

**R.T.
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**REPRESENTATION OF RUSSIAN-GEORGIAN 2008 WAR IN
THE EYES OF GEORGIA:
A CRITICAL GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE**

MASTER THESIS

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Department: International Relations

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Murat YEŞİLTAS

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“This thesis was adopted on 21/06/2019 by the following jury in majority vote.”

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Sakarya University
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Author of Thesis: Salome Tsikarishvili		Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Murat Yeşiltaş	
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<p>Sharing the historical background, and the same borders in terms of geographical location, Georgia and Russia, have been a core connective bridge. After the demise of the USSR, main ambition for Russia was to retain its influence in the Post-Soviet countries, had instigated a major problem to its neighbors, and particularly to Georgia. The newborn state had been inspired with the western values, which consequently evolved a desire to decrease the pro-Russian attitude and increase the Western-based views by joining NATO alliances. These aspirations resulted a dislike to its Big neighbor country, which subsequently developed to a Red Line between Georgian-Russian relationship and caused the unexpected, yet inevitable, August War. Different perspectives about the August war, have been reviewed; Nevertheless, less attention has been paid to the point of view of the main victim, Georgia. As a result, this study aims to review the Georgian statecraft's construction and conceptualization of the 2008 August war. The thesis explores and examines the Georgian perspective of the Five days war, and provides Georgian statecraft discourse analysis of the events related to the Russian invasion from a critical geopolitical perspective.</p> <p>It has been concluded, regarding the Georgian discourse analysis and everyday performance of the statecraft, that the Russian military intervention in the Georgian territory was an "Aggressive military intervention" and "Attack on the West" in order to control the energy resources of Europe. The Georgian statecraft's discourse defined Russia as "Aggressors", "Barbarians of the 21st century" and "Occupiers". This war pictured Russia as an enemy to the Georgian statehood and sovereignty, that had broken the international norms, beside the Western values.</p>			
Keywords: Critical Geopolitics, Discourse, Georgia, Russia, August War			

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<p>Coğrafi konumu itibariyle iki komşu ülke olan Gürcistan ve Rusya arasındaki tarihi geçmiş, bir köprü haline gelmiştir. Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşünden bu yana, Rusya'nın Sovyetler sonrası ülkelerdeki nüfuzunu koruma konusundaki tutkusu, eski Sovyet devletlerinde, özellikle de Batı'nın değerlerinden ilham alan Gürcistan'da büyük sorun haline geldi. Gürcistan'ın Rus yanlılarını azaltma konusundaki istekleri ve NATO'nun ittifaklarına katılarak Batı'ya yönelik görüşleri artırma yönündeki tavırları, Gürcü-Rus ilişkilerinin Kırmızı Çizgisi olan ve beklenmedik ancak kaçınılmaz olan, Ağustos Savaşı'na yol açmıştır.</p> <p>Ağustos savaşı ile ilgili farklı bakış açıları gözden geçirildi. Bununla birlikte, mağdur olan Gürcistan'ın görüşüne daha az dikkat edildi. Bunun bir sonucu olarak çalışma, Gürcistan devlet yapısının 2008 Ağustos Savaşı'nın konstrüksiyonunu ve kavramsallaşmasını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez, Gürcülerin Beş günlük savaş perspektifini araştırmakta ve incelemektedir. Rus işgali ile ilgili olayların eleştirel olarak jeopolitik perspektiften analizini sunmaktadır.</p> <p>Tez, Gürcü söylem analizi ve devletin günlük performansı ile ilgili olarak, Gürcistan topraklarına yapılan Rus askeri müdahalesinin, Avrupa'nın enerji kaynaklarını kontrol etmek için "saldırgan bir askeri müdahale" ve "Batı'ya saldırı" olduğu sonucuna varmıştır. Gürcistan devleti Rusya'yı "saldırganlar", "21. yüzyılın barbarları" ve "işgalciler" olarak tanımladı. Bu savaş Rusya'yı, uluslararası normları ve aynı zamanda Batı'nın değerini bozan Gürcü toprak bütünlüğüne bir tehdit olarak görüyordu.</p>			
Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel Jeopolitik, Söylem, Gürcistan, Rusya, Ağustos Savaşı			

INTRODUCTION

Being located between the two seas and having a quite significant central position on a geopolitical space - Georgia, known as The Country of Golden Fleece in classical Greek mythology, famous with its great Caucasus mountain range, has been as a tremendous natural frontier between the civilized and barbarian worlds.¹ Such a geo-strategical location, has been, throughout the centuries, a target of interest for ancient civilizations and empires, such as Byzantium, Persia, Mongolia, the Arab Caliphate, Ottoman Empire, the Soviet Union, nowadays, Russia.

The history of Georgia, since the 18th century, has been connected with co-religionist neighbor Russia, and supposedly it should have been ended, when the USSR collapsed in 1991, leaving Georgia as an independent state. Nevertheless, the shadow of this “Big Neighbor”, has been dominating the internal divisions of the newly independent state. One of the biggest issues that has been following, since demise of the USSR, is the reorganization of ethnic and communal differences in Georgian Soviet republic, that divided the country internally into numerous ethnic groups, where Abkhazia and South Ossetia have got autonomous territories. A reason for which, they later rejected the idea of being integrated into Georgia, not to lose their power and privileges; Moreover, the weak government with its nationalistic attitudes created chaos, which turned into a civil war with breakaway regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and Samachablo (South Ossetia). This chaos was supported by Russia, whose influence remained strong, despite the destruction of the Soviet Union. The next president of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, was trying to reduce the Russian influence in the region, and therefore, he started an economic and military cooperation with the West, which opened the gate to his fellow, Mikheil Saakashvili, to have an enhanced interest towards alliances with NATO and the European Union. The Rose Revolution, which took a place in 2003, and the victory of the United National Movement (ერთიანი ნაციონალური მოძრაობა, shortly referred as the UNM) have dramatically transformed the Georgian foreign policy. It can be considered that the key factor behind this revolution and Georgia’s transformation was the Western educated Saakashvili, who showed to the international society, the crucial geopolitical role of Georgia in the world map, and attracted their interests toward Georgia. The pro-

¹ Tariel Putkaradze, “Some Aspects of the Geopolitical Strategy of Georgia (On Politicization of the Kartvelological Studies)”, *The Patriarchate of Georgia and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation*, (December 2008):173.

Russian attitude changed into a pro-Western, that caused dissatisfaction of the co-religionist neighbor Russia, which expressed its discontent with the old imperialist strategy “divide and conquer”, and invaded Georgia in August, 2008.

The outbreak of the August war of 2008 is controversial and considered various points of views. For Ossetians, the war was a genocidal campaign against the Ossetians conducted by Georgia. For Georgians, it was an intervention of Russia into the Georgian territory and furthermore, invasion of the West too. For Russia, that war was a defensive response to protect Russian passport holders. For the international community, the Russian actions were strongly condemned and addressed both sides for ceasefire and negotiations. There are still a lot of polemics about Russia’s intervention in Georgia, which are widely discussed in different academical works such as Gerard Ó Tuathail (2017), who shows the roads to intervention, underlining territorial conflicts and geopolitical struggles of the August war, and also analyzing the war with three conceptual foundations (geopolitical field, geopolitical culture, geopolitical condition) of the critical geopolitical analysis. Toal (2017) seeks to analyze discursive practices as it gives contribution to communications, representations and legitimation of the discourse.

Asmus (2010) analyzes the “little war” on a big geopolitical picture as a strategical message to the United States and states that this August war, “shook the world”, that “it had no winners, but multiple losers”. He considers Russian foreign policy as a “killing of two birds with one stone”²: punishing their antagonist Saakashvili, and at the same time, sending message to the US and other leaders of former Soviet republics about predictable threat in case they turn to the West and enter to western institutions, specifically NATO. Nevertheless, this thesis will not examine foreign policy and geo-strategical targets of Russia in the August War in “near abroad”, however, it will analyze the geo-strategical role of Georgia on a world map, and study Russian intervention with a Georgian perspective. The theoretical framework of critical geopolitics for broad analysis, was used to represent the August war from a Georgian perspective.

Over the centuries, geopolitical location of Georgia has attracted various external powers, which affected the policy of the state. Each one of them, had left special influence that was determining the country’s policy for some period of time. The August War, for

² Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook The World: Georgia, Russian and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 9.

example, made notable transformations in Georgian policy, that has taken the side of the west and turned its back to Russia. This western orientation had started with the government of Saakashvili and from 2008 utterly turned to the West. Therefore, during the time of his administration, the awareness of the state has spread around the world and gained important geopolitical role, as a “bridge” between the West and the East. The discussions and debates about the August war, which has brought drastic changes to the Georgian foreign policy, are increasing gradually in academic researches, international politics and political elites. Interests of the West also has been increasing toward Georgia year by year, which, by consequence, had been causing the irritation of the “Big Neighbor”. The discontent was eventually expressed in August, 2008 by intensifying internal frozen conflicts, then implementing well-planned attack against Georgia. This “Little” five days war, had attracted the entire world’s attention, and consequently, became controversial not only for Georgian-Russian relations, but also developed into an international issue.

The major concern of this thesis, is the representation of the August War in the eyes of Georgia, by examining speeches, writings, interviews of the Georgian government officials, their perception about the war and construction of the Russian expression. This study will not provide deep analysis of the original roots of the Georgian-Abkhazian or Georgian-South Ossetian conflict; but rather will try to explain everyday practice of the Georgian government and their way of defining and conceptualizing the Russian actions against the country through Georgian discourse analysis. Consequently, the discourse analyses of the critical geopolitical perspective was used to offer an understanding of the Georgian statecraft practices towards Russian expression throughout the August war.

The main core of this thesis analyses is to conceptualize the preparation of the August war and frame Georgian foreign policy towards its neighbor country by analyzing discourses, speeches and writings of the government’s officials. The study focuses on the administration of the President Mikheil Saakashvili, specifically, post-time of the Bucharest Summit 2008, where an agenda of NATO to expand its territories with two former Soviet countries, was expected. The main candidates were Georgia and Ukraine. This expansion over neighborhood countries, represented a threat to Russia which led it to sabotage the NATO plan by attacking the foreseen members, making of Georgia the first target.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and understand how the Georgian statecraft constructed, framed and conceptualized August war in 2008. Then, to provide an analysis of events related to the Russian troops invading and occupying Georgian territories, which questioned the territorial integration of the state, and encumbered its efforts with joining North Atlantic Alliance. The research will do discourse analyses from a critical geopolitical perspective, which means representation of the August war through scrutinizing Georgian statecraft discourses, speeches and writings of the government officials, and construction of the language in order to define the Russian intervention.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the thesis are:

1. To analyze the Georgian-Russian 2008 August war from a Georgian government point of view, that encompasses scrutinizing discourses and construction of the language in order to contextualize the Russian intervention with critical geopolitical perspective.
2. To understand and develop analytical framework of the August war, with the language of the Georgian discourses as a tool for governmental leaders to legitimate their actions.

The research question of the thesis is to understand how statecraft of Georgia framed, conceptualized and defined Russian intervention in 2008 August war.

Argument

The Georgian statecraft's geopolitical construction of the war defines Russian military intervention as an aggression and direct occupation of the Georgian territories. Everyday political performance of the government framed the war as a brutal attack on the West and Balkan-type ethnic cleansing of Georgian population. The government's definition of the war, not only as an attack to Georgia, but to the Europe, justified Georgian statecraft's West-ward orientation. The government's legitimated power about considering Georgia as a European country with Western values, built up the new differentiation between Us and Other, where the West was perceived as Us and Russia became an outside Other.

Methodology

Discourse analysis, that has become popular methodology rapidly found itself as a key concept for the critical study of world politics in international relations. Discourse analysis in critical geopolitics pays attention to the discourses of the geopolitical construction of the world. Language in discourse, that can be spoken or written, is crucial. Power of language can construct identities socially and politically. The main investigation of discourse analysis is to figure out influence of linguistic representation in the texts which are the recorded traces of the text and indicates activity of discourse.³

Each methodological approach has its own characteristic distinguishes to understand and analyze the meaning of the data and determinations of different capacities of the discourse. Discourse analysis in critical geopolitics studies discourses with different stories written and spoken by state leaders to legitimate their actions for their citizens.⁴ Discourses are sets of capabilities used by people and the sets of the rules by which speech and written statements construct the meaning of their world. Discourses make readers/listeners and speakers/audiences to hear, read and construct it into organized whole.⁵ For example, some events, that happen in some states, are legitimated by state leaders. How do state leaders legitimate their power? By speeches noted by media. Those legitimated actions of state leaders can have its effect on state's policy itself and global politics; It is crucial to know the way how to describe the world, how to act and how to use the words in order to shape the view of the world.⁶ As a result, discourse is an opportunity to analyze power of the language, which is spoken by state leaders and written by media. Those discourses can show the direction of state's regional politics and its impact on global order.

Discourse analysis, as a methodology in the constructivist social science, has become analytical approach in critical studies, as a result, it also became a tool of critical geopolitics. Sometimes, discourse analysis is understood as a method of data analysis, but that is wrong understanding, says Müller. It doesn't only encompass data collection and

³ Martin Müller, "Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics", *Online Journal of Political Geography and Geopolitics* (March 2011): 2.

⁴ Petar Kurečić, "Identity and Discourse in Critical Geopolitics: A Framework for Analysis", *Society & Technology Book of Papers* (June 2015): 2.

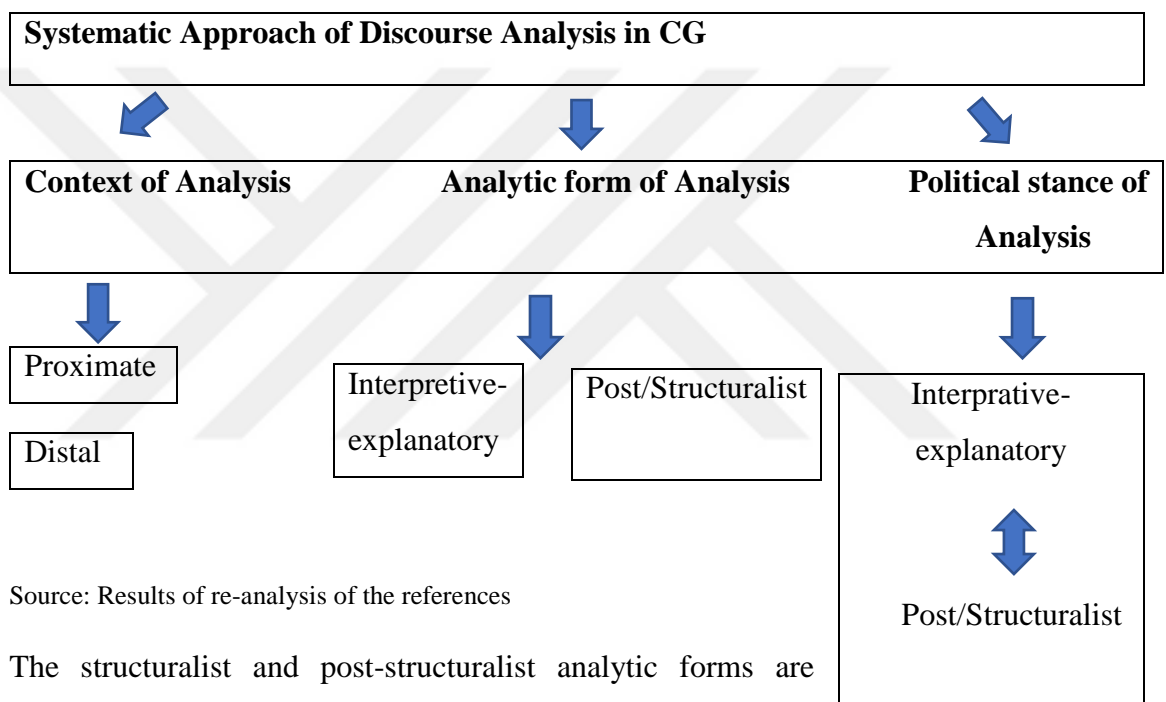
⁵ Gearóid Ó Tuathail - John Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy", *Political Geography* 11/2 (March 1992): 192-193.

⁶ Tuathail - Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy", 190.

analytical review, but integrates with different concerns of language and social practice. Choosing discourse analysis as an approach is a complex act, it needs balance between aims and analysis, research and data. As a result, there are three major dimensions of the systematic approach of discourse analysis in critical geopolitics proposed by Laclau and Mouffe: the context of analysis, analytic form of analysis and the political stance of analysis.⁷

Figure 1:

Approach of Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics



Source: Results of re-analysis of the references

The structuralist and post-structuralist analytic forms are focusing on the meaning of socially constructed processes and mechanisms. Discourse must be first and foremost corpus of statements. It analyzes how social world is being regulated by discourse. Beside linguistic features (such as documents, texts, speeches), which are main orientation for interpretive-explanatory form of analysis, structuralist and post structuralist form of analysis orient on actions, processes, mechanisms.⁸ Martin Müller in the article “Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics” argues that these two analytic forms are intertwined with each other, one cannot be separated from the other. In that case, with the collaboration of interpretive-explanatory form of analysis and post/structuralist form of analysis, we have third

⁷ Martin Müller, “Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics”, *Online Journal of Political Geography and Geopolitics* (March 2011): 4.

⁸ Müller, “Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics”, 8.

dimension, political stance of analysis which is considered as a key tenet in critical geopolitics.

Political stance of analysis research how forms of power and knowledge are embedded in geopolitical discourse. This stance of analysis has much in common with CDA which uses language as a social and cultural structure. Critical discourse analysis develops the concept that there is a link between linguistic and social structures. Its main challenge is to connect texts to ideologies and power.

In order to transform theory into analysis is impossible to be implemented without methodology. One of the three keys of the systematic approaches that are shown on the Figure Nr.1 should be taken as a methodology of discourse analysis in critical geopolitics. In order to understand the process of how Russia's intervention has been conceptualized by the statecraft of Georgia and how Georgia constructed foreign policy with the geographical settings, linguistic features (texts and speeches) orienting on the nature of the war, are main research of this thesis. As a result, an ideal systematic approach for this thesis is political stance of analysis, that combines both interpretive-explanatory and post/structuralist form of analysis.

Applying the explained methodology, this thesis will provide primary sources and academic literatures. Moreover, it collects various data such as articles, reports, books, speeches, news sources and other relevant documents. The current research encompasses all sources of data concentrated about the August war, collects speeches, news resources and articles of the Georgian government officials during 2008. It also adds several interviews from some politicians in order to make better analyses and enrich the resources.

Significance of the Study

In the end of the August war, Georgia still has been reaping the results of the war: breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, have been recognized as an independent states and borders were set with barbed-wire fences on the territory of Georgia. A decade passed after the 2008 war, however, the issue has not lost its actuality neither for Georgia nor for the West and particularly Russia, on which the blame falls since its neo-imperialistic desires has not stopped (planning to restore old border of the South Ossetian autonomous province as it was during Soviet period, in order to control Baku-Supsa pipeline). Moreover, it continues quietly containing the rest of the Georgian territories.

The administrative border, is expanding gradually, moving deeper and getting closer to the central highway of Georgia, which connects the West to the East.

The “Creeping occupation” started in the August war and ever since has been following Georgia. It is the number one issue for the new government (the ruling party: Georgian Dream- ქართული ოცნება) of Georgia. Officials of the government consider the so called Russian “borderization” process as illegal, which damages rights of the locals and the state security. There have been cases where some people have been kidnapped, or those who slept in a Georgian territory, then because of the “creeping occupation” woke up in an “independent” South Ossetia. Inhabitants, living close to the barbed-wired border, have no stability and security. Consequently, actuality of this research topic is very significant at regional, as well as, international level. The attempt to represent the August war as an aggression, due to the Russian intervention into Georgia by analyzing the language of Georgian discourses as well as, the way of the perception, will be useful, not only for Georgian or Caucasian studies, but also for European research. The nature of the war, according to Georgian discourses, was not only a military invasion, however, an attack on Europe too. In addition, the issue of the August war has been debated, discussed and studied from different point of views and various directions. Nevertheless, the Georgian perception has not been reviewed properly. Therefore, this study will offer a contribution in assisting other academic research.

Organization of the Study

The thesis consists of three main chapters. The first part of the thesis is introduction, which encompasses research framework, methodology, purposes, objectives and the significance of the study. The first chapter is about theoretical framework of critical geopolitics. In this chapter, general discussions about geopolitics and its evolution to critical geopolitics, are represented. It reviews the importance of critical geopolitics and its types; applies Practical geopolitics (one of the types of CG) as an approach, as the best way of the August War’s Georgian perspective. The second chapter of the thesis overviews Georgian identity and foreign policy. It discusses nation building processes of independent Georgia and the main event - the Rose Revolution, that was a turning point of the Georgian foreign policy transformation from pro-Russian attitude towards the Westward orientation. This chapter revises the Georgian foreign policy aspirations and its relationship with NATO and the EU west alliances. The third chapter is about the

Georgia's statecraft's depiction of the August war. It analyses every day practice of the government, their definition the Five Days war and representation of the Russian intervention from the Georgian point of view. The final part of the thesis, is conclusion, that is a summary of this research.



1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS

1.1. Introduction

Geopolitics was born in time of period where imperialistic rivalry between competing empires was intensive, the lines of the borders had been changing by clashes and wars between empires and reflecting it's meaning in history and on the world political map.⁹ After changing of international politics in the post-Cold War era, there was a necessity to understand how classical geopolitical understanding was constructing international politics, because geopolitics was a different kind of knowledge, which was producing different knowledge about world politics. This led critical-thinkers to start analyzing how geopolitical understanding constructs, understands and frames international politics, identity, power relations and so on by using geopolitical formulations, geopolitical concepts. Main priority for critical geopolitics is to understand the question how the statecrafts frame and produce international politics or world order. Critical geopolitics seeks to unpack the ways of producing or geographical knowledge in analyzing international politics.

In this chapter, it will be analyzed theoretical foundation of CG in order to develop an analytical geopolitical way of thinking. First section is about spreading geopolitical studies, the contributions of academicians to geopolitical field and the fundamental theories of classical geopolitical approaches as a basis for critical geopolitics. Later, new reality of the world made the geopolitical thinkers to revise their classical views about the world order at the end of the Cold War. As a result, second section is about the new geopolitical approach known as critical geopolitics, its differences from classical geopolitics and the types of the critical geopolitics. The third section analyzes two types of critical geopolitics: Practical and Popular geopolitics of the Georgian statecraft during the August war.

1.2. Evolution of Geopolitics: From Classical to Critical Geopolitics

Geopolitics, the term created by the Swedish political scientist, Rudolf Kjellen, in the end of the 19th century,¹⁰ is combination of geographical and political factors that relates to

⁹ Gearóid Ó Tuathail et al., *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 15.

¹⁰ Daniel H. Deudney, "Geopolitics", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/geopolitics>.

the state and has an impact on state's foreign policy.¹¹ Geopolitics has been defined with a lot of definitions but all the meanings that have in common is that geopolitics is nothing but interrelationship of space and power.¹²

During the Cold War, geopolitics was perceived as a simple cartographic capture of the world where different political states were competing with each other for obtaining power of leadership.¹³ This geopolitical consideration of the Cold War, having superpower of the world, goes to the classical geopolitical approach, initially defined by one the founding fathers of geopolitics, Halford Mackinder, British geographer, who gave some specific approaches about the important role of the geography. Mackinder's strategical formulations were important for political leaders and their policies. He gave meaningful definitions to the geographical regions of the world in which control of Eastern Europe was significant for controlling the world. Those formulations became known as Heartland Theory.¹⁴

After Mackinder's initial formulations, his theory started to be developed by other new ideas of other geopolitical thinkers. German political geographer, Karl Haushofer was considering that geopolitics could make predictions in certain ways: "It will help our statesmen to see political situations as they really are."¹⁵ American geopolitical thinker Nicolas J. Spykman, considered that real power could be accessed with water and developed new geopolitical theory, Rimland theory which became principal formula on strategical form of foreign policy of the U.S. within the Cold War.¹⁶

States that were struggling for gaining power of the world were taking geopolitical approaches into consideration. It was obvious that small and not powerful countries could not implement their own geopolitical strategies for their favor, because big and powerful states were trying to spread their influence not only in small states but over the world. Big states wanted to be the leaders of the world and for that goal they started territorial expansionism. It is obvious that geopolitical ideas and goals were born from the beginning, when the empires started clashing and spreading their territorial domains but geopolitics as an approach, as a study has been analyzed later.

¹¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Geopolitics", <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/geopolitics>.

¹² Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War* (London: Pinter Publisher, 1990), 33.

¹³ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, 34.

¹⁴ Gearóid Ó Tuathail et al., *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 17-18.

¹⁵ Gearóid Ó Tuathail et al. *The Geopolitics Reader*, 20.

¹⁶ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), 39.

Geopolitical thinkers started analyzing historical events by applying to the state's policy. By sharing their own ideas, they came to the one final conclusion that everything was connected to the geography and politics, relations between space and power. After that, states started creation of their own geopolitical strategies that was determining foreign policy of the state.¹⁷ For example, by struggling to control space and gain the power in the world, created hostile atmosphere between two superpowers U.S. and the USSR that turned into geopolitical ideological competition during the Cold War.

Geopolitical approaches had been started to be revised after the Cold War. Geopolitical thinkers and not only them faced new reality. There was a necessity for dramatical changes, to think in a smart way, to think geopolitically. Academicians started to relate new ways of thinking to the new world order because geopolitics became more than expansionism of the territory. It became everyday practice of the state.¹⁸

1.3. Critical Geopolitics: New Way of Thinking

Critical geopolitics, arose in the late 80's with the collaboration of political geography and international relations, that investigates social and cultural practice of geopolitics. CG is feeding from the poststructuralism, post-modern critiques, post-colonial discourses on the power strategies.¹⁹ The terminology, "critical geopolitics", was created by Gearóid Ó Tuathail, John Agnew and Simon Dalby, by three political geographers who made important developments into that field.

The core understanding of CG comes from traditional geopolitics that focuses on balance of power. Classical geopolitics has two main spatial and power perspective, relations between space and power is mostly concerned. But critical geopolitics centers four main issues in world geopolitics: space, identity, vision and statecraft (power). Space is very important to critical geopolitics, it investigates how space is constructed with geopolitical actors; Identity like space focuses on social construction, how nations, ethnic groups construct identity referred as "we" and distinguish "other" as enemy, opponent. Identical perceivable gives us a vision who is familiar "us" and unfamiliar "other". Geopolitical gaze perceive world as a whole with its homogenous spaces and identity. It creates different geopolitical visions between "us" and "them", spheres of influence, balance of power, relations between states and etc. The last, statecraft, with critical geopolitics, is a

¹⁷ Gearóid Ó Tuathail et al., *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 20-21.

¹⁸ Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21.

¹⁹ Gearóid Ó Tuathail - Simon Dalby, *Rethinking Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 1998), 2.

form of knowledge, which guides a state, creates its own policy and legitimate its power.²⁰ Consequently, traditional geopolitics provides blueprints of geopolitical actors to the state's foreign policy with the advice of strategic thinkers, when critical geopolitics in contrast refers to audiences to confine state security, expose the plays of powers with geopolitical schemes.²¹

How did it start to reconceptualize geopolitics in a critical way? Gearóid Ó. Tuathail and Simon Dalby, in 1992's published paper started rethinking of geography as a discourse of power/knowledge. This claim made them to reconceptualize geopolitics critically which means how intellectuals of the statecraft represent the state by particular ways, for example, place, people, identity.²² Tuathail and Dalby are scholars who have theorized critical geopolitical approach and their contribution in this field is important. As critical geopolitical thinkers, Tuathail and Dalby have created five main arguments of critical geopolitics:

1. Geopolitics is much wider phenomenon than it is interpreted by the intellectuals of statecraft. It is the spatial practice that analyses geopolitical imagination of the state, represented by statecraft.
2. Critical geopolitics focuses on the boundary-producing practice and performance, which happen everyday life of a state. It is not only about the outside border of state, but also inside.
3. Critical geopolitics understands geopolitics as a plurality - not only represented as the practice of statecraft by its officials, but also as a broad social phenomenon.
4. Critical geopolitics argues that studying of geopolitics is not politically neutral. CG tries to find objectivism in the geopolitics' history and practices in diplomacy.
5. Critical geopolitical perspective seeks to understand theoretically broader development of spatial and territorial use. The question that has always been asked in the history of geopolitics is about states and their societies, networks and territorial relationship.²³

²⁰ Ian Klinke, "Geopolitics: Critical vs. Classical", Date Accessed: 15 May 2018, http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/publication_klinke_ian_five_minutes_for_critical_geopolitics_a_slightly_provocative_introduction/.

²¹ Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War* (London: Pinter Publisher, 1990), 180.

²² Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), 46.

²³ Gearóid Ó Tuathail - Simon Dalby, *Rethinking Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 1998), 2-7.

These five arguments have been determined by Tuathail and Dalby are inevitable for critical geopolitics, because it puts existing structures of power and knowledge into the question and gives broader understanding of geopolitical problem.²⁴ It is the boundary-drawing practice which is about “inside” and “outside”, “here” and “there”, “foreign” and “domestic”, CG is analyzing relationship of power and space that is affected on foreign policy of state. It is about nothing but “boundary producing political practice”.²⁵

To summarize major difference between classical geopolitics and CG, the first one tends to understand the state as a contingent territorial achievement. It gives the importance to the geographical settings by which empires and states can operate as they try to defend security and prosperity. But critical geopolitics gives more open conception to the geographical settings. It tends to seek how power structures have produced territories and landscapes, environments and spaces.²⁶

For better understanding, there are offered types of geopolitics in CG from where one geopolitical approach, for the case study, will be chosen. Critical geopolitics categorizes four geopolitical approaches: formal, practical, popular and structural geopolitical approaches. *Formal* geopolitical approach investigates geopolitical thought and tradition. It engages the intellectuals, institutions and their political and cultural contexts. It pursues to scrutinize geopolitical figures and explains writing strategies in their texts. This type of geopolitics insights the complex of the world. It uncovers permanent struggle between the land and the sea, the East and the West and etc. The construction of foreign policy should be sensitive to the diverse states of the world. *Practical* geopolitics concerns everyday practice of foreign policy of statecraft. Foreign policy decision-makers use that geopolitical approach when they frame geographical knowledge to make dimensional sense of the world in order to explain certain issues. Practical geopolitical reasoning is regular everyday discourse. It is widely spread by the mass media that has also an important impact to formulate the form of knowledge about the occasions around the world. It also analyzes socially constructed power relations. Main problem of practical geopolitics is conceptualization of foreign policy by pragmatic reasoning. *Popular* geopolitics addresses geographical politics that has been created by different mass-media

²⁴ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, “Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Security”, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22/2-3 (January 2008): 107.

²⁵ Richard K. Ashley, “Foreign Policy as Political Performance”, *International Studies Notes* 13/2 (1987): 51.

²⁶ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Near Abroad: Putin, The West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8-9.

culture; That can be movies, novels, caricatures or cartoons. It considers problem of socially constructed national identity of different people and places represented by the media. It shapes the images of various political issues. And the last type of geopolitics is *structural* geopolitics that pays attention to modern geopolitical condition and studies structural processes of foreign policy practice between all states. Gerard Toal in the article, “Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Security” divided three critical geopolitical arguments about different directions and challenges of the contemporary geopolitical condition throughout structural geopolitical reasoning. Contemporary world is global now. Each regional or state-centered threats are now international.²⁷

Table 1:

The Types of Geopolitics Studies by Critical Geopolitics

Types of geopolitics by Critical Geopolitics		
Type of Geopolitics	Object	Problem
Formal	Geopolitical thought and tradition	Intellectuals, institutions
Practical	Everyday practice of state	Practical process of foreign policy decision-making concept
Popular	Mass-media, cinema, novels	National identity construction with the popular culture images
Structural	Modern geopolitical situation	Global processes and tendencies

Source: Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Security*, *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (1999), London, pg. 111.

Factors such as identity, history, state politics, global tendencies and etc. have influence on geopolitics, which need to be analyzed and understood. Because of those factors, there are different types of geopolitics that try to understand the influence of each factor onto each type. For example, media, movies, cartoons have its impact on a statecraft’s practice. For that, there is a need of popular geopolitics in order to examine various images of the

²⁷ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, “Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Security”, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22/2-3 (January 2008): 109-118.

national identity of different people and states. This study's attention will not be paid to all of the types of critical geopolitics and its objects. Major focus will be on practical geopolitics, which means everyday practice of statecraft, in this study, practice of the statecraft of Georgia during the 2008 war. Critical geopolitics as a perspective and practical geopolitics as an approach can give the possibility to understand the nature of the war. With the help of this perspective, there is an opportunity to analyze how statecraft of Georgia constructed Russian intervention, how the intellectuals, politicians framed Russia's military expression to the territory of Georgia and how foreign policy decision-makers of Georgia use geopolitics as a knowledge/power.

Critical geopolitics is not only about to seek and recover the hidden geographical settings of geopolitical practice, but also it suggests critical analysis of the forms of geopolitical discourses.²⁸ Those discourses that are unique and united, make its own construction of identity, policies, differentiations and juxtapositions; revise the past and construct new policy. All texts construct themselves as knowledgeable, but way and form of knowledge is different. For example, political leaders by their speeches construct their authority, exercise the power and legitimate their actions;²⁹ To understand the significance of those texts/discourses and intertextuality between them practical geopolitics as an approach and discourse analysis as a methodology are applied for this study.

1.4. Practical and Popular Geopolitical Reasoning of The August War

Practical geopolitical reasoning is an everyday practice of a statecraft, that can be disseminated by the mass-media in order to create a common sense.³⁰ However, sometimes media formulations do not make a good sense out of it. Some significant events can be looked from only one side. It has been forgotten that a medal has both sides, which means, each side produces its own perspective. For example, each participant of the August war can express their point of view. However, the main focus in this case study, is to understand the Georgian perception of the 2008 war.

Georgia's perception has always been focusing to the West. However, some crucial moments in its history have made dramatical changes. Also, geography has contributed

²⁸ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Near Abroad: Putin, The West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 21.

²⁹ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 49.

³⁰ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Security", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22/2-3 (January 2008): 114.

unsuccessfully in the country's different lifetime decisions. Having a big neighbor, targeting at the past imperialistic world-order, has never given the peace to Georgia since collapsing the USSR. Imperialistic neighbor's strong interference, in Georgian foreign as well as domestic policy, has been concomitant process until Mikheil Saakashvili's new ruling party came to power. Saakashvili's view was anti-Russian, that caused strong disapproval of the Big neighbor. Such an unpleasant situation and a lot of disagreements between Georgian and Russian governments did not last long. The fact that Georgia could get a MPA at Bucharest Summit turned to be a culminant for a long-standing, well-planned war from Russia.

As it is mentioned above, each side has its own perspective of seeing events. Representation of the August war from the Georgian perspective was defined as a Russian aggression. This description became a main part of the discourse in order to contextualize the August war in the Georgian perception and popular imagination.

Georgian statecraft's practicing in interpretation Russia as a provocative, aggressor and 21st century barbarian country, turned the issue as a main concern, not only for themselves, but for the whole international world. Practice of the Georgian government established a favorable geopolitical spatial view of the crisis. Domestic conflict between Georgian and Ossetians became a big Russo-Georgian war, that could be compared with the fight between David and Goliath. Saakashvili's fluent English language allowed his voice to be reached internationally. His representation of Georgia, as a small, freedom-loving country and Russia as a big, aggressive and brutal neighbor, depicted the reality of the crisis. His perception of the war as an attack on the West, was criticism of the West itself and conceptualization of the war as a universal crisis. He emphasized the same theme in the Wall Street Journal on August 11, that the conflict was about the future of Europe, and the common values, that connects Georgia to Europe. The north neighbor attempts to gain the 20th century influence in order to terminate small state's aspirations for the western beliefs, freedom and democracy.³¹ These arguments voiced Georgia's strong desires for European values.

Saakashvili also offered different motives about Russia's imperial behavior in the region. It should be mentioned that control of the Caucasus region was desirable for any leading

³¹ Mikheil Saakashvili, "The War in Georgia Is a War for the West", *The Wall Street Journal* (2008), Date Accessed: 2 December 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121841306186328421>.

country, especially for Russia, which had been able to control the region since 1783 when Treaty of Georgievsk was concluded. It is noteworthy that the reason for this agreement was good geographical location of Georgia.³²

Later on, the importance of geographical location of Georgia, was confirmed, once more, when the construction of Baku-Supsa and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipelines were started, that made Georgia to become the central corridor between Europe and Asia.³³ Consequently, from the Georgian perception control of oil resources and desire to have economic leverage over Europe encouraged Kremlin to invade Georgia. Georgia became a transit country for oil and natural gas, that threatened Russia's "near abroad" monopoly. Russia wants to control energy routes, the sea ports and the transportation infrastructure.³⁴ Georgian statecraft charged that Russia's plan was to attack the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, that was described by Georgian prime minister as an invasion of the European energy security.³⁵

Georgian-Russian 2008 war was also reflected in popular geopolitics. Sometimes different pictures and caricatures shape various reality better than any other political officials. Practice of Georgian statecraft as Russia targets to control oil resources were depicted in Brazilian cartoonist's caricatures, that express the August war events perfectly. For example, the first picture shows the USA and NATO, with broken piece of pipe in hands, are watching how Georgian soldier tries stop Russian tank, which crossing the border and pressing the BTC pipeline.

³² Davit Kalmadze, "Geopolitical location of Georgia", *Radio Tavisupleba* (2016), Date Accessed: 2 December 2018, <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/tavisupali-sivrtse-davit-kamladze-saqartvelos-geopolitikuri-mdgomareoba/28075927.html>.

³³ Seçil Özyanık, "TRACECA: Restoration of Silk Road", *Journal of Caspian Affairs* 1/2 (Summer 2015): 3.

³⁴ Anne Bernard, "Georgia and Russia Nearing All-Out War", *The New York Times* (2008), Date Accessed: 3 December 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/10/world/europe/10georgia.html>.

³⁵ Peter Finn, "Georgia Retreats, Pleads for Truce; U.S. Condemns Russian Onslaught", *Washington Post* (2008), Date Accessed: 3 December 2018, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/10/AR2008081000267.html?noredirect=on>.

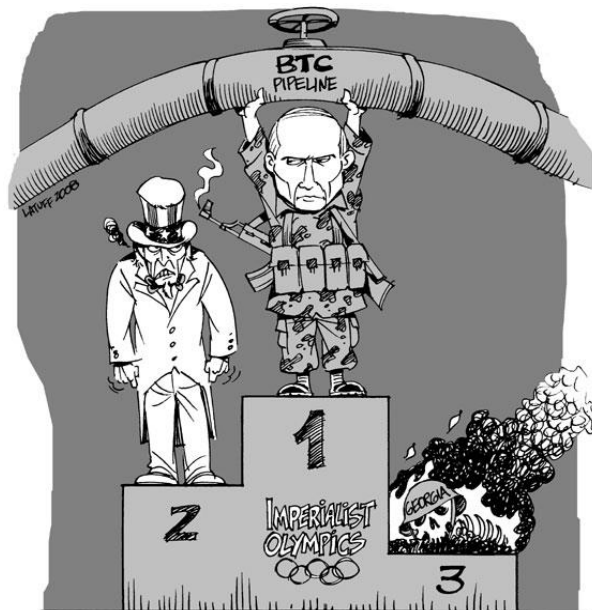
Picture 1:
Georgian Soldier vs. Russian Tank



Source: Latuff, Brazilian cartoonist, Russia-Georgia conflict: it's about oil...again!, <https://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/london/2008/08/406294.html?c=on>

Picture 2 shows the Beijing Olympic game, the imperialistic Russia as a winner with pipeline in hands, on the second place angry USA and the third place Georgian dead soldier.

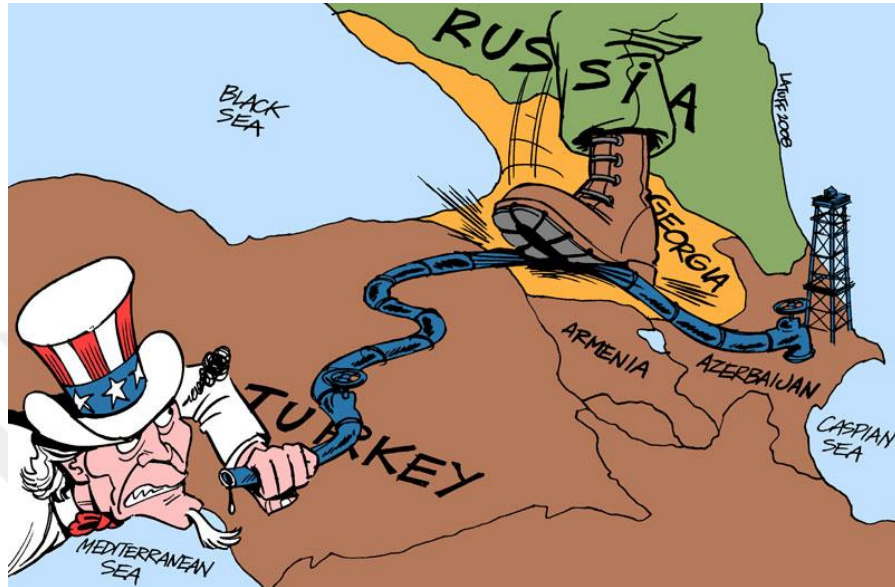
Picture 2:
The Winner of the Imperialist Olympics



Source: Latuff, Brazilian cartoonist, Russia-Georgia conflict: it's about oil...again!, <https://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/london/2008/08/406294.html?c=on>

This image shows Russian boot stepping on a BTC pipeline in order to seize the oil flow to the USA (the West).

Picture 3:
It is about the Politics



Source: Latuff, Brazilian cartoonist, Russia-Georgia conflict: it's about oil...again!
<https://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/london/2008/08/406294.html?c=on>

Georgian statecraft's representation of the state itself, as a small, unprotected country next to the big neighbor Russia with imperialistic desires; And it's implying the Russian invention as an attack on the west, was practiced well. These arguments showed to the rest of the world, that the war in Georgia was a global issue. There was no time anymore, to ignore Russian recent actions. It was a time for direct actions, where the West needed to be awoken.

2. GEORGIAN FOREIGN POLICY

2.1. Introduction

Geographical location in Georgian foreign policy stays as a one of the key elements for the state's political progress. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, major foreign policy objectives of Georgia, have been close relations with the EU and NATO, as well as balancing the relations with Russia. Western integration and de-Sovietization became a main goal of the Georgian government, which was supported by its citizens as well. Applying themselves as Europeans, shaped the interests and aims of the Georgian foreign policy, which distinguishes a state from its neighbors, stands to defend sovereignty seeks to promote the country abroad.³⁶

This section reviews that the interconnection of identity and state's policy is an unbreakable chain. Therefore, the first section is about general overview of identity and foreign policy practice. Second section offers as an example, the construction of the Georgian identity, and interconnection with its foreign policy.

2.2. Identity and Foreign Policy

Each state, to function, needs a territory in order to legitimate relations between inside community and the outside space of community. Line of the state's territory defines its sovereignty and cooperation with another geographical space. Territorializing of the state empowers the identity and precise its living space. It determines the sense of belonging to the specified place and provokes the process of identification, spreading and recognition between "we", "us" from "they", "others". The production of the Otherness is determined by political elites and institutions in order to distinguish their own space and power, identity and legitimation. In this sense, living area of a certain community represents a frame of the geopolitical culture and tradition, belonging to a certain territory constructs identity and has a strong influence of the state's policy (Figure 2). Development of the identity and the state are constituted together, each one cannot be without the other.³⁷ In other words, state cannot function without its "men". With its community "men", state starts to practice its power, defines domestic and foreign policy interests and constitutes "self" in the contrast to the "other". Nexus of the self/other able

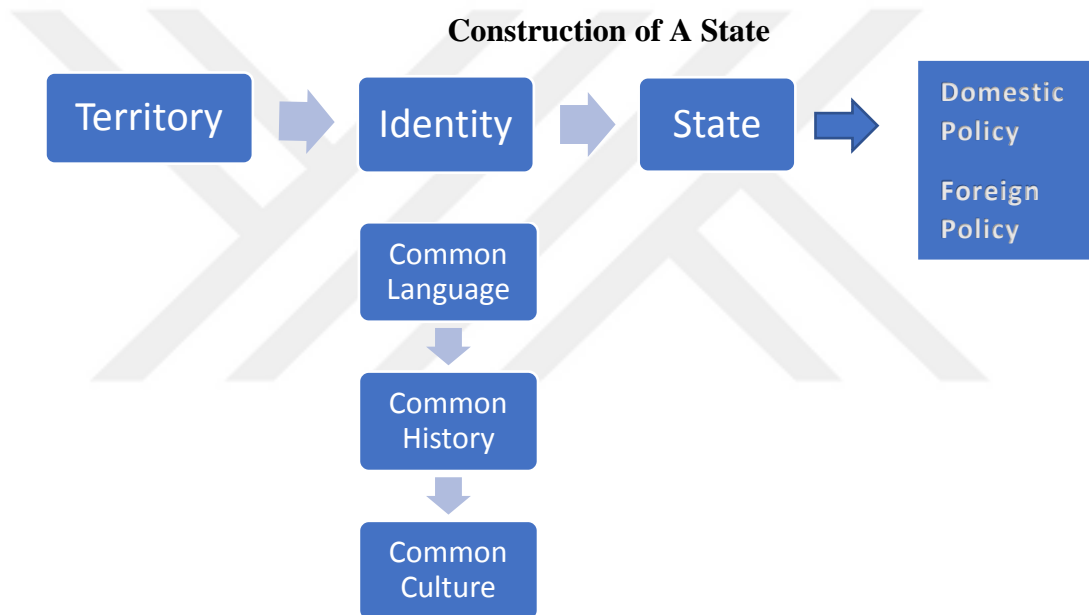
³⁶ William Wallace, "Foreign Policy and National Identity in the United Kingdom", *Oxford Journals* 67/1 (1991): 65.

³⁷ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Glasgow: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 64.

to impact on the state’s ideas and principles, that can shift different directions of the political practices. For example, “boundary producing political performance” of Georgia has been transformed by political intellectuals in different time of period and in different geopolitical condition. It was surrounded by constituted external “other”, however, political elites legitimated their power and chose one of the “us”. Later on, one of the “us”, in the geopolitical history of Georgia, became outside “other” and was defined as a threat. In such situations, geopolitical condition supported to the political elites’ to shift their political discourse. They legitimated their power, constructed “other” and defined identity politics, that influenced on foreign policy decision-making process.

Figure 2:

Construction of A State



Source: Results of re-analysis of the references

2.3. Constructing Georgian Foreign Policy and Identity

The Georgians, who call themselves as Kartveli and to the country - Georgia as Sakartvelo, had their own alphabet since 5th century. Country had been facing a lot of struggles from the beginning of its existence till today. It had its prosperous and discontent moments. One of the first peak of glorious period in history of Georgian statehood was in 12th century, when territorial unity was reaching from Nikopsia (today’s Krasnodar Krai, Russia) till Daruband (Derbent, city in the Republic of Dagestan) in the reign of King Tamar. After this century, the country suffered from Mongol invasions, Ottomans and etc., however, the sense of Georgian identity has never been lost.

There was a big threat to lose language and identity in Soviet Georgia too, but this made Georgians more to retain their own national identity. More than two millennia, Georgians had their own identities.³⁸ How was Georgian identity considered? By its own language, alphabet, historical heritage, ancient Christian culture. Those features of Georgian identity became national pride and one of the reasons of considering Georgia as one of the European nations. Consequently, for Georgia Europe is considered as “us” because of sharing same heritage. Also, when Georgia was become battlefield for the rivalry - Safavid Persian and the Ottoman Empire, the country found itself as an object of Islamic powers, which made Christian religion be a main marker for identifying Georgian-self. As a result, Georgian, Christian, European became one of the special identification vis-a-vis the Muslim “Other”.³⁹ Historically, Georgian population have always been multi-confessional state, but the devotion to the church has influenced on the relations between ethnical minorities and also Muslim Georgians.⁴⁰ Perceiving Christian religion as a determination of the identity provoked Georgia to look for an ally in Christian Europe. For instance, diplomatic missions to Europe, different sessions and discussions with various leaders like Ludwing XIV, Pope Clement XI and Louis XIV, were dedicated to have an ally and protectors. Consequently, according to the history of Georgia, perception being a Georgian and Christian became the same concepts. Moreover, it distinguished Christian Georgians from Muslim Georgians.⁴¹

While Georgia could not find an ally in “Us” - Christian Europe, Russia became a considerable power. Due to the fact that neighbor Russia was also Christian, Georgian leaders identified it as “Us” in order to protect themselves from dominant Muslim “other” and appealed to Russian “Us”. However, Russia’s protection turned out a big mistake for Georgia’s political independence later on, nevertheless, Western ideas through Russia had never been lost. Georgians, educated in Russia, were considered as developers of European ideas and thinking, but after the Bolshevik Revolution image of Russia as a part of the Europe was lost and Georgian leadership started to seek for direct connections to Europe without Russia. As a matter of the fact, Russia, which was isolating Georgia from

³⁸ Revaz Gachechiladze, “National idea, state-building and boundaries in the post-Soviet space (the case of Georgia)”, *GeoJournal* 43 (1997): 55-57.

³⁹ Stephen Jones, “The Role of Cultural Paradigms in Georgian Foreign Policy”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19:3 (2003): 89-91.

⁴⁰ Stephen Jones, *Georgia: A Political History Since Independence* (Tbilisi: Center for Social Science, 2013), 31.

⁴¹ Diana Bogishvili et al., *Georgian National Identity: Conflict and Integration* (Tbilisi: Center for Social Science, 2016), 251.

Europe, was being seen as “other”, forced Georgia to be integrated in the Soviet Union. This time, self-perception of the Georgians as the followers of Christianity contradiction with Muslim “others”, had been changed into saying no to communism and accepting western-type of development and democracy.⁴²

Figure 3:

Russia Us/Other before and after the Soviet Union



Source: Results of re-analysis of the references

To create a self-conscious of the nation, geographical location plays an important role. Geographical representations inform identities to understand their importance in the world. Every nation feels special and think that their country has a crucial role in the world politics. Georgia is not an exclusion too. Despite multi-ethnicity and religious diversity of Georgia, Georgian people are proud of their identity, because of their language, history, heritage, religion, geographical location. And political leaders,

⁴² Kornely Kakachia - Salome Minesashvili, “Identity Politics: Exploring Georgian Foreign Policy Behavior”, *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 6/2 (April 2015): 174-175.

intellectuals by everyday practice of the language made Georgian people to retain their own national identity. For example, the first Georgian president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was mentioning the role of the religion and history, as a national unity of the state. He was emphasizing Georgia's importance as a holy land. One of his speech, he compared path of Georgia to the thorny path of Christ and remind the nation of the fable from John's Gospel about releasing Christ or Barabbas. Mentioning the name of the Great Ilia, who was killed, considered as a punishment for the state: "Neglecting Ilia we gave preference to Barabbas; We shot him, we gained freedom but marched along Barabbas' path. Since we made our choice on Barabbas the God took away our freedom and let the great punishment come on us, which has continued for 70 years."⁴³

The second president, Eduard Shevardnadze nicknamed the "silver fox", was an experienced and skilled leader in politics. He was also emphasizing how state and church should collaborate and by helping of God, Georgia became the bridge between Europe and Asia.⁴⁴ During his presidency, with his advisers, Georgia represented as a corridor between Europe and Asia.

The agreement between Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev, president of Azerbaijan, established pipeline route from Baku to Supsa, the port city of the Black Sea. It was even more ambitious to connect the Caspian and the Mediterranean seas. Shevardnadze and the leaders of Turkey, Azerbaijan committed to the plan. A new pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan helped Georgia to represent an important geostrategic location. Shevardnadze's speech, at the EAPC Summit in November, 2002, was addressing the role of the Caucasus for the Western world. He emphasized the significance of the region that indeed merited to be paid special attention for cooperation. It was "a major outlet for the Caspian hydrocarbons to world markets", that was providing "the shortest ways linking the West to the natural wealth, labor and markets in Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Far East."⁴⁵ He was visioning the country on a western path and connected Georgian foreign policy toward the West. He modernized and brought new faces into the Georgian political

⁴³ "First Georgian President-Speech", Youtube, Date Accessed: 15 August 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqUmgAQXhXo>, 02:06-02:30.

⁴⁴ David Matsaberidze, "The Role of Civic Nationalism in Transformation of the Internal Ethnic Politics of Post-Soviet Georgia", *The European Centre for Minority Issues* (December 2014): 11.

⁴⁵ NATO Speeches, "President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze at the EAPC Summit", Date Accessed: 15 August 2018, <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021122h.htm>.

processes. Zurab Zhvania, co-chair of the Green party, that time was one of the new face representatives, who also recruited young reformers, including Mikheil Saakashvili, following president.⁴⁶

The third president Mikheil Saakashvili was also emphasizing rich legacy and ancient Christian culture of Georgia, which is one of the proofs to be European. His discourse was represented as the Georgians were the first Europeans. The bond between Georgian and Europe was forever connected on a common culture, history and identity.⁴⁷ The well-known speech of Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania “I am Georgian, and therefore I am European”⁴⁸ at the European Council in 1999 made clear message to Georgian audience to consider themselves as Europeans. Also, Saakashvili’s such practice of language made Georgians to think more as Europeans and to consider Europe as “us”, as it is democratic, civilized, free and secured.

The fourth president of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili in his inaugural speech claimed that European self-awareness was an integral part of Georgia by nature; Increasing relations with European countries were significant in order to develop European kind of political culture, democracy, national security and sustainable development.⁴⁹

As a result of a state’s practice of the language intellectuals determine identity of a statecraft. By practicing of language orally or verbally, made Georgian audience to consider themselves as Europeans. Europe became constitutive “us”, which is secured and developed, and Russia as a threat for Georgia’s security and development considered as constitutive “others”. In the case study, everyday practice of the language of the statecraft of Georgia made a clear message that Russia is a threat for Georgia’s security and territorial unity. From now on, for Georgian identity “us” is Europe, Russia is “other” and to defend itself from the “other” there is a need to be closer with “us”. Unfortunately, the “other” doesn’t like Georgia’s such proximity to the “us” and the August Five Day

⁴⁶ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Near Abroad: Putin, The West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 102-105.

⁴⁷ Civil Georgia, “Inaugural speech of President Mikheil Saakashvili”, Date Accessed: 16 August 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=16960>.

⁴⁸ “I am Georgian, and therefore I am European – Zurab Zhvania’s historic speech at the European Council”, Georgian Journal, Date Accessed: 16 August 2018, <https://www.georgianjournal.ge/politics/25618-i-am-georgian-and-therefore-i-am-european--zurab-zhvanias-historic-speech-at-the-european-council.html>.

⁴⁹ Civil Georgia, “President Margvelashvili's Inauguration Speech”, Date Accessed: 16 August 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26693>.

war in 2008 was obvious message to show its antipathy to Georgia and to the whole international community.

2.4. The Rose Revolution: New Page In Georgian Foreign Policy

Period of the Cold War was the largest geopolitical war in the history of humankind, which encompassed geopolitical, informational and technological struggles. The leading countries of the world were struggling to become one of the world's leaders. They used their satellite countries to achieve this goal by cooperating both politically and economically. To implement their aims, satellite countries' geographical location was one of the determinative factors. Territory and location on the map were defining a state's policy. For example, small country, like Georgia located on the old Silk Road's, considered as a "bridge" between Europe and Asia, a mediator between the West and the East, attracted lots of external strong countries attention. According to such strategic geographical location, the country has been facing problems about which direction should it take, which path should it follow in order to have a protectorate. Every decision brought some significant issues and was a new way to define the state's national interests and policy. Each resolution framed the identity and the state's foreign policy. One of the decisive momenta in the Georgian history was the Rose Revolution, which forced the president Shevardnadze to resign and leded, Mikheil Saakashvili, to come to power.

The Rose Revolution, that was considered by Lincoln Mitchell, as a victory for democracy universally, showed that "semi-democratic kleptocracy can be defeated."⁵⁰ It opened the new way in Georgian foreign policy. The revolution made state's orientation to be radically transformed. Central government started to reduce the dependence on Russia and increased the ties with the West. Georgian government's foreign policy priority became to seek integration with Euro-Atlantic Alliance and direct security ties with the US in order to have protection from Russia.⁵¹ Saakashvili's government saw the future in the West, as an independent, sovereign and secure. Integration with NATO and the EU was highlighted as a major national interest of the country, in order to strengthen the state's national security.⁵² The country perceives the EU and NATO as a guarantor of stability, security and territorial integrity.

⁵⁰ Lincoln Mitchell, "Georgia's Rose Revolution", *Current History* 103 (October 2004): 342.

⁵¹ Svante E. Cornell, *Georgia After The Rose Revolution: Geopolitical Predicament And Implications For U.S. Policy* (Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 3.

⁵² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, "National Security Concept of Georgia", Date Accessed: 8 December 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/NationalSecurityConcept.aspx>.

Therefore, the Western aspirations of Georgia, caused problems in Georgian-Russian relations. Moscow was not satisfied with new ruling party of Georgia due to its anti-Russian policy. The presence of the EU and the USA, in “its (Russian) sphere of influence” was not something that Russia could tolerate and has affected on the relations with Georgia. In 2006, Russia prohibited Georgian import, including agricultural products, wine and mineral water. Also, Russia stopped transportation and postal connections with Georgia.⁵³ Since, Georgia withdrew from CIS, it actively followed the aim to become a member of the western alliances. Main idea of this withdrawal was to erase the remains of the post-soviet society. Saakashvili’s major purpose was to turn the failed former Soviet country into a modern European democracy. Essential elements to build European model of Georgia, such as energy independence, economic development and Euro-Atlantic integration, were set for Saakashvili’s ruling party, which also was also an affirmation of Georgia’s European identity. He declared that it was not a new way for Georgia, but rather a reentrance to European home, which was intensely preserved in the Georgian history and national identity.⁵⁴

The Russian attempts to change the Georgian course by imposing economic embargo, deporting ethnic Georgians from their federation and later, even, invade the country’s territory in order to prevent Euro-Atlantic integration, did not interrupt the Georgian, the West-oriented, foreign policy. Moreover, aspirations for the western integration were strengthened. The war did not frighten Georgia. It had only one choice: to go back to 1921, or to continue following for its determinant aspirations.⁵⁵

2.5. Relations Between Georgia And the West

2.5.1. Georgia and the EU

Adopting Christianity in the 4th century, the Georgians considered themselves that they have always belonged to Europe. Christianity made the country to be an essential part of the Christian European civilization. In order to defend the south-eastern border of Christian Europe, Georgians were fighting against Muslim neighbors. In the 18th century, weakened Georgia sought ties with Russia due to stay connected with Europe.

⁵³ Giorgi Gvalia et al., *Political Elites, Ideas And Foreign Policy: Explaining and Understanding the International Behavior of Small States in the Former Soviet Union* (Tbilisi: Ilia State University Press, 2011), 41.

⁵⁴ Giorgi Gvalia et al., *Political Elites, Ideas And Foreign Policy: Explaining and Understanding the International Behavior of Small States in the Former Soviet Union*, 42.

⁵⁵ Giorgi Gvalia et al., *Political Elites, Ideas And Foreign Policy: Explaining and Understanding the International Behavior of Small States in the Former Soviet Union*, 43-44.

Unfortunately, connection stopped in 1921, when Soviet Russia occupied Georgia.⁵⁶ Since then, for 70 years, all doors towards Europe were closed. However, pursuing to the West has never been vanished.

After the dismantle of the Soviet Union, independent Georgia slowly started its reintegration with the European Union. The Georgian government's main priority became integration into the EU. However, this goal was not easily achievable. At that time, the EU had no views on Georgia, but considering regional partnership with post-Soviet countries wanting to establish democracy and develop economy. However, in the late 90's, the EU divided Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Armenia from other former Soviet countries and welcomed them to a new level of relations. This new stage showed that these six former Soviet countries could have a European perspective.⁵⁷

Relationship between Georgia and the European Union dates back in 1992, right after the demise of the Soviet-era, when the country was in a deep crisis. Despite such condition of Georgia, the EU began providing the country with an aid in three essential areas- humanitarian, financial and technical. The assistance of the EU improved the country's economic condition and stability. As a result of the support from the EU during the hard times, Georgia ensured its integration with the international community, as a vital in order to protect the country's sovereignty.⁵⁸

Bilateral relations intensified after the Rose Revolution, which replaced Shevardnadze's old regime with an young leaders, who were sharing liberal Western values. Since then, Georgia sent a clear message to the world that its priorities were Euro-Atlantic and European integration even if it will worsen relations with Russia.⁵⁹

Since, European Union has begun launching European Neighborhood Policy to bring post-Soviet and the southern Mediterranean states closer to EU, Georgia made its strong desires to join this policy from the very beginning. In 2004, after the various attempts, the states from the South Caucasus were combined in the ENP. Between 2003 and 2008 with the EU support in the European Neighborhood Policy, Georgia significantly developed

⁵⁶ George Rukhadze, "What should be next in EU-Georgia relations?", Date Accessed: 9 December 2018, <https://wi.christenunie.nl/page/46143>.

⁵⁷ Kakha Gogolashvili, *EU-Georgian Relations Future Perspective* (Tbilisi: Georgian Center for Security and Development, 2017), 5.

⁵⁸ Kakha Gogolashvili, *EU-Georgian Relations Future Perspective*, 7.

⁵⁹ Tamar Khidasheli, "Georgia's European Way", *Sixth International Conference* (February 2010): 96.

its institutional and legislative systems, which brought the country to the EU standards.⁶⁰ However, the EU-Georgia relations did not increase until after August 2008.

The August War has changed the situation. Russian invasion of Georgia woke the EU up. Georgian government's main message about safety of Georgia means the EU's security, showed the EU to defend its eastern borders and develop its neighborhood countries stability and security.⁶¹ Afterwards the August 2008 war, Georgia's resolutions towards European future strengthened. At the Prague Summit in 2009, launching of the Eastern Partnership, started new phase of the EU-Georgia relations. EaP created a new format in order to deepen EU's cooperation with Eastern neighbors. It also promoted to strengthen security and economic sustainability in the region.⁶²

The most significantly event that happened in 2014, was signing an Association Agreement, which deepened political and economic ties between Georgia and the EU. Furthermore, the EU continues to support conflict resolutions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and supports Georgia's territorial unity. The EU implements monitoring missions since 2008 in order to help Georgia's conflict territorial borders.⁶³

Currently, the EU provides Georgia with international assistance in four main programs:

1. Geographic programs, which supports three-year cycle financing to all the ENP countries. Georgia receives around 330-400 million EUR for financial and technical support.
2. Thematic programs, which finances specific developing areas. Georgia is a beneficiary of the European Instrument for Democracy and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.
3. Investment programs, projects and grants from the European Bank and other financial institutions.
4. Different EU programs, for example, Erasmus +, Horizon 2020.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Kakha Gogolashvili, *EU-Georgian Relations Future Perspective* (Tbilisi: Georgian Center for Security and Development, 2017), 9.

⁶¹ Tamar Khidasheli, "Georgia's European Way", *Sixth International Conference* (February 2010): 97.

⁶² Thea Maisuradze, "Georgia's Progress And Challenges On The Path To The EU Approximation After The Signature Of Association Agreement With Particular Emphasis on Issues Related To The Consolidation of Democracy In Georgian", (CISS, 2015), http://giss.org.ge/img/document_22eng.pdf.

⁶³ Elene Beraia, "European Union Eastern Partnership Programme in Georgia", *United Europe* 11 (2017): 68.

⁶⁴ Kakha Gogolashvili, *EU-Georgian Relations Future Perspective* (Tbilisi: Georgian Center for Security and Development, 2017), 6.

The August 2008 war put Europe's security at a stake. It showed to Europe that there was time not for passive, but direct actions in order to defend its eastern border. Georgia's western orientation after the war, has not been changed, moreover, rapprochement with the EU became the most prominent. The war turned out to be a catalyzer to renew EU-Georgia's relations.

2.5.2. Georgia and NATO

Georgia is one of the closest non-NATO partners of the United States among the former Soviet countries. Relations between NATO and Georgia began in 1992, when Georgia joined the North-Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). Later, replaced with EU-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997. Georgia also entered to the Partnership for Peace program in 1994 and since then, has been actively involved in trainings and workshops of this framework. Georgia, for the first time, declared its NATO membership aspiration in 2002, at Prague Summit and has been following membership process accordingly.⁶⁵ Georgia has been a leading receiver of U.S. foreign and military aid in Europe and Eurasia.⁶⁶

Georgia's geographical location in Caucasus region with a passing way to the Black Sea, has strategic importance for the U.S. for a different reasons: first, to uphold the advancement of Georgia's counterterrorist effectiveness; Second, to provide Georgia not to become a host to international terrorist activities; Third to secure the progress of Caspian Sea hydrocarbon resources' transportation to the global markets.

After the collapse of the USSR, Georgia started to seek support with different organizations and transatlantic alliances. Very soon, it became a beacon of hope in an unstable region.⁶⁷ After the regime change in 2003, when the new government of Georgia started connecting the country's future to the western values, relations have been deepened and the fourth strategic interest have been added - to strengthen Georgia as a democratic state. The US has positioned itself as a supporter of Georgia, that succeeded in democracy. In 2005, President George W. Bush in his speech, on Freedom Square in Tbilisi declared Georgia as a beacon of freedom and messaged across the world that the US firmly stands and supports to liberty seeker every nation.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ministry of Defense of Georgia, "NATO-Georgia Cooperation", Date Accessed: 11 December 2018, <https://mod.gov.ge/en/page/38/nato-georgia-cooperation>.

⁶⁶ Cory Welt, "Georgia: Background and U.S. Policy" (CRS, 2018), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45307.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Luke Coffey, "NATO Membership for Georgia: In U.S. and European Interest" (The Heritage Foundation, 2018), https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/SR-199_0.pdf.

⁶⁸ Dov Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters*, 86 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2006), 51.

Georgia, has played an important role, connecting Europe to Asia, last decades. As a transit country of oil and gas from the Caspian Sea to the world markets, has brought multiple international interests to the country. Oil and gas pipelines, especially the construction of the BTC pipeline reduced Russian influence and increased the EU and NATO interests. The pipeline is an energy resource for Europe, which makes the Caucasus important to global economic and energy security for the West.⁶⁹

The NATO-Georgian relationship has been steadily retaining the connection. However, there were multiple issues to be done. During the time, in 2008, Georgia was got a promise to become NATO member, which later turned out to be fatal. Unfortunately, critical relations of Georgia with Russia, took a long time for the country's journey towards NATO. After the Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008, the United States rose its foreign assistance to Georgia and provided over \$38 million humanitarian aid and emergency relief. Since the war, Georgia has been a beneficiary of U.S. foreign aid.⁷⁰ Although, the transatlantic alliance supported Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. They condemned Russia's military action and called for the immediate peacekeeping actions.⁷¹ Despite the fact that Georgia did not become a member of NATO, it deepened its relationship with the North-Atlantic alliance that is the biggest achievement in Georgian diplomacy. Georgia benefits NATO's different programs, which is certainly a big commitment for a country, that is not a member of the alliance. By NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg's declaration in December 2016: Georgia has got all potentials to be a member of North Atlantic Treaty organization.⁷² Georgia, that considers being NATO member as a security guarantor, proved that the country is ready to join the alliance, no matter what. However, NATO turned out to be not ready for the risks, that follows Georgian integration into the alliance. That has been proven by the August war, where Georgia has been left alone. Despite all promises and nice words, that were expressed from the Unites State and NATO, taking risks for Georgia to achieve its

⁶⁹ Svante E. Cornell, *Georgia After The Rose Revolution: Geopolitical Predicament And Implications For U.S. Policy* (Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 10.

⁷⁰ Cory Welt, "Georgia: Background and U.S. Policy" (CRS, 2018), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45307.pdf>.

⁷¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with Georgia", Date Accessed: 12 December 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm.

⁷² Thea Morrison, "Stoltenberg: Georgia Has All Practical Tools to Become NATO Member", *Georgia Today* (December 2016), Date Accessed: 13 December 2018, <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/5297/Stoltenberg%3A-Georgia-Has-All-Practical-Tools-to-Become-NATO-Member>.

territorial integrity, turned out to be an illusion.⁷³ Some NATO members were concerned about the fact that NATO membership process could not be moved forward as long as the conflict remained unresolved with Georgian territories being under the occupation of Russia.



⁷³ Per Gahrton, *Georgia: Pawn In The New Great Game* (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 217.

3. DEPICTION OF THE AUGUST WAR FROM THE GEORGIAN STATECRAFT'S PERSPECTIVE

3.1. Striving Back to An Old Belonged Place

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, weak Georgian government with its dependence on Russia, could not develop its own national prosperity. Georgian citizens, tired from inactiveness of the government, began protests in November 2003, known as the Rose Revolution, that opened a new page in Georgian history and brought Mikheil Saakashvili as a new elected president.⁷⁴ Georgia started developing its own principles. Different reforms were implemented in different (started from political finished with agricultural) sectors. President Saakashvili's main focus during his presidency, was to present Georgia as one of the oldest European civilization. He managed to change country's pro-Russian orientation to its ancient roots of the West. In his inaugural speech he addressed:

“Georgia is the country of unique culture. We are not only old Europeans, we are the very *first Europeans*, and therefore Georgia holds special place in *European civilization*... Georgia will be stable ally for all friendly states. Georgia should be formed as the state assuming international responsibility, as the dignified member of international community, as the state, which regardless the highly complicated *geopolitical situation and location*, has equally benign relations with all its neighbors, and at the same time does not forget to take its own place in European family, in European civilization, the place lost several centuries ago. As an ancient Christian state, we should take this place again. Our direction is towards European integration. It is time for Europe finally to see and appreciate Georgia and undertake steps towards us. And first signs of these are already evident. Today, we have not raised European flag by accident - this flag is Georgian flag as well, as far as it embodies our civilization, our culture, essence of our history and perspective, and vision of our future.”⁷⁵

By emphasizing geopolitical location of Georgia and its connection to European civilization as Georgians “very first Europeans” became main motivating point of Saakashvili's presidency. Western oriented Saakashvili made fundamental changes in

⁷⁴ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Near Abroad: Putin, The West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 112.

⁷⁵ Civil Georgia, “President Saakashvili's Inauguration Speech”, Date Accessed: 10 July 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26694&search=>.

foreign policy and strategical orientation of Georgia. His main goal to restore territorial integration of Georgia and geopolitical partnership with the USA caused strains with the relations of Russia; As he mentioned in his inaugural speech, the president Saakashvili needed Russia as a friend, as an ally and powerful partner, not as an enemy and offered a friendly hand in order to progress Georgian-Russian friendship.⁷⁶ However, as much as Saakashvili was trying to keep good relations with the northern neighbor country and deepening relations with the USA dislikes from the part of Russia were increasing.

Saakashvili's strong enthusiasm, to gain lost place in European family, was achieved in a very culminant moment, at the Bucharest summit of 2008. Georgia was close to the major aim to become a member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, the country did not get MAP, but has received something more than MAP, a clear commitment to gain membership status, which opened the new stage between Georgian-NATO relationship.⁷⁸ It was a historical moment for Georgia, that one day, it would become a NATO member,⁷⁹ claimed Georgian Foreign Minister, Davit Bakradze. Saakashvili also mentioned that getting MAP is not easy, and used Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as the example countries, that also struggled very hard to get a membership in the North Atlantic alliance.

Saakashvili's aim to keep normal relations with Russia along with NATO membership, was his priority. He was considering Russia the greatest neighbor, with whom Georgia was linked by common history.⁸⁰ However, Russia's strong antagonism, blackmails, threat, certain actions and different diplomatic tricks, directed to block Georgia's retrieval. Everything, what Russia had been doing, was targeting to prevent Georgia from receiving MAP, yet, a direct commitment that Georgia received at the Bucharest Summit, that the country will become a NATO member equals to a geo-political revolution,⁸¹ claimed Saakashvili.

⁷⁶ Civil Georgia, "President Saakashvili's Inauguration Speech".

⁷⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Bucharest Summit Declaration", Date Accessed: 10 July 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/official_texts_8443.htm.

⁷⁸ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili Hails 'Historic' NATO Summit Results", Date Accessed: 10 July 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17517&search=>.

⁷⁹ Civil Georgia, "Georgian Foreign Minister on NATO's Decision", Date Accessed: 10 July 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17513&search=>.

⁸⁰ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili: NATO Summit Outcome Unclear", Date Accessed: 11 July 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17499&search=>.

⁸¹ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili Hails 'Historic' NATO Summit Results", Date Accessed: 11 July 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17517&search=>.

In the end of the Bucharest summit, Georgia made a very big step back to a very big European family, which gave political and legal guarantee to the country to become a NATO member. However, Russia's dissatisfaction about NATO enlargement was expressed by sending supportive messages to Abkhaz and South Ossetian leaders.⁸² Duma's resolutions were not accepting NATO membership. Moreover, Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov claimed that the situation would be thoroughly changed for the South Ossetia and Abkhazia's populations, most of whom were Russian citizens, and Russia would always stand for the protection and a support to its own compatriots in order to legitimate their rights;⁸³ Also, he considered NATO expansion as security threat for Russia and expressed that the Russian government would not allow NATO's approaching attempts to the state's borders, that would cause confrontation between blocs.⁸⁴ Russia's such attitude about NATO enlargement could not change anything, Ukraine and Georgia have got a membership guarantee, which has not happened for any other countries. "This is a decision of geopolitical importance for our region"⁸⁵ said Saakashvili in an interview with Rustavi 2 TV. Saakashvili's effort to bring Georgia back to its an old belonged place was not easy, especially, when the country was facing powerful contradictions from the northern neighbor.

3.2. Russia As a Provocative Aggressor Country

The Bucharest Summit declaration became very controversial between Russia and Georgia. After the declaration, series of provocations had been started: Russian authorities have quit the CIS treaty; they have denounced territorial integrity of Georgia; Russian fighter jet had been taken off from the Gudauta military base; some aerial attacks have been carried out in close to Ganmukhuri. Russia's such prevocational actions were considered as illegal and unacceptable, which portends a threat not only for Georgia, but also for the security and stability of Europe. By Saakashvili's proclamation may Georgia had a small territory, but it would not allow anyone to humiliate unity, freedom and dignity of the Georgian population, which were supported by not only the Georgian

⁸² Civil Georgia, "Putin Sends Supportive Message to Abkhaz, S.Ossetian Leaders", Date Accessed: 11 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114672>.

⁸³ Civil Georgia, "Lavrov: Russia Respects Principle of Territorial Integrity", Date Accessed: 11 July 2018, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17500&search=>.

⁸⁴ Civil Georgia, "Russian Foreign Minister on NATO Expansion", Date Accessed: 11 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114709>.

⁸⁵ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili on NATO Summit Results", Date Accessed: 11 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114679>.

authorities, but entire international and democratic communities.⁸⁶ He also addressed to Abkhazians and Ossetians to keep being united against the external, “outrageous force”,⁸⁷ that was trying to confront them against Georgians and he offered peace and protection instead living with criminals, separatists and corrupt groups.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, leaders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia refused his offer to be unified with Georgians. The leader of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoity, declared that the people in South Ossetia have decided to be a sovereign state, and they were not going to change this course.⁸⁹

Russian provocations were expressed by raised number of peacekeeping troops in Abkhaz conflict zone.⁹⁰ The main purpose of increasing number of Russian peacekeepers was not to control territories of the conflict zones, but to defend rights of its citizens - that’s how Russia justified its acts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁹¹ Moreover, Russia was blaming Georgia for its provocations in the conflict zones; And pointing that Georgia was sending weapons, food and technical means to Kodori Gorge. Prime Minister of Georgia, Lado Gurgeniidze, called Russian troops “aggressors” and claimed that such move of Russia would destabilize the region and any additional soldier or military hardware [in the Abkhaz conflict zone] would be considered as illegal, as potential *aggression* in order to trigger unsustainability and endangerment.⁹²

Main task for Georgian government was to avoid provocative aggression from Russian side and not to make any step to put peace, security and territorial integrity under the Russian threat.⁹³

⁸⁶ Civil Georgia, “President Saakashvili’s Televised Address to Nation”, Date Accessed: 13 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114827>.

⁸⁷ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Calls on Abkhazians, Ossetians to Jointly Resist External Force”, Date Accessed: 13 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114874>.

⁸⁸ Civil Georgia, “President Saakashvili’s Televised Address to Abkhazians and South Ossetians”, Date Accessed: 13 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114875>.

⁸⁹ Civil Georgia, “Abkhaz, S.Ossetian Leaders Reject Saakashvili’s Proposals”, Date Accessed: 13 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114877>.

⁹⁰ Civil Georgia, “Russia Increases Number of Peacekeepers in Abkhazia”, Date Accessed: 14 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114865>.

⁹¹ Civil Georgia, “Moscow Justifies Legal Links with Abkhazia, S.Ossetia”, Date Accessed: 14 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114867>.

⁹² Civil Georgia, “Georgian PM: Additional Russian Troops ‘Aggressors’”, Date Accessed: 14 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114870>.

⁹³ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili’s Statement on Russian Peacekeeping Forces”, Date Accessed: 14 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114836>.

The officials of Georgia considered Russia as a provocative and aggressor “external threat” for the country’s domestic stability. As a “very first Europeans”, belonging themselves back to European civilization, NATO and EU were perceived as “us” and Russia as “other”.

Russian extremely dangerous provocations were expressing a serious threat to the international societies.⁹⁴ Georgian government managed to give worldwide importance to the recent actions that were implementing against Georgia. Saakashvili said that the Russian’s recent actions were the “moment of truth” for Europe and there was a need to deter Russian actions in conflict zone. Russia’s aggressive actions were spread as disastrous virous to demolish freedom and democracy, which were sprouting in its neighborhood. Saakashvili represented recent actions from the Russian side as a reply to the Kosovo precedent, to the West and to NATO, extension borders in Caucasus region.⁹⁵ Saakashvili speaking at his ruling party’s congress in Tbilisi, mentioned that one part of Georgia was under the occupation by the biggest aggressors and Georgia was on a frontline of “battle between good and evil.”⁹⁶ It was getting “very close” to war. Russian propaganda and the signals, based on the false information, were targeting military expansion against Georgia,⁹⁷ was said by the state minister of Georgia, Temur Iakobashvili.

President Saakashvili was implementing different press-conferences in order to solve the current problems. At one of his press briefing with five EU foreign ministers from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Sweden and Slovenia, he said that goal of Georgia was resolving conflict peacefully, but recent actions by Russia toward Georgia were source of concern. Europe left Georgia alone in 1921, but Europe should not make the same mistake, because this problem is not only problem for Georgia, but whole Europe, “Russia and its officials are violating international norms of conduct.”⁹⁸ Russia’s rough and outrageous signals were the most aggressive way to revise the world after disruption of

⁹⁴ Civil Georgia, “Russia Deploys Additional Troops in Abkhazia”, Date Accessed: 15 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114886>.

⁹⁵ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Calls Europe to Deter Russia’s Moves”, Date Accessed: 15 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114896>.

⁹⁶ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Hails Ruling Party’s ‘Renewal’”, Date Accessed: 15 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/185589>.

⁹⁷ Civil Georgia, “State Minister: Georgia ‘Very Close’ to War”, Date Accessed: 15 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114924>.

⁹⁸ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Urges for EU’s Help”, Date Accessed: 16 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116270>.

Communism.⁹⁹ International communities needed to stand next to Georgia and speak up, because the future of Europe at stake.

3.3. Double Game Player Russia

Russia did not stop its provocations despite all the warnings from the international world. Each call was addressing towards Russia to respect territorial unity and sovereignty of Georgia; To support international law and border principles and to accept the powerful leaders' calls about the ways of reducing tensions.¹⁰⁰ However, neither Europe's, nor NATO's concerns and calls on Russia, could not stop them from the provocations. Moreover, they kept denying the facts and defining as a disinformation to discredit Russian peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.¹⁰¹ Each calls were in vain. Furthermore, Russia started to play a double game. Every their provocative actions, condemned by Georgia, were justified in order to show "legality" to the international society.

Situation was getting worse and a fear of the war was increasing, "there is a sense of concern that war is inevitable."¹⁰² Georgian Foreign Minister, Eka Tkeshelashvili commented about the recent events that neither the Georgian, nor the Abkhazian side were causing tension. The main source of the current, increased problems was Russia, escalating the situation according to its own rules.¹⁰³ Their "peacekeeping" troops in the region of Abkhazia brought anything, but "peace."¹⁰⁴

Russia was playing dangerous double game. One part of the game toward Georgia was aggressive and full of provocations, another side of the game was well-planned justification for the European Union and North-Atlantic Alliance in order to pretend as a supporter of the Georgian territorial unity. Russian ministers at the meetings with UN Secretary pretended as if they were de-escalating the current tensions and building a peace

⁹⁹ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili Says Russia's Moves Triggered 'Serious Crisis'", Date Accessed: 16 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116291>.

¹⁰⁰ Civil Georgia, "Bush, Merkel Discuss Georgia", Date Accessed: 16 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116548>.

¹⁰¹ Civil Georgia, "Russia Denies Base in Abkhazia", Date Accessed: 17 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116559>.

¹⁰² Civil Georgia, "Abkhaz Officials Say Fear of War Increased", Date Accessed: 17 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116571>.

¹⁰³ Civil Georgia, "Georgian FM: Russian Peacekeepers Source of Tension in Abkhazia", Date Accessed: 17 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116572>.

¹⁰⁴ Civil Georgia, "Russia Warns Tbilisi Against Peacekeepers' Withdrawal", Date Accessed: 17 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/185630>.

in the conflict areas;¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, it was in the contrary, Russia, “as a facilitator and a peacekeeper in negotiations between Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia”, was gaining political points in front of the international community, but on the other hand, it was implementing military pressure in Georgian territory.¹⁰⁶ Russia, with its double game principle, managed to blur the picture of the recent events. They managed not to show a clear image of the situation (where people being killed) to the international community. and. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, stated that recent tensions between Georgia and Russia was playing with fire. It should not be allowed that people in South Caucasus witness the war. In order to prevent this, not only the governments of Georgia and Russia, but everyone, should do their utmost help to deescalate further tensions between these two countries.¹⁰⁷

Saakashvili’s attempts, to neutralize tensions with Russia, were aiming for a dialogue in order to reduce the recent problems. He also addressed to the western friends that the Russians were trying to show that Georgia had internal problems with South Ossetia and they were next to South Ossetian people in order to defend them. However, Russia was a key player behind all of these problems and clashes, specially within recent several months.¹⁰⁸ The president of Georgia mentioned that main goal of Russia’s double game were to escalate and distract attention, “that’s why, I ask everyone to be very attentive and get rid of the provocations. I call on all of our friends to double diplomatic efforts to prevent annexation and illegal occupation of Georgian territories.”¹⁰⁹

However, President Saakashvili made an initiative in parliament to increase number of troops. The deputy of the parliamentary committee for defense and security, Nika Rurua, said, the Georgian government had been thinking about increasing number of troops for a year now, but this decision has been accelerated because of Russia’s provocations in the separatist regions.¹¹⁰ MP Givi Targamadze also agreed with Rurua’s remark and

¹⁰⁵ Civil Georgia, “Russian Official, UN Envoy Discuss Abkhazia”, Date Accessed: 18 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116576>.

¹⁰⁶ Civil Georgia, “U.S. Official: Russia Increases Pressure on Georgia”, Date Accessed: 20 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116582>.

¹⁰⁷ Civil Georgia, “CoE Chief Concerned over S.Ossetia Tensions”, Date Accessed: 20 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116690>.

¹⁰⁸ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili’s Remarks on Rice’s Visit, Russia”, Date Accessed: 20 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116735>.

¹⁰⁹ National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, *Republic of Georgia (საქართველოს რესპუბლიკა)*, 127.

¹¹⁰ National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, *Asaval Dasavali (სავალ დასავალი)*, 29.

explained, that threat assessment has showed it has reached to critical level after the aggressive actions from Russia's side. Threat was real and there was not time for any illusion. The decision about increasing the troops was considered as an adequate response to actual threats.¹¹¹

Situation was getting more and more complicated. In the South Ossetian conflict zone, on late August 1, people were killed and injured. Both sides blamed each other about opening the first fire. Mamuka Kurashvili, a Georgian Defense Ministry official, who was in charge of peacekeeping operations, claimed that the Georgian side responded to the Russian shelling of the Georgian villages. He emphasized, the bombing, in the South Ossetian breakaway region, was the most violent, where the Russian peacekeepers also were engaged.¹¹² Temur Iakobashvili, on August 2, visited the conflict zone. He met with Marat Kulakhmetov, the Russian commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces in order to have the negotiations with the separatists. He suggested meeting with the South Ossetian leaders, but all tries and the offers were rejected. Alternatives for negotiations were locked.¹¹³ He also mentioned that late incident was “an obvious sign to engage Georgia in a large-scale military conflict.”¹¹⁴

Georgian side accused Tskhinvali of opening fire first, in the village of Dvani, close to the Ossetian village of Mugut. The South Ossetian side and Moscow accused Tbilisi of dispatching military units close to the border.¹¹⁵ As Iakobashvili said it was Russia's “old tricks,” to create an illusion of large-scale military conflict, as if war was imminent. The most disappointing thing in this case is that the Russian government was evidently promoting and orchestrating this process.¹¹⁶ Temur Iakobashvili and Grigol Vashadze, Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister, on the phone with Grigory Karasin, mentioned that Georgia was negotiating with the hope to Russia to manage and resume the peace processes in Tskhinvali conflict region. They assured that the major intention

¹¹¹ Civil Georgia, “Defense Spending, Number of Troops Increased”, Date Accessed: 20 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116784>.

¹¹² Civil Georgia, “Six Die in S.Ossetia Shootout”, Date Accessed: 21 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116867>.

¹¹³ Civil Georgia, “State Minister Meets Chief Russian Peacekeeper”, Date Accessed: 21 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116874>.

¹¹⁴ Civil Georgia, “MIA: Seven Georgians Injured in S.Ossetia Shootout”, Date Accessed: 21 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116870>.

¹¹⁵ Civil Georgia, “‘Relatively Quiet’ but Tensions Remain High in S.Ossetia”, Date Accessed: 21 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116877>.

¹¹⁶ Civil Georgia, “Russia Tries to Create ‘Illusion of War’ – Tbilisi Says”, Date Accessed: 21 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116868>.

of Georgian side was to decrease tension and continue negotiations with the South Ossetian side.¹¹⁷

3.4. Role of Russia As A “Peacekeeper” In the Conflict Resolution

Tbilisi was trying not to involve into the tensions despite the Russian attacks to the Georgian villages in Tskhinvali region. President Saakashvili’s assurances about the recent actions, that Georgian statecraft’s interests were not the escalation of the conflict, in the contrary, the government wanted to stop the violence in a very peaceful way. However, he was disappointed that even permanent contacts with Russian diplomats did not stop the violation of the Georgian peacekeepers, policemen and civilians in the conflict zone. He called on the Russian officials to stop the madness and brutality in the breakaway region in order not to deepen the confrontation, but instead to settle the controversy peacefully.¹¹⁸

Unfortunately, entire calls and speeches about decreasing tensions in the conflicts zone were unsuccessful. On August 7, Georgian television reported that residents, in the villages, were evacuated.¹¹⁹ President Saakashvili had ordered Georgian forces to cease fire and called for the immediate talks in order to overcome the hard situation. He also made a very important offer to the Russian Federation to resolve the conflict, as both sides, Georgia and Russia, have been allies for decades. Russia had to be a real mediator between Georgia and South Ossetia to provide protection to the population in the conflict zone that they are protected by those (Russia), who they trust.¹²⁰ Despite a unilateral Georgian ceasefire, Georgian villages were invaded by South Ossetian militiamen, said, a spokesperson of the Georgian Interior Ministry, Shota Utiashvili, on August 7.¹²¹ President Saakashvili’s announcement via television about the current conflict situation in South Ossetia on August 7, referred to de-escalate tensions in separatist regions. He

¹¹⁷ Civil Georgia, “State Minister Hopeful over Possible Talks with Tskhinvali”, Date Accessed: 21 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116885>.

¹¹⁸ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Says Georgia Shows Restraint in S. Ossetia”, Date Accessed: 22 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116912>.

¹¹⁹ Civil Georgia, “Reports: Evacuation from Georgian Villages”, Date Accessed: 23 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116920>.

¹²⁰ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Appeals for Peace in Televised Address”, Date Accessed: 23 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116922>.

¹²¹ Civil Georgia, “Georgian Village Attacked? MIA”, Date Accessed: 23 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116924>.

made speech to the South Ossetian people, to the Georgian society and international community to avoid violence and prevent the tensions in a peaceful way. His message was including main proposal to Russia as a mediator player and a safety guarantor between Georgia and South Ossetian autonomy. He referred also that Georgia and South Ossetians have been a unity. Each ethnic Ossetian people have been an integral part in the Georgian history for centuries. Dedicated to this unity, he addressed citizens, to forget the negative things that had happened in the past and start taking care of the country, working for the common future and avoiding the violence that harms everyone: “Georgia is strong for its diversity. Georgia has never been and will never be a mono-ethnic country. Georgia belongs to all of us regardless of our ethnicity.”¹²²

After announcing unilaterally ceasing fire from the Georgian side, there was a short term tranquility in the region, but later, the villages of Prisi and Tamarasheni were attacked, also all Georgian positions around Tskhinvali were under the fire, said Georgian Interior Ministry spokesman.¹²³ As a result of actions, Georgian side was forced to reconstruct constitutional order in the whole conflict region, said Mamuka Kurashvili, MoD official in charge of overseeing peacekeeping operations.¹²⁴ Temur Iakobashvili also mentioned situation remained very tense. Iakobashvili emphasized that main goal was not to capture or besiege towns; The goal was to cease fire. He expressed readiness of the Georgian government for dialogue.¹²⁵

¹²² Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili’s Televised Address on S.Ossetia”, Date Accessed: 24 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116925>.

¹²³ Civil Georgia, “Heavy Fighting Resumed in S.Ossetia”, Date Accessed: 25 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116931>.

¹²⁴ Civil Georgia, “‘Georgia Decided to Restore Constitutional Order in S.Ossetia’ – MoD Official”, Date Accessed: 25 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116932>.

¹²⁵ Civil Georgia, “Official: Georgian Forces Capture Five Villages”, Date Accessed: 25 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116937>.

Picture 4:
Restoration of Peace



Russian Boot with an aim of “Restoring Peace” steps on Georgia

Source: Zoe, Caucasus Conflict Zone-August War, 2010, www. Ucnauri.com

3.5. Russia: A threat To the Georgian Territorial Unity

The members of the Georgian government, perceived Russian aggression as a threat to Georgian territorial integrity, dignity and freedom, that was coming from the outside “other” by awaking artificially created frozen conflicts inside the country.

All the efforts, that the Georgian government implemented in order to stop the expecting threat, were responded by the Russian military expressions. Saakashvili addressed that they “has launched a full-scale military invasion of Georgia and Georgia will not be defeated no matter what.”¹²⁶ “Georgia did not start this confrontation and it will not give up its territories; Georgia will not say no to its freedom”¹²⁷ - said Saakashvili in news briefing. Georgian Foreign Ministry also claimed that Russian “aggressive policy” was breaking peace, sovereignty and stability in the whole Caucasus area. Such a development of the relations would increase more tensions and attacks. Russian side should refrain destabilization processes and terminate disruptive actions against the Georgian statecraft.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Civil Georgia, “Georgia in State of War with Russia – Saakashvili”, Date Accessed: 26 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116976>.

¹²⁷ Civil Georgia, “‘Most of S. Ossetia Under Tbilisi’s Control’ – Saakashvili”, Date Accessed: 26 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116946>.

¹²⁸ Civil Georgia, “Tbilisi Protests Russia’s Military Exercises”, Date Accessed: 26 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116786>.

The Russian aircraft was dropping bombs in number of strategic places, including military base in Senaki and port of Poti. Also, outside of Tbilisi, Vaziani military base was bombed. “This is not the conflict in the Tskhinvali region; this is war against Russia”¹²⁹—said Temur Iakobashvili, the Georgian State Minister for Reintegration.

Mikheil Saakashvili claimed that both Georgian and Russian sides should start negotiations to cease the disagreements. He called Russia’s recent aggression “madness” and “crime” against residing people in Georgia in order to cessate the independence and freedom of Georgia.¹³⁰ He said that Georgia was ready for the dialogue and demilitarization of the region if Russia withdrew its troops from South Ossetia.¹³¹ Despite Georgia’s calls for dialogue, Russian forces were making more steps forward and putting the matter of statehood of Georgia under the huge danger. Davit Bakradze, Georgian parliamentary speaker, addressed to the nation to be together and united to endure cruelty of the foe in order not to allow the enemy to occupy Georgian land. The events of 1921 (when the Red Army invaded Georgia) should not be repeated. The most important thing is to retain calm and firmness to show our enemy how dignified nation we are.¹³²

A note, about the confrontation, started by Russia, was given to the Russian Embassy in Tbilisi by the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying that Georgian troops were pulling the troops and ceasing fire in the conflict region. A humanitarian corridor was opened to the south of Tskhinvali to allow the population and injured people to leave the disputed area. Moreover, Georgia expressed its preparations for immediate dialogue with Russia on ending of hostilities.¹³³ However, such offers from Georgian side did not make any changes for Russia. Furthermore, the Russian government dispatched dozens of military appliances via Roki Tunnel. The secretary of the Georgian National Security Council, Alexander Lomaia said that “military aggression of unprecedented scales” was

¹²⁹ Civil Georgia, “Strategic Targets Bombed Across Georgia”, Date Accessed: 26 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116965>.

¹³⁰ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Calls on Russia for Ceasefire and Talks”, Date Accessed: 26 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116982>.

¹³¹ Civil Georgia, “Bush-Medvedev Discuss Russo-Georgia Conflict”, Date Accessed: 26 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116983>.

¹³² Civil Georgia, “Georgia’s Statehood Under Danger, Resist Enemy Everywhere – Government Tells the Nation”, Date Accessed: 27 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116996>.

¹³³ Civil Georgia, “Georgia Announces Ceasefire, Pulls Out Troops”, Date Accessed: 27 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117006>.

ongoing against Georgia.¹³⁴ The Russian air forces carried out strikes across Georgia. Bombs were dropped in the center of Gori, on the Senaki military base. Russian bombardiers were implementing air attacks over Georgia intending to block radio and telecommunications sites. They were also targeting to civilian population in cities and villages as well.¹³⁵ The UN ambassador of Georgia, Irakli Alasania said that Russia's main intention, despite all the efforts what the Georgian side offered, was to abolish Georgian statehood and to extinguish the Georgian people; He also responded, to Russia's accusation of Tbilisi in "genocide" of the Ossetians, that Russia was using old "Soviet propaganda" to prove its righteous of military intervention of Georgia.¹³⁶

President of Georgia, addressed to the nation via live televised broadcast about the current situation and described the ways of helping the country. He emphasized the fact that Russian military intervention had been planned months ago to occupy Georgian territories, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to threaten the country's sovereignty. All the efforts that Russia did were seeded to cause confusion and fear in the society. His message also contained encouragement of the nation in order to be mobilized, resisted and dedicated to save the homeland.¹³⁷

This occupation was an attempt to totally occupy Georgia and put an end to the Georgian statehood. For that, Russia took control over the major highway passing through Gori and divided the country's west part from the east.¹³⁸ President of Georgia, personally blamed Putin for "brutal attacks" on Georgia and described Putin as a person "sick with a maniacal superiority complex."¹³⁹ Saakashvili said that it was a "Balkan-type ethnic cleansing and purification campaign."¹⁴⁰ He accused Russia of ethnic cleansing of two

¹³⁴ Civil Georgia, "Georgian Forces 'Regrouping' after Heavy Overnight Fights", Date Accessed: 27 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/185634>.

¹³⁵ Civil Georgia, "Overnight Air Strikes Across Georgia", Date Accessed: 27 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117019>.

¹³⁶ Civil Georgia, "Russia Wants 'Regime Change' in Georgia – U.S. Suggests", Date Accessed: 27 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117016>.

¹³⁷ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili Addresses Nation", Date Accessed: 27 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117030>.

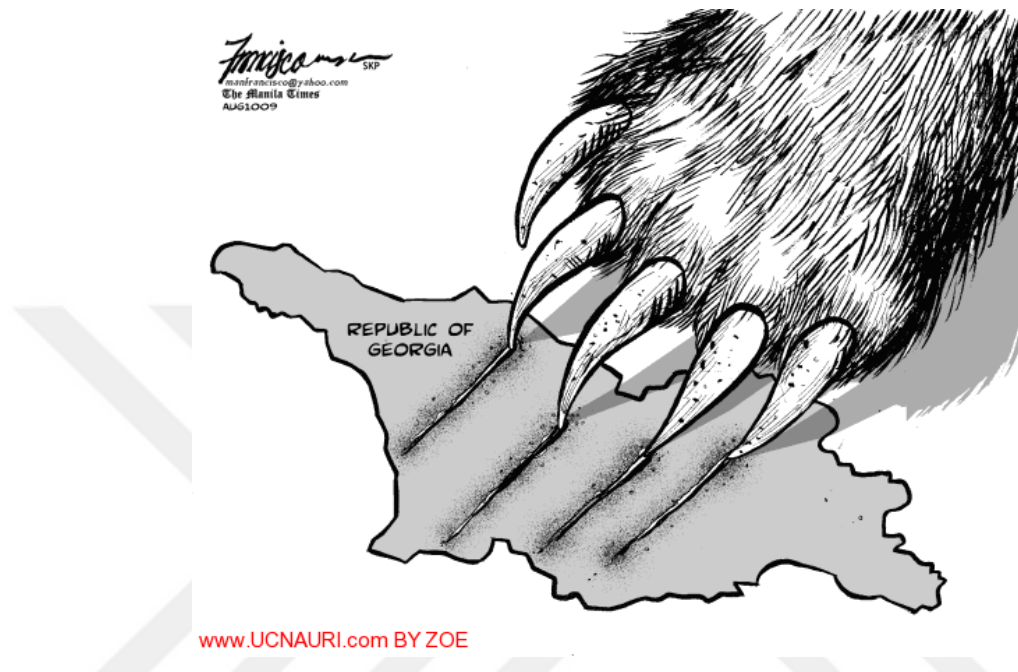
¹³⁸ Civil Georgia, "'Russia Occupies Significant Part of Georgia' – Saakashvili", Date Accessed: 28 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117029>.

¹³⁹ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili Blames Personally Putin for 'Brutal Attack'", Date Accessed: 28 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117042>.

¹⁴⁰ Civil Georgia, "Georgia Alleges 'Ethnic Cleansing' in Conflict Zone", Date Accessed: 28 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117065>.

areas of Georgia, Upper Abkhazia and South Ossetia. 1,400 reports of brutal attacks, violence and rapes were proved with testimony brought by international organization.¹⁴¹

**Picture 5:
Russian Paw**



Russia (Big Brown Bear) swiping the republic of Georgia with a paw

Source: Zoe, Caucasus Conflict Zone-August War, 2010, www. Ucnauri.com

3.6. Russia As an Imperialist Barbarian of the 21st Century

Georgia and Russia signed a ceasefire agreement, that was “a hopeful step” as President George W. Bush said; There was time that Russia needed to honor the agreement by withdrawing troops. However, Maj. Gen. Alexander Borisov said that it would take some time: “You must understand there are a large number of troops.”¹⁴² Real face of Russia with its aggressive actions against Georgia has been made clear image for the world. President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili characterized Russia as “barbarians of 21st century”.¹⁴³

In his televised address, the president Saakashvili talked about the aims of the barbarians’ attack, which were to sabotage Georgia’s sovereignty; to destruct Georgian nation, their

¹⁴¹ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili: ‘I Accuse Russia of Ethnic Cleansing’”, Date Accessed: 28 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117117>.

¹⁴² Civil Georgia, “Russia to Start Pull Out on Monday – Medvedev”, Date Accessed: 29 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117147>.

¹⁴³ Civil Georgia, “Bush: Georgia’s Territorial Integrity not for Debate”, Date Accessed: 29 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117145>.

sole of freedom and devastate future of the country. However, the Georgian government was at the service of the nation at all levels.¹⁴⁴ Despite all of the brutal and barbarian actions conducted against Georgian population, the government was ready for negotiations with Russia after its withdrawal of occupational troops in order not to further alienate between these two neighbor countries.¹⁴⁵

However, “21st century’s barbarians” withdrawal process was being temporized. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of the U.S.A, was seeking for an explanation about withdrawal delay: entrance of the Russian forces to the Georgian territory happened so rapidly that to get the troops out shouldn’t take that long.¹⁴⁶ Russian military have justified their delay, ostensibly, Georgian armed forces were preparing subversive actions against Russian military forces.¹⁴⁷

Russia has always been using a Soviet-old tactics and trying to justify its actions with the pretext of protecting. Saakashvili at the conference with Angela Merkel, German Chancellor, said that when Russia attacks some neighbor, they always blame a neighbor. There is no example when Russia did not justify themselves all the attacks were provoked by another state. For instance, it was provoked by Finland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan.¹⁴⁸ Russia was maneuvering some kind of game and was “making fun of the world”.¹⁴⁹

Even when Russia must withdraw forces, their commitment to take the troops out was limited. “The whole world expects Russia to withdraw all troops,¹⁵⁰ marked Gordon Johndroe, the spokesman of the White House.

Signs of pulling Russian military forces back started on August 22. President Saakashvili mentioned that Russia had started withdrawing because of huge pressure of international

¹⁴⁴ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili’s Televised Address”, Date Accessed: 29 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117156>.

¹⁴⁵ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Says Ready for Talks after Troops Pull Out”, Date Accessed: 29 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117153>.

¹⁴⁶ Civil Georgia, “Rice: Russia Delays Withdrawal”, Date Accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117166>.

¹⁴⁷ Civil Georgia, “Russia Claims Georgia Violates Ceasefire Accord”, Date Accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117173>.

¹⁴⁸ Civil Georgia, “Russia Imposed Conflict on Georgia – Saakashvili”, Date Accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117150>.

¹⁴⁹ Civil Georgia, “Russian Military Reiterate ‘Pullback’ Deadline”, Date Accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117206>.

¹⁵⁰ Civil Georgia, “Bush, Sarkozy Say Russia has yet to Comply with Commitment”, Date Accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117236>.

community, however, “we should have no illusion that the struggle is over.”¹⁵¹

On August 24, Saakashvili met his ruling party members, where he summarized all of the armed conflict reasons with Russia. He started remembering his first days of the presidency. Series of provocations in breakaway South Ossetia started since then. He mentioned his assumptions when Russia has been thinking about military intervention in Georgia and how they were testing western reaction. The NATO summit in Bucharest in April, was a “green light” to Russia to start immediate actions. NATO decision not to give MAP, was a sign to Russia to do something before Georgia gets it.¹⁵² He said that preparations for a war were well-planned. Russia chose perfect moment to implement its plans. However, Justice Minister of Georgia, Nika Gvaramia, said that Russia would be responsible for the consequences, as they still had a problem in respect of separatism. Very soon, this issue would fail Russian statehood.¹⁵³

Recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states was defined by Saakashvili as an “outrageous unlawfulness”. In his televised address he said that Russia made unimaginable strategic mistakes not only with Georgia, but international community. Saakashvili said that Georgia might not persuade the international community that Russia was not a peace-loving country. Moreover, they revealed themselves and showed the world their real face.¹⁵⁴ The protection of Georgia’s sovereignty was no longer matter only for Georgians, but the rest of the international world,¹⁵⁵ he added.

3.7. International Community: A Mediator Between Georgian-Russian Tensions!?

Georgian government’s announcements and refers to the international community made them to be concerned about Russian provocative moves towards Georgia. The European Union made a statement for both sides, to avoid any kind of steps that could escalate tensions.¹⁵⁶ Also, the U.S. House of Representatives made a resolution, which was

¹⁵¹ Civil Georgia, “‘Russian Pullout Positive, but Struggle far from Over’ – Saakashvili”, Date Accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117238>.

¹⁵² Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili’s Account of Events that Led to Conflict”, Date Accessed: 31 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117253>.

¹⁵³ Civil Georgia, “‘Russia will Collapse’ – Georgian Minister”, Date Accessed: 31 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117270>.

¹⁵⁴ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Speaks of Russia’s ‘Strategic Mistake’”, Date Accessed: 31 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117274>.

¹⁵⁵ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Address on Russia’s Abkhazia, S. Ossetia Recognition”, Date Accessed: 31 July 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117275>.

¹⁵⁶ Civil Georgia, “EU ‘Seriously Concerned’ over Russo-Georgian Tensions”, Date Accessed: 1 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114903>.

criticizing provocative moves taken by Russia, threatening territorial integrity of Georgia.¹⁵⁷ The U.S. representative, Daniel Fried, mentioned about the tensions between Russia and Georgia, that recent provocations were an amen for a bigger problem. Both sides' rhetoric was harsh and hot, that made tensions to be heated. Even though we counseled Georgia to refrain aggressive provocations, "it is the small vulnerable country, whose territory is under threat."¹⁵⁸ The international world as a mediator called on both sides to stop provocations. However, how strong concerns international society had, yet, President Saakashvili's fear about a threat of war was expected.¹⁵⁹

General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, secretary of NATO, strongly supported sovereignty and territorial unity of Georgia. He emphasized that there was a need for an open dialogue in order to de-escalate tensions between these two countries.¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately, President Saakashvili's warnings about expecting threat of war, were not paid attention. NATO and the EU considered Russia's recent actions as a game as they were focusing on Beijing Olympic games. However, the West has made the mistake when they underestimated Russia and its imperial ambition.¹⁶¹

Their assumptions, that Russia could not dare that much, were mistaken. The game has changed into the brutal actions.

President George W. Bush also warned Russia that its invasion to the sovereign neighboring Georgian threatened the democracy of the state. "Such an action is unacceptable in the 21st century."¹⁶² He claimed that if Russia did not to reverse its course towards Georgia, it would jeopardize relationship between the U.S.A. and Russia. International community, Baltic states and Poland have supported Georgian and condemned Russia's brutal aggression against its neighbor small state.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Civil Georgia, "U.S. House Condemns Russia's Moves", Date Accessed: 1 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/114937>.

¹⁵⁸ Civil Georgia, "U.S. Worries Russo-Georgian Tensions May Escalate", Date Accessed: 1 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116255>.

¹⁵⁹ Civil Georgia, "Russian Agencies: Saakashvili Says Threat of War Remains", Date Accessed: 1 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116252>.

¹⁶⁰ Civil Georgia, "NATO Tells Russia to Withdraw Railway Forces from Abkhazia", Date Accessed: 1 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/116475>.

¹⁶¹ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili: U.S. Underestimated Russia's Threat", Date Accessed: 2 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117082>.

¹⁶² Civil Georgia, "Bush Warns Russia Over Georgia", Date Accessed: 2 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117033>.

¹⁶³ Civil Georgia, "Baltic, Polish Leaders Call for Stronger Western Support for Georgia", Date Accessed: 2 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117053>.

The French President, Nikola Sarkozy, represented a short term solution about ceasefire that was a political document outlining six major points: the first, not to use force; the second, to stop military actions; the third, to free entry for humanitarian aid; the fourth, to restore the Georgian armed forces to their permanent place; the fifth, to be withdrawn Russian forces from the Georgian territory; and the sixth, to start decreasing hostilities, discuss about the status and stability of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.¹⁶⁴ Obeying the ceasefire documents major points was not implemented right away. U.S. President George W. Bush once more expressed his loyalty to Georgia. He warned Russia to stop confrontation. Russia needs to respect international rules, borders and the freedom of its neighbor countries.¹⁶⁵

Despite that president Saakashvili was not happy about the late reaction of international community, still visit of Condoleezza Rice was very determinant for him to confirm a six-point ceasefire (as it was allowing Russian “peacekeepers” to stay in South Ossetia for uncertain time). He got angry at the European countries for their silence and said that this agreement should be certainly moved from its temporary settlements and not to leave Russian occupiers, but replace them with genuinely international peacekeepers.¹⁶⁶

British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown referred Russia’s recent actions as a “naked aggression” against Georgia.¹⁶⁷ In a response, Saakashvili said that the solidarity of the international community about this outrageous and illegal attempt meant a lot for Georgia. That would help advance process of Georgia’s integration with Europe and final emancipation from Russia.¹⁶⁸

Unfortunately, despite all the strong condemnation by international community and Georgia, Russian recognition, Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent countries, was not stopped.¹⁶⁹ Russia broke all “principles of the peace agreement,”¹⁷⁰ said Foreign Secretary of England, David Miliband.

¹⁶⁴ Civil Georgia, “Moscow Accept Ceasefire Plan”, Date Accessed: 2 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117052>.

¹⁶⁵ Civil Georgia, “Bush Says Cold War Over”, Date Accessed: 3 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117127>.

¹⁶⁶ Civil Georgia, “Georgia Signs Ceasefire Deal”, Date Accessed: 3 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117130>.

¹⁶⁷ Civil Georgia, “Brown Says Stabilizing Georgia should be an EU Priority”, Date Accessed: 4 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117324>.

¹⁶⁸ Civil Georgia, “Georgian Leadership’s Expectations from EU Summit”, Date Accessed: 4 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117326>.

¹⁶⁹ Civil Georgia, “OSCE Chair Condemns Russia’s Recognition of Abkhazia, S. Ossetia”, Date Accessed: 4 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117267>.

¹⁷⁰ Civil Georgia, “Miliband Calls for Coalition against Russian Aggression in Georgia”, Date Accessed: 4 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117273>.

However, Secretary of NATO, claimed that final path of Georgia would be connected to North Atlantic alliance,¹⁷¹ after the 2008 August war, matter of Georgia as a member of the bloc, was extended.

Picture 6:
Closer than Ever



NATO tells to the Georgian soldier: “Georgia, today you are closer to NATO”

Source: What does it mean to have a MAP and why is it important for Georgia, www.intermedia.ge

¹⁷¹ Civil Georgia, “‘Meet Democratic Standards fully’ – Scheffer to Georgia”, Date Accessed: 4 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117480>.

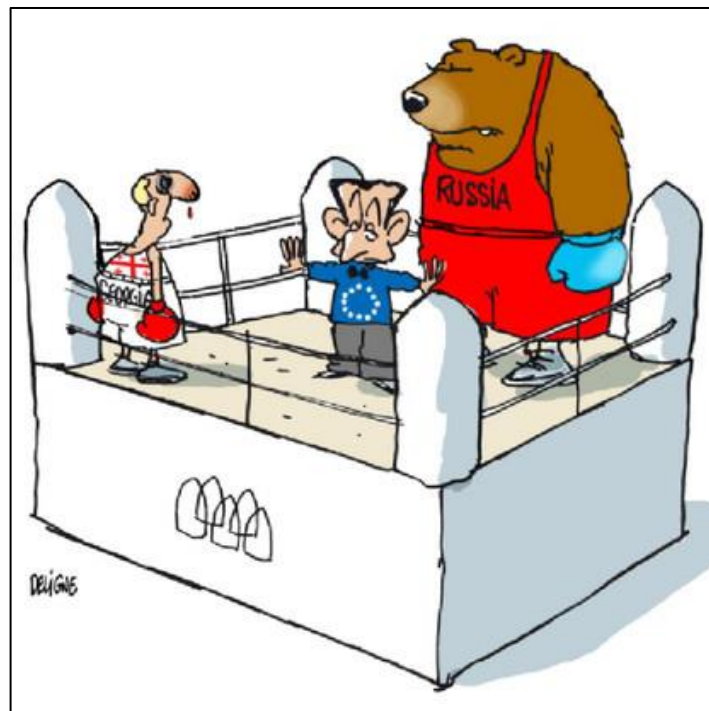
Picture 7:
Georgia vs. Russia and the Destroyed World



The world is destroyed with Beijing 2008 Olympic Games in China, when there is war between Georgia and Russia

Source: Zoe, Caucasus Conflict Zone-August War, 2010, [www. Ucnauri.com](http://www.Ucnauri.com)

Picture 8:
The EU as a Referee



The EU tries to stop Georgian and Russian fighters

Source: Georgia vs. Russia, 2014, www.ambebi.ge

3.8. Georgian Statecraft's Post-War Resolutions

Since, Russia recognized independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgian government decided to minimize its diplomatic relations with Russia.¹⁷² Parliament unanimously passed a resolution, that noted Abkhazia and South Ossetia as occupied territories of Georgia. Russia itself was perceived by the Georgian statecraft as an occupier. As Nika Rurua said this resolution was not only a political, but also a legal assessment against former Soviet criminal agents, and if Russia does not stop its aggressive actions, it will lead to degenerate Russia itself. He also claimed that Georgia was not alone in this struggle, but the entire world supports unanimously.¹⁷³

September 1 was announced as the Day of Georgia's Unity, when over a million people on the streets throughout of Georgia made a live human chain with the message under "Stop Russia", which symbolized the unity of the Georgian people against Russian occupation. Saakashvili at the main square of Tbilisi compared struggle of Georgia to "David and Goliath" and called Russian troops "the 21st century hordes" that entered to Georgian territory in order to establish Russian imperialism. However, it failed, and moreover, it will be buried "once and for all in Georgia".¹⁷⁴ Saakashvili at a briefing with U.S. Vice-President, Dick Cheney, claimed that the August war was also ethnic cleansing not only against ethnic Georgians, but also ethnic Ossetians, that should be condemned by the nations of the world and upheld international law and justice.¹⁷⁵

Saakashvili believed that it did not happened as Russia expected and Georgia has not been left alone. Despite the fact that Russia planned everything in advance: propaganda, clichés, initiator of the war and etc., the entire world supported Georgia and its territorial integrity. "Georgia has become the center of world politics"¹⁷⁶ – said Saakashvili in televised meeting in the town of the eastern region of Georgia.

¹⁷² Civil Georgia, "Georgia 'Minimizes' Diplomatic Ties with Russia – Deputy FM", Date Accessed: 5 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117286>.

¹⁷³ Civil Georgia, "Abkhazia, S. Ossetia Formally Declared Occupied Territory", Date Accessed: 5 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117298>.

¹⁷⁴ Civil Georgia, "Georgia will Bury Russian Imperialism' – Saakashvili", Date Accessed: 5 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117332>.

¹⁷⁵ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili Calls on World not to Accept Ethnic Cleansing", Date Accessed: 5 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117363>.

¹⁷⁶ Civil Georgia, "Saakashvili: Georgia at the Center of World Politics", Date Accessed: 6 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117391>.

Despite Russia's open and evident military aggression, the Georgian governmental members, politicians and political parties started working on the primary strategic issues:

1. Territorial integrity of Georgia should be restored and Russian forces should be fully withdrawn from Georgian territory.
2. Georgia should become the member of the NATO and integrate into the European Union, which are strong will for Georgian people.
3. Domestic political processes in Georgia should remain in the frame of the Constitution and protect national security interests of the country.
4. Due to Russian occupation, country needs to continue the process for internal reforms and create dialogue oriented political environment.¹⁷⁷

President Saakashvili, in his annual speech to the nation about the Russian intervention in Georgia, defined it as a “huge aggression”, targeting to destroy Georgia and Georgian statehood: “Putin, who planned all this, wanted total control over Central Asian energy resources; But Georgia will not be defeated; Not a single dictator will be able redraw European borders.”¹⁷⁸ At UN General Assembly session, Saakashvili mentioned that Russian aggression in Georgia originated new epoch in international relations and have changed rules of the game. Great support of the whole world, especially “our” (Georgia's) allies, Europe and the US, was very important to achieve development of relations with neighbor and other big countries.¹⁷⁹

Saakashvili in his article published by Washington Post noted readiness of Georgia for the conflict resolutions, but at the same time asked to the West to make Russia responsible for their actions: “The world must not permit Russia or others to assert spheres of influence and thus deny the right of free people to associate with like-minded nations.”¹⁸⁰

He urged the world not to stay in silence, but to speak up and stand next to Georgia in the post-war crisis. President referred the post war era in Georgia as a “second rose revolution” to make Georgia stronger and more democratic against Russian aggression:

¹⁷⁷ Civil Georgia, “Charter of Politicians of Georgia”, Date Accessed: 5 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117376>.

¹⁷⁸ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili's Annual Address”, Date Accessed: 6 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117485>.

¹⁷⁹ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Optimistic about Georgia's Future”, Date Accessed: 6 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117515>.

¹⁸⁰ Mikheil Saakashvili, “Answering Russian Aggression”, *Washington Post*, Date Accessed: 7 August 2018, <https://www.novinite.com/articles/97220/Answering+Russian+Aggression>.

”If our first [rose] revolution [in 2003] was about meeting a threat from within by reinventing a failed state riddled by corruption, our second revolution must be even more focused, as now we face an even greater challenge, one that comes from the outside.”¹⁸¹

Table 2:

Conceptualization of Russia/War from the Georgian Statecraft’s Perception

Representation of Russia from Georgian statecraft’s perspective		Representation of the war from Georgian statecraft’s perspective
Provocative		Threat to the territorial integrity
Aggressor		Attack on the West
Double game player		Attack to control Europe’s energy resources
Barbarian		Outrages military aggression
Criminal		Balkan-type ethnic cleansing
Imperialist		Violation of freedom and democracy
Occupiers		Occupation



Source: Results of re-analysis of the references

¹⁸¹ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili Speaks of ‘Second Rose Revolution’”, Date Accessed: 7 August 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/117545>.

CONCLUSION

From its independence, and throughout its existence, Georgia has been struggling to erase remnants of the USSR. In spite of the difficulties that the state came across during that time, it managed to stand for its independence and sovereignty. However, the Rose Revolution, with its young ambitious western-oriented leaders, totally transformed the Georgian foreign policy aspirations. The country actively started to be progressive and involved in different projects worldwide. One of the important projects, that carries more function than it represents, is an oil pipeline, which was constructed as to supply Europe with oil. The geographic location of Georgia, promoted the country to be a corridor for resources from the Caspian Sea to Europe. Implementing BTC pipeline project, emphasized the geo-strategic importance of the newly independent state, and reduced the Russian influence in the region, making of Georgia a transit country for resources which are destined to supply western countries, and mainly, Europe.

Since the beginning of its conflict with Russia, despite the controversy, the Georgian government had been keeping its orientation to the West. Moreover, the country was considered as a prospect member of the North-Atlantic Alliance at the Bucharest Summit, which made an alarming threat to the Russian government. Consequently, Russia invaded the Georgian state occupying its territories, with an aim of sabotaging the ambitions that Georgia had been targeting in order to have stronger allies. Eventually, the Georgian-Russian 2008 August war, which had taken a longer time to load more than it lasted, ended with the Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. This war, which shook the whole world, was regarded as an aggressive military intervention by the Georgian government, with the support of the entire international society.

The aspects of the war had been regarded differently by Russia, South Ossetia, the international community and certainly, Georgia. Nevertheless, the main object of this thesis was the Georgian perception and the representation of the August War from the practice of the Georgian statecraft. This study used critical geopolitical perspective and practical geopolitics, one of the types of geopolitics by CG, that gave the possibility to analyze the construction of the Russian intervention by the Georgian intellectuals, politicians and the government members. The main concern, was to provide an overall narrative of the Georgian discourse. For this purpose, discourse analysis in CG has been an optimum, to explain significance of the different articles, speeches or interviews of the

Georgian statecraft and the power of language, which is crucial in order to follow all the traces.

As the country chose to follow the Western aspirations, Saakashvili's administration had been trying to legitimate the Western path as more progressive and righteous, than the regressive pro-Russian one. The Georgian-Russian 2008 War, clearly, proved that the country had made a good decision for its foreign policy and had chosen a true way. According to the Georgian discourse analysis by everyday performance of the statecraft of the country during the conflict, Russia was defined as "aggressors", "barbarians of the 21st century" and "occupiers". Furthermore, the Russian expressions against Georgia were considered as an "aggressive military intervention", "outrageous" and "Balkan-type ethnic cleansing and purification" of the Georgian population. Therefore, this war showed Russia to be dangerous to the Georgian stability, territorial unity and sovereignty. However, the international community's reaction was not as expected by the Georgian statecraft, and consequently, the language of the government, was strong as to waken the West which left Georgia alone facing the "Big Bear". Being represented as a "brutal attack to the West", "Controlling energy resources of Europe" and "Attack on democracy, on the European Union and America", the Georgian Statecraft's geopolitical discourse, not only had it legitimated to define the Russian aggressive intervention, as a matter for Georgia, but also an international issue, mainly for the European community since some of its energy interests were bonded to Georgia. Therefore, picturing the Five Days War as a global issue that had broken the international norms, as well as, the Western values, help the Georgian government in its justifications.

Nowadays, after more than 10 years of these events, the military intervention during the August 2008 war, continues to be defined as a sequel of the Russian old traditions, which aim to control its neighbor countries and have a wider sphere of influence.

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APPENDIX

Appendix Nr.1

Map Nr.1: Map Of Georgia



Source: Central Intelligence Agency

Appendix Nr.2

Interview Nr.1 with Giorgi Baramidze, Georgian politician who served as Vice-Prime Minister of Georgia and State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration from 2004 to 2012

Interview Date: 09.07.2018

1. What was Georgian perception about Russia before 2008 war?

Russia has always behaved aggressively towards the independent state of Georgia since 1991. This is due to the fact that Russia has always considered Georgia as a part of it, and should never let go the control over “its” territory. When Russia violated the Treaty of Georgievsk, that considered cooperation of the two countries, and protectorate from the Russian side, however, not the unification of the two kingdoms; Russia, by breaching the agreement, has actually occupied and annexed the country. At that time, the Russian authorities had a hostile attitude towards us and they were not even hiding it. Moreover, they were expressing their hate in different ways. The most important and painful fact in Georgian history was separatism, where were multiethnic communities, especially in the autonomous formations of Abkhazia and so called South Ossetia. Also, separatism was provoked on the religion basis in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. Like this, Russia managed to split Georgian society and caused the conflicts. They were supporting separatists methodologically and politically; Providing weapons and encouraging them to confront with the central structures of the government.

Russia was supporting the secessionist illegal military formations and encouraging them politically, militarily and financially before the war. They has conducted the first cyber war against Georgia, which is recognized as a form of aggression by NATO. A cyber war aimed to paralyze security, economics and management systems of our country.

2. What was Georgian perception about Russia’s invasion in 2008 in Georgia?

Russia’s invasion in 2008 in Georgia is seen as a direct, open, obvious, cynical aggression.

3. Has Georgian discourse been transformed after 2008 war?

Georgian discourse has been changed after 2008 war, when Russia officially became an occupier. However, so called peacekeepers under the CIS were also occupiers, controlling the territory and encouraging anti-state forces. After the war, Georgia cut off any kind of

diplomatic relations with Russia as a result of their aggression. However, the positions of Georgia have not changed. We are ready to have normal, civilized and good neighborly relations with Russia in case of they recognize territorial integrity of Georgia.

4. How Georgian perception depicts 2008 war for international community?

Georgia showed to the international community that we are dealing with Putin's Russia that has imperial intentions, is very aggressive, insolent and cynical state. There are no international borders, nor the rules to satisfy their own imperial desires. The international community could not see that. After a short interruption, the West continued cooperation with Russia, as if nothing had happened. However, the annexation of Crimea, awoke the West.

5. What is Georgian perception about Russia after 10 years of the war?

After 10 years of the war, the Georgian perception about Russian remains as an aggressor and an occupier country.

6. What was the perception of the war?

It was an aggressive war from Russia to prevent the aspirations of Georgia to become a member of the western alliances. Russia implemented ethnic cleansing and expelled a lot of people who supported Georgia's territorial integration.

Appendix Nr.3

Interview Nr.2 with Nika Rurua, the Deputy of the parliamentary committee for
Defense and Security

Interview Date: 09.10.2018

1. What was Georgian perception about Russia before 2008 war?

Georgia perceived Russia as a big and undemocratic neighbor, which has been creating problems in Samachablo and Abkhazia since Georgia became an independent state. Georgia and Russia have never had good relations neither in the Soviet times, nor before, because Russia violated our international agreement, so called the Treaty of Georgievsk. Georgia asked for Russian protectorate, but it canceled the throne and the kingdom, as well as autocephaly, the independence of the church. After that, when the Bolshevik revolt occurred in Russia, Georgia declared independence that lasted for three years. Therefore, Russia occupied Georgia for 70 years by the Red Army. Since 1991, Georgia is independent, but new phase of the difficult relation between us and Russia has begun. Russia was trying to stop Western orientation of Georgia throughout reviving frozen ethno-conflicts. As a result, our relations with Russia were not good even till 2008. Russia has always been the enemy of the freedom of Georgia.

2. What was Georgian perception about Russia's invasion in 2008 in Georgia?

Georgia perceived Russian intervention as an aggression. It was an ordinary military vandalism from Russia. Georgia could have done two things. One, act as Ukraine did in the case of Crimea, not to react and simply allow its territory for the occupation or resist and show the real face of Russia to the world, that happened in the case of Georgia. The world recognized Russia as an invader and an occupier of the Georgian territory. I would like to emphasize that without any preconditions, Russia attacked Kodori Gorge unexpectedly, which was under control of the central government of Georgia, and with no resistance occupied the territory. This once more proves that plan was aforethought and aggressive.

3. Has Georgian discourse been transformed after 2008 war?

Attitude towards Russia has been transformed and relations became harder to deal with, because the ongoing occupation creates huge problems for the country and inhabitants.

Reason of Russia's motivation is clear, to slow down Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia and if possible, to stop by the occupation of these two territories.

4. How Georgian perception depicts 2008 war for international community?

Georgia depicted 2008 war as an aggression and showed Russia's face to the entire world not as so-called peacekeepers, whose mandate has been in Abkhazia and Samachablo since the 90s; but as a neo-imperialist force, which wants to dominates over its neighbor countries. It wants to retain spheres of influence, where neighbor sovereign countries will not be able to determine their own future.

5. What is Georgian perception about Russia after 10 years of the war?

Georgia perceives Russia as an occupant, as a problem, as a bad, undemocratic neighbor; The rest of the world also shares the same perception about Russia. Georgia was the first country in the west which attacked by Russia. Later, it was Ukraine, about that we were warning Europe and America, but unfortunately nobody heard us. Then, there was interference in the election of Europe, military adventurism in Syria. Briefly, at this moment, Russia is in the position to attack and the West is in a phase of forced awakening. Russia started this attack in Georgian 10 years ago.

6. What was the perception of the war?

Russia wants to change the architecture of security and peace based on the international law and standards after the Cold War. It wants to restore and rebuild the Soviet period sphere of influence, where does not exist international law, principal of equality between the countries, but the power to share the rest of the world. As it was during the Cold War, where the West and Russia had sphere of influence. Russia wants to rejoin satellite countries and jeopardize millions of people because of its caprices. In fact, neither Georgia, nor Ukraine, nor Baltic, nor the West and NATO represents threat to Russia, but its own neo-imperial policy and Putin.

Interview Nr.3 with Shota Utiashvili, a spokesperson of the Georgian Interior Ministry

Interview Date: 18.10.2018

1. What was Georgian perception about Russia before 2008 war?

Georgia perception towards Russia was not as negative as it was after the war, but there was the anti-Russian attitude in the population rather than pro-Russian.

2. What was Georgian perception about Russia's invasion in 2008 in Georgia?

Georgia perceived Russian invasion in 2008 as an aggression. The hatred, anger and frustration caused by the Russian aggression is still continued.

3. Has Georgian discourse been transformed after 2008 war?

After 2008 war anti-Russian narrative was further strengthened. Seeing Russian military forces on the territory of Georgia, has left the indelible mark in the memory of Georgians. After the war, political role of Russia was delegitimated. Furthermore, having pro-Russian attitude has become a shame and a betrayal of the country. This process is still going on.

4. How Georgian perception depicts 2008 war for international community?

At the beginning, the international community was next to Georgia, then the “reset” of politics happened first in Europe, later in the USA. Despite the fact that Russia aggressively invaded Georgia, international community decided that relations with Russia are more important. Consequently, reaction from the international society was not as we expected. But later, the conflict of Ukraine has changed the attitude of the international community towards Russia.

5. What is Georgian perception about Russia after 10 years of the war?

Such memory cannot be easily disappeared. When Russia repeated same thing in Ukraine, it renewed the experiences and memories of the war. After 10 years of the war, Russia is perceived as an aggressor and occupier of Georgian territory.

6. What was the perception of the war?

Perception of the war was a continuation of the old tradition of Russia, that considers to control neighbor countries and to have a sphere of influence.



CURRICULUM VITAE

Salome Tsikarishvili, was born in Georgia, on the 28th of July, 1993. In 2011, she was admitted at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts in American Studies with honors. Throughout her studies, Ms. Tsikarishvili has been actively involved in various seminars, conferences, workshops and trainings inside, as well as outside Georgia. Due to her strong determination, she was granted a full scholarship from the Turkey Scholarships in 2015, to carry on her Master studies in the field of International Relations.

Ms. Tsikarishvili, has been a representative supervisor of Transparency International Georgia during the Georgian presidential and parliamentary elections. She has done couple of internships at the Public Service Hall of Georgia and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University's Archives. Moreover, she has recently accomplished, an internship at the Institute of International Relations Prague as a Research Assistant.

After her graduation, Ms. Tsikarishvili wants to travel, gain experiences as much as possible, and use all the opportunities offered in this modern world.