LUND UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences

Women's Movement in Contemporary Georgia and The Role of Facebook in Developments of the Movement

Author: Nino Vadatchkoria

Abstract

There is a theoretical debate among social movement scholars around an increasing concern with the role of technology in terms of key social movement activities, including mobilization, running and engaging in campaigns and making claims on authorities. This research deals with this debate and contributes to it with this case study on the Georgian women's movement.

The research examines women's movement in Georgia, which is divided in two parts: formalized, institutionalized women's NGOs and non-formal, non-registered women's groups. This particular study targets three central episodes: the case of femicides starting in 2014 up until March, 2018; the case of quotas in the Parliament from 2014 up until March, 2018; and the case of legal gender recognition in 2018. Within these episodes, the progress of the movement is analyzed in terms of mechanisms and processes of social movements and the role of Facebook in the development and operations of the movement is studied.

The study proves that Facebook plays a crucial role in Georgian women's movement in terms of coalition formation, organization, mobilization, diffusion and framing. Women's movement operates with different tactics according to the claims they make, which leads to a diverse use of Facebook in their activities. A vast amount of activism of the movement is done through Facebook due to the fact that activism is mainly a voluntary arena in Georgia. Facebook creates a working space for women to discuss, organize, mobilize and take actions. Facebook assures that the movement remains continuity and durability through easy access of membership and absence of geographical boundaries. The research analyzes the crucial role Facebook has in facilitating mobilization and central but rather complicated goal in framing. Even though Facebook does not have a revolutionary power to make immediate, institutional changes and the power remains in hands of political elites, it contributes to the overcoming small milestones and long-term process of sustained campaigns.

Keywords: Women's movement, Facebook, social movement, Georgia, campaign, feminism, mobilization, NGO, Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, femicide, quota, legal gender recognition.

Word count: 21,353

I

Acknowledgments

I want to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor Chares Demetriou for his guidance and support throughout the entire process.

I want to express my gratitude to my respondents for taking their time and energy for the interviews, and for sharing the information and their experiences with me.

I would like to thank the Swedish Institute for providing me with a scholarship to study at Lund University.

I want to thank my partner Fabian with my family and friends for supporting and believing in me. Especially, my best friend Tina for being my lifetime partner in crime and for proof reading my draft.

And last, but not least, I want to thank my mother Maia, the strongest woman I know, for teaching me how to dream and fight, and for always being there for me.

Thank you! დიდი მადლობა!

Contents

1. Introduction

Feminism is defined as a social and political movement with the aim to have equal social, political, and economic rights without the distinction of sexes. Although women from all social classes and backgrounds have fought for their rights for decades they still face inequality and discrimination. From the starting point of women's movements, types of actions have varied and changed in relation to the relevant topics for that period, time or era. In addition, societal structures and cultures, along with pertinent issues spark various types of movements and actions. More than a century ago, women started actively demanding equal rights in terms of marriage, property, political involvement, etc. Even though suffragettes achieved their right to vote, there were and still are gaps in structures that put women in oppressed, disadvantageous positions. Despite the fact that women are more than half of the world's population, in many cases they are underrepresented and left behind. There are hardly any issues that are not actively or passively affecting women. This creates an urgent need for increased women's participation in each field of a society and when women get rejected, their actions start to progress to draw attention to the unfair treatment, and to eventually eradicate the root of the problem. Additionally, the role of social media in social movements is gaining attention as it became central in our lives in this era of digital revolution.

Among the scholars of social movements there is an increasing concern about the role which technology plays in the development of social movements. How should one understand the connection between social movements and social media and how does the latter affect the former? I address this question through an analysis of the case of women's movement in Georgia, based on empirical material gathered at women's organizations and groups in Georgia and the traditional social movement theory. Specifically, I examine the role Facebook played in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia, investigating mainly the key social movement

1

activities such as mobilization, running and engaging in campaigns, and making claims to the authorities.

In Georgia, the first women's movements emerged at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. "Georgian women started organizing massive appearances to get equal rights since 1905 when the freedom of gatherings was announced" (Tkeshelashvili, 1932 in Beraia, 2017, p. 12). Women formed the first organization named "Georgian Women's Union for Equal Rights" which did not achieve a strong political success, but they managed to send a representative to the Third Conference of the International Women Suffrage Alliance in 1906 in Copenhagen (Beraia, 2017, p. 12). Essential examples of women's organization include the founding of the "Caucasus women's society" and publication of the first feminist newspaper "The Voice of a Georgian Woman", which aimed to unify women from different political parties and social classes, and to support them in their political activism (Ibid, p. 8). The success of women was visible on the elections of the first Democratic Republic of Georgia (DRG) as well, where female voters were within electors and the first parliament of the DRG was assembled with five female members, all from the social-democratic party. There were significant steps forward towards gender equality but after the Soviet occupation in 1921 all women's (feminist)[1] achievements gradually faded.

Before the Russian Revolution in 1917 and afterwards during the existence of the DRG there were politically active women, whose political activism and ideas were marginalized after the Soviet Occupation both from politics and history. Women's activism, their organizations and separatism were not something Bolsheviks encouraged. Women were told "to find equality by participating with men in working-

---

[1] The term feminism is continuously contested for being affiliated with Western women's movements, as well as the meaning of what feminism means changes over time (Crossley and Hurwitz, 2013: 2). Therefore, throughout the study women's movement is used as an umbrella term to represent both not declared and declared feminist groups and organizations.

class organizations, not by setting up separate groups to pursue their own self-interest" (Clements, 1982, p. 232). The Existence of those groups for Bolsheviks would make women see men as the source of oppression while the real "enemies" were the class and the system and women had to overcome the problem by cooperating with men (Ibid). But the justification is less relevant when the politics of the Soviet Union was against independent initiatives and especially women's initiatives. The aim of the communist party was to emancipate women with their agendas and making women as a political subject was never there (Beraia, 2017, p. 12). Emancipating women meant liberating them from the traditional domestic roles of housework and childcare while they would shift to social collective where children would be raised in public institutions to learn collectivist values and behavior (Lapidus, 1978: 55). The Soviet agenda concerning women changed with the change of men in power, and the so-called Soviet egalitarian ideas preaching "gender equality" created various gender stereotypes in different fields.

As a result of 70 years of occupation Georgia missed several phases of feminist movements and lost the history of the fight for gender equality and women's rights in the beginning of the DRG. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia appeared in the world where in some counties people spoke on third-wave feminism, some on post-feminism. And on the other hand, there were a set of countries in which women could not even benefit from the achievements of the first and second-wave feminism, and that is where Georgia fell.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, numerous NGOs working on women's rights were formed in post-soviet countries. They focused on addressing gendered consequences brought with the collapse of the union and shaping public policy in the interest of women (Bingham, 2017, p. 295). Since in 1992-1993, Georgia had a war over the region of Abkhazia most of the NGOs were registered for humanitarian purposes in order to provide services for internally displaced persons. NGOs working on women's issues since 1990s contributed to advocate and implement numerous policies, mostly

focused on women's human rights, health issues, humanitarian issues, etc. Additionally, NGOs started holding trainings, courses, seminars, lectures and other events to raise awareness on diverse sets of issues and influence the public (Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, the common view on the post-soviet civil society has shaped around institutionalized NGOs. Social movements mainly established an image of "professionalized organizations, that are more interested in applying for grants and other types of funding than mobilizing society" (Ibid.). General representation for the country and the outside world was that civil society, including women's organizations were playing "the funding game" and the processes of institutionalization and professionalization pulled them into "hierarchical, centralized and corporate entities that focus on their own survival" (Ibid. p. 6). Moreover, that they were imposed to follow the agendas of their donor organizations rather than their own goals or needs of local population (Ibid. p. 7). "Donors brought the colonial approach to women's NGOs to hush them and surrender women's organizations" (Japaridze, 2012, p. 27). They are not interested in backing up women's activism, and donor's interventions are, according to the respondent that Japaridze cites, "rape and violence" (Ibid.). Bingham after conducting a study in the post-soviet states[2] proposes that since NGOs are reliant on Western funding, the latter determines NGO's policy and agenda without consideration of regional settings (Bingham, 2017, p. 299). Therefore, the autonomy of these organizations is rather limited.

Hence, the NGOs in Georgia in some ways have been criticized and have lost the trust of the society. The Caucasus Barometer 2017 shows that only 4 percent of the population trusts NGOs, while 10 percent fully distrusts and 13 percent would rather distrust (The Caucasus Barometer, 2017). As a result, the need of alternative activism, or activism together with institutionalized NGOs emerged in a society. Gender researcher Natia Gvianishvili suggests that even though the fall of the Soviet Union gave rise to NGOs working on women's rights, Georgian women's movement have

---

[2] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova

never been shaped (Gvianishvili, 2017, p. 89). There were several attempts to launch women's movement in Georgia from donor organizations. They aimed at creating a Coalition of Women's NGOs first in 2000 by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and then by the United Nations Development Fund of Women (UNIFEM)[3] in 2003 (Melashvili, 2014). Both efforts were realizations of a top-to-bottom approach and ended up being unsuccessful since women's movements start at the grassroot level and has a bottom-up perspective (Ibid.). Additionally, Melashvili states that the consolidation of women's groups cannot be guided by donor organizations who set priorities without knowing country specific context and settings and deny considering certain historical heritage (Ibid.). Women's NGOs also lack support from public due to societal perception on NGOs, and because they have limited resources for mobilizing people (Ibid.). Besides, institutionalized women's NGOs have obligations to the state and to the donors, they have their structure and agreements (Women's Movement in Georgia, 2017). All the above-mentioned reasons have hindered institutionalized women's NGOs to mobilize a large number of people and to engage in active traditional contentious politics. The conflict with institutionalized NGOs initiated a creation of non-formal groups that protested existing structures by not formalizing their activism. Consequently, Georgian activism can be divided in two parts – formalized, institutionalized women's NGOs and non-formalized, non-registered women's groups (Ibid.).

One side of the women's movement is composed with institutionalized, registered NGOs, which are actively involved in working, lobbying, advocating with authorities, and are more or less engaged in contentious politics. They get their resources for various projects and services from the donor organizations. Examples of institutionalized NGOs are the "Women's Information Center (WIC)" and the "Women's Gaze". The WIC is one of the pioneer organizations which started working on gender issues and advancing women's rights. The organization focuses on providing

---

[3] Nowadays, UN Women

assistance, advocating and raising awareness, and actively participates "in the process of lobbying gender issues in legislative and executive bodies" (Women's Information Center, 2014). The WIC was a co-founder of Coalition of Women's NGOs in Georgia in 2000 and in 2003 officially registered as an independent organization (Ibid.). The organization is represented in several regions of Georgia and manages web projects: Gender Information Portal in the Southern Caucasus[4], No Trafficking[5] and "Youth line" of the European network[6] (Ibid.). "Women's Gaze" is a leftist feminist movement oriented on producing autonomous politics of women (Women's Gaze, 2016). The organization started in 2014 in order to set an agenda of women's social, political and economic issues (Tsopurashvili, 2017, p. 10).

The other side of the women's movement is made up with non-registered groups of women that are actively involved in working, advocating and lobbying with authorities. They actively engage in contentious politics and in contrast to institutionalized NGOs reject receiving money from donor organizations. The most suitable example of non-formal, non-registered groups is the "Women's Movement". The initiative started in 2014 in response to the numerous femicides that have occurred in the country. "Women's movement" opened opportunity to every woman to join regardless of their ideological views. With the formation of "Women's Movement" a *"new wave of women's movement started in Georgia [...] more proactive, advocacy oriented, reaction oriented"* to address women's issues on various levels and to oppose previous donor practices.

Another side is comprised of more radical groups that reject any relations with authorities and also, deny donor organizations. For example, "Independent Group of Feminists (IGF)" and "Partisan Girls". The IGF is the first group in Georgia which openly declared being feminist and is non-formal, non-registered and non-hierarchical

---

[4] www.ginsc.net
[5] www.antitraf.net
[6] www.youthknot.net

feminist initiative (Melashvili, 2014). IGF was launched in 2011 in response to campaigns against abortion, as well as women's reproductive and sexual rights (Ibid.). The word "independent" as in the title once again proves that members wanted to highlight that it is an initiative not registered as an NGO or depended on donors having space for being autonomous (Ibid.). According to a representative of the IGF:

"Not being registered is equal to being independent for us. Our everyday agenda is not defined with available funds from donor organizations which mostly does not allow for making radical statements… We are trying to be reactive following on a situation and we maintain being radical too. When you are lobbying and working with politicians, it is difficult to make extreme statements. So, we take advantage of not having that agenda and keep pure feminist approaches without being politically correct".

"Partisan Girls" is an anonymous, radical group founded in 2012. The group confronted sexism, homophobia and transphobia with a video art (Gvianishvili, 2017, p. 92). The IGF and "Partisan Girls" introduced alternative activism (Ibid.), since the movement was entirely dominated by the NGOs. Nowadays, there are more radical feminist groups in Georgia, such as the green feminists, lesbian feminists, anarcho-feminists, etc. (Gvianishvili, 2016, p. 16).

The final side is registered women's NGOs which are not involved in contentious politics and have no affiliation in lobbying or advocating with authorities. They get funding from donor organizations for various purposes. But this study focuses on the first three types of organizations and groups. Obviously, they are not excluded from the women's movement but at this point when discussing the movement and certain actions carried out by them, mainly other three sides are considered.

Portrayal of the groups and organizations in the women's movement addressing and working on women's issues are placed on Table 1. The table is assembled after analyzing interviews with experts, including the representatives of NGOs and non-registered groups, independent activists, and the experts working for the UNDP

Georgia and Public Defender's Office of Georgia in Georgia, as well as the background analysis of the field and other related studies.

Authorities Orientation

Institutionalized women's NGOs (Involved in contentious politics)	Non-formal groups (For example, "Women's Movement")

Donor Orientation — Donor Disorientation

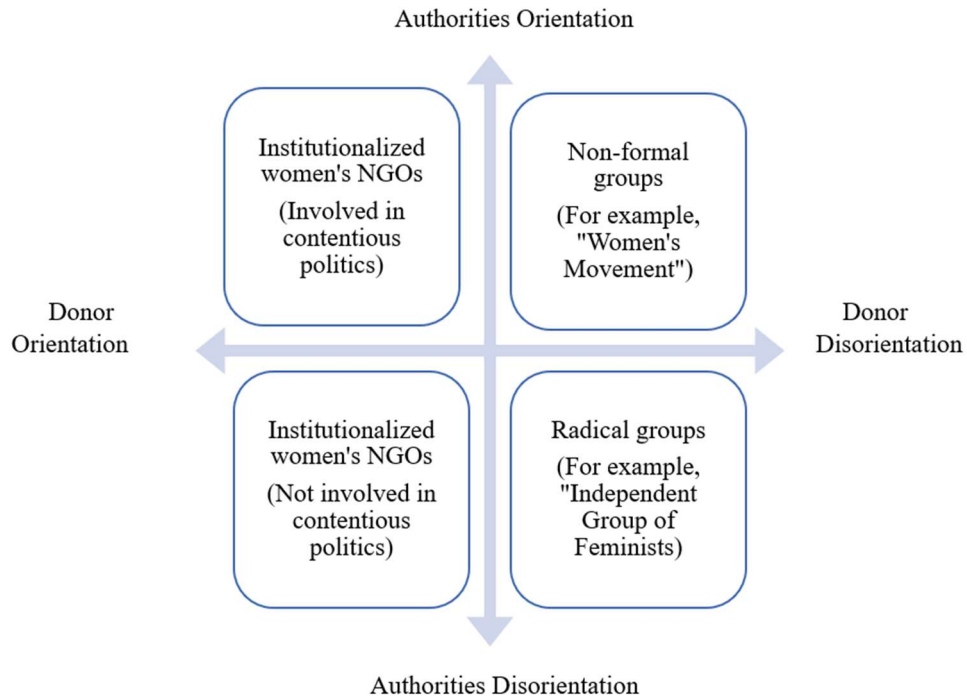| Institutionalized women's NGOs (Not involved in contentious politics)	Radical groups (For example, "Independent Group of Feminists)

Authorities Disorientation

Table 1: Women's organizations and groups in Georgia

Both platforms of Georgian activism – institutionalized NGOs and non-formal groups have more or less the same interest. They intend to bring in women's issues in the everyday agenda and in every sector of the society. Together they create the women's movement in Georgia. However, different women's organizations and groups address them with different methods and tactics. On certain occasions they cooperate and unite, but they compete and criticize each other as well. The last couple of years problems of violence against women, such as teenage marriages were brought up by the movement, but women so far are a minority in the decision-making bodies. Melashvili points out that civic activism has troubles being dynamic after living in a totalitarian regime for 70 years (2014). The control over the freedom of speech and expression suppressed

civic initiatives (Ibid.). Nowadays, Georgian women's movement is in an interesting position where Georgian feminists can benefit from the experience and knowledge that feminists have gathered for decades (Gvianishvili, 2017, p. 92). On the other hand, technological advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) introduced various possibilities for social movements around the globe.

In the era of globalization, the use of ICT tools and the social media has intensified in the everyday lives of all people. This directed the attention of scholars to study relations they have with various structures and organizations, including social movements. The role of social media has already been studied and is being studied in different regions of the world with different perspectives. The Arab Spring, Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, Tahrir Square Protests in Egypt, 2009 Iranian Presidential Election Protests, Occupy Wall Street and many others have been a focus of many scholars who study the impacts of social media. The ongoing and controversial discussions on the role of social media in relation to social movements, including women's movement has been put in the spotlight by numerous scholars. Technological determinists[7] see a lot of potential in social media, while others criticize and illuminate its "dark sides".

Social media websites and apps are popular in Georgia as well. However, Facebook in particular has widespread use, from socializing to activism. According to the Freedom of the Net 2014 "Facebook is now the most popular website among internet users in Georgia […] Facebook is also used by civil society activists and others as a tool for discussions about ongoing political and social developments" (Freedom House, 2014). Social movements in Georgia, especially the women's movement is transitioning to being more organized and active. Feminist activists fight every day on various platforms to raise awareness, mobilize and organize women to incite changes on societal and institutional levels. Women's organizations and groups use different tactics in order to achieve their purposes and make significant changes for the society,

---

[7] Technological Determinism – a belief of technological power as an essential agent of social change (Smith and Marx, 1994, p. ix)

specifically for women. Women's groups and organizations are active on Facebook, and although several researches have been conducted already to study women's movement in Georgia, none of them highlight the role and the use of social media in the process by women's organizations and groups.

The purpose of the research is to study the women's movement in Georgia, analyze the developments and operations of the movement, and to identify the role of Facebook in the entire process. The aim of the research is to explore and analyze central points, times and episodes in the history of contemporary women's movement in Georgia. Moreover, I aim to study the actors in the field and find out about the practices and mechanisms they use in various cases. Conducting a comprehensive research is crucial as the issue is relatively new, and there is a very small number of studies about or around the topic already done, and none of those studies examine the use of Informational and Communicational Technologies or that of the social media. Researching the case will be beneficial for feminist activists, organizations, and groups, academia and all the interested individuals or parties. Therefore, the research question of the study is as follows:

What is the role of Facebook in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia?

The women's movement in Georgia operates using various tactics, which leads to a diverse use of Facebook in their activities. They use traditional practices and methods as any other social movement does. They make claims to the authorities, use public performances, make alliances, use institutional routines to build on their claims, etc., and Facebook has a critical role to play every step of the way. With the new platform available, women started gathering their strengths, distributing duties by voting on who can contribute in what way, discussing possible courses of action, etc. online. Thus, Facebook gradually became an essential tool for mobilization and framing. It has both quantitative and qualitative effects on the women's movement and is widely considered

a tool to position claims in the political discourse, mobilize people and coordinate political campaigns/protests.

The study is divided into following chapters: previous research, methodology, theoretical framework and concepts, analysis, including three episodes and a comparison of the episodes and conclusion.

In the previous research chapter, I analyze the theoretical debate among scholars of social movements around an increasing concern with the role of technology in terms of key social movement activities, including mobilization, running campaigns, engaging in campaigns and making claims on authorities. The ongoing discussion involves techno-optimists, techno-pessimists and the third camp of techno-ambivalence. In addition, I review why I intend to discover the role of Facebook in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia and position it in the ongoing theoretical debate. Lastly, I discuss on absence of relevant studies in Georgia and exemplify similar research carried out in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the methodology chapter, I introduce the aim and objectives of the research and a methodological approach. Furthermore, the chapter presents the data collection process and the sampling strategy, as well as ethics of the research. Finally, the limitations and weaknesses are examined.

In the theoretical framework chapter, I analyze the theory of social movements according to Tilly and Tarrow (2007), Tilly (2008) and Della Porta and Diani (2006). I evaluate descriptions of social movement provided by the above-mentioned authors. As well as elements of social movement and recommendations of studying streams of campaigns are analyzed. I look into streams, episodes, mechanisms and processes offered by Tilly and Tarrow and build up a schedule for the following study in line with them. Furthermore, applied concepts are examined.

The analysis of this Master thesis develops around the importance of Facebook in the campaigns of women's organizations and groups in order to explain women's movement in Georgia. My aim is not to analyze the success of their campaign, but rather to follow and observe their actions, programs and decisions. As a result three very specific episodes in contemporary Georgia women's movement are analyzed All together provides an accurate summary of developments and progress of the movement which is analyzed chronologically as a process to make it easier for a reader to follow.

The first episode concerns protest campaign responding to the increased femicide rate in 2014. I aim to explain why it was a turning point for large number of women to mobilize and take action. I analyze this episode in terms of mechanisms and processes of social movements described by Tilly and Tarrow. I analyze this episode in terms of the following mechanisms – boundary activation and formation, brokerage, certification, and diffusion, as well as in terms of the following processes – coalition formation, collective action, framing, mobilization and scale shift. I intend to show how the use of Facebook was crucial for the actions taken during the protest campaign. Specifically, how Facebook served as a key tool for coalition formation, mobilization, diffusion and framing. The episode unfolds the events chronologically starting in 2014 up until March, 2018. I discuss how women were unsuccessful mobilizing masses of people to stand against femicides, how the problem was not addressed by political elites. I examine the turning point for mobilization and coalition formation and look at the vital role that Facebook played in the process, as well as the collective actions and events that followed after, and how the movement addresses the problem today.

The second episode analyses campaign around a claim to adopt quota system in the Parliament of Georgia and actions taken by the movement starting from 2014 until March 2018. I analyze male dominated Georgian political environment and underrepresentation of women in politics. I review what are quotas, what type of quotas are out there and success stories how quotas promoted more gender-equal political participation in different countries. Which is followed by discussion on why Georgia

needs quotas as a temporary mechanism and what measures did women's movement take to promote quota system. I analyze this episode with mechanisms and processes of social movements in accordance with Tilly and Tarrow (2007). Specifically, in terms of coalition formation, collective action, mobilization, institutionalization and self-representation. I highlight why Facebook had less significant role to play once the movement works on advocating and lobbying with political elites. Additionally, I analyze the relation between the movement and politics.

The third episode analyses the protest campaign in support of legal gender recognition for transgender women and actions taken by the movement in 2018. The analyze is done in terms of mechanisms and processes in line with Tilly and Tarrow (2007). Specifically, in terms of collective action, mobilization and framing, where Facebook played a crucial role. I evaluate what are the general attitudes on LGBTI issues in Georgia, especially transgender women. I examine intersectional approach women's movement is trying to adopt, as well as challenges with it.

Analysis chapter ends with a comparison of the episodes and the role of Facebook in them. I discuss a phenomenon of using Facebook for the movement and activism, which I place in a theoretical debate between techno-optimism and techno-pessimism. I evaluate where Facebook stands with connection of women's movement in Georgia based on expert interviews representing women's NGOs, women's non-formal groups, solo-activists and experts working for the UNDP Georgia and Public Defender's Office of Georgia. I analyze the discussion in terms of framing, mobilization and self-representation processes (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007).

The comparison of the episodes is followed by conclusion, summarizing the findings of the study, as well as offers recommendations for further research.

2. Previous Research

In this chapter, I analyze the theoretical debate among scholars of social movements around an increasing concern with the role of technology in terms of key social movement activities, including mobilization, running campaigns, engaging in campaigns and making claims on authorities. The ongoing discussion involves techno-optimists, who see social media having a big role to play in today's social movements and in solving social problems. Techno-pessimists who see the negative sides of social media and argue on incapability and exaggeration of social revolutions and positive social change (Kidd and McIntosh, 2016, p. 785). I discuss the third camp of techno-ambivalence, which stands in between techno-optimists and techno-pessimists, balancing the streams and recognizing arguments of both sides (Ibid. p. 792). In addition, I review why I intend to discover the role of Facebook in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia and position it in the ongoing theoretical debate. Lastly, I discuss on absence of relevant studies in Georgia and exemplify similar research carried out in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

An increasing number of social media users create the necessity to study social media in relation to various fields. Using social media became a daily routine, provoking social movement scholars to study relations between social media and social movements. Internet and Communication tools (ICTs) "spread news of street protests quickly, driving offline protest and its diffusion", allowing to engage in political activism online (Earl, Hunt, Garrett, and Dal, 2015, p. 4). Social media tools are one of the effective ways to encourage civic and political participation for the process of democratization and globalization (Yigit and Tarman, 2013, p. 75). "ICT usage exposes individuals to political information in non-political online spaces" (Wojcieszak and Mutz, 2009 in Earl et al. 2013, p. 9) and invites them to participate. Consequently, scholars have already been studying the role of social media in different geographical locations from different perspectives. The Arab Spring, Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia,

Tahrir Square Protests in Egypt, Occupy Wall Street and many others have been a focus of many scholars including ones studying impacts of social media. There are ongoing and controversial discussions on the role of social media in relation to social movements and whether it has a real influence and power to make changes.

According to Kidd and McIntosh, discussion on the importance of social media starts to develop now after years of claim making and scholars are divided into three camps: techno-optimist, techno-pessimist and techno-ambivalent (2016, p. 785). It is presumable to predict what are the claims for each camp, but below I reflect on each one of them, discuss previous studies conducted in the field and connect it to the research topic of this study.

Even though technological optimists are found as early as Aristotle, technological achievements much later led to formation of ideas by intellectuals like Bacon, Voltaire, Saint-Simon and others (Chumakov, 2014, p. 452). The potential they saw in technologies was rather immense prophesying to solve problems and set global well-being (Ibid.). Similarly, to their predecessors, contemporary techno optimists stress the capacities social media tools have in solving social problems (Kidd and McIntosh, 2016, p. 785). Social media networks levelled powerful organizations and top-down approaches of social movement making. They gave power and trust to individuals, including bloggers and activists (Ibid. p. 786). In addition, using online technologies either for organizing or mobilizing is cheap and easy. Various studies attempt to prove that social media plays an important role in social movements in different ways. Such as, Tufecki's and Wilson's study on the influence of Facebook and Twitter in the protests in Egypt. Leading to scholars arguing on the "Facebook Revolutions" and the "Twitter Revolutions". Additionally, various scholars argue that social media is an essential tool in the hands of people living under authoritarian regimes, where online space is safer for users to operate and harder for authorities to control (Qiang, 2011 and Wines 2009 in Earl et al. 2015, p. 3).

Technological pessimists consider that social media has a little impact on profoundly changing interrelations between humans in the offline life (Kidd and McIntosh, 2016, p. 788). Even more, impacts of social media as a tool for social change are seen as an exaggeration and utopian, as well as a threat through misuse of power (Ibid.). Morozov[8]'s argues how authoritarian regimes respond to the internet, how dictators master techniques of surveillance and censorship and how it can be used for propaganda intentions (2011, p. xiv). He gives an example of Russia where the Kremlin successfully uses "Russia's vibrant Internet culture, leveraging it to the government's own ideological advantage" (Ibid. p. 124). Morozov gives an example of how the Russian propaganda was produced using a documentary on the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia. The cut of video footage "analyzed the war from a highly ideological position, portraying Georgians in the worst possible light imaginable" (Ibid. p. 125). The documentary was posted online and went viral with 2.5 million views, after which it was shown Russia's national patriotic TV channels, followed up by a book. This pattern shows how the Internet can be governed with propaganda-driven methods of control without direct censorship and bans (Ibid. p. 126). Christian Cristensen makes a point on the example of Iran in 2009 where the elections provoked an uprising. Even though, it was labeled as a "Twitter Revolution" only over 0.2 percent of the population used Twitter (Christensen, 2011, p. 238). How Morozov puts it together, what people "cared about was Twitter's prominent role in organizing the protests and its resilience in the face of censorship" (Morozov, 2011, p. 293) rather than actual protests. Another important aspect raised by techno-pessimists is "slactivism". The idea that social media creates "an online form of self-aggrandizing, politically ineffective activism" (Cabrera, Matias and Montoya, 2017, p. 400). The boundary between activism and slacktivism is fading which is in conflict with traditional forms of activism. It gives people the impression that they contribute to the political change in a digital influence (virtual campaigns, online petitions, etc.)

---

[8] "The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom" (2011)

(Morozov, 2011, p. 201), which "makes online activists feel useful and important while having preciously little political impact" (Ibid. p. 190).

Neither techno-optimists nor techno-pessimists fail to make arguments that are relevant for the discussion on the rise of social media and its positive/negative impacts. But it is important to consider that arguments defending their positions are made from different perspectives. For example, techno-pessimists argue that it is blurred who creates, controls and has the access to social media. It can be authoritarian regimes censoring the internet and using them for tracking or destabilizing uprisings. On the other side, techno-optimists argue that there are authoritarian regimes where social media has a crucial part to play in protesting and voicing people's concerns. China is a compatible example for their argument, as street protests at this point of time at least are not an option. Therefore, using social media while living in an authoritarian regime can have both benefits and harms. Consequently, this is when techno-ambivalence enters the discussion.

Techno-ambivalence falls in between of techno-optimism and techno-pessimism. According to Murthy, even though Twitter is an essential tool for organizing, it needs to be remembered that Twitter does not cause movements (2013, p. 94). In accordance with the study by Tufekci and Wilson, Facebook and Twitter had a significant role in the Tahrir Square protests, which led to the resignation of the President Mubarak (2012, p. 374). From Tahrir square protestors 52% used Facebook and 16% used Twitter (Ibid. p. 370). Tufekci and Wilson examined how people were informed about the protests, which showed that almost 30% got the information through Facebook and 46% used it for sharing information about the protests. Therefore, social media was an important tool in protests despite the fact of Egypt's authoritarian rule. To what extent can social media be praised for successful protests is a matter of balance and measurements. But, it is clear that techno-ambivalence rejects romanticizing both the past and the future and waits for further developments of social media and its influence on social movements (Kidd and McIntosh, 2016, p. 792).

In this ongoing discussion which creates a debate between social movement scholars, I intend to discover where the role of Facebook stands in development and operations of the women's movement in Georgia and position it in the theoretical debate of techno-optimism, techno-pessimism and techno-ambivalence. I will engage in this debate with this case study on Georgian women's movement.

Dealing with this question is not only important theoretically by joining the debate among scholars, but to study Georgian women's movement since so far there are limited number of studies that deliberate on women's movement. Those limited amount of perspectives and discourses are directed to other aspects of the movement, like NGO-ization[9] while the narratives and roles of ICT tools and social media are absent. However, there are several studies carried out in the post-Soviet countries exploring relations between new media and social movements. Jacobsson and Saxonberg claim that not all activist groups seek to institutionalize and professionalize themselves, instead they depend on grassroot and voluntary activism (2013, p. 260), which also is evident in Georgia. As a result, some scholars studying social movements in Central and Eastern European countries shifted their focus from professionalized organizations to grassroot activism. These actors have less funding and capacities but organize and actively engage in contentious politics. In this case, groups mobilize cultural and social capital and use the Internet for wider mobilizations and claim making in order to balance insufficient funding (Ibid.). Katalin Fábián describes that in Hungary "first individual activists and then the emerging movement took advantage of social media sites, especially Facebook, to provide information, recruit supporters and encourage others to engage in networking and creative protests" (2013, p. 73), which led to creating discussion forums for subscribers. In Poland, the initiative to march for animal rights spread on Facebook and resulted in 10,000 people marching in the streets of several cities. This was unexpected case of mobilization while "street action is typically

---

[9] NGO-ization – "the professionalization and institutionalization of social action" (Kapoor, 2013).

performed locally, involving only a few people and largely unnoticed by media" (Jacobsson, 2013, p. 38). Therefore, social media has a potential to mobilize a large number of people around various claims and my aim is to look at the movement of Georgian women in order to analyze processes and mechanism in relation to the social media phenomena.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, I introduce the aim and objectives of the research and a methodological approach. Furthermore, the chapter presents the data collection process and the sampling strategy, as well as ethics of the research. Finally, the limitations and weaknesses are examined.

3.1 Aim and Objectives

The purpose of the research is to study women's movement in Georgia, analyze developments and operations of the movement and identify the role of Facebook in the process. The aim of the research is to explore and analyze central points, times and episodes in contemporary women's movement in Georgia. Moreover, to study actors in the field and to find out what practices and mechanisms they use in various cases. According to the aim of the research following objectives are formulated:

- To conduct expert interviews with actors working in women's organizations and groups forming women's movement in Georgia;
- To study what are the claims of the movement;
- To identify the main processes and mechanisms women's movement uses for various purposes;
- To investigate how different women's organizations and groups collaborate with each other;
- To explore how women's movement collaborates with the elites (the government);
- To examine how different women's organizations and groups use Facebook.

3.2 Research Method

For the data collection qualitative sociological research methods were used, specifically explorative expert interviews. The interview method of qualitative empirical research aims to explore data from experts which is "quick, easy, and safe", promising valuable material (Meuser and Nagel, 2009, p. 17). Expert interviews allow to gain specific knowledge about the study area (Gläser and Laudel, 2010 in Van Audenhove, 2017, p. 7). There are several reasons that made expert interviews relevant for this study and proved that there is no other method of empirical data collecting that would suit better in this case. Van Audenhove lists several reasons explaining what differentiates expert interviews from other types of interviews: "expert is confident about his/her knowledge", "expert is often able to identify the problem, the question, the solution". In addition, he mentioned the risk of influencing by interviewee is decreased and experts provide knowledge and experience which is otherwise challenging to gain (2017, p. 11). Experts are willing to cooperate and discuss. They also have high understanding and experience of the subject, terminology and field, which generates a high level of discussion and information production (Ibid. p. 14;26). All the mentioned factors made expert interviews the most applicable method of data collection.

Qualitative explorative interviews were conducted with 10 experts working in the field. Choosing explorative interview was needed to understand an in-depth perspective on women's organizations and groups in Georgia. The interview guide brought up a variety of issues, such as: operations within an organization or a group, including challenges, achievements, activities, tactics, main focuses and aims. Moreover, alliances and cooperation with other women's groups and organizations, as well as the political elites. Additionally, the use of Facebook was examined, including tactics of using, target group, and negative and positive aspects of it. The interview guide was developed based on the preliminary literature review. It was assembled using theory of

social movements by Tilly and Tarrow. I focused on processes and mechanisms analyzed by them and they were incorporated within the question of the interview.

3.3 Data Collection and Ethics

10 expert interviews were conducted with experts representing women's NGOs in the country, women's non-formal (feminist) groups, solo-activists, as well as experts working for the UNDP Georgia and Public Defender's Office of Georgia. As a sampling technique snowball sampling was chosen based on the purpose, aim and objectives of the study. First, I started conducting a background research and gathering information on actors in the field. I reviewed the Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus platform on Gender Democracy, where I read various articles women's organizations and groups in Georgia, as well as individuals working in the field. Accordingly, I used contacts of the people I have worked with on similar projects before. I contacted "Women's Movement", "Women's Gaze" and "Women's Information Center" (WIC) through their Facebook page. I set interviews with the director of the WIC Elene Rusetskaia and co-founder of "Women's Gaze" Gvantsa Khonelidze. Accordingly, with a recommendation of "Women's Movement" I became a member of a working group of "Women's Movement". Here over 2,200 women are involved, including NGO representatives, activists, International NGO employees, etc. I posted a small statement in a group about myself, my research and that I was searching for experts representing women's organizations and groups for expert interviews. My post was commented on 37 times, where women tagged other possible candidates for the interviews on the post. Therefore, I contacted those who were interested in having an interview in a private message (on Facebook) and set a date and time for a meeting. In the interview my respondents were recommending me other people who would be willing to talk about their organization and generally on the women's movement in Georgia.

All 10 interviews were conducted in person in the manner of semi-structured interviews. Before starting the interview, information for informed consent were presented, including the presentation of the researcher and the purpose and aim of the research. The confidentiality and anonymity of the research respondents are respected. Every respondent agreed on recording the interview and only two respondents wanted to stay completely anonymous. While the representative of "Independent Feminist Group" chose to speak with the name of the entire group and conceal the name and surname. Protecting the interests and security of the respondents who wanted to stay anonymous are achieved on basis of keeping confidentiality and anonymity. Other respondents chose to reveal their identity and be mentioned with their name and surname. All interviews were conducted in Georgian language, and quotations from the interviews are my translations from Georgian.

3.4 Data analysis

The data gathered in the interviews were transcribed and for analyzing qualitative data analysis computer software NVivo was used. NVivo offers easy and efficient process of coding, to mark texts in codes (nodes in NVivo) and retrieving, to collect coded texts together in certain categories (Bryman, 2012, p. 291). Therefore, interviews were coded into paragraphs of themes and issues, in terms of social movement processes and mechanisms in line with Tilly and Tarrow (2007), as well as data on Facebook and different claims of the movement.Categorized data was analyzed according to the social movement theory, processes and mechanisms presented in a chapter of Theoretical Framework.

3.5 Limitations and Weaknesses

The weaknesses of the method itself are that experts are not neutral and the information obtained through them could be subjective (Van Audenhove, 2017, p. 12;17). Experts represent an organization, an institution or a group and they have their own views and judgments based on their experience and knowledge. Therefore, it is challenging to identify objective and subjective data from each other. Moreover, time and finances were other limitations of the field work. Since the research is carried out for the Master thesis only 10 interviews were conducted. However, having more time and capacities would ensure more expert interviews with women's organizations and groups in Georgia. It would open a possibility to expand the scope of the problems, actions and cooperation.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I analyze the theory of social movements according to Tilly and Tarrow (2007), Tilly (2008) and Della Porta and Diani (2006). I evaluate descriptions of social movement provided by the above-mentioned authors. As well as elements of social movement and recommendations of studying streams of campaigns are analyzed. I look into streams, episodes, mechanisms and processes offered by Tilly and Tarrow and build up a schedule for the following study in line with them. Furthermore, applied concepts are examined.

The composition of performances, called today a social movement inaugurated in Great Britain (Tilly, 2008, p. 72). According to Tilly and Tarrow a social movement is "a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities" (2007, p. 8). In accordance with Tilly, the social movement combines three elements: sustained campaigns of claims on power holder, a set of various collective actions, called repertoires and repeated displays of collective worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (Tilly, 2008, p. 72).

The first element is campaign – a sustained, harmonized series of episodes that either implies parallel collective claim making or the same targets (Ibid. p. 121). Tilly divides those claims in three categories: identity, where a demand is a certification of their collective existence; standing, where a demand is directed to an authorization as an existing and legitimate political group, and program, where a demand is a promotion of particular outcome or outcomes (Ibid.). The second element is repertoire – sets of different performances of claim making. Performances include forming coalitions, organizing street demonstrations, making public statements of claims, holding public meetings, petitioning, lobbying, etc. (Ibid.). The third element is WUNC – a demonstration of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment. Each one of them represents various sets of points. Social movement performers display that their

worthy; their unity engages various common markers within participants; they use numbers to demonstrate their scale, using signatures, counts and other elements of representing quantity; and commitment by participating, subscribing, resisting, etc. (Ibid.). Tilly and Tarrow add the fourth element to the first three, which is social movement bases "the organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain […] activities" (2007, p. 8). Therefore, social movements make claims on authorities, uses diverse arrays of performances, demonstrate their capacities, and are based on organizations, networks, participants or other actors who operate to sustain them.

Engaging in those aspects, means being engaged in contentious politics, which ties three aspects together: contention, collective action, and politics (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 4). When these three aspects convene, claims become collective, they become political, and groups shape political identities (for example, us women) (Ibid. p. 9). Consequently, shared interests, government policy, and power come into play which can acquire power to build revolutions (Ibid.).

In parallel to Tilly and Tarrow, Della Porta and Diani propose a description of social movements as "a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action", including well-defined choice of adversaries, connection with strong informal networks and possession of clear collective identity (Diani, 1992a; 2003a; 2004a; Diani and Bison 2004 in Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 20). Social movement actors are involved in resistance with opponent actors defined by them in order to endorse or reject social changes (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 21). On behalf of the confrontation, individual and organized actors, while sustaining their autonomy and independence, connect with each other and form informal networks in order combine their capacities to achieve a shared goal (Ibid.). As a result, they form a collective identity which goes beyond protests and demonstrations (Ibid.). They shape "a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause, which enables single activists and/or organizations to regard themselves as inextricably linked to other actors, not necessarily identical but surely compatible, in a broader collective

mobilization" (Touraine, 1981 in Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 21). Accordingly, Della Porta and Diani set four issues for the social movement analysis, including the relationship between structural change and transformations in arrays of social conflict, the role of cultural representation in social conflict, the process through which values, interests and ideas get turned into collective action, and influences of a certain social, political, and/or cultural context on social movement successes (2006, pp. 5-6).

However, Tilly and Tarrow introduce the possibility to analyze social movements with streams, episodes, mechanisms and processes, which are applied as key frames to carry out this research. Streams are sets of claim-making, which bring together all the above-mentioned elements of social movements. For example, Ukraine's Orange Revolution, American women's movement, U.S. antislavery, etc. (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 211-212). Episodes are "bounded sequences of contentious interaction" (Ibid: 213), which deals with activities, including protests, strikes, demonstrations or outcomes of certain streams of contention. Mechanisms are "events that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances" (Ibid: 214); For example, diffusion, brokerage, certification and emulation. Processes are "assemble mechanisms into combinations and sequences that produce larger-scale effects than any particular mechanism causes by itself" (Ibid.). For example, framing, collective action, institutionalization, scale-shift, etc.

Therefore, this research follows the theory of Tilly and Tarrow by analyzing contentious stream, sets of contentious episodes, causal mechanisms and episodes. I intent to explore how Facebook became a part of the movements by dividing a stream into episodes and looking into mechanisms and processes. In accordance with Tilly and Tarrow the internet plays a major role in contentious politics in two ways: to assemble people and to coordinate demonstrations (2007, p. 13). While petitioning, demonstrations and internet-based calls developed into modular performances for contentious repertoires that are adopted to local settings, using particular language, symbols and practices (Ibid.). Besides, online activism allows "a faster mediated

representation of protest events and campaigns and renders the practices at the basis of media activism feasible for those people who would not define themselves as activists, but rather as protest participants or sympathetic audiences" (Mattoni, 2013, p. 2). Internet becomes a tool to stimulate individuals for whom the level of citizen engagement and participation is very low as a consequence of the soviet past where collective action was forced and ritualized by communist regimes (Císař, 2013, p. 1). Therefore, exploring effects of Facebook on the women's movement in Georgia has significant importance, while analyzing is done through traditional social movement mechanisms and episodes developed by Tilly and Tarrow. As a result, the following schedule is formulated:

Stream: Georgian women's movement from 2014 onward

Episodes: Three major claims and activities within those claims carried out by women's movement in Georgia. Episode one – the case of femicides in 2014, episode two – the case of quotas in the parliament, episode three – the case of legal gender recognition

Mechanisms: Boundary activation, boundary formation, brokerage, certification and diffusion

Processes: Coalition formation, collective action, framing, mobilization, scale-shift, institutionalization, self-representation and identity shift.

4.1 Concepts

Concepts implemented and analyzed throughout the study are reviewed below. Concepts like mobilization, coalition formation, framing and collective action are central for the study and are used employed in various ways by the women's movement in Georgia. While the rest of the concepts are relatively secondary for this case. In a broader picture they are discussed later in the chapter of analysis.

Boundary activation – "increase in the salience of the us-them distinction separating two political actors" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 215). Social boundaries detach us and them, they draw lines between different group groups. Tilly points out that every person lives in numerous social boundaries which activate and deactivate themselves according to certain actions a person takes (2004, p. 223). Apart from individual cases, it applies to a large-scale number as well. For example, in a case of social movement formation.

Boundary formation – "creation of an us-them distinction between two political actors" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 215).

Brokerage – "production of a new connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites" (Ibid.). Brokerage guarantees connecting two or more social sites with each other. Although, brokerage activation does not necessarily promise more effective coordination (Tilly, 2001, p. 25).

Certification – "an external authority's signal of its readiness to recognize and support the existence and claims of a political actor" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 215). Certification changes positions and relations between two actors. However, they can become oppressors, opponents or allies (Ibid. p. 75).

Diffusion – "spread of a contentious performance, issue, or interpretive frame from one site to another" (Ibid. p. 215). The successful example of diffusion was the Arab Spring, where the cross-national diffusion of protest waves spread the Middle East and North

Africa (Solingen, 2012 in Bamert, Gilardi and Wasserfallen, 2015, p. 1). Protests spread from Egypt and Tunisia with a domino effect inspiring other countries to resist (Bamert, Gilardi and Wasserfallen, 2015, p. 1).

Coalition formation – "creation of new, visible, and direct coordination of claims between two or more previously distinct actors" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 216).

Collective action – "all coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs" (Ibid.).

Framing – "adopting and broadcasting a shared definition of an issue or performance" (Ibid.).

Mobilization – "increase in the resources available to a political actor for collective making of claims" (Ibid. p. 217). Mobilization brings "demand and supply of protest together. Without mobilization there will be no action even in circumstances of high demand" (Klandermans, 2013, p. 1). Therefore, effective mobilization practices play an important role in movement development. Tilly and Tarrow highlight that major mobilization practices combines mechanisms of brokerage and diffusion with other mechanisms and processes (2007, p. 203).

Scale-shift – "increase in the number of actors and/or geographic range of coordinated claim making" (Ibid. p. 217). One of the most important process in contentious politics as stated by Tilly and Tarrow is upward scale shift, which takes place on a local level and progresses to national or international (Ibid p. 95). Upward scale shift operates on two routes: *direct diffusion* and *mediated route*. *Direct diffusion* succeeds through groups and individuals by having same contacts or due to their similar interests. While *mediated route* incorporates brokers connecting people without no former contacts or shared interests (Ibid.).

Institutionalization – "incorporation of performances and political actors into the routines of organized politics" (Ibid. p. 216). Institutionalization means that

30

movements are or transform into formalized structures with professionalized leaders (Staggenborg, 2013, p. 1). On the one hand, institutionalization is sometimes seen as a cooptation of the movement (Ibid p. 2). While on the other hand, it can be a tool to target governments and corporate with authorities (Zald and Berger 1978; Katzenstein 1998; Raeburn 2004; Snow 2004; Soule 2009 in Staggenborg, 2013: 2).

Self-representation – "an actor's or coalition's public display of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment" (Ibid. p. 217). Above-mentioned WUNC, called self-representation by Tilly and Tarrow (2007). Social movement performers display that they are worthy; their unity engages various common markers within participants; they use numbers to demonstrate their scale, using signatures, counts and other elements of representing quantity; and commitment by participating, subscribing, resisting, etc. (Ibid.).

Identity-shift – "emergence of new collective answers to the questions "Who are you?" "Who are we?" and "Who are they?" (Ibid. p. 216).

5. Analysis

The analysis of this Master thesis develops around the importance of Facebook in the campaigns of women's organizations and groups in order to explain women's movement in Georgia. This digital era of social media that we live in today has enabled today's organized groups to reach massive amounts of people in seconds. What at first started as a fun way of interacting with friends and acquaintances has grown into a strong political platform where social activists try to get their voices heard about the injustices that prevail in the modern society. Women's organizations and groups have used different types of mechanisms and processes to address problems that have emerged at different points in time. My intention is to explain this campaign which has involved many different tactics and claims in its history. Focusing on these various tools that women have applied in their battle for equality is truly fascinating considering the intense competition, occasional cooperation, and different formulations of heated contentions that have taken place over the years. Some issues evolve and dissolve, some sustain themselves. My aim is not to analyze the success of their campaign, but rather to follow and observe their actions, programs and decisions.

Although the women's organizations and groups in Georgia have tackled various issues and have focused on numerous important matters, this particular analysis targets three very specific chapters in its history. The first episode is the case of frequent femicides in 2014. The reason I start examining femicides is that it served as a turning point for women to mobilize and demand relevant actions from the government. The second episode is the claim for gender quotas in the parliament. With the support from international organizations and the civil society, women's organizations and groups have started actively advocating for quotas in the parliament through a comprehensive agenda. The third episode is the demand of legal gender recognition of transgender women.

Within these episodes, I will focus on the development and the growth of the movement. I will look at the patterns of mobilization and framing, along with other mechanisms and processes characterizing social movements. I draw attention to the movement and its opposition to the patriarchal emphasis on politics, institutions and structures that women's organizations and groups are fighting; I will try to reach deep within the broad perspective of the movement, and analyze the challenges they face internally. I will also examine how the movement is perceived by the public, what women's organizations and groups are contributing to better the society and what role they aspire to play in the history of modern Georgia. All of this together provide an accurate summary of developments and help analyze the progress of the movement chronologically, to make it easier for the reader to follow. And most importantly, I study how Facebook is used in everyday dynamics of women's organizations and groups, what are the purposes and effects of using it.

5.1 Episode[10] One – The Case of Femicides in 2014

The first part of the analysis is the episode of protest campaign responding to the increased femicide rate in 2014 and a response actions from the movement. I aim to explain why it was a turning point for large number of women to mobilize and take action. I analyze this episode in terms of mechanisms and processes of social movements described by Tilly and Tarrow. Mechanisms are defined as "events that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances", while processes "assemble mechanisms into combinations and sequences that produce larger-scale effects than any particular mechanism causes by itself" (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 214). I analyze this episode in terms of the following mechanisms – boundary activation and formation, brokerage, certification, and diffusion, as well as in terms of the following processes – coalition formation, collective action, framing, mobilization and scale shift. I intend to show how the use of Facebook was crucial for the actions taken during the protest campaign. Specifically, how Facebook served as a key tool for coalition formation, mobilization, diffusion and framing. The episode unfolds the events chronologically starting in 2014 up until March, 2018. I discuss how women were unsuccessful mobilizing masses of people to stand against femicides, how the problem was not addressed by political elites. I examine the turning point for mobilization and coalition formation and look at the vital role that Facebook played in the process, as well as the collective actions and events that followed after, and how the movement addresses the problem today.

The first episode of the protest campaign centers around the frequent femicides in 2014. The reason I put a great emphasis on the increased femicides is that it prompted women to mobilize, organize politically, and demand relevant actions from the Government.

---

[10] Episodes are sequence of interactions, including protests, demonstrations, etc. (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007: 213).

Socially constructed gender stereotypes and gender binary roles are still strongly held in the Georgian society. The popular stance, especially common in the rural areas of the country, is that a woman's job is to be a nurturer, while a man's job is to be a provider. This notion, held on a large scale can prove to be quite detrimental to women in general. As the majority of women have no way of sustaining themselves without the help of "the provider", they are often forced to stay in failing marriages. Additionally, the negative preconceived opinions that the society, especially the rural society, holds against divorced women are a major deterrent for these women to separate from their possibly abusive husbands. The research report on "Public Perceptions on Gender Equality in Politics and Business" carried out by the UN Women Georgia (2013) once again proved that the devotion of a woman in the family is expressed through taking care of the household. Also, the study underlines that Georgian women are tough, resilient, patient, and in order to keep the family together and preserve marriage, in some cases they choose to accept and ignore domestic violence.

The history of the Soviet Union has made Central and Eastern Europe "acutely sensitive to human rights violations" (Fábián, 2007, p. 278). Since its collapse, women's NGOs started actively advocating to help women across the country, especially the more vulnerable ones. This culminated when Georgian parliament adopted the Law of Georgia on Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence (Arganashvili, 2017, p. 150) in 2006. Since then, various special services have been offered to help people in need, and calls to the police from alleged victims of domestic violence have become more frequent. Elene Rusetskaia, the director of Women's Information Center (WIC) states:

"The most important achievement for me is the law on domestic violence, when the country recognized the existence of the problem. This is one of the laws which brought state services, resources, training of the personnel and many other procedures which brought us at the point that women speak up on their problems, on which they were not talking before".

Thus, fighting domestic violence was introduced in the Georgian state agenda in 2006. But the Law was gender blind[11]. According to Fábián, in their chase of democracy Central and Eastern European countries "may have rhetorically trapped themselves on the side of universality and might not be able to continue to deny the gender-specific imbalances in power and the resulting discriminations, such as violence against women and within it, domestic violence" (2007, p. 278). Similarly, the Article 3 of the Law of Georgia stated that "Domestic violence is a violation of the constitutional rights and freedoms of one family member by another family member through physical, psychological, economic, sexual violence or coercion" (The Law of Georgia, 2006). So, according to the law, domestic violence was de-gendered for the state, meaning that there was an absence of gender components (Tchabukiani, Jibladze and Ubilava, 2014, p. 29). Thus, the Law was declared in gender neutral terms even though that studies and researches show that in the majority of cases in Georgian families, women are disproportionately the victims of domestic violence. Tchabukiani et al. highlight that neither in the Law of Georgia on Gender Equality or in the action plan is domestic violence considered as a gendered violence. Meaning that even if the state declares that domestic violence is a problem, it does not reflect on it in terms of gender inequality conditions, or as a demonstration of gendered violence, which later causes the key aspects to be omitted from the policy making process (Tchabukiani et al. 2014, p. 43).

Public perceptions on domestic violence and women's duty[12] was strengthened and encouraged with the law of non-gendered domestic violence. Domestic violence was recognized as a problem of human rights, but was not considered in terms of gender

---

[11] Gender blind – "the failure to recognize that the roles and responsibilities of men/boys and women/girls are given to them in specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts and backgrounds. Projects, programmes, policies and attitudes which are gender blind do not take into account these different roles and diverse needs, maintain the status quo and will not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations" (United Nations Statistics Division – UNSD, n.d.)

[12] According to the UN Women research report "Public Perceptions on Gender Equality in Politics and Business" (2013)

equality and completely ignored the unequal grounds on which men and women operate in their social and professional lives (Ibid. p. 27). Despite the gender blind policy, the victims of domestic violence in most cases were contacting police to report their threatened or endangered situation. In some cases the police officer recommended the victim to normalize their relationship with the perpetrator, and thus failed their duty to safeguard the vulnerable that had already risked too much by contacting the police in the first place (UN Women Georgia, 2015a). In 2014 the scale of violence against women in Georgia intensified. The Emergency and Operative Response Center "112" received 9,290 calls on domestic violence. Thirty-four women were killed, from which thirteen murders were committed by a husband, ex-husband or partner (Public Defender of Georgia, 2015). Alarming fact for women's organizations and groups was that the police did not try to prevent possibly avoidable crimes, and that the state officials were turning a blind eye to the increasing rate of femicides.

Femicide is defined as violence against women that various acts – from physical and sexual abuse to murder, usually committed by a present or a previous partner (World Health Organization, 2012). There were cases of family members and partners murdering women and no state official was discussing the matter or addressing it directly. Additionally, there were no mechanisms for the police to tackle the problem. On the other side, there was a general mistrust from the society that these women were actually killed per gender motives. The general narrative that opposes the feminist narrative is that murder is a very serious crime as it is, and gender is not to be considered at court. But what feminists were and still are trying to prove is that to prevent murder in general, one has to examine the various causes of such actions and tackle each one with policy tools and regulations. In case of femicides, which by definition is punishing women for being "bad" women in the traditional sense, certain measures have to be taken. This is not to devalue crimes perpetrated by men towards men, but to address a very specific issue ignoring of which will only help it prevail.

Women's organizations and groups were focusing on the problem and mobilizing media in order to raise awareness among people, and more importantly to make the officials react. After each murder of a woman, a small group of people would gather in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) with posters and different slogans. Half of the women I interviewed were involved in these protests against femicides. They tried to mobilize people to join the protest through the outlet of Facebook but after some time, they realized that it was very ineffective. Due to Facebook's algorithm that shows certain events/posts to only people that have previously shown interest in the subject, and considering the fact that feminism is not a popular school of thought in the general public, the efforts of this group to get people involved did not reach a large audience. And even those that agreed with the general objective behind the protests did not recognize the pressing need for everyone to join in on the action. Not a single official from the government has met them or has recognized the problem. According to them, they had no power or voice to organize and convince people to join the protest.

After a couple of attempts to make people join them, a small group of women from "Independent Group of Feminists" and other activists decided that there was a need of an alliance with bigger, stronger, broader and more dynamic group which any interested person could join. The main reason was to get raise the platform and reach more people and try to get them to listen. On the 17th of October, 2014, Maka Tsivtsivadze, a university professor, was killed in a centrally located university building by her former husband. She reported the death threats she was subject to the police a couple of times but the police did not take any actions. Tsivtsivadze's murder was a breaking point for the society. It was a realization that one cannot be safe during the day even in a public place from an abusive partner/ex-partner. This time more people were ready to join the protests and recognize the palpable need for action. Nino Gamisonia, a member of "Women's Movement", co-founder of "Women from Georgia" and the former member of the "Independent Feminists Group" said: "so even those people, who never had a reaction and whom I was texting whole year to join the

protest and never did, woke up, and now they were texting me themselves to take some action"[13].

The same day, women willing to contribute contacted each other through Facebook to arrange a meeting. The use of Facebook in Georgia as in many other countries is a daily activity, and so was in 2014. According to the Freedom House "Freedom of the net 2014" internet in Georgia is Free. There are no social media or ICT apps that are blocked nationwide; no political or social content is censored. With no obstacles to access the internet or limitations on content (Freedom House, 2014), Facebook can generate a lot of social activity and attention to specific issues/events given that enough people share information on the subject initially. 72 percent of internet users use internet mainly to check social networks, and Facebook is the most commonly visited website - "Facebook is now the most popular website among internet users in Georgia . . . Facebook is also used by civil society activists and others as a tool for discussions about ongoing political and social developments" (Ibid.). Gvantsa Khonelidze, co-founder of "Women's Gaze" stated: "Facebook is the point of departure for activism, gathering social capital and sharing information". Therefore, Facebook is a platform used broadly for activism, from opening discussions on topics to organizing, and to decision-making. Although the use of Facebook was unsuccessful to mobilize people to join protests in front of the MIA in 2014, it transformed into a tool for a successful mobilization after the murder of Maka Tsivtsivadze. Since a lot of people that previously ignored the calls for help decided to take a more active part in the process, the movement managed to cultivate enough initial social interest to make the issue viral on Facebook. The tragic death of Maka Tsivtsivadze exposed the urgency of needed action. Women contacted each other through Facebook and decided to meet and discuss possible plans of action. Over 45 women gathered. Some, that had never before been involved in activism, decided to establish a new wave of Georgian women's movement. With a name "Women's Movement" to let the society know that women's

---

[13] People were contacting her through Facebook.

movement in Georgia still exists, a group where any person who identifies as a woman could join. From this position women could now make claims and address bodies responsible for various preventive or executive practices. To analyze this phenomenon more broadly, the act of connecting with each other according to Tilly and Tarrow (2007, p. 215) is a mechanism of boundary activation - "increase in the salience of the us-them distinction separating two political actors". In this case, they, women, needed to make their voices heard to the state officials and institutions, triggering boundary formation, defined as the "creation of an us-them distinction between two political actors" (Ibid.). Thus, on one side – we have women who were concerned with ongoing murders in the country, and on the other side – the state with its officials and institutions.

"Women's Movement" decided to organize their first campaign on the 25th of November, 2014 on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. On the 17th of November, "Women's Movement" held an official presentation with a declaration that "women's movement is not a political party, NGO or a charitable foundation. Rather it is a movement that unites all persons for whom gender equality and women's rights matters and who are extremely concerned by murders of at least 25 women so far this year, by the frequency of domestic violence and by the constant subjugation of women in Georgia" (Women's Movement, 2014a). In addition to the presentation, a Facebook page[14] of the group and a working group were launched for women, those concerned with Femicides and other issues affecting women. Consequently, Facebook is used on two levels, on a public level as a platform to share public events, useful articles, responses and information, and on private level for women to connect and discuss issues with one another. Ida Bakhturidze, a member of "Women's Movement", co-founder of "Women from Georgia", and the former member of the "Independent Feminists Group" identified Facebook as the main tool to

---

[14] https://www.facebook.com/GeorgianWomensMovement/

prepare processes, the main instrument for communication and the central means of sharing information:

"Every informal group which was created, would have it much harder to exist without Facebook. The main working group of "Women's movement" is on Facebook. There we process everything, there we argue, debate and plan every meeting. All the information on our activities are shared on Facebook".

Hundreds of people came to the protest held by the "Women's Movement" in Tbilisi, Georgia, on the 25th of November. Solidarity protests, organized by local groups, were held in over 20 other cities of Georgia. Ida Bakhturidze states:

"Every day, new cities were joining, and local organizers claimed that they would organize the protest in their cities. No one from here (Tbilisi - the capital) has gone there. Women with mutual messages, and common manifestations came out at the same time in 25 different cities, towns and places, including the area in front of the parliament in Tbilisi".

The contentious performance, in this case, a protest, spread from one city to another. The mechanism of diffusion took place on Facebook and continued in the streets of various cities and towns of Georgia. Hundreds of people joined to express their solidarity and concerns, causing the scale to shift upwards. Although the protests were not centrally organized, they played out as a united manifestation on a national level. According to Tilly and Tarrow (2007, pp. 94-95) this is one of the most important process of contentious politics, where the contention starts on a local level and moves to a national (or an international) front. As an example, one of the recent and strong upward scale shift of contention was manifested during "The Arab Spring". Where the rise started from Tunisia and with brokerage and diffusion formed new coordination of demands and moved to a transnational level (Tarrow, 2015, p. 7).

Activism is a voluntary activity for every woman joined in any informal, unregistered group in Georgia, and a large majority has full-time jobs besides being a member of the "Women's Movement" or the "Independent Group of Feminists". They work for

women's NGOs or other civil society organizations, public and private institutions, they are students, or stay-at-home moms. Thus, Facebook is a platform they can contact one another, share information, practices and ideas, in a matter of seconds. Thus, unsurprisingly, a vast amount of activism of the movement is done through Facebook. Online, women started gathering their strengths, distributing duties by voting who can contribute in what field, discussing possible actions, etc.

In addition, Facebook was used as a tool to mobilize women in Tbilisi and to spread the information in other cities. Nine of the women I interviewed named Facebook as the main source for mobilization of women. Facebook in Georgia is a special phenomenon said one of my interviewees. Facebook is not a private sphere but a public one. Both authorized women's NGOs and non-registered groups use Facebook as a tool for mobilization. While for non-registered groups it almost is the only way to spread information since they have no funding for extra expenses. Facebook is the main tool for recruiting, sharing information and communication. Activists and members of the groups not only share and invite people on the event, they also send personal messages with the invitation. As stated by my interviewees, personal communication always works better.

On the day of the protest on November 25, activists in every city started signing a petition addressing officials of Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches to recognize the severity of the problem of femicides, with the aim to generate effective and operative politics to fight violence and gender inequality nationwide. The petition was shared and re-shared on Facebook for 16 days in order to gather signatures, which ended up getting over 6500 signatures at the end of the campaign. Activists submitted the petition to the parliament with a performance where students from six universities of Georgia participated. Each participant was passing the petition to another, finally submitting it to the parliament (Women's Movement, 2014b). On the 19th of December, 2014, the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament supported the petition and decided to create a working group (The Parliament of Georgia, 2014)

formed with the members of the Parliament, and representatives of the legislative government and the civil society. The support for the petition from the Committee of the Parliament of Georgia was an indication that the governmental side is ready to recognize and work on the problem promoted by the civil society. Ida Bakhturidze said: "When people believed and admitted femicides, state had to admit the reality as well". Therefore, the raising number of femicides in 2014 was a turning point for the women in Georgia in various ways. It was one of the first large women's protest incorporating women working for different organizations and in different sectors and groups, united under a single claim. According to Tsopurashvili (2017, pp. 10-11), in the last three years the feminist discourse and the feminist movement became stronger and made many people reflect on the oppressing local cultural processes and practices in gender terms.

On the 19th of June, 2014 Georgia signed the Istanbul Convention, which is the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence[15]. "The Convention requires states parties to promote and effectively implement policies of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women; to protect women against all forms of violence; and to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. To offer a holistic response to violence against women and domestic violence, it calls for the involvement of all relevant actors, such as government agencies, the national, regional and local parliaments and authorities, national human rights institutions, and civil society organizations" (UN Women Georgia, 2017). However, the convention was not ratified for two more years to come. The delay prompted the NGOs to hold a conference on December 5, 2016, and to require government representative to attend the said conference to speed up the process of ratifying the Istanbul convention (Open Society

---

[15] The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (The Istanbul Convention, 2011).

Georgia Foundation, 2016). On May 19, 2017, Georgia finally ratified the Istanbul Convention.

In 2015, the "Women's Movement" with the support from other groups and organizations in Georgia developed recommendations to create a working group in the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee. Recommendations were directly addressed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs of Georgia and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The first and the most important recommendation was for the Ministry of Internal Affairs to create a special department that would work on domestic violence against women, gendered violence on women and sexual violence against women (Women's Movement, 2015). The recommendation was supported and suggested by the Public Defender of Georgia. On the 23rd of January, 2018, the Ministry of Internal Affairs introduced "Human Rights Protection Department" in partnership with UN Women Georgia to combat "domestic violence, violence against women (including sexual violence), crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination, hate crimes, trafficking and crimes committed by and/or towards minors" (UN Women Georgia, 2018).

However, it is important to highlight that although the goal of equal rights and opportunities seems like it leaves little room for different interpretations, the tactics that these various actors choose along with their list of priorities, do not always align. Although their fight is unified under the big umbrella of a "feminist movement", they are most definitely not uniform. For example, the "Women's Movement" work with the government and endorse them to make systemic changes. There are also two other actors on the arena, more radical groups and women's NGOs not involved in contentious politics. Even though each one of them was actively involved or supporting protesting femicides in 2014, petitioning and protesting around the same claim, their relations are tense. After interviewing 10 leaders and representatives of different sides some problems became very clear. There is a fight for resources within the movement

and certain individuals have to compete to receive them, creating tensions and conflict between them. The process of competition rises where individuals' get caught up in the pursuit of "rewards" rather than outcomes (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007, p. 216). The one that gets the "reward" tends to think that they are better as an organization, a group or an individual, and can offer a better service or do something better than their colleagues. Solidarity and mutual support is rather weak. In addition, these activists have personal mistrust and conflicts with each other, as has been revealed in closed Facebook groups many times. One of the strong reason behind these tensions is the ideological differences. Some groups have vague ideological positions, while others are very specific. These ideological differences and personal misunderstandings provoke disagreements with one another. Nevertheless, a couple of my respondents see differences and tensions with each other as a healthy process that improves and enhances activism to stay alive. As well as some groups found common positions and denominators in order cooperate and collaborate together. However, regardless of their internal tensions and conflicts vast majority of the groups and organizations join the petitions that are being signed to address various problems. Additionally, when there is a protest or a performance to promote this cause, groups and organizations, or at least individuals from other groups or organizations join their colleagues to show that women stand together. Gvantsa Khonelidze stated: "Standing in the street protests together as a declaration and manifestation that we are together and we are not divided and separated makes easier to win battles with conservative groups". According to Jacobsson and Saxonberg, recent studies carried out by several scholars revealed that in Russia division of labor takes place within a movement. Different groups and organizations chose to work with diverse strategies with "developing relation to the state; some are more oriented toward self-help or providing services, some are more grassroots-oriented and others are professionalized advocacy groups" (Fröhlich, 2012; Henry, 2006; Chebankova, 2012 in Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, p. 3). Similarly to the case in Russia, there is a division of labor in Georgian women's movement. There are organizations and groups covering various topics, but some issues are universal to

all groups. For instance, "Independent Group of Feminists" are trying to remain reactive in order to respond to various changing circumstances. Their focus is bringing up issues that are less expected to fall in other organizations and groups agendas but are essential for the public, including women. A representative of the IGF said:

"We think that we need to bring these topics up and later if any group or organization that is working with the government gets interested, they can use our protest or demonstrations as a legitimation that there is a demand on those issues".

This shows that, despite the tension, these groups try to cooperate in many ways. If the IGF brings up an issue, other organizations and groups carry on working on different levels. Ultimately, it was mainly the IGF members protesting in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs after each murder of women in 2014, which culminated in forming "Women's Movement" and structural changes in the system.

To conclude this episode, the women's movement made claims on Femicides and their claims were successful. According to my respondents creating the department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs was one of the major successes of the movement along with many others. The movement acts as a watchdog for the state parties, that follow their claims until they are accomplished. However, although the groups have had certain success on their path, they are fully aware that the war for equality is not over.

On April 16, 2018, the "Women's Movement" started petitioning on Femicides again, after the murder of a 25-year-old woman by her stepfather. The petition on change.org has been signed by 1,102 persons. It is addressed to the Parliament of Georgia demanding a distinct criminal offence for femicide or to propose gender-motivated murder as an aggravating condition. The petition addresses also the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the President of Georgia (Change.org, 2018).

5.2 Episode Two – The Case of Quotas in the Parliament

In moving on in this episode, I analyze the campaign around a claim to adopt the quota system in the Parliament of Georgia and the actions taken by the movement starting from 2014 until March 2018. I aim to analyze the male-dominated Georgian political environment and the prominent underrepresentation of women in politics. I start by reviewing what quotas are, then examine the different existing types of quotas and success stories of how adopting the quota system has promoted more gender-equal political participation in different countries. This will be followed by a discussion on why Georgia needs quotas as a temporary mechanism and what measures were taken by the women's movement to promote it. I analyze this episode with mechanisms and processes of social movements in accordance with Tilly and Tarrow (2007), specifically, in terms of coalition formation, collective action, mobilization, institutionalization and self-representation. I explain and stress the declining role of Facebook when it comes to advocating and lobbying with political elites. Additionally, I analyze the relations between the movement and politics in general.

In response to the violence against women and femicides, the Committee for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of the UN urged the government of Georgia to eliminate the growing number of femicides (National Democratic Institute, 2016). According to the National Democratic Institute (NDI), issues like violence and other crimes against women receive no response from political leaders because women are underrepresented in Georgian politics. In the parliament of Georgia from 2012-2016, there have only been 17 female members, which is only 11 percent. After the parliamentary elections in 2016, the ratio was raised up to 15%. Despite the slight improvement, the indicator remains disproportionately low, especially, considering that the female representation on the municipal level is even lower. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (2016), women make up 52 percent of the general population of Georgia. This number really highlights the lack of women in politics, which is a highly man-dominated patriarchal structure. The lack

of political will to empower women in political participation has left women on the sidelines of politics for the last 25 years (Urchukhishvili, 2017, pp. 13-14). Even though, the same proportion of male and female members are involved in political parties', women are mainly active at a lower level while men get leadership positions (Nodia and Scholtbach, 2007, p. 180). Georgian state parties receive recommendations regularly from the international community to take measures to address the prominent underrepresentation of women in politics.

In 2011, the Georgian legislation introduced voluntary quotas for political parties. If women made up 20 percent of candidates in the party's list, the state would pay 10 percent more its base funding. In 2014 the benefit was raised to 30 percent budget increase with 30 percent representation of women. However, voluntary quotas are not legally binding, and not many parties have used them either in 2012 or in 2014 (Transparency International Georgia, 2016).

Figure 3. The incremental track model and the fast track model

	The incremental model	The fast track model
Diagnosis	Women lack resources	Discrimination and mechanisms of exclusion
Goal	More women in politics	Gender-balanced elected bodies
Strategy	Capacity-building activities	Active measures, such as gender quotas
View on historical development	Gender equality will be reached in due time	Gender equality will not be reached by itself

Source: adapted from Dahlerup, Drude and Freidenvall, Lenita, 'Quotas as a "Fast Track" to Equal Representation of Women: Why Scandinavia is No Longer the Model', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7/1 (2005), p. 29.

In the beginning of the 21st century numerous countries adopted some type of gender quotas in order to increase women's political representation. By the year 2010, nearly 100 countries had adopted quotas in one way or another. This led to an increasing number of women's representation in national parliaments (Högström, 2016, p. 180). There are three types of gender quotas used in the world: reserved seats, legal candidate

quotas and political party quotas[16] (International IDEA and Stockholm University, 2009). The progress towards gender equal political representation takes either an incremental track or a fast track (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005 in Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2011, 28). Incremental track requires decades to increase political involvement of women and Scandinavian countries are the example for it. While fast track considers introducing legislated quotas to promote quicker change (Ibid, p. 28-29). The most relevant example for the fast track is Rwanda with 61.3 percent of women in parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017, p. 11).

Figure 3. from Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2011, p. 29) shows that because of the discrimination and exclusion of women, they have various obstacles on their path to obtaining seats in the parliament, and that gender equal political involvement will not be reached independently without certain special actions. Urchukhishvili's study reveals that the Georgian patriarchal reality of politics nourishes myths and stereotypes regarding women's political participation. Such as "politics as a dirty job", it is not a place for women and they should be avoiding getting involved in it (2017). In 2000, the creation of the first women's coalition with the support of the OSCE launched the discussion on women's participation in politics. In 2008, NGOs that joined the coalition gathered 30,000 signatures and submitted to the parliament with the request for mandatory quotas. However, the claim failed to pass the com (Oxford University Press, 2018)mittee hearings and was not considered on the parliament plenary session (Radio Freedom, 2017).

This shows that there is an absence of political will to involve women in politics within political parties. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a temporary mechanism to stimulate the process. Moreover, the failure of voluntary party quotas in Georgia led

---

[16] "While reserved seats regulate the number of women elected, the other two forms set a minimum for the share of women on the candidate lists, either as a legal requirement or a measure written into the statuses of individual political parties" (International IDEA and Stockholm University, 2009)

local civil society organizations and international organizations recommending mandatory party quotas to encourage gender-equal representation (Open Society Georgia Foundation, 2015, p. 6). In 2014, with the increasing number of femicides, women's involvement in politics on decision-making positions proved to be an emergency. This is when the women's movement, including women's organizations and groups started actively lobbying mandatory party quotas.

On the 13th of February, 2014, "the Task Force on Women's Political Participation in Georgia (the Task Force) was established by local civil society and international organizations" (Ibid. p. 4). Task Force was lobbying to implement mandatory party quotas in Parliament. The formation of the Task Force is what Tilly and Tarrow refer to as coalition formation, and implies a "new, visible, and direct coordination of claims between two or more previously distinct actors (2007, p. 216). The Task Force consists of nine NGOs, most of them registered by women, which are part of the women's movement, but there are also organizations that are not necessarily women's NGOs. The coalition is formal, and each actor is an institutionalized body. But people representing those authorized NGOs are also actively involved in other groups, such as the "Women's Movement", which is a non-registered group against institutionalization and formalities. So, even though the image of the Task Force is official, it represents almost every part of the movement. As a result, on the International Women's Day in 2015, "Women's Movement" rallied to the parliament building demanding "More Women in Parliament". Simultaneously, 24 other cities and towns protested in Georgia with the same posters and messages[17].

In response to the protest, on the 16th of March, 2015 the Task Force organized a high-level meeting on women's political participation with Giorgi Margvelashvili, the President of Georgia, and David Usupashvili, the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia. Representatives of political parties, civil society, international organizations and

---

[17] Event on Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/events/406429592866730/

50

diplomatic corps attended the event. The President and the Speaker of Parliament expressed their support in mandatory party quotas, and Usupashvili declared that "it is time to move this discussion to the Parliament and address the issue through legislation" (UN Women Georgia, 2015b).

Additionally, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and The Caucasus Research Resource Center Georgia (CRRC) carried out a public opinion poll in 2014 on women's political participation, interviewing almost 4000 people nationally (NDI, and CRRC, 2014). Results show that:

1. 64% of Georgians believe currently there is no gender equality in Georgia (68% among youth);
2. 55% of citizens think having 17 women out of 150 members in parliament is too few;
3. 68% say they support the parliament adopting mandatory gender quota;
4. 70% of population think the number of women in parliament should be at least 30%;
5. Half of the population believes that increasing the number of women in parliament would have a positive impact on Georgia;

According to the findings of the NDI and CRRC, Georgian society is ready to have quotas in the parliament and support women's increased political participation. Society is willing to have a more gender equal legislative body, which well represents or is closer to the realistic representation of the Georgian society.

In 2017, the NDI and the CRRC-Georgia carried out another research to further study public attitudes towards the issue in Georgia. This time, 63% of the population (69% of women and 58% of men) supports mandatory quotas in the parliament to increase women's participation (NDI, and CRRC, 2017). 69% of women and 58% of men support it. After the results of the study the task force started gathering signatures again to re-propose the bill to the parliament. Elene Rusetskaia, director of Women's

Information Center (WIC) and a member of the Task Force said that they could not find a single member of the parliament who would take up the responsibility to propose quotas in the parliament. Hence, they had to find other ways to make it happen. The Task Force got funding from the NDI to collect signatures and register the bill in the parliament. On June 12, 2017, the coalition submitted a legislative proposal to the parliament with 37,455 signatures. Numerous parliaments in the world give the people a chance to submit their own initiatives. "In accordance with the Georgian Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the Georgian Parliament allows its citizens to submit a bill for which at least 30,000 signatures of Georgian citizens need to be presented" (Transparency International Georgia, 2018). For reference, in Poland, social movements are allowed to propose a bill to the parliament with 100,000 signatures. It gives movements motivation to mobilize people which could be the explanation of "why Polish women's organizations partake in mobilizational activities more often than Czech ones, which instead concentrate on lobbying" (Korolczuk and Saxonberg, 2011 in Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, p. 13). With access to different possible political tools, women's movements choose various tactics. In Georgia, the Task Force had to find several solutions to address women's political representation, and to pressure the political elite to consider the quota system.

This time the bill on quotas was endorsed on three committee hearings and was scheduled for the plenary meeting on the 21st of March. The plenary meeting grew into a long discussion and the final hearing was rescheduled for the March 23. On the final hearing, the parliament voted the proposal down. It needed 76 votes and received only 66 (Civil.ge, 2018). Thus, despite the Task Force's efforts that were put into the process, they fell 10 votes short of achieving their goal.

When discussing the mobilization in women's organizations and groups for pushing the implementation of the quota system in Georgia, it is important to evaluate the relation between the women's movement and the state politics and individual politicians. I interviewed 10 representatives of women's groups and organizations,

including solo activists and experts. One of the focus points of the interviews was relations with politics, namely, the extent to which the women's movement influences Georgian politics, the type of cooperation there is between the women's movement and politicians, the main aspects of the overarching problem that they focus on, the challenges and difficulties they come across while working with the government, the success stories of the movement, and their future goals. On one hand, I was concentrating on finding out more about the tactics and strategies of the movement when working with the state. On the other hand, I wanted to know more about how different actors of the movement see the individual political elites, identifying both achievements and challenges of the process. There were several points underlined by my respondents and I want to describe and explain them below to present a better picture.

As stated above, women's organizations and groups work on every level with the state officials. Due to labor division within the movement, some groups work more intensively on a number of issues than others. Some are involved in lobbying and advocating while others are more active in the field of traditional contentious activism. However, groups cooperate with each other despite the tensions among different generations of feminists. Beraia divides Georgian women's movement into three generations: the first-generation forms after the collapse of the Soviet Union; the second generation develops after 2011 with the birth of the "Independent Group of Feminists", and the third generation rises after 2015 when more socialist groups emerge (Beraia and Kutranidze, p. 2017). The second-generation benefits from the achievements of the first generation. But there's a gap between them, while the dialogue between the second and third generations is more tense, and often ineffective since the third generation is very critical towards the second generation (Ibid. p. 38). I interviewed women from all generations, but mostly from the second and the third one, and the interviews revealed the following patterns about the movement and the elites.

Institutionalization of the women's movement started from the early 90s. There was a post-soviet NGO boom - "NGOs grew like mushrooms after the rain" (Phillips, 2008, p. 65). In Georgia, donor organizations were entering the country first for the humanitarian purposes and then it transitioned into solving development problems (Sabedashvili, 2007, p. 43). So, women started mobilizing and working with different governments on an organizational level. They were not depended on state funding, which gave them freedom and flexibility. But they had to align with the agendas of donor organizations, which limited their autonomy. Moreover, women's NGOs then were not declaring themselves as feminist organizations with feminist agendas (Ibid. p. 42). The word feminism was a taboo, and women's organizations felt antagonistic about being called "feminist". Although, efforts carried out by the first generation created numerous laws and changes which prepared and created the social and political environment for the second generation. But it is important to stress that first generation of women activist was not replaced, but rather enhanced with a new force when the second generation came into play.

The second generation came to be more active, loud, straightforward and demanding. "Independent Group of Feminists" managed to legitimize feminism. More and more groups started setting up and various feminist narratives and parallel discourses started flowing, greatly affecting the attitudes of the society, including those of the politicians. Language and attitudes of the politicians became more gender aware. Maka Meshveliani, program manager for the UNDP Georgia thinks that one of the biggest achievements of women's movement in Georgia is that gender equality has the same political relevance along with other concerns of politics. Political parties feel responsible to have serious stances to these issues. Feminists are occupying public spheres and claims made by them are listened to and heard. The strength that the women's movement obtained puts politicians in a position where they have to respond to the claims that are made. Gradually, the movement gathered power. However, political institutions are men dominated patriarchal structures. Numerous political

parties are gender blind and cannot see the urgency of problems, such as sexual harassment. According to my interviewees elites are not open, are not democratic, are looking at their claims as a manifestation of "radical feminism" and refuse to accept recommendations from the bottom part of the society. As a result, women's organizations and groups lobby to have civil sector representatives in government institutions, who are able to present societal problems better and in a more accurate way. Moreover, the Women's NGOs and international organizations organize trainings for the state representatives and employees to raise awareness on gender sensitivity[18].

Yet, the power and authority are in hands of the government. The absence of the willingness of politicians to change means no changes in the system. Tamta Melashvili, writer and solo-activist, said that when women's organizations and groups are demanding 100% of change, only 20% is realized, while the effort from the movement is 200%. But even achieving the little milestones opens doors to fighting bigger fights. Also, it has to be mentioned that women's organizations and groups address very realistic issues. Lack of political willingness was the reason those issues were not legitimately addressed. Therefore, groups are lobbying from one topic to another, or covering couple of them simultaneously. According to activists, in some cases, it is challenging to prove and show the reality of the problem, which makes the argument of adopting quotas even stronger. There are number of issues on which women can relate better than men, and that is why having more women on decision-making levels will lead to more inclusive policies and services. It is very hard to convince such a male dominated audience in the need for the quota system, as they have never been subject to such sexism. Most of them believe that the lack of women in parliament is caused by the innate disregard for politics in women in general.

---

[18] "Gender sensitivity refers to the aim of understanding and taking account of the societal and cultural factors involved in gender-based exclusion and discrimination in the most diverse spheres of public and private life. It focuses mainly on instances of structural disadvantage in the positions and roles of women" (Šribar, 2015).

Relations between the movement and the state officials and institutions are, despite the difficulties, characterized as cooperative and collaborative. Various laws and changes have been adopted through lobbying and advocating of the movement, as well as through petitioning or protesting, but one protest never brings structural changes. It is the chain of actions by several actors that bring institutional changes in the politics on policy level. But the women's groups and organizations work very hard to change the system and for now, one of the most important priorities is implementing the quota system. Despite the fact that a part of the ruling party and the Prime Minister of Georgia support the initiative, some of the politicians are still managing to block it. Recent studies show that quotas have increasing support from the public as well. Baia Pataraia, a director of SCO Union "Sapari"[19] and a member of the "Women's Movement" wrote on her blog that the only solution is to strengthen civic activism. People need to mobilize themselves, make political claims and fight for them since not a single political party represents public opinion (Pataraia, 2018). Therefore, it is exciting to see further developments and actions from the women's movement in order to achieve their mission.

As a concluding paragraph, I want to state that the role of Facebook in the process of quotas is rather insignificant. Facebook was used as a mobilization tool 8th of March, 2015. Besides, Facebook is used to raise awareness on the quota system in public. Activists are writing blog-posts and sharing them on Facebook or writing Facebook statuses explaining the urgent need of implementing mandatory quotas. People also actively share recent studies and statistics with their friends. But most of the efforts are done on the institutional level, behind closed doors, at a conference or around the meeting tables where the scope of Facebook use is limited.

---

[19] "Sapari" is one of nine NGOs united in the Task Force on Women's Political Participation in Georgia

5.3 Episode Three – The Case of Legal Gender Recognition

In this episode, I analyze the protest campaign in support of legal gender recognition for transgender women and actions taken by the movement in 2018. The analysis is done in terms of mechanisms and processes explained by Tilly and Tarrow (2007), specifically, in terms of collective action, mobilization and framing, where the Facebook platform again assumed a crucial role. I evaluate the general attitudes on LGBTI[20] issues in Georgia, especially those regarding transgender women. I examine the intersectional approach that the women's movement is trying to adopt, as well as the challenges that come with it. My analysis is based on the previous research in the field, as well as articles and narratives from the respondents.

Gender binary views and roles dictated by them are very strong in a Georgian society. Socially constructed masculine and feminine norms set sharp boundaries and minor deviation from them creates causes for violence and discrimination (Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, 2012, p. 53). In Georgia, cisgender[21] women are already in oppressed position compared to men and LBT[22] women are one of the most vulnerable (Ibid.). But before I start deliberating on women, I want to explain the general climate for sexual minorities in Georgia.

The various studies carried out in Georgia show that LGBTI groups are one of the most "invisible" which keeps violence "invisible" as well (Ibid.). Homophobic attitudes were evident in 2013 when a peaceful march on 17th of May (the International day against homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia) was raided by thousands of protesters, mostly men, including Orthodox priests. Legal institutions and legislation is rather weak in protection of LGBTI persons. "Until 2014, there was no comprehensive and

---

[20] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex.
[21] Cisgender – "individuals who possess, from birth and into adulthood, the male or female reproductive organs (sex) typical of the social category of man or woman (gender) to which that individual was assigned at birth" (Aultman, 2014, p. 61).
[22] Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender

consolidated anti-discriminatory legislation, which would ensure the readiness of the government to combat all forms of discrimination and which would subordinate it to adequate legal mechanisms in Georgia" (Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center, 2016, p. 16). The Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was adopted in 2014 and confirmed Public Defender's Office for the law implementation. Until 2012 crimes with discriminatory reasons were excluding crimes committed on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. But in 2012, a special Article was added to the Criminal Code (Ibid.).

The Yogyakarta Principles[23] Plus 10 adopted in 2017 in Geneva "The Right to Legal Recognition" in Article 31 articulates that "Everyone has the right to legal recognition without reference to, or requiring assignment or disclosure of, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. Everyone has the right to obtain identity documents, including birth certificates, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. Everyone has the right to change gendered information in such documents while gendered information is included in them" (The Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10, 2017, p. 9). In Georgia, a new Identity Document (ID), birth certificate and passport can be obtained only if the person undergoes the surgery of sex change. Hormonal treatment and irreversible sterilization are compulsory processes as well (Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, 2014, p. 4). Sex reassignment procedure is not prohibited in Georgia, but it is very expensive and not covered by the public or private insurance services (Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, 2012, p. 79).

Discrepancy in legal documents creates not only personal discomfort, but also exposes such persons to discrimination on the labor market. "It promotes stigma, social

---

[23] In Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 6 to 9 November 2006, 29 distinguished experts from 25 countries with diverse backgrounds and expertise relevant to issues of human rights law unanimously adopted the *Yogyakarta Principles* on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (The Yogyakarta Principles, 2007, p. 7).

exclusion and discrimination" (TGEU, 2017). "In April 2017, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that requiring sterilization for legal gender recognition violates human rights. All Council of Europe Member States must bring their legislation and practice into line with this new legal principle" (Ibid.)

According to the study conducted in 2012 by the Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG), "LBT rights are not perceived as a part of women's rights . . . LBT issues are practically eliminated from the agenda of women's rights organizations" (Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, 2012, pp. 53-54). So, in this episode, I intend to analyze whether the movement in Georgia represents women regardless their backgrounds. In this case, I look at transgender women and to what extent transgender women are involved in the activities of the women's movement in Georgia.

According to Gvianishvili "NGOs and informal women's groups manage to more or less efficiently cooperate in exchanging resources and filling gaps in each other's work. However, in the dominant narrative women are still portrayed as a homogenous group (ethnically Georgian, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied and absent mental illnesses)" (Gvianishvili, 2016b). Intersectionality[24] was not introduced in feminist discourses and agenda when the first NGOs were appearing in Georgia. Additionally, donors were setting their agendas and priorities on which existing groups had to compete on (Ibid. p. 15-16). The "Independent Group of Feminists" was the first to openly declare the intersectional approach. Later on, more and more groups tried to transition to incorporating the intersectional approach in their agendas (Ibid. pp. 16-17). But Beraia states that even though lesbian and bisexual women fight against domination of heterosexual women in the movement and create their discourse and practices, Georgian feminist movement is mainly cisnormative (Beraia and Kutranidze,

---

[24] Intersectionality – a concept by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. "The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage" (Oxford University Press, 2018).

2017, p. 24) Therefore, transgender women are marginalized within the movement (Ibid.).

The movement prioritizes the tactics they use to fight for each cause. Some deal with topics one after another, others take on several at a time. Cases, when the majority of the groups and organizations have united for the same purpose is rather rare. Gvantsa Khonelidze, co-founder of the feminist group "Women's Gaze" said that on the 19th of July, 2018, women's solidarity march against "inequality, violence and oppression" was a rare occasion where every type of feminist and activist gathered against homophobic and xenophobic activities. But the march was reactive on ultranationalist march.

On March 8, 2016, the "Independent Group of Feminists" marched protesting labor rights, including labor rights for persons with disabilities and transgender persons. Of course, the representatives of LGBTI group joined and brought the pride flag. At the same time, "Women's Movement" was holding a demonstration in front of the parliament building demanding quotas in the parliament and women's equal representation where several female politicians were joining to have a speech supporting quotas. The IGF group marched to the parliament and joined the demonstration on quotas. Once the politicians saw the pride flag, they left the premises explaining that they could not give a speech with pride flags on the background. This situation caused a disagreement between the two groups. In this case, "Women's Movement" was prioritizing holding the demonstration on quotas, and said that the pride flag was "not a necessary element" for the day. This situation on one hand shows that for the "Women's Movement" focus is on middle-age, cisgender women. But Gvianishvili assesses the day as "a call for a new agenda for the feminist movement in Georgia", where "the flags and posters that the marchers bore gave a distinctly "queer" flavor to the protest" (2016b, p. 17). On the other hand, it demonstrates how scared the female politicians are to make statements with the pride flag on the background not to be marginalized and criticized by the society and/or by their fellow politicians.

Considering the generally prevalent traditional values in the Georgian Society, directly speaking on women's rights in front of the pride flag would be a completely un-populist move.

March 8, 2018, the "Women's Movement" held a protest demonstration "I am a woman – admit it" for transgender women's rights. The protest was held in front of the Justice House objecting the insensitive procedure for legal gender recognition and demanding changing it. At the same time, a petition by "Women's Movement" was running on change.org addressing the Minister of Justice to make changes. The petitions gathered 1,051 supporters and was submitted to the Justice House. The official response has not been made regarding the petition and the movement will possibly take further actions to see the petition through.

Ida Bakhturidze, a member of "Women's Movement" expressed that it takes a very strong group of activists to start working on topics like transgender women. Activists who are vulnerable themselves for any reason have less capacity to so. Today cisgender activists in Georgia are more self-confident and powerful to stand next to transgender women and make claims together. But it is important to encourage groups acquiring more intersectional perspectives and approaches, addressing problems of all women without distinction of sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin, etc. Anna Iluridze, the Head of the Department of Gender Equality at Public Defenders Office of Georgia, believes that women's activism has to become more inclusive and women's movement, organizations and activists are trying to do so. The manifestation for this is the protest of 8th of March, 2018, when the "Women's Movement" held a protest for something they previously decided was less important.

This is why this episode is crucially important when talking about the women's movements in Georgia in general. Despite the clashes, tensions and arguments, these groups have a common goal and serve the same purpose, however, not necessarily the same way. While some think that prioritization of issues is important, others are

unapologetic in their demands and refuse to disregard one issue to focus on the other. The "one step at a time" attitude is not enough for the Independent Group of Feminists. However, they manage to come together and support each other in their battles.

The movement uses Facebook exclusively for mobilization and framing. First, the decision about the focus of the protest of the International Women's Day 2018 was made on Facebook. The platform was facilitating the mobilization of women for the event and the collection of signatures. Facebook served as an online forum for discussing myriad of topics relevant to the movement. This is also where the representatives/leaders of the movement agreed on what information to share with the general public, and how to do it in a way that incites action in the audience the most. However, framing was contested and reframing processes started when women's movement applied intersectionality.

5.4 Comparison of The Episodes

In this part of the analysis, I examine the role that Facebook play in the developments and operations regarding the women's movement in Georgia. I discuss the phenomenon of using the most ubiquitous social network, Facebook, for mobilization and activism, which I place in a theoretical debate between scholars of social movements. I evaluate where Facebook stands with the connection of women's movement based on expert interviews representing women's NGO, women's non-formal (feminist) groups, solo-activists and experts working for the UNDP Georgia and Public Defender's Office of Georgia. I analyze the discussion in terms of framing, mobilization and self-representation processes discussed by Tilly and Tarrow (2007).

Nowadays, Facebook has a widespread use apart from socializing with friends. Every type of groups and alliances are active on Facebook, including companies, politicians, institutions, agencies, NGOs, activists, etc. Facebook is used for political campaigns, and for influencing the public opinion revealed after the Facebook – Cambridge Analytica data scandal[25].

As discussed already, Facebook is actively used by women's groups and organizations in Georgia for different purposes. But I intend to discuss it further and look into details of using Facebook as "the point of departure for activism", and the positive and negative sides of using Facebook according to my respondents. I studied the way women's groups and organizations use Facebook, the reasons behind it, their target groups and statistics, as well as advantages and disadvantages of using it. Summarizing the data locates Georgian women's movement on the map of the theoretical debate

---

[25] Facebook – Cambridge Analytica Scandal – "The data analytics firm used personal information harvested from more than 50 million Facebook profiles without permission to build a system that could target US voters with personalised political advertisements based on their psychological profile" (The Guardian, 2018).

between techno-optimism, techno-pessimism and techno-ambivalence, and answers the research question of the study.

The three episodes from women's movement in Georgia described above made it clear that Facebook plays a big part for women's groups and organizations. Some of them use it extensively and Facebook platform is the base of their activism, while others use it relatively less. But one thing is certain - every women's non-formal group and formal organization (NGOs) has their own Facebook page. In addition, non-formal groups run closed working groups on Facebook for organizing and discussing within exclusive members. Next, I describe the aspects highlighted by my respondents when reviewing Facebook and finalize the discussion on the role of Facebook in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia.

Online activism is an essential part of the frontline and has a big role to play at this point in time. It is strongly linked with social media, mainly Facebook. Online activism is very up-to-date and urgent which creates less need for using traditional media for activism. One of my respondents believe that Facebook is the most effective tool and it will not be replaced for a long time still. The argument of Facebook being the most effective tool was endorsed by four other respondents. Facebook is of crucial importance. It allows everything to happen in one space such as liking, sharing, commenting, blogging, debating and discussing. Facebook holds a position of spreading information and campaigns of raising awareness in a society on feminism and women's rights. Even the "Independent Group of Feminists", who shifted the institutionalized social movement into the streets in 2011 and started protesting against practice/phenomena of women's oppression, have increased their involvement in online activism. A representative of the "Independent Group of Feminists" said that the ratio of protests and online activism is 30 to 70 percent, maybe even 20 to 80. Initially the group was protest oriented, but lately they took up an informative role, including translating articles and sharing information. So, Women's groups and organizations translate articles in Georgian and spread them on Facebook, make Georgian subtitles

for videos, shoot informative videos on sexual education and reproductive health, offer Facebook counseling for women of all ages, and discuss topics publicly and privately. Gvanca Khonelidze, co-founder of "Women's Gaze" said she gets around 20-25 private messages on Facebook every day with questions on various issues, including expressing their willingness to become members of the organization. She contacts them personally and encourages and empowers them. If they need specific services that "Women's Gaze" cannot offer, she redirects them to the other organizations. So, not only organizations work on raising awareness, they offer consultations and counseling through Facebook which could carry on to life offline. Organizations cooperate and work with each other, offering each other's contacts and services to the people in need. In addition, groups and organizations use Facebook tools to promote themselves, such as emphasizing the region, age, interests, etc. Therefore, the women's movement at the moment prioritizes raising awareness, which results in the gradually growing circle of interested people, and Facebook is a major tool in this process.

Another essential aspect of Facebook is that it is used for organizing. It is relevant for Georgia that not all the groups aspire institutionalization, some depend on grassroot and voluntary activism (Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013, p. 260). It is a tool that comes in handy when people are physically not working together in one space to be able to talk face to face with each other and discuss further actions. These meetings on a regular basis requires resources of time and money. When there are lack of resources Facebook is chosen as a working platform for the members. It is a low-cost communication tool for organizing and participating especially for resource-poor actors (Della Porta and Mosca, 2005, p. 166). In the Facebook working group of "Women's Movement" people vote, discuss and decide. It does not require "long-term or sustained commitments from participants" (Earl et al. 2015, p. 4) which makes membership easier to sustain and measure. Facebook helps women's movement remain continuous and durable, which could be challenging without it.

The most important and the main aspect of using Facebook for the women's movement is mobilization. Both women's non-formal groups and authorized NGOs use Facebook for this purpose. Mobilization happens in different ways, as merely setting up an event is not enough. Group members and organization representatives invite their Facebook friends to the events and share it. Additionally, they sent private Facebook messages to people, which according to my respondents always works better and results in a bigger number of participants and their greater involvement in the offline world. Obviously, there are more strategies of mobilizing people but since being an activist is a voluntary occupation, they do not have enough time left to mobilize and apply different strategies. On the other hand, the NGO employees who are professionally working to increase participation have additional tools for mobilizing people. But even for them, the use of Facebook is one of the more effective options to this end. Therefore, the use of Facebook for the purpose of mobilization is universal.

Apart from the pros of Facebook, my respondents identified its cons, which are conflicts that happen regularly. The attitude of one's writing is many times misinterpreted leading to tensions and mistrusts in between different groups and individuals. It is challenging to identify what is reality and what is imagined. One of my respondent noted that debating on Facebook is like playing video games. When you kill somebody, it does not mean that you actually killed somebody in real life. Communications are frequently offensive and fake. In addition to that, Facebook is labeled as being tricky. While being a small, closed space, it gives a feeling that you covered everybody and everybody is informed about an event, an article or a post. Although, not everybody uses Facebook and Facebook uses algorithms through which people access information they would like to get, locking them up in a bubble. As well as, some activists point out that Facebook promotes slacktivism. It creates people who would rather write a post as a protest than standing in the streets making claims. So, using Facebook comes with consequences.

Reviewing the theoretical debate between social media and social movements shows that social media has had a tremendous influence on contemporary social movements, including the Arab Spring, Tahrir Square protests in Egypt, Occupy Wall Street movement, and many others. But there is an ongoing debate whether the effects are positive, negative or neutral. The debate generates techno-optimists who see social media having a big role to play in today's social movements and in solving social problems. They believe in revolutionary power of social media that "the revolution can be tweeted or that it already has been" (Kid and McIntosh, 2016, p. 785). On the other side, there are techno-pessimists who see the negative sides of social media, including Facebook. They argue on incapability and exaggeration of social revolutions and positive social change (Ibid.), while strengthening their argument by showing examples of authoritarian states in charge of controlling social media. However, techno-ambivalence stands in between of them, balancing the streams and recognizing both authorities and individual activities (Ibid, p. 792).

The analysis of the Georgian women's movement shows that women's groups and organizations in Georgia operate differently according to the nature of the claim they put forward. This results in a diverse use of Facebook in their activities. The turning point came in 2014, when they organized around frequent femicides and Facebook played a significant role. It was the main mean for coalition formation, mobilization and organization, as well as the reason behind the scale shift. Facebook turned out to be a major platform for these women which sustains today with over 2200 members. The case on quotas in the Parliament required much less activities like protests, performances, marches, etc. which led to less practice of Facebook. Mainly women's groups and organizations were focusing on advocating and lobbying with the political elites, while only one protest was organized on the 8th of March, 2015. As well as, Facebook was used for raising awareness on the necessity of quotas by publishing articles, statuses, studies, practices from other countries, etc. Intersectionality and the claim for legal gender recognition is a relatively new concern for the women's

67

movement. Therefore, there is not much evidence to show how Facebook is used in this case, except for the mobilization people to carry out a protest on the 8th of March, 2018, and the petition to demand a change from institutions in terms of legal gender recognition. Otherwise, it is very interesting how women's movement continues applying intersectionality on their agenda and what role will Facebook play in further developments on this claim.

Studying women's movement in Georgia showed that women's groups and organizations operate with traditional practices and methods as any other social movement does. Before meeting politicians, they make claims to the authorities, use public performances, make alliances, use institutional routines to build on their claims, etc. and Facebook has a critical role to play in them. However, in the end it comes down to the politicians who make final decisions, and on this level Facebook has no role. Facebook is used for mobilizing, petitioning and discussing. It is used to self-represent - when women's movement demonstrates the relevance of various problems, insists that the goal is worthy, shows that women are united and mobilized, signs petitions, fills the streets and shows their commitment to the cause. Although, the final decisions depend on politicians, Facebook is an important tool and a medium in the process of getting the issue to their attention.

To conclude, nowadays Facebook plays an important role in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia. Although it fails to make a revolutionary difference as techno-optimists would claim, neither is it incapable of making changes. Women's movement in Georgia stands in between those two dichotomies, recognizing "the power of existing hegemonies and the agency of individual actors" (Kidd and McIntosh, 2016, p. 792). The Facebook does not make immediate, institutional changes. While it contributes to the overcoming small milestones and the long-term process of change-making.

6. Conclusion

The research examined the women's movement in Georgia, analyzed developments and operations of the movement, and assessed the role of Facebook in the process. It focused on three central episodes in the history of contemporary women's movement in Georgia in order to analyze mechanisms and processes they use, and to identify the role of Facebook in the process of fighting for their claims.

The research introduced a background knowledge on women's movement in Georgia, including first moves towards feminism over a century ago and its rebirth after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It presented contemporary women's groups and organizations in Georgia and aimed to identify the role of Facebook in the processes that ensued since 2014. The previous research chapter of the study outlined the theoretical debate between techno-optimism, techno-pessimism and techno-ambivalence. A theory of social movements was proposed according to Tilly and Tarrow, in terms of which the movements' contemporary history was analyzed and the role of Facebook was studied. Furthermore, ten expert interviews were conducted representing women's NGOs, women's non-formal groups, solo-activists and experts working for the UNDP Georgia and the Public Defender's Office of Georgia. As a result, three main episodes were identified and explored.

The first episode studied the protest campaign responding to the increased femicide rate in 2014 up until March, 2018, which served as a turning point for a large number of women to mobilize and take action. It was analyzed in terms of mechanisms and processes according to Tilly and Tarrow, and explained the use of Facebook as a key mechanism for coalition formation, mobilization, diffusion and framing. The second episode analyzed the campaign around the claim to adopt a quota system in the Parliament of Georgia and the actions taken by the movement starting from 2014 until March, 2018. The outcomes proved that Facebook had a less significant role to play while the movement focused on advocating and lobbying with political elites.

69

Additionally, less activities of contentious politics were carried out in the streets and online. However, Facebook remained a mechanism for communication and raising awareness. The third episode studied the protest campaign in support of the legal gender recognition for transgender women, and the actions taken by the movement in 2018. It reviews the prioritization of tactics within the movement and current efforts of integrating an intersectional approach into the agenda. Facebook, again in this episode similarly to the first, played a crucial role in terms of collective action, mobilization and framing.

Women's groups and organization in Georgia have various tactics with which they operate according to the claim they make. This leads to a diverse use of Facebook in their activities. However, the study proved that women's movements in Georgia operate with traditional practices and methods, as any other social movement does. They make claims to the authorities, use public performances, make alliances, use institutional routines to build on their claims, etc. And Facebook has a critical role to play every step of the way. While activism is a voluntary activity for numerous women, Facebook is a platform they can contact one another, share information, practices and ideas, in a matter of seconds. Thus, unsurprisingly, a vast amount of activism of the movement is done through Facebook. With the new platform available, women started gathering their strengths, distributing duties by voting on who can contribute in what way, discussing possible courses of action, etc. online. Facebook gradually becomes an essential tool for mobilization, while framing becomes more difficult. Facebook facilitates the diffusion of information with the same logic - it is faster, more efficient and more accessible to everyone. However, it has not only quantitative but also more qualitative effects, for example its use as a tool to sustain campaigns and help prompting fundamental changes in norms and structures. However, politicians are the ones to make final decisions, and no social media is involved in the final step of the process. However, its use as a tool to position claims in the political discourse, mobilize people and coordinate political campaigns or protests, is nonetheless very important.

To conclude, even though Facebook plays an important role in the development and operation of the women's movement in Georgia, it does not make a revolutionary difference as techno-optimists would claim, but neither is it incapable of making any changes. Women's movement in Georgia stands in between those two dichotomies, balancing in between. Facebook does not make immediate, institutional changes. However, it contributes to overcoming small milestones and to the long-term process of change-making.

Social movements in Georgia are relatively new but have a potential in terms of aspirations towards positive changes within the society, while social media is relatively new on the global scale. The findings of the study are limited to this particular scenario, despite the fact that the aim was to explore and assess the positions of the women's movement and their relations with Facebook. It is a case study which cannot be generalized but rather gives an answer on this particular picture. There is a strong reason and evidence to think that same developments and methods occur in other places which implies a responsibility to further research the happenings in those other places with similar research methods. Further studies are recommended to compare the findings with other cases or to develop it further. Therefore, it is crucial for academia to follow the processes and identify both traditional patterns and new opportunities for social movements. Additionally, more extensive research needs to be conducted in Georgia in order to identify the complexity of women's movement in Georgia, including different groups and organizations from different generations, practices and ideologies, and further delve into how social media, including Facebook can contribute to social change.

Bibliography

Arganashvili, A. (2017). მართლმსაჯულების სისტემა - საკუთარ ცხოვრებაზე კონტროლის წართმევა თუ დაბრუნება - ქალებისათვის [Justice system - taking away or returning freedom to control their own life - for women]. In *ვის ეშინია ფემინიზმის საქართველოში? [Who is afraid of feminism in Georgia?]* (p. 212). Tbilisi: Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office.

Aultman, B. (2014). Cisgender. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly, 1(1-2)*, 61-62.

Bamert, J., Gilardi, F., and Wasserfallen, F. (2015). Learning and the diffusion of regime contention in the Arab Spring. *Research & Politics, 2(3)*.

Beraia, A. (2017). რუსეთის რევოლუცია და ქართველი ფემინისტები: ქალი, როგორც პოლიტიკური სუბიექტი [Russian Revolution and Georgian Feminists: Woman as a Political Subject]. *The Voice of a Georgian Woman*.

Beraia, A. and Kutranidze, M. . (2017). *ფემინისტური დიალოგი [Feminist dialogue]*. Sapari, Women's Fund in Georgia . Retrieved from http://sapari.ge/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/dialogi-cigni.pdf

Bingham, N. (2017). Gendering Civil Society: The State of Women's NGOs in the Former Soviet Region. *Women's Studies, 46(5)*, 478-494.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cabrera, N. L., Matias, C. E., & Montoya, R. (2017). Activism or slacktivism? The potential and pitfalls of social media in contemporary student activism. *Journal Of Diversity In Higher Education, 10(4)*, 400-415. doi:10.1037/dhe0000061

Change.org. (2018). Petition of Women's Movement on Femicide. Retrieved from https://www.change.org/p/საქართველოს-პარლამენტს-ქალთა-მოძრაობის-პეტიცია-ფემიციდზე

Christensen, C. (2011). Discourses of Technology and Liberation: State Aid to Net Activists in an Era of 'Twitter Revolutions'. *Communication Review, 14(3)*, 233-253. doi:10.1080/10714421.2011.597263

Chumakov, A. N. (2014). Techno-Optimism. *Value Inquiry Book Series, 276*, 452-454.

Císař, O. (2013). In The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements. In D. D. D. A. Snow, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements.* doi:10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm481

Civil.ge. (2018, March 23). MPs Vote Down Mandatory Gender Quotas Bill. Retrieved from http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=30974

Clements, B. (1982). Working-class and peasant women in the Russian revolution, 1917-1923. *The University of Chicago*.

Dahl Crossley, A. and McKee Hurwitz, H. (2013). Women's Movements. In D. D. eds D. A. Snow, *In The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements.* doi:doi:10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm420

Dahlerup, D., and Freidenvall, L. . (2011). Electoral gender quota systems and their implementation in Europe. *European Parliament*.

Della Porta, D., and Diani, M. (2006). *Social movements : An introduction (2.nd ed.).* Malden, MA.: Blackwell.

Della Porta, D., and Mosca, L. (2005). Global-net for Global Movements? A Network of Networks for a Movement of Movements. *Journal of Public Policy, 25(1)*, 165-190.

Earl, J., Hunt, J., Garrett, R., & Dal, A. (2015). New Technologies and Social Movements. In *Oxford University Press.* Retrieved from http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199

Fábián, K. (2007). Norm Diffusion in Central and Eastern Europe's Domestic Violence Policies. In *Globalization: Perspectives from Central and Eastern Europe. Published online: 09 Mar 2015; 253-303.* (pp. 253-303). Published online: 09 Mar 2015.

Fábián, K. (2013). Overcoming Disempowerment: The Home-Birth Movement in Hungary. In K. J. (eds.), *Beyond NGO-ization: The Development of Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 71–95). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Freedom House. (2014). Retrieved from https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/Georgia.pdf

Gvianishvili, N. (2016a). Retrieved from https://pl.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2016/04/panel-i_v_international-gender-workshop_feminism-georgia-needs-intersectionality_natia_gvianishvili.pdf

Gvianishvili, N. (2016b). Intersectionality and the Georgian Feminist Movement. In *The Fight for Public Space: When Personal Is Political.* South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation. Retrieved from https://ge.boell.org/sites/default/files/fight_for_public_spaces-en.pdf

Gvianishvili, N. (2017). ლესბოსური ფემინიზმი და სეპარაცია, როგორც პოლიტიკური წინააღმდეგობის ფორმა [Lesbian Feminism and Separation as Political Resistance]. In *ვის ეშინია ფემინიზმის საქართველოში? [Who is afraid of feminism in Georgia?]* (p. 212). Tbilisi: Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office .

Högström, J. (2016). The Effect of Gender Quotas in the First Decade of the Twenty-first Century: A Global Comparison. *Comparative Sociology, 15(2)*, 179-205.

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center. (2016). *Legal Situation of LGBTI Persons in Georgia.* Retrieved from https://ge.boell.org/sites/default/files/emc_legal_situation_of_lgbti_persons_in_georgia_eng.pdf

International IDEA and Stockholm University. (2009). Quotas. Retrieved from https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/quotas

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2017). Annual report on the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union: 2017. Retrieved from https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2018-03/annual-report-activities-inter-parliamentary-union-2017

Jacobsson, K. (2013). Chanelling and Enrollment: The Institutional Shaping of Animal Rights Activism in Poland. In K. J. (eds.), *Beyond NGO-ization: The Development of Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 37-47). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Jacobsson, K. and Saxonberg, S. (2013). Introduction: The development of social movements in Central and Eastern Europe. In S. Saxonberg, *Beyond NGO-ization: The Development of Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe.* Taylor & Francis Group.

Japaridze, T. (2012, December 14). 'Backstage' of Women's NGOs in Georgia: Challenges of Autonomy and Donor Relations. Women, Gender, Development (WGD). Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2105/13040

Kapoor, D. (2013). *NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions and Prospects.* Zed Books.

Kidd, D. and McIntosh, K. (2016). Social Media and Social Movements. *Sociology Compass*.

Klandermans, B. (2013). Consensus and Action Mobilization. In D. D. D. A. Snow, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. doi:10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm048

Lapidus, G. (1978). Women in Soviet society: Equality, development and social change. *Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. P.* .

Mattoni, A. (2013). Media Activism. In D. D. D. A. Snow, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. doi:10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm339

Melashvili, T. (2014). თანამედროვე ფემინისტური აქტივიზმი საქართველოში [Modern feminist activism in Georgia]. Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office . Retrieved from http://www.feminism-boell.org/en/2014/06/25/modern-feminist-activism-georgia

Meuser M., and Nagel U. (2009). The Expert Interview and Changes in Knowledge Production. In L. B. Bogner A., *Interviewing Experts. Research Methods Series.* . London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Morozov, E. (2011). *The net delusion : The dark side of internet freedom (1.st ed.).* . New York: Public Affairs.

Murthy, D. (2013). *Twitter : Social communication in the twitter age (Digital Media and Society).* Cambridge: Polity.

National Democratic Institute. (2016, March 31). Georgian Task Force Lobbies for Gender Quotas. Retrieved from https://www.ndi.org/georgian-task-force-lobbies-gender-quotas

National Statistics Office of Georgia. (2016). გენდერული სტატისტიკა [Gender statistics]. Retrieved from http://www.geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/georgian/genderuli%20statistika.pdf

NDI, and CRRC. (2014). *Women's Political Participation in Georgia.* Retrieved from https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Georgia_October%202014_Gender%20poll_Public%20ENG_Final_0.pdf

NDI, and CRRC. (2017). *Public attitudes in Georgia.* Retrieved from https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20poll_December_2017_POLITICAL_ENG_final.pdf

Nodia, G. and Scholtbach, A. P. . (2007). The Political Landscape of Georgia: Political Parties: Achievements, Challenges, and Prospects. *Delft: Eburon Publishers. .*

Open Society Georgia Foundation. (2015). Georgian Politics without Women – Quotas as a Solution to the Problem. Retrieved from http://sapari.ge/en/archives/5309

Open Society Georgia Foundation. (2016). სტამბოლის კონვენციის რატიფიცირება, როგორც ქალთა მიმართ ძალადობის შემცირების მექანიზმი [Ratification of the Istanbul Convention, as a mechanism of reducing violence against women]. Retrieved from http://www.osgf.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=15&info_id=4675

Oxford University Press. (2018). Intersectionality. *Oxford Dictionary*. Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/intersectionality

Pataraia, B. (2018, March 26). რატომ ჩავარდა კვოტები [Why quotas failed]. Retrieved from http://sapari.ge/archives/5393

Phillips, S. (2008). Women's social activism in the new Ukraine : Development and the politics of differentiation (New anthropologies of Europe). *Bloomington: Indiana University Press.*

Press, O. U. (2018). Oxford Dictionary. *Intersectionality* . Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/intersectionality

Public Defender of Georgia. (2015). *Violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia* . Retrieved from http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3389.pdf

Radio Freedom. (2017, June 12). გენდერული კვოტირება ისევ დღის წესრიგშია [Gender quotas still in the agenda]. Retrieved from https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/genderuli-kvotireba/28542563.html

Sabedashvili, T. (2007). *Gender and Democratization: The Case of Georgia 1991-2006.* Heinrich Boell Foundation. Retrieved from https://ge.boell.org/sites/default/files/gender_and_democratisation_eng_1.pdf

Smith, M. and Marx, L. . (1994). *Does technology drive history? : the dilemma of technological determinism.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Šribar, R. (. (2015). Gender Sensitivity. *European Institute for Gender Equality* . Retrieved from European Institute for Gender Equality: http://eige.europa.eu/taxonomy/term/1218

Staggenborg, S. (2013). Institutionalization of Social Movements. In D. D. D. A. Snow, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements.* doi:10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm113

Tarrow, S. (2015). Contentious Politics. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements. : Oxford University Press*. Retrieved from http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9 780199678402.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199678402-e-8.

Tchabukiani, N., Jibladze, G., and Ubilava, N. (2014). *საქართველოში ოჯახში ძალადობის წინააღმდეგ მიმართული პოლიტიკის ანალიზი [Analysis of Politics against Domestic Violence in Georgia]* . Women's Fund in Georgia . Retrieved from http://sapari.ge/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ojaxshizaladobispolitikis-analizi.pdf

TGEU. (2017, May 18). Trans Rights Europe Map & Index 2017. Retrieved from https://tgeu.org/trans-rights-map-2017/

The Caucasus Barometer. (2017). Retrieved from http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2017ge/TRUNGOS/

The Guardian. (2018, March 26). The Cambridge Analytica files: the story so far. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/26/the-cambridge-analytica-files-the-story-so-far

The Istanbul Convention. (2011). *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.* Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/168008482e

The Law of Georgia. (2006). Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence. Retrieved from https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/download/26422/2/en/pdf

The Parliament of Georgia. (2014). The sitting of the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee. Retrieved from http://www.parliament.ge/en/saparlamento-saqmianoba/komitetebi/adamianis-uflebata-dacvisa-da-samoqalaqo-integraciis-komiteti/axali-ambebi-adamianis/the-sitting-of-the-human-rights-and-civil-integration-committee10.page

The Yogyakarta Principles. (2007). Retrieved from http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/48244e602.pdf

The Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10. (2017). Retrieved from http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A5_yogyakartaWEB-2.pdf

Tilly, C. (2001). Mechanisms in Political Processes. *Annual Review of Political Science (4)*, 21-41.

Tilly, C. (2004). Social Boundary Mechanisms. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 34(2)*, 211-236.

Tilly, C. (2008). *Contentious Performances (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics).* Cambridge University Press; 1 edition .

Tilly, C., and Tarrow, S. (2007). *Contentious politics.* Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm.

Transparency International Georgia. (2016). Georgian Political Party Finances in 2016. Retrieved from http://www.transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post_attachments/georgian_political_party_finances_in_2016.pdf

Transparency International Georgia. (2018). Citizens to be able to electronically submit bills and petitions to Parliament. Retrieved from http://www.transparency.ge/en/blog/citizens-be-able-electronically-submit-bills-and-petitions-parliament

Tsopurashvili, S. (2017). წინასიტყვაობა [Introduction]. In *ვის ეშინია ფემინიზმის საქართველოში? [Who is afraid of feminism in Georgia?]* (p. 2012). Tbilisi: Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office.

Tufekci, Z., and Wilson, C. . (2012). Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations From Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication, 62(2)*, 363-379.

UN Women Georgia. (2013). *Public Perceptions on Gender Equality in Politics and Business - Research Report.* Retrieved from http://www.ge.undp.org/content/dam/georgia/docs/publications/GE_UNDP_Gender_%20Research_ENG.pdf

UN Women Georgia. (2015a). *Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence in Georgia.* Retrieved from http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence-in-georgia

UN Women Georgia. (2015b). *A High-level Event on Women's Participation in Political Decision-making Took Place.* Retrieved from

http://georgia.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/03/a-high-level-event-on-womens-participation

UN Women Georgia. (2017). Georgia Ratifies the Istanbul Convention. Retrieved from http://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/05/georgia-ratifies-the-istanbul-convention

UN Women Georgia. (2018, January 23). Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia launches Human Rights Protection Department to strengthen response to violence against women and domestic violence.

United Nations Statistics Division – UNSD. (n.d.). *Gender Blind*. Retrieved from Global Gender Statistics Programme: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/Glossary.ashx

Urchukhishvili, G. (2017). *Women in the Parties: Deconstructing Myths.* Sapari. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Van Audenhove, L. (2017). Expert and Elite Interviews in the Social Sciences. doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.26876.95364.

Women's Gaze. (2016). Retrieved from http://womensgaze.org.ge/ჩვენს-შესახებ/

Women's Information Center. (2014). Retrieved from http://www.wicge.org/home.php?cat=3&sub=3&mode=1&lang=ge

Women's Initiatives Supporting Group. (2012). *Rights of LBT women in Georgia.* Tbilisi.

Women's Initiatives Supporting Group. (2014). *Rights of LBT Women in Georgia.* Retrieved from http://women.ge/data/WISG_LBT-women-in-Georgia_CEDAW-58th-session.pdf

Women's Movement. (2014a). Presentation of women's movement. Retrieved from https://georgianwomenmovement.wordpress.com/2014/11/17/ქალთა-მომრაობის-პრეზენტა/

Women's Movement. (2015). "ქალთა მომრაობის" მიერ შემუშავებული რეკომენდაციები პარლამენტის ადამიანის უფლებათა კომიტეტის სამუშაო ჯგუფისთვის [Recommendations for the working group in the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament]. Retrieved from https://georgianwomenmovement.wordpress.com/2015/05/25/ქალთა-მომრაობის-მიერ-შ/

Women's Movement. (2014b). პეტიცია ქალთა მიმართ ძალადობის აღმოსაფხვრელად პარლამენტს გადაეცა [Petition to eradicate violence against women was submitted to the parliament]. Retrieved from https://georgianwomenmovement.wordpress.com/2014/12/10/%e1%83%9e% e1%83%94%e1%83%a2%e1%83%98%e1%83%aa%e1%83%98%e1%83%9 0-%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%9a%e1%83%97%e1%83%90- %e1%83%9b%e1%83%98%e1%83%9b%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83 %97-%e1%83%ab%e1%83%90%e1%83%9a-2/

Women's Movement. (n.d.). Facebook page. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/GeorgianWomensMovement/

World Health Organization. (2012). Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_en g.pdf?sequence=1

Yigit, M. F., and Tarman, B. (2013). The Impact of Social Media on Globalization, Democratization and Participative Citizenship. *Journal of Social Science Education. 12.*, 75-80. doi:10.4119/UNIBI/jsse-v12-i1-84

ქალთა მოძრაობა საქართველოში [Women's Movement in Georgia] (2017). [Motion Picture].