

Hegemony in Post-Soviet Georgia: Types of Nationalisms and Masculinities

Introduction

In Soviet Georgia, the political nationalist movement began in the 1980s. Its leaders aimed at establishing independence for Georgia and the formation of a Georgian state. The aim was finally achieved in 1991, during the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is the point when Georgia became an independent nation state (for the second time in Georgian history) and since then it has gradually transformed into a liberal democracy under neoliberal capitalism. In this process, post-Soviet Georgia moved away from the Soviet Union and its successor, Russia, and acquired European identity in both an economic and cultural sense.

These processes are reflected and generated through certain nationalist and masculinist discourses. As “the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism” (Nagel 1998), the aim of this article is to show what types of masculinities and nationalisms were and/or continue to be hegemonic in post-Soviet Georgia.

Todd W. Reeser claims that both masculinity and nationality “are being ideologically constructed” (2010, 177). He writes:

Discourse is central to these constructs: in the same way that definitions of male subjectivities are discursive, the nation is constructed in and through discourse and especially in political discourse (speeches, government documents, civics textbooks, etc.) (2010, 177).

Thus for the analysis of the discourses of hegemonic nationalisms and hegemonic masculinities, I chose seven persons from the political and economic elites of Georgia who were active during the years 1990-2016. Six of them occupied primary positions in the Georgian government. Discourses produced by them are of major importance as they are the chief faces and implementers of nationalist projects (see Jones 2006).

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In this article, I will at first present concepts and theories that are the basis for the analysis followed by a brief discussion of the political history of post-Soviet Georgia. Then, I will present and interpret my findings about hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic nationalism in Georgia.

Hegemony, Masculinity and Nationalism

I will now analyze the concept of cultural and political hegemony, the concept and theory of hegemonic masculinity, the idea of a nation as the product of nationalism, and the theories that proclaim the connection between hegemonic nationalism and hegemonic masculinity.

Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of cultural and political hegemony in his *Prison Notebooks* (1992). He argues that ruling classes enact hegemony through civil society and state institutions. A bourgeois state is not solely based on repression, it also has “civilizing” function. This means that governance is mediated by educational, “civilizing” practices. State and civil society are educating and producing certain types of citizens by disseminating and propagating certain ideologies and types of subjectivity. Cultural and political hegemony means that ruling classes attain “consent” from the ruled, even though their governance is against the interests of the latter.

Consequently, nationalism as a cultural and political phenomenon can be viewed as a form of cultural and political hegemony: the state propagates nationalist ideas using public educational systems and media. These ideas are thus internalized by lower social classes. In this way, the nation state generates hegemonic nationalism and gains “consent” from the ruled.

As for hegemonic masculinity, R.W. Connell places this concept in her theory of masculinities (2005). She distinguishes four kinds of masculinities: hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as, “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (2005, 77). According to Connell, men who embody hegemonic masculinity are not always the most powerful people, and, what is more, the ideal of hegemonic masculinity can be represented by fantasy figures and characters rather than real men. However, there still has to be some kind of correspondence between this ideal and institutional power. Consequently, “the top levels of business, the military and government provide a fairly convincing corporate display of masculinity” (Connell 2005, 77). The public image of hegemonic masculinity holds up the power of masculine elites and is supported by the majority of men. Thus, hegemonic masculinity receives “consent” even from the marginalized or subordinated men. The major reason for this paradox seems to be that “most men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is the cultural expression of this ascendancy” (Connell 1991, 185). Another important feature of hegemonic masculinity is that “it is heterosexual, being closely connected to the institution of marriage; and a key form of subordinated masculinity is homosexual” (Connell 1991, 186). Despite offering these key universal features

of hegemonic masculinity, Connell also mentions that hegemonic masculinity is not fixed and unchangeable and it can be contested (2005).

According to Benedict Anderson, nationality and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. In his opinion, nationalism should not be treated as ideology, but as something that belongs with “kinship” and “religion” (2016, 5). Nationalism is a modern phenomenon, according to Anderson; it originated in Europe at the end of the XVIII century (2016). Nationalism replaced two cultural systems that had preceded it: the religious community and the dynastic realm. The decline of these two systems, as well as other social and economic changes occurring in Europe, created a need for a new order and new kinds of communities, “for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together” (Anderson 2016, 36). Nationalism gave birth to the idea of the nation. The nation is defined by Anderson as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2016, 6). A nation is imagined because it is impossible for all members of a nation to know or meet each other; therefore, their communion is illusory (*ibid.*). A nation is limited because it is always imagined with borders and is never coterminous with mankind (2016, 7). “Finally, it is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (*ibid.*).

Anderson also discusses print-capitalism, which contributed greatly to the creation of nationalism and “imagined communities” (2016). The emergence of print-capitalism from the sixteenth century onwards meant the ascendancy of vernacular languages (instead of Latin) and the mass production and consuming of books and newspapers in Europe. Print-capitalism created the basis for national consciousness via the following: (a) through creating a unified field of communication as language was becoming more “universal” and comprehensible for all speakers who were also becoming aware of their “fellow-readers”; and (b) through giving fixity to language, which later helped to create the image of its (and therefore the nation’s) antiquity (2016, 44).

Similarly, Etienne Balibar writes about the crucial role of language in producing ethnicity; however, he also adds that there is a “correlation between the national formation and development of schools as “popular” institutions,” because of the role they play in the socialization of individuals (2010, 97). He emphasizes that “schooling is the principal institution which produces ethnicity as a linguistic community” (2010, 98).

Balibar also claims that the ideological form that is necessary in order to create “people” and “nationalize” individuals would be called nationalism or patriotism, and that it is originated by political methods, such as “the combination of ‘force’ and ‘education’ (as Machiavelli and Gramsci put it)” (2010, 95).¹ He partially agrees with the idea that, nonetheless, the deepest reason of nationalism’s or patriotism’s effectiveness lies in the notion that they are the religion of modern times (*ibid.*). According to Balibar, national identity is not a simple analogy of religious identity, but it also tends to integrate and replace the latter (*ibid.*).

¹ Here we have the reference to Gramsci and the concept of hegemony.

Thus, we can see that both masculinity and nationality are socially constructed and both can become hegemonic. In the case of nationalism, theorizing about the role of printed materials, media, and public education system gains importance as they are also crucial elements for sustaining hegemony. Now we can draw attention to the next issue: how do hegemonic nationalism and hegemonic masculinity relate to each other?

Modern forms of masculinity are historically related and intertwined with the nation state and nationalism. Joane Nagel writes that “the modern forms of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and place as modern masculinity” (1998, 249). Masculinity has been defining and dominating modern political systems in various ways. According to Nagel, “the national state is essentially a masculine institution,” as men traditionally dominate the decision-making positions and ensure the subordination of women through hierarchical authority structure (1998, 251). She also cites Cynthia Enloe, according to whom nationalist ideologies relegate women to minor and often symbolic roles. On the other hand, “the real actors are men who are defending their freedom, their honour, their homeland and their women” (Nagel 1998, 244). Todd W. Reeser is another scholar who focuses on the fact that nationalism and the nation state has been dominated by men. Leaders of nations have mostly been men, and their gender and sexuality has been crucial for the image of the nation. Thus, the prestige of the nation is based on its association with masculinity and heterosexuality. As previously mentioned, both nationality and masculinity are ideologically and discursively constructed: “in the same way that definitions of male subjectivities are discursive, the nation is constructed in and through discourse and especially in political discourse (speeches, government documents, civics textbooks, etc.)” (Reeser 2010, 177). Nation/nationality and gender/masculinity support each other culturally and help to make each other appear natural. They overlap, influence, and mutually construct each other in such a way that it becomes very difficult to discern which is the original and primary force in the society. “[T]he nation creates masculinity at the same time as masculinity creates the nation” (Reeser 2010, 178).

Using the example of post-Soviet Georgia, I will briefly discuss the functioning of hegemonic nationalism and hegemonic masculinity in this context. The decision-making positions of the Georgian nation state are dominated by men – the institutional leaders of the nation, such as presidents and prime ministers have all been men.² Parliament is dominated by men as well, as only 16% of the MPs are women. However, this is the highest percent in the history of post-Soviet Georgia. The representation of women in parliament was especially low in the first decade of independence: 6.22% in 1992, 6.64% in 1995, and 7.17% in 1999 (Netgazeti 2016). In order to increase women’s representation, the feminist movement in Georgia initiated a law about obligatory gender quotas in political parties; however, the recent version of this law was rejected by the parliament in March 2018.

² During the writing of this article, in November 2018, a first female president, Salome Zurbishvili, was elected.

While men are the decision-makers and main actors of the nation, in some versions of nationalism woman(hood) has been relegated to serve as a national symbol. The statue of Kartlis Deda (Mother of Georgia) erected in Tbilisi serves as good example of this phenomenon. In conservative nationalism, women were usually presented as mothers and loyal wives, while the public activities of women were not valued and the history of Georgian feminism was ignored. As for men, various versions of nationalism adopt the icon of a Georgian medieval king, David the Builder (1073-1125), under whose rule Georgia is said to have prospered. David the Builder is a popular figure; and perhaps because of this, some presidents of Georgia tried to associate themselves with him. For example, Mikheil Saakashvili visited David the Builder's tomb as a part of his inauguration ceremony in 2004. However, as neoliberal nationalism/masculinity has gradually become hegemonic³, attention to women's symbolic or traditional roles, as well as traditional masculine icons, such as David the Builder, have diminished. The new national heroes of this pro-Western nationalism are rich and powerful American men, such as George W. Bush, Donald Trump, and John McCain. In 2005, one of the streets in Tbilisi was given the name of George W. Bush, to symbolize the alliance between Georgia and the United States. In 2018, after Senator John McCain's death, there are also discussions in Georgia about naming streets after him in the country's cities.

To sum up, from the very beginning, nationalism and modern citizenship were created under male domination. Nationalism can be represented as a creation of men's homosocial unions. Consequently, it is no surprise that the leaders of the nation are mostly men. In nationalist ideologies, women occupy secondary and/or symbolic roles. The real actors of nationalism and the nation state are men – the main institution of nationalism is a masculine institution. Nationalism and the nation state provide men with institutional power. Institutional state power is used to create cultural hegemony and gendered projects, such as hegemonic masculinity.

Political History of Post-Soviet Georgia

I will briefly summarize the history of Post-Soviet Georgia. The history of independent Georgia till 2012 is told by Stephen F. Jones. His book, *Georgia: A Political History since Independence* (2013), covers the period of three presidents of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Eduard Shevardnadze and Mikheil Saakashvili.

Gamsakhurdia was one of the leaders of the Georgian nationalist movement that became active in the 1980s. After the first multi-party election in Soviet Georgia, Gamsakhurdia became the chairman of the Supreme Council of Georgia. After the announcement of independence in Georgia on April 9, 1991, he was elected as president. But his power was ended by the civil war

³ Neoliberal masculinity is one of the hegemonic masculinities revealed by the analysis of discourses of the political and economic elites of post-Soviet Georgia and presented in this article, in the chapter, "Three Types of Hegemonic Masculinity."

which broke out at the end of 1991, and the president was forced to leave the country. In the transitional period, power was taken by the military council, which soon invited Eduard Shevardnadze to rule. He was the former minister of foreign affairs of the Soviet Union, who then lived in Moscow. Shevardnadze arrived in Georgia in March 1992 and became the head of the transitional government. In the transitional period of 1992-1995, the government was trying to deal with war, chaos, and economic collapse throughout the country. In 1995, the Constitution of Georgia was approved by the parliament, and Shevardnadze was elected as president. This was the beginning of relative economic and institutional stabilization. Another period which brought major changes in the political and economic life of Georgia began in 2003, by the so-called Rose Revolution. Shevardnadze was forced to step down and the new leaders of the state became Mikheil Saakashvili (he was elected as president in 2004) and his party, the United National Movement. The new government introduced and enacted the policies of modernization, elimination of corruption, and economic liberalism, which was characterized by privatization and deregulation. These measures restricted citizens' access to education and healthcare, while their labor rights receded and they became more exposed to exploitation at the workplace. Altogether, these policies were the cause of increased social inequality (Jones 2013). Citizens became resistant to these policies while the state became more violent. This development was especially evident in the various crisis periods. Other historically important events were the war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 and "the prison scandal" in 2012, which led to the defeat of Saakashvili's United National Movement in the election. Instead, the majority of seats in the Georgian parliament was won by Bidzina Ivanishvili's party, Georgian Dream. Bidzina Ivanishvili is a billionaire businessman. As a politician, he gained popularity by opposing Saakashvili's government. After the election in October 2012, he served as a prime minister of Georgia for one year. After the presidential election in 2013 he resigned, nevertheless, he is still believed to be the "informal leader" of the country by opposition parties and civil society in Georgia. In any case, the Georgian Dream initiated the constitutional reform, which restricted the rights of the president and gave more rights and duties to the prime minister. Since 2013, Georgia has an elected president as the head of state and a party-appointed prime minister as the head of government. Giorgi Margvelashvili of Georgian Dream was elected as a president in 2013. The new government has mostly continued the neoliberal policies introduced during Saakashvili's rule. However, Georgia signed and ratified the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union in 2014 and the document entered into force in July 2016. While Georgian citizens still suffer from poverty, human rights violations, and many forms of discrimination, the changed practices of governance and the agreement with the EU have affected Georgian citizenship and citizens' methods of resistance. Civil society actors such as NGOs and labor unions have become more actively engaged in the ongoing struggles alongside oppositional political parties.

Gamsakhurdia's period was defined by the issue of national independence, an anti-imperialist stance, and state autonomy. However, his nation-

alism was becoming more and more isolationist until his rule was brought to end. Shevardnadze, on the other hand, underlined the importance of order, peace, unity, and consensus. Through diplomacy and maneuvering, he managed to maintain power. Saakashvili came into power as pro-Western progressist; nonetheless, his reforms increased social inequality and polarized society. The Georgian Dream government is less aggressive than Saakashvili and seems more open to critique and initiatives from political opposition and civil society. Nevertheless, no major changes have been introduced at the level of legislation and state practices.

This is the historical context in which the forms of hegemonic nationalism and hegemonic masculinity have emerged. Types of hegemonic masculinity and nationalism I discuss in the next sections become understandable in relation to this context, namely, the political and economic transformations which have great impact on the life of the nation.

Three Types of Hegemonic Masculinity

The tendencies in relations and overlapping between hegemonic nationalism and hegemonic masculinity can be studied by the analysis of public discourses (speeches, statements, interviews, etc.) of political and economic elites. First, I will focus on three types of hegemonic masculinity that are revealed in the discourses of the powerful Georgian men - presidents, prime ministers, politicians, and businessmen.

It is worth noting that in these elite discourses the ideas of nation and masculinity are often generated simultaneously. This is evident for example in Gamsakhurdia's, Saakashvili's, Bendukidze's, and Ivanishvili's texts. For these leaders, the liberation and development of the nation is connected with men. In their discourses, the nation is masculinized or is identified with men. Men are the faces and representatives of the nation on the global arena as well as at all levels of domestic and foreign affairs. The elites establish a connection between men/masculinity and the nation, which becomes evident in an analysis of the types of masculinities that they produce discursively.

The first type of masculinity that surfaces in this context is masculinity as a symbol of the nation and/or marker of cultural borders. This type of masculinity gains importance when discussing the independence of Georgia or when some actors feel that Georgian culture is threatened by empires and/or Westernization⁴. Consequently, in certain versions of Georgian nationalism, men figure as the symbols of the nation - they are represented as having characteristics that make Georgians different from other nations. More specifically, men are supposed to embody or enact certain attributes such as morality, courage, and self-sacrifice. Some versions also claim that Georgian men lead a specific peasant lifestyle that is traditional and somehow natural for them. These are the cultural markers that make the nation unique and special, thus, in this version of nationalism/masculinity, men become the guardians of the nation's culture. The nation will live on if they stay loyal to these attributes and this kind of masculinity.

⁴ In the studied data the "empires" are the Soviet Union, Russia and the USA/West.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia stated:

The economic system in the captivity of the communist ideology and imposed violently on Georgian peasant has taken from him the most important things - land and freedom, and made work loathsome for him... Such an approach has negatively affected the character of Georgian man, his psyche and his traditional lifestyle (Gamsakhurdia 1991, 26).

This quote makes visible several things: (1) the nation is represented by men, (2) the peasant lifestyle is a national attribute of Georgians, and it was supposedly taken away from them by communists, (3) the terms “Georgian peasant” and “Georgian man” are used interchangeably, which strengthens the connection between nationalism and masculinity.

In 2005 Saakashvili speaks about Kakutsa Cholokashvili, a Georgian military officer who led the unsuccessful anti-Soviet rebellion in 1924. After the rebellion, he fled to France where he died in 1930. His remains were reburied in Georgia in 2005 during Saakashvili’s rule. He was figured as a national hero and Saakashvili (2005) spoke at the funeral:

He was the most loyal and most courageous soldier of Georgia... He sacrificed himself for the love of the homeland, together with his Sworn Men [followers]... When the Sworn Men were taken to their execution, they were singing and held their heads up. They were not fanatics nor madmen, they just loved their homeland and understood what it means to sacrifice yourself for your country.

Cholokashvili and his Sworn Men figure as the symbols of the nation. They are also set as an example for contemporary Georgian men. This version of masculinity implies patriotism, courage, and self-sacrifice. It is stressed that men who express their love for the homeland in such a way are not madmen; on the contrary, they are heroes and they are something that Georgians should be proud of.

Masculinity as a marker of cultural borders, as presented in the quotes above, distinguishes Georgians from other nations and also helps them to resist empires and enemies that threaten its national independence. In these particular discourses, the Soviet Union is the enemy.

The second type of masculinity is militaristic masculinity. This version of masculinity was activated by president Saakashvili. This discourse was active during years 2004-2008. After his inauguration ceremony in 2004, Saakashvili stated that the Georgian army would be one of his priorities along with anti-corruption policies. This was the beginning of national militarization. Since Georgia has two secessionist regions (backed by Russia), a stronger army was associated with territorial integrity. In 2004, Saakashvili said that he did not want war, but that a strong army would back his diplomacy. However, Saakashvili’s discourse was getting more and more antagonistic and threatening towards Russia. In conjunction with anti-Russian rhetoric, Saakashvili strengthened Georgia’s relations with the U.S. and became involved in the “War on Terror” operations. Georgian troops were sent to Iraq and Afghanistan. These policies and discourse culminated in the war between Russia and Georgia, in August 2008. The dominating period of this discourse of militaristic masculinity was not very long, but the discourse was incredi-

bly powerful and demanding. Saakashvili extensively talked about patriotism, the “Georgian military spirit,” national heroes, and showing the whole world the militaristic capabilities of Georgia. He also demanded that every Georgian family participated in the making of a strong army.

“We will destroy mercilessly everyone who will enter Georgia with arms” Saakashvili stated in 2004 during the graduation ceremony of the National Defense Academy of Georgia (Saakashvili 2004c). This comment refers to Russia, which objected pro-Western policies in Georgia. Saakashvili tried to demonstrate force against Russia, whose influence in Georgia was quite strong.

On May 26, 2006 (Independence Day of Georgia) Saakashvili stated the following during the military parade:

We greet the soldiers and officers who have received the government awards today, as well as one of the highest awards in the U.S., which is extremely rarely given to non-American officers and soldiers. It is the fate and tradition of Georgians, to prove ourselves not only while defending our country but also in the struggle for freedom, in the struggle for Georgia in the whole world (Saakashvili 2006).

Georgian men as soldiers and officers are not only valued in Georgia, but they also receive international recognition. According to Saakashvili, Georgian men have to be proud that they are involved in the projects and military operations of the U.S. They are the representatives of Georgia as a nation, and they can show Georgian militaristic capabilities to the whole world.

The army is supposed to be dominated by men, and militaristic activities are managed and carried out mostly by men. Thus, the nation becomes masculinized, while the army is instrumentalized against the supposed enemy and the army becomes the proof of Georgia’s strength and usefulness to its major allies. In addition, militaristic masculinity becomes normative for men if they want to be valued by the state and nation.

The third type is neoliberal masculinity. Saakashvili was one of the major actors who produced this discourse; however, neoliberal masculinity is also promoted in the discourse of Kakha Bendukidze who was the minister in Saakashvili’s government and the main author of the new economic policies. The Georgian Dream government has also continued this discourse and policies. Masculinity and neoliberalism are connected on macro and micro levels. On the macro level, the connection is expressed by promoting certain norms and values, such as holding an anti-corruption and anti-Soviet stance, focusing on investors, and supporting free trade. This functions as the macro level, because it manifests in parallel with the discursive form wherein the state enacts major reforms and policies. For example, as mentioned above, Saakashvili stated in 2004 that anti-corruption policies would be one of his priorities. While this was a popular decision, it was in compliance with the ideas of neoliberal development. The goal of these policies was to attract direct foreign investments to Georgia, so it is at least questionable if the Georgian population was the main beneficiary of these policies. The Soviet economic models and culture were also rejected in favor of the West and neoliberal capitalism. On the micro level, masculinity and neoliberalism are connected to produce subjectivities and characteristics of individual men, such as economic rationality,

knowledge of trade and calculation, and being profit-oriented. The macro-level policies would not be enough if men do not become willing participants of the new neoliberal culture and economy.

“Nowadays each corrupt official is a betrayer of the national interests,” said Saakashvili in 2004, in his inauguration speech, when he declared that his government would fight against the large-scale corruption established in the country during president Shevardnadze’s rule (Saakashvili 2004a). It is stated explicitly that the government views corruption as “anti-national.” Later in 2004, Saakashvili said:

We have to do everything to stimulate the economy, to create new jobs, to attract investments. I’ve had talks about this in Davos where I met all the rich people in the world. But for this it is necessary to have a very strict order in Georgia and everyone should know their place before the law (Saakashvili 2004b).

“Strict order” and equality before the law are needed in order to attract investments. Attracting investments require other measures as well, such as deregulation. This remains invisible in Saakashvili’s anti-corruption discourse; however, it was part of the state’s policies. Nonetheless, the discourse establishes “attracting investments” as the only possible way of economic development and the only possible way out of poverty. There is no alternative to Georgia’s neoliberal development.

Kakha Bendukidze is a harsh critic of the Soviet Union. He views the Soviet values as obstacles for the new way of life and economy. In 2010 he wrote in a blogpost:

Apart from the Soviet Union and its former parts, there is no such thing as “intelligentsia.” The term “creative intelligentsia” is a Soviet term. And the phrase, “the hospital collective has done everything possible” cannot be translated into English... It takes a lot of time and effort to eradicate all these things. The important thing is to get them out of our souls (Bendukidze 2010a).⁵

Things that were part of the Soviet state and culture and are supposedly incomprehensible for the Westerners are the signs of the backward culture and should be eradicated. It should be replaced by the Western culture which is superior. This transformation is called upon by these leaders to happen on the micro, subjective level.

Bendukidze is also worried that Georgian men do not have knowledge of trade and/or do not know how to calculate things. The new economy requires subjects who are economically rational and who have skills of cost-benefit analysis. Thus, Bendukidze writes in another of his posts:

I’m told that in Georgia it’s shameful for men to use a calculator. Weapons are good, cigarettes are ok, but a calculator is shameful. Shallowness is acceptable, while depth is not... Guys! Let’s take a calculator, it’s useful, we can count something (Bendukidze 2010b).

⁵ The term “hospital collective” implies employees of a hospital, mainly surgeons, doctors, medical assistants and nurses who are responsible for “saving” the patient. In the Soviet Union, employees of any organization were referred as worker collectives. Probably this is what Bendukidze thought was untranslatable into English.

As Bendukidze talks about “men,” it becomes obvious once again that the nation is identified with men. In this discourse women are invisible. The masculinized nation is in need of the transformation and it should be achieved by transforming individual men. In this case, men should learn how to be neoliberal subjects. They should learn how to make economically rational choices.

Investments and free trade are considered important for Georgia’s development by the government of Georgian Dream, as well. President Margvelashvili stated during his 2015 Annual Report speech in the parliament:

Our main objective is to ensure economic growth, employment, and, finally, the reduction of inequality in the country and the prosperity of each member of society... What potential do we have in this regard? The Free Trade Agreement with Europe: this is the opportunity and the new stimulus for economic growth, investments, employment, and export (Margvelashvili 2015).

Margvelashvili also mentions low levels of corruption and criminal activity in Georgia, which should be attractive for investors. Free market still figures as a norm and the neoliberal development model remains the sole form of development visible in this discourse.

The first type of hegemonic masculinity – masculinity as a symbol of the nation and/or marker of cultural borders – is quite marginal because its main producer is Zviad Gamsakhurdia (who was the president of Georgia for a relatively short period). Mikheil Saakashvili is also one of the producers of this discourse, but in his case the focus is about patriotism and national heroes and it overlaps with militaristic masculinity. The discourse of militaristic masculinity generated by Saakashvili lasted for several years and was powerful and demanding. However, the most dominant type of hegemonic masculinity is neoliberal masculinity. Its primacy is confirmed both by the period of its domination – it involves periods of Saakashvili’s government and the Georgian Dream government – and by the number and political positions of actors involved in its making.

The Domination of Pro-Western Nationalism

In Soviet Georgia, the goal of Georgian nationalism was to become an independent state. However, after obtaining independence, Georgians have to deal with a geopolitical choice between Russia and the West. The elite nationalism is also produced along these lines. All leaders studied by me - except Ivanishvili - are explicitly anti-Russian and anti-Soviet. President Gamsakhurdia was anti-Western as well, but all other leaders are pro-Western. Thus, we can speak about the domination of pro-Western nationalism.

Gamsakhurdia claimed that both the Soviet Union and the West were empires, and he sought to “decolonize” Georgia. Shevardnadze, who replaced him, sought “to build democracy” which meant to open and prepare Georgia for the Western-style governance: liberal democracy. His rule lacked legitimacy in Georgia but he managed to create an order and system which was ac-

ceptable to both Russia and the West⁶. Accordingly, he maintained his power despite the lack of legitimacy and large-scale corruption and took measures for creating certain “democratic” institutions. Saakashvili and his government were the first ones who proactively claimed a European identity for Georgia. “We are not just old Europeans, we are the oldest Europeans, and, therefore, Georgia holds a special position in European Civilization,” stated Saakashvili during his inauguration speech in 2004 (Saakashvili 2004a). Saakashvili’s discourse was aggressively anti-Russian; he used militarization to threaten Russia, which was figured as an enemy. Bendukidze was anti-Russian as well. His discourse was characterized by the radical negation of the Soviet political economy and cultural values. In these discourses of the Rose Revolution government, the Soviet Union/Russia and the West became too polarized. The negation of the Soviet Union/Russia was paralleled with policies of militarization, anti-corruption, neoliberal reforms, claiming European identity, and an alliance with the U.S. The Georgian Dream government somewhat changed this legacy, mostly by becoming less aggressive towards Russia. However, European identity has become sustainable. According to president Margvelashvili, the post-Soviet country (Georgia) has to become a European state. In the 2015 Annual Report, he said: “Historically and culturally, we [Georgians, the Georgian state] have been Europe – not just a part of it, but for centuries an active participant of European development and creations.”

Georgia’s political orientation towards the West is evident. However, there can be different interpretations concerning the domination period and quality of pro-Western elite nationalism. On the one hand, it can be said that pro-Western nationalism dominates in Georgia since the ousting of president Gamsakhurdia. All of the later leaders were oriented towards the model of the Western state (liberal democracy) and cooperated with the Western powers. However, the configuration of state institutions, economy, and foreign policy was changing: during Shevardnadze’s rule it was a weak and fragile state, crony capitalism and a foreign policy based on political maneuvering; under Saakashvili’s governance it was strong state institutions, militarism, neoliberal capitalism, European identity, and an alliance with the US; under the Georgian Dream government there are again strong state institutions, neoliberal capitalism, and European identity, which has now been complemented with the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union.

⁶ Shevardnadze’s lack of legitimacy was connected with the violent ousting of president Gamsakhurdia, as many people, especially, in west Georgia continued to support him. Civil war over this issue continued in 1992 and 1993. In addition, war in Abkhazia (also known as the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict) broke out in 1992, ending in 1993 by Abkhazia’s secession. As a result, the Georgian state lost control over the region. At one point – he spoke about it in the parliament, in March, 1994 - Shevardnadze even appealed military intervention from Russia, because he could not control the situation in west Georgia, Abkhazia, and Samegrelo, where the support of Gamsakhurdia was especially strong. In this context, he also agreed for Georgia to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). These events show that Shevardnadze, especially in the beginning of his rule, used external forces to make and keep his power. His rule lacked internal consent, as strong hegemonic projects were yet to be created.

Though, there still can be a second interpretation. The so-called Rose Revolution in 2003 was the point where Georgia proclaimed clearly its geopolitical choice in favor of the West. Saakashvili, as one of the leaders of the revolution and later the leader of this “new Georgia,” made sure to discursively connect Georgia with Europe and the European Union. The new government also introduced discourses and policies dealing with corruption, neoliberal economy, culture, individual subjectivities, openly and aggressively anti-Soviet and anti-Russian attitudes, and militaristic actions and wars. All these were done in the name of pro-Western choice, under the pretense of including Georgia in the developed and progressive world. The idea of progress was constructed as being “like the West” and doing “what the West wants.” In reality, the geopolitical choice of Georgia, and the domination of pro-Western nationalism following it, made Georgia open for the darkest aspects and effects of Western civilization, such as adopting a neoliberal system and being complicit in the US military interventions and domination of developing countries. Thus, the dominant types of hegemonic masculinities – militaristic masculinity and neoliberal masculinity – were also generated and shaped during this period. This means that elite pro-Western nationalism in Georgia has so far been connected with this kind of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinities.

Conclusion

The analysis of discourses of Georgian political and economic elites reveals the types of masculinities and nationalisms that have become hegemonic in post-Soviet Georgia. There are important and transformative points in the political history of post-Soviet Georgia, such as gaining independence, accepting the new state model of liberal democracy, making the geopolitical choice between Russia and the West, introducing neoliberal capitalism, and acquiring European identity. Overall, Georgian elite nationalism is mostly pro-Western nationalism. We can see orientation towards the West in different periods of Georgia’s history represented in different configurations of state institutions, economy, and foreign policy. As an alternative interpretation, we can also see the Rose Revolution as the major starting point for pro-Western nationalism – the pro-Western choice of Georgia has become qualitatively different and is expressed in various reforms and policies. In parallel, this analysis reveals three types of hegemonic masculinity. The first type – masculinity as a symbol of the nation and/or marker of cultural borders – focuses on Georgia’s independence and cultural autonomy. In some cases, this form of masculinity does not go well with, and even rejects, pro-Western nationalism. However, there are also two other types of hegemonic masculinity: militaristic masculinity and neoliberal masculinity. They are much more powerful than the first type, which is evident by both qualitative and quantitative indicators. These types were activated after the Rose Revolution, by president Saakashvili’s government. The domination of the militaristic type was quite short lived. However, the neoliberal type has become the stable form of hegemonic masculinity. These types – and especially, neoliberal masculinity – go hand in hand with hegemonic pro-Western nationalism. In the discourses of these

elites, ideas of these masculinities and pro-Western nationalism support and construct each other.

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