between November 24th and December 3rd, 2017. In my fourth field research, I tried to shed light on the impact of contemporary developments between Georgia and the EU, e.g., the initiation of the visa-free regime for Georgia that started in March 2017 and how this and other events reflect on Georgian Europeanization.

Between 2014 and 2017, I conducted 42 expert interviews in total, the length of which ranged from around 45 minutes to more than 1.5 hours. During the field research, I engaged in purposive sampling and used snowball methods. My sample covers the academicians, state officials, representatives of the political parties including the ones who are former/current MPs and served as former ministers, and NGO experts on the basis of their comprehensive expertise in relations between the EU and Georgia as well as their involvement in Georgian Europeanization process and the EU itself. The interviews were conducted in English with no need for translation. As it is stated above, most of the respondents are actively involved in the Europeanization process regarding their rank and position in the academia, relevant ministries, civil society organizations, and political parties, who frequently attend bilateral negotiations and inter-parliamentary meetings and talks between the EU and Georgia.

Among the interviewees, 22 of them work in relevant civil society organizations, which actively take part in Europeanization process of Georgia, 10 of them are academicians, working on different fields of the relation between the EU and Georgia, and particularly focusing on Georgian Europeanization process. Also, 10 of the interviewees are state officials and politicians and/or political party representatives. Among 10 respondents, one interviewee is a former minister, and another one held a position in the Georgian Parliament in relation to the Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia. Two respondents have held positions in the Ministry of State and the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, who are actively involved with the bilateral and multilateral negotiations with the EU and who experience the process of Association Agreements, Visa Liberalization talks between the EU and Georgia. The others have affiliations with different political parties; they are either active politicians and/or political party representatives regarding the EU and Georgian relations.

Regarding the time span between 2014 and 2017, Georgia had gone through various legal and institutional changes. For instance, in June 2014, Georgia signed the EU–

Georgia Association Agreement, ensuring Georgia's commitments to gradual approximation of the domestic legislation to the EU legislation, and Georgia had experienced a long and difficult 'constitutional reform' process, which lasted between the 15th December, 2016 and 23rd March, 2018, when the Parliament of Georgia has unanimously voted in favor for the final changes to the state constitution. Likewise, on March 28th 2017, the EU granted visa-free regime for Georgian citizens to enter the Schengen Area, as a result of a prolonged negotiation process and a series of reforms, which initially began in June 2012, under the framework of the EU–Georgia Visa Dialogue. Additionally, I also witnessed firsthand a political crisis in the Georgian Dream Coalition during my field research in 2014, with the controversial arrests of the Ministry of Defense officials, which resulted with the resignation of the Defense Minister Irakli Alasania, the Foreign Affairs Minister Maia Panjikidze, and the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Alex Petriashvili. The crises was attached to the 'divergent views' in the Georgian Dream Coalition based on the Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration, ended up with the departure of the Free Democrats, led by Irakli Alasania, from the Georgian Dream Coalition.[9] All these developments led me to update my questions in order to deepen my knowledge considering the new 'steps' taken in the Europeanization path of the country.

Also, it should be noted that depending on my previous field research experiences in different projects and during my field research regarding my masters dissertation, I only experienced minor difficulties to reach the targeted respondents, especially about contacting the ruling party (Georgian Dream) representatives. In making connections with the reserachers, academicians and with the NGO experts, who can be counted as much closer to the opposition parties and/or more critical about the ruling party, I met less obstacles and this target group was more willing to give an

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[9] "The Former Minister of Defense Alasania stated that he personally, and the Ministry of Defense as an institution that's heavily invested in Euro-Atlantic integration, were targeted because of the disagreement about the foreign policy goals. In his interview with the Georgian TV Channel Rustavi 2, he warned that Russia plans to influence Georgia's pro-western foreign policy via different strategies." See: (Melkadze, 2014)

interview compared to the former group. In order to overcome this difficulty, I got assistance from my network and with their connection I managed to reach the aforementioned respondents.

1.4   Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation will aim to analyze the multiple dynamics of Georgian Europeanization process, which addresses both 'ideational'/'normative' and institutional elements since the early years after the independence and reached its culmination point with the pro-Western/European political discourse with the Rose Revolution. In order to examine this multi-causational process, this dissertation is comprised of eight chapters. In Chapter II, the different theoretical discussions about Europeanization and its relation with the early integration theories will be elaborated. This chapter will aim to shed light on two major issues in order to reveal the various discussions pertinent to the Europeanization debate and its relations to different disciplines. On that account, the first part of Chapter II would offer a roadmap to the readers about how the Europeanization debate is nurtured by the different theoretical frameworks such as Comparative Politics, and IR, while re-locating its position within a wider framework of the integration theories. The latter one will propose to shed light on the discussion about why social constructivism offers a vital framework in order to understand the Georgian case vis-à-vis the limitations of the mainstream Europeanization debate. This investigation will not cover all the aspects of Europeanization; rather, it will selectively read the field in line with the major aim of the dissertation. Chapter III will focus on providing both political and institutional contextualization of the relations between Georgia and the EU, while trying to 'situate' how the idea of Europe develops in the Georgian political history. Therefore, this chapter will discuss, four historical 'critical junctures', which would address the early years after the independence, the First Democratic Republic (1918-1921), the Rose Revolution and post-Rose Revolution periods to demonstrate how the EU and the Europe are crosscutting the crucial turning points in the Georgian political history.

After Chapter II and Chapter III, following four chapters are based on the analysis of the data obtained from the field research about Georgian Europeanization as a single case study. In accordance with this course, Chapter IV discusses how the different characterizations, representations, and meanings attached to the 'idea of Europe' in Georgian history would determine the 'ideational' aspects of the contemporary Europeanization process as well as unravel the historical reference points and narratives constructed around the 'Georgian Europeanness.' In this respect, the aim of this chapter is to build a bridge between the past and the contemporary Georgian Europeanization process, especially with regard to unravelling 'idea(s) constructed around Europe.' Chapter V focuses on the Rose Revolution as one of the four historical 'critical junctures' and its strong pro-European political discourse, and on what levels the post-Soviet transition and European aspiration of Georgia with the Rose Revolution are connected and share parallel pathways. More specifically, this chapter explores to what extent the challenging reform process implemented after the Rose Revolution is compatible with the Europeanization path of the country, whether it serves to bring about a more pluralistic and democratic environment, and to consolidate a more democratic statehood for Georgia.

Depending on the multiple pathways towards Georgian Europeanization, Chapter VI is comprised of two main parts examining both the institutional and normative/ideational aspects of Europeanization. The aim of this chapter is to elaborate to what extent the EU is successful to transfer its 'norms', 'rules' and 'values' on the basis of the strengthening institutional cooperation between the EU and Georgia, while discussing the sphere of impact and/or applicability of the domestic legal arrangements and laws adopted and complied during this process. Thereby, this chapter seeks to offer two analytical elaborations to reflect on both the institutional and normative/ideational aspects of Georgian Europeanization. Chapter VII tackles with the role of the EU as a 'security' actor by drawing attention to the post-Cold War geopolitical constellation regarding the post-Soviet region, and by comparing the EU's role with the U.S., NATO and Russia as other crucial international players vis-à-vis their engagement with the region and specifically for

Georgia. Lastly, Chapter VIII evaluates the results derived from the field research on Georgian Europeanization as a single case study. It examines the multi-level and multi-causational determinants of Georgian Europeanization on the basis of four major discussion points: the limitations of the mainstream Europeanization research, the role of the ideational/normative construction of Europe in the Georgian political history, the limits of the Eastern Partnership as a path towards Europeanization, and the impact of the post-Soviet legacy vis-à-vis the Georgian path towards Europe. In the last section of Chapter VIII, the various future projections regarding the relations between the EU and Georgia and Georgian Europeanization will be discussed in order to usher new debates and questions for the following academic ventures about Georgian Europeanization.

CHAPTER 2

DEBATES ON EUROPEANIZATION

> "We are cultural beings, endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend it significance" (Weber, 1949: 81)

2.1 Introduction

The Europeanization debate emerged as the 'logical outgrowth' of the evolution of the European integration, and this debate itself is long been analyzed within the impact of European integration at the national level (Caporaso, 2007; Knill and Lehmkul, 2002: 255). The early debates in classical theories of integration defined the conceptual and spatial framework of the Europeanization (Knill and Lehmkul, 2002: 255).[10] In other words, it expands through the epistemological and ontological spheres that classical integration studies posing its lights on (Rosamond, 2000; Marciacq, 2012: 57-74; Heritier, 2005; Wiener and Diez, 2009).[11] In fact, before the 'Europeanization turn' in EU studies in the end of the 90s, the main focus of the

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[10] Although scholars of the EU Studies have diverse positions about the causal explanations as well as their theoretical perspective, they more or less agree about the periodization about the European integration debates. Accordingly, there are three phases of the European integration debates in the EU Studies, starting from the late 1950s and 1960s, with the emerging of the classical integration theories inspired by the discipline of IR, and reached in a different level in 1980s with comparative politics' focus on 'analyzing the governance' and policy analysis, while extended to a new debate between 'rationalists' and 'constructivists' in 1990s and onwards.

[11] The organic connection between Europeanization and European integration also can be traced in the vast academic literature, which has shown different aspects, causalities relate to/European/EU-ization/European studies. See: (Cini and Bourne, 2006)

scholars was concentrated on the description and explanation of the European integration process and there were very few attempts to offer a systematic analysis of the ongoing relation between regional and domestic political regime (Graziano and Vink, 2006: 33). In this regard, Europeanization debate entered into the European integration studies as a new phase and/or a 'third step' in a European based regional integration theory (Caporaso, 2007: 23-34). Therefore, the long existing theoretical debates/narratives in the EU integration theory directly connects to how Europeanization debate emerged as a result of the evolution of the EU, started from an intergovernmental economic cooperation to a supranational political one, to understand what kind of theoretical attempts determines its analytical framework and its impact on the member states. All these initiated the rise of a new theoretical debate, 'Europeanization', as a growing theoretical debate emerged through the theoretical European integration debate (Vink, 2002: 2).

In this light, the first objective of this chapter will be to locate 'Europeanization debate' within the broader debates of the European Studies. In doing so, it will be aimed to build a bridge between the classical and contemporary European integration theories and Europeanization in order to clarify rather 'fuzzy' and 'contested' depiction of what Europeanization means and how the different theoretical approaches within the European integration studies have evolved, while contesting, yet, interacting with each other (Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch, 2004). In this regard, the following section would offer a route map to demonstrate how the different phases of the various theoretical approaches regarding the European integration gained visibility in the EU Studies with their shortcomings as well as strengths in their historical disciplinary context. Nevertheless, this exploration will not aim to cover all aspects of the field. Rather, in coherence with the central aim of the dissertation it will attempt to provide a critical look towards the theories of European integration and various academic attempts to conceptualize Europeanization. My second objective will be to shed light on the rise of social constructivism in the EU Studies and how it offers a fruitful analytical terrain for the Europeanization debate with its emphasis on social ontologies such as intersubjective

meanings, norms, rules, institutions, routinized practices, discourse, constitutive and/or deliberative processes, symbolic politics, imagined and/or epistemic communities, communicative action, collective identity formation, and cultures of national security with the aim to overcome former limitations derived from the previous theoretical attempts (Christiansen et al., 2001: 5). Most importantly, regarding Georgian Europeanization process, the major aim of this chapter is to go beyond the dominance as well as hindrances brought by the institutionalist perspectives in the Europeanization debate, without neglecting its importance, to elaborate the multiple and intersecting dynamics with a certain spatio-temporal focus to elaborate how all these construct the Georgian self-identification with Europe in its Europeanization path.

2.2 Bridging the Classical and Contemporary European Integration Debates

The Europeanization debate[12] took its roots from the classical European integration theories, which are the neo-functionalism[13] and intergovernmentalism[14], emerged within the discipline of IR back to 1950s and 1960s. The decades-long debate between classical integration theories based their argumentation and scientific enquiry on the nature of the regional integration and international cooperation between European nation states.[15] Both schools of thought, namely the neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, aimed at analyzing international cooperation and institutionalization, while trying to explain the 'process' of European integration. The scholars of the first generation of the European integration

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[12] Journal of Contemporary European Studies (JCES), Journal of Common Market Studies(JCMS), Journal of European Public Policy, Journal of European Integration, are the primary established journals regarding various debates of europeanization/european integration/enlargement debates, yet, there is no 'European theory'. And perhaps there should not be. To see more: (Manners, 2002: 67-83)

[13] For neo-functionalism see: (Haas, 1968; 1975; 1976; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970; Petland, 1973; Taylor, 1983; Mikkelsen, 1991: 4)

[14] For intergovernmentalist debate see: (Hoffmann,1966; 1964; Moravcsik, 1998: 4)

[15] According to Wiener and Diez the first phase roughly lasting from the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 until the early 1980s. See: (Diez and Wiener 2003: 8)

theories tried to entangle the question of the European integration process through examining "why more and more member state policies are being drawn into the political and judicial processes at the European level" (Heritier, 2005: 199-200). Also, the first period of the integration debate tried to illuminate the questions that "how can integration outcomes be explained" and "why does European integration takes place" (Diez and Wiener, 2003).

The key element of neo-functionalism is based on the concept of 'spillover' built upon Mitrany's functionalism in a more complex way. The neo-functionalist conception of change is succinctly encapsulated in the notion of 'spillover' which is explained within three notions: sectoral (functional), political and cultivated spillover (Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991: 1-22). In that regard, Haas (1958) defines political integration as "the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states" (p.16). Apparently, according to neo-functionalism, economic integration determines the process of political integration; once more policy areas are involved in the process. Therefore, neo-functionalism proposes that integration is a self-reinforcing process, once the first integrative steps have been taken.

Another above-mentioned leading debate of the classical European integration theories is the intergovernmentalism, which emphasizes the intentional delegation of national powers of policymaking to EU institutionalizations (Heritier, 2005). Intergovernmentalism took its roots from realism in the discipline of IR, which highlights the notions of state sovereignty and security as a determining factor for nation-states. Contrary to neo-functionalism, it addresses the nation-states as the primary actors for the international cooperation and integration process. Merely, Hoffman (1966) as the major figure for the intergovernmentalism, rejects the neo-functionalist proposition that functional spillovers might trigger incremental, politically unintended integration steps 'from below' (p. 862-915). Rather, he

insisted on a logical hierarchy of integration forms, consisting of an intergovernmental logic at the top of the hierarchy and a neo-functional logic at the bottom (Hoffmann, 1966; Hoffmann, 1964: 1244-1297). Contrary to neo-functionalists, Hoffmann (1995) analyzes nation-state as 'a factor of non-integration'; "[T]hus the nation-state survives, preserved by the resilience of national political systems, by the interaction between separate nations and a single international system, and by leaders who believe in the primacy of 'high politics' over managerial politics and in the primacy of the nation" (p.96).

Virtually, the debate between two schools of thought, neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, cast light on following academic ventures, with such an elaborative attempt, to understand whether the stimulus for regional integration comes from national governments or from supranational or transnational actors, and/or they questioned to what extent supranational institutions (such as the European Commission) are independent from national governments, and the relation between the regional integration and nation states.[16]

2.3   New Paths, New Dimensions: Contemporary European Integration Debates

Nevertheless, when the EU incrementally started to obtain a more complex structure in a greater degree, elaborating the different dynamics and dimensions of the integration required new theoretical endeavors. The 'grand bargains' and 'political cooperation/ integration' debates of the classical integration theories remained inadequate to explain the new phenomena brought up by the Single European Act (SEA) (1986) and Maastricht era.[17] All these changing dynamics, both indicating

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[16] According to Cini and Bourne, the struggle between neo-functionalists and intergovernmentalists in the 1960s and 1970s was supplemented, and some might say supplanted, by a similar dichotomy which appeared between Comparative Politics and International Relations scholars in the 1980s; and, more recently, a rationalist–constructivist divide has become increasingly important from the 1990s on. See: (Cini and Bourne, 2006:8; Pollack, 2001)

[17] The new era started with the Single European Act and the end of the Cold War, also called the 2nd phase, was identified as the 'renaissance/boom' era in the EU Studies. See: (Keeler, 2005)

incrementally complex integration process and the relation between the more 'institutionalized' EU structure and member states addressed the rise of a new era, where the contemporary theories about the EU and the European integration came to the surface.

The EU started to embrace a politically more 'unified' structure, when the member states, as the building blocks of the EU, started to develop a 'common' political culture, norms, values and working methods with the signature of the SEA in 1986 and end of the Cold War.[18] These 'new' and 'contemporary' theoretical approaches addressed different causal pathways to understand the multifaceted nature of the EU. Merely, this new era brought comparative political science and institutionalist approaches to the center of the theoretical debates in the EU studies. According to the comparative political scientists, the emerging need to unfold the complex nature of the European integration and the EU necessitates a theoretical shift from the previously dominant IR perspective to the comparative politics and new-institutionalist understanding, which tried to elaborate specific aspects of EU politics (Cini and Bourne, 2006: 8). The scholars of these 'newer' approaches, who had comparativist and/or governance perspectives, claimed that 'analytical toolbox of IR scholars' has its limits in capturing the nature of the EU, with referring to Puchala's analogy of 'elephant and blind men' (Puchala, 1972: 267).[19]

Having considered these conceptual and theoretical 'shifts' with the rise of the 'new phase' in the post SEA and Maastricht era, they indicated various application in the

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[18] After the end of the Cold War, the EU member states increased from 12 to 27.

[19] It is crucial to remember Donald Puchala's (1972) description of international integration theory, which is so commonly addressed by the scholars in the field, as an illuminating analogy for grasping the profusion of different theoretical ventures. The Puchala's metaphor follows the story of blind men trying to understand an elephant, as each blind man, however, touched a different part of the large animal, and each concluded that the elephant had the appearance of the part he had touched and in the end no man arrived at a very accurate description of the elephant. Yet, each man had gained enough evidence from his own experience to disbelieve his fellows and maintain a lively debate about the nature of the beast. The metaphor of Puchala is a vibrant example to identify the problems of the competing theories and approaches concluding with a theoretical ramification in the EU studies. See: (Puchala, 1972: 267).

EU studies. Within this context, state-centric intergovernmentalism[20], neo-functionalism[21], supranational governance[22], multi-level governance approach[23] and neo-institutionalism[24] came to fore with the focus on the development of the supranational system and the implications of this system for the institutions and policies of the EU. They also varied with their definitions and different conceptualization, while depicting the EU with concepts such as "new, post-Hobbesian order"[25] "post-modern state"[26] "network of pooling and sharing sovereignty"[27] "system of multi-level governance"[28] or "network governance."[29] They are rather keen to study the EU with elaborating the specific aspects of EU politics and policy[30] and argue that the EU is best conceived of as a political system, not excluding, yet, downscaling the European integration.[31] Here, it is important to note that the contemporary discussions also paved the way for the revival of the classical integration theories with liberal intergovernmentalism[32] and neo-functionalism[33] within the IR discipline.[34] Also they paved the ground for a new

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[20] (Hoffman, 1982: 21-37; Moravcsik, 1991:19-58; Moravcsik, 1993: 473-520; Moravcsik, 1998)

[21] (Haas, 1968; Haas, 1964; Lindberg, 1963; Mitrany, 1943)

[22] (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1998)

[23] (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999)

[24] (Pollack, 2009: 137; Hall and Taylor, 1996: 941; March and Olsen, 1984; March and Olsen, 1989)

[25] (Schmitter, 1991)

[26] (Ruggie, 1993: 139-174; Caporaso, 1996: 29-52)

[27] (Keohane and Hoffmann, 1991)

[28] (Hooghe and Marks, 2001)

[29] (Eising and Kohler-Koch, 1999: 3-13)

[30] (Hix, 1994: 1-30)

[31] (Rosamond, 2000)

[32] (Moravcsik, 1991)

[33] In this process, the neo-functionalist school of thought were re-examined and developed by the supranational governance approach led by Alec Stone Sweet and Wayne Sandholtz, whose academic contribution with the following theoretical debates about the European integration extended the range and scope as well as provided a comprehensive academic/theoretical growth in the literature of the EU

debate between the rationalists and the constructivists (Börzel, 2011). Hence, among the other conceptual and theoretical analysis of the contemporary integration studies, the last theoretical debate, also called third phase, started to take place in the 1990s between rationalist and constructivist camps as well as the normative political theory (Cini and Bourne, 2006).

Figure 1.1. Major Contemporary Theoretical Positions[35]

Constructivism

Rationalism   Reflectivism
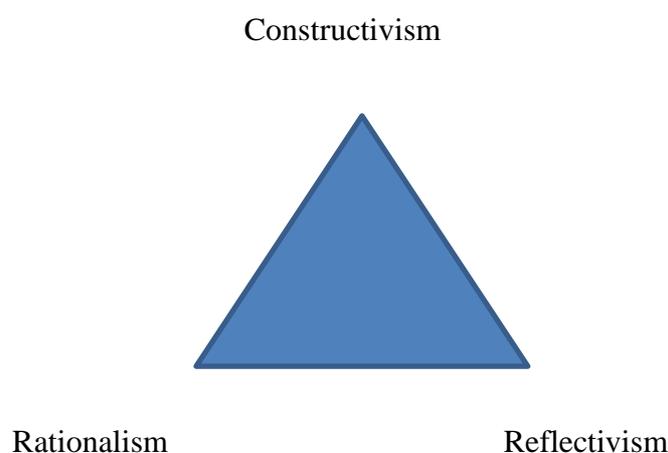
Namely, the rationalist-constructivist debate changed the course of the studies of the EU and European integration by the mid-90s.[36] In other words, the 'constructivist turn' in 1990s enflamed an ontological drift between rationalism and constructivism

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studies. See: (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1997: 297-317; Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1998; Sandholtz et al., 2001)

[34] According to Rosamond, during the second phase, neo-functionalits became concerned with the progressive mechanics of the integration process, while intergovernmentalists developed an interest in the ways in which diplomacy between national governments either survived or became institutionalized in the context of European integration. See: (Rosamond, 2003:120)

[35] (Christiansen et al., 2001: 532)

[36] Social constructivism reached the study of the European Union (EU) in the late 1990s. See: (Christiansen et al., 2001; Jorgensen, 1997). Checkel points out the emergence of the constructivist-rationalist debate as follows that "The fiftieth anniversary issue of the journal International Organization declared the rationalist-constructivist debate to be a central dividing line in the discipline, while ever more submissions to presses and journals characterize themselves as constructivist or situate their arguments vis-à-vis those of constructivists." See: (Checkel, 2003: 1-26)

in IR and it has affected the study of European integration.[37] This divide revealed itself through the dichotomy between the 'rationalists', predominantly liberal intergovernmentalists and rational institutionalists on the one hand, and scholars who advocating the applying sociological approaches, particularly constructivists and sociological institutionalists, on the other. Pollack (2001, p. 39) identifies this period as 'the great debate' of contemporary EU Studies.

Along with the rise of critical accounts with 2000s, there have been several post-positivist/reflectivist theoretical stance coming to the surface, as the previous theoretical debates have fallen short to meet the current complexities both pertinent to and beyond Europe/the EU. The current theoretical debates aim to broaden their 'object of inquiry' not only towards 'the member-states', but also extend through the neighbouring countries, while encompassing the EU's role in the global level. These 'new' theoretical endeavors mostly obtain more agent-based orientation in order to entangle why the EU has problems with the democratic deficit, social disengagement and several crises that the EU has to meet such as the financial crisis in the euro-zone, the Brexit, and the current refugee crisis inside and outside of its borders. Along with these, there are also critical voices challenge the 'mainstream theoretical discussions' of studying the EU/Europe, while calling for a more 'pluralist' ground to move beyond the narrow conception of ontological, epistomological and methodological standpoints of the previous theoretization attempts and surely would usher new debates in the following years.[38]

2.4 Emergence of the Europeanization Debate

As it is summarized above, Europeanization has evolved through such contested yet complementary theoretical debates, and has been affected by both the classical and

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[37] For the constructivist turn in IR see: (Wendt, 1999; Mearsheimer, 1994-1995: 37-47; Krasner, 1983; Checkel, 1998: 324-348)

[38] For a critique about the lack of 'dissident voices' and 'mainstreaming' of the past theoretical endeavors in the EU Studies, See: (Manners and Whitman, 2016: 3-18)

contemporary European integration debates. Depending on the dominance of the classical integration theories, it took time for Europeanization being recognized as a "distinctive research area in the EU studies" (Sedelmeier, 2006: 4). Namely, the 'Europeanization turn' emanated from a series of institutional reforms, supranational processes and particularly new rising 'domains of discussions' that came into prominence with the Eastern Enlargement, focusing on changes in national political systems pertinent to the development of European regional integration.[39] This shift to understand the institutional adaptation of states regarding the EU membership opened up venues for new research for acquiring more comprehensive understanding of the influence of European integration on changes in national political systems (Börzel and Risse, 2000; Cowles et al., 2001; Hix and Goetz, 2000; Knill and Lehmkul, 2002; Radaelli, 2000a). In the light of these developments, the scholars started posing new questions, while paving the ground for a new theoretical debate with asking how the supranational system of cooperation and the intergovernmental bargaining process of the European integration have impacts on the national political systems of the member states. Drawing such academic attention to the development of a new research agenda, the study of European integration began to embrace a new, more focused dimension and put forward new answers to the previously under-developed research areas pertinent to the domestic implementation/impact of the European politics.[40] In so doing, Europeanization provides a closer look to the domestic policies, practices, structures and politics of the member states. In other words, with the aim to go beyond the classical integration theories, the rise of Europeanization as a new research agenda shifted the scholarly attention to the administrative adaptation of member states to EU membership and changes in the

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[39] See: (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Cowles et al., 2001; Gustavsson and Lewin, 1996; Héritier et al., 2001; Knill, 2001; Kohler-Koch, 2003; Olsen, 2002; Radaelli, 2000a; Radaelli, 2000b: 25-43; Wallace, 2000: 369-382)

[40] For instance, regarding the 'Europeanization turn' in the European integration debates, Börzel emphasizes that how Europeanization debate puts forward the role of 'domestic institutions', different from the classical integration theories, which focus on the issue whether European integration strengthens the state (intergovernmentalism), weakens it, or triggers 'multilevel governance' dynamics. See: (Börzel, 1999: 576-7)

"organizational logic of national politics and policy making" induced by the EU membership (Ladrech 1994: 70; Wessels and Rometsch, 1996; Kassim et al., 2000).

Contrary to the traditional integration theories, the Europeanization debate offers to develop meso theories to deal with the former limitations, derived from the idea to develop 'grand theory' with setting generalizable laws about the regional integration across the world. In doing so, Europeanization offers a post-ontological stance with focusing on impacts of the EU institutionalization and its reflection on the member states, rather than developing an 'overarching' theory, as it was aimed by its predecessors (Keeler, 2005: 551-582). This 'shift' from 'grand theories' to 'meso theories' also reflected on posing new questions, departing from 'why does integration occur' to 'what effect does integration have' (Rosamond, 2000:121).[41] Howell (2004) explains this 'shift' and how Europeanization is considered as a meso theory in relation to neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, which "should attempt to enable verifiable generalizations and empirical reliability, but not the cost of thicker understanding of process in terms of interaction and continuity" (p.2). Within the process of 'Europeanization', structure and agency are best understood as being inherently relational concepts (Bashkar, 1999; Giddens, 1984; Checkel, 1998). Agency within the 'Europeanization' process is not only structured, but may also be structuring, as actors 'lead' (Dyson and Featherstone, 1999: 776-782). Following that, the classic strand of Europeanization literature focuses particularly on the domestic implementation of EU policies such as environmental policy (Knill and Lenschow, 1998), community policy (Héritier et al., 2001), or cohesion policy (Gualini, 2003) as well as new object of inquiries such as political parties (Ladrech, 2002), party systems (Mair, 2000), and citizenship (Checkel, 2001; Vink, 2001). With the purpose of bringing light on the multitude of definitions of Europeanization before moving to the next section, it is vital to underline that 'Europeanization' has not been widely used as a stand-alone conceptual framework, as it is rightly articulated by Featherstone and Radaelli (2003, p.12). As already indicated above,

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[41] According to Keeler, this reveals a shift from the domination of the 'grand theories' to the 'meso theories' of European integration, while tracing the changing nature of the EU with the 1990s. (Keeler, 2005)

Europeanization research is built on the classical integration perspectives as well as meta-theoretical frames, first with respect to the contemporary variants of neo-functionalism: supranational governance (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet, 1998), and multi-level governance[42] also with an 'institutionalist' focus with neo-institutionalism and its three strands (March and Olsen, 1984; March and Olsen, 1989). Relying on Hall and Taylor's (1996) conceptualization/categorization, three strands of institutionalism, i.e., rationalist, historical and sociological institutionalism, have its own distinct definition of how institutions affect the outcome, while trying to clarify how institutions 'matter' in the study of politics.[43] In fact, the initial applications of rational choice institutionalism were born out of a reaction against both neo-functionalism (which was rejected for its lack of micro foundations) and liberal intergovernmentalism (which was rejected for its minimalist account of EU institutions) (Pollack, 2001: 221-244). Rationalist institutionalists see actors as strategic 'utility-maximizers' and their preferences are taken as given, and drawing on 'rational choice' perspective they put forward a 'logic of consequentialism' applied also in Europeanization. In contrast, the sociological institutionalists assume that people act according to a 'logic of appropriateness' taking signs from their institutional environment that determine how they construct their preferences and select the appropriate behavior for a given institutional environment (Pollack, 2009: 127). Merely, for sociological institutionalism (as well as constructivist approaches), institutions carry informal norms and conventions as well as formal rules, while constituting actors, affecting the way in which actors

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[42] Multi-level governance was introduced by Marks and Hooghe suggesting that the EU has evolved into a unique system of multi-level governance. They challenged the traditional state-centric views with arguing that the sovereignty of European states is limited by the application of collective decision-making and by the growing competence of supranational institutions. What the multi-level governance emphasizes that 'interconnected arenas', in which local, regional, national and supranational levels of government depend upon each other. See: (Marks and Hooghe, 1996: 341-378; Hooghe and Marks, 2001)

[43] (New) Institutionalism emphasizes the importance of institutions in the process of European integration, as the European Union is the most densely institutionalized international organization in the world. Having developed in 1980s and early 1990s in reaction to the behavioral perspectives that were influential during the 1960s and 1970s, institutionalism seeks to reveal the role that institutions play in determining social and political outcomes. See: (Pollack, 2009: 137; Hall and Taylor, 1996: 941; March and Olsen, 1984; March and Olsen, 1989)

perceive the world. In addition; historical institutionalism has a position between the two 'poles' of rational choice and sociological institutionalism, by focusing on the effects of institutions over time with examining how institutional choices have long-term impacts (Thelen, 1999; Pierson, 2000; Aspinwall and Schneider, 2000: 6-7; Aspinwall and Schneider, 2001). As contrary to rationalist camp, historical institutionalists argue that if institutions interact with each other in a decision-making process it leads to choices taken in the past can persist, or become 'locked in', that may cause 'path dependence'. In relation to this, both in sociological institutionalism and some aspects of historical institutionalism, agents form preferences endogenously, and these are to a certain extent 'path dependent' (Aspinwall and Schneider, 2000: 17).[44] Consequently, according to Pollack (2006), the prominent concepts of three strands of the new-institutionalism such as 'path-dependence', 'logic of appropriateness', 'logic of consequentialism', 'joint-decision trap' have been applied to the integration studies and used by the Europeanization scholars in a very influential way for the elaboration of 'Europeanization' processes in the last decades (p. 33).[45]

Nevertheless, Checkel and Zurn (2005) assert the necessity of bridging – establishing a dialogue between – both constructivism and rationalism to fully perceive the process of Europeanization (p.1046). Despite the dominance of the approaches that drawing attention to 'rationalist' perspective in the earlier phases, more recent theoretical discussions in the contemporary European integration debate also brought a much broader and pluralistic perspective to Europeanization, as the sociological institutionalism and constructivist approaches in international relations gained considerable weight in the EU Studies.

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[44] Here, Aspinwall and Schneider (2000) underline the fact that both sociological and historical institutionalism are largely influenced by the historical sociology indicating both strands tend to be holistic, which can also be perceived as main epistemological root of their convergence.

[45] Mainly, each of the strands, rationalist, historical and sociological institutionalist approach, develops differentiated rationale on how actor preferences are constructed within a certain institutional settings. Pollack states that rational choice theory under the new institutionalism refers to the analysis from the ontological and epistemological perspective of the individual and his relation with the social structures as well as on the role of ideas and material forces in the social life. See: (Pollack, 2006: 33)

2.4.1. Defining Europeanization: Conceptual Debates

As it is discussed previously, although Europeanization has become a rather fashionable (Olsen, 2002), and widely deployed research tool amongst scholars from International Relations, European Studies and comparative government or political traditions, it contains very divergent definitions, conceptualizations among the scholars and it still lacks a clear, generally agreed conceptual framework (Kassim and Peters, 2000; Börzel and Risse, 2007; Olsen, 2002; Mair, 2004). It is even seen 'unwieldy' that it is futile to use it as an organizing concept since it has no single precise or stable meaning (Kassim, 2000: 238). It is even questioned whether Europeanization is a solution that provides solid conceptual explanations or it is a new problem for researchers (Radaelli, 2004).

Nevertheless, different scholars who deal with Europeanization offer a wide-range of definitions and put forward different analytical lenses to grasp and analyze Europeanization. They refer to different, but related, phenomena (Olsen, 2002). In this regard, Europeanization may embrace various meanings depending on the object of inquiry of the researchers. Extending from different levels of institution building to domestic change and/or different systems of governance, and transnational cultural diffusion of cultural norms, ideas, identities, discourses Europeanization offers multiple pathways to discover.

Most of the academic works on Europeanization largely address institutional adaptation and domestic change. Here, Europeanization rather refers to regulatory, administrative, and policy-related uses of the term, especially regarding the member states. In other words, most of the scientific attempts about Europeanization concentrate on bringing theoretical explanations about the domestic change in core institutions, policy processes, and actors as a result of the EU membership. The scholars of comparative politics provide useful analytical concept, examining the domestic change led by Europeanization within three categories: polity, policy and politics. This categorization later echoed in different causal mechanism measuring domestic change also reflected to two different theoretical reasoning between

rationalist and constructivist debates in the EU Studies (Checkel, 2001; Jupille et al., 2002; Radaelli, 2004; Börzel, 2010; Schimmelfennig, 2010). For instance, Dyson and Goetz (2002) identify this differing focus as 'first generation' and 'second generation' in Europeanization theories. While the first generation touches on 'more formal' and 'observable' outcomes brought by the EU membership or partnership, within 'constructivist turn' in 1990s, the second generation is not limited with changes in political-administrative structures and policy content, but focuses on ideas, discourses and identities (Bache et al., 2012: 63).

Table 1: Summary of Dyson and Goetz (2002) on 'Two Generations of Europeanization Research'[46]

First Generation	Second Generation
Generally top-down approaches, seeking to explain domestic change from EU pressures	Emphasizes more complex interactions (top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal)
Assumed 'misfit' between European and domestic levels: particularly formal, institutional	Greater emphasis on the 'political' dynamics of fit: interests, beliefs, values and ideas
Emphasis on reactive and involuntary nature of adaptation	Greater emphasis on voluntary adaptation through policy transfer and learning
Focus on policy and polity dimension	Greater emphasis on politics, e.g. identities, electoral behavior, parties and party systems
Expected increasing cross-national convergence	Emphasizes differential impact of Europe
Defined Europeanization in substantive terms- focus on the 'end state' effects	Emphasizes impact of Europeanization on domestic political, institutional and policy dynamics

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[46] Source: (Bache et al., 2012: 64)

One of the early definitions of the Europeanization is addressed by Ladrech (1994), emphasizing that Europeanization occurs when the EU political dynamics become part of the logic and norms of domestic policy-making (p.64). He asserts that "Europeanization is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making" (Ladrech, 1994: 69). Héritier (2001: 185-206) defines Europeanization as the process of influence deriving from European decisions and impacting member states' policies and political and administrative structures. Both of the definitions underlines 'process' and the impact of the decisions made at the European level and how they reflect on the domestic level. On the other hand, Börzel (1999) defines Europeanization as a "process by which domestic policy areas become increasingly subject to European policy-making" (p.574). Apparently, she emphasizes some form of hierarchy between Brussels and member states. Although Ladrech (1994) asserts more 'bottom-up' perspective about Europeanization with stressing the role of domestic actors, as it is also seen in Börzel and Risse's (2000) description, the early definitions of Europeanization are inclined to follow 'top-down' perspective, seeking to explain domestic reactions as a result of the pressures from above, i.e., 'downloading' the European Union directives, regulations and institutional structures to the domestic level. For instance, Caporaso et al. (2001: 3) see Europeanization as an "evolution of governance institutions at the supra-national level and how these institutions are affecting national/sub-national policies." Likewise, Bulmer and Burch's in-terpretation also addresses another example of the 'top-down' approach, as they describe Europeanization as follows: "the extent to which EC/EU requirements and policies have affected the determination of member states' policy agendas and goals' and 'the extent to which EU practices, operating procedures and administrative values have impinged on, and become embedded in, the administrative practices of member states" (Bulmer and Burch, 1998: 602).

Nevertheless, member states also 'upload' their policies to the European level in order to minimize the costs of 'downloading' afterwards (Börzel, 2002: 193-214). In

this regard, Europeanization does not only cover a 'top-down' approach that the member states follow policies determined in Brussels, however, member states also have active role for the policy outcomes at the European level. In fact, as the Europeanization studies developed, the focus shifted from 'top-down' to the 'bottom-up' because the member states not only 'download' from the EU but also 'upload'/project their policy interests and preferences to the EU level (Börzel, 2003: 3; Börzel, 2001). Dyson and Goetz (2003) exemplify this difference derived from the differing perception between 'two generations' of Europeanization. According to the authors, while the first generation emerged during the 1970s and focused on 'top-down' perspective and seeking to explain domestic reactions to pressures from above, second generation which appeared in 1990s, concentrated on both 'bottom-up' and 'top-down', and even beside the 'vertical' forms also 'horizontal' dimensions (p.119). Apparently, to see Europeanization merely as "the penetration of the European dimension into the national arena" would rather overshadow the multi-causal relationship between the EU and member states (Gamble, 2001). Rather, Europeanization requires a multi-level interpretation of the two-way interactive process, both bottom-up (uploading) and top-down (downloading) mechanisms in order to capture a full-fledged analysis (Börzel, 2004; Bulmer and Radaelli, 2004; Howell, 2004; Radaelli, 2000). Moreover, Howell (2004) also asserts that there is also cross-loading of the process where there is a linkage between the macro level (member state) and micro level (sub-national interests) for vertical policy transfer. In fact, the mutually constitutive relationship between the member states and the EU addresses that while member states have an impact on the composition of the EU structure, the EU structure has also changed the domestic structures of the member states (Tanıl, 2014: 483). The uploading part of this process can be identified as the deepening of European integration, while the downloading part, or the impact of the EU-level political culture, norms, values, and working methods on member states, can be called Europeanization (Tanıl, 2014: 484). Recently, there is a new generation of inquiry has begun to emerge—a "top out" perspective in order to conceptualize, explain, and evaluate the impact of EU policies and rules on the domestic structures, laws, and behavior of the non-member countries (Magen, 2006: 385). In other words,

'external Europeanization' focuses on the extra-territorialization of the EU rules and involvement of the third countries excluded from the EU's rule-making institutions, while seeking the impact of the EU beyond the EU borders and the adoption of EU rules by the non-member countries (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004; Schimmelfennig, 2008; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005).

Also, it is important to note that the concept/notion of change lies at the heart of the Europeanization debate in order to understand what processes should be understood as Europeanization; while questioning "whether it is itself a theory, or other theories are needed to expound it; and what kind of change" (Vink, 2005). The concept of change has guided various scholars to see how and when the 'change' takes place, while trying to define/untangle Europeanization. Featherstone (2003) identifies change derived from the EU influence taken place on two different levels: institutional adaptation and the adaptation of policies and policy processes (p.7-9). He mainly concentrates on "political institutions and the agents embedded within them respond in routine ways to changing opportunities and challenges".[47] Radaelli (2012) identifies Europeanization as "a process of change affecting domestic institutions, politics and public policy"; according to him, change occurs when political behavior at the EU level has a transformative effect on domestic political behavior (p.1).

Another crucial attempt with the concept/notion of change is also discernible with the conceptualization of the 'goodness of fit', which is based on the general idea that how 'adaptational pressure' causes domestic change. According to Börzel (1999) and Cowles et al. (2001), Europeanization matters only if there is divergence, incompatibility, or 'misfit' between European-level institutional process, politics, and policies, and the domestic level. By focusing on the 'goodness of fit', they draw attention to explanatory factors related to any mechanism of change. Börzel and

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[47] Olsen identifies five different areas to observe and measure how 'change' occurs through Europeanization. He asserts 'changes in external boundaries', 'developing institutions at the European level', 'central penetration of national systems of governance', 'exporting forms of political organization', 'a political unification project'. See: (Olsen, 2002: 921-924)

Risse (2000) frame 'change' at the core of their theoretical approach. They argue that "[W]hether we study policies, politics, or polities, a misfit between European-level and domestic processes, policies, or institutions constitutes the necessary condition for expecting any change" (Börzel and Risse, 2000: 1). In other words, when 'adaptational pressure' is low, which means there is no need to change domestic institutions indicating a 'good fit' between national policy and the European Union. Conversely, if the distance between EU policies and national ones is very high, member states will find it very difficult to 'internalize' the European policy, which can conclude with 'inertia' at the domestic level. At that point, the existence of 'mediating factors' or 'intervening variables' as enabling or prohibiting domestic may filter the domestic impact of the EU (Caporaso et al., 2001).[48]

Among the above-mentioned interpretations, analysis and descriptions about Europeanization, Radaelli (2000) formulizes one of the most encompassing definition of Europeanization as he puts a general framework as follows: "Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies" (p. 4).[49]

Radaelli's interpretation of Europeanization has threefold analysis about the very nature of the term. First, it indicates that it includes different stages and forms regarding the policy process, while he also emphasizes that Europeanization has an

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[48] The 'goodness of fit' or congruence between the European and the domestic level is a crucial concept in Europeanization literature (Cowles at al., 2001). It determines the degree of pressure for adaptation generated by Europeanization on the Member States. Only if European policies, institutions, and/or processes differ significantly from those found at the domestic level, Member States feel the need to change. The lower the compatibility between European and domestic processes, policies, and institutions, the higher is the adaptational pressure Europe exerts on the Member States. See: (Héritier, Knill, and Mingers, 1996; Schmidt 2001; Börzel 2003)

[49] See also: (Exadaktylos and Radaelli, 2009)

impact on individuals through values, beliefs, norms, behavior, and attitudes and lastly it suggests that it is a two-way process indicating an interdependent relation between the national and supra-national level" (Grünhut and Bodor, 2015: 15-16). Relying on the profusion of the analytical and conceptual frameworks of the Europeanization, Radaelli (2006) prefers to define it as an 'orchestrating approach' not a theory in itself. Featherstone (2003) sheds light on the divergent process of Europeanization as an 'inherently asymmetrical process' and define it "typically incremental, irregular, and uneven over time and between locations, national and subnational with profound disparities of impact remain." Against this backdrop, all these indicate that Europeanization is not a homogenous, static, regular process, which can be discernible in all member countries in a similar way. Departing from that, they emphasize the fact that "the real meaning of the term depends on the researchers to discover the dynamics and causalities emerged around the term, as well as constructing and deconstructing the meaning attached to itself" (Featherstone, 2003). With this in mind, the Europeanization as a term and research object is not to be perceived as something static and teleological, as the various causalities and interdependencies give its real meaning. As delimiting the term can bring about certain misguidance and misinterpretation of the research object, it can range over history, culture, politics, society, and economics (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003).

2.5.   Moving Beyond the 'Mainstream': A New Conception of Europeanization

Diez and Wiener (2009) elucidate that 'the post-positivist turn' in IR in 80s and 90s, led to emergence of constructivist and critical approaches to European integration and resulted with a diverse mixture of theoretical approaches and conceptual lenses in European integration theory with a diversification of epistemological and ontological assumptions (pp.3-11). In parallel, Europeanization research has also been affected by more critical dimensions with the rise of sociological and constructivist (as well as historical sociological) accounts, while focusing on the role of norms, rules, discourses, ideas and identities. Despite the dominance of the

'institutionalist' perspectives in the Europeanization debate, it also comprises more 'ideational' and 'normative' definitions, which are tend to focus on 'cognitive' structures with ideas, norms, identities in which the political action is embedded. These critical/constructivist/normative elaborations of Europeanization intended to transcend beyond rather 'ahistorical' and narrow spatio-temporal conceptualization of Europeanization, which is mostly limited with the EU member states (Wallace, 2000: 369-382; Flockhart, 2010: 787-810; Flockhart, 2008: 1-37). Featherstone (2003) denotes that 'Europeanization'—like 'globalization'—as a useful entry-point for greater understanding of important changes occurring in politics and society, while denoting that it is not a simple synonym for European regional integration or even convergence, though it does overlap with aspects of both (p.3). It is identified with an encompassing framework in the social scientific enquiry; it is a process of structural change, variously affecting actors and institutions, ideas and interests (Featherstone, 2003). Lehmkul (2007) emphasizes that Europeanization also means 'adaptation' to potentially new normative frameworks and underpinnings, and when it pays more attention to 'the ideational dimension of European integration' and how it 'hits home', its contribution to our understanding of European integration will be even more substantial (p.353). Trenz (2014: 2) frames a wide-array of meanings ascribed to Europeanization addressing the notions such as long-term historical transformations (Conway and Patel, 2010), the dynamics of societal change and the advancement of modernity (Delanty and Rumford, 2005: 7), the convergence of political cultures, the public sphere and collective identities (Koopmans and Statham, 2010; Risse, 2010), and more confined political science analyses of the processes of adaptation of member state law, policies or administration (Heritier, 2007). He also connects Europeanization with modernization and globalization, stressing that "Europeanisation also refers to large-scale processes of transformation of contemporary politics and society that are experienced by large groups of people and collectively interpreted like modernization or globalization" (Trenz, 2014: 2). Delanty and Rumford elaborate Europeanization as:

a concern to go beyond institutional frameworks to examine the dynamics of society; an awareness of the importance of cultural dynamics; the centrality of contestations generated by multiple perspectives on issues central to European transformation; the importance of a global context for understanding European developments; and a dissatisfaction with the ways in which questions of European transformation have been framed within political science discourses on the EU (Delanty and Rumford, 2005: 7).

Patel and Conway (2010), for instance, underline how Europeanization is not all about Europe but also about 'non-European' territories where Europe have shown its 'interest', as follows: "Europeanization is not just about Europe. For a long time, the term was primarily used with regard to non-European spaces, to conceptualize the Europeanization of the world, mainly as part of the European processes of expansion which took place from the early modern period onward" (p.5).

The above-mentioned developments have resulted in an extremely rich and diverse body of literature in theorizing the EU. All these periods aimed at revealing different aspects of studying the EU, the European integration/Europeanization with elaborating changes and continuities in order to reach a better understanding/analysis. Still, above-mentioned cleavages between different attempts of theorizing Europe/the EU reflect a wide range of ontological, epistemological and theoretical disagreements. Each re/theorization attempt would fall into the trap to repeat the 'similar causalities' with identifying even insignificant diversities as new theoretical positions, which have resulted in rich but diverse body of studies leading to profusion and confusion in demarcating the 'real' object of inquiry in the field of Europeanization and European integration (Cini and Bourne, 2006: 8).

As it is discussed in the previous parts, the literature on Europeanization mostly concentrates on the studies about the institutional adaptation and/or change in political and administrative structures and levels of 'political fit' and/or 'misfit' as the main indicator of the process/outcome of Europeanization. Among its broadest interpretation, Europeanization concentrates on which "involves the development of formal and informal rules, procedures, norms and practices governing politics at the European, national and subnational level" (Cowles et al., 2001: 1-20). In other

words, 'Europeanization' is most often placed within some type of institutional perspective (Featherstone, 2003: 13). At this point, it is essential to question that whether it is sufficient to delineate the Europeanization debate with the level of political institutionalization and/or examining the impact of European integration and governance on the member states? In fact, putting the main focus on the 'the impact of the EU' and explaining domestic adaptation to European integration through the EU, has been limiting, hence, ignoring other processes that might also be included under the heading of Europeanization (Flockhart, 2008). Some scholars in the EU studies suggest what is currently thought of as 'Europeanization' should more properly to be called 'EU-ization', since EU-ization is only a small part of a much broader and longer term process that can be examined with the term; Europeanization (Wallace, 2000; Flockhart, 2010; Flockhart, 2008). This 'EU bias' in Europeanization research has been noted as 'conflating' Europeanisation with 'EU-Europeanisation', 'EU-isation', 'Communitization' or 'Unionisation' instead of addressing a broader perspective, delving differing ideational structures and its impacts on agents (Wallace, 2000; Goetz, 2001; Emerson, 2004a: 17). Most of the Europeanization scholars rather stress a narrow geographical and historical scope of the concept and not to question the origin and content of the ideational structures of Europeanization.[50] Another problem of the current Europeanization research is that the conceptual and empirical research mostly includes the member states.[51] Academic research addressing to analyze candidate states and/or neighbouring countries, which have different types of 'association' with the EU is rather limited, despite Europeanization can be seen as an important phenomenon and its influence affects not only its member states but also candidate/partnering countries beyond its territory.

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[50] In this sense, Flockhart draws attention, a number of fundamental problems relating to scope, ideational foundations and which causal relationships to explain, as well as neglecting the 'original' source of the problem.
See: (Flockhart, 2010: 787-810; Flockhart, 2008: 1-37)

[51] See: (Börzel, 1998; Börzel, 1999; Featherstone, 1998; Héritier et al., 1996; Ladrech, 1994; Radaelli, 1997; Featherstone and Kazamias, 2001)

In the light of all these, adopting a 'social constructivist' perspective/approach towards Europeanization would be illuminating in order to grasp the differing role of ideas, norms, knowledge, culture, and argument in politics; in other words, 'intersubjective' ideas and understandings, which are collectively held in social life (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001: 392). In order to analyze the Europeanization in Georgia, a social constructivist conceptualization of Europeanization offers a vital ground to shed light on how Europe is constructed with focusing on long term changes over time in ideational structures, ideas and representations, while allowing historical and theoretical depth necessary to fully understand contemporary meanings attached to being a part of the 'European family' and Europe itself as well as what the EU represents for Georgia. Departing from that, you can find how social constructivist angle to Europeanization would contribute to overcome theoretical and conceptual limitations of the mainstream Europeanization debate, especially concerning the Georgian case. Before moving to indicate how the social constructivist analysis would contribute to understanding the multiple dimensions of Georgian Europeanization process, we will elaborate the main ontological focus that social constructivist analysis offer to overcome above-mentioned limitations.

2.5.1. Constructivism and Europeanization

The involvement of the constructivism to analyze the impact of the EU from a wider framework is somehow late and underdeveloped; despite it has convincing explanations for the European integration/Europeanization (Smith, 1999: 684). In this vein, constructivism offers strong analytical stance with its meta-theoretical position and its emphasis towards interrelated causalities, which can be identified as an illuminating social scientific rigor to understand and elaborate the multi-layered and complex nature of the EU and its impact on third countries.

Constructivists consider the EU as a political system and they are keen to examine the European integration as a process bound up with change with drawing on a meta-theoretical position, as the 'reality' is contested and problematic from a constructivist position. As it is discussed in the previous sections, before the constructivist 'turn', a

'rationalist' ontology dominated the EU Studies (Bache et al., 2012: 41). The social constructivism locates itself on the middle ground between rationalism and reflectivism. In fact, the emergence of constructivism upon the work of Wendt was heralded in the EU studies, as they offer different premises than rationalist perspectives (Wendt, 1999). Contrary to rationalists' emphasis on methodological individualism centered on 'individual human action', constructivists state that individuals' interests and identities are shaped by the social environment in which they exist and social environment is shaped over time by the actions of individuals (Bache et al., 2012: 42). An important criticism of constructivists reveals the inadequacy of rationalist approaches focusing on 'material interests', such as economic, security etc., with ignoring the role played by deeply embedded cultures that shape national positions, and the role of ideas and values. For instance, as a clear depiction of the ontological difference between rationalism and social constructivism, Risse (2009) proposes that a constructivist history of the EU would "focus on the ongoing struggles, contestations, and discourses on 'how to build Europe' over the years, and thus, rejects an imagery of actors including governments as calculating machines who always know what they want and are never uncertain about the future and even their own stakes and interest" (p.147). Drawing on social constructivist interpretation of reality, Ruggie (1998) describes constructivism as follows:

> At bottom, constructivism concerns the issue of human consciousness: the role it plays in international relations, and the implications for the logic and methods of social inquiry of taking it seriously. Constructivists hold the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material; that ideational factors have normative as well as instrumental dimensions; that they express not only individual but also collective intentionality; and that the meaning and significance of ideational factors are not independent of time and place. (p.33)

As opposed to the classical debates, constructivism; as a specific position in the philosophy of the social sciences, is neither a substantive theory of European integration nor there is an aim to develop such a constructivist 'grand theory' of

integration.[52] Rather, constructivist theories could be combined in different constructivist frameworks of analysis in order to develop an understanding of aspects of European integration. Merely, constructivists are interested in how the collective understandings emerge, and how institutions constitute the interests and identities of actors.[53] From this perspective, the dominance of the rationalist approaches is seen as restricting for the development of the European integration literature, as their agent-centered view asserts that all social phenomena are explicable in ways that only involve individual agents and their goals and actions; the starting point of the analysis is actors (Jupille et al., 2003). Rather than taking agents and fixed preferences that interact through strategic exchange, social constructivism seeks out to explain the content of actor identities/preferences and the modes of social interaction.

Against this backdrop, Christiansen et al. (2001) propose that constructivist inspired work should focus on 'social ontologies' and 'social institutions' directing research at the origin and reconstruction of identities, the impact of rules and norms, the role of language and political discourse (p.12). In other words, it is crucial to underline that constructivism is not a substantive theory but an approach to social inquiry (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001: 393). It is merely interested in underlying conceptions that reveals how social and political world works. It is based on two assumptions: (a) the environment in which agents take action is social as well as material; and (b) this setting can provide agents with understandings of their interests ('constitutes' them). According to Checkel (1998), the first assumption indicates that

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[52] Here it is important to denote that constructivism and neo-functionalism have some analytical and conceptual connections – e.g. processes of socialization, learning, transfers of loyalty, redefinitions of interest and, in general, the transformative perspective – and aspects of constructivism. See: (Wendt, 1992; Wendt, 1999; Ruggie, 1998a: 11; Christiansen et al., 1999: 530)

[53] There are some divisions among constructivists. For instance, Ruggie distinguishes between three variants of social constructivism: neo-classical, based on intersubjective meanings, and derived from Durkheim and Weber; postmodernist, based on a decisive epistemological break with modernism, and derived from the work of Nietzsche, Foucault and Derrida; and naturalistic, based on the philosophical doctrine of scientific realism, derived from the work of Bhaskar. See: (Ruggie, 1998a: 35–6; Adler, 1997: 335-336) Klotz and Lynch (2007) distinguishes between four forms of constructivism: modernist, rule-based, narrative knowing and postmodernist. For Katzenstein et al. (1998: 675-678), there are three versions of constructivism, which are, conventional, critical and postmodern.

material structures are meaningful as long as the social context through which they are interpreted, while the second assumption takes the basic nature of human agents and states, in particular, their relation to broader structural environments into consideration (p.326). More importantly, constructivists emphasize a process of interaction between agents and structures; the ontology is one of mutual constitution, where neither unit of analysis, limited with agents or structures, rather, it examines interest and identity formation; state interests emerge from and are endogenous to interaction with structures (Checkel, 1998: 326). For instance, regarding a social constructivist analysis of Europeanization, Delanty and Rumford (2005) also highlight how multiple factors and their reflexive relationship assist to 'construct' Europe as follows:

> Europe is being socially constructed out of disparate projects, discourses, models of societies, imaginaries, and in condition of contestation, resistances and diffused through process of globalization. What is being claimed in this is that Europeanization as a process of social construction rather than one of state building and one in which globalization, in all its facets, plays a key role in creating its conditions. A social constructivist approach draws attention to contestation and also to reflexivity since social actors and discourses are often reflexively constituted (p.6).

Here, the constructivist contribution is to cast light on studying integration as process and critically examining transformatory processes of integration rather than the rationalist debate between intergovernmentalists (implicitly assuming that there is no fundamental change) and comparativists (implicitly assuming that fundamental change has already occurred) which will be moving the study of European integration forward (Christiansen et al., 1999: 537).

2.6. Georgian Europeanization from a Social Constructivist Angle

In the light of these, considering the complexities of Georgian Europeanization path, adoption of social constructivist perspective would allow raising questions about social ontologies (norms, institutions, practices, etc.), and re/construction of identities (Georgian Europeanness), the impact of rules and norms (institutional cooperation/ convergence), and political discourses regarding the perception of what

is Europe and being 'European' in the Georgian case. Here, while tracing the dynamics and causalities that constitute Georgian Europeanization path, analyzing the determinants of the ideational (as well as material) 'construction' of Europe and 'Georgian Europeanness' acquire utmost importance. Although the institutional cooperation between European Union and independent Georgian republic is relatively new, just started after Georgia's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the idea of Europe dated back a long ago, and has evolved through various 'critical junctures' and political/cultural occurrences (including the enlightenment and modernization under the Soviet ruling, and the Democratic Republic of Georgia between 1918–1921, etc.) all of which contribute to how Georgian people perceive/construct Europe, and identify themselves as a part of Europe. It clearly shows that the Europeanization path of Georgia precedes any institutional cooperation emerged between the EU and Georgia, with also acknowledging its importance.[54] Therefore, adopting only 'institutional lenses', which seeks change in core domestic institutions of governance and politics at the domestic level to entangle Georgian Europeanization would be misleading, to say the least. Although the questions pertinent to the origins of Europeanization and its implications on a global scale have received little attention as the Europeanization agenda has become almost entirely focus on the impact on and off the EU in the mainstream Europeanization debate; the Europeanization process in the Georgian case was intricately interwoven with 'transformative' and 'critical junctures' such as modernization, enlightenment, even territorial integrity/security dimension as well as ideational one. Undoubtedly, all these arise as 'constructive' themes re/producing the pro-European political discourse emanated from 'cultural belongingness' and 'shared-identity' with Europe, which will be elaborated in the following chapters. Here, a social constructivist analysis of Georgian Europeanization would provide us to elaborate how/to what extent European norms, values and policy paradigms are

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[54] Georgia started preparation process to sign the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) from 1994. The Agreement was signed in Luxembourg on 22 April 1996, which came into effect. The PCA, which determines the major framework for future relations between the EU-Georgia, was signed by the EU Member States, the President of the European Commission and the President of Georgia and entered into force in 1999. See: (Gogolashvili, 2017)

internalized, while shaping discourses and identities in Georgia considering a large time-span (Olsen, 2002: 935).

Secondly, social constructivism, while converging with reflectivism, would offer us rather useful analytical terrain to discover how Europe is perceived as well as how it was constructed as a part of the Georgian 'we' in the discursive level. Defining the 'Europe' depends on parallel construction of 'others' (variously located in the East, South, West or in Europe's past) against which a separate European identity is seen as being constructed, created or invented (Rumford, 2006; Checkel and Katzenstein, 2008; Neumann, 1999; Neumann and Welsh, 1991; Christiansen et al., 2001).[55] Nevertheless, the idea of Europe has not arisen as a result of a similar dichotomy of 'otherization' between Georgia and Europe when we consider the Georgian political history. Georgia focused on its European identity, which became a major cultural focus of the political discourse that gradually emerged throughout the country's troublesome history and constant struggle for survival amidst various empires (Jones, 2004).

Regarding the Georgian case, instead, the idea of Europe has emerged as a part of Georgian 'we', vis-à-vis what constitutes 'other', which have taken different 'appearances' in the changing phases of the country's long history and collective memory. Nevertheless, interestingly enough, the perception of Europe as a part of the Georgian 'we' seems to remain more or less the same. In this regard, taking into account rather 'ahistorical' stance of the institutional approaches, which suffer from a narrow geographical and historical scope that deals with the contemporary determinants of 'change' for analyzing the impact of Europe would be far from shedding light on 'cross-cutting' elements which shape the Europeanization path in Georgia. Nevertheless, social constructivism will lead us to transcend beyond all these restrictions coming out from rather 'limited' temporal focus with its

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[55] To see more about different conceptualizations about 'defining' Europe, see: (Bruun, 1972; Huntington, 1996; Eisenstadt, 2000; Delanty, 2006; Wallerstein, 1997; Chakrabarty, 2000; Wolff, 1994; Davies 2006; Davies, 1996; Melegh, 2006)

elaboration of how different ideas, identities and manifestations in the past gave (intersubjective) meaning to the contemporary understanding/perception of Europe/the EU for Georgia.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF GEORGIAN EUROPEANIZATION

> "Each society is a construction, a constitution, a creation of the world, of its own world. Its own identity is nothing but this 'system of interpretation' this world that it creates."
>
> Castoriadis, 1993: 9)

3.1   The post-Soviet Independence Period of Georgia: Re-uniting with Europe

Zurab Zhvania, who was a former chairman of the Georgian parliament, made his famous and much quoted declaration during Georgia's accession to the Council of Europe in February 1999, "I am Georgian, therefore, I am European".[56] Virtually, his words were merely more than a declaration of the country's new path, after its independence from the Soviet Union. It unfolds the 'idea of Europe' and 'European identity' with the complex attributions and meanings attached to it in the Georgian political history.

The aim of this part is neither solely investigating the political aftermath of the turbulent early independence era, nor analyzing the hardships arisen with the post-Soviet transition in Georgia alone. Rather, the main target of this chapter is to provide both political and institutional contextualization, while trying to 'situate'

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[56] On 27 April 1999 when Georgia became a member state of the Council of Europe, the chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly, Lord Russell-Johnston, addressed the Georgian delegation with the following words - "Georgia, welcome back home!"

Europe and trace the institutional ties between the EU and Georgia as well as shedding light on both 'ideational' and 'institutional' aspects of Georgian Europeanization. In doing so, four historical 'critical junctures' will be elaborated after the independence: the early years of the independence, the First Democratic Republic, Rose Revolution and post-Rose Revolution periods. Also, it intends to examine how the idea of Europe embraces a new phase with building institutional ties with European Union and how its role is linked with the Georgian contemporary politics vis-à-vis its national identity.

3.2 The Early Independence Period: Strength in Unity?[57]

On April 9, 1991 Georgia declared its independence under the leadership of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. As the first President of Georgia, Gamsakhurdia gained 86.5% of the votes cast after the declaration of independent Georgia, on 26 May 1991. Georgia was recognized as an independent state by the United States in December 1991, when the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed an agreement to put an end to the Soviet Union, concluded with rise of twelve independent states from its former constituent republics.

After its independence, the country had to go through two ethno-territorial conflicts and a short-lived civil war from 1991 to 1993 (Nodia and Scholtbach, 2006: 10-12). Despite its internal struggle, it had taken initiatives to be a part of the international order as a new post-Soviet republic, also with the notion to 'secure' its independence with ensuring its international legitimacy. In this regard, just after its independence, Georgia became a part of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1992 and it signed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace Agreement in 1994 (Coene, 2016). However, the level of relations with the European countries was rather limited with the humanitarian assistance by the mid-1990s (Jones, 2004: 88). The major reasons behind the limited relationship are twofold.

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[57] "Strength in Unity", *Dzala ertobashia,* is the official motto of the Georgian state, which also refers to a famous fable by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani.

First, the EU's reluctance to take active role towards its neighbours, particularly concerning the post-Soviet states during the 1990s. For instance, the EU's involvement with Georgia was limited with providing technical assistance, including advice on policy, the development of the legal frameworks etc., through TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States), which were allocated for all Newly Independent States. In his article written in 1998, Bruno Coppieters (1998) explains this 'reluctance' of the Europe with highlighting the perception of the European states, seen Georgia as 'peripheral' to Europe (pp.44-68). Coppieters (1998) explains his argument as follows: "The European Union does not regard Georgia as belonging to Europe, but rather as part of a region bridging Europe and Asia… The whole problem of European identity, which has been so decisive both for the process of European integration before the fall of the Berlin Wall and for Georgia's policies of independence, is absent from the European Union's strategic approach to Georgia. Western European policies on Georgia can best be described as an attitude of benevolent indifference" (p.65). Second, another reason of this 'indifference' from the EU towards Georgia stemmed from the Georgian state elite's political behavior and discriminatory ethnic policies towards the national minorities in the early years of independence (Nodia, 1998: 24). Gamsakhurdia's overly nationalist tone towards non-ethnic Georgians both led to civil war and territorial conflict while putting distance between Europe and Georgia (Jones, 2004: 88). In order to portray the political environment in the early independence period under Gamkahurdia's ruling, Tarkhan-Mouravi (2014) asserts that "Georgia's independence in its first year was characterized by civil turmoil and international isolation, but after the return of Shevardnadze in March 1992, European countries were among the first to recognize Georgia's new statehood" (p.51).

Clearly, it can be noted that there was no strong involvement/support from the European countries accompanying the Georgian claim of 'being a part of Europe', or support 'the Georgian cause' for independence during the early days of the republic. On the contrary, as Nodia (1998) underlines "Most western publications, often re-printed in Georgia, described Georgian developments as bizarre and the new political

elite as something between insane and fascist, which resulted with feeling of 'shock' and 'misunderstood' from Georgians" (p.24). The short period of Gamsakhurdia's ruling[58], attracted harsh criticism abroad, especially from the West due to his primordial, exclusionary nationalist discourse and ethnic policies. Jones (2004) asserts that the main rationale about the strong centralized leadership and ethnocentrism in the early days of the republic derived from the decades of enforced isolation from the rest of the world as well as sense of historical victimization (p.87). Apparently, Gamsakhurdia did not manage to maintain his popular stance that he acquired as a dissident leader in his short presidency between 1990 and 1992. Jones (2004) explains his 'failed' transformation from 'a dissident leader' to 'the first president' of the independent Georgia as follows:

> Gamsakhurdia's colleagues, who joined his government from the universities and institutes, were popular orators but inexperienced administrators. They brought fratricidal squabbles, intensified ethnic conflict and international ostracism. Gamsakhurdia, rejected by the West and concentrating power in his own hands, in the last months of his rule began to pursue a regional pan-Caucasian rather than international policy (p.87).

Under such circumstances, following the 'forced' departure of Gamsakhurdia in January 1992, Shevardnadze, who served as a Soviet foreign minister, was invited to Georgia by the National Council based on his skills of statesmanship. Shevardnadze's ruling led to the relations with Europe to evolve into another stage for both sides. His former posts as the former communist leader of Georgia and the foreign minister of the Soviet Union had given him international reputation as well as domestic legitimacy in the Georgian politics. After a long period of internal conflicts, Shevardnadze's arrival raised the political expectation to exercise reconciliatory policies to re-store the national unity. Gamsakhurdia interprets Shevardnadze's comeback as a 'communist counter-revolution', while the communist *nomenklatura* welcomed his arrival as a partial restoration of its legitimacy, however, he was a symbol of past and hope for future in terms of order

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[58] Gamsakhurdia had to flee on January 6, 1992 as a result of the bombardment of the Georgian Parliament led by *Mkhedrioni,* a paramilitary group.

and stability in the country (Nodia, 1998: 28). Moreover, his return also invoked sentiments in the society about ensuring 'Western patronage' based on clientalistic networks owing to his international profile as former foreign minister and personal relations with the Western leaders (Nodia, 1998: 28-29). Nodia (1998) remarkably depicts the over-expectations/perceptions about Shevardnadze as a leader in the Georgian society to gain Western recognition and assistance, as follows: "Thanks to Shevardnadze, Georgia was now a couple of phone calls away from freedom and prosperity" (pp.28-29).

Shevardnadze ensured the support of the EU primarily based on humanitarian assistance to the conflicting zones/regions from 1992 to 1997. By the end of the 1990s, EU aid started to cover technical cooperation, aimed at facilitating Georgia's economic and social development under the TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States) program.[59] Meanwhile, the initial steps of bilateral relations started to be taken by the EU and Georgia in the institutional level during his term. In 1994, all three South Caucasus states started negotiating Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) which entered into force on July 1, 1999, with more or less similar arrangements, despite the same tasks for all three countries with very narrow differences concerning the specific national circumstances (Gogolashvili, 2006). The agreement aimed to cover for an initial period of ten years with the possibility of future prolongation. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) addressed to achieve four major aims as follows:

> • To provide an appropriate framework for political dialogue between the parties allowing the development of political relations,
>
> • To support Georgian efforts to consolidate its democracy and to develop its economy and to complete the transition to a market economy,
>
> • To promote trade and investment and harmonious economic relations between the parties and so to foster their sustainable economic development,

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[59] Between 1992 and 2006, grants from the EU to Georgia amounted to EUR 505 million, of which EUR 112 million were disbursed under the program of TACIS. See: (Müller, 2011: 66)

> • To provide a basis for legislative, economic, social, financial, civil
> scientific, technological and cultural cooperation (Council of the European
> Union, 1996: Article 1).

Virtually, the PCA aimed to strengthen the economic relations between the EU and Georgia with enabling better access to each other's markets (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, Art. 9). The agreement was designed in accordance with the EU's area of priority defined in the Article 56 (2) of the agreement addressing that "investment projects in the energy sector, and particularly in the construction or refurbishment of oil and gas pipelines" (Council of the European Union, 1996: Art. 56 (2)). Nevertheless, in terms of strengthening the political relations between the EU and Georgia, the PCA did not offer a remarkable opportunity, nor did it bring tangible political benefits except defining a legal framework for the bilateral relations between the EU and Georgia, in a similar manner that signed with the Central Asian Republics (Chkhikvadze, 2013). On the other hand, the necessary actions for implementing reforms were not fulfilled by Shevardnadze to fulfill the institutional attempts. Rather, his political discourse about Europe based on that "Georgia was a fledgling democracy trying to survive in a very inhospitable environment and that its future as a sovereign, law-based democracy could only be assured with massive external support" (Ó'Beacháin and Coene, 2014: 929).

By the turn of the 1990s, it was apparent that the Shevardnadze administration neither succeeded to bring a new dimension nor there was a political will to implement necessary reforms that the country needed. Although he brought considerable balance and stability to settle down the ethnic conflict, there was no political strategy proposing a new path for the country, particularly in terms of modernization, democratization and fighting with corruption that were the major obstacles to have a modern nation state. O'Beachain and Coene (2014) explicitly describe what Georgia had gone through from the early years of independence to the fall of Shevardnadze as follows:

> When he arrived in Tbilisi in March 1992, there was no legitimate
> government, only chaos and gunfire in the streets. Within two years,

> Georgia became an internationally recognized state with a constitution, a functioning parliament, and relatively fair and free elections… By the end of the 1990s Shevardnadze was no longer a positive force in Georgian politics. Having put the institutions of the state in place he fell back on his instincts and skills, honed during the Brezhnev years, of managing people rather than implementing policy (p.200).

His party, Citizens' Union of Georgia (CUG), had shown similar patterns of the Soviet political tradition pertaining to hierarchy and clientelistic relations as well as the dominant position of the party leader. As Shevardnadze started to consolidate his power between 1993 and 1995, the inner structure of the party became more fragmented and allowed new political elites with no communist experience to acquire more power in the party ranks (Jones, 2000: 42-73).[60] The diffused power structure allowed Zurab Zhvania, who was the Western-oriented general secretary of the CUG, to make a strategic decision with inviting the young, pro-Western Georgian people inside the party.[61] According to Nilsson, the political system under Shevardnadze ruling can be identified as "balancing of interests" where former *nomenklatura* were balanced against a newly emerging pro-western, young, reform-oriented liberals, who mostly worked or studied in the west (Nilsson, 2009: 85). This new political elite can be described as young, Western-educated people, who had pro-Western political orientation. Within a short period of time, the new political elite had become the 'reformer wing/faction' inside the CUG, who later initiated the period of Georgia's disengagement from the Soviet legacy while forming a new political path for the country resulted with the Rose Revolution in 2003.

Meanwhile, Georgia became a member of the Council of Europe in 1999, which is still remembered as a historical moment for the Georgian political history, as it was previously mentioned in the opening in this chapter. On January 27, 1999 the former Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania declared his famous, oft-quoted phrase "I am Georgian, and therefore I am European" at the Parliamentary Assembly; which

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[60] For a more comprehensive elaboration about under what circumstances Shevardnadze came to power and then consolidated his position, please see: (Wheatley, 2005: 67-102)

[61] Zhvania's major aim was to make the CUG the driving force to make Georgia as a part of the European Family. He invited Mikheil Saakashivili and Davit Onoprishvili from the United States to enter the CUG party list in the 1995 parliamentary elections. See: (Wheatley, 2005: 89)

afterwards became a motto considering the political path of Georgia. In return, when Georgia became a member state of the Council of Europe on April 27th 1999, the chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly, Lord Russell-Johnston, addressed the Georgian delegation with the following words – "Georgia, welcome back home!" Apparently, Zhvania's statement found resonance in Europe after a long period of delays and ignorance by the West in different critical junctures the Georgian nation encountered in their political history. It can be also marked as encouraging for the new political elite to become more assertive to construct their policies towards Europe in order to pursue a path towards further integration to the European political institutions as well as re-constructing the Georgia's path "back to Europe."

3.3   Traces of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921)

Before moving to the Rose Revolution and its strong pro-European political discourse in the following section, it is crucial to note that the ideational roots of the Georgian Europeanness can be found in the first Democratic Republic of Georgia. The importance of the first independence period is manifold in the Georgian political history vis-à-vis its nation and state building process as well as its self-identification with Europe and Europeanness. Despite its short survival between 1918 and 1921, the Democratic Republic of Georgia was the embodiment of an extensive process of national awakening and modern nation building process, respectively led as well as constructed by the different political/intellectual groups, whose intellectual/political role emerged under the Russian ruling since the second half of the 19th century.[62] These young Georgian intellectuals coming from the noble families and had become the torch-bearers of the national awareness, emulated from the Platonic model arose from the experience of western modernization under the rule of the Russian Empire (Nodia, 2010: 84-101).

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[62] The modern idea of the Georgian nationhood emerged around the 1860s, evolved around the circle of tergdaleulebi [literally, one who drank water of River Terek (in Georgian Tergi)]; people who had education in Russian universities, laid the foundations of the Georgian intelligentsia. It is also used as a symbol of the geographical and cultural boundary between Russia and Georgia, which also became a mental boundary as the basis of a new national identity for those who crossed it returning from Russia. See: (Reisner, 2009: 36-50; Suny, 1994).

Parallel to that, the Democratic Republic of Georgia was the first independent modern Georgian state, with the notion of creating democratic institutions inspired by the European social democratic models by its social democratic leadership, which became a source of inspiration for the dissident movement emerged in the last period of Soviet ruling for the Georgian independence. Most importantly, the Democratic Republic of Georgia had been a clear manifestation of Georgia's convergence with Europe with the impact of the ideas of European enlightenment and modernization to its 'founding figures', while became a reference point for the 'rebirth' of the Georgian national identity and Georgian statehood, in the following decades to come.[63]

Kandelaki, who was a member of *Kmara*[64] and a member of the Georgian Parliament states that "Those genuinely committed to the current project of a modern democratic and European Georgian state should give more attention to the first republic, not only because it was the first Georgian state in the modern era, but because its parliamentary and democratic political system actually worked" (Kandelaki, 2014: 161-174). Drawing on Kandelaki's words, the symbolic and historical importance of the 1st Republic for the Georgian nation and state building process, it defined the design of the Georgian political project and the framework, which persisted today in the contemporary Georgian state. Drawing on that, Nodia portrays the major guidelines and the continuation of the European path of Georgia and addresses the Democratic Republic, as it represents as compatible with today's political context in the contemporary Georgia as follows:

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[63] Although the Democratic Republic had an important role for the dissident movement during the Soviet rule, there are also controversial arguments regarding the deliberate ignorance about its crucial role after the independence in 1991. For instance, Redjeb Jordania, the son of famous social democratic leader Noe Jordania, asserts that "there were no celebrations of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1990. In 2012, over 20 years after independence, there is still little evidence that the first republic, even now, has been incorporated into Georgia's official history. There is no acknowledgement of its achievements, and there is little recognition of the many thousands of Georgians who sacrificed their lives for an independent Georgian state after 115 years of Tsarist occupation." To see more: (Jordania, 2014)

[64] *Kmara* (Enough) emerged as the main leading youth movement to mobilize thousands of young people during the Rose Revolution.

1) The Georgian nation-state is the only acceptable political framework for the development of the Georgian nation; 2) Europe or the West in general (these two terms are not conceptually divided) serves as the provider of a larger (framework) identity, as the role model, and the presumed ally. This means that: (a) By its essence, Georgia is part of Europe, it should be recognized as such and be part of main institutions of the West such as NATO and the European Union; (b) the West serves as a blueprint for the construction of the Georgian state - that is, it is only legitimate as a democratic state. If it does not fully conform to this normative framework yet, it is on the way to doing so; (c) the West is Georgia's main friend, ally, and protector (Nodia, 2010: 93-94).

However, the problems connected to the territorial survival and independence persisted. In order to solve this question, the Georgian leaders had kept on seeking for guarantors from the West, even shortly after declaring the independence in May 1918. The initial task of the Prime Minister Noe Ramishvili and the Foreign Minister Akaki Chkhenkeli of the newly-born republic was to sign an agreement with German General von Lossow for a German protectorate to ensure its security from the possible territorial attempts of the Turkish army (Suny, 1994: 192-193).[65] The German assistance also allowed the Georgians to resist the Bolshevik threat, which could be directed from Abkhazia. There was also a demand from the Georgian leadership that the cases of Russia and Georgia needed to be kept distinct from each other in order gain insurance from the West/Europe for the survival of the new-born republic. For instance, Akaki Chkhenkeli wrote to the official state newspaper *Sakartvelos Respublica* in 1920 that Europe has to be kept positively informed about Georgia by Georgians, because it was the attitude of the Western Europe which its independence hinged upon as follows:

We stand by our thinking that Georgia is for itself and so in Russia. They [Western Europeans] need to help us to show to the European societies the truthfulness of our requests… I consider that the question of Georgia… should be examined separately, without Russia… They cannot force us to become part of Russia (Chkhenkeli, 1920: 6-7 Cited in Brisku, 2013: 45).

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[65] On June 4th, Georgia and he Ottoman Empire signed the Treaty of Batum and Georgia had to yield the Muslim-inhabited regions such as Batum, Ardahan, Artvin, Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki to the Ottoman ruling and the Ottoman Empire formally recognized the first Georgian Republic afterwards. And soon after, on June 10th, the German troops arrived in Tbilisi. See: (Suny, 1994)

Apart from the urgency and delicacy of the security reasons for the Democratic Republic's survival under the changing new geopolitical atmosphere of the 1st World War, the Georgian relations with the West led to a new pattern to appear in the Georgian political history. In relation to that Nodia stresses that

> In the end, Georgia made a choice in favour of Germany rather than Britain, because Germany took more interest in Georgia and seemed to be winning the war. This proved to be miscalculation; but more importantly, a new paradigm was born: by the logic of its internal development, Georgia tended to flee from the totalitarian Russia and strove to become part of the democratic West. The latter was to provide security guarantees for its independence and democracy against the imperial yearnings of Russia (Nodia, 1998: 17).

Nodia's argument indicates that the Georgian affiliation with Europe does not only derive from the security needs of the country but also relies on what Europe represents: the ideational factors such as democracy and development affiliated with West/Europe from the Georgian perspective. Regarding the importance of the short period of the Democratic Republic and for its clear alignment towards Europe, the attempts towards Europeanization and its continuing impact for the succeeding leaders, Jones (2014) underlines that

> Europeanism, a central principle of the DRG [Democratic Republic of Georgia], was passed on to its post-Soviet successors. Europe has a darker, non-democratic history characterized by radical nationalism, racism, and statism but the second Georgian Republic of Gamsakhurdia (91–92), the third and fourth republic under Shevardnadze (92–95 and 95–2003) and the fifth republic under Saakashvili (2004–13), despite threatening lapses of authoritarianism, shared an aspiration for Europeanness which underpinned the democratic framework all Georgia's republics have tried to establish (pp.4-5).

Correspondingly, Brisku elaborates the Georgian (and also Albanian) perception of Europe, as they continue to articulate, instrumentalize and experience 'Europe' within 'a tense triadic entity': Europe is constructed/interpreted as geopolitically important, as a torchbearer of progress, and as the symbol of civilization and high culture – all of which have generated hopes as well as delusions towards it and themselves (Brisku, 2013). What Brisku proposes with the 'triadic Europe' is vital to

grasp the multi-layered interpretation of Europe and Europeanness from the perspective of the Georgian intellectual/political elites that they have constructed the Georgian national identity as well as 'Georgianness' as a part of Europe for centuries. Brisku's formulation for Georgia (and Albania) reveals how the idea of Europe and Europeanness carried polysemous meaning that has been resonated with the similar discourses, articulations and constructed belongings for the Georgian political/intellectual elites since the early signs of the Georgian nation formation in the 11th–12th century (Brisku, 2013). Whether the idea stem from the survival of the nation, the Enlightenment ideas and modernization, indicating democracy, market economy and being a part of 'the western family' in the post-Cold War era, Europe always has been constructed as a 'safe haven' 'desired patron/protector', 'cradle of civilization' which most of the time fell short to meet the Georgian demands.

The crucial outcomes of the long-awaited rise and rapid fall of the Georgian Democratic Republic and its social democratic leadership clarified the 'European path' that Georgians identify as well as construct themselves as a part. Despite the fact that the country was about to enter into another phase, away from the European constellation with the 70-years of the Soviet interlude, the Democratic Republic symbolized a convergence with the democratic West/Europe with its social democratic rulers as well as their attempts to build up democratic institutions, while detaching themselves from the autocratic remnants of the imperial Russia. In particular, this period also resonated on the post-Soviet independence period, this time with a bolder and louder expression of 're-uniting with the Europe' discourse, which its traces can be found in the Rose Revolution.

3.4 The Rose Revolution and the Rise of the New Political Elite

The Rose Revolution can be portrayed as one of the most critical historical junctures that Georgia experienced in its political history. It became a culmination point for the Georgian political elites' attempts towards re-discovering and re/building the Georgian European identity, as a part of the Georgian nation and state building process. This endeavor carried a significant role both for re-imagining the country's

destiny with its 'European' identity, while 'detaching/disassociating' the country from its Soviet legacy with its strong reference to pre-Soviet independence period. Merely, the post-Rose Revolution period has revealed as de-Sovietization process, and attempted to re-locate Georgia as a part of the Western/European world order/constellation.

Nevertheless, the Rose Revolution had not occurred as a path-independent event. Rather, the signals of change had already begun during the last period of the Shevardnadze administration. The former members of the old-*nomenklatura* were no longer seen legitimate and/or complied with the long-awaited 'new route' which Georgia belongs/had been attained to. In this context, Georgia's *vardebis revolutsia,* 'revolution of roses', was the culmination point of a process, symbolized breaking away from the Soviet system, while revival of the pre-Soviet national identity. This new political path to Europe was repeatedly underlined by the opposition, soon new political elite-to-be, with re-constructing the Georgia's 'real/genuine' path derived from its 'centuries-long' political and cultural ties with Europe.

In fact, Saakashvili emerged as a promising young, Western-oriented political figure at the demise of the CUG. Two years before the Rose Revolution, on November 7th 2001, Saakashvili declared his intention to establish a social organization called New National Movement, later obtained the United National Movement (UNM) name, which would aim to unite all progressive forces inside the country (Wheatley, 2005: 173). The UNM gathered Zhvania's former reformist wing of the CUG under the Euro-Atlantic oriented, center-right liberal perspective. The young reformer wing of the CUG was described as influential businessmen, found several opportunities to taking democratic steps in Georgia such as their incentive towards having drastic reforms in the judiciary, admission to the Council of Europe as the first country in the South Caucasus in 1999 (Nodia and Scholtbach, 2006: 14). The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Report of OSCE summarized the general framework of the Georgian opposition at the dawn of the Rose Revolution as follows:

In 2001, the CUG began to fragment, losing its predominant position in Parliament. The first group of Members of Parliament (MPs) to leave the majority faction founded the New Rights Party, which described itself as 'constructive opposition'. In November 2001, Mikheil Saakashvili founded the United National Movement, drawing more MPs away from the CUG (OSCE/ODIHR, 2004).

On the other hand, Shevardnadze formed a new political party, New Georgia, which addressed the Georgia's integration into Europe, closer relations with the United States and NATO, the liberalization of the economy, and increases in salaries (Chiaberashvili and Tevzadze, 2005: 12). Yet, it was apparent that the Shevardnadze ruling was not able to provide real solutions to existing social problems; moreover, he was not able to achieve any meaningful progress towards democracy and good governance (Muskelishvili and Jorjoliani, 2009: 691). Shortly before the parliamentary election on November 2nd 2003, the opposition movement led by a triumvirate: Saakashvili, Burjanadze and Zhvania, all portrayed themselves as pro-Western, reformists. The major campaign theme of the opposition movement was based on fighting against corruption that was very large and embedded in almost all spheres of public and private life. The election campaign also addressed the clientalistic relations embedded in high-level administrative levels of the government. During the election campaign Saakashvili attracted popular sympathy due to his direct and dramatic confrontations with the political elite over the misuse of public money (Sumbadze, 2009: 188). Virtually, the UNM succeeded to channelize the popular tension within a short period of time, as a result of the failures of the Shevardnadze administration, accumulated for years. Regarding the leadership ability of Saakashvili and organizational success of the UNM, Wheatley (2005) asserts that

The Rose Revolution would not have worked with Saakashvili's charisma and rhetorical skills alone, and here the role of the National Movement as an organization proved crucial. The Movement very rapidly developed a well-oiled and efficient organizational structure. Its leaders built up a network of support at grass-roots level like no other political party (p.185).

As it is noted by Wheatley, there were also other assisting factors accelerated the political atmosphere for initiating such a transformation of power. To name the few,

the youth organizations, international organizations; non-governmental bodies paved the way for the oppositional figures, and mostly Saakashvili, for their cause through the Rose Revolution process. The international organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), International Republican Institute (IRI) and Open Society showed their support by way of collaborating with the oppositional figures resulted with international recognition and legitimacy to the United National Movement figures.

For instance, the *Kmara* (Enough) emerged as the main youth movement carrying a pioneering role with mobilizing thousands of young artists and university students during the revolution, especially after the closure of the main independent (opposition) TV channel, Rustavi-2. *Kmara,* as rather loose, decentralized network of local and regional cells but being skillful in coordinating and mobilizing youth protesters, invoked 'political responsiveness' among the youth population, which is rather rare concerning the post-Soviet political dynamics. Giorgi Kandelaki, who co-founded *Kmara* in 2003, as one of the major active figures of the Rose Revolution comments on the role of Saakashvili and the victory of the UNM as follows:

> Saakashvili's main strategy could be summarized as radicalizing the political situation and expanding the political space. He realized that even with fair elections – a development no one expected – several rounds would be needed for the National Movement and other opposition parties to build their electoral and organizational strength… The 2001 rallies showed that the urban masses alone were insufficient for such a breakthrough, and a search for supporters beyond those groups was necessary. Mobilization targets included members of the lower middle class, provincial populations, and middle-aged Georgians. One of the National Movement's most important achievements was effectively reaching out to provincial populations…The courage of his National Movement in the 'politically protected areas' was instrumental in its swift rise in approval ratings and eventual victory in the elections (Kandelaki, 2006: 8-9).

The protests and rallies following the elections portrayed the largest demonstrations in the history of Georgia with the participation of various groups, activists, ordinary citizens as well as the opposition movement, which seemed to overcome the political apathy and fear inherited from the previous regime. During the protests,

Saakashvili's new leadership style promised to guarantee democratic values, show concern for people's needs, eliminate corruption, improve economic growth, and restore the territorial integrity of the country based on Western support (Sumbadze, 2009: 186). Against this backdrop, the National Movement and Saakashvili both gained legitimacy and ensured public support with the participation of the large groups to the protests for the upcoming events ended with the transformation of power from the 'old' to the new type of leadership with Saakashvili and his close circle.

3.4.1   The November Elections and the 'Revolution of the Roses'

As a result of the November 2003 parliamentary elections, Shevardnadze was announced as the winner with 21.32% of the votes, as the UNM reached 18% reported by the Georgian Electoral Commission. Nonetheless, the result of the elections was articulated differently by different actors upon which the closeness of the particular groups. Unlike the statements of electoral observation groups close to the Shevardnadze ruling, the US-based Global Strategy Group declared that the National Movement gained 26.4 % while Shevardnadze's New Georgia only got 19% of the votes (Sershen, 2003). After the 'so-called' electoral victory of Shevardnadze, the opposition groups declared that the result of November 2003 elections was falsified due to the several reports related to problems such as rampant ballot stuffing, multiple voting, late poll openings, and ballots not being delivered to some polling places, and voter lists that included dead people but excluded thousands of live voters (Mitchell, 2004: 343; OSCE/ODIHR, 2004: 16-21). In addition, similar problems experienced in 1999 parliamentary and 2000 presidential elections, therefore, the Georgian oppositional figures pushed forward for a new electoral code back then in order to prevent any electoral fraud for the November 2003 elections with the international support (Usupashvili, 2004: 77). For that reason, before the November elections, the oppositional figures collaborated with different civil society groups, local activists and international bodies such as OSCE/ODIHR in order to observe the election process, which were rapidly organized for the protests afterwards. For instance, after the announcement of Shevardnadze's victory, Bruce

George, who was the special coordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, leading the short-term observation mission asserted that "these elections have, regrettably, been insufficient to enhance the credibility of either the electoral or the democratic process" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2003).

While the Central Election Committee counting the votes after the November 2003 general election, the mass protests started calling the Shevardnadze government to either recognize the victory of the opposition or step down (Nodia and Scholtbach, 2006: 19). The protests started with small numbers, but accelerated on November the 4th, when the United National Movement, Burjanadze's group and *Ertoba* block under the leadership of Patiashvili declared the need to establish a 'Resistance Front' to mobilize a popular protest against the electoral fraud and to force Shevardnadze to resign (Radio Free Caucasus Report, 2003).[66] After days of protests at the Liberty Square in Tbilisi, on 21 November 2003, many protestors across the country gathered together in Tbilisi. Saakashvili interpreted this as the masses upholding Georgia's national dignity and democratic values as follows:

> Georgia has arisen to defend its dignity and its future. Today, we are witnessing a European-type, velvet, bloodless, democratic and nation-wide revolution which aims at the bloodless removal of President Shevardnadze from his post, the removal of President Shevardnadze's government from power by democratic means, the restoration of our dignity and the return of our country's future (Ó'Beacháin and Coene, 2014: 930).

The end of November 2003 brought an unprecedented generational change in post-Soviet political leaderships, based on public support for the democracy (Devdariani, 2004: 79). On the 22nd, these series of events resulted with the Rose Revolution, while Shevardnadze delivering the opening speech of the new Parliament after the November elections, the opposition leaders entered into the Georgian Parliament with roses in their hands following Saakashvili. Two days later more than 20.000

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[66] Especially the discrepancies between official results and the exit polls considering the Adjarian votes triggered the uninterrupted protests in front of the Georgian Parliament because they were clearly fraudulent. The number of votes that Abashidze reported that his party had received in the elections was at least a third more than Adjaria's total population. See: (Areshidze, 2007: 157)

people gathered in the streets around the Georgian Parliament and the largest demonstration took place in Tbilisi (Mitchell, 2004: 345).

The fragmented regime and declining presidential legitimacy of Shevardnadze due to his ties with discredited political allies and increasing pressure on media and opposition figures had drawn the country to the series of political upheavals with the public demonstrations poured thousands of Georgians into the streets in Tbilisi. No doubt, the Rose Revolution was neither an incident nor its success could only be derived from the triggering impact of the new, young and western-educated oppositional figures. According to Welt, the weakness of the Shevardnadze regime prepared the necessary conditions for the Rose Revolution, however, the interaction between social actors and the 'new elite' made the government's unpopularity, along with the fraud, and the protests; Shevardnadze's alliance with Abashidze; the non-political elite's support for the united opposition; and the government's reluctance to use force against the protestors visible (Welt, 2010: 155-188). On the other hand, Nodia emphasizes that Rose Revolution gave 'a new wave of confidence' to the Georgian people as it 'broke the mold of powerlessness' and challenged the 'social memory' of the 1990s that many Georgians had suffered due to the loss of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the state's weakness, the stagnation and corruption, and the acceptance that no government would achieve any better (Nodia, 2005: 104).

The success of the Rose Revolution addresses several outcomes that come to the fore regarding the Georgian political system. First, the protests and mass mobilization of the Georgian people and initiatives taken by the opposition leaders enabled political change in a non-violent way, which indicates the first non-violent transformation of power for the first time in the Georgian politics. Although there is a strong academic debate about whether the Rose Revolution is a revolution, revolt or just a transformation of power, its impact, as it realized 'change' without 'blood', on the Georgian political life is explicit. Second, Georgia began to experience a new state-building process with the Rose Revolution, which is pro-Western and contained democratic elements. The key reform process, as it was promised, aimed to struggle

with high-level corruption, underdeveloped economic structure, and severe patronage politics with clientalistic relations and judicial restoration. Above all, the Rose Revolution became a symbolic revolt against the legacy of Soviet rule and that of Shevardnadze, not Gorbachev's foreign minister but the Soviet ruler of Georgia, and continuity of the post-Soviet regime (Cheterian, 2009b: 693). The 'de-Sovietization' discourse reached its pinnacle point with the transformation of power from 'the old-*nomeklatura*' to the new 'western-oriented' political elites. In other words, the Rose Revolution put forward an idea of 'a new future' for the Georgian people detached from the failures/problems of the past, rather, a democratic, and modern welfare state connected to the West and Europe. During his last years inside the CUG, Saakashvili saw the changing dynamics of the society for a new regime, new understanding, rationale and he successfully attached his political struggle, as the leading opposition figure, in order to meet this demand as well as reshaping it. He managed to build his discourse addressing 'a new path' for the country with referring to the pre-Soviet national identity, overlapping with 'Georgian Europeanness'.

3.5   The Post-Rose Revolution Era: Tracing the Political Discourse with the Institutional Developments

Saakashvili became the third president of Georgia in January 2004, with 96% of the electoral support. It was the highest level of electoral turnout in the Georgian political history, with the participation of 1,763,000 eligible voters. The relations with Europe gained a new momentum with the presidency of Saakashvili in terms of foreign policy orientation and institutional level. He built his political legitimacy on his achievement during the Rose Revolution process, when he carried the pivotal role both with demanding and fighting for 'change' in the Georgian politics. The political discourse that he articulated addressed the West as a model for Georgia's development and democracy, and reclaimed Georgia's place in Europe and correspondingly address NATO and EU membership as the major foreign policy goals (Kakachia and Minesashvili, 2015: 175).

Regarding the post-Rose Revolution political atmosphere in Georgia, democracy and security emerged as the fundamental elements both necessitated and amalgamated the connection between Georgia and Europe. The societal support to the Rose Revolution and the new western-oriented leadership was embodied with 'seeking for democracy' and 'erasing the remnants of the past' narrative. In parallel to that, the Georgia's pre-Soviet national identity and the social democratic nature of the first independence process between 1918 and 1921, started to be emphasized in order to show/ensure the connection of the Georgia's Europeanness in the post-Rose Revolution political environment. In this context, the Rose Revolution was interpreted as "the masses upholding Georgia's national dignity and democratic values" that addressed to re-entry into Europe (O'Beachain and Coene, 2014: 930). Saakashvili pronounced the Rose Revolution as a 'new wave' of democratic change with international significance, especially considering the post-Soviet countries' convergence with the West. He even underlined that as Georgia's 'spiritual mission', based on its special role for humanity, and has described his country as 'a beacon of freedom for the whole world' (Jones, 2006: 33). As a clear example of how he connects the Georgianness vis-à-vis European culture and the country's 'attained' and 'rightful' place among European countries, he declared in his inaugural speech in January 2004, with having the banner of the EU raised alongside the Georgian flag as follows:

> [the European] flag is Georgia's flag as well, as far as it embodies our civilization, our culture, the essence of our history and perspective, and our vision for the future of Georgia…Georgia is not just a European country, but one of the most ancient European countries… Our steady course is toward European integration. It is time Europe finally saw and valued Georgia and took steps toward us (Civil Georgia, 2004).

Likewise, during his 2008 Presidential inauguration speech, Saakashvili, again, portrays 'the unbreakable historical ties' between Europe and Georgia as follows:

> Georgia is forever yoked to Europe. We are joined by a common and unbreakable bond-based on culture – on our shared history and identity – and on common set of values that has at its heart, the celebration of peace and the establishment of fair and prosperous societies… Georgians, by their

nature, by their culture, by their political behavior, are Europeans (Civil Georgia, 2008).

The new elite based their arguments on the pre-Soviet dynamics of the Georgian nation building process, when the Georgian intelligentsia followed 'the European path' in terms of the Enlightenment values of Europe, as it was elaborated in the previous parts of this chapter. Jones unfolds how the new state elite, particularly UNM as the ruling party, identified the relation between Georgia and its European ties embedded in the Georgian national awakening process as follows:

> Central to polemics of the late 19th century were themes of democracy, self-government, economic growth, relations with Europe and Russia, national education and the creation of national consciousness. Mikheil Saakashvili's speeches consciously echo these themes: greater community between ruler and ruled, the creation of a modern economy, the introduction of European institutions, and national unity based on a newly 'cultured' public. Like the *tergdaleulni*, he talks of a new 'energetic and patriotic generation' which will restore broken bridges (a common metaphor of the *tergdaleulni*) and help Georgia regain its place in Europe (Jones, 2006: 37).

The new political discourse on 're-uniting with Europe' primarily based its narrative on Georgia as a 'European' state and 'an ancient part of western civilization' that was separated (against its will) from its natural path by 'historical cataclysms' such as the annexation of Georgian land by Russian Tsardom and forceful integration to the Soviet Union. The desire to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures derived from the idea that the EU and NATO are the 'bearers' of the same values as those shared by the Georgians, which also includes similar 'political culture' seen as European. In this sense, during the post-Rose Revolution era, the Rose Revolution is articulated as a 'real victory of the European values of the Georgians' (Mitchell, 2004). For instance, according to Kakachia and Minesashvili (2015), the values particularly unite Georgia and Western civilizations are 'individualism' and 'love of freedom' (p.176). On the other hand, it can be argued that the Georgian self-identification with Europe relied on a historical pattern of belonging to a 'supranational identity'. The Georgians became a part of the Soviet supranational identity, in other words, to be a part of *Homo Sovieticus*. This pattern of belonging to a 'greater' and more encompassing identity construction found itself in the demands

of replacing it with European identification considering the dynamics of the post-Soviet political constellation. At this point, the Georgian 'Europeanness' can be addressed as a larger 'framework' identity for the Georgian people (Nodia, 2009: 94). Considering the post-independence process, Coene indicates the Georgia's self-identification with Europe does not only cover ideational/abstract, 'ideal' ground but it also contains a practical/pragmatic quest in the equation by stating that

> When looking at the geographical and geopolitical situation of the country, three main options arise: Georgians can try to integrate in the wider Europe, associate itself with the post-Soviet past and heritage, or turn towards renewed commonalities with the Middle East. Most Georgians now look negatively at the Soviet past and Russia, but similarly, the Muslim aspect of the Middle East is not favoured. Thus, attempting to be amalgamated with Europe remains the most favourable option.[67]

Although a European supranational identity might exist to a certain extent for the European member states as a framework identity for legitimizing the European polity, the 'Europeanness' of the Georgians seems rather different from the EU-related European identity. In addition to that, the Georgian self-ascribed European identity does not exclude the security dimension and vulnerability of the territorial integrity, as the persisting problems of the country. Having considered that, the new political elites also underlined the 'Euro-Atlantic' integration as the main foreign policy priority of the country (Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000; 2006; 2011). Although Georgia's membership to NATO is seen as the primary target for the Georgian security, the European Union is also perceived as an actor for the similar purpose with its 'soft-power instruments'. In this sense, the National Security Concept of Georgia adopted by the Georgian Parliament in July 2005, described Georgia as "an integral part of the European political, economic and cultural area, whose fundamental national values are rooted in European values and traditions [and which] aspires to achieve full integration into Europe's political, economic and security systems… and to return to its European tradition and remain an integral part of Europe" (Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005). Tracey German analyzes two aspects of Georgia's desire for integration with European and Euro-Atlantic

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[67] (Coene, 2016: 79)

structures stemming from "the belief that only a western alignment can guarantee its future independence and prosperity; and the notion of Georgia's 'European' identity" (German, 2015: 612).

3.6   Strengthening the Institutional Ties between Georgia and the European Union

Along with the political discourse and foreign policy orientation that offered pro-European path for the country, the post-Rose Revolution political atmosphere also opened up a process of building stronger institutional ties with Europe. The relations between the EU and Georgia reached another phase as a result of the inception of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP), respectively The post-Rose Revolution political environment collided with the 2004 enlargement of the EU, which referred to a significant moment that Georgia started to be a part of the 'mental map' of the Europe. Evolving from the "benevolent indifference" as it is articulated by Coppieters about the attitude of the EU towards Georgia following the 1990s, from the second half of 2000s, the growing interconnectedness between the EU and Georgia was marked with close institutional collaboration. Particularly, the objectives attained by the EU through ENP and EaP stimulate Georgia to implement certain reforms and changes. Relying on all these developments, this part of the chapter will focus on the steps taken by Georgia and the European Union in the light of the institutional arrangements, which put Georgia in a closer position as a part of the EU's institutional framework as well as to its 'political map'.

The EU launched the ENP as a foreign relations instrument in 2004, to promote "a ring of well governed countries (…) next to the EU that share the EU's fundamental values." The main objective of the ENP is to strengthen security, stability and wellbeing for all neighbours (European Commission, 2003:9; European Commission, 2004: 3-5).[68] When the neighbourhood policy was first outlined by the European

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[68] The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) covers Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine in its eastern frontier; as well as states located on the Mediterranean: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, the Palestinian Authority, and the three states of the South Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Commission in 2003, the EU had not covered the South Caucasus.[69] However, the EC later decided to include all three Caucasian states, as they became its immediate neighbourhood with the 2004 enlargement. The major target of the ENP programme actions aimed at preventing the obstacle emanated from the post-Soviet tendencies and their security, stability and prosperity of these six ENP countries, as they become closer neighbours to the EU. Georgia and the EU adopted the Action Plan and the National Indicative Programme in November 2006 within the framework of the ENP, which provided a concrete agenda to follow both sides (European Commission, 2006). The National Indicative Programme marks the first time that cooperation between the EU and Georgia is embedded in a coherent international framework that specifies concrete goals (Müller, 2011: 66). The Action Plan addressed the strategic objectives for cooperation with the timeframe of five years and its implementation comprises the former provisions of the PCA, as well as new areas of cooperation. The document also shows the EU's commitment to encourage and support Georgia's objective of further integration into European economic and social structures.[70] Moreover, the National Indicative Programme defines priority areas and objectives for the implementation of the Action Plan (European Commission, 2006).[71]

After the 2007 enlargement of the EU, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU and it necessitated a structural change in EU's policies towards its neighbourhood (BBC News, 2007). With the 2007 enlargement, the EU's concerns about any spillover of security threats emanated from post-Soviet region gained more visibility. Regarding the EU, it is extremely important to ensure that these six ENP states' post-Soviet development become stable, predictable and synergetic to the EU as the instability of

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[69] For critical assessments of the ENP, See: (Gänzle, 2009; Franke et al., 2010; Kostadinova, 2009; Browning and Christou, 2010)

[70] The allocated budget for the time period from 2007 to 2010 was EUR 120 million.

[71] The eight priority areas are defined as; strengthening the rule of law, democratic institutions, and human rights; improving the business and investment climate; encouraging economic and sustainable development and poverty reduction; promoting cooperation in the fields of justice, freedom, and security; regional cooperation; peaceful resolution of internal conflicts; cooperation on foreign and security policy and transport and energy.

any border state can have a damaging impact on the European Block (Kharlamova, 2015: 30). Against this backdrop, the EU developed the Black Sea Synergy in April 2007 and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in May 2009 to exercise more comprehensive policies for its eastern neighbourhood (Bache and George, 2006; Balfour and Missiroli, 2007; ENPI Georgia National Indicative Programme, 2007-2010).[72] The Black Sea Synergy was introduced as a result of the need to develop 'a new regional cooperation initiative' that would "focus political attention at the regional level and invigorate ongoing cooperation processes" (European Commission, 2007). However, the EU member states obtained different positions in terms of their divergent national interest which led to internal disputes about further initiatives. For instance, France strongly opposed the German proposal to introduce ENP Eastern Dimension in 2007; the EU Black Sea Synergy launched afterwards representing a compromise between different groups within the EU (Rinnert, 2011: 9). As a result, on May 7, 2009, EU member states and six partner countries initiated the Eastern Partnership process and Georgia became one of six countries within this newly institutionalized collaboration.

According to the Joint Declaration of the Prague EaP Summit, the main goal of the Eastern Partnership is to create the "political association and further economic integration between the European Union and interested [Eastern] partner countries" (Council of the European Union, 2009b). The EaP is developed to bring "distinct policy instruments and represents a political project aiming at bringing attention to the east" while intended as "a specific Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy" (Council of the European Union, 2009a: 5-6). The EaP introduces a new multilateral cooperation track promoting "multilateral confidence building on four thematic platforms: (1) Democracy, good governance and stability, (2) economic integration and convergence with EU policies, (3) energy security and (4) contacts between people. The major contribution of the EaP to the bilateral

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[72] Through the Black Sea Synergy the EU seeks to enhance regional cooperation in a number of key sectors between countries in the so-called Wider Black Sea region, which comprises Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

relations between the partnering countries and the EU is that it embraces more sophisticated/specific policies avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach compared to the ENP (Chkhikvadze, 2013: 58). In order to achieve this aim, the EaP puts forward Association Agreements (AAs) with all six partner countries in order to observe and motivate their reform processes.

For Georgia, the ENP (and also EaP) is considered to be a proper tool to ensure EU's engagement in the process of Georgia's reforms, and a good institutional anchor making (Gogolashvili, 2009: 90). Being a part of the ENP refers to 'soft external guarantees' that the reform process will continue on the correct path, no matter which government comes to power (Gogolashvili, 2009: 90). In this context, the EU obtains a 'guaranteeing position' considering the specific reform steps that the country need to take to pursue its aim towards membership in the future. Meanwhile, Georgia experienced a political change with having a new political leadership as a result of the 2012 parliamentary and 2013 presidential elections. The UNM and Saakashvili lost both elections to a newly emerged political party, the Georgian Dream, founded by a billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, who allegedly had close connections with Russia and against the Rose Revolution.[73] [74] The Georgian Dream coalition replaced the Saakashvili-led United National Movement and presented its slightly different vision of foreign policy (Kakachia and Minesashvili, 2015: 175). Besides, it is important to underline that Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream coalition consisted of six different political parties, having different political orientations and ideology, from pro-Eurasian Gogi Topadze, the leader of the Party of Industrialists,

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[73] The victory of the Georgian Dream coalition in the parliamentary elections of October 2012 ended nine years of rule by the United National Movement (UNM) and of the president, Mikheil Saakashvili.

[74] Just before the elections; President Saakashvili declared that "Our enemy thought that now is the right time to use [a] different approach with [the] Georgians; they thought: "We've failed through economic embargos, provocations, explosions and invasion… maybe the Georgian people are now tired and as a result of these elections…let's seize this beautiful country with kind words and bribes." No. We will have freedom, we want Europe, we want NATO, we want development and better life." See: (Civil Georgia, 2012)

to the pro-Western Alasania Movement: Free Democrats.[75] The new government offered a new policy of 'normalization' with Russia, while promising to maintain Georgia's main aspiration to be a part of the Euro-Atlantic integration. However, the 'normalization' discourse with 'balancing relationship with Russia and West' attracted harsh criticism by the new opposition (the former ruling elite), the UNM. Nevertheless, the new leadership with the Georgian Dream coalition ushered for new alliances both with Europe and Russia despite the opposite expectations. MacFarlane (2015) portrays the recent dynamics after the political victory of the Georgian Dream coalition as follows:

> Dealing with Georgia has been a challenge for the European Union for many years. As with the other Eastern Partnership states, the EU has never made clear its view on possible Georgian membership. Georgia's poor relations with Russia impeded the EU's effort to make Georgia a pillar of the stable, peaceful, democratic and liberal neighbourhood that is a central element of its security strategy. The domestic policies of Saakashvili and the UNM government breached the liberal and democratic standards in the EU's neighbourhood policy. In addition, progress on trade was hampered by the reluctance of the UNM government to accept key elements[76] of the EU's reform agenda (p.1).

At this point, it is important to underline that there are certain setbacks and obstacles preventing further collaboration between the post-Soviet neighbouring countries and the EU in the absence of any membership prospect. However, the ENP and particularly the EaP process required undertaking several reform processes in time in order to achieve more tangible results parallel with each partner countries' demands (Korosteleva, 2017: 321-227). Addressing to the obstacles, Haukkala underlines that "the Union should consider a neighbourhood policy that is based less on heavy normative convergence and harmonization and more on tangible cooperation with

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[75] In 2014, the Georgian Dream Coalition had a crisis when the Western-oriented Defense Minister dismissed, afterwards, the Foreign Minister, the Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, all from the Alasania Movement: Free Democrats had resigned. Then, Irakli Alasania, ex-defense minister and leader of the Free Democrats, said on November 5, 2014, that his party quit the Georgian Dream ruling coalition. The Free Democrats had 10 of the coalition's 83 seats in the 150-seat assembly. See: (Reuters, 2014; Rferl, 2014; Civil Georgia, 2014)

[76] These included competition policy, the labour code, phytosanitary and food safety regulations, judicial independence, and judicial and police practices.

more modest rhetoric and clearer material incentives" (Haukkala, 2008: 1618). In the light of all these challenges, very recently, at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 15th May 2017, EU ministers exchanged their views on the Eastern Partnership and reiterated the crucial importance of the Eastern Partnership for the European Union. This iteration in the Eastern Partnership policies was developed in response to more individual, country-specific policies demanded by each partner country. In relation to this 'new visual identity', the High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn presented a new working document, jointly prepared by the EEAS and the European Commission, called: Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020: Focusing on key priorities and tangible results'. The document identifies '20 deliverables for 2020' concerning four areas: "strengthening institutions and good governance," "connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change," "mobility and people-to-people contacts" (European Commission, 2017).[77]

Despite the concerns, the relations between Georgia and Europe continued strengthening under the rule of the Georgian Dream Coalition. Both bilateral talks finalized with the signing of an Association Agreement on 27 June 2014 that covers creating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Here, it is vital to note that the negotiation talks with the EU for the Association Agreement in 2010 led by the UNM before its finalization during the Georgian Dream Coalition ruling. Still, the new Georgian Dream Coalition was also eager to take the similar steps, aiming strengthening the bilateral relations with the EU and continued similar pro-European/western official state discourse likewise their predecessors. Despite the doubts and allegations expressed by the opposition figures, the Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili re-emphasized Georgia's, as well as his party's choice, towards European path at the signing ceremony of the Association Agreement in 2014 as follows:

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[77] The document based on contributions from EU Member States and EaP Partner countries, points out the concrete terms and tangible results expected of the cooperation and delivered as a common work plan for 2020.

Today Georgia is taking a big step towards free Europe. June 27 will be remembered as a historic and special day. There are dates in the history of each nation, which they are proud of. Today a new big date is being written in the history of my homeland, which gives hope and which our future generations will be proud of. Many generations have spent their lives thinking about this day. And I am happy that it was honour of my generation to turn this dream of our ancestors into reality. It is very difficult to express in words feelings I am experiencing now. I am sure that everyone has this emotion in my country. Today Georgia is given a historic chance to return to its natural environment, Europe, its political, economic, social and cultural space (Civil Georgia, 2014).

Likewise, during his inaugural address in 2013, the President Giorgi Margvelashvili also articulates 'how he feels connected to the Western civilization': "as an individual, a Georgian national is European in terms of self-awareness and an integral part of Western civilization by nature" (Civil Georgia, 2013).

The EU and Georgia started Visa Liberalisation Dialogue (VLD) on 4 June 2012 and the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP) was presented to the Georgian authorities on 25 February 2013. When the European Commission recommended visa-free travel for Georgian citizens in December 2015, the proposal attracted criticism among some EU members, most notably from Germany, which voiced its concern over crimes allegedly committed by Georgian criminal gangs in Germany (Jozwiak, 2017). Another important obstacle caused the delays about the visa liberalization was the migration crisis that the EU had to face and the Georgian VLAP seems to reflect this double challenge through the article 16.2 of the Association Agreement (Vatchadze, 2016). In November 2015, the Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili declared his views on Georgia's European future after visiting Brussels as follows:

It was clear during today's meeting that Georgia's path towards EU integration is irreversible. Some 80 percent of Georgians want closer relations with the EU. It was acknowledged that the benefits for the EU are obvious. Georgia is a success story for the Eastern Partnership and for EU soft power. Yet we need to go further to secure the stability of our region and to shore up human rights. The logical next step on our European journey is visa liberalisation. This is fundamental to the implementation of our Association Agreement with the EU. Without visa-free travel across Europe for Georgians, we cannot make further progress on the people-to-people

exchanges that will really cement EU values in our country and region (Garibashvili, 2015).

The delays regarding granting the visa liberalization to Georgia overshadowed the EU's 'soft-power' approach, as it offers 'more for more' considering pushing for more reforms. In fact, the VLD took five years between Georgia and the EU.[78] Nevertheless, on February 27th 2017, the European Council adopted the Commission proposal granting visa liberalization for Georgia after a long duration of negotiation talks. On March 28th 2017, the Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, along with cabinet ministers, MPs and a group of students, travelled to Athens to celebrate the launch of the visa-free travel to the European Union and to attend the academic conference 'Georgia from Europe to Europe' (Georgian Foreign Ministry, 2017; Georgia Today, 2017). While he was on his way to Athens, Kvirikashvili declared:

> Today is a historic day. Georgian citizens will finally be able to travel visa-free to the European Union/Schengen countries… This is an enormous achievement and a great opportunity for Georgian citizens to better acquaint with the European Union, to better learn the values that the European Union stands on (Civil Georgia, 2017).

The visa-liberalization for the Georgian citizens was heralded as a great victory and clear manifestation of Georgia's progress towards Europe both as a part of the European 'family' and encouraged both the Georgian citizens and political elites for further integration attempts in the future.

3.7   After 25 Years

Alexander Rondeli, who had been one of the prominent figures of the Georgian politics and academia analyses the Georgian Western/European path in the context of the post-Cold War geopolitical constellation as "[Georgian] attempts to integrate their country into European structures is often seen as strategic idealism, which goes

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[78] In order to meet the requirement for the Visa Liberalization, Georgia has ratified seven international conventions as well as adopted eight national strategies, more than 60 legislative amendments and around 70 bylaws, instructions and regulations since 2012.

against all geopolitical arguments and even common sense" (Rondeli, 2001: 195) Drawing on his analysis, it has been more than 25 years since Georgia declared its independence as a result of a long journey regarding its independence struggle. Being a part of the Euro-Atlantic world order as a foreign policy choice and political elites' discourse on 're-uniting with Europe' has been its main targets and political aspiration since the early days of its independence (Kakachia and Minesashvili, 2015: 171).

In addition, in order to disentangle itself from the Soviet heritage and escaping from Russia's geographic and civilizational hegemony, Georgian political elites often pursued a path to put distance to post-Soviet institutional structures such as Commonwealth of Independent states (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Eurasian Union (Kakachia, 2012: 2). In turn, all these attempts to 're-positioning' and/or 'embracing' the Georgia's new path by disassociating itself from the Soviet as well as the imperial Russian experience found resonance in 're-uniting with Europe' and 're-discovering/constructing Georgia's Europeanness' in the contemporary Georgian politics and as a part of its Europeanization path.

No doubt that the increasing in the institutional collaboration between the EU and Georgia has positively affected the relation between Georgia and the European countries in many levels as well as it contributes to country's Europeanization path. Nevertheless, the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness, building on 'returning to Europe' discourse reaches beyond any institutional cooperation. Merely, the idea of Europe can be traced back to the first independence process, even pre-modern time in the mental map/political memory of the Georgian people. In the Georgian case, the multi-layered self-identification with Europe has not emerged irrespective of the 'other' constructed as opposed to what symbolizes 'the Georgian' (Bechev and Nicolaidis, 2010: 1-11). On the contrary, it has revealed itself in the form of 'detaching/disassociating itself' from the past: i.e. including both the imperial era and the Soviet experience. Against this backdrop, the Rose Revolution paved the

ground for the Georgian new state elites to re-construct the 'idealized image' of the West/Europe, as it locates 'we' as a part of European culture vis-à-vis the Soviet/Imperial Russian notion of the 'other'. In this sense, the 'idealized' interpretation of Europe and emphasis on Georgian 'Europeanness' are embedded in "the out-group" image derived from *determinacio est negatio*: in order to define oneself (or exercise a right to self-determination) one has to distinguish oneself from the other (Nodia, 2009).

CHAPTER 4

THE REPRESENTATION(S) OF EUROPE DURING THE PRE AND EARLY MODERN EPOCHS

4.1   Introduction

In 1919, Noe Jordania, the president of the Georgian Democratic Republic, addressed to the Georgia's Constituent Assembly that "Our life today and our life in the future is ... indissolubly tied to the west, and no force can break this bond" (Jones, 2013: 251). This statement points out Europe as a 'true' path of the country, while still resonates in the perception of the past as well as the contemporary political orientation of Georgia towards Europe.

Relying on what Jordania addressed for the future path of the country, the idea of Europe has various meanings, representations and articulations in Georgian identity building regarding different critical junctures of the Georgian history.[79] According to Delanty, Europe cannot be reduced to an idea, an identity or a reality since it has a structuring force and what is real is the discourse in which ideas and identities are formed and historical realities constituted (Delanty, 1995: 3). Following Delanty, the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanization path are closely interrelated, depending on what constituted the Georgian 'self' and 'other' that were constructed through the different political discourses/critical junctures. While there is no monolithic understanding/ structure about Europe and being European, the Georgian identity building and how it constructed the 'other' in different historical junctures

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[79] There is a vast academic literature about 'the idea of Europe' in European Studies as well as Literature, Political Philosophy and History. Still, the very 'core' of the subject, could easily be highlighted by different intellectual domains, depending on the different academic fields as well as from where one approaches Europe geographically and intellectually.

cemented the perception of Georgian Europeanness and Europe as part of Georgian 'self'/'we' along with different spatio-temporal political occurrences. Merely, different conceptualizations and meanings attached to the Georgian identity building and its self-identification with Europe emanated from a contested geopolitical landscape that defined the neighboring Muslim powers and Russia as 'other' in different historical phases. Nevertheless, the 'constructed' notion of Europe as a 'true-path' justifies the narrative built around 'return to Europe' in the following decades as a state discourse remained the same.

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the different representations of Europe in Georgian history articulated by the respondents to reveal the 'ideational' aspects of Georgian Europeanization, which directly connects to how the idea of Europe and 'Georgian Europeanness' are constructed and how it reflects on the 'semantic world' of the contemporary Europeanization process. Depending on my findings of the fieldwork, I argue that the 'ideational' elements of the Georgian self-identification with Europe did not particularly emanate from a direct encounter with the Europe/West in the Georgian history, yet, it determined by the third parties identified as 'other(s)'. Nevertheless, despite the contested geopolitical framework and changing 'characterizations/representations' of the 'other' in different political constellations, the perception of the idea of Europe and articulations about 'belonging to European family' indicates similar pattern in the perception of the past and even today. Most importantly, the very aim of this chapter is to find out the historical reference points and narratives that have been presently used in re/constructing and justifying the current dominant discourse that is the Georgian path towards the EU. In doing so, it will become a bridge between the past and the contemporary Georgian Europeanization process, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Depending on the field data, there are some particular determinants, which both comprised 'belonging' to Europe while constructing the 'Georgian Europeanness' as a part of the Georgian 'self'/'we'. All the respondents underline these determinants,

co-constituting the idea of Europe and Georgianness while building the Georgian identity, exemplified as Christianity, the perception of (in)security/territorial vulnerability and the rise of national awareness, which were determined by modernization and Enlightenment process blossomed in Europe and accessed through Russian Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries. All these determinants seem to construct "social imaginaries" about the Georgian identity and its self-identification with Europe.[80]

Drawing on a social-constructivist perspective, the aim of this part is to elaborate the multiple and the complex layers of Georgian Europeanization. Merely, the perception of Europe and the Georgian self-attained Europeanization would be elaborated in order to reveal the 'ideational' determinants of Georgian Europeanization path. In doing so, I will examine how the Georgian identity and idea of Europe were interdependently constructed in different 'critical junctures', what kind of dynamics lie beneath the construction of the Georgian 'self' and 'other' through these historical phases such as the fall of Constantinople, Russian annexation of 1801 and the Soviet era and how they contribute to the Georgian self-identification with Europe in return.

Based on the field data, I will focus on three building blocks shaping the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness, which are the role of Christianity, (in)security notion and territorial vulnerability, modernization and enlightenment under the Russian Empire that corresponded with the rise of the Georgian national awakening in the late 19th century, driven by the Georgian national intelligentsia.[81]

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[80] Here, the term "social imaginary" is borrowed from Charles Taylor. He explains the term as follows: "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations." See: (Taylor, 2004: 26; Castoriadis, 1987)

[81] However, the idea of Europe had little meaning during the ancient time, it was a geographical expression, and belonged more to the realm of myth than of science and politics. See: (Hay, 1957: 5)

4.2   Pre-Modern Idea/Representations of Europe and Christianity

The early traces/indications of the idea of Europe and the Georgian self-ascribed European identity are attributed to the pre-modern era of the Georgian history. During the field research, almost all the respondents underline Christianity[82] as one of the defining elements of the Georgian identity, and one of the major determinants of the Georgian self-identification with Europe. Accordingly, Christianity provides a normative framework that 'we' and 'Europe' are embedded into, which particularly refers to 'social imaginary', as one of the basis of the Georgian discourse of the belonging to Europe, despite the changing critical junctures.

In the interviews, Christianity is mentioned of particular importance for establishing common cultural ground with Europe in building the Georgian Europeanness. The respondents underline the 'same civilizational ground' that Georgia and Europe share, started from the Roman and Byzantine era, through Christianity.

Regarding the early foundations of the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness, a former Minister states that

> From an analytical point of view I would like to say that we share, the general public understanding regarding our identity is shaped as being a part of Europe, and European. I would say that we share the whole geographical space with Europe. These roots are not just a perception, but roots of this phenomenon go deep into the [Georgian] history. The political entities and societies emerged here and Georgia has historically been always a part of the wider Mediterranean civilizational space, which later called the Byzantine cultural area. And the very much roots of our culture and self-identification comes from that understanding definitely. We see no contradiction whatever between the identity of European and here in Georgia as Caucasian. I would say, they complement each other because the influence of that civilization [Mediterranean]… Mainstream from the Mediterranean, Black Sea area to this very region is so strong ties between the cultures between the religious species based here… Here, in the Caucasus, there are Armenians, Georgians are Greek Orthodox people, nevertheless, they were very closely working together in the setting that I

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[82] The adoption of Christianity for Georgians dated back to the early 4th century, while the Kingdom of Kartli/Iberia as a political unit started emerging at the end of the 4th century, and Parnavaz, considered being the first Georgian king ruled between 312 and 301 BC.

would say that all spiritual, [based on Christianity] and all cultural space here in the South Caucasus and Georgia is very much part of that. (Interviewee 1, Former State Official, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

In a similar line, a former state officer and expert on European affairs emphasizes the roots of the Georgian Europeanness with the influence of the Byzantine Empire as geographical and cultural basis which connected the Georgian land with Europe during the ancient time, as follows:

[The idea of Europe] is not new in Georgia, if we go to history it is a really long story. The most long-term influence of Europe on Georgia

it was through the Byzantine Empire. Although the western European countries do not consider the Byzantine Empire as a western power, they think it is an Asian power, but it was Roman Empire. That was long-term influence of course and because there was very strong cultural ties. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

According to most of the respondents, the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness directly refer to sharing/belonging a 'common cultural space' within a larger geographical and civilizational framework; i.e. as a part of the Mediterranean civilization and locate Georgia as a part of the Byzantine sphere of influence in their mental map. In addition, the respondents underline that the 'European identity' is not seen contradictory with the Georgian identity, rather, as a complementing factor based on the 'same values'.

Another element of the narrative of Georgian Europeanness is highlighted as 'common European values' that were again transferred trough Christianity. Most of the respondents underline that the Georgian and European people also have 'same values' and share 'same historical roots'. For instance, a former Ambassador, who is also a foreign policy expert, emphasizes that both Georgia and Europe share the 'common values' through Christianity as follows:

Georgian historical experience is the one that the closest to European values. In the past, like European values, they were based on Christian values. They have involved what we called European values: the human rights, dignity and freedom. (Interviewee 3, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

In addition, an MP in the Georgian Parliament who is responsible for the EU relations also points out the 'common basis' that European and Georgian identities are built upon with denoting that

> Georgians are identifying themselves as European, as it has its roots in Georgianness. In terms of values, we are not transforming our values to (European values) it is common system of values. General European and Georgian values are the same. (Interviewee 4, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 07/12/2016).

In a similar vein, an academician from the Tbilisi State University also highlights the same elements with referring how Christianity means "sharing similar Christian values" as a part of the common culture and tradition with the West/Europe as

> If you review Georgian culture, in its articulation, representation you always find western European values in it. First of all, these values are based on Christianity, Christian tradition; we can find huge overlap of Christianity and western values. Since Georgia became Christian country since 4th century, it is European values became for us, as a basis for our existence. It was not as an easy process but of course... here we developed in this channel, we have developed somehow parallel to Europe. (Interviewee 5, Academician, Tbilisi, 28/11/2017).

During the field research it is observed that some of the respondents use 'Christian values' and 'European values' interchangeably. Christianity seems to be perceived as the basis for the formation of 'common values' exemplified with human rights and freedom and assumed to provide 'the same ground' in the formation of the Georgian and European identity. Nevertheless, it remains vague in this narrative to understand how these values such as human rights; freedom and equality are particularly emanated from Christianity.

In order to draw attention to the defining role of religion in the Georgian identity, many of the respondents emphasize the role of Christianity as the core of the Georgianness and Georgian identity. For instance, an academician from Tbilisi State University underlines that Georgians obtained Christianity even before Europe, which also had taken place in the official statement as follows:

Christianity as a civilization that Europe is based upon is the same base for Georgia. Georgian would say 'we', because we were Christians earlier than Europe, Europe is not the one that taught us how to be true Christians. It is kind of the same argument that Georgia was Europe even before (Europe itself). And actually David Usupashvili head of the Georgian Parliament declared, I guess two years ago, in his official speech: 'Georgia was Europe even before Europe knew it was Europe.' (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

According to her statement, it can be traced that the perception/representation of being European can easily be articulated as 'being Christian'. In that vein, her analysis also demonstrates that Georgia's Europeanness is perceived to be based on being Christian, "even before the self-realization of Europe as Europe" that is inferable to the Georgians' early adoption of Christianity as compared to Europe.

Another academician from Tbilisi State University also characterizes Christianity as an inseparable part of 'being Georgian' as follows:

When Russia came to the Caucasus at the end of the 18th century, there was this discussion among the Georgian political elite of the time; both in the eastern and western Georgian Kingdoms, that Christianity is a part of the Georgian identity. So it started from the 8th century, there are different texts which refer being Georgian in this region means first of all being Christian. Then, you should speak Georgian language and so on. So Georgia as a nation was constructed from different people being Christian living in this region and being part of the Georgian language and culture. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

According to almost all the interviewees, Christianity holds utmost importance for the identity formation in pre-modern and modern Georgia. Besides, as to the predominant majority of the respondents, it also renders the European identity with the Georgian one and draws a 'true path' that united the former with the latter. According to findings obtained in the interviews, Georgian identity has been formed as a part of the 'the Mediterranean civilizational space', therefore, shared 'common historical roots' and 'common cultural ground' with Europe and carrying 'Christian/European values' all stemmed from Christianity and being Christian. All these determinants demonstrate the ties entwined Europe with Georgia since the pre-modern era that substantiating the Georgian self-ascribed identification with Europe.

However, in spite of the 'self-evident' role of Christianity in Georgian Europeanness, the above-mentioned determinants pertinent to Christianity indicates some, yet limited, connections with Europe in the pre-modern Georgian history. Regarding the pre-modern interaction between Europe and Georgia, as Jones puts it "the early reminiscence of Europe is illustrated by rather slim historical pickings before the 19th century" (Jones, 2003: 83-110). It is ambiguous to what extent early Georgian Kingdom shared 'common cultural ground' with Europe. For instance, there is no clear historical evidence/record between the Georgian Kingdom and its counterparts in Europe during the 'golden era' of the Georgian Kingdom in the 11th and 12th centuries (Lordkipanidze, 1987: 80-118). As Ó'Beacháin and Coene (2014) assert, despite the Georgians had close contacts with, and were in some ways part of, the Greco-Roman and Byzantine worlds; however, there are no indications whether they identified themselves with these civilizations and cultures (p.925). Nevertheless, it still occupies crucial standing as a 'reference point' and 'political path' that Georgians are willing to take.

According to Nodia, the European identity of Georgia carries the notion that 'we do not belong here' (Nodia, 1998). Here, that sentence indicates certain 'discontent' about the geographical and cultural attributions that the 'Georgian self-perception' is built upon (Batiashvili, 2017). Nodia further explains this phenomenon in connection with being surrounded by the 'wrong neighbours' that also construct the perception of Europe as a 'centre of goodness and hope' as follows:

> …although throughout the mediaeval period Georgia had been politically involved in Muslim – and in particular Arab, Persian and Turkish – worlds, and became part of the Russian Empire in 1801, all these were considered to be happening against its will and no less importantly, against its deep sense of identity. Georgia was unlucky enough to have the wrong neighbours. Hence, there had to be cultural and/or geographical reference points, a 'centre of goodness and hope' against which the wrongness of the bad neighbours could be highlighted. In 'reality', Georgia 'belonged' to this center of goodness; so only when it had established proper links with centre would it be able to be its true self For the Georgian elite since the 19th century, this centre of goodness and true self has been represented by the West, or Europe. This implied that the basic Georgian project was to build

bridges to the west, and to become westernized itself – which at the same time was seen as returning to its true self (Nodia, 1998: 13).

Drawing on what Nodia proposes, apart from its pre-modern rather 'slim' impact, the notion of Europe mainly stems from the negative representation of 'wrong neighbours' and all sorts of interaction with 'these surrounding forces' depicted against Georgia's 'real path' while signifying West/Europe to reach its 'true-self'. Hence, despite the ambiguous historical evidences about sharing the 'same culture' and 'same values' with Europe, the role of Christianity was discernible in the Georgian European identity building and for forging alliances. For instance, a former minister explains the continuous attempts taken by Georgia to 'lessen' the impact of the 'wrong neighbours' as follows:

> You know it [being surrounded by oppressive neighbours] prompted the process with the Byzantine Empire and with searching for assistance from the Christian European states and so on. However, the fall of the Georgian Kingdom finally led Georgia to join Russian Empire, then, to the Soviet Union. Definitely, during these processes, the possibilities of the common development and culture were sought. However, we always decided, and served as the final destination, no matter how good, or crazy it was, the Europeanization and Europe. (Interviewee 1, Former State Official, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

Returning to the role of Christianity, even today in the contemporary Georgia, Orthodox Christianity obtains crucial stance, as it is seen as the constitutive element of the Georgian identity and Georgian traditional values. On the other hand, these values were/are not always compatible with the 'European values'. Christianity was/is not only pertinent to Europe to build ties/connections and to be a part of the 'common cultural space'. Correspondingly, during the 19th century, after the failed attempt of Orbeliani with the European powers for building alliance, Christianity again became the mainstay of the Georgian Kingdom to direct its attention to the Russian Empire, which founds its ground with "sharing the Orthodox faith" (Batiashvili, 2017).[83] So, while it had vague position to provide 'common cultural

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[83] For instance, Batiashvili elaborates the role of Orthodoxy which approximated Georgia with Russia as a part of the geopolitical concerns as well as cultural ground it entails as "The discourse on Orthodoxy is significant not only as part of cultural identity, but in terms of its capacity to have

ground' with Europe in the pre-modern era, its uniting character to incite Georgian political elites to build geopolitical alliances due to its territorial vulnerability and insecurity was much more discernible in the early modern eras, which will be discussed in the following part.

4.3 Security Notion and Searching for a 'Savior'

The second building block of the Georgian Europeanness emphasized by the interviewees is the security issue and/or territorial vulnerability, which are strongly intertwined with the Georgian European identity and its self-identification with the West/Europe. The permanent external threats and geopolitical constraints surrounding the Georgian land emerge as a deeply rooted element shaping the Georgian Europeanness as well as its quest to reach Europe (Suny, 1994).[84]

Most of the respondents denote that the territorial vulnerability and continuous external attacks from the neighbouring powers necessitated the search for building alliance with a 'powerful actor'. In fact, according to most of the respondents, the (in) security problem are/were directly relational to the construction of the Georgian 'we' and 'other', i.e., derived from the dichotomy between Georgian 'Christian self' and 'Muslim others'. Parallel to that, the respondents underline, the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, and the Russian annexation of the Georgian land in 1801 as two major 'historical junctures', which demonstrate 'detachment' from Europe, yet, led to different phases of 'convergence' in line with the Georgian European identity.

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geopolitical implications. Namely, the issue with the Orthodox imperative is that it implicitly entails favoring the Orthodox "familiar neighbor" Russia over the non-Orthodox "stranger" West. Such a breach between state rhetoric and the country's most authoritative institution's ideology created a subterranean tension and a sense among many that Russia, after all, may not be "that much of an enemy." See: (Batiashvili, 2017)

[84] Even as early as the first millennium, the Caucasus region was a battlefield between the great powers, i.e. Rome-Byzantium and Iran, all of which claimed suzerainty/control over Caucasia, yet neither of them was able to overwhelm the other entirely and decisively.

An academician from the Tbilisi State University highlights the reasons of the security needs of the Georgian Kingdoms for searching for alliance to keep its territorial integrity. He stresses how the continuous threat from neighbouring powers influences the Georgians' motivation for acquiring European identity, thereby guaranteeing its territorial survival as follows:

> …Because the empires changed and the Georgia had a brief history [The Golden era in the 11th century during the reign of Queen Tamar and David II] that was very strong Kingdom that exerted influence over its neighbours in the 11th and 12th century. Then, from the 13th century, when the Mongols came to the Caucasus, so Georgia again was dismembered and became prey to the different empires. After the Mongol Empire dissolved, then, there were other powers. And starting from the fall of Constantinople, [in the 15th century] and with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, Georgia was caught up between the Persian Empire and Ottoman Empire. So this was the case during the 16th century and 17th century and most of the 18th century. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

Another academician from Tbilisi State University also stresses how territorial vulnerability and independence are embedded into the Georgian Europeanness and stemmed from the dichotomy between the 'Muslim East' as the 'other' vis-à-vis 'European West' as a part of 'we' with stating that

> Retrospective historical context, this idea [the Georgian Europeanness] is very strong I would say, Orientation to Europe and European values. This strong orientation has different sources. The first source is very oriented to the idea of keeping Georgia as an independent country. We had different enemies trying to swallow our identity, swallow our country to abolish our independence. This was coming from the East, I would say, from Muslim countries mostly; Iran Turkey and Arab countries as well. Therefore, the West/Europe seemed to us a kind of a protection of our identity, our independence as a state and nation. This was a pure historical reason I would say. (Interviewee 5, Academician, Tbilisi, 28/11/2017).

In a parallel way, a former state officer and expert on European affairs interprets 'the fall of Constantinople' as 'isolation from Europe' and comments on how the fall of Byzantine Empire and Constantinople/İstanbul necessitated the Georgian Kingdom for searching for new alliance as follows:

After the fall of Byzantine Empire and the fall of Constantinople, Georgia became isolated from Europe. Also, when Turkey [the Ottoman Empire] took the straits, for instance, Venetian also could not reach the Georgian ports so the European influence practically stopped. But still the Georgian enlightenment figures, who reached Europe and bringing some ideas from there, with joining Russian Empire of course. Before joining the Russian Empire, there were also some contacts between the Georgian Kings and the European Kings; and Georgia was always looking to get support from Europe as a Christian power that was surrounded by Muslim powers. And it was always appealing Europe to help but actually there was not anybody to help. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

In a similar way, Kakachia and Minesashvili underline how the fall of Constantinople/İstanbul is depicted in the early Georgian history as follows:

As the Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople in 1453 and sealed the Black Sea, Georgia was cut off from Europe and the Christian world. Consequently, Georgia's trade ties with the West were severed resulting in political and economic decline. The country turned into a battleground for two rival powers; i.e. Safavid Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Georgia found itself exclusively enveloped by Islamic powers (Kakachia and Minesashvili, 2015: 174).

The fall of Constantinople/İstanbul in 1453 marked the beginning of a new era for the Georgian Kingdom. The Georgian Kingdom lost its 'Christian' ally to protect its land and the fall of Constantinople/İstanbul was/is perceived as 'rupture' from the West/Europe as well as from the Christian world. The protection of the Byzantine Empire regarding the small Georgian principalities, i.e., the early Kingdoms of Kolkhis (Western Georgia) and Kartli (Eastern Georgia) through common Christian faith no longer existed.[85] Then, between the 15th and 18th century, Georgia had been gone through a long-term turmoil and the small Georgian princedoms had to obtain various forms of vassal/suzerainty relations with the Muslim powers, which were

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[85] V. D. Dondua, a Soviet historian, underlines how Christianity had/has a major role in the formation of alliances and consolidating the ruling power inside the Georgian Kingdom as "[The adoption of Christianity] had important consequences for the kings of Kartli. In the first place, it strengthened their alliance with the Roman Empire, where Christianity had also been victorious, against the Persians; second, it untied the hands of the kings in struggle against the pagan priesthood, which possessed immense landholdings and great wealth." See: (Suny, 1994)

striving for superiority, with its east and west.[86] Meanwhile, long term occupation of the 'hostile neighbours' paved the ground for the construction of the image/notion of the West/Europe as 'savior' and 'patron', while it consolidated its perception of 'Muslim other'.[87] According to Nodia and Jones, "the Europe/West was perceived as a 'patron', 'rescuer' from the Muslim neighbors, which would later, became Russia" in the Georgian political history (Jones, 2003: 83-110).[88] All these factors delineated the borders of its self-perception that "[Georgia] as an outpost of Western Christendom in an Islamic world; therefore, Georgianness refers to being 'Christian, European and warrior-martyr' vis-à-vis the Muslim 'other'" (Jones, 2005: 91).

Depending on the respondents' analysis, protecting the 'territorial integrity' comes to the fore as a prominent element in the construction of the West/Europe as a part of the Georgian 'we'. In spite of some weak elements/indications regarding the pre-modern/ancient connections between Georgian and European powers, the 'image' and 'perception' of the West/Europe rather 'strong' according to the respondents' interpretation. Under such geostrategic constraints, the first diplomatic encounter between the European powers and the Georgian Kingdom had not taken place until the Orbeliani's visit in the 18th century with the pursuit of making alliance against

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[86] At the end of the 15th century, the Georgian Kingdom could not maintain its unity and had fragmented into three kingdoms: Kartli, Kakheti, and Imereti, and the Duchy of Samtskhe-Saatbago. Thereafter, Georgia had become a battlefield between two powerful enemies, the Ottoman Turks to the west and the Persian Safavids to the east. The two powers were constantly at war (1514-55, 1578-90, 1602-18, 1623-39), in order to ensure their sphere of influence in the Caucasian region, including the Georgian land. For an overview of Georgia's economic and political situation between Persia and the Ottoman Empire in the 16th–17th centuries. See: (Brisku, 2013)

[87] Nodia identifies 'the search for a proper patron' as a part of the 'identity paradigm' that has its roots from the perception of the West, resulted from the continuous threats directed by its 'expansionist' neighbours. See: (Nodia, 1998: 13-14)

[88] There are also other sources articulated by the Georgian intellectuals, historians and also political elites about the political, cultural and historical connection between Georgia and Europe. For instance, A. Jokhadze, asserts "Before the 13th century Georgian society was identical to the feudal society of the West European type; typologically, Georgia belonged to the West European civilization. This means that its social infrastructure realized the idea of personal freedom, although, admittedly, as a system of rights and duties of the complicated vassal hierarchy." For a critical analysis of the Georgian euro-centric historiography, see: (Kirchanov, 2010: 158-167)

the neighbouring powers (Jones, 2003: 83-110). In fact, Orbeliani's visit to Europe[89] can be exemplified as a 'reference point' for demonstrating to what extend they shared similar components in their 'social imaginary' to build an alliance. However, European powers had not met the Georgian demand for building alliance and the reluctance of the West simply indicated rather inadequate access and connection of the Georgian Kingdom**.** Afterwards, Orbeliani's mission became a well-known narrative/symbol of disappointment about how West/Europe neglects Georgian call for assistance, which is also discernable in the contemporary Georgian political life (Nodia, 1998: 20; Gideon, 2008; Coppieters, 1998: 44-68, Batiashvili, 2017; Rachman, 2008). [90]

Also, Orbeliani's failed attempt to build alliance with the European powers led to another crucial historical turning point regarding to the Georgian identity building and its ties with Europe. The averseness of Western/European powers to provide protection paved the way for a new actor, the emerging Russian Empire, as an alternative ally, a powerful neighbor bounded with the same Orthodox Christian faith.[91] In this regard, the indifference of the Western powers to Georgia had the result of enforcing Georgia to establish closer relations with the Russian Empire in return of Russian protection for the Georgian Kingdom against its Muslim neighbours.

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[89] When the Georgian King Vakhtang VI attempted to search for a powerful ally to ensure its survival. The Georgian King Vakhtang VI, (ruled between 1716 and 1724) sent his envoy, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani for this mission to negotiate with the European powers. During his diplomatic visits, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani tried to make political alliances particularly with Vatican, i.e. Pope Clement XI, and King Louis XIV of France to ensure protection for preventing the attacks of the Ottoman and Persian Empires. See: (Suny, 1994)

[90] Here it is important to denote that despite his pro-Western stance and political discourse, President Saakashvili admitted that "the whole history of Georgia is of Georgian Kings writing to Western Kings for help or for understanding. And sometimes not even getting a response." See: (Rachman, 2008)

As another example: The German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher declared in 1992 that "Europe will never leave Georgia to its fate" and that Georgia would not be disappointed a third time by Europe. See: (Coppieters, 1998: 44-68)

[91] Since the 17th century, Muscovy emerged as an important power in northern Eurasia. To see more about the impact of Russian expansionism in Caucasus and Central Asia, please see: (Rywkin, 1988; Lang, 1957; Lang, 1962; Baddeley, 1999; Barrett, 1999; Gvosdev, 2000)

According to an academician from Tbilisi State University, the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness take its roots from various political narratives pertinent to different timeframes, re/produced by the different political actors, which seems to oscillate between one pole (center of power) to another as follows:

> European idea has very complex history in Georgia. If you view it from social-constructivist perspective, it depends on who are the political elites in a specific historical period that we are discussing. And Georgia has had different political elites and governments since its independence. Each government and political elites had, I would say, different ideas about Europe, different ideas about the Georgian identity and its role in the international system and international politics. When Georgia regained its independence in 1991, people and the political elites started to discuss about the Georgian long history and what was the position of Georgia vis-à-vis Europe from the ancient times, the Middle Age or in the 19th and 20th century. Also, there are always conflicting ideas. The Georgian ideas and identities are complex because of the very interesting geographical location vis-à-vis different empires, which tried to influence and conquer Georgia. It used to be a buffer state between the different empires and it used to be partitioned by the different empires. Therefore, the Georgian identity was a little bit ambiguous. There is a part of the Georgian society either pro-one empire or others another empire. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

As it is indicated in his analysis, geopolitical considerations, i.e., being exposed to 'external' threats and occupations for such a long time seem to have been affected and had shaped the Georgian identity, while it also gave different attributions and meanings ascribed 'different' meanings to Europe and 'being European'.

4.4 Modernization and Enlightenment: The Emergence of the Russian Empire as a Gate/Bridge to Europe

According to the respondents' analysis, the Russian Empire constituted an important place in relation to the formation of Georgian Europeanness and Georgian path of Europeanization. The early idea of Europe and Europeanization in Georgian history started to take a new phase with the emergence of Russia through a set of contradictory relations between the Russian Empire and Georgia. While Russian Empire soon started to obtain an 'oppressive' characteristic, far from being a 'savior' for the Georgian people, it also carried out an intermediary role as a gate to Europe.

Almost all the respondents underline the 'twofold/dual faced role' pertained to the Russian Empire for Georgia that comprises both 'occupation' as well as the path to 'liberation' for independence during the early 20th century. Depending on the field data, it can be said that access to Europe through Russian Empire for catching up with Western/European Enlightenment and modernization were of vital importance for Georgians. It also later resonated in the path that Georgian intelligentsia had taken for the Georgian nation building process in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[92]

A respondent from Tbilisi State University stresses the dual role that Russian Empire had taken as follows:[93]

> When the Kakheti Kingdom, the Eastern Georgian Kingdom, signed the Georgievsk Agreement with the Russian Empire; Russia and Georgia became allies. But what happened afterwards was that Russia of course violated the treaty and conquered first the Eastern Georgian Kingdom, then, in the 19th century, occupied the Western Georgian Kingdom. So instead of being a savior, Russian Empire became an oppressor. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

On the other hand, the same respondent also underlines how Russian Empire had become a gate to Europe despite the annexation of the Georgian land, as follows:

> So at the end of the 18th century, there was this discussion since Russia is a Christian country and Georgia was facing with the enemies [surrounding

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[92] According to Chavchavadze, it was Russia which 'opened the doors of Enlightenment' to Georgia, and Georgia found 'peace', as he illustrated in his article called 'Hundred Years Ago' published in 1899, reminded the events had taken place a century ago, when the Russian army came to assist the Georgian Kingdom threatened by the Ottoman and Persian forces. Chavchavadze stated that: "Russia 'opened the doors of the Enlightenment … [and] Georgia found peace. The patronage of our fellow believers quelled our fear of the enemy… the constantly warring, exhausted country became tranquil, freed from havoc and devastation and rested from war and struggle." Chavchavadze, I. (1987) cited in Brisku, A. (2016) p.116.

[93] The Russo-Georgian Treaty of Georgievsk was signed between Erekle II, the King of the Eastern Georgian Kingdom of Kartli Kakheti, and Catherine II of Russia in 1783. The Treaty granted Georgia protectorate status and Russia gained the control of the Georgian foreign relations and promised military protection from the ongoing Muslim attacks, the right of control on its internal affairs. The agreement also ensured the continuation of Bagrationi (Bagratid) succession in the Georgian throne and guaranteed the autocephalic position of the Georgian Orthodox Church. See: (Rayfield, 2013: 250)

Muslim powers] of different religion mainly Islam. For that reason, we should stick with the Russians and should be Russian allies so that would sort of be a way to 'return to Europe'. So Europe is understood as Christian world, so to say. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

The attempts for building alliance with Russia had not ended up with finding another 'savior' for the Georgian Kingdom but the Russian annexation of the Georgian land.[94] Therefore, the 1801 Russian annexation of Georgia has been viewed as a great tragedy by Georgians.[95] However, it paradoxically led to Georgia got closer to Europe. By the time of the annexation of the Georgian land, Russia had already gone through modernization[96] process and directly influenced by the Enlightenment ideas that already flourished in Europe. During the 19th and 20th century the Russian Empire had become a bridge between Georgia and Europe in terms of catching up with 'modernization' and 'western civilization' (Reger, 2004: 217; Jones, 2004: 92). In order to highlight the role that the Russian Empire played for giving Georgia access to Europe as well as the impact of Europe in Georgian socio-political life during the 19th and the 20th century, a former state officer and expert on European affairs states that

Counting on Russia as an Orthodox Christian country, this was the main idea that the Russia would defend Georgia against the big Muslim powers, which were surrounding Georgia. Actually when Russia annexed Georgia, I can say that there was very strange thing that Europeanization of Georgia was coming through the Russian Empire. What were the signs of Europeanization [back then] even if the Russian way of governance, but still there were European institutions. So the way of governance, architecture, and the buildings you see in Tbilisi now were built in the 19th century or in

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[94] In 1800, Tsar Paul I signed a decree on the incorporation of Kartli-Kakheti into the Russian Empire, benefiting from the rivalry in the Georgian throne and the persisting turbulence brought by the Iranian incursion. See: (Gvosdev, 2000: 85)

[95] The 1801 Russian annexation of Georgia is a controversial issue between the Russian and Georgian sources. While the Georgian historiography asserts that the annexation was against the Georgian Kingdom's will, the Russian sources proposes the otherwise. As it was requested by the Georgian King to secure its lands from further attacks. See: (The Russian Presidential Library, n.d.)

[96] Regarding that era, Westernization and Europeanization are used as synonymous with modernization, but are more specific in their implication that European values, practices, and institutions serve as the criteria for measuring change. See: (Reger, 2004: 217)

the beginning of the 20th century, were purely European architecture. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

Apart from the 'modernizing' role of the Russian Empire, it can be noticeable that the deep-rooted dichotomy between 'Muslim-East' and 'Christian-West' still determined the Georgian perception of the 'self' and 'other' as well as what it was to be 'attained' as a part of its European identity building. For instance, many respondents underline what 'East' and 'West/Europe' represented for the Georgian identity during the 19th and 20th centuries in the field research. A respondent from a civil society institution underscores the 'cultural' roots of the Georgian self-identification with Europe as follows:

> The European self-image/self-understanding of Georgia historically started in the 18th century, even earlier. There were connections, through Christianity, ideological, and before these, through economy like the Silk Road. The Georgian orientation is neither Asiatic nor 'eastern'. Therefore, Georgian self-identification is not built on eastern culture, never. That is why there is a common understanding, connection with the Europe. So, Europeanization [of Georgia] began in the 19th century with the European ideas came through Russia, during the 18th-19th century and as a part of modernization. Yet, this is different right now; it [Europeanization] embodies political understanding much. Culturally, we always think that we belong to Europe. As compared to the Russia, we have more European elements. (Interviewee 8, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 16/10/2015).

In a similar vein, another respondent from a civil society organization emphasizes the importance of identity and elaborates connotations that constructed the 'other' also molded the 'Georgian self' and what Europe represented as follows:

> First of all, Europe is a matter of identity for Georgians. Georgians claim that they are first European Christians and feel closer to Europe... Being European also means that not 'being Asian'. There are lots of negative connotations about being Asian, for instance, it means that being 'backward', 'not modern' and 'unprogressive'. You know it is [being European] is a matter of opinion, 'belonging to Europe', refers to 'not being Asian'. I don't think that Georgians particularly give a thought to the meaning of Europe. On the contrary, they just feel that way about themselves. (Interviewee 9, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

In regard to the impact of the European Enlightenment for Georgia, Suny depicts how the Georgians discovered a new path for uniting itself with Europe through

Enlightenment under the Russian Empire in the 19th and 20th century. Suny denotes that "Enlightenment was the means by which Georgia could escape the past dominated by the Muslim East and join the Christian, modern West... This ambivalence toward 'Europeanization' and Russian rule was a constant feature of Georgian intellectual life through the 19th century into the 20th (Suny, 1994: 122). Although annexation of Russia might be seen as a rupture with the formation of Georgian Europeanness in early modern era, there are still continuities with the pre-modern era in terms of Georgian concerns of territorial integrity and security as well as the self-identification with Europe against the others.

4.4.1 At the Dawn of the Georgian Democratic Republic: The Rise of Tergdaleulebi and the Georgian National Identity

Georgia's path under the Russian Empire from 1801 to 1918 had been one of the critical junctures at the demise of the 19th century. Throughout this process, Russian Empire acquired an important position as the mainstay for the European modernization and the Enlightenment, which inevitably prompting the Georgian intelligentsia to forge the basis of the modern Georgian nation as well as consolidating the notion of Georgian European identity.

The modernization and the European Enlightenment acquired through the Russian Empire instigated the national awareness among the Georgian intellectuals during the late 19th and early 20th century. The Georgian intellectual elite, *tergdaleulebi,* came from the noble families and involved with the Russian Empire's intellectual milieu in the same period.[97] These young Georgian intellectuals, had become the torch-bearers of the national awareness, emulated from the Platonic model that arose from the experience of western modernization (Nodia, 2010: 84-101). A respondent states how the Georgian intellectual environment was influenced by the European

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[97] The typical representatives of this younger generation were of Eastern Georgian aristocratic origin close to the Bagratid family. Almost all of the students were of noble origin, from princely dynasties. These princes (*tavadni*) dominated social and political life in different Georgian regions, villages or valleys for centuries. They possessed sovereign power, set and controlled local values. Noble knights (*aznaurni*), peasants, Armenian traders and merchants, and Orthodox clergymen were their subordinated serfs. See: (Reisner, 2009: 37)

enlightenment through Russia and how it still reflects on the perception of Europe and Europeanization in the early modern and in contemporary Georgia as follows:

> Georgia got this Europeanization from Russian Europeanization, which practically got nothing Russian itself. This is very strange phenomenon actually. So, I attribute all these to the natural attractiveness of Europe for Georgians. Whatever about Europe in Russia it was absorbed by Georgia immediately and whatever it was purely Russian was left. And in literature and the classical music pieces, Georgian poetry it was more influenced by the French poets in the beginning of the 20th century… We can say a lot of negative things about the Russian occupation, but in this regard, I think Russia helped Georgia to Europeanize and the proximity with Russia influenced Georgian Europeanization. That is why right now Georgia is a country that accepts the total European idea and it is easy to join the EU, if there will be certain possibility, there won't be any resistance from the Georgian population. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

As it is underlined by the respondent, the Georgian identity started to embrace 'national' component. The members of *tergdaleulebi,* as the front-runners of the Georgian national awareness built up their reformist approach in to the idea of Europe and westernization. On the way to modernization, they aimed to achieve a cultural restoration of the former pre-modern Georgian identity, known as *'kartveloba',* and to create a modern national culture as well as a new social order, which unified all the Georgian people. Merely, the *tergdaleulebi* members' quest rekindled the idea of 'national re-birth' for modernizing their father-/motherland and restoring the Georgian culture.

Along with this path, in 1860, Ilia Chavchavadze (1837-1907), who was known as 'the father of the nation' by the Georgians, proposed a triad that became a cornerstone of the Georgian national identity: Fatherland, Language, Faith (*mamuli, ena, sartsmunoeba*) (Nodia, 2010; Nodia and Scholtbach, 2006; Suny, 1994). As well as Chavchavadze, the other intellectual figures of *tergdaleulebi,* such as Akaki Tsereteli, Giorgi Tsereteli, Niko Nikoladze, promoted the development/revival of Georgian cultural nationalism and national identity with emphasizing the importance of common language, popular education, literature, arts and culture. For the members of *tergdaleulebi*, the national survival and cultural renaissance were the fundamental

notions, which could only be achieved through the Georgian language (Rayfield, 2012; Kolstø and Rusetskii, 2012: 139-155).[98] As an evidence to their European aspiration encompassing 'Georgian Europeanness' the *tergdaleulebi* members declared their principles in the journal *Iveria* to build up the Georgian national identity inspired by the European enlightenment ideas in May 1881, as follows: [99] [100]

> 1. The return and restoration of the oppressed identity and its protection against all dangers; 2. Everybody who is able to should join this movement and cooperate fraternally. All problems and affairs that are connected in our lives with us or others should be taken into consideration and submitted to our identity. Whether school, bank or theatre, everything should be determined by that. Whether a person is going to be chosen a marshal of the nobility, a banker or a teacher, it should be decided from that point of view; 3. Young people should take great pains with their education. They should thoroughly study European sciences, gather European experiences and, so armed, push our country ahead (Reisner, 2009: 44).

Except *tergdaleulebi,* there was also another group obtaining a pro-European discourse/path called *tsisperkhantselni* (the Blue Horn: 1915–1931), a group of literary figures educated in Western Europe. The members of *tsisperkhantselni* predicated the roots of the 'Georgian Europeanness' on the Greek civilization, in which the Georgian place within the European cultural space can be traced back. The movement put forward a pro-European orientation, while taking a leading role in introducing new European ideas into the Georgian culture with the aim of 'returning' to the European 'common' space (Brisku, 2013: 76-81).

A respondent from Tbilisi State University elaborates the dynamics regarding the rise of national awareness under the Russian Empire and the historical phases that the first Georgian Independent Republic was founded as follows:

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[98] According to Kolstø and Rusetskii, *tergdaleulni* can be seen as the counterpart to the *zapadniki* in the Russian Empire. See: (Kolstø and Rusetskii, 2012)

[99] The Society organized a web of network for schools, libraries as well as training teachers and Chavchavadze himself initiated to print periodicals such as *'Saqartvelos Moambe'* (Messenger of Georgia) and *'Iveria'*. See: (Jones, 2013: 9)

[100] Along with *Saqartvelos Moambe* and *Iveria*; there were also *Mnatobi, Sasoflo, Gazeti, Tsiskari* aimed at speading Georgian national consciousness to develop a national identity during the 19th and 20th century.

In the second half of the 19th century, there was a rise of the Georgian nationalism, and there was again a big debate whether Russia was a positive factor or negative factor in Georgian identity. While this discussion continued, the 1st World War came, and there were revolutions in Russia. First the February Revolution and the October Revolution [Bolshevik seizure of power] Meanwhile, under such circumstances, Georgia became independent in 1918. [1918-1921] It seemed that the Russian Empire dissolved after the February Revolution in 1917, especially after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 October, Georgia became independent in 1918. That was the time, when the idea of European identity came back. The Georgian political elite decided that the Georgian Democratic Republic should be part of Europe and it should also be part of the Europe that was constructed after the 1st WW and there was the idea of national self-determination for the many peoples used to be a part of the bigger empires such as Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary and so on. This was a window of opportunity for the Georgian as they would become independent, and they would be a part of the European civilization. But then again in 1921, the Russian Bolshevik government intervened Georgia militarily, and they crushed the resistance of the Georgian government and Georgia was first conquered and annexed by the Bolshevik Russia, which soon became the Soviet Union. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

Relying on his analysis, while paving the way for the Georgian nation-formation, the imperial period also revealed the dialectical relation between the Georgian 'self' and 'other'; with delimiting/constructing the boundaries of the Georgian 'self' both 'as a part' and 'as opposed' to first 'Muslim' then 'Russian' 'other' on the edge of the Russian Empire, which also indicated the rise of the 1st Georgian Republic in 1918. In fact, the Russian administration established in Georgia what Benedict Anderson called the "grammar of nationalism", yet; the process was slow (Jones, 2005: 12). More than a century-long-exposure to the imperial policies had concluded neither with assimilation of the Georgian people nor any 'rupture' from the 'idea' of Europe. In spite of its autocratic elements, the imperial Russia was perceived as a gate to access Europe and European ideas by the Georgian national intelligentsia. Furthermore, this 'intermediary' role paradoxically led to 'the remaking of the Georgian nation' that concluded with the 1st Independent Republic of Georgia in 1918 (Jones, 2013; Jones, 2014; Suny, 1994).

Under such intellectual movements inspired by Europe and European ideas, Georgian self-identification with Europe and its national identity, which was linked

to western cultural values found crucial arteries to develop under the imperial rule. Then, it flourished with the foundation of the first independent Republic of Georgia, took place between 1918 and 1921, which defined Europeanism and European aspiration as its founding element (Jones, 2015: 4-5). As it is underlined in the opening of this chapter, this was when Noe Jordania, the president of the Georgian Democratic Republic, addressed to the Georgia's Constituent Assembly the future path of the country as "indissolubly tied to the West/Europe."

4.5   Georgian Europeanness during the era of the Soviet Modernization

Almost all the respondents articulated the Soviet era as another 'critical juncture' in Georgian history. The respondents overwhelmingly identified the Soviet era as a long 'interlude' to Europe. The Soviet ruling was underlined as a 'rupture'/'detaching period' both from Georgian national identity as well as from its self-identification with Europe. Rather, the Soviet era brought about a new identity, aimed to 'unite' all different peoples under the Soviet ruling with the construction of 'Soviet men/Homo Sovieticus'. In the following seven decades, the Georgians were forced to become a part of the Soviet supranational identity, in other words, to be a part of *Homo Sovieticus* (Sabanadze, 2014; Pipes, 1964).

A respondent from Tbilisi State University clearly depicts how the Soviet ruling initiated the creation of a new identity, *'Homo Sovieticus'*, and how it influenced the rising of the Georgian national movement led to the independence in 1991 as follows:

> During the Soviet era, the Georgian European identity totally devastated. There was a time that a new identity was constructed all across the Soviet Union: the identity of the Soviet citizen [Homo Sovieticus] which was like an image of a proletarian man, without nationality, without religion so this was the period during the Soviet time, basic policy of Moscow towards the different parts of the Soviet Union including Georgia. But Georgia tried to maintain its ethnic and national identity within the Soviet Union. Again there was a debate whether the factor of Stalin, you know he is ethnically Georgian, helped Georgia this way or whether he did not. Starting from the 1970s, there was again the rise of Georgian nationalism. Then, when the Soviet Union began weakening, during the second half of the 1980s, during

the perestroika period, during the Gorbachev period, there was a massive rise of the Georgian national independence movement. But it was not based on the European identity of Georgia; it was more based on more Georgian unique or separate nation in the Caucasus and having different bonds with the different Caucasian people in the south and north Caucasus. The idea of Georgia belongs to Europe and it is a part of Europe was not well developed at that time. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

Also, another respondent from a civil society organization emphasizes the Georgian 'European' way of thinking constitutes the main contradiction with Russia and the Soviet Union. She denotes that the 'imperialist' policies of Russian Empire were re-constructed during the Soviet era, and it also reflects on the contemporary Russia's policies towards Georgia, that the Georgian people do not want to be a part as follows:

The Georgian identity is contradicting with Russia, not only with Russia but also with the Soviets. We are more affiliated with European way of understanding that is the main difference between us [between Georgia and Russia]. And of course the politics of Russia towards Georgia is pretty imperialistic, to rebuild the big Soviet Empire, which is totally unacceptable for us. Armenians and Belarus may have different game, but Georgia is totally against it. That Soviet mentality we don't want to have it back. We could not be back. The people ended it, because it was a bad one. (Interviewee 8, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 16/10/2015).

Iver Neumann asserts that "the neighbours you want to dissociate yourself from are more important than the ones you want to emulate" (Neumann, 1999). Reflecting on what Neumann emphasizes, the Georgian forceful integration to the Soviet Union was perceived as a barrier isolating it from its 'historical destiny', nevertheless, it brought about a new dimension to the Georgian nation-building within 'the Soviet mold', as it is underlined by Suny (Suny, 1994). Along with the Soviet ruling, Georgia lost its position to be part of modern Europe, as it was attempted with the First Republic of Georgia. Particularly, the Soviet nationalities policies, which held utmost importance for all titular republics, aimed at re-making the Georgian national identity within/under 'Soviet mold'. Virtually, the Bolshevik regime institutionalized territorial nationhood and ethnic nationality as social categories, which later (maybe

better to say concurrently) transformed into political ones.[101] They were defined as quasi-nation states, complete with their own territories, names, constitutions, legislatures, administrative staffs, cultural and scientific institutions, as the precessor of the contemporary independent post-Soviet states (Brubaker, 1996: 17-18).

Most importantly, all these led to a new political discourse, carrying 'de-Sovietization' elements, came to fore with the post-independence period by the Georgian political elites on the basis of the idea/belonging to Europe and Europeanization, re-constructed as negation to the Soviet era, and 'uniting' with Europe.[102] Merely, the Soviet experience of Georgia paved the way for 're-constructing' a new 'other' as the Soviets vis-à-vis belonging to Europe, by the end of the 20th century.

4.6   Conclusion

The idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness have a multi-layered web of connections with the pre- and early modern periods embedded into the idea of the Georgian 'self' and 'other' in different critical junctures. Drawing on this, this chapter aimed to reveal the historical traces/patterns of the contemporary political discourse about Europe and the EU.

The data obtained in the field research demonstrates that the 'ideational' elements of the Georgian Europeanness and the idea of Europe have taken its roots back to its previous, pre-modern appearances. Based on the field research, there were three 'building blocks' of what constituted the Georgian identity and its self-ascribed Europeanness. According to most of the respondents, Christianity, territorial

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[101] For instance, according to the 1922 Soviet Constitution, the formerly independent republics of Ukraine, Belorussia, and Georgia became a part of the Union. Along with the national delimitation of Central Asia in 1924 the formation of the large Soviet national republics was completed and the Soviet Union began covering two federal republics, eight union republics, seventeen autonomous republics, and thirteen autonomous oblasts.

[102] For early Marxist debates on nationalism, see: (Walker, 1984; D'Encausse, 1992; Rudolph and Good, 1992; Pipes, 1964; Szporluk, 1988)

vulnerability/(in)security notion as well as enlightenment period and modernization under the Russian ruling are three main founding blocks of the Georgian identity and its connection with Europe. Depending on the respondents' elaboration of the pattern of Georgia in 'connecting' itself with Europe emanated from the idea/notion of seeking 'saviour' from 'external' threats (both cultural and territorial) in parallel with the 'Georgian-self' indicates rather continuity despite the geopolitical shifts that happened in different critical junctures.

Jones rightfully underlines that Georgia's 'Europeanism' is not a new phenomenon and has occasionally appeared throughout its history (Jones, 2003: 87). For him, Georgia's 'belonging to Europe' has constantly been underlined with the 'construction' of other(s) beginning with the image of Muslim 'other', which was later replaced by communism, perceived as an 'oriental backwardness' vis-à-vis the West within the independence of Georgia in 1991 (Jones, 2003: 91-93). Parallel to Jones, the respondents' analysis demonstrates that despite the limited 'encounter' with the West/Europe, the idea of Europe has remained more or less the same and mostly associated with/as a part of the Georgian 'Significant We', in spite of the 'changing' faces of 'others' in the Georgian political history. The pre-modern 'other' seems to be derived from Christian 'we' and Muslim 'other', which seemed to be identified as 'occupying' forces pushed the Georgian Kingdom to look for a powerful alliance from the West, yet, it brought out the reluctance of the 'Western' powers vis-à-vis the Georgian demands. Despite the Western indifference concluded with the Georgian 'unwilling' cooperation with Russia and following annexation of the Georgian land by the Russian Empire, nevertheless, the Russian Empire had become a 'channel' for Georgia to reach modernization and Enlightenment ideas inspired by Europe. Subsequently, these ideas spread from Europe with the 'intermediary' role of the Russian Empire paved the ground for shaping the Georgian identity with the rising Georgian intelligentsia, as well as 'nested' the idea of Europeanness vis-à-vis Georgianness.

Apparently, the respondents' interpretations of the Georgian European identity demonstrate that the Georgian self-identification and its 'Europeanness' had been constructed through the 3rd actor(s), rather than as a result of a direct 'interaction' with the European 'actors'. It was derived from 'negation'; with identifying what constituted the 'other', which had obtained various articulations in the Georgian political history as being 'Muslim', 'Eastern', 'Asian' and 'unprogressive', 'backward', 'Soviet' as a way of underlining/constructing the 'Western/European' element of being 'Georgian'. Here, 'being European' would represent belonging a 'common' cultural space which are identified with being 'Christian', 'Western' 'developed', 'modern', and 'progressive' constructed as 'social imaginaries' about the Georgian identity and its self-identification with Europe.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROSE REVOLUTION AND THE POST-SOVIET TRANSITION IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEANIZATION

5.1   Introduction

The Rose Revolution, which took place in November 2003, is perceived as one of the 'major breakthrough' for the Georgian political history that invoked a large-scale transformation regarding the state building process as a part of its post-Soviet transition. The Rose Revolution was interpreted as "the masses upholding Georgia's national dignity and democratic values" (O'Beachain and Coene, 2010: 930). Afterwards, Georgia significantly outbid most of its post-Soviet counterparts, particularly in terms of decreasing corruption as well as becoming one of the fastest growing economies in Southeastern Europe (Cornell, 2007; Fairbanks, 2004; Jawad, 2006; Mitchell, 2008; Wheatley, 2006).

The Rose Revolution revealed Georgia's strong manifestation on the basis of the Georgia's long-standing aspiration for being a part of Europe and its Europeanization process. After the Rose Revolution, Georgian European integration gained a new momentum as Georgia became a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004, while reclaiming its place in Europe. The new leadership aimed at building a closer cooperation between the EU and Georgia, and they instigated further domestic reforms. As regards to the Rose Revolution, pro-European aspirations of the country were broadly recognized (Edwards, 2008; Grabbe 2004). Georgia correspondingly set NATO and EU membership as major foreign policy goals and the essential tenets of the Georgian identity as well as two solidifying grounds for Georgian state building process.

Based on the field research, all the respondents underline the Rose Revolution as a 'breaking point' for transformation from 'a typical Soviet state' towards a 'modern Western/European state'. The emergence of 'a new Western-oriented leadership', who became the 'new political elites', led to pursue Georgia's economic and political transition with state building efforts with a strong democratization narrative with the Rose Revolution. Depending on the respondents' analysis, there are three dimensions/outcomes of the Rose Revolution, which can be perceived as 'transformation' in relation to Europeanization. They underline the connection between de-Sovietization and Europeanization, state-building attempts/modernization and the peaceful transfer of power with the November 2012 parliamentary elections as the major building blocks of the post-Soviet transition emanated from the Rose Revolution. Nevertheless, they also identify certain drawbacks about the democratization process of the country, which paved the ground for Saakashvili's electoral defeat in 2012.

The aim of this chapter is not to elaborate the important institutional steps taken with the inception of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2004 after the Rose Revolution, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. Instead, this chapter intends to shed light on what levels the post-Soviet transition and the 'strong' articulation of the European integration and Europeanization with the Rose Revolution are linked/ share parallel pathways. Based on the field data, the problems derived from the over-concentration on the modernization of the state, hindered the construction of a democratic and pluralistic atmosphere in line with embracing/internalizing European norms and values. Against this backdrop, despite the Rose Revolution constructed a 'vocal' European discourse and set a clear foreign policy direction towards Euro-Atlantic alignment, the patterns of 'dominant political power system' and less-liberal tendencies of the ruling power caused a 'limited' transformation with only focusing on state-building efforts, instead of paving the ground for a more democratic atmosphere.

5.2 The Rose Revolution and de-Sovietization Discourse of the New State Elites

The Europeanization as well as Euro-Atlantic political direction became the backbone of the foreign policy orientation and as a part of its 're-ideologization' of the newly founded Georgian Republic. According to Jones, "as in most of the former Soviet republics, Georgian foreign policy – at least in the first few years after independence – became part of the re-ideologization of politics, and an instrument for asserting the legitimacy of the new elite and the identity of the new state" (Jones, 2004: 83-110). As it is stated above, the Rose Revolution became a catalyst regarding the European aspiration and Europeanization of the country both at the institutional (regarding state building efforts) and discursive levels. In that sense, the overwhelming majority of respondents underline that the Rose Revolution represented a strong articulation of Georgia's pro-Western foreign policy orientations. In parallel, the de-Sovietization discourse is formulated on the grounds of convergence with Europe, and became an important tool for the new state elite to 'construct' a 'new Georgia' as a liberal, Western/European oriented independent state, with leaving out its 'Soviet' elements. Against this backdrop, the Rose Revolution had offered a new pathway for Georgia to (re)construct its ideational and institutional linkage with Europe.

A well-known Georgian scholar, Alexander Rondeli, proposes that Saakashvili purposefully initiated a new path with breaking away with the Soviet past to construct a new Georgia which is in line with Western, liberal and more democratic path as follows:

> When Mikheil Saakashvili and his team came to power in 2004, they started quite consciously to attempt to break with the Soviet and post-Soviet legacy: its structures, mentality, governance and other dominating elements. The new leadership calculated that it had only a little time to achieve its goals. Its attitude was that the use of revolutionary methods to implement quite drastic reforms would inflict short-term pain but that this would be succeeded by tangible progress facilitated by financial investments from abroad (Rondeli, 2008).

A respondent from a political party underlines that after the Rose Revolution, as a part of the de-Sovietization discourse, the Georgian foreign policy orientation remarkably directed to the West/Europe with a pro-European political discourse as follows:

> After the Rose Revolution, the Georgian foreign policy direction our direction was cemented, with the EU relations, and the European parliaments and the institutions and also with the NATO. I think it is also different from the previous [Shevardnadze] period; the foreign policy of the country became clear, without any doubt. We are not like sitting in two different chairs as the other neighboring countries. The foreign policy orientation was very straight-forward and precise and people were supporting that, that is very important. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

An expert from a civil society organization addresses the similar notion that the foreign policy orientation towards Europe and in Western course was solidified through institutional attempts with signing initial agreements with Europe and the Western countries as follows:

> Along with the Rose Revolution, the government decided to be very aggressive in their statements against Russia and, well, very supportive of Georgia's Western course, which means in this case integration into NATO and integration and/or getting close to the EU. So, these were the two ways it was manifested itself. There were some achievements in that regard, especially the preparation of the Association Agreement during the Saakashvili government and its ratification. The signing of the Association Agreement with the EU happened later with the successor government [during the Georgian Dream ruling]. However, the bulk of those negotiations and the political commitment were achieved during the previous Saakashvili government. So, the Western course was really unquestionable with the previous Saakashvili government. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

As it is underlined by many respondents, the Western/European course of the new political elites with the Rose Revolution was obvious. There are various examples of the strong state discourse towards Europe/West and the country's Europeanization path along with the Rose Revolution in the official statements of the Georgian politicians, primarily, in the President Saakashvili's international as well as national speeches. For instance, during his first inaugural speech as a new President of

Georgia, on January 25, 2004, he articulates Georgia's 'rightful' position among the European countries and as a part of the European civilization as follows:

> …Georgia should be formed as the state assuming international responsibility, as the dignified member of international community, as the state, which regardless the highly complicated geopolitical situation and location, has equally benign relations with all its neighbors, and at the same time does not forget to take its own place in European family, in European civilization, the place lost several centuries ago. As an ancient Christian state, we should take this place again. Our direction is towards European integration. It is time for Europe finally to see and appreciate Georgia and undertake steps towards us. And first signs of these are already evident. Today, we have not raised European flag by accident - this flag is Georgian flag as well, as far as it embodies our civilization, our culture, essence of our history and perspective, and vision of our future (Civil Georgia, 2004).

One of the major aims of President Saakashvili was to build a 'new' Georgian state, which needed to be compatible with the modern Western/European states; as a part of the European civilization. Therefore, he perceives Georgia's partnership (also membership) with the Western/European institutional framework as an indispensable path for the 'new' statehood that he was trying to forge. In this framework, he underlines the importance of the membership of NATO and EU especially regarding overcoming the post-Soviet obstacles, his speech at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's 58th Annual Session would be illuminating. He declares that

> Reformist leaders in the post-Soviet world sometimes feel like sailors on a long, difficult journey in an ocean of troubles. As we sought to navigate these troubled waters, NATO, as well as EU membership was like a pole star guiding the way for all the members of our idealistic team. NATO and the EU are, Ladies and gentlemen, the quintessence of what we call transformative foreign policy goals… In Georgia, NATO is neither a partisan issue, nor just a simple foreign policy objective. Our NATO aspiration is an integral part of the identity and the nature of the new state we have built over the last decade. It is the corner stone of our democracy, the bedrock of values on which we have erected our most important institutions.[103]

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[103] (Georgian Journal, 2012)

Some of the respondents also highlight the personal encounters/experience of the new elites with the West as another determining factor regarding the transformation of power from the 'old-Soviet' leadership to the 'new, Western oriented' one. Regarding the 'new political elites' closeness to the Western world, Nodia denotes that "These are persons whose social advancement is in one way or another linked to the skills acquired for contacts with Western institutions: they have either been educated in the West or travelled there extensively, worked in international organisations or Western-funded NGOs, or run Western-style businesses" (Nodia, 2005: 48). In order to achieve the country's transformation from a Soviet constituent republic to a European path, a respondent from a political party asserts that

> The new political elites, who were committed to initiate reforms, were pro-Western, democratic and quite strong professionals in terms of state building. Also, they had professional links with the West. Especially, they pursued different levels of framework of institutional cooperation with EU and NATO… Overall, all the reforms that eventually made the Rose Revolution successful, later became the key turning point for democratization and some kind of a model for post-Soviet transformation from a Soviet-type of country to a European one. (Interviewee 12, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 5/10/2015)

Some of the respondents also assert that de-Sovietization discourse includes a strong anti-Russian element in order to reinforce its 'European emphasis'. For instance, a respondent from Tbilisi State University argues that

> The de-Sovietization narrative caused the rise of Georgian Europeanness, absolutely. It was strictly initiated by Saakashvili government. You cannot underestimate the role of the Rose Revolution in terms of becoming a part of Europe and internalizing the European values and Westernization in general, this is crucial of course. Despite the fact that Saakashvili's government made really severe mistakes in different senses, the modernization of the country happened towards the European modernization. Also, the European democracy somehow became a pattern of the Georgian development and this is very important. And in the case of the Russian orientation, which was a historical product somehow, during the Saakashvili's government, Russia was constructed as an icon of enemy. This was intentionally made, with underlining the values of the West. It was stressed intentionally, the notion that Russia hinders the Georgian development, was somehow pushed by the government as a part of the de-Sovietization. Saakashvili government wanted that the Soviet mentality became less and less apparent in the Georgian society; this was what Russia constructed in 75 years, even since

the 19th century, when Georgia became a part of the Russian Empire. This was based on some kind of dependence on Russian Empire/state as an only survival way for the Georgian identity, and Saakashvili wanted this mentality should have been diminished and neglected, and this was intentionally made by the Rose Revolution. (Interviewee 5, Academician, Tbilisi, 28/11/2017).

The notion of Georgia's 'belonging' to European family as a part of the state discourse and identity-driven foreign policy provides a certain foundation for Georgia's Europeanization (Kakachia, 2013: 41-53). Almost all the respondents highlight the importance of the de-Sovietization discourse emerged through the Rose Revolution as the essential elements of the convergence with Europe and of Europeanization. Drawing on that, the new state elite consolidated the Europeanization and Western path of the country through the Rose Revolution, while relating the hindrances that are stemmed from the state-building process to the Soviet experience of Georgia.

5.3   Is Democratization through Europeanization Possible?

The fundamental pillar of the European integration stems from the Kantian 'perpetual peace' theory that prioritizes 'peace through democracy' (Kant, 1970: 131-175). The respondents also draw attention to the relation between Europeanization and democratization. In this sense, all of them elaborate on the interplay between Europeanization and democratization with a focus on the extent that the 're-uniting with the Europe' discourse, came forward with the Rose Revolution, might pave the way for tangible steps taken for democratization via European integration of Georgia.

Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents are critical about whether the Rose Revolution would enforce democratization efforts, despite its strong articulation with Europeanization and European integration. They rather draw attention to the steps needed to be taken for democratization via Europeanization were overshadowed by the attempts towards modernization and state-building process and concluded with relative progress in terms of democratization.

According to the respondents' interpretation, the lack of democratic system is another acute problem of the post-Soviet transition and they depict democratization is as crucial as overcoming the difficulties stemmed from the post-Soviet state-building process. A respondent from a civil society interprets both the positive and negative outcomes of the Rose Revolution as follows:

> I think there were some changes towards better and some changes towards worse. There was a more consolidated state and some formal structures of democracy developed. The corruption was reduced, the economic situation got better and there was a push for the European integration, it became much stronger, at least in the formal level. There were some democratic institutions developing. However, at the same time, there were new dropbacks in terms of democracy. For example, some of the changes in the constitution, I mean the first constitutional change in the judiciary was not very good for democracy. Also, the balance between the different branches of power, I think, the executive branch was totally dominating the legislation and judiciary. Especially, this super-presidential system was of course, I think that is was not very good in terms of democracy. I mean how much power the president has vis-à-vis the parliament, the judiciary etc. The president had such power that it allowed him to do anything like appointing ministers, making decisions on his own etc. So, it was very strong until the latest presidential elections. So, since 2006, the progress toward democracy slowed down. It even reversed in some cases because the freedom of media was reduced. Also, in 2006, there was a lot of violence against the anti-government protesters and there was a tension between the opposition parties and the ruling party. The decisions started to be made by very small circle of people and it led to the 2008 War between Georgia and Russia. So, the more and more autocratic tendencies started to be seen in the system, which is not quite same as democracy. So, after the Rose Revolution, there were certain drop-backs such as concentration of power of the president, and human rights violations started just after the Rose Revolution. (Interviewee 13, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

Many of the respondents are highly critical about the Rose Revolution and the Saakashvili government in terms of lack of necessary attempts towards democratization. They argue that especially after the first couple of years of the Rose Revolution, the expectations of Georgian society for further democratization were not met by the new political elite despite the 'new Georgia' narrative of the Rose Revolution for Georgia's European integration and democratization. For instance, a respondent from Tbilisi State University declares that

Well, there was a huge expectation about the 'new Georgia' after the Rose Revolution. I mean Georgia free of corruption, Georgia towards the European and Euro-Atlantic structures and having full protection of human rights reforms and innovations. Generally, from the perspective of Saakashvili and the United National Movement's followers, it was good in terms of the results of the revolution and some other reforms regarding the state institutions. However, it was extremely negative in terms of democratization and strengthening the civil society of Georgia. Furthermore, it damaged the political system of Georgia very much. I mean the first years, maybe two or maximum three years of Saakashvili rule was more or less positive for the country. I mean the period between 2004 and 2006. Then; it became worse in terms of political and civil rights, business and strengthening the political system, specifically for the opposition parties. Especially, after the Georgian–Russian War in 2008, it became worse and worse. And we moved to an authoritarian system because there was a huge fear among the society that anyone could be detained or imprisoned for nothing, it was the case especially for those people who were in the opposition. (Interviewee 14, Academician, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Another academician from the Tbilisi State University is also highly critical about to what extent the Rose Revolution could meet the demands for democracy, although it is widely perceived as a part of democratization via Europeanization as follows:

Now let's talk about democracy and democratization. Again, we can say that democracy and democratization are not very much the same. Let's talk about democratization. The Rose Revolution happened as a part of the wave of democratization and it was one of expectation of the Georgian society before it happened. However, the dynamics, the main criteria for democracy, I mean negative freedoms like quality of elections, quality of media, media freedom, human rights, property rights etc. had been declining since the Rose Revolution and still not improving. So, despite one could expect that the trend would be upward in terms of democratization; however, it was downward instead. (Interviewee 15, Academician, Tbilisi, 18/11/2014).

According to some of the respondents, the main hindrance of the Rose Revolution was relied on the new political elites' overemphasis/priority about modernization as a political choice over democracy. Most of them agree about the new elite prioritized the Georgian modernization and ignored to take necessary steps for initiating more democratic, pluralistic political system. Therefore, they analyze 'democratic deficits' and/or authoritarian tendencies of the Saakashvili regime was 'somehow expected' outcome of the modernization and state building process. A respondent from a civil

society institution address some findings about the overall direction of democracy after the Rose Revolution as follows:

> If you look at the democracy index after the Rose Revolution, all of them went down. There were some restrictions about the media freedom, and engagement with the civil society, and also about the decision-making process. It was a step back from democracy. So, the difference is drastic. They [the Rose Revolution political elites] came to power with the promise of promoting democracy. However, they changed after that, they sacrificed democracy to the modernization. They thought that the modernization of society is a top priority and building democracy might wait. (Interviewee 16, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/11/2014).

Likewise, a representative from a political party also articulates similar argument about the overemphasis of modernization as the major target of the ruling party, the UNM, during the post-Rose Revolution process. He explains this situation as follows:

> Saakashvili pursued modernization without democratization. This is what the whole Saakashvili's governance can be characterized with. This is about modernization, building the state institutions to make them effective. However, in terms of democratization, it should be an open space for different views, different political parties to engage, to debate and share the power. This is what democratization all about and this is something that we lacked. Therefore, we started to have a big public unrest in the beginning of 2007 and this was only after 3 years he came to power. And ever since 2007, it continued every year that we got some demonstrations on the streets, crowded with people, huge uprisings. There was a public discontent because people's voice was not heard by the government. So, for modernization we are thankful to Mr. Saakashvili for that. But, he forgot about the democratization. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 1/12/2014).

Also another respondent from a civil society institution points out similar argument that the new political elite came to power with the Rose Revolution did not intend to take further steps for democratizing Georgia. As it was depicted in the previous paragraphs, he also argues that the new state elite with the Rose Revolution saw modernization and state building process more urgent not to become a 'failed state' that turned out to be a major dilemma vis-à-vis democratization as follows:

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So, I think the main idea of the Rose Revolution, whether it was an idea from very beginning or whether it was how the things worked out after the revolution, but, Saakashvili government did not exactly prioritize democracy to be very honest. As it was demonstrated by some of the key institutions after the Rose Revolution, such as the parliament, judiciary, or some of the non-state institutions such as the media, it was clear that in most of these institutions, the government was not fully committed to democracy. Also, there was a very strong influence of the executive branch over the judiciary. The Georgian Parliament was not sufficiently independent and did not actively oversee the executive branch. On the other hand, they [the government] had tremendous success in reducing and almost eliminating corruption in public services. So as a result the government was able to collect taxes effectively, as a result of improved tax revenues, the government was able to provide appropriate funding to all key public agencies. So, the quality of public administration and public bureaucracy increased a lot. So, you could say that the Saakashvili government did not directly really try to make country more democratic. Also, you could argue that in some ways he [Saakashvili] made the country less democratic. But on the other hand, those reforms saved Georgia from becoming a failed state and ultimately lead some kind of foundation for a future democratic state. I mean the problem was that whether Georgia is going be a state at all, apart from a democratic state… So, I do not know if you describe it as a paradox, but it is sure that it was a very peculiar situation. You could say that Georgia was some way more democratic under Shevardnadze, but it was failing as a state. So, Saakashvili implemented a number of very successful reforms but those reforms were implemented along with very high degree of concentration of power on the executive branch. Actually, it was not just the executive branch, but a very small team of president and his few closest associates. So, Georgia was some kind of mixed story under Saakashvili, there were some very effective reforms, clear reforms in public administration, but there were also so serious problems in accountability and democracy in broader sense. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

Based on his analysis, the Rose Revolution did not bring more democratic environment, despite the civil society organizations obtained crucial roles before the Rose Revolution for such a change to happen. For instance, Mitchell defines the political dynamics before the Rose Revolution as "The relatively open Georgian society; the international community's support for reform; the weakness and failure of the Shevardnadze administration; and elections conducted more fraudulently than almost anybody—even most Georgian voters—expected, all contributed to the Rose Revolution" (Mitchell, 2004: 348). Lanskoy and Areshidze (2008) interpret the effective and influential role of the Georgian civil society organizations just before the Rose Revolution as "Georgia in 2003 clearly had real potential to become a

democracy. Precisely because Shevardnadze's government permitted political parties, business, and the media to thrive, these institutions were able effectively to challenge the government's attempt to manipulate the outcome of the elections and to bring about the Rose Revolution in November 2003" (p.157). However, just after the Rose Revolution, such concentration of power under the control of the Saakashvili government limited the sphere of influence of the other intermediary actors such as opposition parties, civil society organizations in order to establish a democratic system and trigger European integration.

Another crucial outcome of the field research is based on the respondents' analyses indicating that the problem of 'concentration of power' did not start with the Saakashvili government. Rather, it demonstrates a 'political pattern' that hampers the balance in the division of power and prevents achieving a democratic political system. Likewise, a political scientist from Tbilisi State University elaborates why the Rose Revolution and the reforms implemented by the Saakashvili government were not able to pave the way for a more democratic environment in Georgia with arguing that

> It is hard to tell this in a simple way. I think Saakashvili did believe that he was democratizing Georgia as a country. But it was a sort of top-down democratization, through top-down reforms. They were carried out in a way that contradicting each other in the sense of democracy because democracy is about pluralism ultimately and division of power. But Saakashvili's reforms were carried out from a single center and from very concentrated power. In fact, it was not new for Georgia that power was always concentrated. Yet, it became much more effective; therefore, there was a perception that it became sort of autocratic. It was concentrated but effective. Under Shevardnadze, it was also concentrated but it was ineffective. Therefore, it was still considered autocratic, but also as corrupt and ineffective. In formal institutional sense, Saakashvili's government did carry out reforms, which made institutions more independent. For instance, he did carry out reforms that were supposed to make courts more independent. However, in reality, they did not become more independent because of *de facto* concentration of power. For instance, he made some reforms for the local governments, to make them more independent. But in fact they were very much dominated from the center. In the end, I think the great achievement of the Saakashvili's government is more about modernization of state. The Georgian state became less corrupt, much more effective and much more capable of providing public goods... There was a

> deficit of political pluralism; I call this 'dominant power system'. We had it before; we have it now, after Saakashvili left. We had it also during the Saakashvili's government. We had this system of 'dominating power' that there is one group around one leader, who is the strongest player. And the opposition, independent media, and everything exist and they also have some influence, however, there is no level of 'playing field' between the dominant power and the rest. (Interviewee 18, Academician, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

In a similar vein, another respondent from Tbilisi State University underlines the same paradigm, 'dominant party system' that Georgia continues to have, irrespective of the transformation of power between different political groups/elites, while also drawing attention to the differences between 'institutional' and 'behavioral' dimensions of the Rose Revolution in regard to Europeanization as follows:

> I have two types of observation about the impact of the Rose Revolution. The first is that we have really done a lot because when you talk about Europeanization, my understanding is that it is first based on the institutional arrangements. The second is more about the behavioral part; I mean socialization in a way. Nevertheless, what matters most is that how you apply changes through those institutions because I think that the main problem in the post-Soviet countries is that sometimes we do have the institutions but do not use them. That is why we are partially free countries because we have actually some features of democracy but in implementation, we have more problems. I think that we have certain tangible results first of all with the state capacity to clean corruption and providing better services to citizens. So, this part I guess that it is more, more or less visible and measurable too. And I see that as a prerequisite for democratization. For the behavioral part, or how do we apply procedural improvements in the institutions, especially in terms of politics, then, I would say that even though there are some changes, the outcome remained the same. What I mean is that the procedural improvement that we have applied in certain amendments, like constitutional amendments about the electoral legislation. It strengthens the role of the parliament and so on and so forth. But, in the fact you see that we still have 'dominant party system' or 'dominant power system'. (Interviewee 19, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

Regarding the Saakashvili government's falling behind the promises of more democratic system, a respondent from a civil society institution gives concrete examples about the 'democratic deficit' of the country, which constitutes a major hindrance in the implementation of reforms that would also stimulate European integration, as follows:

So well, those reforms were very successful, they were indeed improving public administration in the Saakashvili government. However, it also became clear that the country had serious problems in terms of government accountability. In fact, the key institutions were operating properly aside from the executive branch. The parliament was not performing its role very well, the judiciary was not performing well and this of course created opportunities for abuse of the power by the top leadership of executive branch. Regarding the media, there were a lot of independent newspapers and websites and small TV stations, but they had relatively small audience. Yet, before the 2012 elections, none of three major TV stations could broadcast any content that would be critical of the Saakashvili government in their news. They had very few political talk shows and discussions. So, the content of the news and political programs were the most influential TV stations and they were extremely pro-government. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

For instance in November 2007, four years after the Rose Revolution, there was a protest by the opposition group, called the National Council (RFERL, 2007). They were not represented in the Georgian Parliament, and continuously attracted attention to the democratic backsliding of the country as well as Saakashvili presidency due to the decision of the government to delay the upcoming presidential election in the spring 2008 to autumn 2008 (Asatiani, 2007a). In the following days, the police used disproportionate violence to the protesters on the streets of Tbilisi, the President Saakashvili declared a 'state of emergency' and the leading oppositional TV channel, Imedi TV, was shut down by the special forces, while it was broadcasting (Asatiani, 2007b).

According to Nodia (2005), the concept of 'democratic transition' is similar to 'democratic revolution', while it addresses a 'profound change' of a political regime from a non-democratic to a (more) democratic one (p.39). Taking the Rose Revolution into account, while its success on the state-building process was obvious, its impact is ambiguous to have more democratic, pluralistic political system that is required for achieving the further goal of Europeanization. Relying on the analyses of the respondents, the lack of democratic elements of the Rose Revolution was interlinked/has causal relation with the concentration of power at the center, demonstrating certain pattern that the Georgian political system suffers from undemocratic/authoritarian practices. This pattern, which is articulated by Nodia as

'dominant power system' reveals the major obstacles to democratization via Europeanization. In other words, lack of democratic experiences, tradition of power-concentration and the hardships emanated from the post-Soviet state-building process such as building effective institutional reforms catalyzed the 'authoritarian/less democratic' atmosphere of the Saakashvili government. Therefore, while the European path and Saakashvili government's willingness towards Europeanization was noticeable in the state discourse, and foreign policy orientation, it has very limited impact on achieving democratic domestic reforms required for Europeanization in the context of the Rose Revolution.

5.4 The Rose Revolution and Building a Functioning State

In accordance with the clear pro-European political path/orientation at the discursive level, the Rose Revolution led to the emergence of expectations for structural and institutional reforms in state apparatus, which was also required for achieving the goal of Europeanization. All the respondents underline that the 'state-building process' emerged as the major outcome/achievement of the Rose Revolution, while portraying the pre-Rose Revolution Georgia as a 'weak state' with non-functioning state institutions and the problems that were characterized with the post-Soviet transition process (Milliken and Krause, 2003; Linz and Stepan, 1996).[104] They analyze the Rose Revolution as a critical juncture in the Georgian history in regards to 'transition' from its Soviet past to a functioning democratic state. Also, almost all of them agree that Georgia did not have a functioning state and state institutions before the Rose Revolution with comparing the political dynamics before and after the Rose Revolution. They address on the high level of corruption and the remnants

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[104] Actually the Georgian statehood started in 1918 with the Democratic Republic of Georgia. However, due to the Soviet intrusion to the Georgian land, it only lasted between 1918 and 1921. For that reason, the independence of Georgia in 1991 can be named as the 'resurgence' of the 1st Georgian independent Republic.

of the Soviet-type leadership as the major reasons that necessitated such a change to take place.[105]

The respondents analyze the factors that caused the non-functioning state institutions within a framework of a long-process since the independence in 1991. A respondent from Tbilisi State University points out that the political environment/climate before the Rose Revolution paved the way for such a political occurrence to happen as follows:

> We know what was going on before the Rose Revolution, Georgia was a failed state. It was a typical corrupt post-Soviet state, where the political institutions were very weak. So at some point people got very fed up because poverty was very visible. People could not really live under such condition. So, at some point there was some kind of demand from lower strata of the Georgian society, from masses to change something. So when the Revolution started, the major problem was how to change Georgian transitions from failed state to a country which is going towards the state building. So state building was number one task for that group so within this task, they find out that in order to start a successful state you will need several kind of reforms. (Interviewee 20, Academician, Tbilisi, 11/11/2014).

A representative from a political party frames the two former presidents of Georgia, namely Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze in the process of 'failed' state-building prior to the Rose Revolution, thereby leading to such a 'change' to happen as

> Before the Rose Revolution, I mean the process started with the independence until the Rose Revolution in 2003, we can separate it to two phases. First, during the Gamsakhurdia term, it was a more fascist era. Gamsakhurdia's ideology was very conservative and Orthodox. After Gamsakhurdia, we had Shevardnadze, and he is well known with his Soviet legacy. He became more autocratic, although there was still some development in the government institutions. I believe that the basic foundation of the change brought by the Rose Revolution was necessary because the system was corrupt to exercise its responsibilities and obligations. So definitely after the Rose Revolution, the state institutions became stronger, the defense system, the ministry of interior, and the government started to exercise libertarian policies in terms of economy. This

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[105] For instance, related to the role of *nomenklatura* in Shevardnadze's team, Zurab Chiaberashvili and Gigi Tevzadze claim that "The *nomenklatura* filled executive authority almost entirely, partly via their representation in the legislature provided by the parliamentary faction." See: (Chiaberashvili and Tevzadze, 2005: 3)

was a positive change of the system because the state institutions became much more effective and changed according to what people demanded. (Interviewee 21, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

Also, another respondent, who used to be an Ambassador of Georgia and currently an expert about the Georgian Europeanization, identifies the Rose Revolution as a 'major breakthrough' in Georgian history, while underlining its affirmative impact on the state-building process and on re-locating Georgia's path from a 'failed state' to a 'functioning modern state' as follows:

> Well, many observers agree that Rose Revolution was a huge breakthrough in Georgian history. But most of them would emphasize this breakthrough as the progress in terms of state building, not necessarily for democratization. Well, I am old enough to be in a position to compare what we had before and after the Rose Revolution. In terms of democracy, representation, decentralization of power, of course progress was made. But probably it was not as much in terms of democracy. The Rose Revolution was more about making the state more efficient, more sustainable. Because what we had prior to 2004 was very much, if not a failed state, but a failing state. And that applies to all spheres including the democracy. (Interviewee 3, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

Almost all the respondents see the main reason of the pre-Rose Revolution 'malfunctioning' of the state institutions of Georgia due to the Soviet experience. They emphasize the historical roots of the 'lack of knowledge' and 'lack of experience' of Georgian statehood derived from its 'Soviet past' and 'Soviet mentality' of its political elites. A former minister points out the patterns of the post-Soviet authoritarian tendencies and inefficient statehood derived from the Soviet past, which all the other post-Soviet states similarly has to overcome as follows:

> I would say there was a 'demand' for change, which started to take place within the entire post-Soviet space, what remained after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Among the fifteen new-born states, I would say, they have not zero but very limited statehood experience. So, in order to transform the post-Soviet past into a liberal democratic reality, democratization and democratic change proclaimed as one of the main goal of every country in the post-Soviet states, including Georgia. The majority of our former colleagues [old-nomenklatura] not just remained in the past, they even strengthened their very authoritarian and even dictatorial trend in the reality and now all of this space, post-Soviet space, post space area, we have, I would say totally strong, authoritarian ruling with some exceptions and

definitely it is my pleasure to confirm that Georgia belongs to this exceptions along with maybe Moldova and to some extent with Ukraine, which is still swinging and trying to get out of this vicious circle. (Interviewee 1, Former State Official, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

There is no doubt that post-Soviet transition has its own peculiar problems in terms of state-building and democratization. Building an internally and externally sovereign territorial state is *sine quo non* for a functioning democracy, because without its existence, a state cannot be democratized (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 17). The respondents repeatedly underline the necessary steps for the Georgian statehood had been taken with the Rose Revolution through strengthening the state structures, institutions, and governance capacities. For instance, a respondent from a civil society institution elaborates that despite the relative freedom due to the Shevardnadze government's lack of control, the 'state-building problem' of Georgia persisted before the Rose Revolution as follows:

> I think that the most important difference that the Rose Revolution made was not so much as Georgia improving kind of democratization but more about Georgia becoming a functioning state. Because in many ways, Georgia was not a functioning state before 2003 [before the Rose Revolution]. You could say that this condition provided democracy to some extent because the government was very weak and its weakness was not just incapability. For example, it was also about it [the government] was not able to collecting taxes or ensuring public safety, public security or fighting with crime. So, in some ways, the Georgia under Shevardnadze was kind of a peculiar case in many ways. It was not exactly failed state but it was moving to that direction in many respects. However, it did had some form of democracy, probably more democratic environment, when you compare it to its post-Soviet neighbors. It had relatively free media, relatively free civil society but still overall it was not a functioning state. It was a state that had a lot of problems, a lot of corruption and very ineffective government and bureaucracy. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

Depending on the respondents' analyses, before the Rose Revolution, Georgia had relatively free political environment with active civil society and media, which paved the way for the process carried Georgia to the Rose Revolution. Nevertheless, the underlying question still remains that what were the tools/promises of the Rose Revolution that attracted such a popular support to build a 'functioning state' in the post-Soviet environment. Here, the respondents emphasize reforms such as zero-

tolerance about the corruption, and to have more vibrant bureaucracy and state services as the elements that brought certain change to 'build/construct' a functioning state.

5.5   Corruption and Reforms

Based on the interpretations of the respondents, the reforms carried out by the Rose Revolution had a 'transformative' feature on non-functioning state institutions in Georgia. In order to achieve a well-functioning state, the interviewees highlight the implementation of certain reforms and improvements in the state services such as new regulations for more effective bureaucracy, education reform, and new taxation system. Besides, almost all the respondents highlight the elimination of the corruption from all spheres of the state is the most important achievement of the Rose Revolution.

According to respondents' analyses, the Rose Revolution brought about 'hard-edged' reforms in many sectors of the Georgian state, and this effort especially gained visibility with its struggle with bribery and corruption. A politician underlines the biggest achievement of the Rose Revolution is fighting with corruption in many layers of the state institutions. She denotes that

> I think corruption was the biggest achievement of the Rose Revolution. Corruption is a kind of cancer that destroys all of the fields, economy, education, business, public life, human rights everything. In every part of your daily life, you were squeezed by corrupt practices. It was somehow so widespread that; it really destroyed energy, it destroyed economy, everything. The first thing was that, the biggest achievement that revitalized the whole state, it was fighting with corruption… In that achievement, the biggest part of the fighting corruption was of course the traffic police reform, which enabled us to create a very fair, transparent, effective patrol police that is not taking bribes anymore and was really serving to the public. The second thing was deregulation and simplification of the common public services. I mean all the process related to the licenses, commissions, endless bureaucratic difficulties to do business. For instance, tax system was simplified we had like 21 types of taxes or 26 maybe; and it was reduced to 11 or even less maybe. The third achievement was the creation of motivated bureaucracy in public services with decent salary. Before the Rose Revolution, you can only live through bribes and a bureaucrat could never

sustain himself with the salary. (Interviewee 12, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 05/10/2015)

Another respondent from Tbilisi State University exemplifies these reforms brought by the Rose Revolution, as police reforms, adjustment in state revenue system and finally education reform as follows:

> Among the most successful reforms for strengthening the state building process of Georgia, the first one was the police reform because that was most visible, the most corrupt state institution. Especially, the traffic police, they were the most unpopular in the eyes of the Georgian public. So, they [the government] started to reform the whole police forces. Actually, you may not call it reforms because they were even more radical than reforms. They fired almost 22.000 policemen overnight. Then, they brought new, young, educated people after very short time of training, like six months. Then, they were very successful at this and now a lot of people outside of Georgia talk about these successful reforms of police forces in Georgia. So, this was just one part of the state building, the major reason was not the police reform itself. The major goal was how to enhance state institutions. The second reform was about the revenues. Under Shevardnadze government, it was very difficult to get revenues and there was always shortage of money in the state budget. Saakashvili government started to renew this institution. Third one, they started very radical education reform. They started to ban the Soviet-style institutions like Academia of Science and all these including some universities. They fired a lot of Soviet-type of professors, sometimes not really legally, even illegally. In short, education reform was not as successful as police reform but it was still a success. So, in the long run, I think after the Rose Revolution, what it seem is that the state institutions became stronger. Nevertheless, especially maybe three or four years after these reforms, the Georgian society realized that the state institutions became too strong I mean the political institutions like police force. (Interviewee 20, Academician, Tbilisi, 11/11/2014).

The rapid wave of reforms brought certain developments in many areas. Especially, the libertarian economic measures boosted the Georgian economy in terms of attracting foreign direct investment. For instance, in 2006, the World Bank addressed Georgia 'the world's leading economic reformer' and ranked the country as the 18th country in the world, where one can do business easily. Also, among the infrastructural improvements, Saakashvili's government dramatically improved access to public goods providing a stable supply of electricity, erecting new buildings, repaving roads, and establishing new communication networks and other

infrastructure projects that delivered immediately visible benefits to the population (Lanskoy and Areshidze, 2008: 158).

Nevertheless, all these attempts taken for the state-building of Georgia did not end up with similar improvements towards democracy. Especially after the first years of the Rose Revolution, some of the respondents argue that such a rapid change through 'hard reforms' caused public frustration in spite of their certain benefits. For instance, a respondent from a civil society institution explains the causes of the public 'discontent' derived from the reforms as

> There is one thing that Saakashvili had done, which is 'a clear-cut elites'. He started to work with a new generation of people, different from the old Soviet nomenklatura, with the notion that 'you cannot train the old ones, but you can replace them with the new ones'. The success of the police reform was based on this understanding actually. So, you fire the old ones in a day, and bring the new ones next day. And train the new ones as you like. The result was successful; however, the societal/social dimension of this is another story. I mean there were a lots of mistakes until the change of power in 2012 [she mentions Saakashvili's electoral loss after the 2012 general elections]. I mean there were very crucial political steps taken for everyone, but without any consultation. There were no communication with public institutions, NGOs, whatsoever and taking some important steps about structural reforms without any public consultation/consensus. Also, with the Rose Revolution, the new government obtained libertarian economy model and pursued libertarian economy policies in order to attract more foreign direct investment. Of course, that brought about considerable social cost on the Georgian people. For instance, because of the ultra-libertarian Labour Code, the social rights of the workers were almost nothing. The employers were able to fire their employees in any moment without any reasons. This is just an example that indicates social inadequacies that we understand. When we consider the public frustration about the reforms, we need to think all these no participation, no social protection, no economic opportunity, no equal chance for access public goods, we need to think all these factors as a whole. (Interviewee 9, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

As it was highlighted above, despite the successful structural and economic reforms, the Rose Revolution was not able to solve the deeply embedded social inequalities and injustices, while gradually leading to an 'authoritarian' direction. It also lessened the influence of the civil society and left considerably limited space for the opposition parties, which ended up with 'social unrest' about the Saakashvili government. In a similar vein, another respondent from a civil society institution

interprets the Rose Revolution with underlining its weakness to solve 'state-building versus democracy'[106] dilemma as follows:

> Our history of these 24 years of independent state is not about democratization first of all, but it is about building state capacity to be a state. And when you analyze this 24 years in terms of democratization, you see that you do not move anywhere, as you have pretty much the same scores on different measures on democracy, as you had in mid-1999s. So it does not change much with the Rose Revolution. What really changed is that state capacities and states abilities to function as a state. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

Another respondent, who was a former Ambassador and current expert in a civil society organization, underlines how the concentration of power reached a climax in Saakashvili's second term and how he faced with criticisms in that regard as

> The power was concentrated in the presidency but it was necessary to give a momentum to changes, to reforms. But once reforms started, and country started to transform, when you need to start moving a train, which stops on the railway, you need enormous effort, but, once it starts moving, you may change your attitude. So, I think Saakashvili should have started giving up powers before the end of his second term. Yes, the constitutional reform was initiated after the election, presidential system changed to semi-parliamentary system. But many people suspected that he was preparing his transition from Presidency to Prime Minister position. I do not know how fair it was but they were, especially the opposition parties, comparing him with Putin. But the thing is that Putin have appointed himself as Prime Minister. Saakashvili could not appoint himself as prime minister. Saakashvili had to win the pre-parliamentary election and that would make him a Prime Minister. Unlike in Russia, we had real election, which he lost. So I think he proved that the critiques were wrong in this sense. But again, we could have started de-centralizing powers from the presidency, slightly earlier. (Interviewee 3, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

Based on the respondents' analyses, after the first years of the Rose Revolution, especially in his second term, the Saakashvili government demonstrated somehow

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[106] Francis Fukuyama elaborates "state-building versus democracy dilemma" with identifying both terms as complementary to each other. Yet, he still prioritizes the 'stateness' with arguing that "Before you can have a democracy, you must have a state, but to have a legitimate and therefore durable state you eventually must have democracy. The two are intertwined, but the precise sequencing of how and when to build the distinct but interlocking institutions needs very careful thought." (Fukuyama, 2005: 88) See also: (Fukuyama, 2004)

authoritarian/less liberal tendencies.[107] The new regime was inclined to ignore the 'uneasiness' of the Georgian society due to the consequence of the severe reforms, while also putting pressure to the oppositional voices in the country. Virtually, Saakashvili and his team prioritized restructuring the state institutions, initiating structural reforms, while missing out the democratization process of the country. In fact, the success of the Rose Revolution and electoral support that Saakashvili obtained led to the emergence of 'too-much' concentration of power regarding executing the 'painful' reforms with postponing the demands for a more democratic system.

5.6 The Perception of the Georgian People towards the Rose Revolution: Is it still Revolutionary or Abandoned?

Another aspect of the Rose Revolution underlined by the respondents is about how the Georgian society perceives the Rose Revolution during its eruption, and how it reflects on the expectation of the Georgian people today from the contemporary political figures. Almost all the respondents underline that the Georgian society's expectation based on the Rose Revolution was very high. Nevertheless, as it is elaborated in the previous parts, due to the hindrances such as the pressure directed from the ruling party to implement the reforms, authoritarian inclinations as well as certain backlashes about democratizations shaped the perception of the Georgian society about the outcomes of the Rose Revolution.

Most of the respondents emphasize that there are three groups in the Georgian society, who obtain different positions vis-à-vis their political choices. In other words, all the interviewees underline that the way how the Georgian society analyzes the consequences of the Rose Revolution is a highly 'politicized' issue. The respondents stress that the despite 'high' expectations of the Georgian society about

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[107] According to the average democratic score, measured by the Freedom House's Nations in Transit Survey, Georgia was classified as hybrid or transitional regime. Regarding the scale from 1.00 to 6.00, It had 4.83 in 2003, when the Rose Revolution took place. Then, its score was 4.96 in 2005 and 4.68 in 2007. In 2012, when the November 2012 parliamentary election was held, the average democratic score of Georgia hit 4.82 again out of 6.00-7.00, which address consolidated authoritarian regimes.

the 'changes' it would bring, its 'non-democratic' diversion following the first years ended up with 'disappointment' and caused the electoral downfall of Saakashvili in 2012.

A respondent from Tbilisi State University proposes that the society's expectation from the current government is to continue in the 'same direction' that was started with the Rose Revolution, yet, this time with more democratic means as follows:

> I would say there are three different categories of approaches, visions about the Rose Revolution. The first is that, well this was good, this was necessary also there were some difficulties afterwards, but in general, we made a step in the right direction. The other perception is that the Rose Revolution was good but Saakashvili spoiled it. So the wrong people came to power. So, now the government has changed [after the 2012 elections], and the new government has to fulfill the promises of Rose Revolution better than Saakashvili did. The third approach is that the Rose Revolution was wrong in a sense that it was inherited from the authoritarianism and it was the inevitable outcome of the revolution. So, the revolution itself spread the feelings and messages that it could not continue with the democracy. So, it had to bring the results which it has brought [she mentions transformation of power in 2012 due to this dissatisfaction]. Now it is necessary not to continue in the same direction, but with finding new ways about how to build democracy differently. (Interviewee 15, Academician, Tbilisi, 18/11/2014).

Interestingly, the European path defined with the Rose Revolution seems to be not questioned by any of the respondents. Rather, they are keen on criticizing the measures taken by the previous Saakashvili government to implement such drastic reforms with a 'strong hand'.

Also, a respondent from a civil society organization stresses that there are three different perspectives in the Georgian society regarding the Rose Revolution as follows:

> From my personal experience, I think there are probably three type of attitude to that. One would be the attitude of the United National Movement supporters, the actual supporters, who strongly or at least to some extent continue to support Saakashvili's party. According to different opinion polls, the numbers vary from 10 to 20 percent of the general population. Those people of course would say that the Rose Revolution was a clear

success and it basically saved Georgia as a country and made Georgia as an example in many ways for countries in the post-Soviet region. So, they still would have the very positive view of Rose Revolution. Secondly, there are people, of course, who supported the Rose Revolution at that time, but grew angry or disappointed about the Saakashvili's administration. So, they joined or supported the opposition in subsequent years. So, you will hear a lot of those people would say that ultimately Saakashvili's administration did a lot of things. Or, maybe they would say that he betrayed the values of the Rose Revolution, but, they would still say that it was the right thing to do at that time. The Rose Revolution was the right choice at that time because it gave the right options to the country as compared to the Shevardnadze's government... Basically those people would say that revolution was the best of the option that Georgia had at that point. Then, a lot of bad things happened that did not have to happen, that they could have been avoided. And thirdly, there are, of course, people who never like the Rose Revolution, would say that it was a disaster from the beginning. But I think that the majority of the people would agree that overall situation improved after the Rose Revolution and it produced a lot of important positive changes in the country. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

Another respondent from a civil society institution also highlights the fact that it is a pretty 'politicized' issue that is highly related to/ still reflects the Georgian people's political orientation as follows:

Unfortunately, the public assessment about the Rose Revolution, we are not impartial about it. This is not a non-partisan issue, on the contrary, this is a very partisan issue depends who you are talking to. If you talk to someone, who is sympathetic to the National Movement, they would tell you that the Rose Revolution was a great thing and everything that was achieved after that was very important. If you are talking to someone, who is totally opposed with that political force, they would say that it did not meet any expectations at all and probably neither of this is correct. Therefore it is probably too early to ask about public opinion about the Rose Revolution because right now people are as polarized as ever about this issue. Therefore, it is hard to hear analytical opinions, but only partisan opinions on that. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

In a similar vein, a respondent from a political party gives details about the political profile of the Georgian electorates related to their position about the Rose Revolution as follows:

I think there are three different perspectives about the Rose Revolution in the society. The first group is that very radical, *asaval dasavali* kind of people [he refers to pro-traditionalist group of people also has their own

newspaper with the same name]. There is a newspaper called that and people who read this newspaper are very radical Orthodox people, who are also anti-EU, anti-liberal values and, of course, anti-Saakashvili. Therefore, they are anti-Rose Revolution. The biggest fraction of them is pro-Russian and a small fraction inside them suggest that they are neither pro-European nor pro-Russian just neutral. So, they are like 10%-15% maximum of the whole Georgian society. Then, we have the followers of the UNM, Saakashvili-guys, who still support him. During the last local elections, they got 20%. These people adore Saakashvili and they think that the Rose Revolution is really good. They also say that the Rose Revolution is the best event in the Georgian history. They think that the Georgian history starts in 2003, [when the Rose Revolution took place] .The rest, we have liberals, like our party supporters, and other liberal groups. They think that the Rose Revolution is a good thing, however, what happened afterwards, the way they continued this change and the way they pursued modernization without democratization was wrong. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

Based on the respondents' analyses, the support of the Georgian society about the Rose Revolution is associated with embracing the liberal values and change as well as the Western/European path of the country. On the contrary, those who are less inclined to accept the reforms led by the Rose Revolution seem to be the electorates, who are less supportive of the European/liberal values, and hold the traditional Orthodox values above, while they are more sympathized with Russia in return. More importantly, as it is denoted by the respondents' analyses, the perception of the Georgian people about the Rose Revolution directly correlates with their voting behavior and reflects to the ballot boxes about their choices of who would obtain the ruling power.

Also, the 'identity politics' became another marker about the Georgian society's perspective about the Rose Revolution and the Saakashvili government. The 'inclusive' and 'liberal' policies towards the minorities led by the previous Saakashvili regime caused certain tension in some parts of the Georgian society, because they were perceived as a 'threat' to the Georgian traditional values. In parallel, an academician who is a political scientist from Tbilisi State University draws attention to the 'civic nationalism' built by Saakashvili was understood and/or reflected as something that 'undermines' the Georgian identity for some of the opposition figures as well as for some people in the Georgian population as follows:

To some extent there was a great perception of human rights, rights of minorities. The rhetoric of government was much more inclusive in terms of Georgian identities [he mentions Saakashvili's civic nationalism discourse]. This was based on not just ethnic identity or religious identity, but more on civic identity etc. However, it caused also backlash because it was also perceived as some kind of a mental revolution from above, that the government was imposing some kind of Westernized, Western liberal values on the Georgian society. And, this was perceived as if it was undermining traditional Georgian values so that it became one of the most important motives of the opposition to Saakashvili. For instance, he was too open for foreigners including Turks and many others, so that we have too many foreigners because of too liberal policies on economy or migration, and also the visa regime was very liberal. All these demonstrated that Georgia was becoming too open to globalization and Georgianness is kind of diluted in return. So that became the major feeling of the important part of the society. I think that especially in the last period of Saakashvili and during the post-Saakashvili period, we have this situation of 'culture wars' in a way. I mean it is between more modernist and liberal understanding and more traditional conservative understanding, they are in sort of clash. (Interviewee 18, Academician, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

Depending on his analysis, the Rose Revolution made the ideational division between the Georgian people, who are 'pro-Western' and 'liberal' versus those who are rather 'traditional', 'Orthodox' and 'closer' to Russia more tangible. In addition, the Saakashvili government's strong narrative and willingness about the EU and NATO membership led to increase rather 'unrealistic' expectations in the Georgian society as if such steps could be taken within such a short period of time for Georgia. For instance, a respondent from a civil society institution, who is also an expert about the EU integration of Georgia, analyzes the political environment just after the Rose Revolution in the context of the Europeanization and convergence with the West, also, how the political elites of the time caused such a disappointment in the following years after the Rose Revolution in the Georgian society as follows:

In the beginning it was perceived that we could do anything. The feeling back in 2004 was that we are great we can even become the EU member state; we can become a member state of NATO one day. It was also very much supported by the Georgian economy; we had the highest economic growth in 2007, it was up to 12 percent and this is the highest number achieved in the history of independent Georgia. Then, there was a kind of disappointment started, when we saw that actually the EU membership is far away, if any. The NATO membership after the Bucharest Summit was kind of really long way to go [about the membership to NATO]. Then we saw that actually the biggest problem, which still we are facing now, is about the

unemployment and a lot of people actually are looking for jobs and previous government [the UNM] could not settle that issue. Actually, it is still number one priority for Georgians. Then we saw that the people in prison were actually very badly treated and raped from time to time under the previous government. So, basically we saw all these backlashes and the disappointment was growing. So, if you look at the results of the general elections [in 2012 and 2016] it means that basically there are still many, but not so much, supporters of the United National Movement, which is affiliated with the Rose Revolution. We have their representatives in the parliament. Nevertheless, at the same time, the majority of the people are kind of disappointed with the United National Movement generally. Actually, they had come to the power as a consequence of the Rose Revolution. At the same time, it actually brought a lot of changes like police reform, was one of the success story that a lot of post-Soviet countries are actually trying to do the same... Georgia is trying to actually export these reforms to other countries like Ukraine, Armenia and Central Asian countries. To make a short answer, there are some people still believe in the Rose Revolution, some people still believe in United National Movement, which is a kind of baby of the Rose Revolution.[108] (Interviewee 23, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 07/10/2015).

Despite the success of the Rose Revolution on some of the issues such as fighting with corruption and improvement of the state services and creating more efficient bureaucracy, which became exemplary to the other post-Soviet states suffering from similar problems of post-Soviet transition, almost all the respondents highlight that it lacks democratic element. In fact, in spite of high hopes and expectations from the Georgian society after the Rose Revolution, the democracy deficit along the way to modernization and state-building revealed more-authoritarian tendencies of the UNM, while affecting the society's perception about the Rose Revolution and Saakashvili government negatively. Following that, Saakashvili and his party, UNM, lost the popular support and the 2012 general elections became 'the end of the Rose Revolution dream' for Saakashvili and his team.[109] Regarding that 'end' of the nearly

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[108] Despite the expectation about a roadmap to NATO membership, Ukraine and Georgia didn't get their Membership Action Plan status in the Bucharest Summit in 2008. They rather were left with an open-ended prospect about possible membership. See: (Zaryckyj, 2018)

[109] Just before the November 2012 elections, on September 18th, there were some videos leaked to the public shown senior officers of the custody and penitentiary department torture inmates in Gldani prison in Tbilisi. The videos shocked the Georgian public and international community and led to staging various protests in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities. Due to the video, aired by the opposition television channel TV9, the country's prisons minister was forced to resign. See: (Human Rights House, 2012) See also: Open Society's Report on Crime and Excessive Punishment: The Prevalence and Causes of Human Rights Abuse in Georgia's Prison, published in 2014. See: (Slade et al., 2014

decade-long venture that opened up new horizons for Georgia, a respondent from a civil society institution states that

> …In the beginning everyone was, not everyone but majority of people were more enthusiastic and hopeful about the Rose Revolution. This would bring democratization, but then of course many of them have been disappointed. So, their perspective and assessment changed. It was the major reason of change in 2012 that the majority of people voted against the United National Movement in 2012 and Saakashvili lost the elections. (Interviewee 24, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 24/11/2014).

A politican elaborates how the 'winds of change' brought by the Rose Revolution ended with rather disappointment and shifted towards more 'authoritarian' political climate, which poses an obstacle to the emergence of a democratic and pluralistic system as follows:

> I think what happened in the final years of the Rose Revolution there were some abuses of power and some kind of shift to stronger way of ruling… I think what happened actually the government, which needed a strong hand in the beginning of the Rose Revolution, because you cannot fight with thieves, criminals, you cannot fight with corruption without a strong hand. You are going to need a strong police, criminal police; you need a strong prison services so on and so forth. I mean you need strong mandate and political consolidation. However, in the second part of Rose Revolution I mean after 2008 and 2009, it was the time for liberalization, with putting distance to these strong practices. We needed to liberalize business practices; we needed to give more liberalization to the courts. Generally, the population in the prison was very high and we need to think of how to liberalize that field too. Obviously, we missed that moment and we failed to do that. In 2012, [before the elections] there was some kind of abuse of power and it was not justified at all. And people needed more, I mean people were happy of course that there was no corruption, of course, but people needed, they wanted more. The government failed to address these demands. Now because of that sentiment there was a huge disapproval of the previous government that led to change of the ruling party through the 2012 election. (Interviewee 12, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 05/10/2015).

5.7 The October 2012 Elections: The same pattern or a step towards Democratization?

Despite the particular hindrances to democratization derived from the modernization and state-building process of the country, the respondents highlight the October 2012 election as a 'milestone' in Georgia's development as a democracy.[110] They repeatedly underline that it was 'the first peaceful transition of power' in the Georgian history since its independence in 1991, while it is depicted as a huge step towards democratization of the country. After the October 2012 election, Bidzina Ivanishvili and his party, Georgian Dream, received 54.9% of the votes cast, while the United National Movement and Saakashvili got 40.4% of the votes, according to the results announced by the Central Electoral Commission. In the meantime, President Saakashvili and his team declared that they recognized the results and were ready for the smooth transfer of power (Cabrnoch, 2012).

A respondent, who is a politician, analyzes the 'peaceful transfer of power' from one party, which led the Rose Revolution, to another newly founded political party, as 'the biggest achievement of the Rose Revolution' as follows:

> The biggest achievement, I would say, of the Rose Revolution was, not the reforms, like we could go further in different particular forms of government. But, I would say that the biggest achievement of the Rose Revolution was the peaceful transfer of power, which was the first time in the history of Georgia, where the election cycle really worked and the government was changed through elections. Although I would say that after the elections there are certain directions that show that we have reversal of the democratic development and very serious challenges to the democracy. Now, despite these problems, I think the very fact is that we really manage

[110] On 15 October 2010, the Georgian Parliament accepted amendments to the constitution, which introduced a change from presidential system to the parliamentary one. As a result of the amendment, the competences of the president will be limited, and the main organ of executive government will be a cabinet formed by the prime minister and supported by a parliamentary majority. These changes, in the direction of limiting presidential power and strengthening the powers of parliament and government, were proposed by the West, and have mostly encountered the approval of the Venice Commission (an advisory body of the Council of Europe). However, the fact that its most important provisions will come into effect only at the end of President Mikheil Saakashvili's second and final term, as well as its far-reaching reinforcement of the prerogatives of the head of government, must be interpreted as an attempt to ensure state policy continues in its present direction, and make it possible for the head of state to remain in power in the office of prime minister. However, Saakashvili lost the parliamentary elections that had taken place in November 2012. See: (Matusiak, 2010)

to have this presidential change of power, and it was eventually 'the end of this Rose Revolution era' in Georgia. It is true. (Interviewee 12, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 05/10/2015).

Another respondent, who was a former Ambassador and an expert in a civil society organization, also draws attention to the 'peaceful transition of power' and its first occurrence in the Georgian history from one legitimate government to another one through elections as follows:

> Saakashvili may have done wrongs in terms of democratic, accountable government. Many people believe think that he had concentrated power too much. But the fact remains that Saakashvili and his government presided over as a result of a fair and free election, by which one elected government was defeated by the opposition in the election and another elected government came to power. This was his government basically presided over, the transfer of power, in a democratic manner, which never happened before in the Georgian history. You would read that this was the first peaceful election, it was not. Peaceful elections happened before. But as I said, we had never experienced such a situation that one democratically elected government transferred the power to the other democratically elected government. (Interviewee 3, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

A respondent from a political party also underlines the importance of the transfer of power between two democratically elected political parties, while at the same time pointing out societal dynamics regarding why the Rose Revolution failed to bring more democratic environment as

> Those changes [reforms] happened but the society was not enough educated and ready to handle with those changes. And its capacity was not sufficient to exercise some control over the [Saakashvili] government. That is why, after ten years we started to have a system, which became really autocratic. Then, in 2012, we have for the first time peaceful transfer of power in democratic manners, with the ballot boxes not with the bullets. At this moment, we have a parliamentary system but we cannot say confidently that it is a parliamentary system because there are some errors [shortages] that the power is in the prime minister. But still those changes give us hope for more democratization and development in that direction. (Interviewee 21, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

In addition, the critical position of the 2012 election relies in the fact that it opened up a new path for democratization in Georgia, if the democratic and peaceful transfer of power would become a pattern in the Georgian political system. In that regard, a

respondent from a civil society institution cautiously addresses that although the 2012 election was a hopeful sign for the country for democracy, there should be a continuing pattern of the peaceful transfer of power in this direction in the future elections as follows:

> The project of Rose Revolution was not democratization at all; it was the state capacity building so that the state could deliver something to the citizens, to deliver policies. Now it is also democratization, the last election gives us huge hope. If you have it [peaceful transformation of power] several times than you can talk about democratization. Now this democratization I say it is not that much relevant, not because it is not an important issue but because it requires much longer time period to observe where is it going. Right know we had only one election where we changed political power through electoral means, only one in 24 years. I mean the last one. Before that either we had kind of revolutionary change or coup d'état or something that were extra-constitution, not as a result of an electoral process. So it is very hard to say that Georgia is democratizing because the period is not long enough to say. But what you can say that we have much greater capacity now as a state than we had in 1990s. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

Based on the respondents' analyses, almost all of them underline the 2012 elections and peaceful transfer of power as important steps towards democratization without any external intervention to the regular electoral process. However, as it is underlined in the previous parts, there are still certain implications towards overuse of power with the new Georgian Dream coalition too, as it was depicted by a respondent from a civil society institution as follows:

> After the elections in 2012, we had a huge jump in terms of democratic development thanks to democratic transfer of power. However, since then, unfortunately we are moving backwards. Unfortunately for many politicians from the opposition party, from the UNM former ruling party, they are now imprisoned, which raises lots of questions. You may be heard about this unfortunate news that parliamentary assembly of council of Europe made very harsh statements, they adopted a very harsh resolution condemning the fact that... Actually they did not use that term of political prisoner but they imply that we have political prisoners now. Another big issue is that lots of talk shows were shut down and the only independent; let's say anti-government TV channel, which criticizes this government, Rustavi II, is under severe attack from the government. If it also gets shut down, then, we are going to have huge problem of freedom of speech, much bigger problems than under the previous government that is for sure. In fact, in terms of democratic transition, it is not as smooth as it may look to you.

> May be we are more democratic than Azerbaijan and even Armenia, but still we definitely have some serious problems. I am optimistic about our civil society which has become much stronger for the last years, much stronger from the last elections on. I think that our civil society definitely will not give in and they will fight to the end. They will not allow it to happen, they will not allow freedom of expression to be limited in Georgia and our current government [Georgian Dream Coalition] will have very, very serious problems with that. (Interviewee 25, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

Another respondent from a civil society institution also draws attention to the continuation of the pressure from the ruling coalition towards oppositional figures and civil society as follows:[111]

> Well, then there was a change of power in 2012, which was a landmark event for democratic process, because it was for the first time that transition of power happened through elections not through over throwing the government or doing it with a coup or any other violent means. So, everyone agrees about its importance. However, it was followed by the series of cases, prosecutions of high level officials from the previous government [UNM] and it raises questions about the democratic credentials of the current government. Also, you could hear similar criticism from the European Parliament, and other European institutions and from United States. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Despite the October 2012 election is perceived as a critical point for the Georgian democratization, the following actions of the new ruling party, the Georgian Dream Coalition, indicated similar 'restricting' and 'authoritarian' patterns likewise its predecessor. For instance, in October 2015, the ruling coalition put indirect pressure on the Georgian Supreme Court about the Rustavi II case, which is Georgia's largest and one of the most influential TV channels and also known to be closer to the UNM, faced with the possibility of closure due to the dispute over its ownership (Bordzikashvili, 2017; Rustavi II, 2017). Also, there were dozens of investigations have been launched against politicians from the United National Movement, such as the detainment of the former Defense Minister and military chief of staff.[112] Among

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[111] See: (Washington Post, 2015)

[112] Following the electoral victory of the Georgian Dream Coalition, within a month, in November 2012, there were over 15 other individuals — all of them either members of Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM), including Tbilisi's Deputy Mayor, or civil servants who worked for the Interior Ministry — have been detained. See: (Kirchick, 2012)

them, Ugulava case holds a symbolic significance to demonstrate that there are several judicial misconducts under the influence of the ruling Georgian Dream Coalition with political motivation. Giorgi Ugulava, who was the former Mayor of Tbilisi and election campaign chief of the UNM was considered as one of the close allies of Saakashvili, had to face with some allegations since 2013, including misspending of public funds in 2011 and 2012. Despite the allegations, the Court declined the prosecution's motion for Ugulava's pre-trial detention and freed him on bail, while suspended him from the Tbilisi mayor's office in 2013 (Janashia, 2014). However, on July 4th, 2014 the Tbilisi City Court eventually ruled in favor of the prosecution's request and ordered pre-trial custody for Ugulava, which was seen as 'political revenge' of the ruling Georgian Dream Coalition against its predecessor, UNM (Gente, 2015). Clearly, the Ugulava case overshadowed the promise of the Georgian Dream Coalition on 'restoring the justice' after a decade of ruling of Saakashvili.

A respondent from a civil society institution addresses the Ugulava case as one of the main indicators of 'politicized justice' and anti-democratic practices of the Georgian Dream Coalition despite its differing pre-election narrative as follows:

> After the pre-trial detention of Ugulava, the former mayor of Tbilisi, the Constitutional Court ruled that it is not constitutional; then, he was released but sentenced to one and a half years. This is a clear indication that there is a much politicized justice system in Georgia. When you consider the relationship between Europeanization and democratization, there was a statement from the European Delegation here, representation of the European Commission, regarding the release of Ugulava from the pre-trial detention. People did not expect that he would be a free man for the rest of his life, no one was expecting that it would be so swift and quick. No one really paid attention or trust the justice system or the government, the US Embassy and European Delegation made a press statement and just the next day he got released with a minor sentence. But actually, no one really cares about but only the Western world or the EU say things about the politicized justice. (Interviewee 26, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

5.8   Conclusion

Based on the field research, the Rose Revolution is a historical moment/juncture in the Georgian history in terms of its post-Soviet transition to the Western system. It is also of importance to re-articulate its 'European' path with the clear pro-Western political alignment as well as the de-Sovietization process at the discursive level. As it is discussed above, the respondents highlight four elements revealed as the outcomes of the Rose Revolution, which were the de-Sovietization process and pro-European state discourse, weakening of democratization, state-building attempts/modernization and the peaceful transfer of power with the November 2012 parliamentary elections within the context to analyze to what extent the Rose Revolution paved the ground for the Europeanization process of the country. The findings show that Georgia undoubtedly made certain progress in terms of successful implementation of structural and institutional reforms, economic progress and fighting with corruption regarding the modernization and state-building process, which enabled the country to overcome with the difficulties emanated from the post-Soviet transition process. Most of the respondents underline that Georgia had also acquired to have a new form of leadership, which eliminated the remnants of the Soviet type, old-nomenklatura, from the Georgian leadership.

Nevertheless, based on the field data, the Rose Revolution would not demonstrate similar success in terms of bringing more pluralistic and democratic environment, to consolidate a more democratic statehood. The respondents' analyses demonstrates that despite the Saakashvili government's strong discourse towards the European integration and 're-uniting' with Europe, which would address strong arteries for Georgian Europeanization, the Rose Revolution indicates partial 'success' to take necessary steps towards Europeanization path of the country due to the lack of democratic elements. Almost all the interviewees emphasize certain cases that are clear indications of such relapse into more-authoritarian tendencies such as restricting free media outlets and weakening civil society organizations, pressure imposed upon oppositional figures, which reveal certain backlash from flourishing a

more democratic political atmosphere, are not compatible with the necessary steps taken for the Europeanization process of the country. Almost all the respondents agree that these difficulties had grown out of the over-concentration on the modernization of the state, which hampered the construction of a democratic and pluralistic atmosphere in line with embracing/internalizing European norms and values. Therefore, it is difficult to suggest that the Rose Revolution would render a full-fledged realization of the necessary steps towards Europeanization. Especially due to the patterns of 'dominant political power system', which the Georgian political system carries its certain symptoms before and after the Rose Revolution, the post-Rose Revolution Georgia indicates some characteristics of 'limited' transformation as well as partial 'success' in its Europeanization path due to its inability to instigate a more democratic atmosphere.

CHAPTER 6

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO EUROPE AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

6.1   Introduction

Europeanization is understood as a "process of convergence on modern European norms and values" (Emerson at al., 2005). Nevertheless, the Europeanization and European integration of Georgia address multiple pathways, which consist of multiple aspects such as institutional, legal, and democratic dimensions as well as normative element. Merely, the EU integration as well as Europeanization holds utmost importance, as the EU accession is portrayed as a 'national project' for Georgia and institutional integration into the EU has long become a major long-term foreign policy priority and a matter of societal consensus (Gegeshidze, 2005: 5).

As it was mentioned in the previous parts, Georgia declared its Western/European orientation and started to be part of several Western/European bodies since its independence in 1991. In the context of Georgia's re-locating/re-constituting itself within a wider geopolitical framework of the West/EU in the post-Soviet political and geostrategic constellation, the EU represents a unique example of reconstruction and reconciliation of former enemies for peace and prosperity, peaceful resolution of conflicts with political cooperation and economic integration as well as pursuing good-neighbourly relations (Smith, 2008; Inotai, 2007; Sjursen and Smith, 2004). As it is stated in the previous chapter, Georgia became a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004, and its European aspiration became more tangible simultaneously with the Rose Revolution. Afterwards, the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) at the Prague Summit in 2009 gave a new impetus to the country's objective of EU integration. Despite the concerns, the momentum that was gained towards Europe and Europeanization within the Rose Revolution and adoption of the

EaP continued after the transfer of power from UNM to the Georgian Dream Coalition in 2012. The Association Agreement was signed between the EU and Georgia in June 2014 and in December 2016 the Parliament of Georgia unanimously approved a foreign policy resolution declaring European integration a national strategic objective (Georgian Parliament, 2016).

During the field research, the respondents stress different dimensions of European integration and Europeanization in Georgia. They avoid putting an emphasis on one-dimensional/unidirectional interpretation of the Europeanization process; rather, they clearly highlight both normative/ideational as well as institutional aspects of the Europeanization process and how both are interlinked with each other. While they portray the institutional arrangements and legal approximation of the Europeanization as the strongest impetus for Georgia to become more democratic and developed, they also underline the diffusion of 'norms', 'values' and 'rules' with various articulations such as Europe as a 'role-model', 'norm-setter' and more importantly, as a 'triggering' force for the Georgian democratization, modernization as a part of the normative/ideational element of the Europeanization process.

This chapter comprises two main parts with the aim to unravel the institutional, normative/ideational and democratization aspects of Europeanization in Georgia. In the light of the interviews and rich analyses of the respondents, the aim of this chapter is not only explaining the 'normative/ideational aspect' of the Europeanization with elaborating to what extent the EU succeeds to diffuse/transfer its 'norms', 'rules' and 'values' but also discussing the sphere of impact and/or applicability of the domestic legal arrangements adopted and complied during this process. Against this backdrop, this chapter seeks for shedding light on how all these different but actually interdependent processes overall contribute to the

Europeanization of Georgia and how it reflects to construct a 'common grammar' in the process of Europeanization in the case of Georgia.[113]

6.2   Institutional Aspect of Europeanization

The first building block of this chapter is based on the institutional aspect of Europeanization between the EU and Georgia to deepen their cooperation and enabling approximation with the EU structures and European *acquis*. The relation between the EU and Georgia dated back to 90s with the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States Program (TACIS)[114] after the independence in 1991, then, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)[115] that signed in 1996 and came into force in 1999 (Council of the European Union, 1996). However, particularly the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 and Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009 became catalyst for strengthening the relations between Georgia and the EU considering institutional, legal and normative aspects (Whitman and Wolff, 2010). Especially, the Association Agreement signed in 2014 revealed 'surpassing logical benchmark' for Georgia in its path towards Europeanization, which the country has employed since it regaining its sovereignty after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Maisuradze, 2015).

Based on the field research, almost all the respondents underline the Georgia's integration to the ENP and EaP, and the signing of the Association Agreement in 2014 and Visa Liberalization Agreement as the crucial corner stones of the Europeanization and European integration of Georgia.

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[113] According to Radaelli, Europe has become a 'common grammar' in the process of Europeanisation, which is about the 'governance and processes'. See: (Radaelli, 2004: 11).

[114] TACIS aimed to assist 12 post-Soviet countries after their independence including Mongolia in their transition process. From 1990 to 1999 the EU spent 4.2 billion Euro on TACIS programme and 100 million Dollars to Georgia.

[115] Through PCAs, the EU applied its regional approach for the first time in the South Caucasus by treating Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan with no substantial difference, it was not designed with a country-specific focus.

6.2.1   ENP and EaP

Despite the intensifying institutional ties between the EU and Georgia, particularly concerning the last decade, the overwhelming majority of the respondents are critical about both impact and efficiency of the ENP and EaP vis-à-vis Georgia's willingness to take more steps towards the European integration. Nonetheless, the respondents underline how the institutional collaboration between the EU and Georgia under the framework of ENP/EaP, especially through Action Plans, contribute to instigate certain reforms, legal approximation and overall domestic change in return.

For instance, a respondent, who is an expert on the Georgian–European relations lays out how the institutional cooperation have strengthened especially after the EU directed its attention towards its East with the Eastern Enlargement of the EU as follows:

> When we saw the EU enlargement in 2004, the EU started paying much more attention to Georgia. After the Eastern Enlargement in 2004; there was more lobbyist countries in the EU structure than it was before such as Lithuania and Poland, which were the strongest supporters of Georgia's European integration and they lobbied for Georgia. So, it helped a lot and then, we also saw the so-called the Black Sea Enlargement, with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria joining the EU in 2007. Now, we actually have the maritime borders with the EU. Then, we saw that European Neighborhood Policy was launched in 2004 and Georgia was included in this policy framework. All the homework given to Georgia as a part of the ENP Action Plan was mostly accomplished. (Interviewee 23, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

The Eastern Enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007 is perceived as a great success of the EU with the smooth accession of ten post-communist states integrated into the EU structure and decision making mechanism (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005: 1-28; Cirtautas and Schimmelfennig 2010: 421-441).[116] The new enlargement also required an upgrading of the EU's relations with its new neighbouring region (Johansson-Nogués, 2007). However, the Eastern Enlargement also obtains a critical

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[116] In 2004, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia became members of the EU, and in 2007, the EU also included Bulgaria and Romania.

stance in terms of defining the EU's new 'near abroad' and brings up the question whether the EU reached its borders/limits with the accession of the former-communist European countries (Emerson, 2004). The Eastern Enlargement did not suffice to solve the problem of 'the eastern frontier' of the EU, rather, it necessitated a re-mapping of the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbours not to create 'new dividing lines' (Johansson-Nogués, 2007). Most of the member states showed their concerns about the possibility of further accession perspectives for both southern and eastern neighbours with the fear that the EU might lose its capacity to act (Rinnert, 2011: 6). In other words, the EU had to face with the 'further enlargement problem' that whether being open to all European countries or to stop its expansion. For instance, in 2002, Romano Prodi, who was the president of the European Commission, declared that "the EU cannot go on enlarging forever. We cannot water down the European political project and turn the EU into just a free trade area on a continental scale" (Prodi, 2002). From a critical perspective, according to Manners, ENP is very diverse and there are large geographical and linguistic differences, thus, it is a difficult empirical field of study, also, it is neither strictly EU enlargement policy, nor strictly European foreign policy, rather, ENP is best characterized as a "mass of contradictory impulses, led by an EU desire to improve its relations with its nearest neighbours in the aftermath of its most recent enlargement" (Manners, 2010: 30).

Despite it triggered more complex questions to deal with, the ENP, which was launched in 2003 just before the Eastern Enlargement in 2004, aimed at encompassing the 'neighbouring' countries, both in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, with a new political/strategic cluster.[117] The EU's objective with the ENP was to extend "the stability, security and well-being of all concerned" (European Commission, 2004: 5), while transforming the EU's neighbours towards greater economic development, stability and better governance (Börzel, 2011). Aiming at

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[117] ENP includes sixteen countries neighbouring the EU frontier: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

extending the idea of Europeanization without a promise of membership, major targets of the ENP were intensifying the cooperation between the EU and neighbouring countries with stabilizing relations and promotion of security as a policy instrument both in its east and south axis (Smith and Webber, 2008: 73-95; European Commission, 2003: 4).[118]

Nevertheless, as it is argued by Lippert, the ENP is 'neither conceptually complete, nor operationally stable' (Lippert, 2007: 2). Along with the Eastern European and Mediterranean countries, the Caucasian Republics were included in the framework of the ENP in June 2004, a year after its inception. However, the ENP offered rather 'fuzzy' framework that is open to various possibilities of its' understanding 'as you like it' in line with the interest of the ENP actors (Manners, 2010). Due to the ENP's broader framework falling short to meet the expectations from the partnering countries, the EU launched the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009 as both bilateral and multilateral policy initiative towards six post-Soviet countries, namely Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Moldova (Council of the European Union, 2009a). The EaP is widely perceived as an improvement in their relations with the EU that supersedes the ENP by the partnering countries (Wolczuk, 2011: 5). The EaP initiative comprised of bilateral and multilateral tracks (Council of the European Union, 2009a). There are key bilateral elements in the EaP, composed of: (1) Association Agreements: for trade and investment, will provide for the establishment or the objective of establishing deep and comprehensive free trade areas (the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements); (2) Institutional Capacity Building: strengthening of the democratic institutions of the partner countries including through training, technical assistance and any appropriate innovative measures; (3) Visa Facilitation Agreements, to promote mobility of

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[118] Regarding the introduction of the ENP policy to ensure security and stability of wider neighbourhood of the Union, the European Commission declared that "Existed differences in living standards across the Union's borders with its neighbours may be accentuated as a result of faster growth in the new Member States than in their external neighbours; common challenges in fields such as the environment, public health, and the prevention of and fight against organised crime will have to be addressed; efficient and secure border management will be essential both to protect our shared borders and to facilitate legitimate trade and passage" (The European Commission, 2003: 4).

citizens of the partner countries through visa facilitation and readmission agreements; (4) strengthening energy security through cooperation with regard to long-term stable and secure energy supply and transit the enhanced energy security for deeper cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2009a). Also, the negotiations for the Association Agreement between EU and Georgia started in July 2010 and were completed after four years, in June 2014. The text of the agreement was adopted at the third Eastern Partnership Summit, in Vilnius, in November 2013 and required to be signed by the parties in 2014 (Eastern Partnership, 2013).

Relying on the analyses of the respondents, despite the previous agreements between the EU and Georgia, the ENP and EaP are interpreted as the crucial milestones for the European integration and Europeanization process in Georgia. While it necessitated heavy burden of legislative approximation with *acquis communitaire*, it prompted Georgia to restructure its domestic policies to progress in the fields of rule of law, democracy and human rights. Nevertheless, most of the respondents articulate certain hardships about the EaP and implementation of the necessary reforms by the Georgian governments (Cirtautas and Frank Schimmelfennig, 2010: 421-441). Firstly, they criticize the initiation of the partnership due to its common strategies; i.e. 'one size fits all' approach, covering six Eastern Partnership countries together, especially before 2011, without developing strategies focusing on 'one to one' relations for each and every country. Secondly, they underline the reluctance of the Georgian government to implement certain legal changes and reforms, despite they rather accepted on paper. Thirdly, the EU does not promise membership prospect for Georgia, at least it does not seem on the horizon in the near future. This position weakens any leverage the EU has on promoting domestic reforms in Georgia.

Against this backdrop, a respondent, who is an MP in the Georgian Parliament responsible for the EU relations, is critical about the regional inefficiency of the EaP strategies as well as the way it deals with the partnering countries with stating that[119]

> The Action Plans mean a large number of reforms. The EU's approval is high, it should not be taken for granted and we have a dramatic support towards the EU here. On the other hand, the Eastern Partnership unites six different countries with different level of ambitions. It is like regional initiative without any regional perspective. Georgia is the best performer always and Georgia is the front-runner among the other partnership countries. However, not Georgia, but Moldova signed the visa-free agreement before completing the benchmarks. The Eastern Partnership works with more for more principle but it puts everyone into the same basket. For instance, Armenia is different from Georgia in state policies. We are the front-runner but we are still in the same basket with other countries that don't have the same interest towards the European integration. I think ENP failed to meet the regional democratic dynamics. It does not meet the challenges and realities of the region. (Interviewee 4, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 07/12/2016).

Another respondent from a civil society institution also criticizes the effectiveness of the EaP regarding the geopolitical constraints that lead to rather divergent motivations of the partnering countries and inability of the partnership programme to create cohesion as follows:

> The EaP is not that much successful. For instance, Belarus has never ratified it, it has never been a part of it, and so we have five countries out of six [among Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Belarus]. Also, out of five, Armenia just became a part of the Eurasian Union, clearly deviated from the path foreseen by the Eastern Partnership. And Azerbaijan, based on the recent developments, making me more than skeptical even pessimistic in a way in terms of domestic developments and foreign policy direction and statements regarding the European Union and the West in general. When you look at the benchmark given by the Eastern Partnership, since it was launched in 2009, after 2008 War between Georgia and Russia, one of the dreams was creating the ring of stability and bringing prosperity to those countries, also making them closer to the EU. When you assess it from a standpoint today, there is less stability in Ukraine, and it is doubtful

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[119] This interview was obtained in 2016, when the EU was still conducting 'Visa Liberalisation Dialogues' with three Eastern Partnership countries, namely Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. The dialogues were built upon 'Visa Liberalisation Action Plans' (VLAP), which include four blocks of benchmarks related to document security, including biometrics; border management, migration and asylum; public order and security; and external relations and fundamental rights. On 28 March 2017, Visa-free travel came into effect for the Georgian citizens.

that there is prosperity in other countries, in terms of bringing those countries closer to the EU. It only works for Georgia, one can say that also for Ukraine, where the country is split and there is a proxy war going on. Well, Moldova is still on track but if you follow recent developments there is also crisis over there and thousands or ten thousands of people are protesting. So, there is no doubt that there should be a question mark, if there is stability in those countries. (Interviewee 26, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

According to the most of the respondents, the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia became a litmus test between the EU and Georgia because it demonstrated the EU's inability to take any initiative towards Russia. Obviously, the 2008 war diminished the credibility of the EU both in public and private spheres in Georgia. In this vein, while one of the first and foremost targets of the ENP and EaP is to bring 'stability' to the region, the respondents highlight that it falls short to take action both in the 2008 war and the recent developments in Ukraine, which resulted with the annexation of Crimea by the Russians.

Depending on the current development in the post-Soviet region, an academician from Tbilisi State University evaluates the role of the EU as follows:

> ENP is a general framework with full of good intentions. However, it still lacks a real approach, it has some practical approach. We still do not know if the EU foresees Georgia as a future part of the EU or not. For Ukraine, yes indeed they want to have Ukraine within the EU because they consider Ukraine as part of geographical and political Europe. But, we are still not sure about if they have the same attitude towards Georgia. (Interviewee 14, Academician, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Regarding the further integration with the EU, a former Minister indicates this process as a crucial and hard one, while underlining both the legal and practical improvements in this process as follows:

> I would say it is a heavy job done, huge effort was put to get to society and economy of the country, its political life, to the point which allowed Georgia to get to the path to associate with the EU. It was a very heavy and hard work to change our economic life, which is not perfect now, but there is no comparison between what we have now and what we had in 1991. For example, to change our political process here, legally and in practical way, we put many central political procedures into action. I mean not only

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elections, but also legal norms related to freedom of expression, rule of law, despite we still suffer from due to the shortcomings in this area. Nevertheless, the main principles and the main bodies were maintained and developed. Now, we became the associated partner to the EU, and we definitely pledge to continue. Actually, not just continue but deepen this process even in specific areas. And, I hope very much that the Association Agreement will not be just helpful to develop our economy and political life, but also it would serve as an encouraging movement to the new wave of deepening democratic process here in Georgia. (Interviewee 1, Former State Official, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

6.2.2 Association Agreement and Legal Approximation

The EU and Georgia strengthened their relations with the signature of the Association Agreement (AA) in June 2014, when the EaP gained a new impetus. While the AA between the EU and Georgia entered into force on July 2016, in fact, the negotiations on the AA officially began in 2010 in Batumi, where the EU's High Representative and Vice President of the Commission, Catherine Ashton declared that

> Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have shown a clear ambition to intensify their relationships with the EU. I am personally convinced that this comprehensive Association Agreement shall impact positively not just on political relations but also on people's lives, in terms of economic opportunities, easier contacts with people from the EU, the environment, just to name few. This agreement will be a catalyst to the domestic reforms in these countries and can help us to focus resources on the key institutions needed to make further efforts (European Commission Press Release, 2010).

On the other hand, the Commissioner Füle further stated that "these Association Agreements will lay a new legal foundation for our relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The main objective of the Association Agreements is to achieve closer political association and gradual economic integration between the EU and these countries" (European Commission Press Release, 2010).

According to Delcour and Wolczuk, the Association Agreements are the longest and most detailed agreements of their kind that contain detailed and binding provision for the partner countries to align their laws and policies with the EU *acquis*, signaling shift from soft law to the hard law commitments, and in that way reflecting its

greater potential to induce and stimulate domestic reforms in the partnering countries in the region (Delcour and Wolczuk, 2013). Regarding the pre-requisites for signing the Association Agreements, the European Commission expressed the necessary conditions as "a sufficient level of progress in terms of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and in particular evidence that the electoral legislative framework and practice are in compliance with international standards, and full cooperation with the Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR and UN human rights bodies" is a precondition for starting negotiations on signing the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU (European Commission, 2008:4).

Apparently, signing the Association Agreement required 'hard reforms and regulations' for Georgia along with considerable political costs through its route to the European integration. Georgia has to obtain series of reforms that requires to embracing democracy, the rule of law and human rights as well as legal approximation with the *acquis* communitaire. With this aim, according to Gabrichidze (2014), the Georgian Parliament passed the Resolution of 28 March 2003 'On the Enhancement of Georgia's Full Integration into the EU' to ensure the process of voluntary harmonization of national legislation to EU law. The resolution 'On the Enhancement of Georgia's Full Integration into the EU' supported the executive power of Georgia to launch negotiations with the EU institutions about the acceleration of Georgia's full integration into the EU, thereby; the Georgian Parliament emphasized the objective of full EU membership (Gabrichidze, 2014: 183).

Based on the field research, almost all the respondents underline that the approximation with the EU through the Association Agreements would bring certain 'domestic change' in many aspects. They also highlight the importance of the political willingness of the ruling elites to implement hard reforms to meet the EU's demands for change. They draw attention to the reforms brought by the EU via the Association Agreement would require a slow and painful process and would bring political 'cost' to the actors who 'really' implement them. A respondent, who is an

academician and working on the EU and Georgia relations and legal approximation interprets the 'hard commitments' brought by the EU via the Association Agreement, and how the political elites in Georgia sometimes remain reluctant to implement those reforms due to possible high cost of the reformation process in the domestic politics as follows:

> Within the previous legal framework of cooperation between Georgia and the EU – the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement –, there were several provisions containing a soft obligation for Georgia to approximate its legislation to that of the EU. It could have a general character or sometimes it was considered as a precondition for achieving higher level of integration. The EU–Georgia Association Agreement, which was signed in June 2014, contains Georgia's commitments to gradual approximation of the Georgian legislation to the EU legislation. In contrast to approximation clauses of the EU–Georgia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the relevant provisions of the Association Agreement contain hard commitments. Though it can be assumed that the aspiration towards European integration is very strong, very liberal economic approaches dominated the Georgian economic policy in the last decade, turned out to be obstacles to approximation process. The government under President Saakashvili has chosen Singapore as role model for Georgia's economic development; according to this approach, attracting foreign investment is of most importance and it can only be accomplished under the conditions of minimal government and maximum economic deregulation, massive abolition and reduction of regulations and regulatory agencies. This was the direct opposite of what the EU expected from Georgia, that is, the adoption of European rules and regulations. (Interviewee 27, Academician, Tbilisi, 21/12/2017).

A respondent from a civil society institution also interprets that the Association Agreement is a mechanism for domestic change for Georgia as well as taking concrete actions to implement these 'necessary changes' for the European integration of Georgia as follows:

> The EU has these mechanisms for bringing change; it was through ENP before, now it is the Association Agreement. It is related to the concrete obligations that Georgia has to take and implement concrete actions to benefit from relationship with EU. These are more or less concrete benefits, such as trade benefits. This whole Association Agreement necessitates following concrete obligations in almost all spheres of public, administrational and societal life. So this also shows the difference of the EU from other actors I think. (Interviewee 24, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 24/11/2014).

Another respondent from a civil society institution, who is an expert on the EU and Georgia relations and Europeanization of Georgia, also attracts attention to the difference between signing the agreements and implementation of reforms as follows:

> ENP was something which was working and currently Georgia signed the Association Agreement with the EU. This let the EU promotes hard reforms in Georgia. But, the problems we are facing here emerge in several forms. One is that we might see that the Georgian government either pursues kind of shallow reforms just to put a tick on the box and say that we have done something or it just neglects everything. That is why we should step in as a civil society institution and to monitor the government to see what and how they are doing and what is the quality of the job they are doing. Thank God the civil society is quite vibrant here. The Association Agreement, again, is something that we also have to study because Association Agreement is a pretty heavy document, which has more than 1100 pages. We have to transfer national legislation more than 80% in accordance with the *acquis* communitaire and it takes a lot of paper reforms like technical inspections of cars, which was actually suspended in Georgia since 2004. (Interviewee 23, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

Likewise, a respondent from a civil society institution underline the difference between the accepting and signing the binding documents and implementing necessary changes due to possible political cost of these changes and regulations. He adds that implementing these reforms would cause 'sharing power' of the ruling elite and that would diminish both the political eagerness and decisiveness to implement those reforms, although they are accepted on paper as follows:

> I cannot criticize the EU about what they expect because these changes and obligations are not designed to deliver fast results. It is kind of slow institutional developments. As far as I understand, the very important parts in the Association Agreement aims to improve several institutions including the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and that will tremendously improve the political competition in Georgia. In semi-democratic countries, the biggest obstacle is the political competition because law enforcement agencies are totally politicized and controlled by whoever is in the government. So, that is a terrible system. There are some parts of the Association Agreement that suggests reforming those agencies also improving impartiality, which is also very important and what Georgia lacks right now. So, these are the things that I think in several areas, where the Association Agreement can really help us. On the other hand, doing these things or not doing these things require political will of domestic actors. The major nuance lies in the fact that there is no one will tell you or force you to

do those things, if you don't want to do so. The problem is that do we really have the political willingness inside the country to follow what is written and agreed with the EU. Because by declaration we accept those changes, but we will see if we really intend to apply them. It is not certain because these changes will cause loss of some power for the rulers. It is about sharing power with others, which no one likes to share power. So, let's see I mean in the discursive level, they are happy to democratize the country, however, regarding the further steps, we will see. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

Another respondent also draws attention to the importance of the implementation of the necessary arrangements as follows:

> The complexity and broad nature of the topics reflected in the Association Agreement, almost by default, gives rise to questions related to its implementation. In general, institutional system created and functioning in context of implementation of obligations deriving from the legal framework of EU–Georgia relations offers a balanced mechanism for the implementation of the Association Agreement. Besides, the constitutional framework concerning the place and effect of international legal norms establishes a comfortable legal position for international treaties concluded by Georgia, including, of course, the EU–Georgia Association Agreement. Taking into consideration this, the most important question with regard to legal aspects of implementation of the Association Agreement will be whether Georgian courts will start to base their decisions on directly applicable norms of the Association Agreement or will continue to use the EU law just to make their arguments more convincing. (Interviewee 27, Academician, Tbilisi, 21/12/2017).

Similarly, a respondent from a civil society institution stresses the necessary changes with the Association Agreement bring new standards and regulations, while drawing attention to the possible political costs it would bring as follows:

> Because a lot of those things that are in the Association Agreement, these are not costless changes and also these are not painless changes. Some of the changes are pretty hard to achieve and probably that will irritate some segments of the population, if you are serious about really implementing them, not just to show the EU, but if you really want to do it. Certainly, it is not an imposition. I would say that most of these changes are great for the country. Yet, in the short term, it can be painful. For example, let's say for the free trade regulations [as a part of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA)] you have to meet some standards that do not exist before. And, you were trading with Russia, which does not have such standards or they have their own that can be changed through, literally, by payment [he meant bribery] or something. Now, there are new standards,

which were not there before and introducing those standards would be costly. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

In 2012, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a new law on Free Trade and Competition with the objective of approximating the Georgian competition law with the EU competition *acquis*. Based on the legal approximation about the completion in the Georgian legal adjustment to the European law, an expert, who is an academician and working on the EU and Georgia relations and legal approximation, exemplifies how the approximation functions in the domestic legislative attempts and the change in the ruling power affects the process follows:

> Georgian competition legislation is another example how the approximation process can be influenced by the economy policy. One of the fields, which should be covered by legal approximation, is competition. Before 2012, Georgia favoured a minimalist system of state regulation. The Law on Free Trade and Competition, which was adopted in 2005, was limited mainly to state aids and ignored such important areas of competition policy as restrictive agreements, concerted practices, abuses of dominant positions, monopolies, mergers and state-owned enterprises. On 25 April 2012, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a new law on Free Trade and Competition which replaced the law of 2005. Though the new law was adopted for the purpose to approximate the Georgian legislation with the EU norms and while at first look its content was very similar to the legal norms of the EU competition policy, an in-depth analysis showed that the practical effect of the new law would be minimal. For example, the law did not differentiate between a geographic market and a product market, the relevant market could be extended to the neighbouring countries, *de minimis* threshold was very high, etc. After the change of the government in October 2012 the ultra-liberal approach has been renounced. As a result, on 21 March 2014 the Parliament of Georgia modified the 2012 law in a significant way with the purpose to strengthen the role of state with regard to ensuring fair competition in the Georgian market. (Interviewee 27, Academician, Tbilisi, 21/12/2017).

Regarding all the legal adjustments put forward by the EU through the Association Agreement, a respondent, who is an expert on the EU and Georgian relations and Europeanization, declares how difficult to convince people and implement these regulations in the context of Europeanization, as it necessitates detailed reforms and regulations, especially concerning a country which has been experienced the post-Soviet transition as follows:

I can tell you that I am working in this field since 1991, I am always asking myself and explain people what is the European Union, why we prefer this, while I was working as an official, or working in formal institutions. And it is always in my mind that how you should make this discourse more convincing for people. That was easy before, I mean to convince people. It was self-evident before, I mean the difference between the Soviet Union and the EU. It was necessary to build a market economy and people wanted to live in freedom and justice etc. Yet, the more complicated the reality becomes in terms of once you build the state and now more details appear now. When you think about macro things, like market economy, democratic foundations, fair elections, people believe quickly that it is better, Europe is better. But, when you already have these kinds of institutions, you should see more details, smaller things. Now, it is necessary to convince people to implement reforms. For example, food safety system should be adapted or technical regulations, how the market should be organized and how the competition law should be organized. When you talk about more details, technical things, it becomes more difficult to explain all these to people. Georgian Europeanization now goes towards these details, after you build up the country with efficient governance and with efficient legal system, with people understanding and obeying the rules and also for competitive society. If you have rules, but, you are not competitive internationally, it would be damaging for your Europeanization path. For instance, we signed this DCFTA agreement with the EU. However, if your industry is not competitive and import was substituting everything in your country it means people in your country are just consumers. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

Relying on his analysis, the institutional and legal obligations required for the Europeanization process in Georgia does not address an easy path to follow, especially once Georgia completed the primary steps for further cooperation. In other words, the Europeanization and European integration process in Georgia is not only a 'simple' dichotomy between the 'old' system and the 'new' one. Rather, aiming further cooperation/convergence with Europe requires a whole system/systemic change that brings forward to implement important changes in rules, regulations and law enforcement.

6.2.3 Anti-Discrimination Law

In accordance with the EU–Georgia Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) signed in February 2013, Georgia became obligated to adopt a law aimed at eliminating

various forms of discrimination.[120] In April 2014, the Georgian Government has submitted the draft to the Georgian Parliament, which has adopted the Law on 2 May 2014. On May 7, following President Margvelashvili's signature, the 'Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination' has entered into force officially (Transperancy International, 2014). Nevertheless, the so-called Anti-Discrimination Law raised controversial voices in the Georgian society, especially from the Patriarchate of Georgia and traditionalist/conservative segments of the society. During the sessions of the draft law in the Georgian Parliament, 'sexual orientation' expression, followed by the other forms of discrimination such as gender, sex, age, language, stated in the Article 1, led to a momentous turmoil both in political and public discourses.[121] The expressions of 'sexual orientation' and 'gender' interpreted as legalization of 'sodomy' by the clerics of the Patriarchate of Georgia; they also warned MPs of losing public support if they have voted for the Law in this form.[122]

Regarding the Europeanization process of Georgia, the Anti-Discrimination Law is of importance because it became the most apparent case that attracted such level controversy among the other reforms and changes. The respondents interpret the passing of the 'Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination' as a critical brink for the Europeanization process of Georgia. One of the respondents from a

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[120] The European Commission declared that after Georgia fulfills all the VLAP requirements, its citizens with biometric passports would be able to make short-term visits (up to 90 days in any 180 day period) visa free to the Schengen area (which includes 22 EU member and 4 non-member states). See: (EEAS, 2017).

[121] Article 1 of the Anti-Discrimination Law of Georgia states that: "This Law is intended to eliminate every form of discrimination and to ensure equal rights of every natural and legal persons under the legislation of Georgia, irrespective of race, skin colour, language, sex, age, citizenship, origin, place of birth or residence, property or social status, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, profession, marital status, health, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, political or other opinions, or other characteristics." See: (Transparency International, 2014)

[122] For instance, at the hearing of the Committee for Human Rights and Civil Integration, where the draft Law was debated, one of the priests, Davit Isakadze, has stated that "turning homosexuality into a norm" is unacceptable and threatened supporters of the draft Law with anathema. See: (Transparency International, 2014)

civil society institution, who also attended the negotiation talks, analyzes the whole process as follows:

> Actually, as a foundation, we were involved in the process of the drafting the Anti-Discrimination Law. We were cooperating with the Ministry of Justice and I had a chance to observe the process from the very beginning. The first draft of the Law was excellent, it was a kind of Swedish law, and it was like even people in Sweden would accept it. Then, there was a lot of discussion when the draft Law was presented to the civil society organizations here. Just imagine that the civil society organizations almost had nothing to add it, because it was like perfect and this is not a case in Georgia because the civil society organizations are always complaining about missing points. But this time, they said that this is perfect, wonderful. Since the Ministry of Justice has not had a right to initiate the Law in the Parliament, it should be initiated by the government. Then, this draft was sent to the government and it was actually cut down and the backbone of the draft was taken out by the government. There are two important words which were kept and there was a very firm standing, reaction from the European Union. These words were the discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. The EU warned that if you take those words out of the Law, we would accept that this Law is actually not adopted, but it is just a piece of paper. So that was the biggest challenge between the EU and Georgia so far. On the other hand, the Georgian Orthodox Church declared that we would never go against this Law, if you take those two worlds out of the Law. Yet, finally the government managed to win this battle and they kept those two words in the Law. But, if you look at the progress report coming from the EU, you can see that EU might ask Georgia to review this Law. Again, now we are also involved in the progress of litigating of this Law, I mean regarding the cases and we will see how this law will work in practice. So, it will be a very interesting exercise and we are together with five of other NGOs like Georgian Young Lawyers Associations [GYLA] and others, which are the leading Georgian NGOs working on the minority rights. We are trying to see what is working and what is not. (Interviewee 23, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

It is important to note that passing of the Anti-Discrimination Law was constructed on a political narrative that 'choosing' between the EU and Russia by some political figures in the Georgian politics. For instance, the Chair of the Republican Party and the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament Davit Usupashvili made some remarks about the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law with stating that "Anti-discrimination bill is about making choice between Russia and Europe, therefore the Parliament will take a decision that is required for the country in order not to stay in uncivilized world with Russia" (Civil Georgia, 2014). He also added in the Parliamentary session

about the Law as follows: "It is about the following issue: either we go towards Europe and we recognize that we should not chase people with sticks, we should not fire people from job if we do not share their opinions and their way of life, or else we stay in Russia, where it is possible to expel from a city those people, whom you dislike, to ban from entry to shops those people, whom you do not like, and simply to go and invade a territory of others if you like that territory" (Civil Georgia, 2014). A respondent from a civil society organization underlines that Georgia needs to follow the 'rules' that are necessary for its Europeanization path. He also draws attention to the reason of the disagreement about the Anti-Discrimination Law would be stem from 'myth-making' about the EU, as if it would encourage some behaviors and attitudes that are contradicting with the 'Georgian values' as follows:

> First of all, when we say that the EU imposes something, whatever that is, regardless of it is true or not, we need to know that it is Georgia's choice to become closer and integrate with the EU or not. The EU just presents the rules of its game. If Georgia would like to become closer and integrated to the EU, it has to accept these rules. Then, there are some levels of integration possible and the relationship will remain on certain levels. About this particular issue, I mean the Anti-Discrimination Law; it is not that the EU is underlining this. This whole debate was caused by the Law on Discrimination, which Georgia has passed this year and this Law was one of the conditions of signing the Association Agreement. There are a lot of myths about the EU. I think, it is also part of this myth. In this Anti-Discrimination Law, this Law was about all kinds of discrimination, not something particular about the LGBT people and it is not like the EU is requesting from its members that they legalize gay marriages or whatever. You know, it is a major principle not to discriminate people either based on if they are LGBT or on ethnic or religious basis. (Interviewee 24, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 24/11/2014).

A respondent from a political party interprets the whole case as a part of the weaknesses of protection of human rights in Georgia and she depicts the EU's positive role to encourage Georgia to instigate such changes towards increasing individual freedoms as follows:[123]

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[123] On 17 May 2013, thousands of Georgians gathered to protest against a gay rights rally being held to mark the international day against homophobia in Tbilisi. They broke through police barricades and carried stinging nettles with which to beat activists. Some posters read: "We don't need Sodom and

We have a big problem concerning human rights and LGBT rights in Georgia. The EU helps to improve human rights in Georgia to protect the rights of all people without mentioning any ethnical, religious and gender differences. About LGBT, it was even not public in Saakashvili time. It was the first time, on the 17th May 2013, last year, that they had parade. And the Anti-Discrimination Law was under discussion. Georgia is a country that the Orthodox Church has a big power on people and it is very strong. In the minds of people, it is hard to know that your friend is gay. During the parade last year, 5000 people came out for 10 gays and they have just beaten them up. That was a shame for me. (Interviewee 28, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

Another respondent from a political party frames the role of the Orthodox Church in the parliamentary sessions during the negotiation talks of the draft of the Anti-Discrimination Law as follows:

In the Saakashvili era, there was no open manifestation of this [sexual] minority. Even Saakashvili, himself, said "I don't like this way of life" and somehow he took the side of the Orthodox people. The Church made bad things; they violently dispersed the rally in 2013. About the Anti-Discrimination Law, priests from the Church attended the committee hearings in the Parliament. Can you imagine? Lots of priests were sitting there and made comments. On that particular issue, the Committee of Human Rights [Committee for Human Rights and Civil Integration] accepted the demand from the Church and let them in the Parliament and committee hearings. And they made such statements that "if you accept this, you will be cursed" and the session was broadcasted online, everyone could see it. With attending the hearing at the Parliament, they tried to oppress the government. Officially, we have separation between the Church and the state in Georgia. However, what they were doing was giving the directives and orders to the MPs. They said "If you sign this bill, I won't bless you" or something like that. But still, the government passed the law. So, they [the Church] failed two times. The head of the Patriarchy, Ilia II, has a huge authority on the Georgian society. He is the most popular guy; he is like a rock star in Georgia. Since 1978, he is the head of the Patriarchy. He has around 90–91% popularity, but this doesn't mean that you can put some pressure on particular policies and changes in the country. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

Gomorrah". Patriarch Ilia II had urged the authorities not to allow the gay pride rally to go ahead, saying it was a "violation of the majority's rights" and "an insult" to the Georgian nation. See: (BBC, 2013; Dailymail, 2013)

A political activist also attracts attention to 'the bargain' between the Orthodox Church and the Georgian Dream government as regards to the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law as follows:

> When the government is trying to do something that the Church is against, the government gives presents to the Church. In this way, they keep them silent. And last time about the Anti-Discrimination Law, the state gave territory to the Patriarchate as a present. Now, the Patriarchate has/owns eight times bigger territory than Tbilisi. And this is a private property of the Church. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2017).

Another respondent from the State Ministry unravels two different aspects of the Anti-Discrimination Law. At first, he underlines the fact that the Anti-Discrimination Law is a part of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan between the EU and Georgia, and that brings the possibility of 'asylum seeking' by the Georgian citizens once it enters into force; while secondly he mentions Russia's role in using its 'soft power' to make propaganda against the EU as follows:

> First of all, the EU is asking for this law because it is a part of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan. Why it is a part of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan? Because citizens of Georgia would have possibility to travel to the EU and then, they will have possibility to apply for asylum. In the case of absence of respective regulation, protecting human rights, they could easily apply for this asylum stating that in our country, these rules are not protected; these rights are not protected in Georgia. That is why adoption of this kind of law, was one of the main requests of the EU in terms of Visa Liberalization policy, and the government understands this request and that is why we are supporting adoption of the law. Besides, it was adopted unanimously by the Georgian Parliament. Second, EU and government of Georgia together we are fighting against, we are almost sure, the Russian sponsored propaganda and this propaganda openly tries to display the EU as some kind of immoral society and degraded one due to gaining some economic gain. In this sense, Orthodox faith is the only, let's say, the true way to reach God. I could say that this propaganda was financed by the sources from Russia, and even sometimes with using the Georgian Orthodox Church. So, unfortunately it looks like that. So, in the reality, this was like a part of the geopolitical [game], and Russia continues to impose this kind of policy. They created a lot of NGOs in Georgia that now care about the Georgian culture, religion and so on. They portray the EU, like it is going to steal the Georgian culture and degrade the religion and so on. (Interviewee 29, State Official, Tbilisi, 11/11/2014).

6.2.4   Visa Liberalization

On March 28, 2017 the EU granted visa-free regime for Georgian citizens to enter the Schengen Area, as a result of a prolonged political process and series of reforms, which started to be initiated in June 2012, under the framework of the EU–Georgia Visa Dialogue. The Visa Dialogue was followed by the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP), which was initiated on February 25, 2013, between the European Commission and Georgia.[124] The VLAP, as a framework document, laid out the necessary steps needed to be taken by Georgia regarding legislative harmonization and sector policy reforms for visa-free visits to the Schengen Area for Georgian citizens with biometric passports. Beside all these, the Visa Liberalization carries both symbolic and tangible meaning for the Europeanization and European integration in Georgia. It became another historic decision on the road to Georgia's homecoming, its final integration in the European family (Vardishvili and Panchulidze, 2017: 1).

Almost all the respondents portray the EU–Georgia Visa Dialogue and VLAP as very important and concrete steps for the Europeanization and European integration process in Georgia. However, they are mostly critical about the Visa Liberalization negotiation process due to some European countries' reluctance about granting visa-exemption to Georgia, despite its willingness and readiness about meeting the demands. Before proceeding further, it is crucial to note that the interviews were obtained before the finalization of the VLAP, and adoption of the visa free regime in March 2017. So, the interpretation of respondents about the EU–Georgia Visa Dialogue and VLAP corresponded to the timeframe before 2017.

An academician from Tbilisi State University analyzes the process of the Visa Liberalization as one of the most crucial indicators of the Europeanization and readiness of Georgia in order to take further steps towards European integration, while denoting the internal obstacles that the EU has to face with about further

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[124] Before agreeing the VLAP, Georgia and the EU signed agreements on visa facilitation and readmission of unauthorized persons, which took effect in 2011.

cooperation within the framework of 'more for more' principle for the EaP countries as follows:

> This is I think that the most important part demonstrating that the Georgians are ready to take further steps towards Europeanization. However, I think that the European Union, I mean the Europeans are quite stuck. They do not know what to do because you know the current challenges. On the one hand, the Georgians are quite successful that they implement what they have to do through the European integration. However, the Europeans cannot offer 'more for more' and they all the time think about non-EU regulations, new lessons, I mean let's say new requirements and so on. In that sense, the Visa Free Regime is a clear example for that. For my understanding, Georgia is actually ready; I would say even more ready than Moldova. But, Moldova does have the Visa Liberalization and Georgians do not have it [in 2016]. The explanation of this is very easy, it is not 'more for more' because almost 80 percent of the Moldovan population already have Romanian passport so, the Visa Free Regime for Moldova was just a recognition that all Moldovans have right to go to Europe without visa with their Romanian passports. I mean they would definitely be very happy without recognizing this but it is my assumption that they would [be] very happy if the Georgians would not deliver something. For instance, they [would] fail to do the necessary reforms and if they fail next year in the elections, the Europeans and the western countries will have something to criticize Georgia; they would be very happy because this would be an excuse for not accepting you to this Visa Free Regime and so on and so forth. I think this is a big issue, a problem for the Georgians, and I do not think that in the nearest future this will change. (Interviewee 19, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

Another academician criticizes the way that the EU tackles the visa-exemption issue together for all three EaP countries, namely Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia and she attracts attention to the negative language of the European press, which would be used against the visa-exemption of the EaP countries as follows:

> I was shocked how it was presented in the media. You know, Moldova already got the visa-free travel because of a very simple reason, not only because the population is just around two million, [but] because they have double passports, both Romanian and Moldovan. And if they want to go to the EU, they always use their Romanian passports. So, it does not make any sense that concerning the Georgian case, Georgia's 3.7 million people. The EU also decided to negotiate the visa-free travel with Ukraine that has 45 million populations. Why you decide to start a sentence with directly indicating the millions of people, the numbers probably is a very good tool for those who want to irritate the Europeans, while they are already irritated with the recent migration crises [Syrian crises] and they do not want to see any migrants any more. Operating with this discourse, I mean saying that 50

million people coming to Europe as visa-free, you probably target all those irritated Europeans who would be even more irritated after that. There was a discussion in June [2016], on visa liberalization of Georgia, the European media outlets, especially German press saying that the Georgian criminals are responsible for many crimes in Germany, especially burglary. Why did it become the issue right now just before the visa liberalization negotiations? We have the official statistics in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs' web-page; Georgians account to all the crimes in Germany, if we take 100% of crimes, Georgians make 0.7 percent of all the crimes. But, the ordinary people just read the press; they do not go to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs web-site and check the statistics for Georgia. No one does that. You just take on your belief, what is written there in the press, so you can easily persuade people. Especially, less educated segment, especially pensioners, who all the way dream about good old times. And people, who are afraid to lose their jobs because of the migration crises and employment of those foreigners, who come to the country. (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

As it is also mentioned in the analysis of the respondent, since the inception of the Visa Liberalization negotiations, France and Germany were particularly reluctant to the idea of the visa-exemption with the fear of immigration and increase in asylum applications, thus, they insisted upon including an 'emergency brake' from Brussels during the negotiation process with partner countries (Hasselbach, 2018). In June 2016, Germany, supported by France and Italy, has delayed Georgia's bid to get EU visa-free travel due to the political turmoil in Ukraine and beyond, while Georgian president Giorgi Margvelashvili was in Brussels for lobbying for visa-exemption of the Georgian citizens (Rettman, 2016; Lomtadze, 2016). After the visa-exemption of the Georgian citizens in 2017, Germany has recently noted a 'significant rise' in asylum applications from Georgia in 2018. In February 2018, the German Embassy to Georgia released information that Germany has deported 65 Georgians, who had violated visa-free rules and stayed in the country longer than permitted 90 days in any 180 day period; also, in January 2018 there were more than 700 Georgian citizens asked for the asylum were also all denied, all of which concerned Georgia about the future (Georgia Today, 2018). Due to all these recent developments, Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili has announced that "there would be new regulations will be established concerning the changing of surnames to prevent Georgian citizens from violating the Georgia–EU visa free regulations". He adds as follows: "Entering the Schengen Zone through the changing of one's surname is a

crime and we will make the procedure more complicated. The decision has been agreed upon with EU partner states and I hope that the citizens of Georgia will understand the importance of the step. We [the government] should take all necessary measures to avoid threats to the Georgia–EU visa waiver" (Agenda.ge, 2018).

A respondent from Tbilisi State University shares her concerns that the more the EU postpones the Visa Liberalization of Georgia; it would make some Georgian people open to the Russian anti-EU propaganda and would cause disappointment to the EU as follows:

> Georgia has done all the requirements and now Georgia is waiting for the Visa Liberalization, and I am afraid the further the process is postponed, the more Georgian people might be prone to the Russian propaganda that says, "see, these European liars, the EU is always lying to us…" And which is actually, Hahn and other representatives and other EU commissioners already announcing in the European Parliament that we should keep our promises otherwise both countries of the EU and the neighbors and the other countries will lose faith in the EU. So I am afraid that the more the process is postponed the more there is the possibility that what happened in Turkey might happened in Georgia. (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

Nevertheless, an expert who works on the EU and Georgia relations emphasizes the positive steps between the EU and Georgia and the Visa Liberalization would be a clear message towards Georgia and it would speed up the European integration of Georgia in order to take further steps as follows:

> The European path goes on and even quicker than it was before, as you see we signed the Association Agreement when we get the visa-free entry, maybe it will be a separate format for Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova and we would become more and more Europeanized. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 07/12/2016).

6.2.5   The Constitutional Reform

As regards the recent development for the institutional aspect of the Europeanization process in Georgia, it had gone through a 'constitutional reform' process, which

started on 15th December, 2016 by the resolution that established the State Constitutional Commission (Zedelashvili, 2017). Following a long and difficult constitutional reform process, the Parliament of Georgia has unanimously voted for the final changes to the state constitution at the plenary session on 23rd March, 2018.

Before the adoption of the final version of the constitution, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe has released its final report about Georgia's constitutional reforms, showing its approval and positive stance about the changes.[125] The Venice Commission pronounced the constitutional reform as "a step forward in improving and consolidating the constitutional arrangement of the country on the basis of the fundamental principles of democracy and the rule of law" and greeted Georgia for the replacement of the mixed electoral system with proportional one to be enacted after the Parliamentary elections in 2020 (Agenda.ge, 2018; Venice Commission, 2018).[126]

Upon the adoption of the new constitution, Iraqli Kobakhidze, who is the Parliamentary Speaker declared that "Today, we have accomplished the long and hard process of constitutional reform as a result of which the country and the society has the Constitutional Law based on the best European traditions of the Parliamentary democracy… This reform replaces the pro-authoritarian Constitution with the democratic Constitution as reflected in the opinion of the Venice Commission, which is based on the principles of democracy, legal state and human rights and improves the constitutional system of the country" (Georgian Parliament, 2018).

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[125] The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, also known as, The European Commission for Democracy through Law – better known as the Venice Commission is the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters. The role of the Venice Commission is to provide legal advice to its member states and, in particular, to help states wishing to bring their legal and institutional structures into line with European standards and international experience in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

[126] The Venice Commission still wants to see changes to parliamentary election procedures, including the abolition of electoral blocs and the provision on allocating undistributed mandates to the party that receives the most votes. To see the Venice Commission's latest report on Georgia: (Venice Commission, 2018)

Nevertheless, the reform process for the new Georgian Constitution attracted certain criticisms from some of the civil society organizations and opposition groups not to include different voices in the State Constitutional Commission, and carry out the process without any consensus. The criticisms concentrated on two main issues, which were the planned transition from the current mixed majoritarian-proportional system, (in which 73 of the 150 lawmakers are elected from single-mandate constituencies and the remaining 77 under the proportional system), to a fully proportional system (Fuller, 2017). While the oppositional groups demanded a fully proportional parliamentary election, the ruling party proposed 5 percent threshold with undistributed votes below the threshold being allocated to the winning party, as well as preventing possible electoral blocs. The planned amendments regarding the electoral system drew criticisms from the Venice Commission, the Georgian NGOs and the opposition figures. The Venice Commission addressed three mechanisms, which were the 5% threshold rule in legislative elections, the undistributed votes below the 5% threshold are allocated to the winning party and the abolishment of electoral coalitions (party blocks), would limit the effects of the proportional system to the detriment of smaller parties and pluralism and deviate from the principles of fair representation and electoral equality to a larger extent (Venice Commission, 2017).

Another problem of the draft was the presidential elections. The Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili vetoed amendments to the constitution that would shift the government to a parliamentary system, with the president elected by lawmakers, he stated that "he remained in favor of direct presidential elections in October 2017" (RFERL, 2017). Nevertheless, the Georgian Parliament, which was dominated by the Georgian Dream Party faction, overrode his veto within four days, which resulted with the boycott of two of the three opposition parties in the Georgian Parliament. Shortly after, sixteen opposition parties, including the UNM and the European Georgia, which is a new political party split from the UNM, addressed a statement to the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Venice Commission, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in

Europe (OSCE), and foreign ambassadors in Tbilisi calling for a halt to parliamentary discussions of the draft of the constitution and the submission of a revised draft to the Venice Commission, while characterizing the amended constitution as 'antidemocratic', and not reflecting 'the will of the Georgian people' (Fuller, 2017).

Upon the events, Irakli Kobakhidze, who had been the head of the State Constitutional Commission and the chairman of the Georgian Parliament, released a statement in order to clarify the ongoing disputes about the draft on 25th October 2017, stating that

> … We have listened closely to our colleagues in the EU who have guided our efforts. Now we ask our European partners to put this essential element – bringing Georgia in the EU – on the path to the finish line. Ever since independence, the major flaw of Georgia's political system has been the weakness of its legislature at the expense of the executive...With the anticipated constitutional changes, the parliament is intended to become a stronger voice in Georgian politics… Constitutional change in Georgia is part of the larger process. It signals Georgians' commitment to making our hard-won democracy irreversible, while sinking our democratic roots more deeply into European soil. Georgia's historic reunion with Europe beckons, brought ever closer by our common political, cultural, and security objectives. Georgia is Europe (Kobakhidze, 2017).

As it is mentioned in the opening part of the section, the new Georgian Constitution was unanimously voted by the Parliament of Georgia on 23rd March, 2018. Having considered the final version, what has changed with the new Constitution is that the country will employ proportional representation in 2024 elections (the 2020 parliamentary elections will still be based on mixed electoral system) and the election threshold will be lowered from 5 to 3 percent. At the same time, parties will be able to form political blocks, however, only for the 2020 elections (Agenda.ge, 2017).

6.3   Normative/Ideational Aspect of the Europeanization in Georgia

The second building block of this chapter will be based on the normative/ideational aspect of the Europeanization process in Georgia. According to the Treaty of Lisbon Article 21, the EU is founded on the principles of peace, liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law as a political and legal entity and also seeks to advance these principles in the wider world (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007). In line with the 'founding' principles of the EU, the normative/ideational aspect of the EU addresses diffusing norms, values, ideas and policies correspond to peace; liberty; democracy; supranational rule of law; and human rights. By these means, the 'normative power' of the Europe is closely associated with its 'international' role/identity, the way it maintains its 'interaction' with the third parties.

Manners (2002) puts forwards the concept of 'normative power' as "the central component of normative power Europe is that the EU exists as being different to pre-existing political forms, and that this particular difference predisposes it to act in a normative way" (p.242). In fact, Manners' conceptualization of Europe as a 'normative power' has its roots in Francois Duchêne's analysis and his conception of the EU as a 'civilian power' (Duchêne, 1972: 32-47).[127] While Manners explains the EU as neither military power nor purely economic, he proposes that the 'power' of the EU relies on ideas and opinions.[128] In other words, as it is portrayed by Manners,

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[127] The conception of Duchêne about EU as a 'civilian power' paved the way for a broader policy debate about the EU's external policies. Following what Duchêne proposes, Robert Kagan argues that the Europeans come from Venus and the Americans from Mars, while he forming a contrast between the United States that puts forward its military power, which compatible with a perspective on international relations consistent with Hobbesian understanding of 'state of nature', while the EU relies on a 'Kantian' perspective, with focusing on 'soft', civilian ways and means. See: (Kagan, 2003; Sjursen, 2006: 235-251)

[128] Here, it is important to underline that being 'normative power' does not exclude obtaining other forms of power in international relations. Diez underlines the fact that having 'normative power' can go alongside with, notably military and economic forms of power. He argues that "although normative power must be irreducible to economic or military power if it is to make sense as a separate category. For instance, research has shown that the EU is most likely to 'shape conceptions of the normal' (and therefore have greater normative power) in the context of EU membership candidacies, when the interest to join the EU can be assumed to be an important factor determining the impact of EU norms." See: (Diez, 2005: 615)

the concept of 'normative power' is an attempt to refocus analysis away from the empirical emphasis on the EU's institutions or policies towards including 'cognitive' processes with both substantive and symbolic components.[129] Relying on what Manners proposes, the respondents also emphasize the ideational impact of the EU's international role as a normative power, as a 'role model', 'standard-setter', 'democracy-promoter', while criticizing its rather limited impact for democratization. The respondents highlight the EU's role as a 'standard-setter', 'role-model', and 'norm-builder' especially in the context of the post-Soviet political constellation. Based on the field research, the role of 'normative Europe' is as crucial as the institutional aspect of the Europeanization and both pave the ground for further integration with the EU in different manners, yet, complementing each other.

An academician from Tbilisi State University highlights 'the standard-setting' element of the Europeanization and European integration process in Georgia as follows:

> The EU is a standard-setter. The main thing is that the EU's authority is all about standards. Now we may cheat; you know, it is the Georgian way that when there is somebody who sets standards and then you cheat. If you are a child your parents have standards this is what is behaving well. But you may cheat and not behave well sometimes but you know that behaving well is what your parents, what your family says. So, Europe is a standard-setter, which we try to cheat quite often, but still we want to be recognized. Generally, we follow those standards. When Europe criticizes us, that does not mean that Georgia accepts critiques but it cannot ignore that because it [the EU] has some authority. The most important thing is that Georgia is committed to the EU integration. (Interviewee 18, Academician, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

An expert who is specialized on the Georgian and the EU affairs and Europeanization underline that the EU is perceived as a 'role-model state' in the context of the post-Soviet constellation with the emergence of the newly independent fifteen republics as follows:

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[129] See: (Manners, 2002: 240; Manners, 2006: 182-199; Manners, 2008; Sjursen, 2006)

The EU and Europeanization play an important role in Georgia, I think. I mean the problem was in Shevardnadze time that we did not really have a role-model state. There was nobody, which we could actually see as a role model. If you compare this to Azerbaijan, I remember that their president was trying to take Turkey as a role-model state back in 90s. We did not have such a role model. So, I think regarding these processes towards the EU is seen as a kind of role model, giving the blueprint of the reforms in Georgia with using the conditionality, helped also a lot to promote the democratization process in the ground. (Interviewee 23, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 07/10/2015).

Again, another respondent, who is an expert on the Georgian and European affairs and Europeanization process, asserts similarly the normative aspect of the EU within the framework of the post-Soviet obstacles, as it provides a 'social model' while representing human rights and rule of law as follows:

Well there are different motivations but first of all EU has its attraction. So it has attraction for elites and it has attraction for ordinary people as well. Because the EU and Europeanization bring stability and peace. Then, the EU is a social model that welfare and solidarity exist there. It is also about human rights, and rule of law. You cannot hide this. Even if Russian propaganda will just establish older channels in the heads of people they will see difference any way what goes in Russia and what goes in the EU. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

On the other hand, a respondent from a civil society institution also underlines the dual role of the EU, first with the institutional support it proposes, and as a 'role model' which motivates Georgia to pursue its path as follows:

I think EU has played an important role in important ways; I mean, I would say that, you know, there has been an active influence and passive influence by the EU. In terms of active influence, the EU has implemented a lot of programs in Georgia. It has provided important financial aid; it has provided technical aids and technical expertise. So, there are a lot of things that the EU has done proactively. Also, there has been a passive influence and positive role that the EU has without actually doing anything, just by being there. I mean the EU is a target, is a long-term goal towards which Georgia moves. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

As it is underlined in the theoretical discussion on Europeanization, according to Radaelli, a normative and 'idealistic' understanding of the Europeanization process address that "(a) the EU becomes a cognitive and normative frame, and provides

orientation to the logics of meaning and action; (b) there is a process of change, either in response to the EU pressure or as usage of Europe" (Radaelli, 2004: 11). What Radaelli proposes is also applicable to the Georgian case, as it also obtains multiple pathways towards the Europeanization and European integration. For instance, a respondent from a civil society institution also denotes how the multiple aspects of the Europeanization process, encompassing both institutional and normative elements, have different reflections in different areas that may result in domestic change as follows:

> There are many dimensions of Europeanization in Georgia. One is that it is a model for Georgia to pursue. The second thing is that the EU provides resources to Georgia. For example, Georgia was able somehow [to] manage during and after the 2008 war with Russia, because there was a lot of assistance coming from the EU. The third thing is that the conditionality to be a part of the European structure creates some kind of pressure for change domestically. The EU tries to involve Georgia in the institutional structure and in this path, we signed the Association Agreement with the EU. And this brought, of course, some kind of possibilities for change that could be good for democracy as well. For example, after Saakashvili came to the power there was so called libertarian approach to economic development and one of the key issues was to bring regulations to everything. The EU pressured to bring some of these regulations back in the areas, for example, food safety. But the most important, I think, was the labor law. So the labor law was depriving the workers of any rights, in fact due to the pressure from the EU, it was somehow being changed. So, the EU is a model, it is a system, it is hope. It provides some kind of hope, not probably offering some kind of membership, but it gives you hope that sooner or later it might happen. I think, this hope for membership may linger for decades but the hope is still there. (Interviewee 13, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

Another respondent from a civil society institution unravels that despite the membership of Georgia to the EU is less expected in the near future; it sets certain criteria for the country as a 'goal' to achieve and contains 'triggering' elements for implementing reforms, and this paves the ground for the civil society groups, demanding reforms that led to domestic change as follows:

> I think there is a clear understanding, at least among the people who are informed and involved all this process, that Georgia will not become a member in the foreseeable future. But it is identified as a long-term goal, so, it says once there is this long term goal, you know that you have to follow a certain way, certain road, and number of reforms have to be implemented.

By being there, as a goal, towards which Georgia is moving, the EU has had a very important role. Then, of course, it is very important for some groups within Georgia, such as civil society groups or other types [of] groups pushing for reforms for change, you can always say that we want that particular law or this particular practice to change in this particular way because this is the EU standard [...] we are moving towards EU, we should implement these type of changes. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

6.3.1 Various Manifestations of the EU in the Georgian Society

Relying on the normative aspect of the Europeanization with diffusing of norms, ideas and values, the respondents also analyze how the Georgian society interprets the EU and what extent the 'normative framework' has an impact on the Georgian society to develop 'common ground' with the EU. Most of the respondents assert that the public support for the EU and European integration is very high in Georgia. According to a public opinion survey, conducted by International Republican Institute (IRI) in 2016, more than 80% of the respondents either 'fully support' or 'somewhat support' joining of Georgia in the EU (IRI Survey, 2017). On the other hand, according to the poll results conducted by the Caucasus Research and Resource Center (CRRC) and National Democratic Institute (NDI), there has been a slight decrease in 2018, showing that the Georgian approval for membership in the EU is at 75 percent (Agenda.ge, 2018).[130] However, the results of the poll released in 2017 indicated 77% support of the population for the European integration.[131]

Despite the high percentage of public support, the respondents stress that the Georgian society have limited knowledge/interest about what are the values, norms, ideas that the EU stands for. Rather, they more focus on geopolitical and economic considerations with interpreting the European integration and the EU as an ally/partner for 'stability', 'security', 'economical benefits' 'wellbeing' of Georgia. The respondents' analysis show that the process of Europeanization indicates strong

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[130] NDI poll results reflect data collected from March 20 to April 4 through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgia's adult population that included 2,194 completed interviews (the occupied territories were not covered). The average margin of error is +/- 2.2 percent.

[131] See: (NDI Press Release, 2016)

relevance with the historically-rooted 'territorial' and/or 'geopolitical' concerns vis-à-vis the surrounding neighbouring powers, as it is discussed in Chapter IV.

For instance, an MP working in the EU integration Commission in the Georgian Parliament states that the Georgian people are more concerned with 'stability' and 'prosperity' and interprets the Europeanization in Georgia as a pathway for the country as follows:

> Regarding to be a part of the EU; Georgian people need stability with prosperity. It means better mobility, education system, and social protections. These are the issues come with the EU. When you ask what EU means, majority of people have no idea, they know that they should want it, but they don't know about what it is. We, officials in Georgia we need to tell them what it is and that is why we need to make them understand. The goal is to have a stable, prosperous country, the EU is the pathway, and the EU integration is not the goal itself but the pathway. (Interviewee 4, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 07/12/2016).

A respondent from a political party articulates that despite the 'lack of knowledge' about the EU, the main reason of such high level societal support for the EU integration of Georgia stems from the 'security' and 'independence' concerns of the Georgian people, while embracing norms and values such as individual liberties and human rights are somehow do not attract similar degree of attention as follows:

> People are very pro-European in Georgia. In the last 5–6 years, the support to the EU integration was not less than 80–75%. However, the EU integration is not well understood by people. For instance, for the Anti-Discrimination Law, the Church became more and more involved with the politics and put pressure on the government. People identify the EU with 'security' and 'independence' not with the EU norms and values. But still there are also some people have free minds. So, Georgia has a very complex understanding of the EU; first they associate it with 'freedom' and 'security' and 'economic welfare'. In terms of human right and individual liberties, we still have a Soviet mentality. (Interviewee 30, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

A respondent from a civil society institution also underlines the high level of support towards the EU, despite the several misconceptions and misunderstanding about

what the European integration really means, especially concerning the population, reside in the rural areas

> I think it is interesting to know that Georgia is one of the few countries maybe in the world actually that has such a high public support for the EU integration. People believe that the Association Agreement is a way for getting closer to the EU. There was 70 percent, if I am not wrong, there are 70 percent of the population support the pro-Western political course of the country. So, yes people are supportive of that, but that is not so say that there are no different opinions as well as misconceptions about what the EU means and what the association with the EU means. There is a big gap there in knowledge and reliable information that people do not really have. Especially, in the regions, where there is poor internet access and people do not have chance to have access to have information about the EU. Also, there are myths about the EU spreading around that are exploited by the populists and radicals and also fundamentalists, if you like, in different ways. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Likewise, another respondent from a civil society institution underlines lack of 'socialization' and 'learning' mechanisms about what the EU represents in ideational level, despite the high societal support for the EU and Europeanization in Georgia. He stresses that the high support of the Georgian society towards the Europeanization does not stem from 'sharing' similar norms and values with exemplifying some of the EU's values and norms that are not compatible with Georgian values. Nevertheless, he asserts that there is a 'high expectation' from the EU and Europeanization in Georgia, because it is understood as a part of 'wellbeing', solving 'territorial conflicts' as follows:

> Well, we do make surveys in every two years to ask about attitudes and knowledge about EU and our conclusion is that people are very pro-European; if you ask them, do you want to join the EU, they will say yes, I think around 80 percent will say yes. Also, there are about 8-10 percent of people think that we are already there, we are already a member of the EU. So, this indicates that this pro-Europeanism is not based on knowledge or on values. Other questions and analyses of other questions in the surveys we conduct would demonstrate that they want to join the EU not because they know how great that is or they share values, but because they associate 'wellbeing' with being part of the EU as well as 'better life' and also lack of conflict, potentially restoring the 'territorial integrity'. So, all these things are pretty much wrong because you know there are very poor countries of the EU too. Does every European household live in a prosperity? If Georgia joins to the EU tomorrow, it will not become suddenly very wealthy. That is

a wrong expectation. Another wrong expectation is that joining EU will solve all the problems. We have to solve our problems to go there. That is a kind of forced expectations. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

A respondent from a political party points out the obstacles that Georgia experiences through the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia and the recent debates about the issue of accepting LGBT rights that invoked criticisms at the societal level during the discussions of the Anti-Discrimination Law as follows:

> We have a referendum in 2008, which asked that would you like Georgia to be a part of the NATO, and the positive answers was 77%. We have lots of surveys and polls about this issue, if the Georgian people want to be a part of the EU and Euro-Atlantic community. There is always a majority of people support towards the EU and NATO and generally about the Western orientation of the country. Even more, these numbers are rising year by year. But, to my perception, there are only two obstacles or problems that the Georgian people have about the Western orientation and the European integration. The one is, particularly about the EU and NATO jointly, they have the passive role of those institutions and countries in Ukraine, when they are absolutely helpless, and they could [have] delivered some tangible assistance to the Ukrainian people. I think the same thing happened in 2008 war. We were the victim of a great plan between the big powers. That is why I think people have rather pessimistic attitudes towards those institutions. In terms of identity, there is only one problem with the EU about the LGBT rights. There are some issues like gender equality women's rights and Georgian people are okay with that, even more it is part of our everyday life. But the [about] LGBT rights, people are not open to discuss about it. But other issues, they are open, but this issue is something very negative for them. They don't accept it. I think we need some years to discuss this issue, maybe 10–15 years are needed to change the perceptions of the society. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, Orthodoxy is one of the major determinants of the Georgian identity. Based on the field research, the LGBT rights and the discussion about its expression in the Anti-Discrimination Law had been at the center of the highly controversial public debate during the negotiation process of the adoption of the Law. It also became the 'symbol' of the anti-EU sentiments of some groups, who seemingly have more traditional and pro-Russian orientation and motivated by the Georgian Orthodox Church, as a way to degrade the 'European way of life'. In this regard, the debates emerged during the adoption of the Anti-

Discrimination Law demonstrate certain 'contradictions' and/or 'discontents' between the Georgian and European 'way of life' and 'value systems' for the Georgian society.

Likewise, another respondent from a civil society institution stresses the 'contradictory' perceptions about the EU on the basis of the LGBT rights and 'immorality' discussion triggered by the Georgian Church, however, he also emphasizes that the EU still contains the elements of being 'wellbeing', 'security' and 'prosperity' for the Georgian people as follows:

> There are different groups in the Georgian population that have different perceptions. But, in general, many people I think just do not understand what EU integration really means. They just want it because it is a symbol of 'wellbeing', 'security' and 'prosperity'. At the same time, [there are] more and more… people, who are religious and they are somehow pushed by the Georgian Church in the direction that the EU wants to bring some kind of different moral values like homosexuality and things like that. So, they have some kind of understanding that not everything is good there, so at least from moral, religious perspective it is not very good. Nevertheless, the general attitude is very positive for the majority of people. But, you do not have logically consistent views… while people want to be a part of the EU, people want to [be] integrated, but they also do not share the same aspects and norms. So, the positive attitude towards the European integration is not necessarily very consistent. Even the Church itself on the one hand they criticize this 'European degradation'; on the other hand, the country […doesn't have] other choice, if not the EU. So, again, you have different and not very consistent and somehow contradictory statements. For instance, the Georgian Church made a statement that our decision is to join EU. They [the Church] support the European integration, but, at the same time they do not like this Western values or whatever morality, immorality that it would bring. So, it is mixed. There are some people, they would criticize some aspects of the EU, but still they are willing to [be] integrated. (Interviewee 13, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

A respondent from a civil society organization also underlines the importance of the sexual minority issue and gender equality problem and their 'contradictory' position in the Georgian society about what represents 'European' and 'Georgian values as follows:

> We also see that there is a mismatch of values; it is not about the identity that much because I do not see European identity threatening Georgian

identity in a way. However, there is difference in values in terms of accepting differences and rights. For example, accepting the minority rights, gender equality and things like that. There is a huge difference in what is there and what is here in Georgia. Especially, when it comes to the minorities; that belongs to the sexual minorities, when people would say they belong to sexual minorities, there is no way that they have equal rights. While in Europe you have politicians, who say that they belong to sexual minorities and they are voted and they are elected and people do not mind. Of course, you will find homophobia there; but I am talking about big masses here. If someone says that he or she belongs to sexual minority he/she will not be elected anywhere, even worse, it is very unlikely that [this] person will be accepted as a neighbor or a friend by other people. So that is a huge difference there. It is pretty much the same about gender equality. One thing is what is declared by people and even there you will see that we are not very much standing for equality between men and women. It is not only men that have the ideas of domination, but also big part of women, they also have that perception that men are superior than women, as men have to feed the family, they have to engage in politics, not women. So, there is a huge gap in that sense. Therefore, I would say that we should not, especially pro-European people, should not start celebrating that the whole country is pro-European because it is based on very fragile foundations, and it can be destroyed overnight. Unfortunately when we are talking about EU's soft power sometimes it is too soft because they could do much better job, not in terms of kind [of] forcing someone to do something but in terms of informing people better about what it is all about. So, better information and more contacts would be improved and you need more active policies to lead you there. Not like you declare something and it takes four years to really do something. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

An academician from Tbilisi State University draws attention to the different connotations embodied with the Georgian self-identification with Europe such as 'being European' refers to not being 'Russian or not belonging to the Soviet past', while also underlining that it does not mean that the Georgian and Europeans share the same values as follows:

Okay, we have certain problems, I mean, in terms of basic rights and liberties, tolerance and so on and so forth. But, in general, I would say that what does it mean to be European? Looking from the other side, you have Germans and you have also Greece, you have Italians and Italians are quite different from the people on the north. For Georgia, to be European, [it] is to be not with Russia or the Soviet past. I think that in the beginning, it was definitely elite driven project, especially under Saakashvili because since the Rose Revolution it was definitely a top down approach. Now, I do think that it is also popular, how to say, popular idea it is a kind of identity or self-identification of Georgians that we belong to Europe and we have to look like Europeans. In general, there are certain public opinion polls asking

ordinary Georgians, if they are Europeans, they would definitely answer, yes we are. According to the polls more than 80% Georgians support integration to the EU, 60% support integration to the NATO. Nevertheless, it is unclear how cautiously they answer that. So, it depends on how you give the questions to the respondents. If you ask the questions like 'Do you want Georgia to be a part of Europe?' of course, Europe would be a good destination to go. But, at the same time, most of the Georgians don't share most of the European values, for instance, minority rights or sexual minorities [and] so on and so forth. This is a kind of tricky issue. (Interviewee 19, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/10/2015).

Another respondent from a civil society institution also underlines the 'LGBT issue' as one of the major indicators, again, while remarking that the Georgian traditional values are contradicting with the European liberal stance about accepting principle rights and freedoms of individuals, despite the high support of the Georgian European integration and Europeanization as follows:

Considering the public level, the certain polls are conducted by the IRI and NDI, I think the last one was released by the NDI in May this year [2015], there is a huge support for the EU per se, and I think in the February survey from IRI considering the what are the linkages of the Association Agreement and the EU, I think, it was about 'safety', 'economic development' and 'prosperity'. I am not sure if it changed now after the refugee crisis. I think, it is mostly about security and safety for the population, economic development and prosperity all the good things, and democracy; whatever, catchy phrases. But, if you dig deeper about what confronts general population in terms of certain European values, the issue is that is it really in line with the Georgian values? One hot issue is, I don't know if it is relevant, but in the perception of people, is the LGBT issue, because there is a huge crisis and Russian propaganda regarding this issue. Saying that, first of all you don't have a real option in terms of membership, it is one way street, you can continue on this way on approximation, but the EU really doesn't want to have you in the club and actually the Georgian values they cannot be in line with the European value system because of the stance they have about the LGBT rights. (Interviewee 26, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

In addition to all these interpretations, an academician from Tbilisi State University draws a conceptual framework about the EU and analyzes how the EU is comprising multiple representations and 'shifting' meanings depending on the changing constellations and contexts as 'an empty signifier' (the term originally proposed by Laclau), yet, it is reproduced mostly through dichotomies as follows:

Europe is an empty signifier, which is used in different ways in Georgian political discourse with different meanings. Yes, empty signifier to use Laclau's terminology. If Europe is considered as the opposite to Russia, then, this is traditional Cold War opposition between Soviet Union and the West. In this opposition, Europe is synonymous to the Western, democratic, capitalist world. In this sense, Europe is on the one side with the United States, against Russia. If Europe is considered against to the United States, and then, this reflects distinction between right wing and left wing approaches. Saying that well, the United States is minimal liberal state. The European states are more responsible, welfare, and socially integrated states. So, we prefer the European model and we don't want the American model. In this case, Europe and America are on the different sides, and this time, Europe is understood in a more leftist way. If Europe is understood in a sense of globalization, so, Georgians are integrated in to a globalized world through Europe, then, Europe becomes as opposed to Georgia. So, the European values on one side, and the Georgian values are on the other side. The globalist and anti-globalist division prevails, so, Europeanization this time means betraying our traditional values and somehow becoming homosexual and extreme. (Interviewee 15, Academician, Tbilisi, 18/11/2014).

Based on the field research, the support of the Georgian people towards the EU and further European integration seems very high. The Georgian people associate to be a part of the EU with 'wellbeing', 'security', 'prosperity', 'stability', and 'economic welfare', however, they indicate rather slim convergence in terms of sharing the same/similar 'norms' and 'values' especially concerning the LGBT rights and gender equality. During the interviews, all the respondents portray high level willingness/enthusiasm of the Georgian people to become a part of the EU. Nevertheless, almost all of them stress that the source of this 'pro-Europeanism' in the Georgian society does not stem from 'knowledge' and/or shared 'values', yet, it is more or less based mostly on geopolitical and economic considerations/concerns.

6.4   Is Europeanization as a Route to Democratization?

Democratization through Europeanization and/or the EU's impact on the 'democracy promotion' can be named as another major aspect of the Europeanization process in Georgia. Democracy promotion role of the EU is recently a growing body of literature especially regarding the neighbouring countries. The EU's role in democratization of the neighbouring countries mainly corresponds with the

'intended' and 'unintended' processes of 'norm diffusion'. According to Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2007), conditionality, as the major tool of the EU for initiating reforms, interacts in two ways with modernization, on the one hand, and linkage, on the other, regarding democratization of the targeted country (p.12).[132] Emerson proposes two mechanisms that the EU initiates for policies towards democratization: conditionality and socialization. According to Emerson (2005), "Under the conditionality model, the EU offers advantages to the neighbour […] on the condition that economic and/or political conditions are met" (p.175). In the second model of interaction, through socialization, the attractiveness of the EU as a system of society based on democracy and rule of law is emphasized for further integration with the member countries.[133]

Based on the field research, the majority of the respondents make positive remarks about the EU's role on democratization in Georgia. Some of the respondents underline the EU's 'transformative' role for democracy promotion, however, there are also some respondents interpret the EU as a 'soft power' and see its 'deterring capacity' limited to determine the political actors vis-à-vis the costs of implementing hard reforms. Against this backdrop, some of the respondents state that the Europeanization and democratization are not inextricably linked together in the Georgian case. In order to stress the 'limited' role of the EU in terms of democratization, they indicate certain human rights violations, especially the politically motivated law-enforcement such as long-term detentions of the oppositional figures and abuses in the imprisonment, despite the clear condemns from the different EU organs. However, despite their different opinions about the role of the EU on the Georgian democratization, all the respondents agree that it

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[132] They use political conditionality in the context as folows "In using political conditionality, the EU sets the adoption of democratic rules and practices as conditions that the target countries have to fulfill in order to receive rewards such as financial assistance, some kind of contractual association, or – ultimately – membership." See: (Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, 2007: 6)

[133] Through socialization, people from partner countries are changing their behaviour while interacting with their EU counterparts, be they representatives of the civil society, businessmen, students, etc. All these policy instruments – leverage, linkage, conditionality and socialization – underlined the design of the ENP and the EaP. See: (Litra, 2011: 14)

takes time and efforts to reach certain 'democratic standards' in the Georgian society. Relying on the interpretations of the interviewees, 'the role of democracy promotion' of the EU functions as a 'top-down' process facing with rather 'reluctant' 'bottom-up' incentives as a result of the 'limited' conditionality with the vague membership prospect of the EU for Georgia.

For instance, a respondent from a civil society institution emphasizes the stimulus derived from the European integration as follows:

> The EU plays most important role, I think, and in this process [of] democratization [and] modernization this [EU] is one of the strongest impetus for Georgia to become more democratic and to develop. The EU is on the Georgian reform agenda already for years and its declared goal, I mean European integration is a declared goal, it was the same with the previous government and it continues with this government as well. (Interviewee 24, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 24/11/2014).

Another respondent from a civil society institution attracts attention to the role of 'soft power' as well as the 'multiple' objectives emerged throughout the European integration process, all contribute to the country's democratization

> The EU is king of soft power, they will not come and say you that you do this otherwise we will do x, y, z to you. They won't say that but they are using that soft power to make country more democratic. It is not one objective, it is kind of an aggregation of many objectives that the EU puts forward in here, which can be about economy, political institutions, education, civil society, all these different things. But I think common aim of all of that is that country will become more democratic because all those reforms that they suggest that we should do, and all those aids that they give us to change things are directed to more openness of the system. At the same time, there is more competitiveness of the business, more power to different social groups, so, the power is not concentrated somewhere. It is the most important thing, if you want to democratize; you do not need one group to hold all power like it is in this post-Soviet space all the time. This is less, the concentration of power, now in Georgia. But look at other post-Soviet countries, especially to Central Asia or our eastern neighbor, Azerbaijan. So that is that indirect impact… but it is slow and it will take a lot of time. (Interviewee 22, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/11/2014).

A specialist on the Georgian–EU affairs and European integration in Georgia sheds lights on how the institutional steps, especially the EU's demand towards the

adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law can be pointed out as a clear example of how the EU contributes/pushes to the development of democracy in Georgia as follows:

> There are a lot of examples of that. When you look at the micro level, you can see that Georgia is now in the process of visa liberalization process with the EU. The [Visa] Liberalization Action Plan lasts two years, this is the second year actually and one of the requirements is the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law. So, there is nobody on the earth who can persuade me that the Georgian government could even dare to adopt such kind of a controversial law because of the reactions of the Georgian Church and the other oppositional figures. Because Georgia wanted to have and still wants to have visa-free travel to the EU and this was a requirement from the EU. I think, the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law is a very clear example that how the EU can promote human rights and can promote this democratization process. Again, as I said, I don't believe that Georgian government would ever think to develop such kind of law if not the EU requires such an attempt. (Interviewee 23, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

A respondent from a civil society institution underlines the positive impact of the Europeanization on democratic development of the country through 'conditionality' and he also stresses possible political costs, which would reflect both domestic level and regarding the relation between the EU and Georgia as follows:

> I think, it has a clearly positive influence in terms of trying to nudge Georgia towards faster democratization because relations with the EU comes with strings attached with certain conditionality, about the things that they expect in the case of Georgia. I think, it is obvious especially during the times of the internal political crises or concerning important events. Even if the local institutions are not strong enough to contain that process within a democratic framework, I think, the way that the government responds to the crises will have an effect on the relations with the EU. Therefore, the process of getting closer to the EU would have a political cost. So, it is definitely part of their calculation and that is a positive thing for the country. It seems to that me overall that positively effects the democratic projection of this country. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Despite the positive remarks about the EU's role in pushing for further democratization, there are some respondents perceive the link between the Europeanization and democratization is somehow weak in the Georgian case. They have rather critical stance in terms of Europeanization would foster more democratic

environment in Georgia. For instance, an academician from Tbilisi State University underlines that the European integration does not necessarily refer to democratization as follows:

> The EU is very much involved in bringing Georgia closer to Europe, I would say, rather than concentrating on democratization project per se. So, they [EU institutions] have lot of areas of cooperation with the government including, of course, spheres of state building, good governance and democracy building etc. They also have connections with so-called civil society, which I mean it is NGO community. Europeanization and democratization are two processes which from outside seen as correlated, however, from inside they do not correlate. [Especially,] If you look at sociological surveys in Georgia and you try to formulate the main factors that influence voters' behavior and voters' distribution. The one factor is related to NATO integration and coming closer to European Union, pro-western development in general. I would say, this is a very strong divider and cleavage for society. And another, completely independent [factor] from this, is related to democracy so this is perception of political equality, of free elections of social justice etc. And this two are independent from each other so one can say that… [It] is a completely possible that somebody is going in Western direction but is not very strong on… quite an opposite in terms of democracy; and they are, they may support the democracy but at the same time be critical toward European integration. This is understandable if we look at democracy from procedural and substantial point of view. Democracy is a procedure of electing officials and keeping some general norms of competition. It is value free in the sense that, for example, an anti-European society may perfectly apply these institutions with saying that we don't want to join Europe and we don't share European values. On the other hand, the European integration process can take place as a value-loaded process without much care about democracy and political equality just by vanguard elites who will lead society towards different arrangement. So, this should be taken into consideration that you can't talk about them in one context. These are two processes that can compete with each other as an agenda. They can compete with each other in the political level. For example, the previous government [the UNM] was pro-European but anti-democratic in the eyes of the opposition, while the opposition was democratic but not very much pro-European on the other side. Now it became messier but anyway the division is still there. (Interviewee 15, Academician, Tbilisi, 18/11/2014).

A respondent from a civil society institution also highlights the shortcomings about the democratization in Georgia, especially the 'politicized' and 'selective' justice towards the oppositional groups/people, nevertheless, he asserts that the EU and its institutions still have 'determining' factor for the government concerning violation of rights and liberties as follows:

Theoretically they should be parallel; they should be in line as a parallel process. As we can see Georgia signed Association Agreement 15 months ago, which can be seen as a benchmark and big step forward towards Europeanization, and for approximation with the European structures. But, unfortunately we also see stagnation in democratization in Georgia. For instance, it became more obvious with the Ugulava case that politicized justice system is not working free and fair. And it is not working independently. Second indication is that functionality or non-functionality of the institutions, which should be improved and should be worked in line with the approximation with Europe also in terms of implementation of the Association Agreement. But, at the same time, we see that on the ground here in Georgia, there is contradictory development. The PM [Prime Minister] and the President are fighting with each other publicly, which is damaging the institutions itself. Or the government institutions, live aside the Presidential Office, it is not working with the clear democratic standards. If we take into account the influence of the oligarchy, Bidzina Ivanishvili, still exerting [power] over the government or the PM. So, there is a politicized justice and non-proper functioning of the political institutions. There is also a question mark on the freedom of media. I mean the recent developments about the Rustavi II Channel. So, when one takes into account all three factors after the last 15 months, since the signing of the Association Agreement, which would lead me to the conclusion that these two processes [Europeanization and democratization] are in the Georgian case, currently unfortunately and sadly not in line, not in parallel. (Interviewee 26, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/10/2015).

6.5   Conclusion

Georgia had taken important steps in its Europeanization path starting from to become a part of the ENP in 2004 corresponding with the Rose Revolution and the Eastern Enlargement of the EU. Georgia and the EU had strengthened their relations and the institutional ties with the adoption of the EaP at the Prague Summit in 2009, which brought about a more sophisticated view to the EU's attitude towards its 'Eastern' neighbours. Following that, Georgia and Europe signed Association Agreement in June 2014 that covers creating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which was a final step of the negotiation talks between Georgia and the EU for the Association Agreement started in 2010. The Association Agreement enabled space for deeper and closer collaboration between Georgia and the EU, while embracing political and economic components through the establishment of an enhanced institutional framework (Maisuradze, 2015: 10).

Against this backdrop, the respondents highlight that Georgia had gone through series of reforms especially in its legal approximation with the EU *acquis* on certain issues. The respondents address certain steps taken with the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law and the New Constitutional framework among some others, and discuss their relevance with the Georgia's Europeanization path. Despite the strengthening institutional ties and legal arrangements, the respondents underline the hardships and/or deficiencies in regards to the EaP and the Association Agreement, on the basis of whether the above-mentioned developments and institutional integration would contribute to the normative/ideational aspects of the Europeanization, which can be exemplified with paving the ground for effectiveness of institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Based on the field research, almost all the respondents criticize the initiation and scope of the partnership agreements, both ENP and EaP, with not focusing on more 'strategic' elements, i.e., developing strategies and pathways considering the 'success' and 'willingness' of the partnering countries to implement the domestic reforms required by the agreements. Pursuant to Georgia's effort to exercise the extensive regulatory framework of the ENP and EaP as well as the Association Agreement, the respondents highlight the need for a more 'holistic' understanding and 'one to one' relations between the EU and the partnering countries depending on their 'performance' to apply necessary reforms. Almost all the respondents point out that the ENP's 'weak' membership prospect for the partnering countries would hinder the possibility to take more 'concrete' steps for promoting domestic reforms relates to the EU *acquis* effectively, which would be expected to bring certain political cost to the political elites. Rather, as it is stated by Wolczuk, without any membership prospect "[the political elites] their perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the Partnership are conditioned by geopolitical considerations, including any membership aspirations (or a lack of them). This results in a considerable mismatch between the agenda of the EU and that of the partner countries' elites" (Wolczuk, 2011).

The overwhelming majority of the respondents emphasize that the Georgian society seems to be less acquainted with the ideational/normative aspects of the Europeanization. Merely, the field research indicates that the European values, norms, ideas have limited resonance on Georgian society, and the possible cultural 'differences' had revealed during the public debates in the process of the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law on the basis of defining equal rights that includes sexual minorities and gender inequality. In a similar vein, almost all the respondents touch upon the fact that the normative/ideational aspect of the Europeanization seems to be constructed on the geopolitical and economic benefits rather than sharing similar 'value systematic' with interpreting the EU within the framework of having a target/ally/partner for 'stability', 'security', 'economical benefits' and 'wellbeing'. Also, some of the respondents articulate that the Georgian Europeanness derived from the representation of how 'other' is constructed in the Georgian political memory, i.e., 'being European' refers to not being 'Russian or not belonging to the Soviet past.

Relying on the respondents' analysis about the relation between democratization and Europeanization/European integration in Georgia, some of the respondents stress that the Europeanization and democratization process does not seem compatible with each other. In other words, based on the field data, despite the institutional integration and approximation with the European structures, Georgia falls short to demonstrate similar improvement in taking steps towards democratization due to selective and political use of justice, weak state institutions and political party system, lack of freedom in media, and too much concentration of power, which mostly dependent on personalities and political figures. Drawing on the respondents' analysis about the relation between democratization and Europeanization/European integration in Georgia, the shortcomings for democratization are not passing but structural problems, mostly emanated from the Soviet legacy and peculiarities of the post-Soviet transition process.[134] According to Levitsky and Way (2010), hybrid

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[134] According to the 'Freedom in the World in 2017' report of the Freedom House, Georgia was identified as 'partly free' and obtained 3 points out of seven in terms of freedom, political rights and

regimes are characterized by a tilted political playing field, resulting from the incumbent's abuse of state institutions. The countries that carry features of 'hybrid regime' would be inclined to show 'selective compliance' varied in different policy domains. While they put efforts to harmonize with the EU *acquis* regarding the areas such as trade, market liberalization, border management, public service and social policy, they remain reluctant to demonstrate similar determination in the domains of political freedom, electoral reform, media freedom and rule of law (Bolkvadze, 2016: 410-418). Considering the Georgian case, the similar pattern of 'selective compliance' can be observed in the varied policy realms, i.e., while the level of compliance or willingness of the political elites is high in areas which retain popular support/legitimacy and not challenging their 'ruling' power, they lack to show similar enthusiasm to bring up democratic reforms.

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civil liberties. (1: Most Free, 7: Least free) According to the report, among the 195 countries assessed, 87 (45 percent) were rated Free, 59 (30 percent) Partly Free, and 49 (25 percent) Not Free. See: (Freedom House, 2017)

CHAPTER 7

THE ACTORNESS OF THE EU AS A SOFT POWER VIS-À-VIS THE OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

7.1   Introduction

Georgia as a weak, small state had to face with the problems of survival and choosing a strategic orientation after its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 (Rondeli, 2001). The first years of independence were characterized by considerable internal problems such as – a coup, a civil war and two wars of secession – which made the newly founded Georgian state unstable to focus on its development as a new-born country (Kakachia, 2017). Since its independence, Georgia defines its foreign policy orientation based on the Euro-Atlantic integration. Georgia's aspiration of having closer ties with the EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can be named as the main pillars that determine its foreign and national security policy (National Security Concept, 2018: 3).[135] As it is mentioned in the previous chapters, the (in)security notion of Georgia is not limited with 'hard' power concept, rather, it necessitates a wider framework with a much enhanced role of economic, political, and societal elements in the context of the post-Cold War era. At this point, the role of Europe and Europeanization is of importance in order to achieve a comprehensive notion of security regarding the region.[136]

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[135] According to the National Security Concept of Georgia "[B]roadening the integration processes in Europe is important for the security of Georgia. Georgia is a part of the European and Euro-Atlantic space. Therefore, the expansion eastward of NATO and of the European Union is important for Georgia." see: (National Security Concept, 2018)

[136] For instance, Floyd and Croft draw attention to non-traditional security issues with stating that "In Europe the once fierce debate over 'widening' the study of security has been won by the 'wideners', security studies now commonly comprises environmental, societal (identity), political and economic security issues alongside traditional concerns of military security…Thus the range of choice that the

The conflict-prone political environment of the post-Soviet power configuration paved the way for the EU to project itself as a potential 'security' actor for the region. For Georgia, the soft power element of the EU collided with the country's Euro-Atlantic perspective, which meant simultaneously attributing 'security' notion both to the NATO and the EU. Having considered the contested relations between Russia and Georgia, which reached a breaking point with the 2008 Russian-Georgian War, Georgia's expectations from the EU in terms of assuring its territorial integrity against the aggressive stance of its northern neighbor grew more, yet, resulted mostly with ineptitude from the EU.

Against this backdrop, the aim of this chapter is to elaborate the role of the EU as a 'security' actor in multiple levels in order to tackle whether the EU and the European integration are perceived as a way to keep/ensure the territorial integrity and independence of Georgia. To identify the 'security' dimension of the EU, most of the respondents emphasize the 'soft power' capabilities of the European alliance. While analyzing the 'soft power' potential of the EU, almost all the respondents elaborate its role with comparing it with the U.S., NATO and Russia as other international actors, which are actively involved with the Georgian territorial integrity and security issues. As compared to the role of the U.S. and NATO, high percentage of the respondents asserts 'limited' capability and 'lack of willingness' and/or 'reluctance' of the EU member states to initiate any direct attempts/involvement to cope with the regional challenges, which are easily transform from 'frozen' to 'hot' conflicts, as it is seen in the examples of the 2008 War between Georgia and Russia and the current incidents in Ukraine. Lastly, most of the respondents denote the Russia's increasing 'soft-power' vis-à-vis the EU, and how it spreads anti-EU discourse through its various channels in the Georgian society.

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analyst has when beginning a study of security framed by non-traditional concerns not only comprises five different sectors of security, but also a vertical range including security at the individual, group, state, regional and global levels." See: (Floyd and Croft, 2011: 152–179)

7.2   The Role of EU as a Soft Power

The first building block of this chapter is based on the EU's soft power as an international actor. After the end of the Cold War and with the emergence of the new post-Soviet Republics, a new political constellation paved the way for the EU to rise as 'the embodiment of soft power' (Cooper, 2004: 167).[137] Nye (2004) explains the concept of 'soft power' as "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (p.5).[138] The soft power of a country and/or a political entity stems from its culture, political values and its foreign policies. According to Nye, the importance of international image and soft power rely on the capability of attraction with 'shared values', while he acknowledged the EU as one of the strongest 'soft power' players in the world.

Depending on what Nye proposes, most of the respondents elaborate the institutional cooperation as a part of the EU's soft power and define further institutional integration to ensure Georgia's territorial integrity and independence. The EU neither provides any military assistance nor does it offer 'traditional' ways of security alliance/partnership. Almost all the respondents assume the EU as a 'soft power', nevertheless, they still see the further European integration would contribute to solve the post-Soviet territorial conflicts, deeply-rooted notion of (in)security and the Russian aggressiveness, since European integration offers 'peace', 'stability' and 'protection'.[139]

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[137] The concept of 'soft power' originally emanated from Joseph Nye's scholarly work, particularly referring to his famous book, Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, published in 2004. See: (Nye, 2004)

[138] Nye differentiates between 'soft' and 'hard power' with arguing that "the distinction between them [soft and hard power] is one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources. See: (Nye, 2004: 7)

[139] From the very beginning, the project of European integration has maintained a security rationale, visible in the Schuman Declaration or the Rome Treaties, which made explicit the functional link between institutional integration and peace. See: (Simao, 2018: 56)

A respondent, who is an expert on Europeanization and the EU and Georgian relations, elaborates the European integration process as a part of the EU's soft power, while denoting 'dichotomy' between the EU and Russia, and Georgia's political choice towards the EU in terms of keeping Georgian territorial integrity as follows:

> The EU with its soft power, with the gradual European integration process, with different frameworks like PCA, ENP and EaP etc., it influences a lot since the independence, as the most important [actor]. After Georgia decided its independence, Georgian population wants to become a member of the EU and to become a part of the European society. Because when you are a small country, you have no choice. As regards to the previous governments, there were some ministers, who were advocating for total independence of Georgia in terms of non-alliance with anybody. So, they proposed regarding the relations with the EU, or Russia [that] Georgia should be like Singapore or something. But you are not in the same region with Singapore; you don't have the same international guarantees of inviolability of your borders. What if China started to intervene Singapore's internal policy, immediately after these big powers will intervene, right? There is a consensus about Singapore, but there was no consensus about Georgia in the 2008 War between Georgia and Russia. Within such geographical place, you cannot keep your independence, this is no choice. Of course, people think that they should be attached to somebody. There are two alternatives, either you are attached to Russia or you are attached to the EU. There is no other point; even Turkey is a growing power, […] it is not politically a strong power. So, there is either the EU or Russia. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/12/2017).

Drawing on the respondent's analysis, Georgia has to build up and/or involve in international partnerships/cooperation due to the geopolitical hardships that the country is facing with in different timeframes. Hence, building 'alliance' and/or 'partnership' with the EU is perceived as a 'guarantee' for the Georgian security and the territorial integrity in the face of Russia's aggressive attitude towards Georgia.

Based on the field research, almost all the respondents characterize the EU's soft power with the promotion of norms and values of democracy, freedom, human rights, rule of law and peace as the important determinants. Virtually, the EU with its soft power potential became of utmost importance for its 'neighbouring' countries. In this regard, a respondent from a civil society institution also highlights the 'soft

power' feature of the EU and the success of the EU to realize Kantian perpetual peace, while, on the other hand, the role of Russia, which is perceived as a continuation of the Soviet past as follows:

> The EU is all about soft power, it is not a military alliance, and it is not a partner that will provide commitments to Georgia to protect its land from the incursion from neighbors. But, what EU is a case that composed of members, which are wealthy, rich, have good human rights standards in their countries. They also have prosperity and live in peace with each other. It is a peaceful region did not have a violent conflict since the World War II. So, that is what people want to have in Georgia. I think that power comes from the standards of the life, the overall EU security is an attraction [for] people, and that makes the EU a coherent partner for Georgia. When it comes to other international organizations, other than EU and the U.S., the real interested player here would be Russia with its organizations, whatever they are. Whether Customs Union or the Union of Independent States, and that is a very strong reference to the Soviet past and it brings the impression which many of us can remember still, even the young people, so that is the main contrast [from the other actors]. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Likewise, a respondent, who is an MP and working on the European integration and Europeanization in Georgia asserts that the EU is about values, modernization, human rights for Georgia, she also touches upon the role of Russia for the EU especially regarding energy sector as follows:

> It is about the issue of values, we fully agree with the values such as modernization, enlightenment, human rights and democracy. However, the EU's bureaucracy is very heavy. How it is formed [it is a] big and complex structure to work with. Russia is an important actor for the EU. They don't disregard the Russian factor. The EU is more cautious in that. The EU tries to be less and less dependent on Russia. They are trying to diversify the energy sector to ensure stability, getting fuel supply from Asia and less dependent on the Russian gas. Having this opportunity makes this part of the region more developed. (Interviewee 4, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 07/12/2016).

Another respondent from a civil society analyzes the role of the EU and how the EU with its soft power respects the Georgian territorial integrity, while still trigger Georgia both in normative and institutional levels to take further steps for its development as follows:

People can compare, of course, this, I mean, what it means to be attached. It means that whose way of life you follow and with whom you are open more and whose influence you accept. So, everybody sees that the EU's influence is not about taking your independence, invading your territory; it is not about introducing their corrupted structure in your country. Russia's influence is that they put military bases in here, they introduce their rules, and they take your territories. The EU does not intervene in your political spectrum; they say whatever people choose in here [it's their choice]. They just express what they want from Georgia to pursue, the rest, compliance or not, are up to your choice. But what Russia's soft power does? If Russia wants to change the political elite, they would. This is absolutely different; it is not what the people want… And this is [a] different way of influence [on] you, and this is not acceptable for the Georgian people… You can be totally independent but what will you do? You do not know even what democracy is, or how to build up your economy, you know nothing. The EU with its frameworks, it comes of course with certain agenda for Georgia and they help it growing. This happens in Georgia, so this agenda is about democratic development, economic development, fighting with poverty, developing security in the country and sectoral development, as well as energy transport etc. So, all are related to the involvement of the EU in Georgia. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

Depending on the analyses of the respondents, despite the EU does not offer 'hard' military cooperation, its soft power influence the security notion of Georgia, as the Georgia's security understanding also covers establishing democratic order, a social state governed by the rule of law, to ensure universal human rights and freedoms and to strengthen state independence and peaceful co-existence with other nations.[140] Against this backdrop, further institutional integration with the EU is perceived as a part of the national security concept of Georgia because it addresses not only about military and diplomatic affairs but also about the wider context of economic development and interdependence, energy vulnerability, and modes of domestic governance (MacFarlane, 2012; National Security Concept, 2018).

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[140] See: Preamble to the Constitution of Georgia: "We, the citizens of Georgia, whose firm will is to establish a democratic social order, economic freedom, a rule-of-law and a social state, to secure universally recognised human rights and freedoms, to enhance state independence and peaceful relations with other peoples, drawing inspiration from centuries-old traditions of statehood of the Georgian nation and the historical-legal legacy of the Constitution of Georgia of 1921, proclaim the present Constitution before God and the nation." See: (Georgian Parliament, 2010)

7.3   The Role of EU in the Framework of Multiple Actors

To analyze the role of the EU in Georgia's security perception, almost all the respondents stress other international actors; primarily address NATO, the U.S. and Russia, with elaborating both their bilateral and multilateral ties with Georgia. They compare the capabilities and sphere of influence of above-mentioned actors, in addition, they also elaborate certain advantages and drawbacks that all parties have. The respondents analyze the 'different' stances taken by the U.S. and the EU, yet, they are also articulating that both actors are 'complementing' each other. According to their analyses, while the EU is an important figure/player in terms of its 'soft power' measures such as economic cooperation, welfare and stability, the U.S. is perceived to be more tended to meet the Georgian 'hard security' demands such as supporting its membership to NATO and ensuring its security alliance/partnership for protecting its territorial integrity. Moreover, a number of respondents underline the 'reluctance' of the EU to take concrete steps in the case of directly involving 'hot' conflicts, however, almost all the respondents identify both the EU and the U.S. as equally indispensable in regard to Georgia's development and prosperity as well as keeping its territorial integrity.

A respondent from a civil society institution addresses the U.S. as the main partner and has more influence on Georgia as compared to the EU, especially from a security dimension and in terms of its 'hard power' capabilities as follows:

> The EU provides assistance in all spheres, political, social, economic; their assistance is tremendous. But the U.S. is the main partner, still. The Georgian independence heavily relies on the U.S. military and political support. The U.S., still, is a dominant political actor in Georgia, despite Georgia signed Association Agreement with the EU. (Interviewee 16, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 13/11/2014).

Another respondent from a civil society institution also elaborates the different positon of the U.S. in terms of Georgia's security and territorial integrity as well as its NATO membership as compared to the EU's 'soft power' initiatives, while also criticizing 'over-expectation' of Georgia from the U.S. as follows:

Because of Georgia's concerns over its security and its territorial integrity, Georgia has always prioritized specially relations with the U.S. The U.S. provides some aid in the defense sector. That is true [that] the U.S., of course, has a lot more to offer in terms of defense than the EU. And the U.S. has been the main champion of Georgia's accession to NATO. So, in that respect, you know, at least in the defense and security field, the cooperation with the U.S. has been more intensive than with the EU. On the other hand, one may ask whether also this has generated some unrealistic expectations in Georgia because the U.S., of course, has never pledged any direct military support to Georgia and that was evident in 2008. Even the U.S. has been very cautious about actually delivering any weapons to Georgia and it has traditionally refrained from doing so. So, I think, to some extent, the expectations were exaggerated and unrealistic. I mean the U.S. support has been very important for Georgia, but, you could argue that it has been in the economic field but, I think, I do not know that whether there is completely realist attitude in Georgia to how much the U.S. can offer in terms of defense and security. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

A respondent from a civil society institution indicates the 'soft power' element of the EU as an international actor and stresses its position sometimes as 'vague' when facing with the 'incidents' that require 'swift' action. He also asserts that as a certain obstacle refraining the EU from taking prompt actions regarding, for instance, providing military assistance and/or obtaining a critical role in the peace-making process, emanated from different 'national' interests of the member states, which sometimes slows down the internal decision-making mechanism of the EU as follows:

Well, it is clear that EU is very different from other actors, especially from the U.S. The major distinction between these two is the fact that EU is a composition of 28 independent states, and there [in the alliance] are still sovereign states with their own elected governments and they have different opinions. The result is that there are different decision-making processes, which are slow and bureaucratic. There is also [the] fact that within that group of 28 nations, there are different understandings and visions of regional cooperation, security and economic interests. So, all of these have to be synthesized somehow into one decision and that, of course, takes time. Sometimes, actually really often, it [EU] is not as strong as the Georgia would like to see it. Especially, when you are left alone, next to a rogue power that has ambitions to invade your land. People do want to see strong reaction from different actors on the international scene, which can counterbalance that pressure. But, of course, looking at the reality helps it to understand why that reality is the way it is. Also, it is true that there was much more direct support from the U.S. throughout the past two decades, when it comes to military assistance and equating the capacity of the army

and defense capacity in general as well as direct donations to strengthen civil society etc. But that has been also changing; there is more of support coming from the EU in recent years. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the EU is more about economic cooperation than it is about security alliance. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

Nonetheless, the same respondent also sees the EU, U.S. and NATO, all the irrevocable elements of the Georgian Euro-Atlantic strategic path, that all complement each other as follows:

I think people understand the Georgia's Western aspirations, seen in two major ways. One is integration into NATO, which is a security organization and which is perceived to be able to protect Georgia from aggression. The second one is integration with the EU, which is related with better standards of life and better governance and more prosperity. I think, we are always mixing the principles of these two organizations; that is why Georgia is going through two directions: on security matter with NATO and US [while on the other hand] with the EU because of the good governance, human rights and strengthening civil society and economy, of course. That is why signing the Association Agreement has other benefits. The European countries do not have any wars and they are the only peaceful area since the Second World War. But this also means that the countries are in war and/or have conflict cannot enter in the EU space. They cannot protect you and don't provide you security. You have to be already a peaceful country to be there. That is why, I think, we are kind of mixing the principles of two organizations. The EU is providing a lot of assistance about the good governance and human rights and also with the economy. For instance, with signing this Association Agreement, Georgia will benefit a lot. You can always criticize the big nations and the big organizations because you are a small country and you need protection. But, I think, we are kind of mixing the basic principles of the organizations, the EU and NATO, what they were created for. (Interviewee 11, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

An academician underlines that both the EU and the U.S. are not mutually exclusive especially in terms of using their 'soft power' capabilities. Also, he proposes that what makes the EU crucial is derived from the interpretation that it is perceived as 'opposite' of the Russian model as follows:

Of course, the EU is [a] soft power, but in Georgia the United States is also [understood] a soft power. I think, in Georgia the difference between the EU and the U.S. is not that much important [regarding to soft power capacities], but the U.S. is more about NATO. NATO accession is more related, somehow associated with the U.S., while the relations with the EU are generally about West. It has democracy, it is opposed to the Russian model

so that is most important, I think. The EU is being understood as against the Russian model. (Interviewee 18, Academician, Tbilisi, 17/11/2014).

Another respondent underlines the conditionality as a triggering force for Georgia to pursue the necessary reforms for the European integration while stressing the U.S. assistance about ensuring Georgia's security as follows:

> Well, I mean, I think the general aid, again to be honest I do not remember the exact figures, but I think the U.S. and the EU contributions [are] generally comparable in terms of money they have provided. I think that the EU is more important in a sense that Europe actually stands the EU standards to the Georgia [that] actually [are] required to meet. So, the U.S. provides some aid but there is not so much conditionality. But with the EU, Georgia has broad maps, the Action Plans and specific reforms that the EU required [from] Georgia to implement. [in relation to the] [T]he U.S., the aid is usually, you know, less conditioned. Nevertheless, [there is] one area where that is very appropriate and relevant to speak of that kind of situation is the security sphere, for example, for obvious reason that the military power of the U.S. is far more significant than of the EU's and the EU never has that kind of power. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

Likewise, a respondent from a civil society institution also denotes similar points about the U.S and Georgia's strategic alliance in the field of security and the rising collaboration between the EU and Georgia regarding the military operations as follows:

> The U.S. is [a] strategic partner of Georgia since our independence and we have very effective collaboration. Let me phrase it this way due to the fact that we have very effective cooperation with the U.S. not only on the economy but also on defense and security side. We can assume that people in Georgia may consider the U.S. as a main partner on security and defense issues. However, we are cooperating on defense and security issues with the EU as well in frames of the EU mission in Mali, in EU mission in the Central Africa; we were also a part of their operations. (Interviewee 31, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 12/10/2015).

Another respondent from a civil society institution underlines that despite the influence of the U.S. is quite considerable especially with its military and economic assistance to Georgia for counterbalancing Russia, still, the EU has a more important role in democratic development of the country with stating that

It is important to reconsider what Georgia wants to do in the future? Georgia wants to become a part of Europe; Georgia wants to be a part of the EU. I mean, the U.S. is very important partner in terms of the security field, in terms of kind of balancing Russia's influence in the region but, you know, there is no such a kind of ultimate goal. So I think in the long run, the EU might be more important, [even though] also in terms of the internal transformation of the country that is not to down play the importance of the U.S., because the U.S. also financially supported a lot of programs in Georgia that contributed to democratic transformation. (Interviewee 17, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 19/11/2014).

Based on the field research, despite the different perceptions of 'power' pertinent to the U.S. and the EU, almost all the respondents underline their 'complementing' nature with providing different 'elements' for ensuring Georgia's territorial integrity and independence. Hence, in the triangulation of Georgia, the U.S. and the EU, Georgia's 'security needs' vis-à-vis its northern neighbor, requires military assistance and wider level of cooperation, as the former mostly met by the U.S. and the latter refers to long-term 'transformative' rules and regulations to empower Georgian statehood through 'deeper' integration with the EU structures.

7.4 The 2008 Russian–Georgian War and Ukraine Crisis

Based on the field research, despite the 'minor' differences addressed by some of the respondents regarding the diverse roles of Western actors, the 2008 Russian–Georgian War and Ukraine Crisis had been characterized as two important crossroads for the national security notion of Georgia. These occurrences exposed the rising Russian aggression towards the post-Soviet region, particularly directed to two pro-European post-Soviet countries, i.e. Georgia and Ukraine. In addition, the aftermath of these critical periods also revealed the 'reluctant' and 'dispersed' attitude of the EU member countries as well as the ineffectiveness of the EU security policies in case of any military conflict in its neighbouring region. Although these two incidents can be considered as direct confrontations between the West and Russia; the traditional conflict/cooperation dichotomy which defined the dynamic of

EU–Russia relation during the post-cold War period has remained stable, as the recent Ukraine crisis particularly indicated.[141]

Considering the Georgian case, after the proclamation of independence in 1991, the relation between Russia and Georgia had mostly not been at ease. The tense relation between Georgia and Russia had even worsened with the Rose Revolution in 2003. After that, Georgia's strong articulation regarding its Euro-Atlantic aspiration had further deteriorated the Russian–Georgian relations.[142] For Moscow, Georgia's Rose Revolution was not a genuinely democratic event, rather, it was orchestrated by the West to isolate and encircle Russia (Rumer, 2007: 25).

The major reason of the rising tension between Georgia and Russia is actually emanated from the post-Cold War geo-strategic interplay between the 'West' and 'Russia', and both sides' strategy/interest towards the post-Soviet region. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between Russia and the EU have been determined by the conflict/cooperation dichotomy (Averre, 2005; Averre, 2009; Dragneva & Wolczuk, 2012; Webber, 2000). According to Kakachia (2010), "Russia wants to recreate the erstwhile world order in which Moscow again plays a major role, and it's strategy is to cultivate fear of Russia (as it has been Russia's historical culture) to force submission from their rivals… Moreover while dealing with European Union as a security actor Russia considers individual EU members as

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[141] According to Nitoiu, the dynamic of European Union (EU)–Russia relation during the post-Cold War period has been characterized with 'the traditional conflict/cooperation dichotomy'. He explains this 'dichotomy' as a pattern of continuity rather than change regarding the post-Cold War order on the European continent, values and worldviews, perceptions of self and other, and policies towards each other and post-Soviet space. He proposes that after the Ukraine Crisis, the EU and Russia are still very much entrenched in the limbo between conflict and cooperation, even though their relationship has been recalibrated. See: (Nitoiu, 2017: 148-165)

[142] The NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008 had been another factor that increased the ongoing tension between two countries (Georgia and Russia). During the Bucharest Summit, Albania and Croatia became NATO members following the NATO's Eastern flank expansion. Another important issue debated at the Summit was NATO's future enlargement and the question of offering Membership Action Plans (MAP) to Georgia and Ukraine. Despite strong U.S. support, the NATO members decided not to offer MAPs to Georgia and Ukraine at Bucharest Summit. The countries that objected to offering MAPs based their argument on internal separatist conflicts in Georgia, public opposition to NATO membership in Ukraine, and Russia's strong objection to the two countries' membership. The August 2008 conflict between Georgia and Russia seemed to place the membership prospects of Georgia and Ukraine aside for the immediate future.

partners, however, it sees European Union as a whole rival block which potentially could undermine its influence" (p.89).

In this framework, the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit, which was held in April 2008, became a crucial corner stone escalated the tension in the region before the war in August. In March 2008, a month before the Summit, the Bush administration openly supported Georgia's NATO membership. During the presidential level meeting at the White House on 19th March 2008, the U.S. President Bush stated that 'NATO benefits with a Georgian membership . . . [and] Georgia benefits from being part of NATO'.[143] During the Bucharest Summit NATO realized its post-communist enlargement with the membership of Croatia and Albania, which was perceived as a threatening factor for Russia. However, during the Bucharest Summit, despite the efforts of the U.S. administration, the France and Germany remained reluctant to support the implementation of Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Ukraine and Georgia in order to avoid Russia's possible reaction. Nevertheless, they reached a conclusion that

> NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO. Both nations have made valuable contributions to Alliance operations. We welcome the democratic reforms in Ukraine and Georgia and look forward to free and fair parliamentary elections in Georgia in May. MAP is the next step for Ukraine and Georgia on their direct way to membership. Today we make clear that we support these countries' applications for MAP. Therefore we will now begin a period of intensive engagement with both at a high political level to address the questions still outstanding pertaining to their MAP applications. We have asked Foreign Ministers to make a first assessment of progress at their December 2008 meeting. Foreign Ministers have the authority to decide on the MAP applications of Ukraine and Georgia (NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration, 2008).

Having analyzed such a declaration, Karagiannis states that "Although the awarding of a MAP would have certainly stressed NATO's determination to integrate Georgia, there are no reasons to believe that such a development would have prevented

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[143] See: (Erlanger and Myers, 2008)

Moscow from assisting the breakaway republic of South Ossetia (Karagiannis, 2013: 86).

Against this backdrop, the pressure between Georgia and Russia reached its pinnacle point in the summer of 2008. On August 8th, Russia invaded South Ossetia, which is one of the Russia-supported *de-facto* independent breakaway regions with Abkhazia.[144] The clash lasted as five-day military conflict between Russia and Georgia.[145] The war resulted with the Georgian loss of control of its 25% of territory (Antonenko, 2005). Following that, the tension continued with the unilateral recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Moscow. [146] Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this was the first time that Moscow had attacked another independent, sovereign state, which confirmed the conviction of the West that Russia had adopted a more assertive foreign policy under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, especially since his second term in 2004 (Bowker, 2011: 197). Following the War, Russia maintained a strategy of 'controlled instability' or 'frozen uncertainty', thereby obstructing the development of Georgia's sovereignty and statehood (Jawad, 2006: 2).

In fact, President Saakashvili built his political strategy on the promise of reintegrating the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into Georgia, thus facilitating the return of thousands of ethnic Georgians to their homes (Cheterian, 2009: 158). Even before the 2008 War, President Saakashvili declared in

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[144] Russia seized Kutaisi and Senaki, moved into Gori also, blocked the main East–West road across the country. In his press conference, with the Western journalists and academics in Sochi, since the Georgia crisis began, Putin declared that Russia could easily have occupied Georgia and toppled Mikheil Saakashvili. He states "Our forces were 15 kilometres [nine miles] from Tbilisi. It would have taken four hours to capture Tbilisi. We didn't have that goal." See: (Steele, 2018)

[145] For the 2008 War between Georgia and Russia see: (Allison, 2008; Broers, 2009; Cheterian, 2009a; Cornell and Starr, 2009; Lucas, 2009; Rasizade, 2009; Tsygankov and Tarver-Wahlquist, 2009; Asmus, 2010).

[146] Before the 2008 War, on 12 November 2006, a referendum was held in South Ossetia, with the huge majority of ethnic Ossetians favoring independence from Georgia. At the same time, Moscow was gaining de facto control over South Ossetia by extending Russian citizenship to most South Ossetians. See: (Fuller, 2008)

his address to the UN General Assembly on September 22nd, 2006 that "The painful, but factual truth is that these regions [Abkhazia and South Ossetia] are being annexed by our neighbor to the north – the Russian Federation – which has actively supported their incorporation through a concerted policy of mass distribution of Russian passports – in direct violation of international law, which is itself unprecedented."[147] He also added that he proposes "a fresh roadmap" to peacefully resolve secessionist conflicts as "The essential elements of this package must include the demilitarization of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, backed by the active engagement of the United Nations, the OSCE, the EU and other international organizations."[148]

Despite the ineptitude policies and indifference of the West/Europe, an MP, who is working on the EU integration in the Georgian Parliament, explains how the 2008 Russian–Georgian War demonstrated the vulnerable territorial position of Georgia and the importance of finding powerful allies from the West in order to keep its territorial integrity and counterbalance possible Russian aggressiveness as follows:

> The U.S. would not be able to show political will to restore our territorial integrity. Georgia needs political dialogue; there is no other alternative for Georgia. Otherwise, the other option is war with Russia that we could not overcome with. The EU has no alternative, we need strong EU as a strategic partner; we need democracy around Georgia. We need democratic environment to counteract the Russian aggression, we need strong EU. That is why we need the EU so badly, both [due to] security and democratic reasons. We need the EU as a global actor, not diverse member states. Russia has a large territory and they have large influence. The EU's disintegration fuels Russian engagement in the region. Also, Russia uses its soft power. (Interviewee 4, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 07/12/2016).

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[147] See: (Taylor, 2006)

[148] In late-January 2005, the Saakashvili government presented a Peace Initiative for resolving the South Ossetian conflict at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe session in Strasbourg. This included broad autonomy, guaranteed language/cultural rights, and government funding for the rehabilitation of the local economy. In October 2005, the Bush administration and the OSCE expressed their support to the Georgian action plan presented by Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli at the OSCE Permanent Council at Vienna, but was subsequently rejected by the South Ossetian authorities. See: (Fuller, 2005).

Just like the 2008 Russian–Georgian War, most of the respondents also highlight the Ukraine crisis, as another indicator showing Russia's 'containment' policy towards the post-Soviet states, as well as the EU's averseness towards Russia's aggressive policies. Most of the respondents articulate their concern about the EuroMaidan and the Russian antagonistic attitude for containing the post-Soviet countries, particularly towards Ukraine and Georgia mainly due to their pro-European aspiration. For instance, an academician from Tbilisi State University underlines the reluctance of the EU to take action in security matters to respond the ongoing Russian intentions regarding the post-Soviet region, while depicting the position of the U.S. is more influential than the EU as follows:

> The EU is active in terms of fulfilling DCFTA and other, some other standards. However, the U.S., I do not want to say NATO because we do not see NATO in here except in some fields that we have cooperation with NATO such as in the military field, some training and some joint maneuvers; but the U.S. is more active. I think, still the U.S. is more valuable and more reliable partner for Georgia than the EU. The EU has some specific relations with Russia if you take the case of Ukraine, you will see that. The EU should be more and more determined and more principled towards Russia. But they have very important economic ties with Russia and they do not play as important role as they should. I think that the EU is active in providing some expertise, in financial means for the Georgian civil society in terms of strengthening them and of course these are very positive cases for cooperation. The European institutions are also cooperating with the Georgian governmental institutions in terms of improving the Georgian legislation and practices, for example, the Venice Commission, and some other institutions as well. I mean, taking [into] consideration the EU's soft power [capacities] these are more or less positive. However, I think that security should be the top priority because what is going on in Ukraine is a clear example of Russia's intentions towards its neighbors. One day Russia can renew its aggressive actions towards Georgia and the question is that whether there will be any response from the EU or the U.S. I think, the answer is no. So, the security threat [from Russia] remains very important. Now, Russia is talking about returning back to their lands in Kazakhstan and about Transnistria. They want to capture all the southern part of Ukraine to get an easy access to Transnistria. So, this means that Ukraine will stay out with access to the sea, if that happens. As we see, the Russian plans are very ambitions and catastrophic. It is catastrophic for its neighbors and even for Europe in general. All the sanctions could harm Russia's economy and social life, however, it is not enough. (Interviewee 14, Academician, Tbilisi, 14/11/2014).

The Ukraine crisis started in November 2013 with President Yanukovic's announcement not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU at the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit (Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, 2013). President's refusal prompted mass-level demonstrations and civil unrest, later called 'EuroMaidan'.[149] During the demonstrations, pro-European activists fiercely manifested their call for integration with the EU, instead of instigating further alliance with Russia. Yet the most striking thing about recent demonstrations has been the predominance of spontaneous self-mobilization by citizens acting on their own or in very small groups (Way, 2014: 40; Onuch, 2014: 44-51).

The demonstrations had destabilized Ukraine throughout November and December 2013 and reached a culmination point on December 17th, when the President Viktor Yanukovych, made an unexpected deal with Vladimir Putin in which Russia bought $15 billion in Ukrainian bonds and increased the price of natural gas threefold. Yanukovic's attempts confirmed that he had no intention to hear what masses were demanding about going through Western, European path instead of allying with Russia (Diuk, 2014). Pishchikova and Ogryzko (2014) define the 'EuroMaidan' demonstrations as "the protests tend to be spontaneous and organised from the bottom-up; and they are remarkable in their diversity, degree of organisation and resilience in the face of police violence. Some have argued that they represent a new wave of 'democratisation from below'; others are more skeptical about their ability to bring about real political change."

With the ousting of President Yanukovich on 21 February 2014, a new post-revolutionary phase began leading to new process led to a number of dramatic events, most importantly, Russia's annexation of Crimea and fueling a separatist insurgency in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk (eastern Ukraine) (Pishchikova and Ogryzko, 2014). Following the events, disproportionate violence caused nearly a

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[149] Ukrainian President Yanukovich mentioned three priorities in his country's foreign relations: the country's presidency of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); the signing of an Association Agreement with the EU; and the development of "close partnership" with the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, as well as with other organisations. See: (Euroactive, 2013)

hundred dead; EuroMaidan resulted in a change in the political regime, a return to pro-European foreign policy, and an anti-Maidan counter-movement (Zelinska, 2017: 1). After the series of extraordinary episodes that Ukraine experienced in 2013 and 2014, the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine came into full force in July 2017 with providing an economic and political association between the parties (Khomei et al., 2017).

A respondent from a political party denotes how crucial the stance of the Western institutions towards Russia and actorness of both, the EU and NATO, to solve the security problems as follows:

> People demand from both institutions to be more active, it doesn't matter which institutions, the EU or NATO. They need to be stronger; most of the politicians are trying to explain that NATO is about security while the EU is about welfare, prosperity, economic development, investment etc. People think that the most powerful actor is the U.S. and it is more dominant than the EU. But, at the same time, people think that the EU is less interventional institution. If we will have more cooperation with the EU, we would have fewer problems with Russia. But I think this is wrong. We see with the recent affairs in Ukraine, it does not matter; you can still have problems with Russia regardless of the EU and NATO. (Interviewee 10, Political Party Representative, Tbilisi, 01/12/2014).

Another respondent from Tbilisi State University highlights that neighbouring with Russia 'threatens' the Georgian territorial integrity due to its historical legacy with the Russian Empire. Especially, after the 2008 Russian–Georgian War, and with the decision came forward with the Bucharest Summit not to initiate Membership Action Plan for Georgia paved the way for the Georgian society to consider the European integration more favorable and/or more realistic as compared to become a NATO member state. She also mentions that the EU integration of Georgia takes its roots from a 'grand narrative' embodied with the Georgian 'Europeanness' as follows:

> You see what happens at some point one simple guy, Zurab Zhvania, announces in the European Parliament 'I am Georgian therefore I am European'. And then there is this narrative reproduced by the population. It becomes very popular among the politicians especially after Georgia's gaining independence from Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. So, you cannot be all alone, when you are representing around 4 million

people, while neighboring with Russia, which was a huge empire. You always feel some kind of danger. Turkey was an empire, the Ottoman Empire, and Georgia was invaded by the Ottoman Empire many times. But at this point, Turkey is not Ottoman Empire anymore, but Russia; it is still Russian Empire. So, there is a difference. You are really scared of bordering with Russia. And you know that you should choose something, if you do not choose the North, you chose the West. So, especially being this small, unprotected country, no one [is] interested in you, without any hegemony, so you just have to choose. The desirable narrative, or the foreign policy course of Georgia dated back to 90's was Western integration. Since then, 'I am Georgian therefore I am European' has become 'everyday rhetoric' so that people even do not question whether it is the case or not, you just take it as your belief, it is like valuing itself. So, it becomes a 'grand narrative', I would say. When a discourse becomes a 'grand narrative' with being adopted by the largest segment of the society, then, the politicians have to just somehow adjust to that, I mean, [to the] wishes and desires of the society. Because you know, former government, I mean, the United National Movement, was very pro-European and it reinforced this narrative very much. So, before 2008, the Russian–Georgian conflict, the country was mostly oriented towards Euro-Atlantic integration with NATO because of the Russian security threats. But after 2008 Russian–Georgian conflict, it was so clear that Europe will not really bother to protect Georgia, let's say it did not want to irritate Russia or spoil its relations with Russia. Now, the Georgian narrative changed towards the EU integration rather than NATO integration after the Georgian–Russian conflict of 2008. Some people think it is more realistic. Since then, our main foreign policy priority has become both, of course, both the EU and NATO integration. But the EU integration has become priority over the NATO integration at the moment because that is what politicians consider more suitable for Georgia now. (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

A respondent from a civil society institution draws attention that both the EU and NATO need to take more concrete steps toward Georgia because Russia benefits from the reluctant policies of the West/Europe and depictures itself as 'the only player' in town as follows:

It is the objective of Russia to convince [Georgian] society that Russians are able to take concrete decisions but European institutions are not able to take concrete and decisive steps for Georgia. That is why it is very important not only for Georgia but also for those institutions themselves to demonstrate that Georgia's NATO and EU integration process is not reversible and we have an effective continuity in this way. That is why it is very important for Georgian people to see that [integration with] the EU is really based on our very important and very effective performance. The EU is really able to take decision for the visa-free regime with Georgia to demonstrate that Georgia has the European perspective on the EU's side. When it comes to NATO, it is really important to demonstrate that the Georgian NATO membership,

that is also irreversible and to take concrete steps. (Interviewee 31, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 12/10/2015).

The 2008 August War also had implications in the geopolitical setting of the Caucasus region. In this regard, Kakachia explains what was the major motivation of Moscow behind the closed doors as "Russia's interest in the southern slopes of the Caucasus derives from its wish to defend its own territory: the former Soviet republics remain a bastion (as friendly/satellite states) for keeping the rivals (the West) away… Moscow worries that the successful integration of Georgia into Euro-Atlantic structures may cause Russia to lose influence and credibility not only in the Caucasus, but throughout the post-Soviet space" (Kakachia, 2010: 89). On the other hand, Nodia (2008) analyzes the main reason lies behind the 2008 War as "Whatever the humanitarian rhetoric, what Russia is really doing is a preventive strike against NATO, which happens to take place on Georgian territory. Moscow wants to teach Georgia a lesson for Tbilisi's open and defiant wish to become part of the West; it wants to send a message to the United States and Europe that it will not tolerate further encroachment on its zone of influence; and it wants to make clear to other countries in its neighbourhood (Ukraine first of all) that they are in Russia's backyard and should behave accordingly."

The response of the West, mainly the EU countries, was not relied on a common strategy; it was rather diverse towards the Russian aggression regarding the 2008 War. While the U.S. and UK, Poland and the Baltic States rather showed strong reaction to Russia, much of Western Europe, led by France and Germany, responded more carefully (Blank, 2009: 104-121). In 1998, Bruno Coppieters addresses the policies of the West/Europe towards Georgia as 'benevolent indifference' and proposes that the EU sees Georgia as a peripheral state to Europe or as part of the larger Caucasus bridge between Europe and Central Asia as follows:

> The European Union does not regard Georgia as belonging to Europe, but rather as part of a region bridging Europe and Asia. The European Union pursues neither specific Georgian policies nor a policy which acknowledges Georgia's image of itself as a European nation, but defends specific European economic interests and general ('universal') Western values

throughout the Transcaucasus region. In this respect, its approach in the region is basically no different from that of the U.S. when it supports specific economic interests and universal Western values. The whole problem of a European identity, which has been so decisive both for the process of European integration before the fall of the Berlin Wall and for Georgia's policies of independence, is absent from the European Union's strategic approach to Georgia. Western European policies on Georgia can best be described as an attitude of benevolent indifference (p.65).

Having considered the continuation in the 'reluctant' policies of the EU towards the post-Soviet region, ten years later, Blank asserts that "The Russia–Georgia War of 2008 that ended in Georgia's defeat and territorial amputation was also a resounding strategic defeat for the West. The U.S. government, NATO, and the EU proved utterly powerless to do anything constructive on behalf of Georgia even though the war was clearly an act of provocation and ultimately aggression by Russia" (Blank, 2009: 104). Leaving the question aside whether Russia succeeded the resurgence in the post-Soviet region as a result of the 2008 War as well as Ukraine Crisis, both revealed that the EU was not able neither coordinating a 'common' strategy nor giving a 'strong' reaction, while Georgia and Ukraine were facing with the first hand Russian military aggression.

7.5.   Russia's Soft Power and anti-European/Western Narratives

Another building block of this chapter is based on 'soft power policies' of Russia. Relying on the field research, Russia is framed as a power, which does not aim to limit its sphere of influence with only military power. Most of the respondents draw attention that Russia uses its soft power through various media outlets, civil society organizations and political figures. Along with such instruments, predominant majority of respondents underline that Russia is perceived to spread anti-Western/European discourse with using 'traditionalist' and 'nationalist' rhetoric as well as through political actors, which are tended to obtain pro-Russian stance in the Georgian political life. In this framework, according to most of the respondents, Russia mostly emphasizes common 'Orthodox values' and 'Georgian tradition' in contrast to the European values, while putting forward 'common culture and values' between Georgia and Russia.

In order to untangle in what channels/instruments Russia uses its soft power, an academician from Tbilisi State University states that

> Russia uses a lot of instruments, especially through media, such as Sputnik, Russian TV channels; they are still open [broadcasting]. Another method is inviting Georgians to Russia, stressing about the Georgian–Russian common religion, Orthodoxy as uniting element. I think all these [are] wasted resources, money and energy. It is obvious that Georgian society did not become pro-Russian. We have those politicians [who are] pro-Russian. For instance, Nino Burcanadze, she articulates openly that we have to abandon pro-European attitude. Those politicians having anti-Western attitudes they commit political suicide, I would say. (Interviewee 5, Academician, Tbilisi, 28/11/2017).

Another respondent from Tbilisi State University frames the Russian propaganda means anti-EU propaganda and she underlines there are also some Georgian TV channels that has the same anti-European/Western discourse as follows:

> There is a recent decline in the support of the Georgian people [for] European integration; it is around 80 percent of the Georgians [who are] continuously supporting the EU integration. But since 2013, there is a decline in pro-EU attitudes and a bit of increase in supporting Eurasian Customs Union because, you know, the Russian propaganda is really very, very strong. […] Russian soft power is working through different media outlets that operate in the center and both in the regions [Tbilisi and in the countryside]. These media outlets, like the Sputnik and other media channels say even the one that broadcast in Georgian language like *Asaval Dasavali* in Georgia, they are definitely very good instruments for the Russian propaganda and anti-EU propaganda. The Russian propaganda basically means anti-EU propaganda because all the analyses are agreed on the point that recently Russia's main strategy is based on information warfare that is basically disinformation as in contrast to the former strategies. When Russia started to promote Kremlin's agenda, this time it is oriented to discrediting the Western partners such as the EU. So, if you watch Russian channels and listen to Sputnik or RT TV or whatever, the first Russian channel, of course, you have no other alternative information and if your education level is rather low, then, you are influenced by the propaganda. What I wanted to say is that, both less educated and the older segments of the population, who may be with this Soviet nostalgia, still, might be more prone to anti-EU propaganda. And the ethnic minorities are more prone to the Russian anti-EU propaganda as well which is reflected in the numbers in the surveys. (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

Likewise, an academician from Tbilisi State University emphasizes the importance of similar instruments Russia applies to expand its influence in Georgia. Besides, he

also underlines the reflection of the Russian soft power on some of the Georgian political parties, as the 'carrier' of the Russian propaganda, which define themselves as 'more traditionalist' with prioritizing the 'Georgian Orthodox values' vis-à-vis the European values as follows:

> Apart from Russian media outlets, there are also Georgian ones, which are clearly pro-Russian, as well as civil society organizations, and media foundations. There are also newspapers like *Asaval Dasavali*, TV channels like Object TV that is the channel of the Patriot Alliance, and they are in the Parliament right now. They are spreading anti-Western propaganda. So, Russia has TV channels spreading anti-Western propaganda, [and] it has some NGOs [as well] to spread ideas about the Eurasian Union. Maybe they are not very influential but they are still around. There are political parties, either openly pro-Russian or secretly pro-Russian, which say we are neither pro-Russian nor pro-Western but pro-Georgian, but these ultra-nationalist parties they are usually carrying out Russian interest basically. (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

An expert, who works on the Europeanization and Georgian–European relations, elaborates the rising influence of the pro-Russian discourse and its connection with the ultra-nationalist/traditionalist political parties inside the Georgian political life, while analyzing how the pro-Russian political discourse is reproduced through 'nationalism' and 'traditionalism' as follows:

> It is very strange. The same people practically [who are spreading pro-Russian propaganda], are the same type of people, who fought for the independence of Georgia. Back then [in the late 90s], they were ultra-nationalists and they were traditionalists, hated from Russia and they fought for the independence of Georgia. Now, the same type of people fights against the West. And they are practically ally with Russia. Because the Russian propaganda transformed into a nationalistic discourse that goes with 'the prison of nationalism' and it gets purely nationalist discourse. They are getting inspiration and information from there [Russia] how to treat [public issues in an] anti-Western way and build/construct an anti-Western discourse. But the majority of the population, with the 70% or even more, are still in favor of joining the EU, which is probably higher than the EU itself [he means pro-EU attitude among the EU members]. To my view, there is much depurated way of Georgians to adapt to European way of life and European culture. For instance, the Georgians, who usually travel to Europe, they adapt very easy to their life and I would say that in certain sense that they assimilate quickly. So, they don't resist to the rules or way of life that they have there in Europe. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

A respondent from a civil society institution analyzes the impact of the Russian soft power pertaining to the discourse of 'sharing common values' with Russia emanated from Orthodoxy and tradition, while constructing anti-Western and anti-EU narrative that aims to weaken the European integration process in Georgia as follows:

> Regarding the elements of Russia's soft power within Georgia, we are witnessing that many Russian backed NGOs are quite active in Georgia with the aim to deter Georgia from its European and Euro-Atlantic integration path. It is clear that the Russian-backed organizations […] are trying to reinforce the narrative in the country that our European integration is against our religion; it is against our tradition. But once again all polls conducted in the country as well as the general situation in the country will prove that the Georgian people are quite realistically choose the future of the country in line with the West and Europe and quite clearly realize the situation in this respect. And we all understand, not all but the vast majority of the people quite well understand, that it has nothing to do with the Georgian values. (Interviewee 31, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 12/10/2015).

As it is depicted in the previous chapters, Orthodoxy holds a greater importance and has an influential role for the Georgian identity. Gaining the political support of the Georgian Orthodox Church has always been a crucial issue for the Georgian political leaders to gain 'legitimacy' due its historical role and the high level of trust towards the Georgian Orthodox Church from the Georgian society. The Georgian Orthodox Church is a significant civil actor not only because of its historical experience but due to its present status and influence (Minesashvili, 2017: 2-3). According to the 2017 public opinion survey carried out by the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Georgian Orthodox Church is still ranked as the 'most trusted' institution with the 88 percent of support from the Georgian population (IRI Survey, 2017). According to Minesashvili (2017), "Despite being financed by the state, the Georgian Orthodox Church due to its high reputation retains autonomy and often positions itself separately from the government" (p.2). For instance, the Georgian Orthodox Church's relation with Russia can be depicted as an example of its 'independence'/'autonomy' from the state foreign policy orientation. Some of the respondents articulate the role of the Georgian Orthodox Church and its relation with Russia in an 'affirmative' level.

A respondent from Tbilisi State University draw attention to the role of the Orthodox Church in the pro-Russian propaganda while connecting the rising pro-Russian discourse with the identity as follows:

> The Russian propaganda is basically an identity issue. So, this narrative is based on 'distorted West' and Russia is the Christian country with Orthodox Christian values, we have the same religion [with]. It is one of the flag keepers of true Christianity, while the West legalizes homosexual marriages and surrogate mothers and even artificial insemination, all are criticized by Russia. Then, you hear that here our local church, clergies and representatives, priests reproduce these very narratives. The Russian Patriarchy announced […] that practice [of] surrogate mother and artificial insemination should be forbidden. And after two weeks, you hear the same discourse reproduced by the Georgian Orthodox Church. So, definitely the Church is one of the main means of the Russian propaganda to manipulate the Georgian public. I would say that the trust in Church is very high in Georgia and it's around 80 percent or sometimes more […] recently [it] was around 80% or 81%. But, it was 87%. Because 87% of the population is Christian, so you can easily manipulate them with Orthodox Christianity. So, the Georgian Church is always one of the means of manipulation of the Georgian public. What I wanted to say is that yes, the authority of the Church is very high in Georgia and the public trust is also very high [towards it]. And it is kind of something that it is hard that anyone would openly challenge the Church in our society. Just very few people maybe would challenge against it and those people are directly targeted by the Church such as sexual minorities. So, most of the population would not even try to challenge the narratives reproduced by the Church, not just because they did not understand that something is wrong there. They simply do not want [that] all other angry people attack them, especially, those who are the defenders of 'true' Georgian identity. There is always this equation, being Georgian means being Orthodox Christian, and no one would try to challenge this. (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

Another respondent also emphasizes the role of Orthodoxy and the Georgian Orthodox Church as having a 'prompter' role for the discourse of 'sharing same values' with Russia as Orthodox values. He also underlines how the pro-Western and/pro-Russian stance of the political actors easily transforms into a dichotomy discernible in the agents' discourse, when identifying themselves either with the West or with Russia as follows:

> They [Russians] work with the Russian speaking population very intensively and with the nationalist, traditionalist Orthodox communities through the Georgian Church and through those who are very pro-Orthodox thinking.

They think as far as the Russia is an Orthodox Christian country and we are brothers and we fight for the same values. However, after the independence of Georgia from the Soviet Union, this was a very strong decision of the society [to claim that people want] democracy, western type of stabilization […], we want to build a more democratic society and live like that. And people's choice was natural. But after some time, some people started living with other illusions, such as West is something bad, they destroy our national values and tradition and they want us to change. They live with these illusions right now; the West is evil for them. For Saakashvili's time Russia was evil and the West was saint. And it was their propaganda, but it does not mean that they are saints themselves; it was a good use of propaganda to show yourself [with attaching themselves with the West/Europe]. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 29/11/2017).

An academician from Tbilisi State University frames another tool used by Russia to spread its soft power emanated from the Russian control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a political leverage on Georgia as follows:

The occupation actually was a huge blow to the Georgian pro-Western ambitions, because Russia physically occupied 20% of the Georgian territory, which is Abkhazia and South Ossetia. And they [Russians] are spreading this message to the Georgian society that you will never become a member of NATO and the EU, because part of your territory is occupied by a foreign power. So, the only way to get back your territory is to get closer to Russia. So, Russia is trying to push this message to the Georgian public and the international community that Georgia is unstable and insecure place that we [Russians] can do whatever we want, we are occupying its parts and we have an occupation line, and we are moving the occupation line several months and this is the source of instability. They are also trying to discourage foreign investment and dialogue between Georgia and the U.S. and the EU. This occupation is a huge leverage that Russians have. In the Georgian public, they are trying to make this factor work for the Russian interest. The Russians are saying that look, we are here and occupying your land and the Europeans and Americans cannot do anything about it. So why do you want to join the EU and NATO? (Interviewee 7, Academician, Tbilisi, 30/11/2017).

An expert, who works on Europeanization and the EU and Georgian relations, elaborates why Russia is not a viable option for Georgia in terms of foreign policy course due its lack of democratic culture and how it influences Georgia with its soft power as follows:

As regards to independent state of Georgia, I think Russians don't understand why Georgia wanted to go to NATO or the EU. This was inertia

during the last years of the Soviet Union, after which Georgia strived for the independence and it became independent. Now, there is inertia of distancing itself from Russia. That is why the Georgians want to be a part of NATO and the EU etc. But, in reality, I think Georgians quickly understood which system is better, which system is more fair and acceptable. The Russian system is becoming stable too though, and in the [Russian] population there is also consensus. Those who live there, they have no influence on policies and decisions. They cannot influence anything but they have their job and bread and they are happy with these. And the political elite are happy of course, because they have very strong positions, they are not threatened with democratic challenges, re-elections, they have their stable position. For them, the democracy is not the main thing. Fortunately, for majority of the Georgian political elites, democracy still matters. I don't say that the Georgians are fully and mentally democratic, we are not fully yet. But at least, if you ask people's preferences, ask them what is better, they would choose democracy. The majority of people in Russian population they would not differ between democracy and autocracy. In Georgia, maybe majority of people see the difference. They see which system is better, when the judges are impartial, if you are right and you will win the case and it does not matter who would be on the other side. They would say 'I want first of all to find the justice'. I think this is an important difference. Now, the Russian propaganda tries to substitute this understanding and with spreading false ideas with saying that 'the Western system is a pervasive system, it is more camouflaged, but in reality it is even worse, we are more open in Russia, we are for people really'. It is the Russian discourse, really. It is difficult to say, but, the threat exists. In a system like this, when you do not resist to such a country like Russia, to such a threat, they penetrate little by little into your structure and institutions. They use soft power and they use intelligence. (Interviewee 2, NGO Expert, Tbilisi, 20/10/2015).

An academician from Tbilisi State University draws attention to the increasing support of the Georgian society towards Eurasian Economic Union as an alternative to the EU. She also underscores the 'security' and 'identity' discourses used by the pro-European as well as anti-European media outlets to solidify their arguments about the foreign policy orientation of Georgia. The backbone of these discourses, seemingly, stems from the 2008 Russian–Georgian War and recent Ukraine Crisis, which demonstrate rather 'weak' and 'dispersed' reaction from the EU towards Russia. She states that

We have seen the recent rise in the supportive attitude towards the Eurasian Customs Union. It started few years ago and it has become more evident now with the Russian propaganda and especially through media channels. The numbers of those people who supported the Georgia's joining to Eurasians Economic Union, the recent studies have shown that the 31

percent of the population… I can say that based on my own media analysis, there are such newspapers like *Asaval Dasavali* in Georgia they do use especially [the] narratives of Russian propaganda. In our media analysis, we have studied the pro-EU media outlets and anti-EU media outlets in Georgia, both online and printed media outlets. So, we have basically seen that both the pro-EU and anti-EU media outlets operate with same discourses of security and identity. The very same discourses, but they have the same argument upside down. What I mean here is that if the pro-EU media says 'the EU is our only guarantee of security and safeguard against the Russian expansionism' that is about security discourse and concerning the identity discourse. I would say that the integration with the EU is the only means of achieving Georgia's European identity because we already say, we have this rhetoric, 'I am Georgian therefore I am European'. (Interviewee 6, Academician, Tbilisi, 08/12/2016).

7.6. Conclusion

Since the independence in 1991, Georgia aimed at establishing a modern, market-oriented democracy while protecting its territorial integrity as a part of the modern Western world order. Along with its independence, Georgia pursues Euro-Atlantic foreign policy orientation/political path based on 'identity' and 'security' reasons, while demonstrating a strong political 'will' for detaching itself from Russia and the Soviet legacy, as well as re/locating its place as a part of the Western bloc. Most of the respondents depict that the main reason behind the Euro-Atlantic aspiration of Georgia, i.e. becoming a member of the EU and NATO, emanated from its territorial vulnerability and for ensuring its sovereignty, while counterbalancing its northern neighbour.

The overwhelming majority of the respondents interpret the role of the EU in 'positive' but 'limited' manners. While they depict the EU as a soft power and with its limited 'hard' security elements, they are also inclined to analyze its role within a larger framework of 'Western powers' which includes the U.S. and NATO. They mainly analyze the EU's soft power, the European integration and future prospect of NATO membership of Georgia together, as 'complementing' each other within a framework of Euro-Atlantic integration. In this framework, while the NATO and the U.S. are depicted as the main provider of the 'hard-security' elements, the EU is perceived to be the 'promoter' of the soft-power such as economic, social security as

well as political stability. Nevertheless, most of the respondents criticize the EU due to its rather 'reluctant' policies in case of any military encounter and its ambiguous position about membership prospect and/or further institutional integration.

Depending on the analyses of the respondents, Russia seems to be positioned in the intersection of the major security problems of Georgia. The respondents underline that Russia primarily poses a security threat for the Georgian territorial integrity and statehood with using both 'hard' and 'soft' power measures with the aim of both spreading and consolidating its sphere of influence through different channels in the region. As an example of its 'hard' security elements, Russia is perceived to support separatist movements/regions in the post-Soviet countries and control them as a channel to ensure its control both in the region as well as in the internal political dynamics of the post-Soviet countries. Therefore, the 2008 August War and Ukraine Crisis hold an essential meaning for the respondents because two occurrences both expose the (continuation of) Russian aggression and reluctance of the West. In case of Russian 'soft power' the respondents articulate Orthodoxy, pro-Russian media outlets, some ultra-traditionalist and ultra-nationalist groups (converging both some civil society organizations and political figures), as the important arteries that Russia spreads its anti-European discourse in Georgia (Popescu and Wilson, 2009; Popescu, 2006).

As a final point, based on the field research, the post-Soviet 'power-politics' seems to lead to the emergence of a new form of 'post-Cold War' configuration between the 'West' and Russia, while the strategic positioning of the 'sides' is perceived to be tended to become more consolidated in case of any future conflicts rather than peaceful cooperation. That, of course, indicates a similar/former pattern can be traced back in the Georgian political history, which re/produces the new forms of 'we' and 'other' in the triangle of Georgia, Europe and Russia.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1   Introduction

This dissertation examined Georgian Europeanization since Georgia's independence, a process that became more visible with the cooperation of Georgia with Europe at the institutional level and its characterization with Europe at the discursive level especially after the Rose Revolution. The main problem of this dissertation is to understand the dynamics of Georgian Europeanization and to what extent the notion of 'Georgia's Europeanness' as a part of the state discourse and institutional cooperation between Georgia and the EU provided a certain ground for Georgian Europeanization.

Based on the data derived from the field research conducted between 2014 and 2017 and its analysis this dissertation proposes to discuss four major outcomes regarding Georgian Europeanization process: first, the limitations of the mainstream Europeanization research; second, the role of the ideational/normative construction of Europe in the Georgian political history; third the limits of the EaP as a path towards Europeanization; and maybe most importantly, fourth, the impact of the post-Soviet legacy vis-à-vis the Georgian path towards Europe. All these factors indicate a pattern of a process of selective Europeanization in the case of Georgia; while there are certain improvements and convergences between the EU and Georgia, the determinants also address certain hardships in some particular areas, mostly emanating from the post-Soviet transition problems, which seem most resilient to show any tangible progress in the short run.

Georgian Europeanization poses a fruitful analytical terrain for the Europeanization studies, as it is neither explainable with institutional, nor legal and administrative convergence with the EU *acquis* alone. Thus Georgian Europeanization demonstrates elements that exceed the boundaries of the mainstream Europeanization. Along with the enhanced institutional ties between the EU and Georgia, especially after Georgia's inclusion to the EaP structure in 2009 and the signature of the Association Agreement in 2014, the pattern of strong political articulation of the Georgian political elites about 'Georgia's Europeanness' and its 'belongingness to European family' made it necessary to focus on the possible transformations that are taking place at institutional and administrative levels in order to examine Georgian Europeanization. In fact, the findings obtained from the field research demonstrate that Georgian Europeanization contains multiple causalities in the intersection of 'normative'/'ideational' and 'institutional' elements that are complementary to each other. While the institutional arrangements and legal approximation towards the EU *acquis* became an important catalyst for the implementation of several domestic reforms, Georgian Europeanization also includes a strong normative/ideational aspect, which is determined by how the 'idea' of Europe is constructed and what it represents in the Georgian political history.

Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate that the EU's institutional mechanisms under the EaP framework structurally remain short of creating necessary incentives for further integration. No matter how strong the Georgian political discourse/leadership seems to prioritize the European integration as a cross-cutting theme for the country's statehood, territorial integrity, democratization, economic and social development and welfare, the EU seems not able to possess such 'transformative' power without any viable membership prospect in the future.

Lastly, the results also show that Georgian Europeanization is directly interlinked with the difficulties derived from the post-Soviet transition, such as weak statehood and institutions, inefficient economic system, and fragile democratic environment as well as geopolitical concerns. All these problems seem to affect the Europeanization

path of the country; therefore, any scientific attempt which might underestimate/overlook the problems emanating from the post-Soviet transition would be insufficient and even misleading to analyze the distinctiveness of the Georgian case.

8.2 Limits of the Mainstream Europeanization Literature

Relying on the findings derived from the field research, this dissertation put forth that the mainstream Europeanization literature remains limited to explain the multiple meanings attached to Georgian Europeanization path. As it is discussed in Chapter II, according to the mainstream Europeanization debate, Europeanization as a theoretical concept was born out of the European integration theories, and it would explain why, but mostly how domestic institutional change occurs. The mainstream literature on Europeanization highlights the institutional adaptation and/or change in domestic level, while examining whether there would be 'political fit' and/or 'misfit' under the pressure of European integration as the main determinant to observe Europeanization.[150] The 'goodness of fit' is accepted as the main mechanism in any Europeanization process; and the level of domestic adaptations of the member/non-member countries determined by the European integration is conceptualized as Europeanization (Vink, 2003: 63-74; Bulmer and Lequesne, 2005: 1-20; Graziano and Vink, 2006).

As I have discussed earlier, there are many interpretations about Europeanization, such as explaining the Europeanization as "the development of formal and informal rules, procedures, norms and practices governing politics at the European, national and subnational levels" (Caporaso and Risse, 2001: 1-20). In other words, the mainstream Europeanization explores "the effects of 'Europeanization' (or 'EU-ization')—the diffusion of formal and informal rules, procedures, practices, and beliefs that are first defined in EU policy-processes and then incorporated into the

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[150] The notion of "mismatch" or "misfit" and the adaptation pressures it creates in third countries responsive to the EU conditionality stems from concepts originally developed by scholars examining intra-EU processes of Europeanization. See: (Börzel, 1999: 573)

domestic (national and sub-national) structures, policies, and identities of member states" (Magen, 2006: 385).

Here, while examining the limitations of the mainstream Europeanization debate, it is important to note that, the Europeanization literature had grown out of the rationalist and constructivist debate in the early 2000s. Also, three strands of institutionalism, i.e. rationalist, historical and sociological institutionalism, were dominantly discussed among scholars in International Relations and Comparative Politics to theorize and identify Europeanization and its conditions and mechanisms (Börzel and Risse, 2000; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Börzel and Risse, 2003: 57-80). Both rationalist and constructivist perspectives reflected in neo-institutionalism had affected the Europeanization studies and led to the emergence of two institutionalist rationales: (rationalist) 'logic of consequences' and the (constructivist) 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen, 1989). While the 'logic of consequences' argues that actors choose the behavioral option that maximizes their utility under the circumstances, the 'logic of appropriateness' lays down that actors choose the behavior that is appropriate in accordance with their social role and the social norms in a given situation (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2017; March and Olsen, 1989; March and Olsen, 1998; Checkel, 2001; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). As regard to these two rationales, 'conditionality' and 'socialization' are important as the two fundamental mechanisms for examining the EU impact in the Europeanization literature (Schimmelfennig, 2012).[151] In relation to the Georgian case, neither 'logic of appropriateness' nor 'logic of consequentialism' would suffice to explain the multi-causal dynamics of Georgian Europeanization because it exceeds any institutional framework as the idea of Europe carries deeply rooted ideational representations of enlightenment, modernization and territorial integrity as well as

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[151] Regarding the establishment of political conditionality, as a core instrument in EU external policies, Schimmelfennig asserts that "Before the 1990s EU external relations had been notable for their apolitical content and the principle of not interfering with the domestic systems of third countries. Since the beginning of the 1990s, however, democracy, human rights and the rule of law have become "essential elements" in almost all EU agreements with third countries as both an objective and a condition of the institutionalized relationship." See: (Schimmelfennig, 2007: 11; Schimmelfennig, 2012)

overcoming difficulties stemmed from the post-Soviet transition problems. Also, these two rationales, i.e., 'logic of appropriateness' and 'logic of consequentialism' are the mechanisms applicable to member and candidate countries, to which the EU offers membership prospect that Georgia lacks for the time being.

Likewise, the external Europeanization and/or 'top-out' perspective attempts to conceptualize, explain and evaluate the impact of the EU policies and rules on the domestic institutions, legislation and political actions of non-member states (Magen, 2006: 386). For instance, regarding the Europeanization process of the non-member states, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier employ the 'external incentives' model, based on a rational bargaining model and sees the main determinant of compliance is based on 'logic of consequentialism', i.e. simple cost-benefit calculation of the domestic decision makers pertinent to the rewards offered by the EU, the credibility of threats and promises, the determinacy of the rules which the EU seeks to advance, and the size of domestic costs of rule adoption to the domestic actors (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004; 2005; 2008: 918-937). External Europeanization focuses on the extra-territorialization of the EU rules and involvement of the third countries excluded from the EU's rule-making institutions. However, as Magen rightfully puts it "while the EU has extended its policies of legal alignment, political conditionality, and socialization methods to the Balkans and the wider European peripheries, the study of "Europeanization East" (or governance by enlargement) has remained almost entirely confined to the CEECs and other candidates for full membership" (Magen, 2006: 387). In other words, it is considered as a part of EU's governance approach and its impact mostly on candidate countries through the enlargement process.[152]

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[152] Magen draws attention that the external Europeanization had come to fore with the accession process of the Central and Eastern European candidates, which have undergone a massive process of external Europeanization—as exemplified by the oft-cited requirement that they comply with and effectively implement over 80,000 pages of the *acquis communautaire*, resulted with the Eastern Enlargement in May 2004. See: (Magen, 2006: 386)

Consequently, as it is discussed in Chapter II, the mainstream Europeanization literature is heavily confined to the impact of European integration and governance on the member states of the European Union (Schimmelfennig, 2012: 5; Goetz and Meyer-Sahling, 2008). It has recently begun to cover the Europeanization process of the candidate states, under the field of 'enlargement' and 'neighbourood Europeanization' (Schimmelfennig, 2009; 2010; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004: 661-679; 2005). The scope and impact of the EU across its borders, to transfer its rules and practices seems to remain under-theorized. In this regard, only focusing on to what extent the EU has an impact on member and/or candidate states and elaborating the possible domestic change/adaptation would conclude with rather narrow object of analysis. All these demonstrate that the key problem of the mainstream Europeanization literature stems from its tendency to examine Europeanization from an 'institutionalist' perspective. Hence, the mainstream Europeanization remains inadequate to examine other processes, such as the patterns of different socio-political occurrences and/or change which might lead to different interests and/or identity formation towards Europe that might be analyzed under the framework of Europeanization (Flockhart, 2008: 1-37; Flockhart, 2010: 787-810).

Most importantly, the essential problem of the mainstream Europeanization research lays in its tendency to emphasize rather narrow geographical and historical scope of the concept without examining the origin and content of the ideational structures of Europeanization. In fact, most of the Europeanization research facilitates rather a 'Euro-centric' perspective, while demonstrating a particular tendency to analyze domestic adaptation through the EU. Thereof Wallace proposes what is analyzed as Europeanization is better called 'EU-ization' due to its rather narrow elaboration of a much broader and longer process (Wallace, 2000). Nevertheless, as it is rightfully stated by Flockhart, Europeanization can be conceptualized with taking account of various social processes involving different agents, structures, processes and conceptions of 'self' and 'other,' as one of the major objectives of this study tries to illuminate their impact regarding the Georgian case (Flockhart, 2010: 787-810).

8.3   The Ideational/Normative Construction of Europe

One of the crucial findings derived from the field research indicates that the strong political discourse of the Georgian self-identification with Europe seems to be one of the main determinants of Georgian Europeanization, preceding the relations between the EU and Georgia. In fact, the strong political language towards 're-uniting with the West/Europe' is directly linked with how the 'idea of Europe' has been constructed in the Georgian political history. The field research shows that the 'idea' of Europe has been constructed with multiple meanings/references in the Georgian political history and collective memory, vis-à-vis changing 'characterizations/representations' of what constitutes the 'other' in different socio-political contexts.

Although institutional relations between the EU and Georgia had begun to deepen in the mid-90s, the political discourse on the 'Georgian Europeanness' was addressed long before by the Georgian political elites, who framed that it extends through (antiquity) pre-modern Georgia. As it is discussed in Chapter IV, the idea of Europe and Georgian Europeanness is based on three notions: first, depending on 'sharing common cultural space' with Europe through Christianity, second, 'geopolitical considerations and territorial problems', and third 'rise of the modern Georgian identity' through the Enlightenment and modernization, all of which were acquired by the Georgian national elites through the Russian Empire. Before proceeding further, it is crucial to note that these three notions need to be considered as interrelated 'processes' that would contribute to the Georgian self-identification with Europe and the ideational roots of its European aspiration in its post-Soviet independence period.

As it is articulated by most of the respondents, the 'European identity' is not identified as contradictory to the Georgian identity, but rather, as complementary, based on the 'same values' and 'same historical roots' and sharing 'common cultural space' within a larger geographical and civilizational framework. In fact, the focal point of the narrative 'sharing same values' is mostly articulated on the basis of

'being Christian' as a part of what was constructed as 'West/Europe' vis-à-vis what delineates the 'East.' Having considered the role of Orthodoxy in Georgian identity, i.e. as Christianity is at the core of the Georgianness and Georgian identity, it also seems to function as a 'bridging' role between Georgia and Europe. Apparently, 'sharing' the common 'historical roots' with the West/Europe seems to be determined by the past, i.e. Islam versus Christianity dichotomy, which can be said to have place in the 'mental map' of the West/Europe due to the Euro-centric construction of a binary opposition between 'Western world' (the Occident) and the 'Eastern World' (the Orient) (Said, 1979).

Nevertheless, there is rather limited historical evidence that shows such 'common cultural space' that the Georgian Kingdoms and European powers had shared regarding the pre-modern era (O'Beachain and Coene, 2014: 925). In fact, it was not obvious which 'European' actors that would contribute to create such 'common ground' (e.g. through treaties, agreements, alliances etc.) with Georgia except sharing Christian faith. Besides, the theoretical discussions on whether there is/has been a collective European identity and/or where Europe begins, how we delineate its borders in the pre-modern era still remain vague. [153]

Apart from rather 'fuzzy' appearances of the premise of 'belonging to common cultural space', the role of the geopolitics is as persistent today in contemporary Georgia, as it was in the past. Georgia's long history under occupation by different powers such as the Ottoman Empire and Persians, the Russian Empire, and the Soviets seemed to pave the ground for the construction of Europe as a part of the Georgian 'significant we.'

The data obtained in the field research reveals that the idea of Europe that is connected to the rise of Georgian national identity and the nation-building process,

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[153] For instance, Delanty argues that "The idea of Europe when it did emerge was embedded in Christendom having become virtually coterminous with the notion of the Occident, which preceded the idea of Europe. It was this latter notion of the Occident or West that provided continuity between Hellenism, Christendom and the idea of Europe." See: (Delanty, 1995: 16)

began to appear in the early 20th century. The prominent figures of the Georgian intelligentsia, who laid the foundation of the First Georgian Republic (1918-1921) acquired the Western/European Enlightenment and modernization process under the Russian Empire, which constituted a pathway towards Georgian independence during the early 20th century. In other words, the Russian Empire became a 'channel' towards Europe and European ideas, despite its 'occupant' role in the Georgian land. The intellectual mobility of the Georgian intellectual figures and their involvement with the Russian 'Westernization' and modernization process laid the foundations of the rise of the Georgian national awareness and its self-identification with Europe through its social democratic leadership, which was also discernible in European aspiration of the Georgian Democratic Republic as its founding element, as it is discussed in Chapter III.[154]

Almost all the respondents underlined the Soviet era, as another 'critical juncture' which hindered the Georgia's path towards Europe. Soviets seized the Georgian Democratic Republic as a result of the Bolshevik invasion of the Georgian land. In addition, the Soviet era put forward a new identity formation with the construction of the Soviet-men/*Homo Sovieticus* and attempted to 'delineate' different nations under the Soviet ruling with the Soviet national delimitation policies and *korenizatsiia* (nativization), which later led to the re-construction of the Georgian nationalism and prompted redefinition of *kartveloba* (Georgianness) as an ethnic nation (Berglund and Blauvelt, 2016: 11). Despite the short-lived Democratic Republic of Georgia, the Georgian European aspiration found a material ground to amalgamate its national identity in parallel to European ideas and values, it also continued to have a significant symbolic meaning that had later inspired the dissident movements under the Soviet ruling (Jones, 2014: 4-5).

Following the long 'interlude' under the Soviet control, the political discourse about 'returning to Europe' gained much visibility and became 'ideational' basis of the

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[154] It is important to note that in a speech to the Georgian Constituent Assembly in 1919, Noe Jordania declared that "Our life today and our life in the future is… indissolubly tied to the West, and no force can break this bond." See: (Jones, 2015: 251)

Georgian Europeanness, in the post-independence political discourse. Having underlined the changing 'faces' of 'others' yet the remaining role of Europe as a part of the Georgian 'we,' the 'new' dichotomy between the Georgian 'self' and the Soviet 'other' became the backbone of the 'de-Sovietization' process after the Rose Revolution. Along with the independence, the 're-uniting with the West' discourse reached its pinnacle point and Georgia declared the Western principles and its European aspiration as the basis for the country's 'true' path with the Rose Revolution, which is elaborated in Chapter V in detail. In other words, the Rose Revolution had opened new arteries for Georgian Europeanization both in institutional as well as ideational levels with its strong de-Sovietization discourse embedded in the 'vocal' political language of 'returning to European family' and to 'Georgian Europeanness.'

To conclude, the field research demonstrates that the 'idea' of Europe refers to multiple meanings/references such as 'Christianity,' 'Enlightenment,' 'modernization,' 'territorial integrity,' 'welfare,' 'development' and 'progress' etc. in different socio-political occurrences in the Georgian history considering the long time-span under the influence of the different neighbouring powers.

Depending on the field research, this study concludes that the 'ideational'/'normative' elements of the Georgian self-identification with Europe are not necessarily constructed as a result of a direct encounter between the Europe/West and Georgia considering rather limited 'encounters' between Georgia and Europe. Yet, the idea of Europe has a strong position in the Georgian political memory due to the fact that it seems to be determined by the third parties, which has been identified as 'other(s)'. For instance, one of the respondents identified Europe and the idea of Europe as an 'empty signifier' in the Georgian case, which is a Laclauian term used as key tools for discourses in mobilizing consent and achieving hegemony (Laclau, 2005; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Nevertheless, despite the 'changing' characterization of what the 'other' represents in the Georgian political history, what Europe represents seems to remain more or less the same since the establishment of

the first independent Georgian Republic between 1918 and 1921. Therefore, 'belonging to Europe' and Georgian Europeanness seem to constitute a major drive in the Georgian political discourse both as a source of political legitimacy for the Georgian leadership and as a part of its territorial integrity in a contested geopolitical environment, and achieving 'modern' statehood vis-à-vis the difficulties caused by what constitutes 'the other(s)' with various appearances and threats in the Georgian political memory.

8.4 Eastern Partnership as a Route to Europeanization: A Sisyphean task or a path towards Europe?

As it is discussed in Chapter III, Chapter V and Chapter VI, since the restoration of its independence in 1991, Georgia had entered into a new process and defined its priorities in line with the Euro-Atlantic world order. As it is highlighted before, the limited nature of the partnership (only through humanitarian aid and technical support via TACIS) in the early years of the 90s is called 'benevolent indifference' of the EU as it is articulated by Coppieters (1998: 65). Nevertheless, the relations between Georgia and the EU began to intensify in the second half of the 90s. Both sides signed the EU-Georgia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1996, which came into force in 1999, with the aim of determining a route map for their future of bilateral relations. Along with the Eastern Enlargement in 2004 and 2007, and considering the discussion inside the EU whether the EU would enlarge further, the EU began to pay more attention to its neighbours and developed the ENP soon after, not to create new 'dividing lines' across Europe. Accordingly, the overall objective of the ENP, was *"to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged Union and its neighbours"* by sharing "the benefits of the EU's 2004 enlargement with neighbouring countries in strengthening stability, security and well-being (European Commission, 2004).

In the meantime, as it is discussed in Chapter V, Georgia had gone through series of dramatic changes with the Rose Revolution in 2003. The Saakashvili government openly declared a new path for Georgia by emphasizing its European and Euro-

Atlantic aspirations, and began to employ a series of hard economic and political reforms to fight corruption, ensure a highly favorable business climate and to initiate necessary reforms for building modern statehood in Georgia. During Saakashvili's administration, Europeanization was declared as a top objective. For instance, in its new Foreign Policy Strategy of 2006 and 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia depicted the country's primary aim as "turning Georgia into a European State with strong institutions, fully integrated into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures" (The Georgian Foreign Policy Strategy: 2006 – 2009). In the same document, the effective implementation of the ENP Action Plan was also underlined in order to move Georgia's relations with the EU to a higher level. Shortly after the introduction of ENP in 2009, the EU had offered a new framework with a more-focused dimension towards its post-Soviet neighbourhood.

Based on the field research, almost all the respondents maintained positive attitude towards deepening of the institutional cooperation between the EU and Georgia, especially after the Rose Revolution.[155] They mostly underlined that the Georgia's integration to the ENP and EaP, and the signing of the Association Agreement in 2014 and Visa Liberalization Agreement in 2017 as the crucial turning points for Georgian Europeanization. All these led Georgia to take institutional, legal and administrative steps and the approximation with the *acquis communitaire*.

The signing of the EaP (2009), the Association Agreement (2014) and Visa Liberalization (2017) seem to be the main engines that paved the way for restructuring the Georgian domestic policies as regards to its Europeanization path.[156] Especially the signing of the Association Agreement is seen as the 'realization' of Georgia's path to deepen its relations with the EU on the basis of the

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[155] For a detailed analysis of the Rose Revolution and its importance in the context of Europeanization, please see Chapter V.

[156] Under the EaP mechanism, the EU has evolved to offer Association Agreements, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs), and Visa Liberalisation Action Plans (VLAPs).

fundamental European values such as democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and the norms of the European security order.

Nevertheless, while accepting the importance of establishing new bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks between the EU and Georgia, most of the respondents still consider there are certain 'structural' problems from the EU side. These problems are 1) the EU's lack of clear strategic vision towards the region, 2) lack of necessary instruments to incentivize deeper reforms. i.e. 'pushing force' from the EU 3) lack of membership prospect for the partnering countries. All these factors are perceived to limit Georgia's Europeanization process, as they rather demonstrate 'reluctance' and/or 'limited' interest of the EU towards the South Caucasus. Here, it should be noted that, the EU's attitude towards the EaP countries has attracted much criticisms during crises such as the Russian-Georgian War of 2008 and the upheavals that took place following the former Ukrainian President Yanukovich's rejection of signing the Association Agreement during the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on 28th -29th November 2013, followed by Euro-Maidan protests and resulting in the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. Since the inception of the EaP in 2009, the EU seems unable to employ any 'holistic' and 'transformative' program, which could invoke further reforms/transformation regarding the partnering countries, especially considering Ukraine and Georgia, or bolster their sovereignty and resilience to Russian pressure (Wilson, 2017). Despite the main task of the EaP was to bring about reforms and the expectations of the pro-European countries, these tasks do not seem to be fulfilled by the EU raising questions as to whether the whole EaP turned into a Sisyphean task.

As it is articulated by many of the respondents, the EaP countries have varied in their European aspiration and their commitment to implement such hard reform processes. However, the EaP framework offers partnering countries more or less the same framework, lacking any merit-based plan for further integration. Considering the potentials and involvement of the all six EaP countries towards building closer ties with the EU, only Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova signed the Association

Agreements (AAs)/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with the EU. Apparently, that would indicate a sort of 'imbalance' between the engagement of these six partnership countries and "separating these three 'GUM' partners [Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova] from the foot-dragging and downright hostility being displayed in Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan."[157] Hence the EU should develop a more encompassing framework and coherent strategy to countries which are ready to show 'more willingness' for the EU integration, while offering necessary incentives to motivate those countries to implement necessary reforms in parallel with the priorities drawn with the AAs. Also, it requires building a new plan (as well as new mechanisms) to expand its influence with counterbalancing Russia's visible soft power on countries such as Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus that do not have either observable political orientation towards Europe or political will to implement such painful reforms.

Nevertheless, it raises another question: how the EU could achieve such a difficult task without promising membership to the EaP countries. Having considered all the problems defined by a majority of the respondents, the most important difficulty regarding Georgian Europeanization is highlighted as the unclear perspective of membership as a weakening factor for the EU and its lack of leverage for promoting further domestic reforms in Georgia. In fact, there is no precedent of promoting the EU *acquis* successfully without the perspective of membership (Wolczuk, 2010). The European Enlargement towards the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) shows that the effective application of the EU conditionality is directly interlinked with the attractiveness of membership reward (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2011: 885-909; Youngs, 2009). It clearly indicates that without membership prospect, the EU does not suffice to offer necessary 'incentives' and/or 'pushing factor' for counterweighting the political 'costs,' to bring solution to the 'acute' problems of the country, which would mostly emanate from the post-Soviet legacies.

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[157] See: (EUBORDERSCAPES Report, 2015)

Almost after ten years since the inception of the EaP, the EU still lacks a clear strategic vision and coherent policies for the region. This defect also indicates that the EU has neither resilience nor the capability vis-à-vis the changing dynamics in the region, i.e., rising insurgence of Russia with its rising 'hard' and 'soft' power capabilities, which is discussed in Chapter VII. Recently, the EU proposed a new plan, 'The 20 key deliverables for 2020 for the Eastern Partnership' in order to overcome above-mentioned difficulties. The document addresses a clear focus on achieving increased 'stabilization' and 'resilience' in EU's immediate neighbourhood.[158] Likewise, in 2015, the EU declared a review for the ENP, called, 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy,' which included a section addressed 'security dimension' indicating "the need to empower and enable partners to prevent and manage crises" (European Commission, 2015: 12). Of course, all these may bring new questions to to the fore that whether the EU would add new dimensions to its role as a 'soft-power' and begin to employ a new focus pertinent to realpolitik, which is discussed in Chapter VII.[159] The answer is not known at the moment. Having considered six EaP countries, it is observable that almost all of them deal with certain security problems and conflict resolution issues either with each other or with Russia. Especially, Russian-Georgia war of 2008 and the recent Ukraine crisis demonstrated that the EU does not have such a deterring function or mechanism to prevent or de-escalate conflicts that erupt in the region. So, in the long run, the EU might integrate its existing conflict resolution mechanisms such as the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) or The European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) in to the EaP structure (Rinnert, 2011: 20-21). Or alternatively, it would develop more efficient conflict resolution mechanisms to maintain stability; it seems only then it might contribute to lessen the impact of the acute problems of the partnering countries in the region.

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[158] See: (European Commission, 2017)

[159] There is a very recent discussion about building a European Army, put forward by the French President Emmanuel Macron and supported by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. See: (Herszenhorn, 2018; De La Baume and Herszenhorn, 2018; BBC, 2018)

8.5   Limitations of the Post-Soviet Transition

Another crucial outcome of the field research revealed that without taking the post-Soviet transition problems into account, Georgian Europeanization, both at the ideational/normative and institutional levels could not be analyzed thoroughly. In other words, steps taken towards the Europeanization in Georgia do not suffice to solve the problems derived from the weak statehood and institutions, inefficient economic system, dominant political party system and fragile democratic environment as well as geopolitical concerns. Nevertheless, while it indicates the Janus-faced problems both emanating from the post-Soviet legacy and the EU's limited involvement, it does not cause any pretext for the EU not to employ necessary incentives for stimulating the domestic actors for change.

The overwhelming majority of the respondents highlighted the 'state-building vs. democratization' dilemma as a factor which hampers the possibility to take necessary actions in order to build a more democratic environment. The findings indicate that respondents did not see that there has to be a necessary compatibility between the progress made through the Europeanization and the democratization processes in the country. This also reveals a pattern of selective 'conditionality' limited with particular policy domains that raise no threat to the incumbents' sphere of power, which seems to be a common problem in hybrid regimes (Bolkvadze, 2016; Levitsky and Way, 2010). As it is discussed in Chapter V, the implementation of the hard reforms sometimes harmed the democratization process of the country, as the second term of the Saakashvili regime closely pointed out such a gap between democratization and Europeanization. Although the Rose Revolution put forward a strong political discourse towards the Euro-Atlantic integration and highlighted the European path of Georgia, which included setting more democratic standards for the country, in the following years, the Saakashvili regime had caused many controversial cases such as the restriction of the media and pressure imposed to the opposition figures as well as weakening civil society. In that regard, almost all of the respondents underlined that the major success of the Rose Revolution was based on

the state-building attempts/modernization, which transformed Georgia from a post-Soviet 'failed' state to a 'functioning' modern state. Accordingly, another achievement of the Rose Revolution and the Saakashvili administration was its ability to eliminate the large-scale corruption, which can be exemplified as one of the most detrimental problems of the post-Soviet countries pertinent to their transition process.

Nevertheless, the post-Rose Revolution political environment failed to show the same success level to provide the necessary condition to create a vibrant democracy. For instance, the peaceful transfer of power from the UNM to the Georgian Dream Coalition after the November 2012 parliamentary elections has been articulated as the most important moment of the post-Rose Revolution Georgia in terms of its democratic development. However, despite the 'peaceful' transformation (which refers to absence of any revolution/coup/intervention which Georgia had to be exposed in the case of any change in ruling power since its independence) the patterns of less-democratic ruling/leadership persisted. Nodia and Scholtbach explain this situation with the 'dominant political party system' for the Georgian political parties, which are highly dependent on personalities and suffer from lack of democratic tradition that paves the ground for the power-concentration for the benefit of the ruling parties, also indicates sudden dissolution of the political parties, when the leaders lose their public support (Nodia and Scholtbach, 2006). Regarding the post-Rose Revolution political atmosphere, the same hardships about demonstrating less-democratic tendencies seem to continue with the Georgian Dream Party. In accordance with the Freedom House report in 2018, 'independent media' and 'judicial framework and independence' in Georgia are the cases that certain drawbacks can be observed.[160] Likewise, the overwhelming majority of the respondents underlined several cases about the 'politicized' and 'selective' justice towards the oppositional groups/people, who criticize the policies of the ruling

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[160] There were slight setbacks for Georgia's democratic development in 2017. Regarding the Independent Media rate, the performance of Georgia declined from 4.00 to 4.25, and for judicial framework and independence there is a drop from 4.75 to 5.00. See: (Freedom House, 2018)

Georgian Dream Party. After the transformation of power from the UNM to Georgian Dream, there were many cases regarding the selective justice or politically-motivated detentions, including the former Prime-Minister and the former Minister of Defence, former Tbilisi Mayor were either arrested or investigated.[161] Among them, Giorgi Ugulava case, who was the former Mayor of Tbilisi and election campaign chief of the UNM, and the closure of the Rustavi II TV station, which had been the most crucial opposition channel (it is also known with its closeness to the UNM circles) carry symbolic meaning to prove that there are cases of judicial misconducts under the influence of the ruling Georgian Dream due to the political motivation, as it is discussed in Chapter V.

Nevertheless, despite the above-mentioned democratic shortcomings, the EU and its institutions could still have transformative power for the EaP countries. Since democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are the essential elements of the Association Agreements, the EU may hold considerable power to prevent such violations and drawbacks to take place. Georgia had gone through many legislative changes on the basis of its institutional integration with Europe. For instance, in accordance with the EU–Georgia Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) signed in February 2013, Georgia became obligated to adopt a law aimed at eliminating various forms of discrimination.[162] Almost all the respondents highlight the passing of the 'Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination' as a critical moment for the Europeanization process of Georgia. Despite the Anti-Discrimination Law raised controversial voices in the Georgian society, especially from the Patriarchate of Georgia and traditionalist/conservative segments of the society, the ruling power had taken necessary steps to pass the Law and in May 2014, the 'Law on the

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[161] "As a part of the Georgian Dream's electoral pledge to restore justice, the government has launched a series of investigations into alleged crimes and abuses of power by high-profile UNM leaders. Approximately 90 officials of the previous government have been arrested or investigated, and many of its activists nationwide have been questioned, according to UNM." See: (NDI Report, 2014).

[162] The European Commission declared that after Georgia fulfills all the VLAP requirements, its citizens with biometric passports would be able to make short-term visits (up to 90 days in any 180 day period) visa free to the Schengen area (which includes 22 EU member and 4 non-member states).

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination' has entered into force officially (Transparency International, 2014). As a result, On March 28, 2017 the EU granted visa-free regime for Georgian citizens to enter the Schengen Area, as a result of a prolonged political process and series of reforms, which started to be initiated in June 2012, under the framework of the EU–Georgia Visa Dialogue. Another legal change implemented on the basis of the framework of Association Agreement is the constitutional change process. In 2015, one of the legislative reforms pertinent to the Law on the Prosecutor's Office. The government approved a package of legislative amendments to establish a depoliticized and independent Prosecutor's Office, therefore, a new rule was put into practice for the selection/appointment and dismissal of the prosecutor general (Emerson and Kovziridze, 2016). Likewise, in line with the requirements of the Association Agreement, Georgia had initiated a plan for 'constitutional reform' process, and established the State Constitutional Commission in 2016. Before the adoption of the final changes, the process had taken place under the close observation by the Venice Commission,[163] though, it attracted much criticism from the opposition parties and some of the front-runner civil societal organizations that the process neither comprised of different opinions outside the ruling party, nor achieved as a result of consensus. Nevertheless, the Parliament of Georgia has unanimously voted for the final changes to the state constitution in 2018. All these steps had taken on the basis of the Europeanization path of Georgia, which might usher to establish more democratic environment and impartial justice system in line with the European aspiration of Georgia. However, as it is depicted by most of the respondents, the implementation of these reforms is far more important than pursuing legal reforms, and/or enactment of new laws on paper, which would determine whether they are successful steps in the long term.

As it is discussed in Chapter VII, according to the findings gained from the field research, another challenging problem is the post-Cold War geopolitical

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[163] The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, also known as, The European Commission for Democracy through Law – better known as the Venice Commission is the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters.

constellation. This factor paved the ground for instigating regional problems inherited from the past. As it is observable in the past few years, Russia's increasing influence, which contains both 'soft' and 'hard' power measures, and its coercive actions caused some direct and/or indirect threats to the territorial integrity and stability of the post-Soviet countries, especially towards the ones that have pro-Western political course. Regarding the Georgian case, the 2008 Russian-Georgian War proved that the country seriously needs to build security alliances and assistance from the West/Europe in order to counterbalance the possible aggressive actions might be furthered by Russia. However, the aftermath of the 2008 Russian-Georgian War as well as the recent Ukraine crisis demonstrated rather weak position of the EU in the case of any security problem regarding the region. Against this backdrop, all the respondents identify the EU as a 'soft power' vis-à-vis the role of the U.S., NATO and Russia and their involvement with the region. Drawing on limited capabilities and reluctance of the EU in order to meet the 'hard' security demands of the partnering countries, most of the respondents emphasize that the EU could easily be outplayed by other international actors, which might trigger the ongoing 'frozen' conflicts to become 'hot' problems. The respondents also underlined the impact of the Russia's 'soft' power capabilities, which sometimes can be useful to affect public opinion with anti-Western and anti-European narratives on the basis of the Orthodox tradition as opposed to 'immoral' values spread by the European countries.

To conclude, the findings indicate that despite the EU is accepted as a 'soft' power, the absence of the EU's role would open the region to more conflictual geopolitical calculations that would erode the vulnerable stability in the region. Despite it is hard to expect from the EU to get involved with the 'hard' security problems of the partnering countries, there is no doubt that the EU can be more active to pursue peaceful channels for conflict resolution with using its multi-leveled instruments and diplomatic sources that would affect the domestic decision-makers in the region to reach a less-conflict prone post-Cold War geopolitical constellation.

8.6 Possible Future Projections between Georgia and the EU

The case of Georgian Europeanization demonstrates indicators of a selective Europeanization process. Such process derived from both the limited effectiveness of the top-down perspective of the EU through EaP and lack of membership prospect for the partnering countries, thereby diminishing the 'transformative' capabilities of the EU. Furthermore, post-Soviet legacies such as weak state institutions, less-democratic political environment, the dominant political party system, the fragile economy as well as unstable geopolitical constellation and conflict-prone political atmosphere are also other important factors that demonstrate Georgian case as an example of selective Europeanization.

Almost all the respondents were well aware of the ongoing difficulties such as Brexit, economic decline and migration issues that the EU has been dealing within and outside its borders, which might postpone any possibility or willingness to enlarge further to the post-Soviet space. Despite all these hardships and problems, most of the respondents were still optimistic about the Europeanization path of Georgia. Georgian Europeanization is seen as an anchor, a catalyst for re-constructing a new modern, democratic country and to build a socio-economically and politically strong and stable state, and of course as a part of the Euro-Atlantic world order. They overwhelmingly share similar opinions that although the membership of the Georgia to the EU is one of the key objectives of the country, the ultimate goal is to become a strong, economically and socially developed, modern, democratic and prosperous country irrespective of whether it would be inside or outside of the EU.

The European path of Georgia is not an easy task to achieve considering the internal problems and deficiencies, adding to the intensifying geopolitical dynamics and limited involvement of the EU regarding the post-Soviet neighbourhood. The internal problems of the EU seem to prevent any promising picture for further enlargement in the future. Still, the Europeanization path of Georgia is not a lost cause, on the contrary, it signals rather positive picture, if the both parties, the EU

and Georgia, would take further steps with a new, more encompassing and coherent institutional framework that would overcome the structural problems of the EaP framework, and political willingness to implement necessary reforms despite the political costs it might bring.

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APPENDICES

A.   INTERVIEW LIST

1. Transparency International, Tbilisi

2. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

3. Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Tbilisi

4. Open Society, Tbilisi

5. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

6. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, State Official, Tbilisi

7. The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), Tbilisi

8. Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), Tbilisi

9. Rondeli Foundation (GFSIS), Tbilisi

10. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

11. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

12. The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), Tbilisi

13. United National Movement (UNM), Politician, Tbilisi

14. Eurasian Partnership Foundation, Tbilisi

15. Rondeli Foundation (GFSIS), Tbilisi

16. The Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, State Official, Tbilisi

17. Republican Party, Political Representative, Tbilisi

18. Republican Party, Political Representative, Tbilisi

19. Republican Party, Political Representative, Tbilisi

20. International Republican Institute, Tbilisi

21. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Tbilisi

22. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Tbilisi

23. Rondeli Foundation (GFSIS), Tbilisi

24. Rondeli Foundation (GFSIS), Tbilisi

25. United National Movement (UNM), Politician, Tbilisi

26. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Tbilisi

27. Politician, Former Minister, Tbilisi

28. Open Society, Tbilisi

29. Georgian Center for Security and Development (GCSD), Tbilisi

30. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

31. The Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA), Tbilisi

32. State Official, Turkish Embassy, Tbilisi

33. The State Ministry for Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia, Politician, Tbilisi

34. Rondeli Foundation (GFSIS), Tbilisi

35. Open Society, Tbilisi

36. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

37. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

38. Caucasus House, Tbilisi

39. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

40. Rondeli Foundation (GFSIS), Tbilisi

41. Tbilisi State University, Academician, Tbilisi

42. New Vision University, Academician, Tbilisi

B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you describe Europeanization process in Georgia before and after the Rose Revolution?

2. What is the impact of Rose Revolution on political, economic and legal spheres?

3. What Europe represents for Georgia?

4. What the EU represents for Georgia?

5. What is the perception of EU in societal and political level?

6. How do you evaluate the role of the EU for democratization in Georgia?

7. What are the main instruments of EU for promoting democracy in Georgia?

8. How do you differentiate EU from other international actors?

9. How do you evaluate the relation between EU and the ruling party and the opposition parties in terms of democratization?

10. How would you see a possible future scenario between Georgia and EU?

GÜRCİSTAN'IN AVRUPALILAŞMASI: DÜŞÜNSEL VE KURUMSAL BİR ANALİZ

Giriş

Gürcistan, 9 Nisan 1991 tarihinde Sovyetler Birliği'nden bağımsızlığını ilan etmiştir. Gürcistan'ın bağımsızlık hareketi 1980'lerin sonunda Gorbaçov'un glasnost ve perestroika politikalarının getirdiği göreceli özgürlük ortamıyla güçlenen muhalif liderler ve gruplar tarafından şekillenmiştir. Buna paralel olarak, Gürcistan, Baltık devletlerini takiben Sovyetler Birliği'nden bağımsızlığını ifade eden ilk Sovyet cumhuriyetlerinden biri olmuştur (Nodia ve Scholtbach, 2006: 8). Gürcistan bağımsızlık ilanını takiben demokratik ve modern bir devlet kurma hedefiyle hem devlet hem de ulus inşası süreçleri ve bunlarla ilgili zorluklardan oluşan yeni bir sürece girmiştir. Gürcistan bağımsızlık ilanından hemen sonra, darbe, iç savaş, Abhaz ve Osetler ile olan iki ayrılıkçı savaşın yanı sıra, ekonomik çöküş ve altyapısal eksiklikler gibi bir dizi sorun yaşamıştır. Bununla birlikte, Gürcistan ulusal kimlik inşası sürecinde 'Avrupa'ya geri dönüş' söylemini baz almış olup dış politika eksenini Avrupa-Atlantik odaklı olarak belirlemiştir. Başka bir deyişle, Gürcistan bağımsızlık süreci ile birlikte 'Avrupa'yala yeniden bütünleşme' fikrini ortaya atmış olup; bu süreç Gürcü siyasal söyleminde Sovyetleşme karşıtı bir kimlik inşasını içermektedir.

Bağımsızlığın ardından, Gürcü devleti için 'Avrupa'ya geri dönüş' fikri Avrupa Birliği (AB) ile somutlaşmaya başlamış olup ülkenin siyasi elitleri AB ve Gürcistan arasında daha yakın ikili ilişkiler kurmayı ve daha da önemlisi, AB müktesabatına ve AB'nin kurumsal yapısına dahil olmak üzere gerekli siyasi ve yasal uyum sürecini gerçekleştirmeyi hedeflemiştir. Gürcistan ve AB arasındaki ilişkilerin, Gürcistan'ın Avrupa Konseyi'ne üye olmasıyla başlayan 1990'lı yılların ikinci yarısı itibari ile yoğunlaştığı gözlemlenmektedir. Gürcistan 1996 yılında AB ile olan işbirliği

sürecinde Partnerlik ve İşbirliği Anlaşması imzalamıştır. 1999 yılında yürürlüğe giren bu anlaşma, demokratik ilkelerin, insan haklarının ve piyasa ekonomisinin korunmasını öne süren "temel unsurların" altını çizmiştir (Avrupa Birliği Konseyi, 1996: Madde 2). Başka bir deyişle, Sovyet sonrası geçiş sürecinin bir parçası olan Gürcü Avrupalılaşma fikri, hukuk devleti ve piyasa ekonomisinin işleyişiyle birlikte demokratik, refah devletine ulaşmayı ana hedef olarak belirlemiştir.

Bağımsızlık sonrası uluslararası sistemin bir parçası olmayı hedefleyen Gürcistan, yeni doğan bağımsız Gürcü devletinin uluslararası meşruiyetini güçlendirmek amacı ile uluslararası örgütlerle olan bağlarını kuvvetlendimeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu bağlamda Gürcistan, 1992 yılında Birleşmiş Milletlerin (BM), 1993 yılında Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu'nun (BDT) bir parçası olmuştur. 1997 tarihinde ise Gürcistan, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti, Moldova ve Ukrayna arasındaki bölgesel işbirliğini artırmak üzere GUAM'ın kurulması için girişimlerde bulunurken, 1999'da Avrupa Konseyi ile yakın ilişkiler kurmaya başlamıştır. Tüm bu uluslararası bağlantılar, ülkenin sovyet sonrası demokratik ve ekonomik geçiş süreçlerini teşvik etmenin temelini oluştururken, ülkenin sahip olduğu Avrupa-Atlantik siyasi çizgisini güçlendirmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Gürcistan ve Avrupa Birliği arasındaki ilişkiler 2000'ler itibari ile her iki tarafın da yaşadığı önemli dönüm noktaları sebebiyle göz alıcı bir ivme kazanmıştır. AB 2004 yılında Doğu ve Orta Avrupa ülkelerini, yani eski komünist komşularını kucaklamaya yönelik en büyük genişlemesini gerçekleştirmiştir (Schimmelfennig ve Sedelmeier, 2005: 3-29; Toshkov ve diğerleri, 2014). Doğu Genişlemesi (Eastern Enlargement) kaçınılmaz olarak Avrupalıların kim olduğunu ve Avrupa değerlerinin ne olduğunu ve nasıl inşa edildiğini irdeleyen 'Avrupa kimliği' hakkında bir dizi yeni sorunun ortaya çıkmasını sağlamıştır (Sjursen, 2008). Ortaya çıkan yeni sorular daha sonra yeni teorik girişimlerin ortaya çıkmasını zorunlu kılarken, AB, Doğu Genişlemesi ile tarihinin kilometre taşlarından birini gerçekleştirmiştir (Sedelmeier, 2014).

Öte yandan, 2000'li yıllar Gürcistan için Batı yanlısı genç reformcu siyasi figürlerin öncülüğünü yaptığı yeni bir dönemin başlangıcı olmuştur. Gül Devrimi, Gürcistan'ın bağımsızlığının ilanından yaklaşık 10 yıl sonra, Gürcistan'ın Avrupa'yla özdeşleşmesi ve Avrupa/Batı'yla yakınlaşmasının kurumsal işbirliğinin yanısıra düşünsel düzeyde açık bir tezahürü olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Gül Devrimi ile iktidara gelen Saakaşvili hükümeti ekonomik liberalleşmeyi ve yolsuzlukla mücadeleyi kesin bir hedef olarak belirlemiş olup Gürcistan'ın ulus ve devlet inşası ile ilgili güçlü ve reform odaklı yeni bir gündem ortaya koymuştur. Saakaşvili'nin, Avrupa ve Batı yanlısı siyasi söylemi Rusya'nın 'öteki' olarak inşa edilmesine ve Gürcistan ile Rusya arasındaki ilşkilerin gerilmesine yol açmıştır. İki ülke arasında gerilen ilişkiler daha sonra 2008 Rus-Gürcü savaşı ile patlak vermiştir. (Rumer, 2016). Bu askeri çatışma küresel sahnede nispeten 'küçük ölçekli' bir olay olarak algılanmıştır ancak gerek sembolik anlamı bakımından gerekse Gürcistan'ın AB'den beklentileri açısından özel bir öneme sahip olmuştur (Tarkhan-Mouravi, 2012: 54). Olayları takiben AB başkanlığını elinde tutan Fransa liderliğinin çatışmanın artmasını önlemek amacı ile başlattığı girişimlere rağmen AB'nin etkisiz kalması Gürcistan'ın AB'ye yönelik beklentilerini karşılayamamıştır. Yine de, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci bu olumsuzluktan etkilenmemiştir. AB ve Gürcistan arasındaki ilişkiler 2009 yılında Doğu Ortaklığı (Eastern Partnership) ile yeni bir aşamaya girmiştir ve Gürcistan 2010 yılında AB ile Ortaklık Anlaşması (Association Agreement) bağlamında müzakerelere başlamıştır. 2012 Haziran ayında başlayan ve bir dizi önemli reform adımını gerektiren AB-Gürcistan Vize Serbestisi Diyalogu, 2017 Mart ayında AB'nin Gürcistan'a vize serbestisi tanımasıyla resmi olarak yürürlüğe girmiştir.

Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşmasının Toplumsal İnşacı Bir Bakış Açısıyla İncelenmesi

Bağımsızlık sürecinin akabinde ortaya çıkan AB ile Gürcistan arasında gelişen kurumsal bağların önemine rağmen, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci, kurumsal işbirliği/yakınlaşmasıyla sınırlı olmayıp, bağımsızlık öncesi tarihsel döneme dayanmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, 'Avrupa' ve 'Avrupalılık' fikri AB ile bağımsızlık

sonrası gelişen ilişkileri aşan ve Gürcü kimliğinin bir parçası olarak şekillenen oldukça normatif /düşünsel unsurları da içermektedir.

Bu bağlamda, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci, hem düşünsel/normatif hem de pratik/kurumsal bir takım unsurları ortaya koymaktadır. Düşünsel unsurlara bağlı olarak, Gürcistan kendisini özellikle jeopolitik, politik ve kültürel yönler temelinde tarihsel olarak Avrupa ile bağlantılı olarak konumlandırmış ve kendisini Hristiyanlık, kültürel değerler ve mülkiyet biçimleriyle alakalı olarak Avrupa uygarlığının bir parçası olarak tanımlamıştır (Kakachia, 2013: 41-51). Gürcistan'ın tarihsel süreç boyunca çeşitli imparatorluklarla çevrili olması akabinde bölgesel/teritoryal savunmasızlığı/kaygıları ve kültürel baskıları beraberinde getirmiştir. Bütün bunlar, ülkenin bağımsızlık sonrası dış politika yönelimini ve Avrupa ile düşünsel özdeşleşmesini, böylelikle Avrupalılaşma sürecinin ana hattını belirlemektedir.

Wendt (1999) toplumsal inşacı bakış açısına dayanarak "kimliğin, bir aktörün kendi kendini anlamasına dayanan, öznel ya da birim düzeyde bir temel olduğunu" önermektedir (s.224). Wendt'e göre, kimlikler kişi(ler)in sadece 'kendi' algısından değil 'ötekinin' nasıl oluşturduğuna bağlı olarak oluşurlar ve bu sebeple ancak 'karşıt kimlikler' bağlamında inşa edilirler (Wendt, 1999: 224). İlginç bir şekilde, 'Gürcü Avrupalılığı', ve/veya Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci Gürcistan ve Avrupa arasında gelişen/varolan tarihsel bir ilişki sonucunda ortaya çıkmamıştır. Gürcistan ile Avrupa arasındaki ilişkiler görece geç (bağımsızlık sonrasında) ortaya çıkmıştır dolayısıyla Gürcistan ve Avrupa arasındaki etkileşim Avrupa ve Gürcistan arasında meydana gelen tarihsel bir sürecin doğal sonucu olarak şekillenmemiştir. Fakat, Gürcistan için 'Avrupa tahayyülü' Gürcü siyasi tarihi ve kolektif hafızası ve 'ötekinin' nasıl resmedildiği ile yakından ilgilidir. 'Avrupa tahayyülü' tarihsel süreç içinde inşa edilmiş olup 'kendi' ve 'öteki' karşıtlığında 'kendi' olarak adlandırılanı tamamlayan/tamlayan çoklu anlamlar, karakterizasyonlar, ve temsiller taşımaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, Gürcü siyasal söyleminde sıkça yer alan 'Avrupalılık' ve 'Avrupa'ya aitlik' temaları çoğunlukla 'ötekinin' (çoğunlukla toprak bütünlüğünü tehdit eden işgalci güçler) karşısında yeralan 'biz' kavramının önemli bir parçası olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu bağlamda 'Gürcü Avrupalılığı' 'modernleşme',

'aydınlanma', 'ulus ve devlet inşa süreci' ve 'toprak bütünlüğü' gibi unsurlarla yakından ilişkilidir.

Avrupalılaşma literatürü çoğunlukla, AB üyeliğinin bir sonucu olarak çekirdek kurumlarda, politika süreçlerinde ve aktörlerde kurumsal adaptasyon ve/veya değişim konusundaki incelemelere odaklanmaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, Avrupalılaşma literatürü, ağırlıklı olarak, AB üyeliği konusunda oldukça 'gerçekçi' bir perspektif olan üye ülkelerin ve/veya aday ülkelerin Avrupalılaşma süreçlerine odaklanmaktadır (Schimmelfennig ve Sedelmeier, 2005; Lavenex, 2004, 2008; Weber ve ark., 2007). Avrupa Birliği'nin ülkeler ve iç yapılarına etkisi konudan konuya, ülkeden ülkeye ve zamandan zamana göre değişiklik gösterebildiğinden Avrupalılaşmanın etkisi asimetrik ve düzensiz olarak kabul edilir (Featherstone, 2003:11-12). Aslında, Avrupalılaşma literatürünün kavramsal evrimi, uluslararası işbirliğinin ve Avrupa ulus devletleri arasındaki bölgesel entegrasyonun temelindeki argümanları ve bilimsel araştırmaları temel alan erken entegrasyon teorilerinden takip edilebilir (Diez ve Wiener, 2003: 8). Erken dönem entegrasyon teorileri 1986'da Avrupa Tek Senedi'nin (Single European Act) imzasıyla ve Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle 'çağdaş' Avrupalılaşma/Avrupa entegrasyon tartışmaları için zemin hazırlamıştır. Bunu takiben, Avrupalılaşma literatüründe yeni-kurumsalcılık (neo-institutionalism) ile paralel karşılaştırmalı bir perspektifle çok yönlü işbirliği ve yönetişim çerçeveleri yoluyla uluslarüstü kurumsalcılığın öne sürüldüğü başka teorik çalışmalardan da söz edilebilir. Örneğin, uluslarüstü ve ulusal kurumlar arasındaki ilişkilerin ve işbirliğinin hükümetlerarası yorumlamasının bir sonucu olarak, uyum/uyumsuzluk, yakınsama/uzaklaşma göstermesi beklenen ülkelerin "uyum sağlama maliyetinden" kaynaklanan sorunlar teorik olarak ele alınmıştır (Grünhut, 2017: 157-176). Bununla birlikte, Avrupa ve Avrupalılaşma, AB sınırları içinde ve dışında 'çoklu' anlamlar ve yorumlar kazanmaya başladıkça, AB çalışmalarında aktör temelli daha 'sosyolojik' yorumlar/analizler belirgin hale gelmiştir. Şüphesiz, Avrupa'nın hem bilimsel bir kavram hem de politik bir proje olduğunu düşünen bakış açılarına göre AB, bir entegrasyon süreci ve üst yapıların kurulmasından daha fazlasıdır. Daha sonraları 'inşacı dönüş' (constructivist turn) olarak adlandırılan bu

'kayma''' AB Çalışmalarında rasyonalistler ve inşacılar arasında ortaya çıkıp 'büyük tartışma' olarak tanımlanmıştır (Checkel, 2001a; Jupille, Caporaso ve Checkel, 2003; Radaelli, 2004; Börzel, 2004; Schimmelfennig, 2010; Pollack, 2001; Checkel 2005).

AB çalışmalarında ortaya çıkan bu 'inşacı dönüş' sayesinde AB ve Avrupalılaşma, AB merkezli bir kurumsal yorumdan, yani, politik, ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel bir uyum/yakınsamadan daha ötesinde incelenmiş ve ayrıntılandırılmıştır. Söz konusu 'inşacı' bakış açısı, önceki kuramsallaştırma girişimlerinin ontolojik, epistemolojik ve yöntemsel bakış açısının dar kavramlarının ötesine geçerek daha 'çoğulcu' bir analiz çağrısı yaparken, Avrupalılaşma sürecini etkileyebilecek unsurlar olarak değerlerin, normların, kodların, geleneklerin, anlayışların, algıların ve tanımların önemine odaklanmaktadır. Örneğin Radaelli'ye göre Avrupalılaşma ülke içinde üç farklı alana etkide bulunur. Avrupalılaşmanın kurumsal dönüşüm anlamında etki ettiği bu alanlar sırasıyla; kamu yönetimi, hükümetler arası ilişkiler ve hukuki yapı gibi yapılar ve siyasi partiler, baskı grupları ve sosyal gruplar gibi ülke içi siyasi yapılara (domestic structure) aktörler, siyaset sorunları, tarz, araçlar ve kaynaklar gibi kamu politikaları alanının (public policy) alt bileşenlerini etkileyerek Avrupa norm ve kural ve ilkelerine uyumu sağlamak yönünde dönüşümü sağlarlar (Radaelli, 2003:35-36). Öte yandan Radaelli, Avrupalılaşmanın bilişsel ve normatif alanlarda (cognitive – normative structure) söylemler, siyasi sorunlar, siyasi meşruluk, kimlikler, devlet yönetim geleneği, siyasi anlatımlar, siyasete bakış tarzı ve siyasetin çerçevesi gibi konularda sadece maddi (material) unsurlardan ibaret olmadığı, aynı zamanda değerler, kültür, normlar, söylemlerin de Avrupalılaşmasının bir parçası olduğunu belirtir (Radaelli, 2003:36). Bu bağlamda, Avrupalılaşma sürecini toplumsal inşacı bir bakış açısı ile ele alan bu çalışma normatif ve bilişsel yapılara, yani fikirlere, söylemlere, kimliklere, anlatılara, bireysel ve toplu anlamlandırmalara odaklanarak Avrupalılaşma literatürünün, AB-odaklı, dar ve 'tarihsellikten yoksun' mekansal-zamansal kavramsallaştırmasının ötesine geçmeyi hedeflemektedir (Wallace, 2000: 369-382; Flockhart, 2010: 787-810; Flockhart, 2008: 1-37).

Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşmasının karmaşıklığını göz önünde bulundurulduğunda 'ana akım' Avrupalılaşma literatürü, Avrupa'nın sosyalleşme ve kimlik şekillendirici

olgular üzerindeki etkisinin ulusal aracılar üzerindeki yarattığı yansımayı açığa vurmakta yetersiz kalırken, 'öznelerarası' anlamları/temsilleri ve 'paylaşılan fikirleri' açıklayamamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, 'toplumsal inşacı' bir bakış açısına sahip olmak Gürcistan Avrupalılaşmasına dair herhangi bir 'kurumsal' incelemenin ötesine geçerek, önemli dönüm noktalarında ortaya çıkan ve 'Avrupa tahayyülü' ile ilişkilendirilen/özdeşleştirilen 'fikirlerin', 'çıkarların', 'söylemlerin', 'ortak kültürün' anlaşılmasına ışık tutmaktadır. Böylelikle, 'toplumsal inşacı' bir analiz araştırma konusuyla ilgili olarak birden çok Avrupa, birden çok Avrupalılaşma, birden çok Avrupalılık kavramına yönelik 'düşünsel' ve 'normatif' bir çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Bu tezin amacı iki yönlüdür. Birinci amaç Avrupalılaşma literatürüne toplumsal inşacı bir katkı sağlamaktır. Yapılacak bu katkı sayesinde mevcut kuramsal yaklaşımların dar coğrafi ve tarihsel kapsamı ve bu bağlamda 'düşünsel' düzeyde ortaya çıkan sınırlı incelemelerinden ortaya çıkan kısıtlar ortadan kalkacaktır. İkinci amaç ise konu ile ilgili gerçekleştirilen alan araştırmasından edinilen bulgular ışığında sovyet sonrası geçiş dönemi zorluklarını göz önünde bulundurarak Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin 'düşünsel' ve 'kurumsal' yönlerini çözümlemektir.

Tüm bunların ışığında, bu çalışma, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin kurumsal uyum ve yakınlaşmanın ötesine geçen 'çoklu' yönlerini araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Toplumsal inşacı bir bakış açısı ile yazılan bu tez Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin hem normatif/düşünsel hem de pratik/kurumsal unsurlarla iç içe geçtiğini ileri sürmektedir. Normatif/düşünsel unsurlar bir yandan 'Avrupa fikrinin' ve 'Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılığının' çeşitli temsiller/referanslar/anlamlandırmalar üzerinden önemli tarihsel süreçlerde nasıl inşa edildiğini açıklarken, pratik/kurumsal unsurlar öte yandan AB ve Gürcistan arasındaki güncel yasal, idari uyumlanma süreçlerine ve kurumsal işbirliklerine odaklanmaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu tez, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecini toplumsal inşacı bir bakış açısıyla bir vaka çalışması (case study) olarak incelemektedir. Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma

sürecinin ortaya koyduğu çoklu dinamikler ve karşılıklı bağımlılıklar doğrultusunda 'Avrupa fikri' ve 'Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılığı' incelenmektedir. Bu tezin dayandığı ampirik veriler 2014 ve 2017 yılları arasında Gürcistan'ın Tiflis kentinde yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış (semi-structured) derinlemesine mülakatlar doğrultusunda (in-depth interview) gerçekleşen saha araştırmasına dayanmaktadır. Saha araştırması esnasında yapılan mülakatlar sayesinde, 'ilk elden' verilere ulaşılmış olup, bu bilgiler söz konusu araştırma konusu hakkında derinlemesine bilgi sahibi olunmasını sağlamıştır. Saha araştırması sırasında toplanan veriler, katılımcıların kendi algılarına, deneyimlerine ve konu hakkındaki rafine bilgilerine dayanarak elde edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, katılımcıların Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci ile ilgili sahip olduğu uzmanlıkları ve derinlemesine bilgileri Avrupalılaşma literatürünün "Avrupa merkezli" bakış açısından kaynaklanacak sorunları ortadan kaldırmak için alternatif yollar sunmuştur. Öte yandan yarı yapılandırılmış (semi-structured) mülakat tekniği güncel olayları takiben mülakatlar sırasında ele alınan soruların gerektiğinde değiştirilmesine olanak sağlayarak, ek olarak bağlantılı konularla ilgili ayrıntılı bilgi sahibi olma şansını vermiştir.

Saha Araştırması Süreci

Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecini araştıran bu tezin fikri oluşumu, 2009 ve 2010 yıllarında "Gürcistan'daki Siyasi Partiler ve Demokratikleşme" başlıklı yüksek lisans tezim için gerçekleştirdiğim saha araştırması esnasında ortaya çıkmıştır. Yüksek lisans tezim için gerçekleştirdiğim uzman mülakatları sonrasında edindiğim bağlantılar daha sonra doktora tezimin saha araştırmasını yapmak üzere yeni bağlantılar kurmamda oldukça faydalı olmuştur. Saha araştırması öncesinde mülakat yapılacak uzmanlar belirlenirken söz konusu kişilerin Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci hakkında uzmanlık ve derinlemesine bilgi sahibi olmasına dikkat edilmiştir.

Mülakatlar için hazırlanan sorularda Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin hem 'düşünsel' hem de 'kurumsal' boyutlarını, ayrıca Gül Devrimi sonrasında ortaya çıkan Avrupalılaşma söyleminin dinamiklerini ortaya çıkaracak sorulara yer verilmesine dikkat edilmiştir. Kullanılan kuramsal çerçeve ve araştırma konusunun

karmaşıklığı sadece Gürcistan ve AB arasındaki kurumsal ve yasal işbirliğine odaklanmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda Avrupa fikrinin nasıl algılandığını, inşa edildiğini ve ayrıntılandırıldığını ortaya çıkaracak bir araştırma yürütmeyi zorunlu kılmıştır. Bu çerçevede, mülakat sorularını sadece Gürcistan ve AB arasındaki güncel ilişkileri ve kurumsal girişimleri kapsamakla kalmayıp, farklı siyasi süreçlerde ortaya çıkan tarihsel örüntüyü ortaya çıkaracak temaları baz alarak hazırlanmıştır.

Tüm bu bilgiler ışığında, 2014 ve 2017 seneleri arasında her birinin ortalama bir ay sürdüğü 4 adet saha araştırması gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yapılan saha araştırmaları esnasında Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecine dahil olan ve Gürcistan ile AB arasındaki ilişkiler açısından aktif rol oynayan ilgili sivil toplum örgütleri, siyasi parti temsilcileri, milletvekilleri, devlet memurları ve akademisyenler ile 40 adet derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerin bazıları 45 dakika sürerken bazıları 1,5 saatten fazla sürmüştür ve mülakatlar sorunsuz olarak İngilizce gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi, katılımcıların çoğu, AB ve Gürcistan arasında gerçekleşen ikili görüşmelere ve parlamentolar arası toplantılara sık sık katılım gösteren ve akademik çalışma alanları ve konumlarına ilişkin olarak Avrupalılaşma sürecine dair derinlemesine bilgi sahibi olan kişiler arasından seçilmiştir. Mülakat yapılan kişilerin 22 tanesi, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinde aktif rol oynayan ilgili sivil toplum kuruluşlarında çalışmakta olup, 9'u akademisyen olmakla beraber AB-Gürcistan ilişkilerinin farklı alanlarını çalışmakta olan kişilerden seçilmiştir. Mülakat yapılan uzmanların 9'u, çeşitli Devlet Bakanlıkları ve AB ile ikili ve çok taraflı müzakerelere aktif olarak katılım gösteren ve Ortaklık Anlaşmaları sürecinde görev alan devlet görevlilerinden oluşmaktadır.

aha araştırmasının gerçekleştiği 2014-2017 yılları arasında Gürcistan Avrupalılaşma süreci ile ilgili olarak çeşitli yasal ve kurumsal değişikliklerden geçmiştir. Örneğin, Haziran 2014'te, Gürcistan'ın iç mevzuatının AB mevzuatına kademeli bir şekilde uyumlanmasını gerektiren Ortaklık Anlaşması imzalanmıştır. Öte yandan Gürcistan, Aralık 2016 ile Mart 2018 tarihleri arasında uzun ve meşakkatli bir anayasal reform sürecinden geçmiştir. Benzer bir şekilde, AB ve Gürcistan arasında Haziran 2012

yılında başlayan ve zorlu bir reform sürecini kapsayan vize serbestisi görüşmeleri Mart 2017 ayında AB'nin Gürcistan vatandaşlarına sağladığı serbest vize uygulamasıyla başarılı biçimde sonuçlanmıştır.

Tüm bunların yanı sıra, 2014 yılında gerçekleştirilen saha araştırması esnasında Gürcü Rüyası Koalisyonu ortakları arasında patlak veren bir siyasi krize şahit olunmuştur. Tüm bu gelişmeler, ülkenin Avrupalılaşma yolunda atmış olduğu yeni adımları dikkatle analiz edilmesine ve mülakatlar esnasında sorulan soruların güncellenmesine neden olmuştur. Yapılan saha araştırmaları esnasında ortaya çıkan tek zorluk iktidar partisi temsilcilerine ulaşma konusunda yaşanmıştır. Bu sorun varolan bağlantılar aracılığı ile gereken kişilerle görüşülmesi ile çözümlenmiştir.

Bulgular

2014 ve 2017 yılları arasında yapılan saha araştırmasından elde edilen bulgulara dayanan bu çalışma, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci ile ilgili olarak dört temel sonuca ulaşmıştır. Bu sonuçlar; Avrupalılaşma literatürünün Gürcistan örneğini açıklama konusundaki yetersizliği, Avrupa'nın düşünsel/normatif inşasının Gürcistan'ın siyasi tarihindeki rolü, Doğu Ortaklığı'nın Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma yolundaki sınırları, ve belki de en önemlisi, sovyet-sonrası mirasının Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecine olan etkisidir. Tüm bu faktörler bazı alanlarda belirgin gelişmeler olmakla beraber kimi alanlarda, özellikle sovyet sonrası geçiş zorlukları özelinde, önemli sorunların ortaya çıktığının altını çizmekte olup Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin 'seçici' (selective) bir Avrupalılaşma örneği olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bir vaka analizi olarak Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşması, sadece kurumsal adaptasyon veya sadece AB müktesebatı ile açıklanabilecek yasal ve idari bir uyum süreci olarak analiz edilemeyecek olması bakımından Avrupalılaşma literatürü için verimli bir analitik zemin sunmaktadır. Yapılan saha araştırması sonrasında elde edilen bilgiler ışığında Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşması ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürünün sınırlarının ötesine geçmektedir. Elde edilen bulgular, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşmasının normatif/düşünsel ve kurumsal unsurların kesişimi ile ortaya

çıkan çoklu nedensellik ilişkileri sonucunda şekillendiğini gözler önüne sermektedir. AB Müktesabatı'na uyum çerçevesinde ortaya çıkan kurumsal ve yasal düzenlemeler ülke içinde yapılacak bir takım reformlara yönelik katkı sağlarken, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci Gürcü siyasi tarihinde inşa edilen 'Avrupa fikrinin' nasıl şekillendiğine bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan güçlü bir normatif/düşünsel bir zemine de sahiptir.

Ortaya çıkan bulgular, AB'nin Doğu Ortaklığı kapsamında sahip olduğu kurumsal mekanizmaların Avrupa bütünleşmesi doğrultusunda gerekli inisiyatifin yaratılması hususunda yetersiz kaldığını vurgulamaktadır. Gürcistan'daki siyasi söylem/liderlik Avrupa bütünleşmesini ülkenin devlet inşası, toprak bütünlüğü, demokratikleşmesi, ekonomik ve sosyal gelişimi, refah seviyesi bakımından önemini güçlü bir biçimde öncellemesine rağmen, AB'nin gerçekçi bir üyelik perspektifi sunmadan söz konusu 'dönüştürücü' güce sahip olması oldukça düşük bir ihtimaldir. Saha araştırması esnasında elde edilen bulgular, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin zayıf devlet olma durumu ve zayıf kurumsal yapı, verimsiz ekonomik sistem, kırılgan demokratik yapı ve jeopolitik sorunlar gibi bir takım sovyet sonrası geçiş dönemi zorlukları/sorunları ile doğrudan ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Yukarıda belirtilen tüm bu faktörler, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma yolculuğunu doğrudan etkilemektedir. Bu sebeple, sovyet-sonrası geçiş dönemi sorunlarını gözden kaçırmış veya dikkate almamış herhangi bir bilimsel çalışma Gürcistan örneğinin farklılığını analiz etmek açısından eksik ve/veya yanıltıcı olacaktır.

Avrupalılaşma Literatürünün Sınırlılıkları

Saha araştırmasından elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak, ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürünün, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreciyle bağlantılandırılan 'çoklu anlamları' açıklamakta sınırlı olduğu oldukça açıktır. Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürü teorik olarak üye ülkelerin Avrupalılaşma sürecini söz konusu devletlerin kurumsal değişimini uyum/uyumsuzluk seviyeleri ile açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürü Avrupa bütünleşmesinin yarattığı baskı sonucunda üye ülkelerde ortaya çıkan 'siyasi

uyum' ve/veya 'uyumsuzluk' olgularını incelemektedir. Bu nedenle, söz konusu üye/üye olmayan ülkelerin AB'nin harici baskısına karşı sergilediği 'uyumluluk' ve/veya 'uyumsuzluk', Avrupalılaşma olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır (Vink, 2003: 63-74; Bulmer ve Lequesne, 2005: 1-20; Graziano ve Vink, 2006).

Şüphesiz, Avrupalılaşma kavramının birçok yorumu bulunmaktadır. Örneğin, Caporaso ve Risse (2001) Avrupalılaşmayı Avrupa'da, ulusal ve ulusaltı düzeylerde siyasetle ilgili resmi ve gayriresmi kuralların, prosedürlerin, normların ve uygulamaların geliştirilmesi olarak açıklamışlardır. Bir başka deyişle, genel manada ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürü "Avrupalılaşmanın etkisini (veya 'AB-leşmenin'), ilk önce AB politika süreçlerinde tanımlanan resmi ve gayri resmi kuralların, prosedürlerin, uygulamaların ve inançların yayılmasını, ve daha sonra bu etkinin üye devletlerin iç (ulusal ve alt-ulusal) yapıları, politikaları ve kimliklerine dahil edilmesini inceler" (Magen, 2006: 385). Avrupalılaşma tartışmasının sınırlarını incelerken, Avrupalılaşma literatürünün 2000'li yılların başındaki rasyonalist ve (toplumsal) inşacı yaklaşımlar arasındaki tartışmalardan oldukça etkilendiğini belirtmek gerekmektedir. Yeni-kurumsalcılık ve onun üç dalı olan rasyonalist, tarihsel ve sosyolojik kurumsalcılık anlayışları uluslararası ilişkiler ve karşılaştırmalı siyaset dalında inceleme yapan akademisyenler tarafından Avrupalılaşmanın koşul ve mekanizmalarının tanımlanması kuramsallaştırılması açısından tartışılmıştır (Börzel and Risse, 2000; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Börzel and Risse, 2003: 57-80).

Rasyonalist ve inşacı bakış açıları, yeni-kurumsalcılık perspektifini etkilemiş olup Avrupa Çalışmaları içinde iki kurumsalcı mantığın ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Bunlar (rasyonalist) 'sonuç mantığı' (logic of consequentialism) ve (inşacı) 'uygunluk mantığı' (logic of appropriateness) olarak adlandırılmıştır (March ve Olsen, 1989). Rasyonalist-kurumsalcı yaklaşımlar aktörlerin 'sonuç mantığı' ekseninde faydalarını maksimize edecek şekilde davranacağını öne sürerken, 'uygunluk mantığı', aktörlerin bir takım sosyal roller ve sosyal normlara uygun olarak davranışlarını şekillendirdiklerini ortaya koymaktadır (Schimmelfennig ve

Sedelmeier, 2017; March ve Olsen, 1989; March ve Olsen, 1998; Checkel, 2001; Finnemore ve Sikkink, 1998).

Bu bağlamda, 'şartlılık ilkesi' (conditionality) ve 'sosyalleşme' (socialization), Avrupa Birliği literatüründe AB'nin etkisini incelemek için yer alan iki temel mekanizma olarak önemlidir (Schimmelfennig, 2012). Ancak, Gürcistan örneği incelendiğinde ne 'sonuç mantığı' ne de 'uygunluk mantığı' Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin çoklu nedensel dinamiklerini açıklamaya yetmeyecektir. Çünkü Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci rasyonalist herhangi bir analizin açıklamaya yetmeyeceği Avrupa fikrinin taşıdığı modernleşme, aydınlanma, toprak bütünlüğünün korunması gibi köklü birçok 'düşünsel' kavrama ve temsile sahiptir. Öte yandan, hem 'sonuç mantığı' hem de 'uygunluk mantığı' AB'nin halihazırda üresi olan veya aday ülke pozisyonunda yer alan ülkelere uygulanacak mekanizmalardır, ki bu noktada AB'nin Gürcistan arasında herhangi bir üyelik müzakeresinin olmadığı oldukça açıktır.

Aynı şekilde, dış Avrupalılaşma (external Europeanization) perspektifi, AB politikalarının ve kurallarının üye olmayan devletlerin yerel kurumları, mevzuatları ve siyasi eylemleri üzerindeki etkisini kavramsallaştırmaya, açıklamaya ve değerlendirmeye çalışmaktadır (Magen, 2006: 386). Örneğin, Schimmelfennig ve Sedelmeier üye olmayan devletlerin Avrupalılaşma sürecine ilişkin olarak, rasyonel pazarlık modeline dayanan 'dış teşvik' modelini kullanmakta ve AB'ye uyumun ana belirleyicisini, 'sonuç mantığına' dayanan bir kar-zarar hesabına dayandığını, yani aktörlerin AB'nin sunduğu ödüller, tehdit ve vaatlerin güvenilirliği, AB tarafından istenilen kuralların belirlenmesi gibi konuların yerel aktörler için yaratacağı maliyetin büyüklüğünün hesabına dayandığını öne sürmektedir (Schimmelfennig ve Sedelmeier, 2004; 2005; 2008: 918-937). Dış Avrupalılaşmanın AB'nin kurallarının üye veya aday ülke olmayan üçüncü ülkelere olan etkisine ve bu ülkelerin Avrupalılaşma sürecine katılımına odaklanmasına rağmen, Magen'in de haklı bir şekilde belirttiği gibi: "AB hukuki uyum, siyasi şartlılık ilkelerini ve sosyalleşme yöntemlerini Balkanlar ve daha geniş çevre bölgelerine (periphery) doğru genişletmesine rağmen Doğu'ya yönelik Avrupalılaşma (ya da genişlemeyle

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yönetişim) araştırmaları neredeyse tamamen Orta ve Doğu Avrupa ülkeleri ve tam üyelik için aday olan ülkelerle sınırlı kaldı" (Magen, 2006: 387). Başka bir deyişle, dış Avrupalılaşma AB'nin yönetişim yaklaşımının bir parçası olarak kabul edilmekte ve varolan etkisi genişleme süreci boyunca çoğunlukla aday ülkeler üzerinde görülmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürü, Avrupa entegrasyonunun ve yönetişiminin Avrupa Birliği üyesi ülkeler üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmesi ile sınırlıdır (Schimmelfennig, 2012: 5; Goetz ve Meyer-Sahling, 2008). Avrupalılaşma literatürü daha kısa bir süre önce, "genişleme" alanında aday devletlerin Avrupalılaşma sürecini incelemeye başlamıştır (Schimmelfennig, 2009; 2010; Schimmelfennig ve Sedelmeier, 2004: 661-679; 2005). Kısacası, Avrupalılaşma literatüründe AB'nin sınırları dışında kalan ülkelere kurallarını ve uygulamalarını ne ölçekte devrettiği ve tüm bunların kapsamı ve etkisi, teorik olarak yeterince çalışılmamıştır. Bu bağlamda, yalnızca AB'nin üye ve/veya aday devletler üzerinde ne ölçüde bir etkiye sahip olduğuna odaklanmak ve olası iç değişiklik/uyuma sebep olduğunu analiz etmek, Avrupalılaşmayı anlamak için oldukça dar bir analiz olacaktır. Bütün bunlar, ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürünün ana sorununun, baskın olarak Avrupalılaşmayı "kurumsalcı" bir bakış açısıyla inceleme eğiliminden kaynaklandığını göstermektedir. Tüm bu sebeplerle, Avrupalılaşma literatürü, Avrupalılaşma çerçevesinde analiz edilebilecek Avrupa'ya yönelik farklı çıkarlara ve/veya kimlik oluşumuna yol açabilecek farklı sosyo-politik oluşumlar ve/veya değişim kalıpları gibi diğer süreçleri incelemekte yetersiz kalmaktadır (Flockhart, 2008: 1-37; Flockhart, 2010: 787-810).

En önemlisi, ana akım Avrupalılaşma literatürünün asıl sorunu, Avrupalılaşmanın düşünsel kökenini ve içeriğini incelemeden, kavramın oldukça dar coğrafi ve tarihi kapsamını vurgulama eğiliminden kaynaklanmaktadır. Aslında, Avrupalılaşma araştırmalarının çoğu, 'Avrupa merkezli' (euro-centric) bir perspektif kullanmaktadır. Bu sebeple Wallace, çok daha geniş ve kapsamlı olarak ele alınması gereken konuların Avrupalılaşma adı altında dar kapsamlı olarak analiz edilmesi sebebiyle bu çalışmaların Avrupalılaşma yerine AB-leşme olarak adlandırılmasının

daha doğru olacağını vurgulamaktadır (Wallace, 2000). Bununla birlikte, Flockhart tarafından ifade edildiği gibi, Avrupalılaşma, farklı aktörleri, yapıları, süreçleri ve 'kendi' ve 'öteki' kavramlarını içeren çeşitli sosyal süreçleri dikkate alarak kavramsallaştırılabilir (Flockhart, 2010: 787-810). Bu noktada tüm bu düşünsel kavramsallaştırma çabaları Gürcistan örneğinde bu çalışmanın ana amaçlarını belirlemekte olup, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin dinamiklerini çok boyutlu olarak anlayamaya ve analiz etmeye dair ışık tutmaktadır.

Avrupa'nın Düşünsel/Normatif İnşası

Saha araştırmasından elde edilen önemli bulgulara göre Gürcistan'ın Avrupa ile özdeşleşmesi AB ile Gürcistan arasındaki ilişkilerin öncesinde şekillenmiştir ve buna dair sahip olduğu güçlü siyasi söylem Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin önemli bir belirleyicisidir. Aslında, Gürcistan siyasi yaşamının önemli bir parçası olan 'Batı/Avrupa ile yeniden birleşme' söylemi 'Avrupa fikrinin' Gürcistan siyasi tarihinde nasıl inşa edildiğiyle doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Saha araştırması, 'Avrupa fikrinin', Gürcistan'ın siyasal tarihinde farklı sosyo-politik zeminlerde 'öteki' ile/olarak temsil edilen farklı temsiller/anlamlar/karakterizasyonların karşısında inşa edildiğini göstermektedir.

Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, AB ile Gürcistan arasındaki kurumsal ilişkiler 90'lı yılların ortasından itibaren güçlenmeye başlamıştır. Fakat, 'Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılığı' temelindeki siyasi söylem, modern öncesi döneme işaret etmektedir. Saha araştırmasında elde edilen bulgular ışığında Avrupa ve Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılığı fikri, 'Avrupa ile Hristiyanlık vasıtası ile ortak bir kültürel alanı paylaşma', 'jeopolitik kaygılar ve bölgesel sorunlar' ve 'Rus İmparatorluğu aracılığı ile erişim sağlanan aydınlanma ve modernleşme' olgularıyla beslenen 'modern Gürcü kimliğinin yükselişi' ile doğrudan bağlantılı görünmektedir. Bu noktada, Avrupa'nın 'düşünsel' fikriyatını oluşturan tüm bu sosyo-politik süreçlerin Gürcistan'ın sovyet sonrası bağımsızlık döneminde güçlü bir biçimde ortaya çıkan Avrupa ile özdeşleşmesinin fikirsel köklerine katkıda bulunan birbiriyle ilişkili 'süreçler' olarak görülmesi gerektiğine dikkat edilmelidir. Mülakatlarda

katılımcıların çoğunun dile getirdiği bir başka unsur Avrupa kimliğinin, Gürcü kimliğine aykırı olarak tanımlanmamasıdır. Katılımcılar Avrupa kimliğinin Gürcü kimliğini tamamladığını çünkü her iki kimliğin de daha geniş bir coğrafya ve medeniyet bağlamında 'aynı değerlere', 'aynı tarihi kökene' dayandığını ve ortak kültürel mekanı paylaştığını öne sürdüler. Aynı 'değerleri' paylaşma anlatısının (narrative) odak noktası çoğunlukla Batı/Avrupa'nın bir parçası olarak Hristiyan olmakla ilişkilendirilip, Doğu'yu tanımlayan olguların karşısında olarak inşa edilmiştir. Bu noktada altını çizmemiz gereken bir başka mesele Ortodoksluğun Gürcülük ve Gürcü kimliği ile ilgili olarak sahip olduğu önemli roldür. Bu bağlamda Hristiyanlık Avrupa ve Gürcistan arasında bir 'köprü' vazifesi görmektedir. Tüm bu bilgilerden hareketle, Gürcistan'ın Batı/Avrupa ile paylaştığı 'ortak tarihsel kökler' modern öncesi döneme dayanarak Batı'nın Avrupa-merkezli (euro-centric) mental dünyasında bir karşıtlık olarak inşa edilen 'Batı Dünyası' (Occident) ve 'Doğu Dünyası' (Orient) karşıtlığına parallel olarak ortaya çıktığı söylenebilir (Said, 1979).

Ancak, Gürcistan Krallıkları ve Avrupalı güçlerin modern öncesi dönemle ilgili paylaştığı iddia edilen 'ortak kültürel alanı' gösteren sınırlı sayıda tarihsel kanıt vardır (O'Beachain ve Coene, 2014: 925). Aslında, Avrupalı aktörlerin Hristiyanlık dışında, Gürcistan ile paylaştığı (örneğin anlaşmalar, anlaşmalar, ittifaklar vb.) bir 'ortak zemin' olduğu şüphelidir. Ayrıca, ortak bir Avrupa kimliğinin olup olmadığı ve/veya Avrupa'nın coğrafi, tarihi olarak nerede başladığına dair teorik tartışmalar hala belirsizliğini korumaktadır (Delanty, 1995).

Gürcistan ve Batı/Avrupa arasında söz konusu olabilecek 'ortak kültürel geçmişe' dair kanıtların eksikliğine rağmen, jeopolitik koşulların zorlayıcı etkisi geçmişte olduğu gibi günümüzde de Gürcistan'ın güvenliğini etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda, Gürcistan'ın Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Persler, Rus İmparatorluğu ve Sovyetler gibi farklı güçler tarafından işgal edilmesi, tüm bu kuvvetleri 'öteki' olarak inşa ederken, Avrupa'nın Gürcistan'ın 'kendi' algısının bir parçası olarak konumlandırılmasına zemin hazırlamıştır.

Avrupalılaşmaya Giden Yol Olarak Doğu Ortaklığı

1991'de ilan edilen bağımsızlık sonrasında Gürcistan yeni bir sürece girmiş ve ülkenin siyasi stratejik öncelikleri Avrupa-Atlantik dünya düzenine uygun olarak tanımlanmıştır. Daha önce de vurgulandığı gibi, AB ve Gürcistan arasındaki ilişkiler 90'lı yılların başlarında sadece insani yardım ve teknik destekle sınırlıydı. Fakat, 90'lı yılların ikinci yarısından itibaren AB ve Gürcistan arasındaki ilişkiler güçlenmeye başlamıştır. AB ve Gürcistan gelecekteki ikili ilişkileri için bir yol haritası belirlemek amacıyla 1996 yılında AB-Gürcistan Ortaklık ve İşbirliği Anlaşması (PCA) imzaladı. Öte yandan, AB 2004 ve 2007'deki Doğu Genişlemesi (Eastern Enlargement) sonrasında komşu ülkelere ve onlarla olan ilişkilerine daha fazla önem vermeye başlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, AB 2004 yılında komşuları ile arasında yeni sınırlar oluşmasını engellemek amacıyla Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası'nı (European Neighbourhood Policy) geliştirmiştir.

Yine aynı süre zarfı içerisinde Gürcistan 2003 yılında gerçekleşen Gül Devrimi ile birlikte bir dizi reform sürecinden geçmekteydi. Gül Devrimi ile başa gelen Saakaşvili hükümeti, Gürcistan'ın Avrupa-Atlantik dünya düzeninin bir parçası olma isteğini vurgulayarak Gürcistan'a yeni bir siyasi hat belirlemiştir. Gül Devrimi akabinde Gürcistan'da gerçekleştirilen reform süreci temelde modern bir devlet inşa etmeyi hedeflemekle birlikte, yolsuzlukla mücadele, yeni bir ekonomik sistem kurma gibi konularda sıkı kararlar alıp bu doğrultuda düzenlemeler yapmıştır. Saakaşvili Avrupalılaşma sürecini ülkenin en büyük siyasi amaçlarından biri olarak ilan etmiştir. Örnek olarak, Gürcistan Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2006 ile 2009 arasındaki zaman dilimini kapsayan bir 'Dış Politika Stratejisi' yayınladı. Belirlenen bu strateji ülkenin ilk hedefini "Gürcistan'ı Avrupa Atlantik sistemle uyumlu, Avrupa'yla bütünleşmiş, güçlü kurumlara sahip bir Avrupa devletine dönüştürmek" olarak belirlemiştir (Gürcistan Dış Politika Stratejisi: 2006 - 2009). Aynı belgede, Gürcistan'ın AB ile ilişkilerini daha yüksek bir düzeye taşımak için Komşuluk Politikası Eylem Planı'nın etkili bir şekilde uygulanmasının altı çizilmiştir. Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası'nın ortaya atılmasından kısa bir süre sonra 2009 yılında AB Doğu Ortaklığı (Eastern Partnership) ile sovyet-sonrası ülkelere yönelik yeni bir çerçeve hazırlamıştır.

Saha araştırmasında yapılan mülakatlar esnasında hemen hemen tüm katılımcılar, AB ve Gürcistan arasındaki kurumsal işbirliğinin Gül Devrimi'nden sonra daha da güçlendiğini vurguladılar. Bütün katılımcılar Gürcistan'ın Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası'nın ve Doğu Ortaklığı'nın bir parçası olmasının, 2014 yılında AB ile Ortaklık Anlaşması'na imza atmasının ve 2017'de imzalanan Vize Serbestisi Anlaşması'nın Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşması sürecinde gerçekleşen çok önemli dönüm noktaları olduğunun altını çizmişlerdir. Bütün bu adımlar, Gürcistan'ın AB'ye yönelik kurumsal, yasal ve idari adımlar atmasına ve Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşması için gereken AB müktesebatı ile uyum sürecine katkıda bulunmuştur.

Öte yandan, AB ve Gürcistan arasında gerçekleşen tüm bu olumlu gelişmelere rağmen katılımcıların çoğu Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci ile ilgili AB'nin bir takım yapısal sorunları olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Bu sorunlar: 1) AB'nin bölgeye yönelik net bir stratejisinin olmaması 2) AB'nin yapılması gereken iç reformları teşvik etmek için gerekli araçlarının, yani 'itici gücünün' bulunmaması 3) Gürcistan gibi üye veya aday ülkeler için üyelik ihtimalinin olmaması şeklinde ifade edilmiştir. Katılımcılar söz konusu sorunların, AB'nin Güney Kafkasya'ya karşı tutumunun 'ilgisiz' ve/veya 'sınırlı' olduğunu gösterdiğini ve tüm unsurların Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecini sınırladığını belirtmişlerdir.

Mülakatlar esnasında katılımcılar AB'nin 2008 yılında patlak veren Rus Gürcistan Savaşı'na ve Ukrayna eski Cumhurbaşkanı Yanukoviç'in 28-29 Kasım 2013 tarihlerinde Vilnius'ta gerçekleşen Doğu Ortaklığı Zirvesi esnasında Ortaklık Anlaşması'nı imzalamayı reddetmesinin yol açtığı siyasi krizlere dair tutumunu eleştirmektedirler. Doğu Ortaklığı bağlamında AB söz konusu ülkelerin egemenliklerini destekleyecek ve maruz kaldıkları Rusya baskısına karşı dirençlerini artıracak, ve reform süreçlerini destekleyecek 'bütüncül' ve 'dönüştürücü' bir program yürütememiştir (Wilson, 2017). Tüm bu sorunlar, Doğu Ortaklığı ülkelerinin Avrupalılaşma sürecine olumsuz etki etmektedir.

Katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğu tarafından ifade edildiği gibi, Doğu Ortaklığı ülkeleri Avrupalılaşma sürecine yönelik isteklerinde ve bu süreçte gerekli zor reform süreçlerini uygulama konusunda farklılık göstermektedirler. Bu bağlamda AB Doğu Ortaklığı'nın bir diğer sorunu söz konusu ülkelere yönelik ülkelerin isteklilik ve reform sürecindeki başarılarına odaklanan esaslı bir planın olmayışı ve tüm ülkelere benzer bir işbirliği ve entegrasyon çerçevesi sunmasıdır. Tüm Doğu Ortaklığı ülkelerinin Avrupalılaşma konusundaki karalılık ve istekliliği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda sadece Ukrayna, Gürcistan ve Moldova'nın AB ile Ortaklık Anlaşması ve Derin ve Kapsamlı Serbest Ticaret Alanı Anlaşması'nı imzaladığı oldukça açıktır. Bu süreç altı Doğu Ortaklığı ülkesi arasında (Gürcistan, Ukrayna, Moldova, Beyaz Rusya, Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan) Avrupa ile işbirliği yapma konusunda bir çeşit 'dengesizlik' olduğunu gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu nedenle AB'nin, AB entegrasyonu konusunda daha fazla isteklilik gösteren ülkelere yönelik daha kapsayıcı ve uyumlu bir strateji geliştirmesi ve bu süreçte önemli reform süreçlerinin uygulanması için ihtiyaç duyulan gerekli teşviki söz konusu ülkelere sunması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca, Azerbaycan'a, Ermenistan ve Beyaz Rusya gibi AB'ye siyasi olarak bir yönelimi olmayan fakat Rusya'nın 'yumuşak gücünün' etkisi altında olan ülkelerdeki güçlü Rus etkisini dengelemek amacıyla yeni bir plan (ve yeni mekanizmalar) geliştirmesi gerekmektedir.

Tüm bunlar, AB'nin Doğu Ortaklığı ülkelerine 'üyelik sözü' vermeden bu kadar zor bir görevi başarıp başaramayacağı sorusunu gündeme getirmektedir. Mülakatlardan elde edilen veriler ışığında altı çizilen problemler arasında en çok vurgulanan sorun AB'nin Doğu Ortaklığı ülkelerine dair herhangi bir üyelik perspektifinin olmaması ile ilgilidir. Katılımcılar bu sorunun AB'nin Gürcistan'da gerçekleşmesi gereken iç reformları teşvik etme konusunda elini zayıflattığı konusunda hem fikir görünmektedir. Aslında Avrupalılaşma örneklerine bakıldığında söz konusu bir üyelik perspektifi olmadan AB Müktesabatı ile uyum sürecinin gerçekleşmesine dair herhangi bir örnek bulunmamaktadır (Wolczuk, 2010). Örnek olarak, Orta ve Doğu Avrupa ülkelerine yönelik Avrupa Genişlemesi AB 'şartlılık ilkesinin' (conditionality) etkili bir şekilde uygulanmasının üyelik ödülünün cazibesiyle

doğrudan bağlantılı olduğunu göstermektedir (Lavenex ve Schimmelfennig, 2011: 885-909; Youngs, 2009). Başka bir deyişle saha araştırmasında ortaya çıkan bulgulara göre, Gürcistan örneğinde AB'nin, herhangi bir üyelik vaadinde bulunmadan sovyet sonrası geçiş sürecinden kaynaklanan 'akut' sorunlara getirilecek çözümler esnasında ortaya çıkacak siyasi 'bedelleri' karşılayacak gerekli 'teşvikleri' ve 'itici gücü' ortaya koymak konusunda yetersiz kaldığı görülmektedir.

Sovyet Sonrası Geçiş Döneminin Sınırlamaları

Saha araştırması esnasında ortaya çıkan bir diğer önemli sonuç, sovyet sonrası geçiş dönemi sürecinde ortaya çıkan sorunlar göz önünde bulundurulmadan Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşmasının düşünsel/normatif veya kurumsal dinamiklerinin açık bir şekilde analizinin yapılmasının mümkün olmayacağıdır. Bir başka deyişle, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşması yolunda atılan adımlar, sovyet sonrası dönemde ortaya çıkan zayıf devlet ve kurumları, verimsiz ekonomik sistem, baskın siyasi parti sistemi, kırılgan demokratik ortam ve jeopolitik kaygılardan kaynaklanan sorunları çözmek için yeterli olmamaktadır. Sovyet sonrası geçiş dönemi zorlukları ve AB'nin sınırlı müdahilliğinden kaynaklanan tüm bu sorunlar yine de AB'nin yerel aktörleri zorlu reform süreçlerinde teşvik etmek için gerekli mekanizmaları harekete geçirmesine engel olmamalıdır.

Gürcistan Avrupalılaşma konusunda ortaya koyduğu 'isteklilik' ve 'kararlılığı' ülkenin demokratikleşmesi için göstermekten uzaktır. Katılımcıları büyük bir çoğunluğu Gürcistan'daki kırılgan demokratik ortamı açıklarken 'devlet inşası ile demokratikleşme' ikilemini vurgulamışlardır. Saha araştırmasında elde edilen bulgular Avrupalılaşma ve demokratikleşme süreçlerinin birbiri ile paralel şekilde hareket etmediğini, Avrupalılaşma yolunda atılan adımların her durumda demokratikleşme için zemin hazırlamadığının altını çizmektedir. Bunula beraber, Gürcistan gibi hibrid rejime sahip ülkelerde Avrupalılaşma sürecinde uygulanması gereken bazı reformların iktidarı tehdit etmesi ve/veya gücünü zayıflatması halinde 'selektif' biçimde uygulandığını ortaya koymaktadır (Bolkvadze, 2016; Levitsky ve Way, 2010). Gül Devrimi'nden sonra uygulan bir takım zorlu reformlar

Saakaşvili'nin ikinci döneminin açıklıkla gösterdiği gibi, ülkedeki demokratikleşme sürecini sekteye uğratmıştır. Gül Devrimi, Gürcistan'ın Avrupa-Atlantik sistemine dahil olmasını ve Avrupalılaşma sürecini ve bununla beraber ülkenin daha demokratik bir yapıya sahip olmak adına yeni adımlar atmasının önemini vurgularken, Saakaşvili rejiminin ikinci dönemi medyanın kısıtlanması, muhalif figürlere yapılan baskılar ve sivil toplumun zayıflatılması gibi bir dizi tartışmalı süreci beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, katılımcıların hemen hemen hepsi Gül Devrimi'nin asıl başarısının modern devlet inşası olduğunu, Saakaşvili'nin Gürcistan'ı sovyet sonrası 'zayıf' bir devletten 'işleyen' bir modern devlet konumuna taşıdığını belirtmektedir. Katılımcılar ayrıca Gül Devrimi'nin bir diğer başarısını sovyet-sonrası geçiş dönemi ülkelerinde sıklıkla görünen büyük ölçekli yolsuzlukla verilen mücadelede kazandığı başarı olarak vurgulamaktadır.

Gül Devrimi sonrası siyasi atmosferle ilgili olarak, demokratikleşmeye dair sorunların 2012 Kasım seçimleri ile sona eren Saakaşvili rejiminiyle sona ermediğini, benzer sorunların 2012 yılında iktidara gelen Gürcü Rüyası Partisi'nin yönetiminde de devam ettiğini açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Nodia ve Scholtbach, bu durumu Gürcistan siyasi partilerinde sıklıkla görülen siyasi liderlere ve onların kişiliklerine bağlılığı ve iktidar partileri yararına ortaya çıkan güç yoğunlaşmasını 'baskın siyasi parti sistemi' ile açıklamaktadır (Nodia ve Scholtbach, 2006). 2018 yılında yayımlanan Freedom House raporuna göre Gürcistan 'bağımsız medya' ve 'yargı bağımsızlığı' konularında oldukça geri bir konumdadır (Freedom House, 2018). Benzer şekilde, katılımcıların çok büyük bir çoğunluğu Gürcü Rüyası Partisi iktidarı esnasında muhalif kişilere yönelik ortaya çıkan birçok 'siyasi davanın' olduğunu, ve bu davaların bağımsız yargı tarafından ele alınmadığını belirtmektedir. Örnek olarak, iktidarın 2012 yılında Saakaşvili'nin partisinden (UNM) Gürcü Rüyası Partisi'ne el değiştirmesinden itibaren eski Başbakan, Savunma Bakanı, Tiflis Belediye Başkanı gibi siyasi kişilerin tutuklanması veya göz altına alınması gibi birçok 'siyasi' odaklı davanın ortaya çıktığı ülkenin bağımsız bir yargıya veya demokratik bir ortama sahip olmadığını açıkça göstermektedir. Tüm bu davalar arasında, eski Tiflis Belediye Başkanı Giorgi Ugulava'nın davası ve muhalif bir

televizyon kanalı olan Rustavi II'nin kapanması Gürcü Rüyası Partisi'nin yürüttüğü siyasi tutuklamaları ve anti-demokratik kısıtlamaları gözler önüne sermektedir.

Saha araştırmasından elde edilen bir başka bulgu ise Soğuk Savaş dönemi sonrasında ortaya çıkan yeni jeopolitik koşulların geçmişten gelen bölgesel sorunları yeniden alevlendirmiştir. Rusya'nın özellikle Batı'ya yakın bir dış politika sergileyen sovyet sonrası ülkelere dair sergilediği 'yumuşak' ve 'sert' güvenlik politikalarını içeren önlemler, söz konusu ülkelerin istikrarına ve toprak bütünlüğüne dair dolaylı ve/veya direkt tehdit oluşturmaktadır. Gürcistan örneği özelinde 2008 Rusya Gürcistan savaşı Gürcistan'ın Rusya'nın şiddet içeren hareketlerini dengelemek amacıyla Batı ile kurulacak güvenlik ortaklıklarına ve Batı'nın bu bağlamda sağlayacağı yardımlara ihtiyacı olduğu açıktır. Ancak, 2008 Rusya Gürcistan savaşı sonrasında ortaya çıkan siyasi ortam ve Ukrayna'da yaşanan krizler AB'nin bölgeyi ilgilendiren güvenlik sorunları karşısında oldukça etkisiz ve zayıf kaldığını gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu bağlamda, saha araştırmasına katılan tüm katılımcılar AB'yi NATO, Rusya ve ABD gibi bölgede güç sahibi aktörler karşısında 'yumuşak güç' olarak tanımlamışlardır. Katılımcılar ayrıca Rusya'nın 'yumuşak güç' kapasitesinin etkisinin önemini, öyle ki kimi zaman Ortodoksluk bağlamında Batı-karşıtı ve Avrupa-karşıtı söylemleri yayarak kamuoyunu etkilemeye çalıştıklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

Sonuç olarak, saha araştırmasında ortaya çıkan bulgular AB'nin 'yumuşak' bir güç olarak kabul edilmesine rağmen, AB'nin bölgesel rolünün devredışı kalması halinde bölgedeki kırılgan istikrarın ortaya çıkması muhtemelen yeni jeopolitik hesaplarla daha kırılgan hale gelebileceği ihtimaline dikkat çekmektedir. AB'nin bölge ülkelerine dair 'sert' güvenlik politikalarının olmadığı açıktır. Yine de bölgesel bir aktör olarak AB, sahip olduğu çok yönlü araçları ve diplomatik kaynakları kullanarak bölgedeki diğer aktörlerin karar mekanizmalarını etkileyerek bölgede çatışmanın daha az olduğu siyasi bir ortamın oluşturulmasına katkı sağlayabilir.

Gürcistan ve AB İlişkileri Üzerine Olası Tahminler

Bir vaka analizi olarak Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci 'seçili' (selective) bir Avrupalılaşma örneği olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci

Doğu Ortaklığı kapsamında herhangi bir üyelik ihtimali içermediğinden AB'nin gerekli reformların uygulanmasındaki dönüştürücü rolü oldukça kısıtlı kalmaktadır. Öte yandan, zayıf devlet kurumsallaşması, demokratik olmayan siyasi iklim, baskın siyasi parti sistemi, kırılgan ekonomi, istikrarsız jeopolitik ortam gibi sovyet sonrası geçiş sorunları Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Neredeyse tüm katılımcılar AB'nin güncel olarak Brexit, ekonomik çöküş, mülteci krizi gibi sorunlarla mücadele ettiği belirtmiş olup, bu şartlar altında AB'nin sovyet sonrası coğrafyayı kapsayacak yeni bir genişleme sürecinden geçmeyeceğini belirtmişlerdir. Tüm bu sorunlara rağmen, katılımcılar Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma serüveni ile ilgili olarak olumlu görüş bildirdiler. Katılımcılar Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin Avrupa-Atlantik dünya sistemi ile uyumlu modern yeni bir demokratik devlet inşasında ve sosyo-ekonomik ve siyasi olarak güçlü ve istikrarlı bir ülke olması yolunda çok önemli bir dayanak noktası olduğunu sıklıkla ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcılar büyük oranda Gürcistan'ın AB üyeliğinin ülkenin başlıca hedefleri arasında olmasına rağmen, asıl önemli olan hedefin Gürcistan'ın güçlü, ekonomik ve sosyal olarak gelişmiş, modern, demokratik bir refah ülkesi yolunda atılacak adımlar olduğunu vurgulamışlardır.

Şüphesiz, Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma sürecinin jeopolitik sorunlar, AB'nin sovyet sonrası coğrafyaya yönelik sınırlı ilgisi ve Gürcistan'ın yaşamış olduğu iç sorunlar ve kısıtlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda hiç kolay bir hedef olmadığı ortadadır. Öte yandan, AB'nin sınırları içinde yaşadığı iç problemler olası bir genişleme süreci bakımından umut vaat etmemektedir. Yine de Gürcistan'ın Avrupalılaşma süreci umutsuz bir vaka değildir, daha ziyade olumlu bir gidişat göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda bu olumlu gidişatın devamlılığını sağlamak için AB'nin bölge ülkelerine dair daha kapsayıcı, bütünsel bir siyasi çerçeve geliştirmesi Avrupalılaşma sürecinde ortaya çıkan yapısal sorunların aşılması ve gerekli reformların uygulanması için büyük bir önem arz etmektedir.

D. CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

2012-2018   **Ph.D. Degree**
Area Studies, Minor: Sociology
Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey
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2010   **Erasmus Student**
Euro-Master Program
Hamburg University, Germany

2008-2011   **M.A. Degree**
Eurasian Studies
Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey
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2004- 2008   **B.A. Degree**
International Relations
Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

WORK EXPERIENCE

June 2018-Still   Researcher in "Karadeniz Bölgesini Yeniden Tanımlamak: Bölgeye İlişkin İmkânlar, Tehditler ve Gelecek", TÜBİTAK funded project Ankara Turkey

April 2009 –February 2018   Research Assistant at the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) at Middle East Technical University (METU) Ankara, Turkey

June – July 2006   CNN Türk Foreign News Department, Internship, İstanbul, Turkey

August 2006   Cumhuriyet Newspaper, Internship, İstanbul, Turkey

PROJECTS/CONSULTANCY

2014–2017, **Researcher,** Bordering, Political Landscapes and Social Arenas: Potential and Challenges of Evolving Border Concepts in a post-Cold War World **(EUBORDERSCAPES).** EU 7th Framework Programme (FP7) Project.

2011–2015, **Researcher,** EU External Borders and the Immediate Neighbours: Analysing Regional Development Options through Policies and Practices of Cross-Border Cooperation **(EUBORDERREGIONS),** EU 7th Framework Programme (FP7) Project.

2011–2013, **Project Assistant,** The Impact of Constitutional Courts on Democratic Consolidation: A Comparative View on Turkey and Germany, The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey.

2009, **Project Assistant**, Faith-based Organizations and Exclusion in European Cities **(FACIT),** EU 7th Framework Programme (FP7) Project.

Conducted Focus Group for Euborderscapes Project: **'European Neighbourhood Policies and Eastern Partnership: Geopolitical Crises and Future Prospects for Neighbourhood'**, 23rd October 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Conducted Ph.D. field research in Georgia for the project called **'Democratization via Europeanization: a Case Study on Georgia'***, METU supported Scientific Research Project, October-November 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 in Tbilisi Georgia. Conducted Focus Group for Euborderregions Project: **'The Impact of CBC Projects in Turkey and Bulgaria'** 29th May 2014, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Conducted field research in Kırklareli, north-west border city of Turkey, for **Euborderregions: European Regions, EU External Borders and the Immediate Neighbours. Analysing Regional Development Options through Policies and Practices of Cross-Border Co-operation'** *Project Coordinator: Prof. James Scott, University of Eastern Finland. September-October 2012, September 2013.*

Conducted field research in Georgia for the M.A. Thesis: the project called **'The Role of Political Parties in the Post-Soviet Space: A Comparative Analysis of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan'** METU supported Scientific Research Project, November-December 2010.

Conducted field research in Georgia for the project called **'New Democratization Movements in the Post-Soviet Period: Colored Revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyztan'**, METU supported Scientific Research Project, September-October 2009.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Attended the 6th Euroacademia International Conference: Identities and Identifications: Politicized Uses of Collective Identities as a panelist, **'Re/Constructing 'We' and the 'Other' in the Context of Europeanization in Georgia'** organized by Euroacademia, Florence, Italy, 22-23 June 2017.

Attended the conference 'Borders and Bordering in Contemporary Europe' as a panelist, **'Shifting Identities Shifting Borders: Turkey and Azerbaijan'** organized by The Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, UEL, November 10th -12th 2015 the University of East London UK.

Attended 14th METU Conference on Area Studies and International Relations: Intersecting Dimensions as a panelist, **'Georgia's European Identity and its role in Democratization'** June 17th-19th 2015 METU Ankara Turkey.

Attended 1st World Conference Post-Cold War Borders: Global Trends and Regional Responses as a panelist, **'A Case Study on Turkish and Bulgarian Cross-Border'** June 9th-13rd 2014 Joensuu Finland- St. Petersburg Russia.

Attended Turkish Political Science Association 11th Graduate Conference as a panelist, **'Political Elites and Democratization: A Case Study on Georgia'** November 9th, 2013 Ankara, Turkey.

Attended the Euborderscapes Project Conference **'Bordering, Political Landscapes and Social Arenas: Potentials and Challenges of Evolving Border Concepts in a post-Cold War World'** University of Bergamo, July 2013 Bergamo, Italy.

Attended Academic Swiss Caucasus Net Project; Programme of the Autumn School **'Multiple Democracies – Emergence and Transfer of Democratic Repertoires: Assessing the South Caucasus Cases'** as an expert, organized by Radboud University, October 15-19, 2012, Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Attended **Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) Third Regional Conference** as a panelist, hosted by Tbilisi State University Georgia, July 20-21, 2012.

Attended **'Quo Vadis Turkey, Turkey's European and Foreign Policy Today'** held by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Istanbul, October 2010.

ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Taking part in the organization of Center for Black Sea and Central Asia 25th Anniversary Workshop entitled '**Revisiting the Post-Soviet Space: Experiences, Challenges and Prospects'** by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) METU, 17th May 2018.

Taking part in the organization of international conference entitled 'Azerbaycan Demokratik Cumhuriyeti'nin Kuruluşunun 100. Yılında Azerbaycan Türkiye İlişkileri' by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) METU, 11th May 2018.

Elected as a participant to '**Gençlerle Yeni Yollar Yeni Siyaset' (New Roads and New Politics with Young People) Program, organized by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES),** Turkey Office, in İstanbul, Berlin, Gazi Antep, İzmir, Mardin between February 2014 and April 2015.

Taking part in the organization of NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme **'Security and Cross-Border Cooperation in the EU, Black Sea and the Southern Caucasus'** organized by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) METU and Xazar University Azerbaijan, September 23-24, 2011.

Taking part in the organization of **Second Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) Regional Conference**, held by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) METU in cooperation with CESS, July 29-30, 2010.

Taking part in the organization of **Michigan State University Summer School Program** at Middle East Technical University (METU) hosted and co-organized by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA), 2009-2014.

Taking part in the organization of **'The ADA Seventh PhD Workshop'** of The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA), hosted by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) METU, June 14-15, 2012.

Taking part in the organization of Academic Swiss Caucasus Net Project **'Religion, Democracy, and Nation in the Southern Caucasus - A Comparative Analysis of Key Concepts in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan'** hosted by the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) METU, May 2-6, 2012.

PUBLICATIONS

(2018) (with Gökten Doğangün) "EU's Potentials and Limitations for Conflict Transformation in the Turkish-Armenian Border" Geopolitics. DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2018.1547281 (Online published 23 November 2018)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Association of European Studies for the Caucasus (AESC)
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