



Faculty of Arts and Sciences
International School of Caucasian Studies

***Constructing Identities in Georgia's Foreign Policy: The
Georgian "Self" and the Russian "Other" under UNM and
GD (2008-2021)***

CEERES Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Explaining Georgia's foreign policy, particularly its refusal to bandwagon with Russia and its decision to align with the West, has been a long-standing focus of scholarly inquiry. However, after Georgian Dream (GD) took office in October 2012, some have noted a shift to a seemingly pro-Russian foreign policy. Most explanations point towards identity – whether elite, state, national or party – as an explanatory variable for this shift. Instead, this thesis is grounded in poststructuralist theory, which posits that identity is formed through linking and differentiation between the “Self” and the “Other.” The research purpose is to identify how the Georgian “Self” and Russian “Other” have been constructed by United National Movement (UNM) and GD between 2008 and 2021, and to explore whether there has been a change in construction of the Russian “Other.”

I conduct a poststructuralist discourse analysis of official foreign policy documents, government programs, speeches (both domestic and international), and statements made by key officials (prime minister, president, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). I identify six discursive formations on which UNM relies for its identity construction of Georgia and Russia: International Law; Role of the International Community; Historical Legacy; (Future) Russo-Georgian Relations; August 2008 War; and Georgian Statehood. In UNM's construction, the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” as complete opposites. In contrast, I identify four discursive formations that GD uses for its identity construction of Georgia and Russia: International Law; Actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Role of the International Community; and Commitment to a Peaceful Solution. Although GD relies on fewer discursive formations, the portrayal of Russia is more complex.

Overall, I identify four significant changes in the construction of the Russian “Other:” a shift in attribution of blame for the August 2008 War; a more positive tone towards Russia; the construction of a mutual willingness to solve the conflict; and the portrayal of compatibility of the West and Russia.

Keywords: Georgia's foreign policy, poststructuralism, discourse analysis, identity construction, Russia.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract.....	v
List of figures.....	viii
List of tables.....	viii
List of graphs.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Research Puzzle.....	2
Thesis Structure.....	4
1. Historical Background	6
1.1 Russo-Georgian Relations during the 1990s.....	6
1.2 UNM’s Rise and the August 2008 War	8
1.3 GD’s Rise and Borderization.....	9
2. Literature review	11
2.1 Identity within International Relations Theory	11
2.2 Identity within Georgia’s Foreign Policy	14
2.2.1 <i>Realist Literature</i>	15
2.2.2 <i>Constructivist Literature</i>	16
2.3 Research Gap.....	19
3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology.....	20
3.1 Poststructuralism	20
3.2 Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis	24
3.3 Research Design.....	25
3.3.1 <i>Choice of “Self,” “Other,” and Time Period</i>	26
3.3.2 <i>Discourse Selection and Gathering</i>	27
3.3.3 <i>Limitations and Positionality</i>	31
4. Identity Construction between 2008 and 2021.....	35
4.1 Identity Construction between 2008-2013	35
4.1.1 <i>Construction of the Russian “Other”</i>	37
4.1.2 <i>Construction of the Georgian “Self”</i>	42
4.1.3 <i>Linking and Differentiation of Russia and Georgia under UNM</i>	48
4.2 Identity Construction between 2012-2021	50
4.2.1 <i>Construction of the Russian “Other”</i>	52

4.2.2 Construction of the Georgian “Self”	55
4.2.3 Linking and Differentiation of Russia and Georgia under GD	58
4.2.4 Construction of UNM as the “Other”	59
5. Comparison of the Russian Identity Construction	62
5.1 Blame for the August 2008 War	62
5.2 Shift in Tone	65
5.3 Resolution of the Conflict	66
5.4 Changing Compatibility of the West/Russia	67
6. Conclusion	69
Bibliography	75
Appendices	92
Appendix A	92

List of figures

Figure 3.1: The linking and differentiation of “the Balkans” and “Europe.”.....	23
Figure 4.1: The linking and differentiation of Russia and Georgia under UNM, 2008-2013.	49
Figure 4.2: The linking and differentiation of Russia and Georgia under GD, 2012-2021. ...	60

List of tables

Table 3.1: Summary of discourse selection and gathering.....	31
Table 4.1: Discursive formations for the period 2008-2013.	36
Table 4.2: Discursive formations for the period 2012-2021.	51

List of graphs

Graph 3.1: Distribution of discourse entries per year.	27
Graph 3.2: Distribution of discourse types.	29
Graph 4.1: Frequency of references and discourse entries per discursive formation, 2008-2013.....	35
Graph 4.2: Frequency of references and discourse entries per discursive formation, 2012-2021.....	50

Introduction

“I would like to thank Irakli Garibashvili for a very constructive and accurate presentation of relations between Georgia and Russia. Indeed, despite many problems that we face, we are opening [a] new constructive chapter in relations between Georgia and Russia. Thank you Irakli very much.”¹

- Leonid Slutsky, Member of the Russian State Duma.

Since the political party “*Georgian Dream*” (from here on after referred to as GD) came to power in October 2012, concerns over Georgia’s seemingly pro-Russian foreign policy have steadily grown.² GD pursued what it referred to as a “two-track engagement strategy based on being a responsible, pragmatic, and constructive neighbor.”³ It led to a “new constructive chapter,” as it is described in the quote above, in the relations between the two states, which had ceased formal relations following the August 2008 War. Simultaneously, GD continued the Euro-Atlantic path, which became a priority under the previous ruling party “*United National Movement*” (from here on after referred to as UNM). During GD’s ongoing time in office, tangible results were achieved in the European integration, such as the signing of the Association Agreement in June 2014 and the granting of European Union (EU) candidacy status in December 2023.⁴

The accusations of conducting a pro-Russian foreign policy have spiked in the aftermath of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Since then, the GD government has faced significant backlash following its muted response, for example, by refusing to join Western sanctions against Russia.⁵ This despite overwhelming support from the Georgian population for Ukraine, as is clearly visible on the streets of Tbilisi and in surveys

¹ Civil.ge, “Georgian PM Addresses Munich Security Conference,” Civil.ge, February 2, 2014, <https://civil.ge/archives/123477>.

² Vasili Rukhadze, “Is Georgia’s New Government Shifting the Country’s Geopolitical Course Toward Russia?,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 9, no. 208 (November, 2012): <https://jamestown.org/program/is-georgias-new-government-shifting-the-countrys-geopolitical-course-toward-russia/>.

³ Civil.ge, “PM Garibashvili’s UN Speech,” Civil.ge, September 27, 2014, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27688>.

⁴ Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, “The European Union and Georgia,” *European External Action Service*, September 7, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/georgia/european-union-and-georgia_en?s=221.

⁵ Conor Sheils, “‘We are not our government’: Georgians slam Ukraine war response,” *AlJazeera*, April 5, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/5/we-are-not-our-government-georgians-slam-ukraine-war-response>.

on public opinion.⁶ The influx of Russian immigrants to Georgia, rising rent prices, and growing anti-Russian sentiments have further fueled local discontent.⁷ The government's stance also caused friction with President Salome Zourabichvili, culminating in a failed impeachment attempt in 2023 over her support for European integration and Ukraine.⁸ These observations sparked my interest in examining the role of Russia within Georgia's foreign policy, forming the basis of my thesis. Although logically, the research focus has shifted slightly and has been further narrowed down.

Research Puzzle

Since Georgia regained its independence in 1991, its foreign policy decisions have puzzled scholars, particularly its defiance of Russia in favor of aligning with the West.⁹ Existing literature has predominantly focused on explaining its foreign policy choices, generally through the lenses of realism or constructivism. Realist approaches often focus on the bandwagoning debate, explaining Georgia's Western orientation through combining systemic factors with domestic factors. Constructivist perspectives, on the other hand, emphasize the role of identity in Georgia's foreign policy, particularly the notion of Georgia's inherent belonging to the West or the EU. This points towards the importance of identity – whether elite, state, national or party – in explaining Georgia's foreign policy.

Within international relations, identity has become an increasingly important concept since the 1980s, marking what some scholars describe as a “return”¹⁰ or a “discovery.”¹¹ However, defining identity has proven to be complex, leading to varied and sometimes

⁶ Caucasus Research Resource Center, "NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, March 2022," *Caucasus Barometer*, March 2022, <https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/nm2022ge/codebook/>; Caucasus Research Resource Center, "NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia, December 2022," *Caucasus Barometer*, December 2022, <https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/nd2022ge/codebook/>.

⁷ Leonardo Zanatta, "The Impact of Russian Migration in Georgia," *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*, November 6, 2023, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/the-impact-of-russian-migration-in-georgia-151256>.

⁸ Dato Parulava, "Georgian parliament fails to impeach president over unsanctioned EU visits," *POLITICO*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/georgia-parliament-fail-impeach-president-salome-zourabichvili-unsanctioned-eu-visits/>.

⁹ See for example: Levan Kakhishvili, "Towards a two-dimensional analytical framework for understanding Georgian foreign policy: how party competition informs foreign policy analysis," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 37, no. 2 (2021): 176, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2020.1869455>.

¹⁰ Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil, *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 6.

¹¹ Felix Berenskoetter, "Identity in International Relations," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, December 22, 2017, 3, <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-218>.

contradictory conceptualizations. While identity plays a marginal role in realist theories, it is central to theories such as constructivism and poststructuralism. As critics point out, while identity might be a core concept of constructivism, its impact on the understanding of change has been limited.¹² Scholars increasingly acknowledge the seemingly pro-Russian shift mentioned above, arguing that GD seems to combine its pro-Western foreign policy with a turn towards Russia. This leads to what Lebanidze and Kakachia refer to as, “bandwagoning by stealth – a de facto and partial bandwagoning with Russia without formally changing the country’s declared pro-Western foreign policy.”¹³ However, this leads to the exact issue constructivism is criticized for: the explanation of Georgia’s foreign policy, identity, is also the explanation for change.

Therefore, I instead I opt to use poststructuralism. This theory argues that identity should rather be seen as something that is constructed and enforced during the formation and implementation of foreign policy. Identity hence gives way to foreign policy, yet foreign policy also legitimizes that same identity.¹⁴ Moreover, it provides the two core processes of this thesis, namely that of linking and differentiation. The former refers to the establishment of a relationship of similarity, while the latter is one of contrast. During these two processes, states define what they *are*, through what they are not. Hence, through the creation of the foreign “Other,” a state shapes the domestic “Self.” This thesis focuses on the construction of the Russian “Other” via differentiation of the Georgian “Self.” The primary research question that consequently guides this thesis is:

How have the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” been discursively constructed within Georgia’s foreign policy over the years of 2008-2021?

In order to answer this research question, the following sub-questions will be answered:

- a) How have the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” been discursively constructed in the years 2008-2013 by the then ruling party United National Movement?

¹² Trine Flockhart, “The problem of change in constructivist theory: Ontological security seeking and agent motivation,” *Review of International Studies* 42, no. 5 (2016): 783, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026021051600019X>.

¹³ Bidzina Lebanidze and Kornely Kakachia, “Bandwagoning by stealth? Explaining Georgia’s Appeasement Policy on Russia,” *European Security* 32, no. 4 (2023): 677, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2023.2166404>.

¹⁴ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 26-28.

- b) How have the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” been discursively constructed in the years 2012-2021 by the ruling party Georgian Dream?
- c) To what extent has the construction of the Russian “Other” changed between United National Movement and Georgian Dream?

I will answer these questions by conducting a poststructuralist discourse analysis. The chosen discourse is official foreign policy documents, government programs, speeches (both domestic and international), and statements made by key officials (prime minister, president, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). It will be conducted in a two-stage process using the software *NVivo*. By answering these research questions, I aim to contribute not only to the body of literature discussing Georgia’s foreign policy by using a so-far underutilized theory, but also more generally for the understanding of the relationship between identity and foreign policy. Moreover, through analyzing a large quantity of discourse, I hope to provide a detailed and vivid image of the identity construction of both Georgia and Russia by the two parties.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in six chapters. In **Chapter 1**, I start with outlining a brief historical background of Russo-Georgian relations. The goal is to highlight four key moments and concepts since Georgia’s 1991 independence, rather than covering every event: the August 2008 War between Russia and Georgia (including the increasing tensions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia during the 1990s); the Russian policy of borderization; and the coming of power of both UNM and GD. In **Chapter 2**, I outline existing literature on the concept of identity within the field of international relations and specifically relating to Georgia’s foreign policy. First, I discuss identity as a generally important concept for international relations. Secondly, I outline the existing literature on the role of identity within Georgia’s foreign policy. I focus particularly on realist and constructivist-based literature, which tends to dominate the debate.

In **Chapter 3**, I discuss my theoretical and methodological framework. This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I introduce poststructuralism as basis of my thesis, which provides the core concepts and the analytical tools to identify the identity constructions of Georgia and Russia. Secondly, I discuss the chosen method, poststructuralist discourse analysis. Lastly, I discuss the research design of this thesis, as based on the work of Lene Hansen. As will be discussed more in-depth, I have chosen for a focus on a single “Self”

(Georgia) and “Other” (Russia) under two parties, UNM (2008-2013) and GD (2012-2021). The discourse is made up of foreign policy documents, government programs, speeches (both made on a domestic and international stage), and statements made by government officials (prime minister, president, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Chapter 4 reflects the first two sub-questions and dives into the identity constructions by the respective parties. The chapter is divided into two sections, which both follow the same structure. I first identify how the Russian “Other” and the Georgian “Self” have been discursively constructed, before illustrating how these constructions are linked and differentiated from each other. **Chapter 5** aims to answer the third sub-question, analyzing to what extent a change in the construction of the Russian “Other” is visible. I identify four main changes: a shift in blame for the August 2008 War; a general softer tone; the existence of a willingness to peacefully resolve the conflict; and a changing compatibility of the West and Russia. **Chapter 6** is the conclusion, where I summarize my findings and touch upon its implications.

1. Historical Background

In this chapter, I discuss and explain key events and processes within Russo-Georgian relations that are crucial for understanding the discourse analysis. It focuses on four specific events: the August 2008 War between Russia and Georgia, including the preceding tensions between Georgia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia¹⁵ during the 1990s; the concept of borderization; and the rise to power of UNM in 2003 and GD in 2012. These events are chosen based on their recurrence and significance for the identity construction of both parties. The aim is not to provide a comprehensive history of Russo-Georgian relations, but to set the stage for the subsequent analysis.

1.1 Russo-Georgian Relations during the 1990s

Georgia regained its independence in 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Although Georgia had already declared independence in April of the same year, it was only after the Soviet Union officially dissolved in December that Georgia could fully implement an independent foreign policy.¹⁶ The 1990s in Georgia were characterized by domestic political turmoil, including a civil war and a coup d'état.

For the purpose of my thesis, there are two relevant key points. Firstly, during the Soviet era, the Union consisted of various republics and autonomous regions within these republics.¹⁷ The disintegration of the Soviet Union led not only to the emergence of independent states from these republics but also raised questions about the status of the formerly autonomous regions within them.¹⁸ Georgia was a Union republic, comprised of two Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (Abkhazia and Ajaria) and one Autonomous Oblast (South Ossetia). This mattered as it provided these entities with a certain degree of autonomy and institutional capacity. Historical tensions regarding their status, which had already existed during the Soviet era, continued after Georgia regained independence and escalated to military conflict: the

¹⁵ It is important to note here that different references exist for what, within the academic community, is often referred to as South Ossetia. In Georgia, it is more common to speak of the Tskhinvali region.

¹⁶ Revaz Gachechiladze, "Geopolitics and foreign powers in the modern history of Georgia," in *The Making of Modern Georgia, 1918-2021: The first Georgian republic and its successors*, ed. Stephan F. Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 85.

¹⁷ Monica D. Toft, "Multinationality, Regions and State-Building: The Failed Transition in Georgia," *Regional & Federal Studies* 11, no. 3 (2001): 124, <https://doi.org/10.1080/714004709>.

¹⁸ Toft, "Multinationality," 124.

Georgia/South Ossetia conflict from January 1991 to June 1992, and the Georgia/Abkhazia conflict from August 1992 to September 1993.¹⁹ Both conflicts ended with agreements, yet the fundamental issue of whether these regions would remain part of Georgia or become sovereign states, remained unresolved.²⁰

Secondly, Russia helped Georgia in brokering agreements with both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both Georgia and Russia signed the “Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict”²¹ in June 1992 and the “Agreement on a Cease-Fire in Abkhazia and Arrangements to Monitor its Observance”²² in July 1993. These agreements allowed Russia to deploy peacekeeping missions in Abkhazia, which later became a crucial factor in the August 2008 War. In return, Russia expected Georgia to join the newly created Commonwealth of Independent States, a regional organization made up solely of former republics of the Soviet Union.²³ Shevardnadze described it in the following manner: “Georgia was faced with the prospect of catastrophe... The situation forced me to find a compromise: Georgia was forced to become a member of Russia controlled Commonwealth of Independent States.”²⁴ Russia also provided extensive military support to both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, enabling them to establish *de facto* independence from Georgia.²⁵

19 Julie A. George, *The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 95.

20 George, *Politics of Ethnic Separatism*, 95.

21 “Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict,” United Nations Peacemakers, 920624 (June 24, 1992), 1-2, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GE%20RU_920624_AgreemenOnPrinciplesOfSettleme ntGeorgianOssetianConflict.pdf.

22 “Agreement on a Cease-Fire in Abkhazia and Arrangements to Monitor its Observance,” United Nations Peacemaker, S/26250 (July 27, 1993), 1-4, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GE_930727_AbkhaziaCeasefireAndArrangementsToM onitorObservance.pdf.

23 Shale Horowitz, “Identities Unbound: Escalating Ethnic Conflict in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Tajikistan,” in *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics: Explaining Diffusion and Escalation*, ed. Steven E. Lobell and Philip Mauceri (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 64; Gachechiladze, “Geopolitics and foreign powers,” 87.

24 Shevardnadze as cited in Laetitia Spetschinsky and Irina V. Bolgova, ‘Post-Soviet or Post-Colonial? The relations between Russia and Georgia after 1991,’ *European Review of International Studies* 1. No. 3 (winter 2014): 114, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26593315>.

25 Spyros Demetriou, “Evolution in Availability in SALW,” *Politics from the Barrel of a Gun: Small Arms Proliferation and Conflict in the Republic of Georgia (1989-2001)*, *Small Arms Survey* (2002): 10-11, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10758.10>.

1.2 UNM's Rise and the August 2008 War

Since my thesis focuses on identity construction by two parties, UNM and GD, it is important to look at when and how they came to power. UNM was founded by Mikheil Saakashvili. He became president in 2004 following the Rose Revolution, which was part of the wider series of color revolution across the post-Soviet space. It was triggered by widespread public discontent with the government that faced allegations of corruption and electoral fraud during the parliamentary elections in November 2003.²⁶ Then President Eduard Shevardnadze was ousted from power, with Saakashvili winning the following presidential elections.

The Rose Revolution and the subsequent election of Saakashvili as president had severe implications for Russo-Georgian relations. He was outspoken in favor of Georgia's rapprochement with the EU and particularly the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and made it "the goal of his life"²⁷ to regain control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. One area of continued tension was the Russian withdrawal of military bases from Georgia. While Russia initially promised to withdraw its troops in 1999,²⁸ the process was only more or less completed in November 2007.²⁹ Moreover, relations reached a new low in 2006 because of Georgian accusations of Russian energy sabotage³⁰ and espionage.³¹ This resulted in Russia banning Georgia's main export products, wine and mineral water, supposedly because of failure to meet safety requirements.³² The embargo was only lifted in February 2013.³³ Furthermore, as a response to the Georgian accusation of espionage, president Putin deported over a hundred Georgians residing in Russia by cargo plane on account of "illegal immigration."³⁴

²⁶ Alexander Khudonov, "The Rose Revolution in Georgia," in *Handbook of Revolutions in the 21st Century: The New Waves of Revolutions, and the Causes and Effects of Disruptive Political Change*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone, Leonid Grinin, and Andrey Korotayev (Cham: Springer, 2022), 483-486.

²⁷ Spetschinsky and Bolgova, "Post-Soviet or Post-Colonial," 115.

²⁸ Blair A. Ruble et al., *The 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit Decisions on Moldova and Georgia: Prospects for Implementation, Occasional Paper #284*, (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2002), <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/19098/OP284.pdf>.

²⁹ Civil Georgia, "Russia Hands Over Batumi Military Base to Georgia," *Civil Georgia*, November 13, 2007, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.16321>.

³⁰ Daisy Sindelar, "Georgia: Tbilisi Accuses Moscow Of Energy Sabotage," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, January 23, 2006, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1064976.html>.

³¹ BBC, "Putin fury at Georgia 'terrorism'," *BBC*, October 2, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/5397102.stm>.

³² BBC, "Russian wine move draws protests," *BBC*, March 30, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4860454.stm>.

³³ Neil Buckley, "Georgian wine to flow as Russia lifts ban," *Financial Times*, February 4, 2013, <https://www.ft.com/content/13269432-6ee9-11e2-9ded-00144feab49a>.

³⁴ BBC, "Putin calls for Georgia pressure," *BBC*, October 6, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5415014.stm>.

Tensions between Russia and Georgia culminated in 2008. In the beginning of the year, Russia had already announced it would deepen its (economic) relations with South Ossetia and Abkhazia.³⁵ Over the summer, hostilities between South Ossetia and Georgia became more frequent.³⁶ In an independent report commissioned by the EU, published in 2009, it is stated that the shelling of Tskhinvali during the night of August 7th to 8th by the Georgian authorities, marks the beginning of the August 2008 War.³⁷ While this is emphasized by the Russian authorities, the report also highlights that “(...) much of the Russian military action went far beyond the reasonable limits of defense”³⁸ and mentions “serious indications”³⁹ of ethnic cleansing against ethnic Georgians, which were not or could not be stopped by Russian troops in areas under their control. The war ended by a six-point ceasefire on August 12th, 2008, brokered primarily by the EU. The last point – the mutual commitment to international discussions or the Geneva International Discussions – is of particular importance for this thesis, as they will be referred to during the analysis. A full discussion of the events that took place during the 2008 August War is beyond the scope of this thesis and difficult due to the continued unclarity surrounding the events, which is also utilized by both parties in the construction of the Russian “Other.”⁴⁰ At the end of August 2008, Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, after which Georgia left the Commonwealth of Independent States

1.3 GD's Rise and Borderization

UNM was defeated by the party GD, established by Bidzina Ivanishvili, in the parliamentary elections of October 2012. In the following year, the GD-nominated candidate, Giorgi Margevlashvili also won the presidential elections. The party was clear about its desire and attempts to normalize and amend (economic) relations with Russia, while at the same time signing the Association Agreement with the EU.⁴¹ Since approximately the same time, Russia has pursued what is known as “borderization,” which refers to “the installation of border

³⁵ C. J. Chivers, “Russia Expands Support for Breakaway Regions in Georgia,” *The New York Times*, April 17, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/georgia.html>.

³⁶ Roy Allison, “Russia resurgent? Moscow’s campaign to “coerce Georgia to peace”,” *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2008): 1147, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25144986>.

³⁷ Ahto Lobjakas, “EU Report On 2008 War Tilts Against Georgia,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, September 30, 2009, https://www.rferl.org/a/EU_Report_On_2008_War_Tilts_Against_Georgia/1840447.html.

³⁸ Timothy Heritage, “Georgia started war with Russia: EU-backed report,” *Reuters*, September 30, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE58T4MO/>.

³⁹ Heritage, “Georgia started.”

⁴⁰ Allison, “Russia resurgent?,” 1146-1147

⁴¹ Spetschinsky and Bolgova, “Post-Soviet or Post-Colonial,” 118

markers, fencing, and barbed wire along the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABLs) that separate Abkhazia and South Ossetia from the rest of Georgia.”⁴² The process has not been constant, with its strength depending on Russia’s military activities in other places,⁴³ yet its effects are continuous and visible in daily life. Several news articles detail anecdotes about villages, properties or even individual houses suddenly being impacted by a supposed land border.⁴⁴

Overall, this section discussed several significant events and processes within the scope of Russo-Georgian relations that are essential for understanding the chapters yet to come. Although not exhaustive, this overview provides the necessary background on the August 2008 War, including the preceding tensions between Georgia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia during the 1990s, with a specific focus on Russia’s role in these conflicts. Additionally, the chapter discussed how both UNM and GD, the main actors under focus of this thesis, came to power. Lastly, the concept of borderization has been defined, highlighting Russia’s attempts to create *de facto* borders on what is internationally considered Georgian territory.

⁴² Joseph Larsen, *Deterring Russia’s Borderization of Georgia*, (Georgian Institute of Politics, September 2017), 1, <https://gip.ge/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commentary18.pdf>.

⁴³ Mariusz Rzeszutko, *The borderization of Georgia’s breakaways as a tool of Russia’s long-term struggle with the EU and NATO*, (George C. Marshall European Center for Security, May 2022), 8-9, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/marshall-center-papers/borderization-georgias-breakaways-tool-russias-long-term-struggle-eu-and-nato>.

⁴⁴ See for example: Alexander Smith, “A decade after war, Putin-backed ‘borderization’ costs Georgia land,” *NBC News*, August 3, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/decade-after-war-putin-backed-borderization-costs-georgia-land>; Shaun Walker, “Russian ‘borderisation’: barricades erected in Georgia, says EU monitors,” *The Guardian*, October 23, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/23/russia-borderisation-barricades-erected-georgia-eu>; Clément Girardot, “The Georgian village facing Russian ‘creeping occupation’,” *AlJazeera*, July 3, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/7/3/the-georgian-village-facing-russian-creeping-occupation>.

2. Literature review

In this chapter, I explore the core concept of my thesis: identity. It reviews existing literature in the general field of international relations, before turning to specifically identity within Georgia's foreign policy. It is divided into two sections. In the first section, I address the challenges of conceptualizing identity and provide a brief historical background on its significance in the field. In the second section, I will analyze the existing literature on identity within Georgia's foreign policy. The focus here lies on two theoretical debates: realist literature, which tends to draw on the bandwagoning debate, and constructivist literature, which focuses on explanations based on ideational factors. Ultimately, I will conclude that while scholars agree there has been a change in Georgia's foreign policy since GD came to power, they have not adequately addressed how this identity change has been discursively constructed. Utilizing poststructuralism to explore this discursive identity construction within Georgia's foreign policy forms the research gap this thesis aims to fill.

2.1 Identity within International Relations Theory

Identity has always been a significant concept within international relations, or as Berenskoetter phrases it "one, if not *the*, conceptual shooting star."⁴⁵ Several scholars have alluded to its core function in the comprehension of global politics.⁴⁶ The concept truly started to gain traction in the 1980s. In a thorough study of eight leading international relations journals between 1990 and 2002, Horowitz found that publications on the concept of identity significantly increased during this period, especially from 1995 onwards.⁴⁷ He attributed this to the end of the Cold War and a growing frustration with the traditional international relations theories, accompanied by the rise of constructivism and the English School. Some argue this

⁴⁵ Berenskoetter, "Identity in International Relations," 1.

⁴⁶ See for example: Anthony Burke, "Identity/difference," in *Encyclopedia of International Relations and Global Politics*, ed. Martin Griffiths (London and New York: Routledge, 2005): 394, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203929469>; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 9; Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 175, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539267>.

⁴⁷ Michael Horowitz, "Research Report on the Use of Identity Concepts in International Relations," *Harvard Identity Project* (July 2002): 3-4, <https://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/misc/initiative/identity/images/%20ComparativeReport.pdf>.

trend marks a “return”⁴⁸ to the field, alluding to its historical roots,⁴⁹ while others contend that it is more appropriate to refer to it as a “discovery,” given its implicit use in earlier scholarship.⁵⁰

However, defining identity has been a complex endeavor, as Berenskoetter and Horowitz both note, leading to contradicting or even lacking conceptualizations.⁵¹ As Horowitz finds, “international relations scholars have been constructing theories of identity [in an ad hoc manner], sometimes for the purpose of a single article, without searching for existing theories.”⁵² This consequently has led to a critique of the *entire* concept of identity. Brubaker and Cooper argue that its existence as a “category of practice” – a concept to help people understand their daily lives – does not necessarily warrant its existence as an analytical concept.⁵³ Generally, the conceptualization of identity hinges on the international relations theory used in a particular work. As Aydin-Düzgit puts forward, identity only has a marginal role within “rationalist approaches,”⁵⁴ such as realism and neoliberalism. On the other hand, for constructivism and poststructuralism it is considered an essential concept. As Berenskoetter states, “it is fair to say identity is a constructivist concept if there ever was one.”⁵⁵

Constructivism started gaining traction in the field of international relations during the 1990s, attributed to both academic and external factors.⁵⁶ Despite the many strands and approaches within constructivism, the core idea is that meaning and social reality are socially constructed.⁵⁷ Horowitz’s findings highlight the increasing popularity of identity as a concept, correlating with the rise of constructivist theory.⁵⁸ While constructivism provides valuable insights into the role of social constructions and identities, it may not be the most suitable

⁴⁸ Lapid and Kratochwil, *The Return of Culture*, 6.

⁴⁹ Ursula Stark Urrestarazu, “‘Identity’ in International Relations and Foreign Policy,” in *Theorizing Foreign Policy in a Globalized World*, ed. Gunther Hellman and Knud Erik Jorgensen (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 127.

⁵⁰ Berenskoetter, “Identity in International Relations,” 3.

⁵¹ Berenskoetter, “Identity in International Relations,” 5; Horowitz, “Research Report,” 1.

⁵² Horowitz, “Research Report,” 1.

⁵³ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 4-5, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3108478>.

⁵⁴ Senem Aydin-Düzgit, “European Security and the accession of Turkey: Identity and foreign policy in the European Commission,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 48, no. 4 (2013): 524-525, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713482821>.

⁵⁵ Berenskoetter, “Identity in International Relations,” 3.

⁵⁶ Stefano Guzzini, “A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 2 (2000): 150, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066100006002001>.

⁵⁷ Guzzini, “Reconstruction,” 149.

⁵⁸ Horowitz, “Research Report,” 4.

framework for capturing the nuanced changes in identity this thesis seeks to explore. Causal logic still underpins some constructivist research, particularly in examining the relationship between identity and foreign policy.⁵⁹ Price and Reus-Smit, for instance, argue that constructivism should be able “to answer the hard and good question inevitably asked by traditional scholars – ‘show me your discourse matters and how much’.”⁶⁰ Alexander Wendt, a prominent constructivist scholar, argues that identities are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self.”⁶¹ Building on this, he later goes on to argue that interests depend on identity, as what a state would like to achieve is based on who they are.⁶² He further contends that these interests depend on identity, as a state’s goals are based on its self-perception, and these interests, in turn, shape foreign policy. Identity and interests should thus be seen as outcomes influenced by interactions with other actions within a given context, rather than as fixed or predetermined factors.⁶³

At first glance, it might seem contradictory that identities are seen as stable, yet subject to change. Wendt acknowledges this paradox, stating that “identities may be hard to change, but they are not carved in stone.”⁶⁴ He elaborates that identities and interests are not only created through interactions but also sustained through them.⁶⁵ Factors such as pre-existing interests,⁶⁶ or the impact of a self-fulfilling prophecy,⁶⁷ can lead to the maintenance of identities by the involved actors. Structures are consequently shaped by an agent’s actions, and any change in rules and norms through agent simultaneously can alter identities and interests.⁶⁸ The concept of changing identity constructions, which forms the core puzzle of my thesis, has been central to constructivist research. As Adler emphasizes: “if constructivism is about anything, it

⁵⁹ Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Review: The Constructivist Turn in International Relations,” *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (January 1998): 327, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25054040>; Lene Hanse, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 9-10.

⁶⁰ Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, “Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism,” *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 3 (1998): 282, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066198004003001>.

⁶¹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 397, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858?origin=JSTOR-pdf>.

⁶² Alexander Wendt, “Identity Formation and the International State,” *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (June, 1994): 385, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2944711>.

⁶³ Wendt, “Identity Formation,” 387.

⁶⁴ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21.

⁶⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 331

⁶⁶ Wendt, “Anarchy,” 411.

⁶⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 331/339.

⁶⁸ Maja Zehfuss, “Constructivism and identity: a dangerous liaison,” *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 3 (2001): 320-321, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066101007003002>.

is about *change*.”⁶⁹ However, as Flockhart points out, its impact on the understanding of change has been limited, as it tends to focus on “structure and stability.”⁷⁰ She argues that the causes of change are often the same as those that cause stability.⁷¹

Given these limitations, poststructuralism offers a more suitable approach for this thesis. While constructivism acknowledges that identities are socially constructed and can change over time, it often emphasizes the stability and continuity of these identities. In contrast, poststructuralism, with its focus on the deconstruction of fixed identities and attention to the discursive practices that (re)shape identities, allows for a deeper exploration of how narratives, power relations, and history influence the (re)construction of identity.⁷² This theoretical basis and its impact on my methodology will be discussed more in-depth in the following chapter.

2.2 Identity within Georgia’s Foreign Policy

The literature on Georgia’s foreign policy largely focuses on its orientation towards the West – particularly its relationships with the United States, the EU, and NATO.⁷³ As highlighted by Kakhishvili, “[t]he primary puzzle of Georgian foreign policy centers around why the country has been pursuing a pro-Western foreign policy instead of bandwagoning with Russia.”⁷⁴ Scholars typically approach this puzzle from two theoretical perspectives: realist-based literature, which emphasizes the bandwagoning debate, and constructivist-based literature, which explores Georgia’s perceived belonging to Europe.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Emmanuel Adler, “Constructivism and International Relations,” *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes et al. (London: SAGE, 2013): 123. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁰ Flockhart, “The problem of change,” 783.

⁷¹ Jennifer Sterling-Folkner, “Realism and the Constructivist Challenge: Rejecting, Reconstructing, or Rereading,” *International Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 2002): 93, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3186275?origin=JSTOR-pdf>; Flockhart, “Problem of change,” 783.

⁷² Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 1.

⁷³ See for example: Kornely Kakachia and Salome Minesashvili, “Identity politics: Exploring Georgian foreign policy behavior,” *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 6, no. 2 (July 2015): 171-180, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2015.04.002>; Ghia Nodia, “The Georgian Perception of the West,” in *Commonwealth and Independence in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, ed. Bruno Coppieters, Alexei Zverev, and Dmitiri Trenin (London: Routledge, 1998), 12-44; Donnacha Ó Beacháin and Frederik Coene, “Go West: Georgia’s European identity and its role in domestic politics and foreign policy objectives,” *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 6 (November 2014): 923-941, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2014.953466>.

⁷⁴ Kakhishvili, “Two-dimensional analytical framework,” 176.

⁷⁵ Mariam Bibilashvili, *Towards the ‘normal’ state: Georgian Foreign Policy between Russia and the West* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 26-27.

2.2.1 Realist Literature

Realist theory, which dominates much of the literature on small states' foreign policy, puts forward two assumptions: "the international system is the most relevant level of analysis (...) [and] small states are more likely to bandwagon with threatening great powers than to balance against them."⁷⁶ The bandwagoning theory, central to this discussion, posits that smaller states tend to bandwagon with the states threatening their security, rather than balance against them. Walt defines bandwagoning as "alignment with the source of danger," while balancing refers to "allying with others against the prevailing threat."⁷⁷ According to this, Georgia, as a small state, would be expected to align itself with Russia, the source of its security threats.⁷⁸ However, Georgia's persistent pro-Western orientation defies this expectation, prompting scholars to seek alternative explanations.⁷⁹

To address this, realist-based literature often combines systemic factors with domestic factors.⁸⁰ Gvalia et al., for example, highlight the significance of elites in shaping foreign policy. They argue that elite ideas, identities, and preferences – particularly their views on "the identity (...) [and] the purpose of the state –"⁸¹ influence perceptions of external threats and the available policy options. Further expanding on this, Gvalia, Lebanidze, and Siroky introduce the concepts of elite cohesion and state capacity as additional factors.⁸² They suggest that a unified elite vision regarding "foreign policy goals and challenges,"⁸³ together with the resources to implement these policies, are crucial for understanding Georgia's alignment choices.⁸⁴ They argue that despite the threat posed by Russia, Georgian elites have consistently

⁷⁶ Giorgi Gvalia et al., "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States," *Security Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.757463>.

⁷⁷ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 17.

⁷⁸ See for example: Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978): 172-173, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009958>.

⁷⁹ Explaining Georgia's reasons for bandwagoning does not form an exception, as other scholars have focused on Uzbekistan and Ukraine, and the Central Asian states. See Eric A. Miller, *To balance or not to balance: alignment theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); William C. Wohlforth, "Revisiting Balance of Power Theory in Central Eurasia," in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 214-238.

⁸⁰ Kevork Oskanian, "The Balance Strikes Back: Power, Perceptions, and Ideology in Georgian Foreign Policy, 1992-2014," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12, no. 4 (October 2016): 629-630, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw010>.

⁸¹ Giorgi Gvalia et al., "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States," *Security Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.757463>.

⁸² Giorgi Gvalia, Bidzina Lebanidze, and David S. Siroky, "Neoclassical realism and small states: systemic constraints and domestic filters in Georgia's foreign policy," *East European Politics* 35, no. 1 (2019): 23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2019.1581066>.

⁸³ Gvalia, Lebanidze, and Siroky, "Neoclassical realism," 24.

⁸⁴ Gvalia, Lebanidze, and Siroky, "Neoclassical realism," 25.

avored a pro-Western course after the Rose Revolution due to a cohesive vision and the capacity to execute it.⁸⁵

Oskanian also employs neoclassical realism to explain Georgia's foreign policy, highlighting the imperfect actions of elites constrained by systemic factors.⁸⁶ He argues that Georgian elites have had to navigate the dual pressures of Russia's proximity and the West's involvement, sometimes misjudging the level of threat posed by Russia and the reliability of Western commitments.⁸⁷ The August 2008 War revealed the flaws in these assessments, yet the absence of viable alternatives has led elites to maintain its pro-Western stance.⁸⁸ Although, Gvalia et al. argue that its policy is instead driven by the steadfastness of elite ideas.⁸⁹ While Gvalia et al. note an increase in Georgia's state capacity,⁹⁰ Jones and Kakachia provide a counterpoint by highlighting the country's "weak statehood and the dominance of one-man leadership."⁹¹ They emphasize the overpowering role of elites in the foreign policy-making process,⁹² suggesting that the interplay of systemic constraints, domestic weaknesses, and elite influence is central to understanding Georgia's foreign policy. In conclusion, realist literature on Georgia's foreign policy tends to focus on the intersection of systemic pressures—particularly Russia as a threatening neighbor—and domestic factors, all closely linked through the pivotal role of elites.

2.2.2 Constructivist Literature

Turning to constructivist-based literature. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, all newly independent states were faced with the task to interpret the past and set out a path for the future.⁹³ Scholars argue that Georgian elites after regaining its independence, and

⁸⁵ Gvalia, Lebanidze, and Siroky, "Neoclassical realism," 41.

⁸⁶ Oskanian, "The Balance," 630-632.

⁸⁷ Oskanian, "The Balance," 632.

⁸⁸ Oskanian, "The Balance," 641-642.

⁸⁹ Giorgi Gvalia et al., "Thinking Outside the Bloc," 101-102.

⁹⁰ Gvalia, Lebanidze, and Siroky, "Neoclassical realism," 35.

⁹¹ Stephen Jones and Levan Kakhishvili, "The Interregnum: Georgian Foreign Policy from Independence to the Rose Revolution," in *Georgian Foreign Policy: The Quest for Sustainable Security*, ed. Kornely Kakachia and Michael Cecire (Tbilisi: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2013): 14, <https://gip.ge/publication-post/georgian-foreign-policy-the-quest-for-sustainable-security/>.

⁹² Jones and Kakhishvili, "The Interregnum," 40.

⁹³ Nadia Kaneva, "Nation Branding in Post-Communist Europe: Identities, Markets, and Democracy," in *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe*, ed. Nadia Kaneva (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 6.

especially following the Rose Revolution, have constructed a Georgian-European identity.⁹⁴ The idea of a “return”⁹⁵ to Europe and more generally the West, has become a prevalent theme in both political rhetoric and societal discourse. In doing so, they distinguish Georgia from its Caucasian neighbors and the wider post-Soviet region, associating the West with development and civilization.⁹⁶

Ó Beacháin and Coene note that the notion of Georgia’s “Europeanness” is widely accepted within society, with little debate challenging this assumption.⁹⁷ Other scholars, also argue that Georgia is portrayed as inherently European within its foreign policy.⁹⁸ Georgian elites have built this narrative on supposed historical connections to Europe, such as Georgia’s (Orthodox) Christian identity,⁹⁹ to justify their pursuit of integration into European political and economic organizations. While Jones assess the evidence for Georgia’s heritage before the 19th century as rather weak,¹⁰⁰ Ó Beacháin and Coene reference some historians who argue that Georgia has been part of Europe since Greco-Roman times.¹⁰¹ This inherent belonging is best illustrated by the often-cited quote by Zurab Zhvania, then chairman of the Georgian Parliament, when Georgia acceded to the Council of Europe in 1999, “I am Georgian, therefore I am European.”¹⁰² This encapsulates the deeply ingrained perception of Georgia’s European identity. Some scholars, such as Sabanadze, do address the debate around the question whether Georgia *is* European, yet for the purpose of my thesis, this is not relevant.¹⁰³

Kakachia and Minesashvili argue that this European identity was strategically constructed to help build a cohesive Georgian nation-state after regaining its independence,

⁹⁴ Tracy German and Kornely Kakachia, “Achieving Security as a Small State,” in *Georgia’s Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Challenges for a Small State*, ed. Tracey German, Stephen F. Jones, and Kornely Kakachia (London: I.B. Tauris, 2022), 19-20.

⁹⁵ German and Kakachia, “Achieving Security,” 19.

⁹⁶ German and Kakachia, “Achieving Security,” 19-20; Kornely Kakachia, “European, Asia, or Eurasian?: Georgian Identity and the Struggle for Euro-Atlantic Integration,” in *Georgian Foreign Policy: The Quest for Sustainable Security*, ed. Kornely Kakachia and Michael Cecire (Tbilisi: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2013): 46, <https://gip.ge/publication-post/georgian-foreign-policy-the-quest-for-sustainable-security/>.

⁹⁷ Ó Beacháin and Coene, “Go West,” 925. Emphasis added.

⁹⁸ Ó Beacháin and Coene, “Go West,” 925. Emphasis added.

⁹⁹ Jones, “Cultural paradigms,” 90.

¹⁰⁰ Jones, “Cultural paradigms,” 91.

¹⁰¹ Ó Beacháin and Coene, “Go West,” 925.

¹⁰² Nino Lejava, “Georgia’s Unfinished Search for Its Place in Europe,” *Carnegie Europe* (April 2021): 1, https://carnegie-production-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/static/files/2021-04_Lejava_GeorgiaEU.pdf; Sabanadze, “EU-Georgia,” 141.

¹⁰³ Sabanadze, “EU-Georgia,” 144-146.

and to secure financial aid and security guarantees from the West.¹⁰⁴ They contend that Georgia's pro-Western foreign policy is driven by its perceived compatibility with Western values, such as liberal democracy, and its alignment with Europe's "historical and cultural values."¹⁰⁵ This positions Russia as incompatible with Georgia's aspirations, further solidifying the country's Western orientation. This is also highlighted by Kakachia, who stated, "fleeing Russia's backyard became a nationwide mantra."¹⁰⁶ Minesashvili similarly names this alignment with Europe and "othering" of Russia as the core of Georgia's foreign policy.¹⁰⁷ However, she adds nuance by distinguishing between Georgia's alignment with "cultural Europe," to which it already belongs, and "political Europe," which it aspires to join.¹⁰⁸ This distinction is not always explicitly addressed in other works.

Although Georgia's identity is largely West-oriented, some politicians have engaged with other identity formations, which has also been studied. Jones, for example, explores the existence of a pan-Caucasian identity within Georgia's foreign policy, yet as this article was published in 2003, it only focuses on the late 1990s and early 2000s.¹⁰⁹ Several scholars have also highlighted Georgia's shift from a Caucasian identity to one aligned with the broader Black Sea region.¹¹⁰ Aprasidze explores this, arguing that since the 2000s, it is seen as more beneficial to align with the Black Sea region, especially Ukraine and Moldova, rather than the "unstable South Caucasus."¹¹¹ This highlights again the significance of identity as a core concept in the literature on Georgia's foreign policy.

¹⁰⁴ Kakachia and Minesashvili. "Identity politics," 174.

¹⁰⁵ Kakachia and Minesashvili. "Identity politics," 176.

¹⁰⁶ Kornely Kakachia, "Europeanisation and Georgian foreign policy," in *The South Caucasus: Between integration and fragmentation*, European Policy Centre (May 2015): 16, https://www.epc.eu/content/PDF/2015/the_south_caucasus_-_low_res.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ Salome Minesashvili, "Narrating Identity: Belongingness and Alterity in Georgia's Foreign Policy," in *Values and Identity as Sources of Foreign Policy in Armenia and Georgia*, ed. Kornely Kakachia and Alexander Markarov (Tbilisi: Universal, 2016), 12-13. See also Kakachia and Minesashvili. "Identity politics," 178.

¹⁰⁸ Minesashvili, "Narrating Identity," 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, "Cultural paradigms," 93-95.

¹¹⁰ See for example: Kakachia and Minesashvili. "Identity politics," 178; Jonathan Kulick and Temuri Yakobashvili, "Georgia and the Wider Black Sea," in *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century: Strategic, Economic, and Energy Perspectives*, ed. Daniel Hamilton and Gerhand Mangott (Washington: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008), 23-52; Ekaterine Pirtskhalava and Elene Kvanchilashvili, "Identity and Geopolitical Vector of Georgia," in *Social Values and Identities in the Black Sea Region*, ed. Malina Voicu, Kseniya Kizilova, and Marian Zulean (London: Lexington Books, 2023), 239-258.

¹¹¹ David Aprasidze, "In the Caucasus but Towards the Black Sea: Georgia's Regional Identity in Flux," in *Georgia's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Challenges for a Small State*, ed. Tracey German, Stephen F. Jones, and Kornely Kakachia (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 79.

2.3 Research Gap

The existing literature focuses on explaining Georgia's foreign policy, drawing on realist and constructivist perspectives. Both approaches incorporate the concept of identity to some extent, whether it is elite, state, or national identity. However, several authors mark a significant shift in Georgia's foreign policy since 2012.¹¹² For example, Kakachia et al. note a "considerable softening of rhetoric over Russia and a 'normalization policy' restoring economic, cultural, and humanitarian relations" since GD came to power.¹¹³ Similarly, Lebanidze and Kakachia note,

*"(...) the Georgian Dream government that has been in power since 2012 considered accommodation of Russia as the most adequate response to systemic incentives. At the same time, public opinion has remained skeptical of the Russia-accommodating foreign policy and [Georgian Dream]'s attempts at appeasing Russia resulted in some major societal backlashes."*¹¹⁴

Several authors have attempted to explain this change through identity, specifically party identity.¹¹⁵ For example, Lebanidze and Kakachia note that GD elites favor accommodating Russia, leading to what they call "bandwagoning by stealth – a de facto and partial bandwagoning with Russia without formally changing the country's declared pro-Western foreign policy."¹¹⁶ However, Georgia's identity (whether elite, state, national or party), which was first able to explain its refusal for aligning with Russia, can now also explain its *changing* foreign policy. Overall, it points towards an overarching theoretical issue, namely the assumption that identity is an explanatory variable. Instead, I use poststructuralism, a theory that conceptualizes identity as something that is constructed and reinforced through foreign policy. By adopting this approach, I aim to answer the research questions and identify how the identity of Georgia and Russia have been discursively constructed by UNM and GD. Poststructuralism as a theoretical foundation for this thesis will now be explored more in-depth.

¹¹² See for example: Ó Beacháin and Coene, "Go West," 936-937; Oskanian, "The Balance," 19; Anders Wivel, "Living on the edge: Georgian foreign policy between the West and the rest," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 1, no. 1 (2016): 99, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23802014.2016.1194168>.

¹¹³ Kornely Kakachia, Salome Minesashvili, and Levan Kakhishvili, "Change and Continuity in the Foreign Policies of Small States: Elite Perceptions and Georgia's Foreign Policy Towards Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no. 5 (2018): 815, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2018.1480751>.

¹¹⁴ Lebanidze and Kakachia, "Bandwagoning by stealth?" 689.

¹¹⁵ Kakachia, Minesashvili, and Kakhishvili, "Change and Continuity," 815.

¹¹⁶ Lebanidze and Kakachia, "Bandwagoning by stealth?" 677.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss both the theoretical framework and the methodology of my thesis. One of the core features of both poststructuralism¹¹⁷ and discourse analysis, more generally, is the intertwining of theory and method.¹¹⁸ To emphasize this, I have chosen to discuss both in a single chapter. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I briefly discuss the historical background of poststructuralism and its core pillars. Additionally, I define the core concepts of identity and foreign policy, as well as the processes of linking and differentiation. In the second section I elaborate on my method, poststructuralist discourse analysis. Lastly, I outline my research design, based on the work of Lene Hansen, discussing all the choices underpinning my thesis, such as discourse selection and gathering.

3.1 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism¹¹⁹ within international relations finds its origin around the 1980s, when several scholars utilized poststructuralist theories from the field of philosophy.¹²⁰ This thesis largely follows the poststructuralist research design as put forward by Lene Hansen, one of the most prominent poststructuralist scholars, which will be elaborated on in section 3.2 and 3.3. Like other theories from this period, its creation took place during a time where traditional international relations theories were criticized for their inability to explain major events.¹²¹ Additionally, there was also a shift away from positivist research.¹²² It has been utilized to “critically investigate how the subject – in the dual senses of the subject-matter and the subject-

¹¹⁷ I have seen both the use of post-structuralism and poststructuralism. Hansen uses poststructuralism in her 2006 book, while in a later work she uses post-structuralism. I have opted for the consistent use of poststructuralism in this thesis, as it is built on Hansen’s 2006 book.

¹¹⁸ Lene Hansen, “Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 95; Marianne Jørgensen and Louise J. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2011), 4.

¹¹⁹ Like any other International Relations theory, poststructuralism is not without criticism, see for example Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1994), 23-24 and Walt, *Alliances*, 223. For rebuttals, see Mario Baumann, “Poststructuralism in International Relations: Discourse and the Military,” in *Handbook of Military Sciences*, ed. Anders McD Sookermany (Cham: Springer Cham, 2022), 15; Richard Devetak, “Theories, practices and postmodernism in international relations 1,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 12, no. 2 (1999): 72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09557579908400243>; Lene Hansen, “A Case for Seduction? Evaluating the Poststructuralist Conceptualization of Security,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 4 (1997): 383-384, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836797032004002>.

¹²⁰ Hansen, “Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy,” 95-96.

¹²¹ Ash Çalkivik, “Poststructuralism and Postmodernism in International Relations,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (March 2020): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.102>.

¹²² Çalkivik, “Postmodernism,” 3.

actors – of international relations is constituted in and through the discourses and texts of world politics.”¹²³ Thus, it concentrates on the issue of representation and examines how dominant narratives in world politics create and sustain power relations, legitimizing certain actions while marginalizing alternatives.¹²⁴ Turning specifically to foreign policy, poststructuralist research is based on the belief that any policy goal relies on *interpretations* of the state, threats, security, etcetera. Foreign policy needs to give meaning and construct a certain event. It does so by articulating and leveraging identities of others involved – such as states, peoples, and institutions – as well as through its own state, people, or institutions.¹²⁵ In this section, I elaborate on the core concepts of poststructuralism: language, discourse, and identity, while also discussing poststructuralist ontology and epistemology.

Starting with the concept of language, poststructuralism builds on the linguistic work of Ferdinand de Saussure.¹²⁶ Saussure put forward the idea that language is a system of differences,¹²⁷ where the meaning of a word is determined through the process of linking: connecting the spoken word or the “signifier” (for example, t-h-e-s-i-s) to the “signified” (the concept of a written piece of research).¹²⁸ There is no inherent connection: a word gains meaning through its usage and is distinguished from other words by its specific use. One of the first authors to bring this theory of linguistics into political theory was Derrida. He expanded on Saussure’s work, arguing that language is not a fixed element,¹²⁹ but a “process of production.”¹³⁰ Derrida introduces the concept of “*différance*.” Koskinen explains that while *différance* has no clear definition, it highlights the relational and exclusionary nature of creating meaning: something can be defined through what it is *not*.¹³¹

¹²³ James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro, “Preface and Acknowledgements,” in *International/Intertextual Relations*, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (New York: Lexington books, 1989), ix.

¹²⁴ Çalkivik, “Postmodernism,” 1.

¹²⁵ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 5-6.

¹²⁶ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 15; Kaisa Koskinen, “(Mis)Translating the Untranslatable: The Impact of Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism on Translation Theory,” *Meta* 39, no. 3 (September 1994): 447, <https://doi.org/10.7202/003344ar>.

¹²⁷ Saussure, *General Linguistics*, 120.

¹²⁸ Saussure, *General Linguistics*, 67-69; Koskinen, “(Mis)Translating,” 447.

¹²⁹ Baumann, “Discourse and the Military,” 4; Jacques Derrida, “Deconstruction in a Nutshell: The Very Idea (!),” in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida, With a New Introduction*, ed. Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), 31.

¹³⁰ Gözde Turan, “Poststructuralism and the Poststructuralist Turn in IR,” in *Critical Approaches to International Relations*, ed. M. Kürşad Özekin and Engin Sune (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 138.

¹³¹ Koskinen, “(Mis)Translating,” 447.

One of the core premises of poststructuralism is that a “signifier” gains meaning through language,¹³² hence why language is “ontologically significant.”¹³³ The relation between “signifier” and “signified” is, nevertheless, subject to change over time.¹³⁴ As Baumann highlights, poststructuralism aims to show how discourse attempts to solidify a *certain* “signified.”¹³⁵ Discourse is consequently seen as “representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible.”¹³⁶ Given the focus of this thesis and the use of poststructuralist theory of foreign policy, discourse thus refers to foreign policy.

The exclusionary element within language also plays a major role in identity construction within discourse. Identities are defined through a collection of differences, which become socially acknowledged and reproduced.¹³⁷ These differences are crucial, as they create a distinct “signified.” So, through careful consideration of what we are *not* as a collective, we delineate what we *are*. Within foreign policy specifically, the construction of the “foreign” creates an opportunity to create and to shape the domestic identity. The creation of the foreign “Other” is enabled by the practices that simultaneously shape the domestic “Self.”¹³⁸ For this thesis, it means the Russian “Other” is shaped by the Georgian “Self,” and vice versa. Aydin-Düzgit nevertheless adds an important distinction, namely that while poststructuralism argues that identity is not possible without the practice of differing, the connotation does not necessarily have to be negative.¹³⁹

¹³² Turan, “Poststructuralism,” 137.

¹³³ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 16.

¹³⁴ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 20.

¹³⁵ Baumann, “Discourse and the Military,” 4.

¹³⁶ David Campbell, “Poststructuralism,” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and diversity*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 234-235.

¹³⁷ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 64.

¹³⁸ Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby, “Introduction: Rethinking geopolitics: towards a critical geopolitics,” in *Rethinking Geopolitics*, ed. Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 4; Campbell, *Writing Security*, 8.

¹³⁹ Aydin-Düzgit, “European Security,” 525.

Within this construction of the “Self” and the “Other,” two processes simultaneously take place: linking and differentiation. Identity is formed through a network of “signs” that establish both a relationship of similarity (linking) and one of contrast (differentiation).¹⁴⁰ Hansen illustrates these processes through figures, as shown in **Figure 3.1**.¹⁴¹ As her book is about the Balkans, the figure reflects this. This figure is *one* of the prevalent Western discourses through the 1990s she discusses and criticizes.

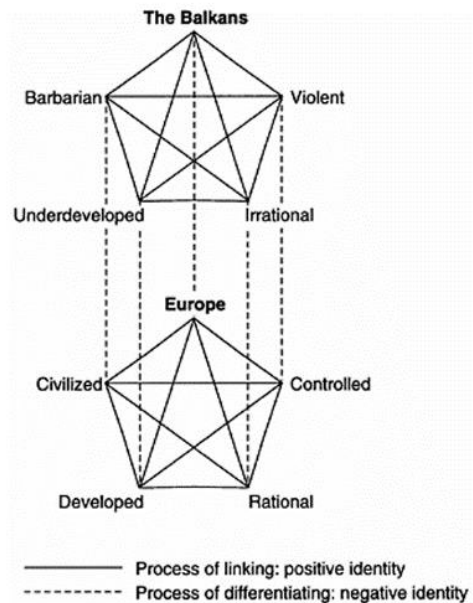


Figure 3.1: The linking and differentiation of “the Balkans” and “Europe.”

She argues that through a process of linking, the Balkans in the dominant Western discourse associated with signs such as “barbarian,” “underdeveloped,” “irrational,” and “violent.” These signs that construct the Balkan identity are differentiated by those that construct the identity of Europe. Poststructuralist research focuses on which signs are attributed to the “Self” and the “Other,” and how these differ from each other. This thesis examines the identity construction of the Russian “Other” by UNM and GD, and what this reveals about the Georgian “Self.” I aim to create two figures similar to **Figure 3.1**, visualizing these identity constructions.

However, identity, similar to language, is not fixed and instead maintained through “repetition.”¹⁴² This is crucial because it validates the premise of this thesis. The starting point was an observed change in the identity construction of Russia within Georgian foreign policy. It is important to mention here that identity and foreign policy go hand-in-hand: identity gives way to policy making, yet foreign policy also legitimizes the same identity.¹⁴³ Based on the claim that language is ontologically significant, identity needs to be “articulated in language.”¹⁴⁴ While Hansen acknowledges that foreign policy can be articulated through non-

¹⁴⁰ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 19-20.

¹⁴¹ Source figure: Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 42.

¹⁴² Campbell, *Writing Security*, 8-9.

¹⁴³ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 26-28.

¹⁴⁴ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 23.

verbal language, to gain significance identity needs to be expressed in *language* through a process of linking and differentiation.¹⁴⁵ The latter sets poststructuralism apart from constructivism. Wendt, the prominent aforementioned constructivist scholar, argues that a state both has a corporate and social identity.¹⁴⁶ The corporate identity is self-organizing and simply constitutes a foundation for other identities to be built on. However, poststructuralism rejects the notion of a pre-determined identity existing outside discourse. This connects to what Hansen refers to as the “impossibility of causality.”¹⁴⁷ Hypotheses are typically based on the identification of independent and dependent variables, which need to be observed separately. Yet, poststructuralism contends that identity is created through foreign policy and vice versa. Identity cannot be observed separately, making the establishment of a causal relationship not feasible. This aligns with the poststructuralist view that there is no neutral place, from which a researcher can observe the phenomena they aim to research.¹⁴⁸ Instead, researchers are part of the same world they seek to explain.¹⁴⁹

3.2 Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis

Building on the section above, this thesis will use poststructuralist discourse analysis as a method. This method has mainly been developed by Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver. As the former outlines, while not all poststructuralists work with discourse analysis, nor apply discourse analysis in the same manner, there is a deep connection between poststructuralism and discourse analysis in the field of international relations.¹⁵⁰ Following the theoretical framework, in poststructuralist discourse analysis, discourse is seen as a system of meaning through which identities are constructed and policy options are defined.¹⁵¹ With the formulation of a policy, there must be a representation of the problem in order to act.

I distinguish between three analytical layers: discursive formations; discursive strategies; and signs. These terms are in concordance with Hansen’s work, yet she does not clearly define them. The definitions are therefore my own. A discursive formation is a general

¹⁴⁵ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 23.

¹⁴⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 225.

¹⁴⁷ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 25.

¹⁴⁸ Turan, “Poststructuralism,” 138.

¹⁴⁹ Jenny Edkins, “Poststructuralism,” in *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An introduction*, ed. Martin Griffiths (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 88.

¹⁵⁰ Hansen, “Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy,” 97.

¹⁵¹ Campbell, “Poststructuralism,” 234-235; Hansen, “Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy,” 102-103.

reoccurring theme within the discourse. It refers to a large overarching visible trend, which is then constructed to say something about the “Self” or the “Other.” For example, a reoccurring discursive formation within the discourse revolves around the August 2008 War. Within this discursive formation, both UNM and GD rely on specific discursive strategies. These strategies can be concepts, ideas, references, etcetera. on which they rely to form a discursive formation. To continue with the same example, within the discursive formation about the August 2008 War, the parties make references to, among others, specific historical events, the need for an investigation, and question who started the war. A sign refers to the specific characteristic that is attributed to the “Self” or the “Other,” and follows logically from both the discursive formation and strategy.

To identify the discursive formations, strategies, and signs within the discourse under consideration, I used the software *NVivo* which is provided by the University of Glasgow. The software uses different words for the terms I use, but the functionality was not impacted. So, while *NVivo*, for example, speaks of a “code” rather than a discursive formation, I was still able to conduct a poststructuralist discourse analysis. I opted for a two-stage analysis process per party. First, I read through all the party discourse. The goal was to first identify the overarching formations. During the first read, I did already loosely identify some of the strategies used by the parties, yet this was not a priority. During the second read, I identified the strategies. As the sign follows from both the discursive formation and strategy, this was only determined after the two readings were completed. Single words, sentences, or whole paragraphs could be included in a range of zero, one, or multiple discursive formations. Overall, *NVivo* allowed me to efficiently go through a large quantity of discourse in a manner consistent with poststructuralism.

3.3 Research Design

I now turn to the research design of my thesis, focusing on the choices I have made throughout. Given the poststructuralist foundation, the following section employs terminology that differs from what is typically found in a thesis. As described above, the relationship between foreign policy and identity is seen as intertwined. As this makes establishing a causal relationship impossible, speaking of independent and dependent variables would be unfitting. Other commonly found concepts, such as “case selection” or “data selection” will also not be used. Instead, I will use the poststructuralist concepts, based on Hansen’s book. Therefore, I

will elaborate on the choice of “Self” and “Other” (instead of case selection) and justify the choices surrounding the discourse I analyzed (instead of data selection). Lastly, I will also touch upon my positionality and the limitations of my research.

3.3.1 Choice of “Self,” “Other,” and Time Period

Poststructuralist research design first addresses the number of selves and others within research. My thesis started from an observed change in Georgia’s foreign policy towards Russia, further supported by academic literature. I focus accordingly on a single “Self” and a single “Other.” The “Self” is Georgia and the “Other” is Russia, as constructed by UNM and GD. While Lebanidze and Kakachia argue GD attempts to both bandwagon with Russia and continue on its pro-Western foreign policy path,¹⁵² I have chosen not to include the West as a second “Other” due to the word limit. “Georgia” and “Russia” can be broken down into more specific categories, such as the “Russian people” or the “Russian government.” However, I opted to stick with a more general term and instead be guided by the discourse to identify what the term represents. In the findings, it is evident that both UNM and GD sometimes distinguish between the Russian government and the Russian population, albeit not consistently.

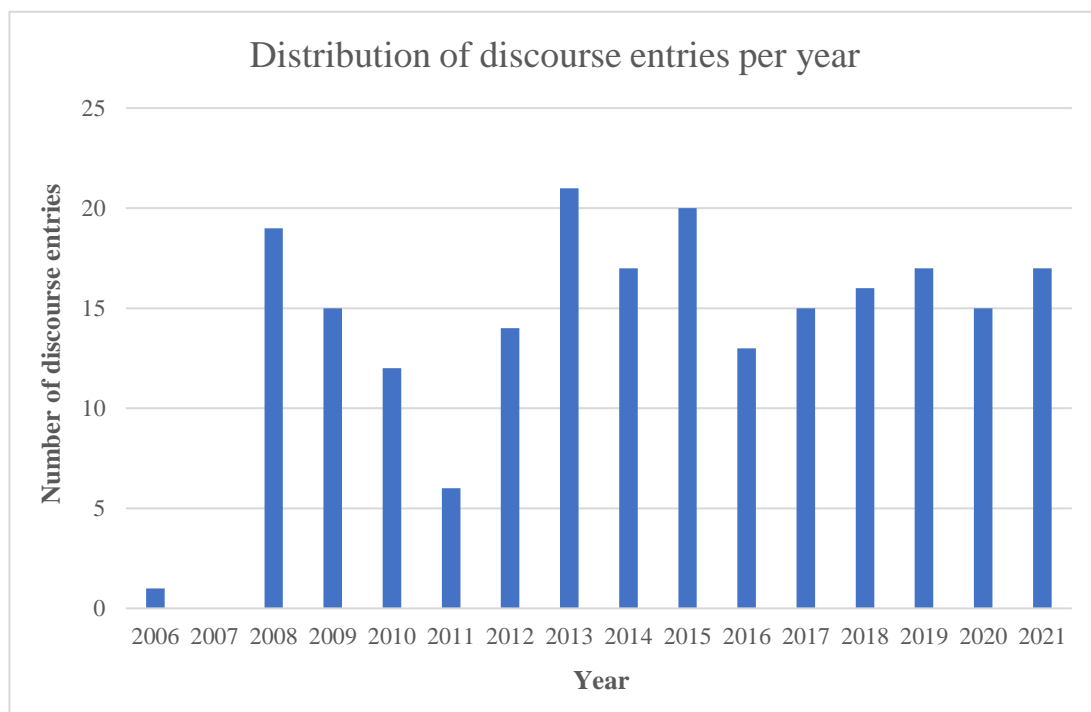
The choice for the time frame follows from the historical background and the research design. I start my analysis in January 2008, the year in which the August 2008 War took place and formal relations with Russia ceased. The end date is December 2021, which may seem less intuitive. However, as the introduction highlighted, tensions between GD and the Georgian population rose significantly after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Analyzing GD’s discourse beyond 2021 would necessitate a more complex analysis to also account for the impact on society and the complex relations between Georgia and Ukraine. Given the word limit, I chose to end the analysis before the start of the war. It does, however, present an interesting avenue for further research. In the analysis, I examine UNM from 2008 to 2013 and GD from 2012 to 2021. These periods overlap due to a phase of cohabitation, when GD won a parliamentary majority in October 2012 and took over the prime minister’s position, while Saakashvili remained president for UNM. During this time, statements are analyzed based on party allegiance and, in the case of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to the government it serves.

¹⁵² Lebanidze and Kakachia, “Bandwagoning by stealth?” 677.

3.3.2 Discourse Selection and Gathering

In conducting a (poststructuralist) discourse analysis, selecting and gathering the relevant discourse is a crucial first step. In this thesis, the discourse consists of official foreign policy documents, government programs, speeches (both domestic and international), and statements made by key officials (prime minister, president, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs). My focus is on elite constructions of identity within Georgia's foreign policy. To gather this discourse, I used official government websites, supplemented by two media outlets, *civil.ge* and *agenda.ge*. These outlets helped capture discourse that might not have been translated or published in English, given the limitations of official sites. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage of relevant events. As a result, the majority of the discourse was in English.

In total, I compiled 218 discourse entries,¹⁵³ which are detailed in **Appendix A**. This appendix provides a chronological list of the entries, along with the responsible person/authority, language, and source. **Graph 3.1** illustrates the distribution of these entries by year. I will now elaborate on the choices I made in the selection and gathering of this discourse.



Graph 3.1: Distribution of discourse entries per year.

¹⁵³ A discourse entry refers to a single speech, address, or foreign policy document etcetera in the larger body of discourse.

For the selection of discourse, poststructuralist methodology emphasizes the use of “public texts.”¹⁵⁴ As Wæver highlights, the focus is not on uncovering “the thoughts or motives of the actors, their hidden intentions or secret plans,”¹⁵⁵ but rather on analyzing the discourse itself. This approach is particularly advantageous in foreign policy analysis, where much information is often concealed. By prioritizing public and open sources, the analysis centers on the language used by actors, instead of interpreting texts as indicators of underlying intentions.

In my analysis, I focus on the following actors: the president, the prime-minister, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁵⁶ I attribute foreign policy choices to a party, as Georgian parties can secure a majority of parliamentary seats, eliminating the need for coalition forming. In the entire period under consideration, the ruling party had a majority of the parliamentary seats and was able to govern on its own. Therefore, I argue that government policies are reflective of the party itself. However, it does need to be emphasized that my thesis focuses on *dominant* party discourse. As will become clear in Chapter 5, dissenting opinions are possible. Moreover, after the 2013 presidential elections, the powers of the president decreased significantly in favor of the prime minister. As the president became a largely ceremonial role, from 2014 onwards I only included statements made by the prime minister.

The discourse possibilities in the field of foreign policy analysis are extensive, including official documents, speeches, interviews, press statements, and parliamentary debates. According to Hansen, all texts should meet three criteria: “they are characterized by the clear articulation of identities and policies; they are widely read and attended to; and they have the formal authority to define a political position.”¹⁵⁷ These texts should be from the period under consideration, in this thesis 2008-2021. Overall, I included the following types of discourse: UN General Assembly speeches; statements; addresses; speeches; foreign policy resolutions; government programs; and foreign policy strategies. The types are categorized based on the classification used by the government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hold

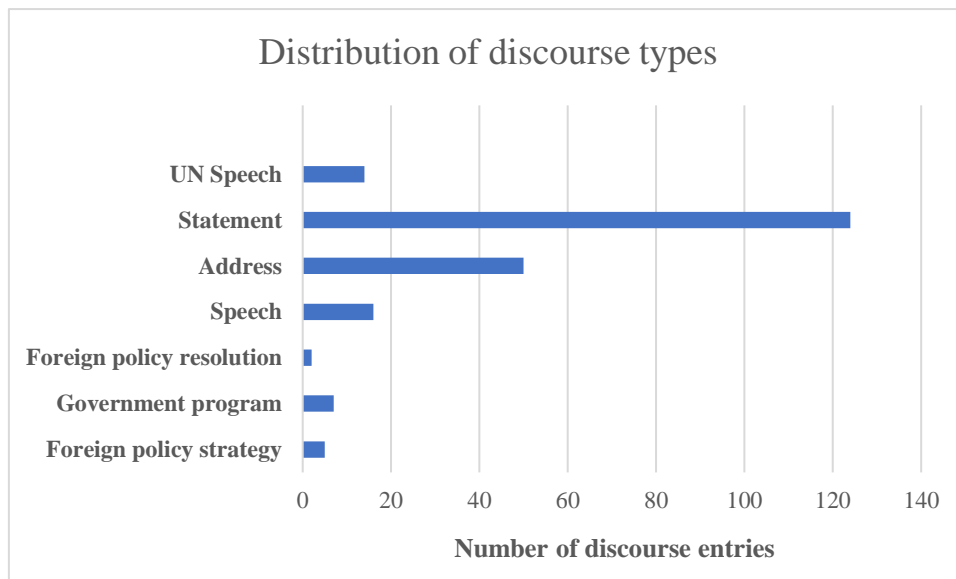
¹⁵⁴ Ole Wæver, “Identity, communities and foreign policy: discourse analysis as foreign policy theory,” in *European Integration and National Identity: The challenge of the Nordic states*, ed. Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 26.

¹⁵⁵ Wæver, “Identity, communities and foreign policy,” 26.

¹⁵⁶ One could argue for the inclusion of other ministries, such as the Ministry of Defense or the State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. Yet, given the primary role of foreign policy-making for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I opted to focus solely on this ministry.

¹⁵⁷ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 85.

no further relevance for the analysis. The distribution of discourse types is illustrated in **Graph 3.2**.



Graph 3.2: Distribution of discourse types.

My discourse collection started with mapping the foreign policy documents published by the Georgian government during the relevant period. I included five foreign policy strategies from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also included government programs, which are documents that outline the vision and goals of the new incumbent government for their time in office. There are a total of eight government programs published between 2008 and 2021. Both these strands of discourse fulfil the abovementioned criteria as they clearly articulate foreign policy and identity. Turning to speeches, statements, and addresses, I only included those made by the actors mentioned above and can be divided into two general groups. One is special occasions that inherently revolve around foreign policy or Russia, such as the State of the Nation addresses, Independence Day addresses, and statements on the anniversary of the August 2008 War. Other statements or speeches, for example, the appointment of a new Foreign Minister or a response of the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were only included if they explicitly mentioned Russia.

For the discourse collection, my initial sources were the official website for the Georgian government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, for speeches and statements by then President Saakashvili, I used the archived website dedicated to his time in

¹⁵⁸ See <https://www.mfa.gov.ge/en> and <https://www.gov.ge/eng>.

office.¹⁵⁹ I combed through these websites, focusing on the abovementioned criteria. However, the English versions of these official websites were less comprehensive and consistent than their Georgian counterparts. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' English records only date back to April 2015. This limitation resulted in a disproportionately small representation of discourse from the UNM period.

To address this gap, I turned to two major-English language news outlets: Civil.ge¹⁶⁰ and Agenda.ge.¹⁶¹ These news sources were useful for identifying references to official government discourse. When I was unable to locate the original government publication, I included the relevant news article to ensure a more balanced and comprehensive collection of discourse. Both civil.ge and agenda.ge archive all their publications and news articles, so I was able to go back until 2008 in the case of Civil.ge and 2013 in the case of Agenda.ge. Because of the way I collected the discourse, the large majority is in English. For those documents or statements where I was unable to find an official translation, I used Google Translate. Section 3.3.2 is summarized in **Table 3.1**, which outlines for the two major discourse groups – official foreign policy documents, and statements, addresses, and speeches – which criteria needed to be fulfilled, the sources, the corresponding authority, and some of examples of the included discourse.

¹⁵⁹ See <http://saakashviliarchive.info/en/>.

¹⁶⁰ Civil.ge was created in 2001 by United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG) and funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, and the Transition Promotion Program (a program by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Source: Civil.ge, "Funding sources," *Civil.ge*, n.d., <https://civil.ge/funding-sources>.

¹⁶¹ Agenda.ge was created by the Administration of the Government of Georgia in December 2013. Source: Agenda.ge, "About agenda.ge," Agenda.ge, n.d., <https://agenda.ge/en/about#gsc.tab=0>.

Table 3.1: Summary of discourse selection and gathering

Type of discourse	Criteria for discourse selection	Sources	Authority	Examples
Official foreign policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear identity and policy articulation of identities; widely read and attended; formal authority to define a political decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official government websites (official government websites (gov.ge and mfa.gove.ge/en). - Official archives of websites dedicated to officials (http://saakashviliarchive.info/en). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign policy strategies. - Government programs. - Resolutions adopted by the parliament.
Statements, addresses, and speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear identity and policy articulation of identities; widely read and attended; formal authority to define a political decision. - If not a regular event; needs to mention Russia in some capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official government websites (official government websites (gov.ge and mfa.gove.ge/en). - Archive of two news outlets (civil.ge and agenda.ge). - Official website of relevant international organizations (OSCE and UN). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Foreign Affairs - President (2008-2013) - Prime minister (2012-2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State of the Nation Address. - Speech in honor of the August 2008 War anniversary. - UN General Assembly address.

3.3.3 Limitations and Positionality

As with any research, my thesis was faced with some limitations. The core limitations of my thesis revolve around discourse selection and gathering. A significant constraint is my lack of proficiency in the Georgian language. Most of the included discourse, except for some speeches delivered on the international stage, are originally in Georgian. Consequently, I often had to rely on translations. Poststructuralist discourse analysis emphasizes the importance of close reading, where subtle shifts in meaning and connotation are critical. Translating text into another language can inadvertently alter these nuances. To minimize the effect on my thesis, I primarily relied on official translations or translations provided by the two news outlets. In only eleven instances did I resort to using Google Translate. By relying on official translations and those by trusted translators, the responsibility for accurately conveying the meaning of the original Georgian text is transferred, thereby enhancing the credibility of translations.

Secondly, using two news outlets as a means of data collection also poses a limitation. Media outlets inherently possess biases, and their editorial choices may reflect certain perspectives. Given the polarized media landscape in Georgia,¹⁶² there is a potential for skewing the discourse either towards pro-government or pro-opposition standpoints. To address this, I selected two major-English language news outlets with differing orientations: Civil.ge, which is generally regarded as independent or pro-oppositional, and Agenda.ge, which is seen as more government-aligned. By using both outlets, I aimed to balance these biases, with the expectation that they would offset each other and provide a more comprehensive view of the discourse.

However, concerns also arise regarding the content of the articles themselves. News outlets make editorial decisions about which parts of a speech or statement to include, potentially omitting important context or nuances. Despite this, both Civil.ge and Agenda.ge tend to include extensive quotes, providing a substantial representation of the original discourse. They often publish complete translations of significant speeches, such as the New Year Address or the UN General Assembly Address. Nevertheless, a majority of the discourse entries consisted of full statements, speeches, etcetera.¹⁶³ Including large, verbatim excerpts helps mitigate some of the concerns about selective reporting and provides a closer approximation of the original content, when I could not locate the full transcript. Because of the large number of discourse entries included, I believe the analysis will nevertheless be sufficiently comprehensive.

Lastly, poststructuralism assumes researchers do not exist independently from the world they observe and analyze, making it crucial to address my positionality. This has been reiterated by Neumann, who stated that “[i]n analyzing the self/other [relation], it is particularly hard not to ponder the ways in which the writer is implicated in what her or she writes about.”¹⁶⁴ Any researcher must engage in a process of looking at their own views and positions, and consider how these might have (directly or indirectly) have influenced the research. I am aware of my position as an outsider within Georgia: I am a student from the Netherlands, without any

¹⁶² Salome Kandelaki et al., *Media Polarization Turbulences in Georgia and the Visegrad States: How to Depolarize?*, 7 (Tbilisi: Georgian Institute for Politics, 2024), https://gip.ge/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Media-Polarization_Report.pdf.

¹⁶³ 123 full versions and 95 excerpts were included, as listed in appendix A.

¹⁶⁴ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 36-37.

cultural or ethnic ties to Georgia, nor do I speak the language. The concept of insider/outsider touches upon a larger methodological debate beyond poststructuralism, namely the relationship between how the researcher views themselves and how the researched view them.¹⁶⁵ This debate raises vital questions, such as whether the researcher should be part of the same community as the researched, and how this relationship impacts their work. Some argue that being part of the same community enhances a researcher's capability to conduct the research,¹⁶⁶ which is challenged by poststructuralism as every relation is situationally constructed.¹⁶⁷ One might wonder why positionality matters for a thesis focused on foreign policy, instead of more ethnographic-focused research. Nonetheless, the impact is significant and worth discussing.

Reflecting on how I became interested in this subject – a core question of positionality¹⁶⁸ – reveals a personal confusion as to why any state would align itself closer to Russia instead of the EU/the West. My perception of Russia is influenced by my Dutch and Western upbringing. The crash of flight Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 (commonly referred to as MH17), caused by Russian-backed separatists in Donetsk, Ukraine in July 2014 has had profound and lasting impact on Dutch society, as many of the passengers were from the Netherlands. This event deeply shaped my view of Russia's actions and policies. Studying international relations in the West, I was also taught to value (liberal) democracy as an ideal state system. Therefore, I generally view closer relations with Russia, given its current political system, as potentially problematic and undesirable, and combining both a pro-Russian and pro-Western foreign policy I view as impossible. My time in Georgia further reinforced this perspective. I witnessed firsthand the influence of actions, at the very least inspired by and at worst instructed by Russia, during the protests against the "foreign agent law."¹⁶⁹ These protests took place throughout April and May 2024, after GD reintroduced a law which targets civil society and requires organizations receiving more than 20 percent foreign funding to register as "foreign agents."

¹⁶⁵ Lizzi Milligan, "Insider-outsider-inbetween? Researcher positioning, participative methods and cross-cultural educational research," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 46, no. 2 (2016): 239-240, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2014.928510>.

¹⁶⁶ Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009): 57-58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>.

¹⁶⁷ Jung-ah Choi, "Doing poststructural ethnography in the life history of dropouts in South Korea: methodological ruminations on subjectivity, positionality and reflexivity," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 19, no. 4 (2006): 439, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390600773163>.

¹⁶⁸ Choi, "Doing poststructural ethnography," 436.

¹⁶⁹ Gavin and Parulava, "Georgia's EU dream."

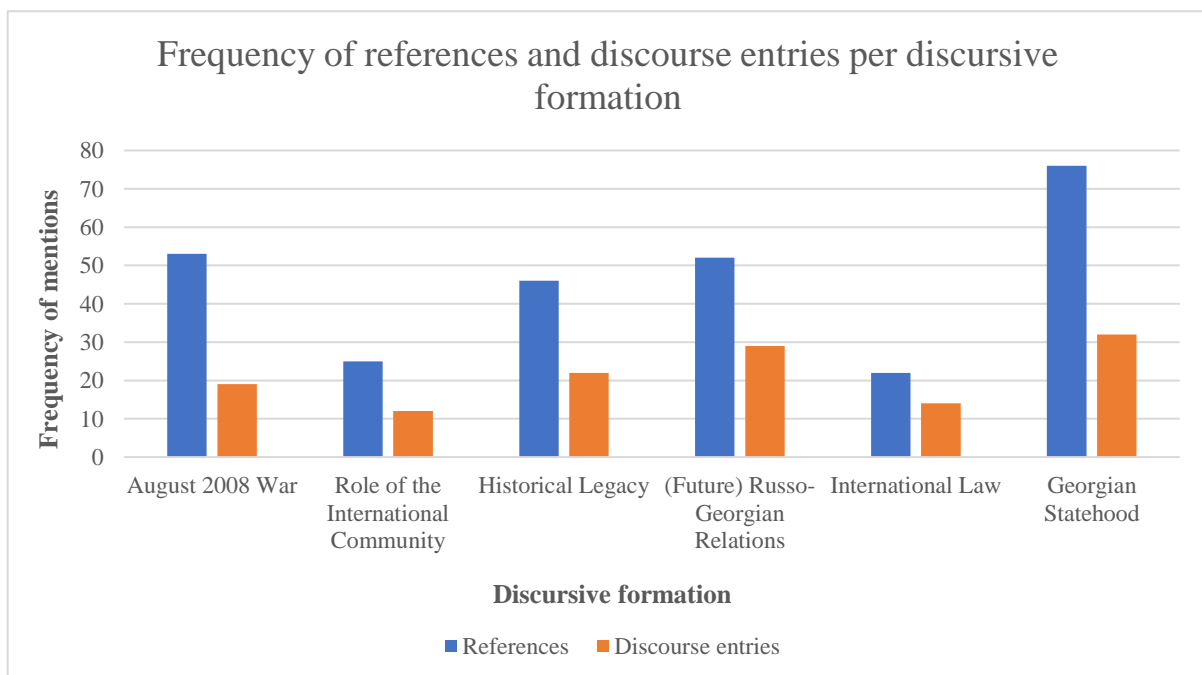
Throughout the analysis I sometimes wondered whether I, as a researcher, had to take historical accuracy and objectivity into account. Did it matter if the reading by, for example, the president or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was what actually took place? I needed time to let go of this idea of objectivity and the existence of an absolute truth, and adapt to a more poststructuralist understanding. Even using personal pronouns rather than using what is sometimes considered “more” academic language initially felt foreign. With the following analysis, I hope to shed light on the construction of the “Self” and the Russian “Other” within Georgia’s foreign policy.

4. Identity Construction between 2008 and 2021

The following chapter is divided into two sections. In sections 4.1 and 4.2, I examine the construction of the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” under UNM and GD respectively. Both sections follow a similar structure. First, I elaborate on the reoccurring discursive patterns I have identified, then I discuss the construction of the Russian “Other” and the Georgian “Self,” before illustrating the processes of linking and differentiation.

4.1 Identity Construction between 2008-2013

Graph 4.1 shows the frequency of references per discursive pattern and the number of data entries per pattern. For example, there were in total 76 references to the discursive pattern “Georgian Statehood,” across 32 separate discourse entries. The patterns in order of least to most occurrences are international law; role of the international community; historical legacy; (future) Russo-Georgian relations; August 2008 War; and Georgian statehood. **Table 4.1** presents an in-depth overview of the discursive formations, discursive strategies (specific concepts, ideas, or phrases), and the connected signs. The signs will be reflected in the figure in section 4.1.3. The discursive formations, in line with the processes of linking and differentiation, are reinforced and intertwined. In the following sections, they will be discussed in order of occurrence.



Graph 4.1: Frequency of references and discourse entries per discursive formation, 2008-2013.

Table 4.1: Discursive formations for the period 2008-2013.

Discursive formation	Discursive strategies	Reoccurring words/phrases	Sign
August 2008 War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of who started the war and who won the war. - Russia is the aggressor, while Georgia was dragged into the war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International inquiry/investigation/commission. - Prevention/ceasefire. - Russian failure to achieve war objectives. 	Aggressor versus victim.
Role of the International Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hierarchy of who matters in the international community. - Georgia is supported by NATO, EU, and the United States. - Russia is a pariah within the international community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - References to NATO, EU, United States. - Common values. - Humanitarian/military aid. - European/American friends. 	Pariah state versus part of the international community.
Historical Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia is an inheritor of historical legacy of aggression. - Georgia as a heroic actor, that stood up against empires. - Revival of Russian imperialism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russian imperialism/Russia's imperial space/post-Soviet space. - Resistance against Russian occupation. - Examples of other historical attacks of empires. 	Imperial power versus historically resisting state.
(Future) Russo-Georgian Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia is unwilling to engage in negotiations, unlike Georgia. - Distinction between people and government/people-to-people contact. - Potential of renewal of conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Territorial integrity/independence/sovereignty/national interests - Dialogue/negotiating table/relations/discussions. - Demands/conditions for renewed relations. 	Unwilling to negotiate versus open to solving conflict.
International Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia continuously violates international law. - Georgia embraces international law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violation of international law/norms/principles/obligations. - References to specific agreements, such as the 2008 ceasefire agreement. 	Violator of law versus follower of law.
Georgian Statehood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing democratization of Georgia is a threat to the Russian authoritarian regime. - Russian attempts to overthrow the Georgian government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overthrow the government/remove authorities. - Destroy Georgian statehood/independence//freedom - Commitment to democracy/fighting corruption/reforms. 	Autocratic state versus democratic state.

4.1.1 Construction of the Russian “Other”

International Law

In the discursive formation “international law,” UNM constructs Russia as a perpetual violator of international law. It makes references to specific agreements, such as the ceasefire agreement, and UN Resolutions, but also the larger framework of international law, all of which Russia disregards and failed to meet.¹⁷⁰ Through doing so, UNM not only delegitimizes Russia’s actions, but it also reaffirms UNM’s own compliance with international norms and legal frameworks. For instance, in his speech at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Summit in 2010, Saakashvili states,

“(...) Russia [has turned its back] on the obligations it undertook in Istanbul both with respect to Georgia and to other states. In fact, contrary to the spirit of Istanbul, Russia has drastically increased the sizes of its forces illegally stationed within our internationally recognized borders. Today more than 12000 heavily armed troops enforced the Russian occupation of 20 percent of Georgian territory, with tanks, with missiles, with heavy artillery, this is a blatant violation of the Helsinki principles, the Istanbul declaration, international law, and August 12, 2008 ceasefire brokered by the European Union.”¹⁷¹

By linking both Russia and Georgia to a legal ground – Russia as violator and Georgia as follower of international law – UNM simplifies the process of picking sides. Within this binary framework, the international community is subtly guided to view Georgia’s position as inherently just and lawful, while Russia’s actions are cast as fundamentally illegitimate. It becomes particularly clear in speeches on an international stage, such as at the UN General Assembly. This binary opposition between law-abiding and law-breaking states constructs a moral clarity that reduces the complexity of conflict into a straightforward choice between right and wrong. The reliance on legal discourse, and the specific mention of agreements, such as the Helsinki principles and the Istanbul declaration, perform a dual function. Furthermore, by emphasizing the *Western* nature of these legal frameworks, UNM particular calls on those partners to take a stance against Russia.

¹⁷⁰ Civil.ge, *Remarks of H.E. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia. 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly* (September 23, 2010), <https://old.civil.ge/files/files/Saakashvili-UN-speech-220910.pdf>; Civil.ge, “President Saakashvili’s Speech at the OSCE Summit in Astana,” *Civil.ge*, December 1, 2010, <https://civil.ge/archives/185756>.

¹⁷¹ Civil.ge, “OSCE Summit in Astana.”

Role of the International Community

The alignment with Western legal values links with the discursive formation, surrounding the role of the international community. Within UNM's discourse, Russia is constructed as a pariah state, one that is fundamentally lacking in legitimate international support. However, this construction is contingent on a specific definition of who constitutes the "international community," implicitly framing the West as primary arbiter of global norms and legitimacy. While UNM acknowledges that Russia is not entirely isolated, it discursively positions Western support as inherently superior, thereby diminishing the significance of any backing Russia might receive from other global powers. Further, the discourse suggests that any support for Russia is coerced rather than freely given, as illustrated by statements like, "Russia's diplomacy has been touring the world to bribe and pressure countries to legitimate its illegal occupation."¹⁷² Additionally, UNM highlights that even post-Soviet states, despite facing significant pressure from Russia, refuse to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia,¹⁷³ further reinforcing the narrative of Russia's illegitimacy in the eyes of the "true" international community.

Historical Legacy

UNM's discourse positions Russia not only as a current violator of international law, but also as the inheritor of a historical legacy of aggression. This is further emphasized by UNM's parallels between Russia and other historical aggressors, most notably the Nazi regime during World War II, which, like Russia, redrew borders through force.¹⁷⁴ Following the August 2008 War, Saakashvili articulated this by stating,

*"[d]uring [the] last days Georgia has passed through the hardest test and the entire Georgian society continues one of the most organized, one of the most heroic resistances against Russian occupation, which, for the first time in our history, was responded by appreciation by the entire world."*¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Council of Europe Directorate of Communications, Media Relations Division, *Address by Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia*, January 21, 2013, <https://old.civil.ge/files/files/2013/Saakashvili-PACE-Jan2013.pdf>.

¹⁷³ Civil.ge, *65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*.

¹⁷⁴ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili's statement*, August 26, 2008, <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements>; Civil.ge, "Saakashvili: Georgia will not Follow Russia's "Bait"," *Civil.ge*, January 22, 2010, <https://civil.ge/archives/119810>.

¹⁷⁵ Civil.ge. 'Saakashvili's Televised Address.' Civil.ge. August 18, 2008. <https://civil.ge/archives/117156>.

Here, UNM constructs a continuity of Russian hostility, linking contemporary events to a broader historical pattern of aggression. It frames Russia's actions not as isolated incidents but as part of an enduring imperialistic behavior that has persisted over time. For example, in May 2010, Saakashvili declared,

*"I want those itching to restore the Soviet empire to know that [the] era of the Soviet Union is over in Georgia. But the Soviet empire is of course now attacking. This empire – something we thought was a corpse – has started to revitalize, because it was not completely buried and it is now trying to seize through ugly forms those parts that used to be Soviet Union previously."*¹⁷⁶

Saakashvili's use of the imagery of a "corpse" being "revitalized" constructs Russia as a power unable to renounce its imperialistic ambitions. It portrayed Russia's actions as a revival of Soviet-era imperialism, yet also extends this imperial threat to other post-Soviet states, such as Ukraine and Moldova. Moreover, UNM draws on American anti-Soviet sentiments, subtly invoking Cold War-era fears of Soviet resurgence. By constructing Russia as a reawakening Soviet empire, it taps into American anxieties about Soviet/Russian influence, thereby making the United States more likely to empathize with and support Georgia. It serves to garner stronger international support. The discursive formation also draws on past experiences of resistance and survival, providing a sense of inevitable victory to both domestic and international audiences. By asserting that history is on Georgia's side, UNM positions the current conflict with Russia as part of a larger, ongoing narrative of triumph over imperial oppression.

(Future) Russo-Georgian Relations

When Saakashvili took office in early 2008, he stated his vision of cooperation with states "in the north, south, west, and east."¹⁷⁷ However, after the 2008 August War, UNM's discourse shifted to construct Russia as a hostile actor, fundamentally opposed to constructive dialogue and peaceful resolution. In this narrative, Russia is depicted as unwilling to engage in meaningful negotiations. At the 2010 OSCE Summit, Saakashvili reinforced this by stating,

¹⁷⁶ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili: Soviet Era is Over in Georgia," *Civil.ge*, May 6, 2010, <https://civil.ge/archives/120147>.

¹⁷⁷ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *Inaugural Speech of the President Mikheil Saakashvili*, January 20, 2008, <http://saakashviliarchive.info/print.aspx?t=1&i=2353>.

*“I came here animated by the same spirit, reiterating my call to the Russian leadership to engage in serious negotiations, to engage in dialogue rather than in polemics. Unfortunately, despite our numerous calls Russia has not agreed to any dialogue either bilaterally or within the framework of the OSCE.”*¹⁷⁸

UNM constructs Russia as a state resistant to negotiation and disinterested in genuine diplomatic efforts. For example, in 2011, when Georgia and Russia reached an agreement on the registration of trade at the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, allowing Russia to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), this moment of cooperation was later undermined by Russia’s actions.¹⁷⁹ Four years after the agreement, the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused Russia of purposely misinterpreting the agreement.¹⁸⁰ According to UNM, it served as an illustration of a broader pattern in Russian foreign policy: reaching agreements to serve immediate strategic interests, only to disregard or reinterpret them once those interests are secured. Through this discourse, UNM constructs Russia as an actor which cannot be trusted, characterized by its approach to international agreements and unwillingness to adhere to the principles of good faith negotiation.

August 2008 War

The August 2008 holds a central position in Georgia’s foreign policy discourse, with UNM constructing Russia’s identity through a dual narrative. Firstly, Russia is consistently portrayed as the aggressor, responsible for initiating the conflict. In 2008, Georgian Foreign Minister Vashadze asserted that Russia had essentially admitted its guilt, making it clear who “is an aggressor, who intruded on the Georgian territory, who bombed mercilessly our towns, who killed civilians – both Georgians and Ossetians and who is now continuing occupation [of the Georgian territories].”¹⁸¹ This narrative of Russian aggression is a reoccurring theme in multiple speeches,¹⁸² reinforcing the narrative of Russia as the primary instigator and violator.

¹⁷⁸ Civil.ge, “OSCE Summit in Astana.”

¹⁷⁹ Civil.ge, “Saakashvili: WTO Deal with Russia “Diplomatic Victory”,” *Civil.ge*, November 3, 2011, <https://civil.ge/archives/186099>.

¹⁸⁰ Civil.ge, “Georgian MFA Accuses Russia of Misinterpreting 2011 WTO Deal,” *Civil.ge*, March 13, 2015, <https://civil.ge/archives/124457>.

¹⁸¹ Civil.ge, “Georgia Says Russia Makes “Guilty Plea” on War,” *Civil.ge*, December 25, 2008, <https://civil.ge/archives/118137>.

¹⁸² Civil.ge, *65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*; *Civil.ge*, “Russia’s “Bait”.”

Secondly, UNM emphasizes Russia's failure to achieve its war objectives, constructing Russia not just as an aggressor but as a defeated a frustrated power that failed to "conquer entire Georgia."¹⁸³ This portrayal as the losing party serves to highlight the potential for renewed conflict, suggesting that Russia, unable to accept its failure, remains a persistent and volatile threat. This creates the need for further (financial) support from Western partners. UNM draws parallels with other Russian military actions, particularly the Chechen Wars,¹⁸⁴ to further construct this narrative. During the First Chechen War, Russia encountered significant resistance and was ultimately forced to withdraw, only to renew its military actions in 1999.¹⁸⁵ By invoking the memory of Chechnya, UNM situates Russia again within this broader pattern of imperial aggression, posing a threat not only to Georgia but also to the region.

Georgian Statehood

Lastly, UNM constructs the existence of a democratic Georgia as a fundamental threat to Russia.¹⁸⁶ This discursive formation is encapsulated in the following statement,

*"[t]he enemy [referring to Russia] was not able to fulfill their aims - to wipe out Georgian government and change the political course of Georgia. (...). The enemy not only wasn't able to kneel down Georgia - but Georgia became the symbol of success for all the other post-soviet countries. Georgia is getting out from Russian imperialistic influence and this is [a] irreversible process."*¹⁸⁷

Here, Russia is constructed as an autocratic state that perceives the emergence of a democratic Georgia as a direct challenge to its influence and authority. The discourse frames Russia's autocratic nature as inherently threatened by Georgia's democratization, which UNM portrays as a symbol of success and inspiration for other post-Soviet states. This narrative positions

¹⁸³ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili Speaks of Putin's New Plan to Subdue Georgia," *Civil.ge*, August 7, 2012., <https://civil.ge/archives/186446>.

¹⁸⁴ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *Remarks by H.E. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia. 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, September 24, 2009, https://www.un.org/en/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/GE_en.pdf.

¹⁸⁵ Emil Pain, "From the First Chechen War Towards the Second," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2001): 7, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24590171>.

¹⁸⁶ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *The President of Georgia delivered a speech at the parade dedicated to the Police Day*, May 6, 2012, <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7520&i=1>.

¹⁸⁷ The President of Georgia, *The President of Georgia visited Mukhatgverdi Brotherhood Cemetery together with the Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia*, August 4, 2010, <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=5352&i=1>.

Georgia's democratic progress as a threat to "a well-rooted way of life in the entire post-Soviet space,"¹⁸⁸ which UNM attributes to the legacy of Russian imperialism. Furthermore, UNM highlights the extreme measures President Putin is willing to take, such as "political violence" and "political murder"¹⁸⁹ to protect this way of life.

4.1.2 Construction of the Georgian "Self"

The Georgian "Self" is differentiated from the Russian "Other." I will now discuss the discursive formations in the same order, but now highlighting how this constructs the Georgian "Self."

International Law

In the discursive formation "international law," UNM constructs Georgia as a nation that adheres to international legal norms, thereby positioning itself as inherently good and morally superior in contrast to Russia's violations. This is crucial in constructing an image of Georgia as a victim, wronged by Russia's aggression. Statements such as, "Georgia fulfilled all international obligations, the police that was armed lightly, defended the gorges and the population living there,"¹⁹⁰ emphasize this moral standing. This links with the discursive formation about international support, as Western powers value adherence to international law. By highlighting its adherence to international law, UNM also asserts Georgia's legitimacy and sovereignty, reinforcing claims to territorial integrity which is relevant in the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Moreover, this focus on lawfulness signals UNM's aspirations for modernization and European integration, aligning itself with Western values. It reflects the desire to be recognized as a European state, committed to the principles of human rights and international law.

Role of the International Community

The discourse surrounding the international community's support links well to the paragraph above. By emphasizing the support from the United States, NATO, and the EU,

¹⁸⁸ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili: 'Georgia is Russia's Major Ideological Competitor'," *Civil.ge*, September 4, 2010, <https://civil.ge/archives/185710>.

¹⁸⁹ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili Says Russia May Resort to "Political Terror" in Georgia," *Civil.ge*, December 27, 2010, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=22996?id=22996>.

¹⁹⁰ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili's speech delivered at the ceremony dedicated to Russia-Georgian war anniversary*, August 7, 2009, <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2247&i=1>.

UNM positions Georgia as part of a democratic alliance. This support is contrasted with Russia's relative isolation, thereby enhancing Georgia's image as a nation embraced by the international community for its commitment to democratic principles and international law. Immediately after the war, Saakashvili proclaimed,

“[b]ut now Georgia has gained a huge international support and solidarity from all over the world and support towards our territorial integrity and we would have failed to gain such a huge support, even if we tried for 200 years, if not for the mistakes made by Russia.”¹⁹¹

This reveals a paradoxical sentiment: a subtle sense of gratitude towards Russia for its invasion. This irony is encapsulated in the assertion that, without the August 2008 War, Georgia would have struggled for centuries to achieve the level of international support and solidarity it now received. There is thus a complex narrative where Russia, typically viewed as the antagonist, played a crucial role in solidifying Georgia's international position. Moreover, UNM emphasizes the West's military and diplomatic support.¹⁹² Over time, the need for direct military support has diminished, and the narrative has shifted towards seeking international assistance in disseminating the “truth” about the August 2008 War.¹⁹³ However, the relationship with the international community is portrayed as complex and sometimes flawed. UNM critiques the international community for disregarding Georgia's warning about the imminent Russian attack. In his 2013 anniversary speech of the August War, Saakashvili recounts how then U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice dismissed the possibility of war,

“Condoleezza Rice did not believe it [war] was coming. When now they say that they were warning us, it is in fact an attempt – everyone wants to be remembered in a good light; records exist; we were warning them that [war] would start and they were telling us: ‘there is no chance.’ Her [referring to Rice] favorite phrase was “I know the Russians, they will not do it.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ The President of Georgia, *Statement*, August 26, 2008.

¹⁹² The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *President of Georgia's Address to European Parliament Members*, November 23, 2010,

<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=5858&i=1>.

¹⁹³ Civil.ge, “Russia's “Bait”.”

¹⁹⁴ Civil.ge, “Saakashvili Speaks of August War,” *Civil.ge*, August 8, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/123075>.

This serves to highlight Georgia's foresight and the international community's failure to act promptly, adding a layer of difficulty to the otherwise supportive relationship.

Historical Legacy

The next discursive formation emphasizes the role of historical legacy in constructing the Georgian "Self." By portraying Russia as a historic imperial power, UNM positions Georgia as a heroic actor that has consistently stood against empires. This narrative is evident in Saakashvili's 2010 speech, where he states,

*"[b]ut despite that [empires attacked and occupied Georgia], our nation has not been broken, it has not surrendered its shield and sword ... has not given up dreaming about independence and freedom and defeated enemy at every occasion; defeated with the fact that empires died out and they found place only on the pages of history [textbooks], while Georgia still exists."*¹⁹⁵

UNM constructs a narrative of resilience and a perpetual struggle for independence, portraying Georgia as an invincible nation. This historical discourse is further reinforced by references to significant events. Particularly important is the invasion of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921 and the subsequent loss of independence. It serves as a warning of what could happen if Georgia fails to resist contemporary Russian aggression.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, it also highlights UNM's own heroic actions. The statement, "the government has not run away as it happened in 1921,"¹⁹⁷ draws a stark contrast between past failures and current resilience reinforcing the idea of a government steadfast in its defense of national sovereignty. Overall, this discursive formation creates an image of an eternal Georgia, a nation that has always existed and will continue to exist despite Russia's attempts to crush its statehood. This construction of an unbroken historical past strengthens national identity by linking past struggles to present resilience. It also connects to the broader discursive formation about the attack on Georgian statehood, portraying the nation's current struggles as part of a historical continuity of resistance against imperial domination.

¹⁹⁵ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili Addresses Nation on Independence Day," *Civil.ge*, May 26, 2010, <https://civil.ge/archives/120214>.

¹⁹⁶ Civil.ge, "Independence Day."

¹⁹⁷ Civil.ge, "Televised Address."

(Future) Russo-Georgian Relations

As mentioned above, UNM portrays Russia as a dishonest and untrustworthy actor, which limits or even completely dismisses the possibility of genuine Russo-Georgian relations. Conversely, UNM constructs Georgia as open to dialogue and reconciliation, seeking to end the alienation between the two states. In 2010, Saakashvili, when addressing the European Parliament vowed,

*“[w]e rely on the power of words, not of bombs. On November 23rd, one week ago I made the solemn pledge in front of the European Parliament, that Georgia would never use force to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty; that it will only resort to peaceful means in its quest for the de-occupation and the reunification of its territory. (...).”*¹⁹⁸

This commitment marks an important moment and as section 5.3 will show, GD also often refers to it. UNM further reinforced their commitment to peaceful resolution by emphasizing its readiness to work together with the Russian government.¹⁹⁹ This taps into the historical legacy of Russo-Georgian relations, positioning Georgia as a nation willing to improve bilateral ties indefinitely based on respect for its territorial integrity and sovereignty. In his 2010 State of the Nation address, Saakashvili remarked on the possibility of reestablishing flights between Tbilisi and Moscow:

*“I have no doubt that one day we will have air traffic with Moscow and normal cooperative relations. Yes, it won't be a flight for 37 rubles [like it was in Soviet times], but believe me it's much better to pay market price to fly to Moscow and go there as free Europeans, than to pay a low price and have the status of provincial vassal.”*²⁰⁰

Referring to Georgians as “free Europeans” is interesting as it touches upon the debate mentioned in the literature, namely the belonging of Georgia to Europe. It also reflects a broader narrative of liberation and alignment with European ideals, contrasting the freedom and dignity associated with being part of Europe with the subjugation and inferiority tied to the

¹⁹⁸ Mikheil Saakashvili, *European Parliament*.

¹⁹⁹ Civil.ge, “Televised Address.”

²⁰⁰ Civil Georgia, “Saakashvili’s State of Nation Address,” *Civil.ge*, February 26, 2010, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=22029?id=22029>.

Soviet past. Additionally, UNM makes a crucial distinction between the Russian government and the Russian people, which serves to highlight Georgia's nuanced approach to Russia. Saakashvili emphasizes, "Georgia is not an enemy of the Russian people."²⁰¹ This differentiation is significant because it sharply contrasts with the foreign policy construction of Russia, which according to UNM does not distinguish between the Georgian government and the Georgian people.²⁰² For example, when Russian President Putin expressed his "genuinely brotherly love"²⁰³ towards Georgians, Saakashvili responded by highlighting the suffering of Georgians who have lost relatives at the hands of Russian soldiers. This response serves to highlight UNM's perspective that, while there is no animosity towards the Russian people, the actions of the Russian government are contradictory to the notion of brotherhood.

August 2008 War

Whereas Russia is constructed as the aggressor and the losing party in the August 2008 War, UNM emphasizes Georgia's unwillingness and unpreparedness for military conflict. Saakashvili articulates that Georgia was compelled to react to Russian actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In a televised address during the war, he declared, "[b]ut I want to say with full responsibility that we want to immediately end this military confrontation, we want to end the war, which we have not launched, we want to stop Russia's intervention. (...)"²⁰⁴ This not only absolves Georgia of initiating the conflict but also highlights the desire for peace. Furthermore, Saakashvili links this discursive formation with the broader fight for Georgian statehood, stating, "[w]e were trying to avoid this, but we (...) still found ourselves in this situation, because it concerns not only Tskhinvali region, it concerns to our future, our children and grandchildren."²⁰⁵ This connection frames the war as an existential struggle for the future of the nation.

²⁰¹ Civil.ge, "Georgia will Bury Russian Imperialism' – Saakashvili," *Civil.ge*, September 1, 2008, <https://civil.ge/archives/117332>.

²⁰² Civil.ge, Saakashvili: "We Aren't Afraid of Russia's Threats"," *Civil.ge*, January 20, 2012, <https://civil.ge/archives/186180>.

²⁰³ Civil.ge, "Georgian MFA on "Putin's Strange Way of Expressing Love" Towards Georgians," *Civil.ge*, February 23, 2012, <https://civil.ge/archives/186229>.

²⁰⁴ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili Addresses Nation," *Civil.ge*, August 11, 2008, <https://civil.ge/archives/117030>.

²⁰⁵ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the Georgian population once again*, August 10, 2008, <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2320&i=1>.

The Georgian government also offered extensive concession to Russia to avoid conflict, including declining NATO integration and scaling down cooperation with the United States, demonstrating Georgia's efforts to appease Russia.²⁰⁶ In response to accusations that Georgia instigated the war or planned military actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, UNM highlighted Georgia's lack of readiness for conflict. Saakashvili pointed out the imperfect timing of the war: Georgia's best troops were deployed in Iraq; air defense systems purchased from Israel were not set to arrive until late 2008; and a military field hospital was "on its way from Germany, which was then taken back by the Germans."²⁰⁷ Overall, UNM paints Georgia as the victim of Russian aggression, unwilling, and unprepared for war. This serves to legitimize Georgia's actions during the war and garner international support. However, UNM alternates between victimization and heroism, adding depth to its narrative. While presenting Georgia as a victim highlights the unjust nature of Russia's aggression, the portrayal as a heroic nation emphasizes its resilience and determination. Georgia is not just a passive victim, but an active defender of its sovereignty and democratic values. This dual narrative serves a dual purpose: it invokes sympathy and support by showcasing its suffering, while also inspiring admiration and solidarity through its resistance.

Georgian Statehood

The most prevalent discursive formation in UNM's rhetoric is the portrayal of the Russian attack as an existential threat to the Georgian state. Russia's aggression is repeatedly linked to the survival of the Georgian nation and its democratizing efforts. Immediately during the war, he stated,

*"[t]hat intervention force, which entered Georgia, is very big very serious, and of course, it contains a fatal threat to Georgian statehood. Today the freedom and future of each of us is under huge threat. An attempt of repeated occupation and enslavement of Georgia, depriving our country of its independence is underway. (...)"*²⁰⁸

This articulation constructs the conflict as not merely a military struggle but a fight for the very existence of Georgia. Surrender is portrayed not merely as a military defeat but as the total loss

²⁰⁶ Mikheil Saakashvili, *Georgian population once again*.

²⁰⁷ Mikheil Saakashvili, *Georgian population once again*.

²⁰⁸ Civil.ge, "Saakashvili Addresses Nation."

of independence and future. This narrative highlights the high stakes involved and justifies the continued resistance against Russian aggression. However, alongside this discourse of existential threat, there is a parallel narrative of resilience and optimism. In his 2010 New Year address, Saakashvili, for example, states,

*“[i]n one hand we should be holding hoe, computer, book and other tools, which are requires for building of 21st and 22nd century modern country... But, on the other hand, in order to protect the country’s future and to protect what we are building, we should always be ready for struggle and for protection of the country.”*²⁰⁹

In this quote, UNM employs a discursive strategy that emphasizes Georgia’s future as a democratic state. This positions Georgia firmly on a path toward democracy, again in stark contrast to Russia’s autocratic tendencies. Saakashvili encapsulates this sentiment with the phrase, “Georgia is building a democracy at gunpoint,”²¹⁰ highlighting the precarious yet determined nature of Georgia’s democratic journey. These efforts garner worldwide attention and solidarity, with UNM arguing that the fate of other post-Soviet states, such as Ukraine, is intertwined to Georgia’s own survival.²¹¹

4.1.3 Linking and Differentiation of Russia and Georgia under UNM

The previous two sections have identified the reoccurring discursive formations within the construction of the Russian “Other” and the Georgian “Self” under UNM. These formations create meaning for the identity of Russia and Georgia through the processes of linking and differentiation. In **Figure 4.1** this dynamic is visually represented, illustrating the juxtaposition of the sign. The placement of the sign is random and as long as the correct juxtaposed signs are opposing each other, they can be placed in any of the boxes. Each sign is linked to another, creating a network of meanings that differentiate the Georgian “Self” from the Russian “Other,” and vice versa.

²⁰⁹ Georgiamediacentre, “Mikheil Saakashvili new year address (subtitled),” YouTube, 5:22, January 5, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPFpmDkDkgQ>.

²¹⁰ Mikheil Saakashvili, *European Parliament*.

²¹¹ The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, *The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili addressed Georgian population in front of the Parliament together with the European leaders*. August 12, 2008, <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2316&i=1>.

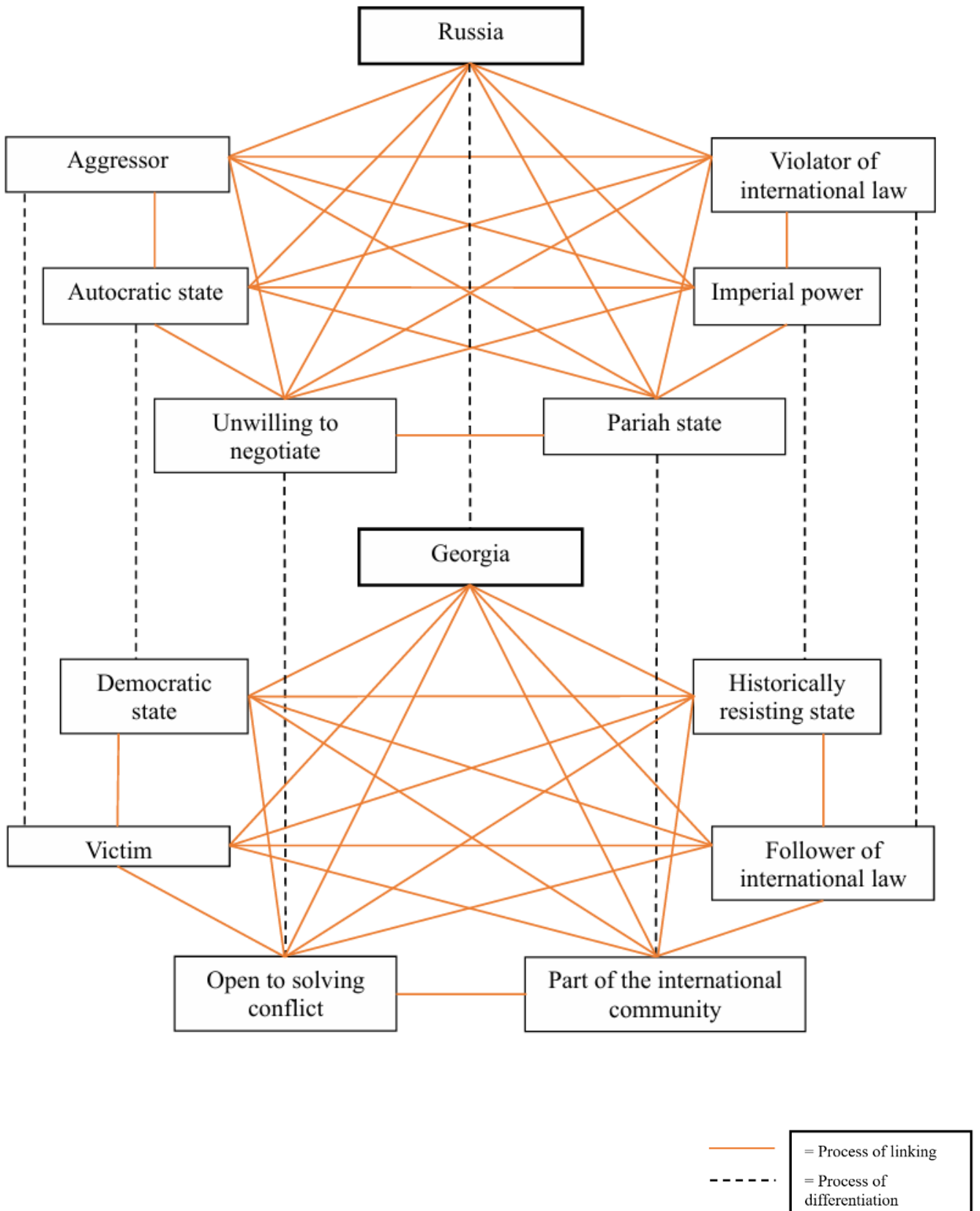
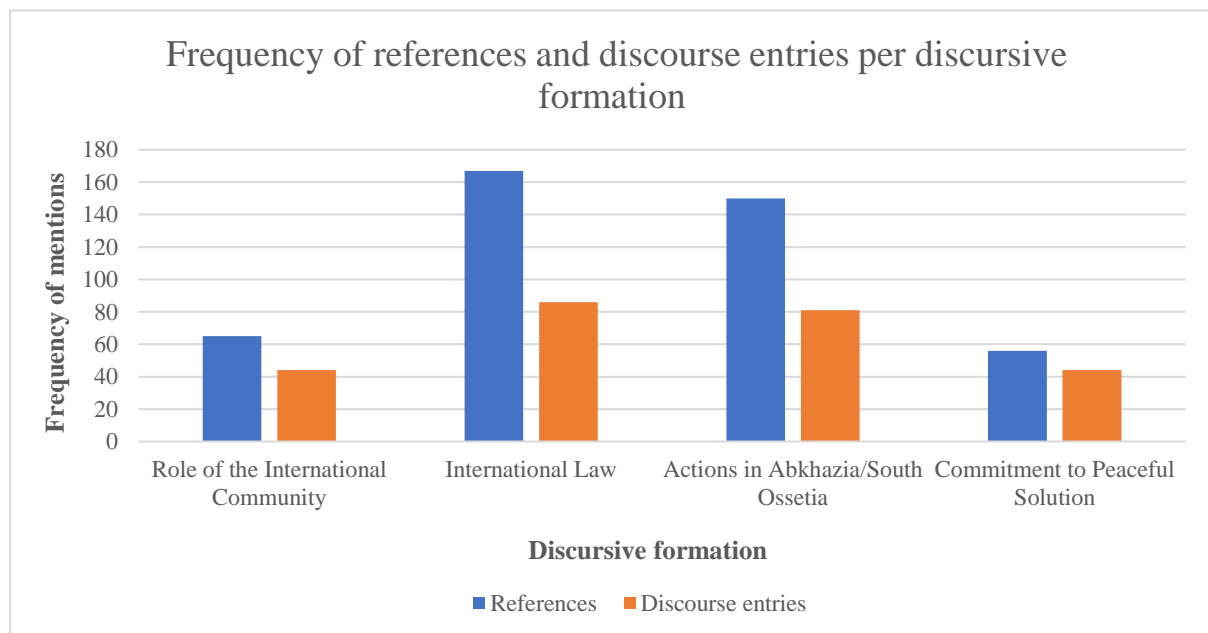


Figure 4.1: The linking and differentiation of Russia and Georgia under UNM, 2008-2013.

4.2 Identity Construction between 2012-2021

In analyzing the identity construction of Russia by GD, it is crucial to take into consideration two significant developments post-2013: the intensification of Russia's borderization and the tangible progress Georgia achieved in European integration. These developments were already discussed in the historical section and are also present in the discursive formations employed by GD.

Graph 4.2 shows the frequency of references per discursive pattern and the number of data entries per pattern. For example, there were in total 167 references to the discursive pattern "law," across 86 separate discourse entries. The patterns in order of least to most occurrences are the role of the international community; commitment to peaceful solution; actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and international law. **Table 4.2** presents an in-depth overview of the discursive formations, discursive strategies (specific concepts, ideas, or phrases), and the connected signs. The signs will be reflected in the figure in section 4.2.3. The discursive formations, in line with the processes of linking and differentiation, are reinforced and intertwined. In the following sections, they will be discussed in order of occurrence.



Graph 4.2: Frequency of references and discourse entries per discursive formation, 2012-2021.

Table 4.2: Discursive formations for the period 2012-2021.

Discursive formation	Discursive strategies	Key words/phrases	Sign
Actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russian disregard for humanitarian crisis - Infringement of rights of <i>all</i> citizens. - Inclusion of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in democratic Georgia. - Georgia wants to help Abkhazia and South Ossetia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy “<i>A Step to a Better Future.</i>” - References to Georgians who were detained and/or died at the ABL at the hands of the Russian occupation forces. - “Abkhazian and Ossetian brothers.” 	Harmful impact on Abkhazia and South Ossetia (ASO) versus beneficial impact on Abkhazia and South Ossetia (ASO).
Role of the International Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support by the EU, NATO, and the United States for Georgia. - International condemnation of Russia’s actions. - Russian (forced) attempts to increase recognition for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy of non-recognition of occupied territories. - Failures to stand up against Russia, for example after the Annexation of Crimea. - Western orientation/integration. 	Pariah state versus part of the international community.
International Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued adherence to international law by Georgia. - Russia’s unwillingness to cooperate in the Geneva discussions. - Intensification of fortifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russian political or military agreements with occupied regions. - References to illegal Russian actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. - Unilateral 2010 pledge non-use of force. 	Violator of law versus follower of law.
Commitment to a Peaceful Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work together on trade relations. - Peaceful resolution of the conflict. - De-escalate existing long-standing tensions with Russia. - Supported by the international community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good neighborly relations. - No use of force. - Pragmatic policy/normalization. - Combination of Russia and European integration. - Direct dialogue (government to government). 	Common willingness to cooperate.

4.2.1 Construction of the Russian “Other”

International Law

During GD’s time in office, the intensification of Russia’s borderization process marks a significant shift in the dynamics of Russo-Georgian relations, serving as a powerful discursive strategy to construct Russia as a violator of international law. This process is not merely a series of physical encroachments but a deliberate act that underscores Russia’s blatant disregard for legal norms, such as territorial integrity, and previous agreements, like the 2008 ceasefire agreement, which mandates the withdrawal of all Russian troops from Georgian territory.²¹² The ongoing borderization thus becomes a tangible symbol of Russia’s territorial violations and its broader pattern of lawlessness. Foreign Minister Panjikidze’s statement at the OSCE Ministerial Council encapsulates this construction, “(...) against the background of the restored economic and cultural relations, Russia has further intensified its illegal activities.”²¹³ The illegal actions attributed to Russia, such as the installation of wire fences; denial of education in native language; and restricting freedom of movement,²¹⁴ all serve to construct a narrative of persistent disregard for international law.

GD’s discourse also emphasizes the impact of these activities on the lives of people near the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL), portraying Russia’s actions not only as violations but as symbolic acts of division and occupation. In a 2017 speech, Prime Minister Kvirikashvili highlights the personal impact, stating, “[f]amilies have even suffered razor wires cutting through their dwellings or farmyards.”²¹⁵ Through this description, GD constructs a vivid image of the human cost of Russia’s actions, reinforcing the narrative of Russia as a violator of human rights and international law. By highlighting the suffering of ordinary people, GD humanizes the conflict, making the abstract violations of international law more tangible and relatable both to domestic and international audiences. This emotional appeal helps to strengthen Georgia’s position by garnering greater sympathy and support from the international community.

²¹² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 9th anniversary of the August 2008 War*, August 7th, 2017, <https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/774573-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis>.

²¹³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Statement by H.E. Ms. Maia Panjikidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs*, December 6, 2013, <https://www.osce.org/mc/109282>.

²¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 8th Anniversary of the August 2008 War*, August 7, 2016, <https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/820548-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis>.

²¹⁵ Civil.ge, “Prime Minister Kvirikashvili’s UN Speech,” *Civil.ge*, September 22, 2017, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=30461>.

Actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

GD's construction of the Russian "Other" as a violator of international law is deeply intertwined to the active harm inflicted by Russia on the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This discursive formation includes the impact on Georgians, Abkhazians, and Ossetians alike, underscoring Russia's accountability for human rights violations in the occupied territories.²¹⁶ GD reinforces this position by referencing authoritative sources, such as the Resolution of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights,²¹⁷ which holds Russia responsible for these abuses. In her UN speech, President Zourabichvili vividly illustrates this by detailing the pervasive human rights abuses and restrictions faced by citizens in the occupied territories, "I have to speak out for our citizens living in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, where continuous are the violations of human rights, restrictions to freedom of movement, of access to health and education services. (...)"²¹⁸ This does not only highlight the immediate impact on basic freedoms but also emphasizes the broader cultural and demographic implications, particularly the threat to the Abkhaz language and identity. Zourabichvili poignantly warns that "the world without Abkhazian language, identity and traditions will be a much poorer place,"²¹⁹ employing a strategy that frames the survival of these cultural identities as a matter for global concern. Russia thus also presents a threat to the cultural heritage and diversity of the country.

One of the most compelling examples of Russia's disregard for international law is the detention and, in some cases, killings of Georgians by occupational forces along the ABL. A 2016 statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, marking the anniversary of the 2008 August War, highlights the frequent detentions of Georgians for alleged "violation of [Abkhaz/South Ossetian] state borders."²²⁰ Continued references to the detention and subsequent hospitalization of Alexandre Shevardashvili, along with other tragic cases such as the deaths of

²¹⁶ Civil.ge, "Prime Minister Gakharia Stresses Russia Threat, EU Priorities During Annual Parliamentary Address," *Civil.ge*, June 26, 2020, <https://civil.ge/archives/357304>; Agenda.ge, "PM in parliament: Russia is a key security challenge for Georgia, our final goal is NATO membership," *Agenda.ge*, June 26, 2020, <https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2020/2032#gsc.tab=0>.

²¹⁷ Government of Georgia, *Government of Georgia: Program for 2021-2024. Towards Building a European State*, February 2021, https://www.gov.ge/files/41_79014_435561_govprogram.PDF.

²¹⁸ Civil.ge, "President Zurabishvili's UNGA Speech," *Civil.ge*, September 25, 2019, <https://civil.ge/archives/321557>.

²¹⁹ Civil.ge, "President Zurabishvili's UNGA Speech."

²²⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *8th Anniversary of the August 2008 War*.

Archil Tatumashvili, Giga Otkhozoria, and Davit Basharuli,²²¹ exemplify the tangible harm caused by Russian actions. Overall, GD emphasizes the lived experiences and human costs of occupation, adding an emotional and human layer that amplifies Georgia's calls for international attention and intervention.

Role of the International Community

GD strategically links the discursive formations of international law, the Russian actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the role of the international community to construct Russia as an isolated violator of international norms, unsupported by the global community. This construction is encapsulated in the statement,

“Russia is absolutely alone in this pursuit: we, the citizens of Georgia, as well as the entire international community, do not recognize any borders, any barbed wires, any ditches, any people with Kalashnikov rifles on the Georgian soil, who create problems to free movement of Georgian citizens.”²²²

Here, the reference to the “entire international community” is again a deliberate discursive strategy that goes beyond the literal interpretation. There is an implicit understanding that GD does not actually refer to every nation of the global community, but specifically to those that hold the most influence and power in the eyes of GD – the West. Thus, by arguing that Russia is isolated, GD is actually emphasizing that it is not supported by those that matter. Foreign Minister Zalkaliani further expands this narrative by pointing out Russia's futile attempts to legitimize the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the international state:

“Russia is doing its best to assure the international community that Georgia's two occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali are independent states. They are trying to assure the world that the situation in Georgia is different from that one in Ukraine and

²²¹ Civil.ge, “Georgian FM Speaks on Abkhazia, S. Ossetia at CoE Ministerial,” *Civil.ge*, May 19, 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/242172>; United Nations, “Georgia – Prime Minister Addresses General Debate, 75th Session,” YouTube, 14:03. September 25, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOwEQQfNzrg>.

²²² Civil.ge, “At August War Commemoration Georgian Leaders Speak of Peaceful Reintegration, Reunification,” *Civil.ge*, August 8, 2017, <https://civil.ge/archives/218123>.

that Georgia must adapt to reality and [recognize] Abkhazia and Tskhinvali as independent countries.”²²³

However, GD also critically acknowledges moments of international failure, particularly following the annexation of Crimea in 2014. President Margvelashvili’s assertion that “the failure of the international community to stand up to Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 let Moscow think it can get away with seizing Crimea”²²⁴ and Prime Minister Bakhtadze’s remark that “[t]he way things unfolded further [after the 2008 August War], however, showed that the then world was unprepared to provide an adequate assessment and response to this aggression [by Russia]”²²⁵ reflect a critical stance towards the global response. These criticisms highlight that while the international community may rhetorically support Georgia, its failure to act decisively in 2008 implicitly emboldened Russia to pursue further aggression. It further reinforces the narrative of Russia as a persistent aggressor, capable of threatening not only Georgia but other states in the post-Soviet space as well.

4.2.2 Construction of the Georgian “Self”

International Law

In contrast to Russia’s identity construction as violator of international law, GD discursively links Georgia to a steadfast adherence to international norms. It does so through highlighting its active participation in the Geneva International Discussions²²⁶ and its overarching dedication to a “peaceful resolution of the Georgian-Russian conflict.”²²⁷ The repeated reliance on the earlier mentioned 2010 commitment to the non-use of force²²⁸ serves as a key discursive strategy that reinforces Georgia’s identity as a peace-seeking nation rooted

²²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 51st Round of the Geneva International Discussions*, December 11, 2020, <https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/789188-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s>.

²²⁴ Civil.ge, “PM Garibashvili Comments on Ukraine,” *Civil.ge*, March 13, 2014, <https://civil.ge/archives/123570>.

²²⁵ Government of Georgia, *Speech by Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze at the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly*, September 27, 2018, https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=497&info_id=68059.

²²⁶ Government of Georgia, *Government Programme (Program): “For Strong, Democratic and Unified Georgia”*, May 2015, https://www.gov.ge/files/50258_50258_105367_15.07.17-May7,2015-ForStrong,Democratic,andUnifiedGeorgia-GovernmentofGeorgiaProgram.pdf; Civil.ge, “Foreign Minister-Designate Speaks of Priorities,” *Civil.ge*, December 28, 2015, <https://civil.ge/archives/125207>.

²²⁷ Civil.ge, “PM Kvirikashvili: Russian Response ‘Leaves Room for Dialogue’,” *Civil.ge*, March 14, 2018, <https://civil.ge/archives/219961>.

²²⁸ Government of Georgia, *Address of the Prime Minister of Georgia H.E. Bidzina Ivanishvili to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, accessed through the Wayback Machine, https://www.government.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=270&info_id=36672.

in the principles of international law. By invoking this 2010 commitment, GD constructs a stark moral dichotomy between Georgia and Russia. It is a deliberate move to assert Georgia's moral high ground and to legitimize its demands on the international stage. GD does not only portray Georgia as a state that follows the rules; rather, it is positioned as embodying the very principles that uphold international order. The construction of a peace-seeking state also aims to bolster Georgia's position in the international community.

Actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

GD constructs the Georgian "Self" as one committed to sharing its developmental progress with citizens in the occupied regions and acting in their best interests.²²⁹ Central is the state's dedication to inclusivity and the welfare of all its people. At almost all special occasions, for example, speeches at the UN General Assembly or during New Year addresses, GD speakers directly address Abkhazians and Ossetians.²³⁰ This rhetorical strategy reinforces the notion of a unified nation, despite the ongoing occupation. For instance, in his inaugural speech, President Margvelashvili declares,

*"[o]ur offer to our compatriots living in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region [referring to South Ossetia] is as follows: Let us build a successful democratic country together, a country that will guarantee the welfare of all citizens, preservation of their ethnic and cultural identity, and respect for their political rights."*²³¹

This positions Georgia as an inclusive actor, eager to integrate the occupied regions (regardless of the administrative form) into its democratic and developed state. Crucially, this also reaches the people directly, circumventing the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. By addressing the citizens of these regions personally and offering them a state in Georgia's progress and development, GD avoids legitimizing the separatist regimes.

²²⁹ Government of Georgia, *Government Program 2019-2020*, September 2019, https://www.gov.ge/files/41_73525_555908_GovernmentProgram2019-2020.pdf.

²³⁰ See for example: Civil.ge, "PM's New Year Address," *Civil.ge*, January 1, 2019, <https://civil.ge/archives/272901>; Agenda.ge, "PM Gakharia's New Year Address: "2021 will be the year of a better future, success recovery, development of Georgia"," *Agenda.ge*, January 1, 2021, <https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2021/1#gsc.tab=0>; ; United Nations, Statement by H.E. Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia. General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, September 24, 2021, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/76/ge_en.pdf.

²³¹ Civil.ge, "President Margvelashvili's Inauguration Speech," *Civil.ge*, November 17, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/186852>.

GD also strategically acknowledges past mistakes,²³² particularly in relation to the 2008 August War. By admitting that the state, under UNM, made errors, GD seeks to construct a forward-looking narrative that emphasizes reconciliation and future cooperation.²³³ This acknowledgement functions as a discursive step, allowing GD to present itself as a mature and responsible actor, committed to learning from the past and fostering a unified future. A key element of this inclusive identity is encapsulated in the policy “*A Step to a Better Future*.” This initiative aims “to provide the populations in the occupied territories with access to healthcare and education services, to create for them opportunities for commercial activities as a means for feeding their families and ensuring their physical survival.”²³⁴ By promoting this initiative, GD discursively links Georgia’s developmental progress with tangible benefits for the people in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, contrasting sharply with Russia’s harmful practices. Overall, GD’s discourse constructs an identity for Georgia that is progressive, inclusive, and forward-looking.

Role of the International Community

GD links Georgia’s identity to the support it receives from the international community, which is portrayed as the primary leverage against Russia’s illegal actions.²³⁵ It emphasizes that Georgia’s legitimacy is deeply intertwined with the support of powerful Western allies, particularly in the wake of Russia’s 2014 cooperation agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.²³⁶ Prime Minister Bakhtadze articulates this linkage, stating, “[t]he support of our friendly nations will warrant that with peace and development we will overcome the Russian occupation and Georgia will be united, strong, and successful country.”²³⁷ It suggests that the country’s future as a united, sovereign, and prosperous state is directly tied to the backing of the international community.

²³² Civil.ge, “PM Slams Saakashvili for His Russian Policies,” *Civil.ge*, September 30, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/123193>.

²³³ Civil.ge, “PM Ivanishvili’s Speech on the Fifth Anniversary of August War,” *Civil.ge*, August 8, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/186760>.

²³⁴ Government of Georgia, *73rd Session of the UN General Assembly*.

²³⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *51st Round of the Geneva International Discussions*.

²³⁶ Civil.ge, “Georgian MFA Condemns New Treaty Between Moscow and Sokhumi,” *Civil.ge*, November 24, 2014, <https://civil.ge/archives/124180>.

²³⁷ Agenda.ge, “Georgian officials pay tribute to victims of 2008 Russia-Georgia war,” *Agenda.ge*, August 8, 2019, <https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2019/2129#gsc.tab=0>.

The emphasis on international support is not just about political alliances; it is deeply connected to Georgia's broader identity as a European nation. GD's discourse frames Georgia's integration with the EU and NATO as a "homecoming"²³⁸ rooted in a "[shared] history, culture, and most importantly, common values."²³⁹ This construction reinforces the notion that Georgia's political alignment is both natural and inevitable, aligning with the values and traditions that have historically defined European identity. It distances the country from Russia's sphere of influence.

4.2.3 Linking and Differentiation of Russia and Georgia under GD

Besides the three discursive formations discussed in the previous two sections, GD constructs a common sign, namely a willingness to cooperate. From the start, the party emphasizes its commitment to a two-pronged "new pragmatic approach,"²⁴⁰ in which,

*"[o]n the first track, we started an unconditional dialogue with Russia on the resumption of trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian relations. On the second track, we have continued to seek a peaceful settlement of the August 2008 war and then end of Russian occupation of Georgian territory, based on the fundamental principles of international law."*²⁴¹

In many ways, this forms a continuation of what was already discussed with UNM. GD portrays Georgia as a rational and diplomatic actor, willing to engage in dialogue in adherence to the principles of international law. Yet, what changed is the construction of the Russian "Other" as willing to do the same. Resolving this tension in the relations can be achieved, according to GD, by looking at "[w]hat are the Russian interests, what are the Georgian interests, what are the interests of those people who suffer there (...)." ²⁴² In the field of trade, Georgia and Russia did indeed make significant progress and tangible results were achieved, for example, by lifting the ban on the export of Georgian wine and mineral water.²⁴³ In its policy, GD emphasizes the "uniqueness"²⁴⁴ of the Georgian case, which is trying to integrate into the EU and at the same

²³⁸ United Nations, *General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly*.

²³⁹ Civil.ge, "PM Garibashvili's UN Speech," *Civil.ge*, September 27, 2014, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27688>.

²⁴⁰ The Government of Georgia, *Address of the Prime Minister of Georgia H.E. Bidzina Ivanishvili*.

²⁴¹ Civil.ge, "PM Garibashvili's UN Speech."

²⁴² Civil.ge, "President-Elect Speaks."

²⁴³ Buckley, "Georgian wine."

²⁴⁴ Irakli Gharibashvili, "BBC World News."

time, attempting to normalize relations with Russia. This is justified by mentioning that its international partners applauded the new format of relations with Russia as a constructive step toward mitigating tensions.²⁴⁵

The previous two sections have identified the reoccurring discursive formations within the construction of the Russian “Other” and the Georgian “Self” under GD. These formations create meaning for the identity of Russia and Georgia through the processes of linking and differentiation. In **Figure 4.2**, this dynamic is visually represented, illustrating the juxtaposition of the signs. The placement of the sign is random and as long as the correct juxtaposed signs are opposing each other, they can be placed in any of the boxes. Each sign is linked to another, creating a network of meanings that differentiate the Georgian “Self” from the Russian “Other,” and vice versa.

4.2.4 Construction of UNM as the “Other”

However, during my analysis of the GD period, a notable shift emerged in the construction of the “Other.” I would argue my analysis of the UNM is a textbook-case, which highlights the strength of poststructuralist theory. In every discursive formation, how UNM constructs the Georgian “Self” is differentiated against the construction of the Russian “Other,” and vice versa. The signs contrast each other and if one is mentioned, the other follows in the same discourse entry. However, during my analysis of GD, Russia is still constructed as an “Other,” but it is not the sole “Other” I was able to identify. While I believe that the selected discourse does not paint the full picture of this “Othering” process, because of the specific focus on *Georgian* foreign policy, GD also constructs UNM as “Other.”

An example becomes clear in the discursive formation regarding Georgia’s historical legacy. UNM links Georgia’s identity to its historically resisting nature and emphasizes that Georgia stood up against Russia as it did in the past. In turn, it differentiates Russia as a historically imperial power, who has done nothing but attack Georgia. The historical legal discourse does come back during the GD period, yet it is now UNM who constitutes the “Other.” Similarly, GD constructs Georgia as a historically resisting state, while UNM

²⁴⁵ Civil.ge, “Fifth Anniversary of August War.”

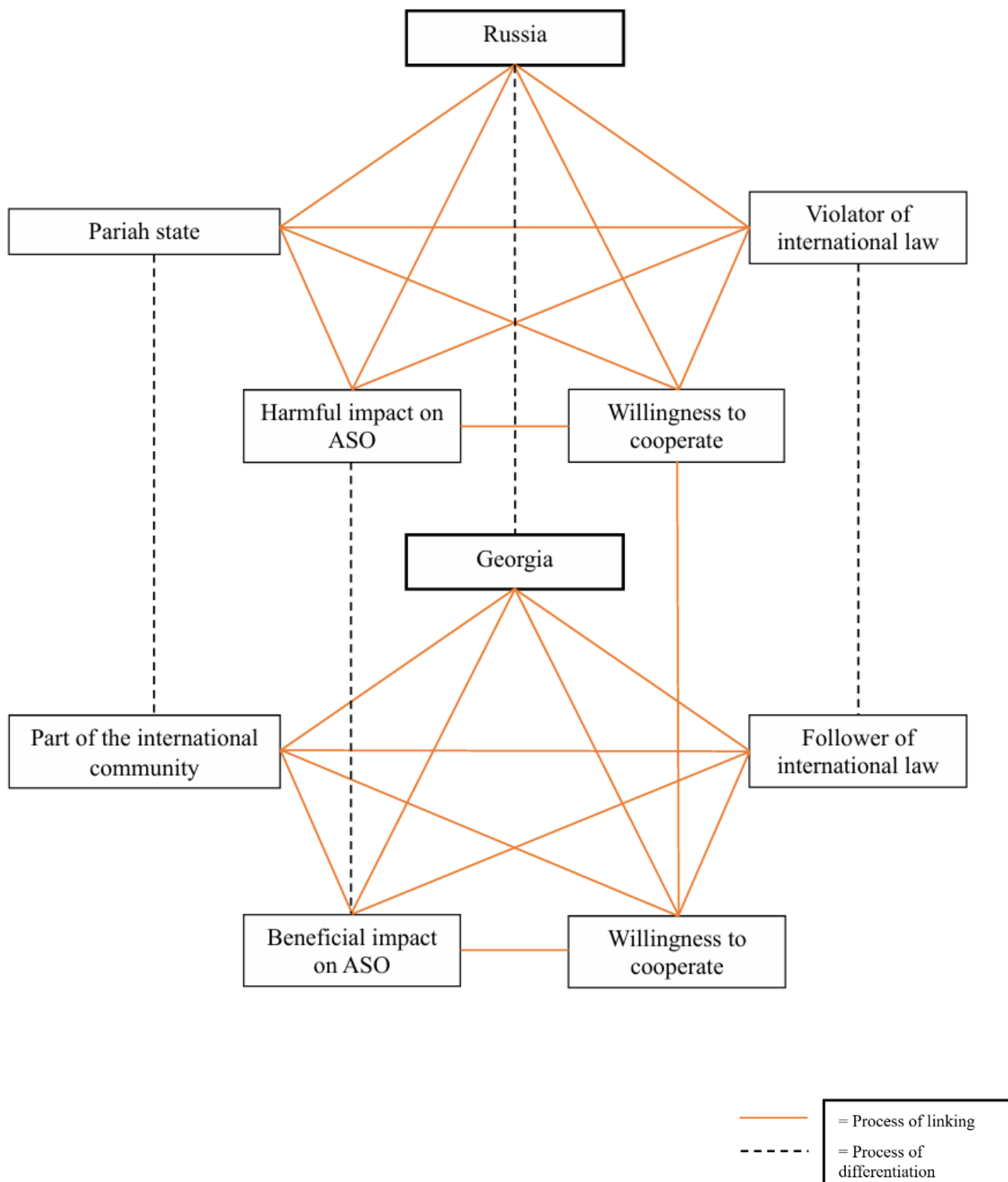


Figure 4.2: The linking and differentiation of Russia and Georgia under GD, 2012-2021.

surrendered Georgian territory because of their “ignorant and foolish,”²⁴⁶ “inadequate,”²⁴⁷ or “radical”²⁴⁸ policy, which heightened tensions with Russia. There is a revision of the historical narrative to include internal failings alongside external aggression.

Moreover, while UNM clearly pointed towards Russia for the blame in the August 2008 War, GD leaves room for ambiguity by stating, for example, “I [referring to Ivanishvili] think it was unjustified to start military actions before Russian [troops] crossed into Georgian borders.”²⁴⁹ Although Ivanishvili later stated, “it was Russia, which violated border of the sovereign state and carried out aggression against our country, which led to occupation of our territories” and actions of the UNM government “cannot justify Russian aggression,”²⁵⁰ the narrative is shifted from Russia to the then governing party. This introduces questions of responsibility and agency into the discourse. Lastly, Georgia’s democratic political system is no longer differentiated from Russia’s autocratic regime, but from Saakashvili’s autocratic regime. GD, for example, refers to the “mass illegal surveillance practice of the previous authorities”²⁵¹ and in a Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, then new prime minister Ivanishvili states,

*“[w]hile continuing that part of the reforms from the previous government, instituted during first years in power, which have been for the benefit of the country, we must also replace the authoritarian structures of his later years with a modern, civil society. (...).”*²⁵²

In the 2014 New Years Address, then prime minister Garibashvili stated “[t]he era of fear and terror is over. Thousands of people, unjustly detained in unbearable conditions by the previous government, are celebrating the New Year at home.”²⁵³ This overall presents an interesting starting point for the comparison of the identity construction of Russia by UNM and GD.

²⁴⁶ Civil.ge, “Saakashvili Slams Ivanishvili’s August War Remarks,” *Civil.ge*, April 11, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/186685>.

²⁴⁷ Civil.ge, “Ivanishvili on August War Probe,” *Civil.ge*, April 10, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/122756>,

²⁴⁸ Irakli Gharibashvili, “BBC World News.”

²⁴⁹ Civil.ge. “PM: ‘We Should Establish Truth’ over August War.” *Civil.ge*. April 12, 2013. <https://civil.ge/archives/186686>.

²⁵⁰ Civil.ge. “PM: ‘We Should Establish Truth’.”

²⁵¹ Civil.ge, “In State of Nation Address, President Asks Who is in Charge,” *Civil.ge*, March 31, 2015, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28174>.

²⁵² The Government of Georgia, *Address of the Prime Minister of Georgia H.E. Bidzina Ivanishvili*.

²⁵³ Civil.ge, “Georgia’s New Leaders Deliver New Year Addresses,” *Civil.ge*, January 1, 2014, <https://civil.ge/archives/186888>.

5. *Comparison of the Russian Identity Construction*

Chapter 4 served the purpose of answering sub-question one and two by identifying how the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” were discursively constructed under UNM and GD. In this chapter, I address the third sub-question, to which extent the construction of the Russian “Other” has changed. **Table 5.1** provides a summary of the identity construction of Russia per party. As mentioned in the literature review, there is a consensus among scholars that there has been a change in Georgia’s foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia. Analyzing **Figure 4.1** and **Figure 4.2** (the identity construction of the Russia and the Georgia under UNM and GD), and comparing the parties in **Table 5.1**, it becomes clear that there are significant similarities and differences in the identity construction. Both parties link Russia’s identity construction around a discursive formation emphasizing its disregard for international law and the lack of international support. Additionally, both parties sometimes distinguish between the Russian people and the political regime. Nevertheless, I point towards four differences in the identity construction: a shift in blame for the 2008 August War; a general softer tone towards Russia; the existence of a willingness to peacefully resolve the conflict; and the changing compatibility of the West and Russia.

5.1 **Blame for the August 2008 War**

As **Table 5.1** highlights, under GD there is no longer a construction of the Russian “Other” in the discursive formation centered around the August 2008 War. Instead, GD attributes responsibility for the war to the inconsistent policies of the then government, as highlighted by Prime Minister Garibashvili’s assertion: “[t]he fact is that the inconsistent policy of [Mikheil] Saakashvili meant we were unable to prevent war with Russia and as a result we lost territory and hundreds of thousands of people were displaced (...).”²⁵⁴ This reallocation of blame serves to reconstruct the narrative of the conflict, framing it as a consequence of domestic political missteps rather than solely external aggression. This shift is not only evident in political rhetoric but also in the symbolic timing of commemorations. The historical context of the relations between Georgia and Russia, as elaborated upon in chapter 1, is a focal point in UNM’s discourse. The discursive strategy emphasizes the buildup of Russian troops and marks August 7 as the start of the war, “(...) they [referring to Russia]

²⁵⁴ Civil.ge, “At August War Commemoration.”

Table 5.1: Summary of the identity construction of Russia per party

United National Movement	Georgian Dream
<p><u>International Law:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perpetual violator of international law. - Russia’s actions are fundamentally illegitimate. 	<p><u>International Law:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persistent disregard for international law. - Highlights Russia’s actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.
<p><u>Role of the international community:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia lacks (freely given) international support from the important Western states. 	<p><u>Role of International Community:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia is an isolated violator of international law. - Failure to act, emboldened Russia to pursue further aggression.
<p><u>(Future) Russo-Georgian relations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia is unwilling to negotiate with Georgia about peaceful resolution of the conflict. - Unwilling to adhere to principles of good faith negotiations, only makes agreements to serve strategic interests. 	<p><u>Willingness to Cooperate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both Georgia and Russia are willing to cooperate and relieve tensions in their relations.
<p><u>Historical Legacy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia is not only a current violator of international law but has a historical legacy of aggression. - Revitalization of the Soviet empire. 	<p><u>Impact on Abkhazia and South Ossetia:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia violates human rights, for example, through denial of education in the native language. - Threat to cultural heritage and diversity of Georgia. - Examples of Georgians detained or killed at the ABL.
<p><u>August 2008 War:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russia is seen as the primary instigator and violator. - Failure to reach war objectives creates a possibility of renewed violence. 	
<p><u>Georgian Statehood</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The democratization of Georgia is seen as a threat to Russia’s autocratic regime. 	

increased their military presence within last days. They deployed the so-called border guards on Georgian territory through rough violation of all international norms. They did their utmost to fuel tensions.”²⁵⁵ This highlights the perception of an immediate and provocative threat from Russia by UNM.

In contrast, GD shifts the commemoration to August 8. For example, in 2016, UNM and other opposition parties commemorated the war’s start on August 7 at the military cemetery at Mukhatgverdi in Tbilisi, while the official ceremony under GD was held on August 8 at the same location.²⁵⁶ This temporal adjustment signifies a deliberate discursive strategy to reshape the historical narrative and its associated political implications. GD acknowledges past grievances but attributes them to the previous ruling party, positioning themselves as a more reasonable alternative, opening up space for cooperation. This divergence between the two parties has not gone unnoticed. Academics and activist groups, particularly youth organizations, have critiqued GD’s narrative as aligning with “Russian propaganda.”²⁵⁷

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs occasionally issues statements on August 7, official speeches by the president and prime minister predominantly occur on August 8. Here it also becomes clear that my thesis focuses on dominant discourse, as mentioned in the methodology section, because some government officials do not follow the party’s reading. Notable examples include Prime Minister Gakharia (2019-2021) and President Zourabichvili (2018-current),²⁵⁸ who recognize the earlier date.²⁵⁹ Similarly, the EU and the United States – since 2020 – recognize August 7 as start date. This change of the war’s starting data is a crucial element in GD’s broader discursive strategy, facilitating the other two visible changes. By positioning the conflict’s onset a day later, GD creates a discursive space that allows for the reinterpretation of UNM’s actions and policies as contributory factors to the conflict. This opens ways for other significant changes in the discourse.

²⁵⁵ Civil.ge, “Saakashvili’s Televised Address to the Nation on Mukhrovani Mutiny,” *Civil.ge*, May 5, 2009, <https://civil.ge/archives/118784>.

²⁵⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *8th Anniversary of the August 2008 War*.

²⁵⁷ David Batashvili, “Why It Is Necessary to Know the Day the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 Started,” *Rondeli Foundation*, July 31, 2018, <https://gfsis.org.ge/blog/view/855>; Joshua Kucera, “August 7 Or 8? Why The Date Georgia Marks Its 2008 War With Russia Is So Controversial,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, August 7, 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-war-russia-start-controversy/32537938.html>.

²⁵⁸ While Zourabichvili ran as an independent candidate, she was endorsed by GD. Initially, she also followed GD’s reading, but since 2019 marks the anniversary on the 7th. See Kucera, “August 7 Or 8?”

²⁵⁹ Kucera, “August 7 Or 8?”

5.2 Shift in Tone

Secondly, a tone shift in GD's discourse regarding Russia is visible.²⁶⁰ Looking at **Figure 4.1** and **Figure 4.2** – the identity construction of Russia and Georgia under UNM and GD – and the signs, UNM consistently constructs Russia as the aggressor, occupier, authoritarian, and a historical imperial power. These are all harsh and negative terms. GD, on the other hand, adopts a more nuanced and softer approach. In UNM's discourse, Russia is unequivocally the aggressor and the occupier, emphasizing its role in the 2008 conflict and its historical imperialism. In contrast, GD shifts the sign of aggressor, to a certain degree, to UNM itself. By framing the previous government's policies as provocative and contributing to the conflict, GD repositions the blame internally, suggestion that UNM's actions exacerbated tensions with Russia. In terms of authoritarianism, UNM describes Russia's political regime as authoritarian, reinforcing a dichotomy between democratic Georgia and authoritarian Russia. GD, however, softens this description, referring to Russia's regime with terms like "stable"²⁶¹ and refraining from explicitly labelling the political regime. This shift in language moves away from outright confrontation to a more diplomatic stance.

When it comes to historical legacy, UNM emphasizes the historical antagonism between Georgia and Russia, often equating Soviet actions with contemporary Russian policies. GD (deliberately) omits references to historical conflicts, distinguishing current Russian actions from the Soviet past. This effort reduces historical antagonism in the narrative, signaling a move towards a less confrontational discourse. This is further supported through a quantitative analysis by Givi Silagadze. In a comparative text analysis of Georgian United Nations General Assembly Speeches from 2007 to 2022, he notes that GD leaders are less inclined to mention Russia, have a more positive sentiment, and rarely mention Russia in a negative sentiment.²⁶² Zourabichvili forms an interesting exception as her speech in 2019 was notably longer and contained more negative words than other GD speeches. Although the analysis is published in the news outlet "OC-Media," lacking the detailed methodological discussion normally found in academic works, its findings do align with my research. By softening the rhetoric and reconfiguring the signs associated with Russia, GD positions itself

²⁶⁰ See also Kakachia, Minesashvili, and Kakhishvili, "Change and Continuity," 820.

²⁶¹ Civil.ge, "President-Elect Speaks."

²⁶² Givi Silagadze, "Datablog | Georgia's changing priorities at the UN General Assembly," *OC-Media*, September 19, 2023, <https://oc-media.org/features/datablog-georgias-changing-priorities-at-the-un-general-assembly/>.

as a pragmatic and forward-looking government. This shift also facilitates a more peace-making approach to conflict resolution, emphasizing stability and cooperation over historical grievances and ideological confrontation.

5.3 Resolution of the Conflict

The most significant discursive change in the identity construction within Georgia's foreign policy revolves around the willingness of both parties to resolve the conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Because UNM places the sole blame on Russia, it constrains the potential for any form of cooperative engagement between the two states. Negotiation after conflict often necessitates a mutual acknowledgement of grievances and a willingness to engage in dialogue. UNM leaves little room for diplomatic efforts that might lead to conflict resolution or improved bilateral relations. By constructing Georgia as the victim and placing the blame squarely on Russia, UNM effectively puts the burden of action on Russia, implying that any progress towards reconciliation must begin with Russian concessions and a change in behavior. This allows UNM to construct a strategy emphasizing a theoretical willingness to work together with Russia, but that Russia is refusing to cooperate with *them*. Consequently, UNM can rally domestic and international support while maintaining a moral high ground and without having to engage in genuine cooperative efforts. This changes under GD.

On the other hand, GD opens up space for cooperation by constructing Russia as a partner willing to engage in dialogue and cooperation.²⁶³ This creates a mutual foundation of understanding, positioning both nations as capable of working together despite the conflict. This contrasts with the more adversarial stance of UNM, as GD seeks to find common ground, particularly in areas such as trade relations. By arguing that “we [referring to Georgia] have to find forms of relations with Russia,”²⁶⁴ GD emphasizes the importance of pragmatic engagement and the potential benefits of improving economic ties. However, GD increasingly is forced to acknowledge the asymmetry in these efforts. In 2014, Prime Minister Garibashvili, addressing the United Nations General Assembly, stated,

“[h]owever, Georgia’s efforts to reduce tensions and extend the olive branch to Russia have not been met with the same spirit of cooperation. We have taken every constructive

²⁶³ Civil.ge, “Georgian PM Hails Putin’s “Readiness to Improve” Ties,” *Civil.ge*, December 19, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/186877>.

²⁶⁴ Civil.ge, “Fifth Anniversary of August War.”

step. Now it is time for the Russian government to stop the occupation and start on a path to lasting peace."²⁶⁵

Similar statements were made in later years,²⁶⁶ highlighting a growing recognition that Russia's reciprocity was lacking.

While my thesis focuses solely on *Georgian* foreign policy discourse, it is needed to make a reference to Russia's construction of the Georgian "Other" to fully understand the overarching dynamics. In one of the discourse entries under consideration, a statement by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov is mentioned. He states "[b]ut if we want to fully normalize relations, I cannot offer anything new except of the need to recognize realities, which exist in this region."²⁶⁷ This "recognition of realities" implies acknowledging the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which differentiates from Georgia's goal of deoccupation and reunification. This fundamental divergence highlights why both Georgia and Russia can claim a desire for peaceful conflict resolution while proposing mutually exclusive solutions. For Georgia, a solution entails the full deoccupation and reunification of its territory, whereas for Russia, it involves recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. While improvements in trade relations, such as the export of Georgian wine to Russia, are tangible steps, they do not address the core issues (for Georgia) of deoccupation and reunification.

5.4 Changing Compatibility of the West/Russia

The final and perhaps most striking difference between UNM and GD lies in their approach to balancing a pro-Western and pro-Russian foreign policy. UNM frames Western integration as a direct challenge to Russian influence. It emphasizes the incompatibility between the European path and Russian interests, portraying European integration as a necessary but contentious move that inherently opposes Russian dominance. This stance is further reinforced by UNM's criticism of the "Soviet way of life,"²⁶⁸ which alludes to the autocratic tendencies prevalent across the wider region. Within GD's discourse, a notable paradox emerges. On one

²⁶⁵ Civil.ge, "PM Garibashvili's UN Speech."

²⁶⁶ See for example: Agenda.ge, "Georgian MFA: statements of Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson are cynical," *Agenda.ge*, October 19, 2018, <https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2018/2168#gsc.tab=0>; Civil Georgia, "GDDG Submits Parliamentary Resolution on Foreign Policy," Civil.ge, December 27, 2016, <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=29724>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *8th Anniversary of the August 2008 War*; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, *9th anniversary of the August 2008 War*.

²⁶⁷ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Statement by H.E. Ms. Maia Panjikidze*.

²⁶⁸ Civil.ge, "Ideological Competitor."

hand, GD suggests that European integration and improved relations with Russia are not only compatible but could potentially benefit Russia,²⁶⁹ arguing that Georgia’s European path might serve as a bridge between East and West.²⁷⁰ On the other hand, this very integration is depicted as a provocation to Russia, resulting in further tensions. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after the 2014 military agreement between Russia and South Ossetia, calls this “a deliberate move by Russia in reaction to Georgia’s European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.”²⁷¹ It highlights a critical difference in the discourse of GD and UNM. While both parties are committed, at least rhetorically, to European integration, they differ fundamentally in how they frame its implications for relations with Russia.

²⁶⁹ See for example: Civil.ge, “President Margvelashvili’s Inauguration Speech.”; Irakli Gharibashvili, “პრეზიდენტ-მინისტრის ინტერვიუ “BBC World News”-ის პირდაპირ ეთერში,” YouTube, 5:57, June 11, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAa7Z1OIRno>; United Nations, *General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly*.

²⁷⁰ Civil.ge, “President-Elect Speaks of Ties with Russia,” *Civil.ge*, November 11, 2013, <https://civil.ge/archives/117372>.

²⁷¹ Civil.ge, “Condemns New Treaty.”

6. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to understand how the Russian “Other” and the Georgian “Self” within Georgia’s foreign policy has been discursively constructed between 2008 and 2021 by UNM and GD. It is grounded in poststructuralist theory of foreign policy. To answer the research questions, I conducted a poststructuralist discourse analysis of official foreign policy documents, government programs, speeches (both domestic and international), and statements made by key officials (prime minister, president, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The core findings of my thesis are illustrated in **Figure 4.1** and **Figure 4.2**, which can be found on the next pages for convenience of the reader. To answer the first sub-question, the construction of the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” by UNM between 2008 and 2013 is illustrated in **Figure 4.1**. I identified six discursive formations on which UNM relies for this identity construction: International Law; Role of the International Community; Historical Legacy; (Future) Russo-Georgian Relations; August 2008 War; and Georgian Statehood. In UNM’s construction, the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” completely oppose each other. For example, whereas Georgia is portrayed as a heroic nation resisting Russian/foreign domination, sharply contrasted against Russia, depicted as an imperialistic force clinging to its past.

To answer the second sub-question, the construction of the Georgian “Self” and the Russian “Other” by GD between 2012 and 2021 is illustrated in **Figure 4.2**. I identified four discursive formations: International Law; Actions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Role of the International Community; and Commitment to a Peaceful Solution. While I identified less discursive formations, the portrayal of Russia becomes more complex. Notably, GD introduces a new dynamic by sometimes constructing UNM as an “Other” alongside Russia. The construction of the Russian “Self” to some degree forms a continuation from UNM, as again Russia is framed as an isolated state within the international community, which fails to adhere to international law. However, more importantly, GD constructs a common sign, a willingness to cooperate: Georgia is portrayed as a rational and diplomatic actor, willing to engage in dialogue in adherence to the principles of international law, and the Russian “Other” is constructed as willing to do the same.

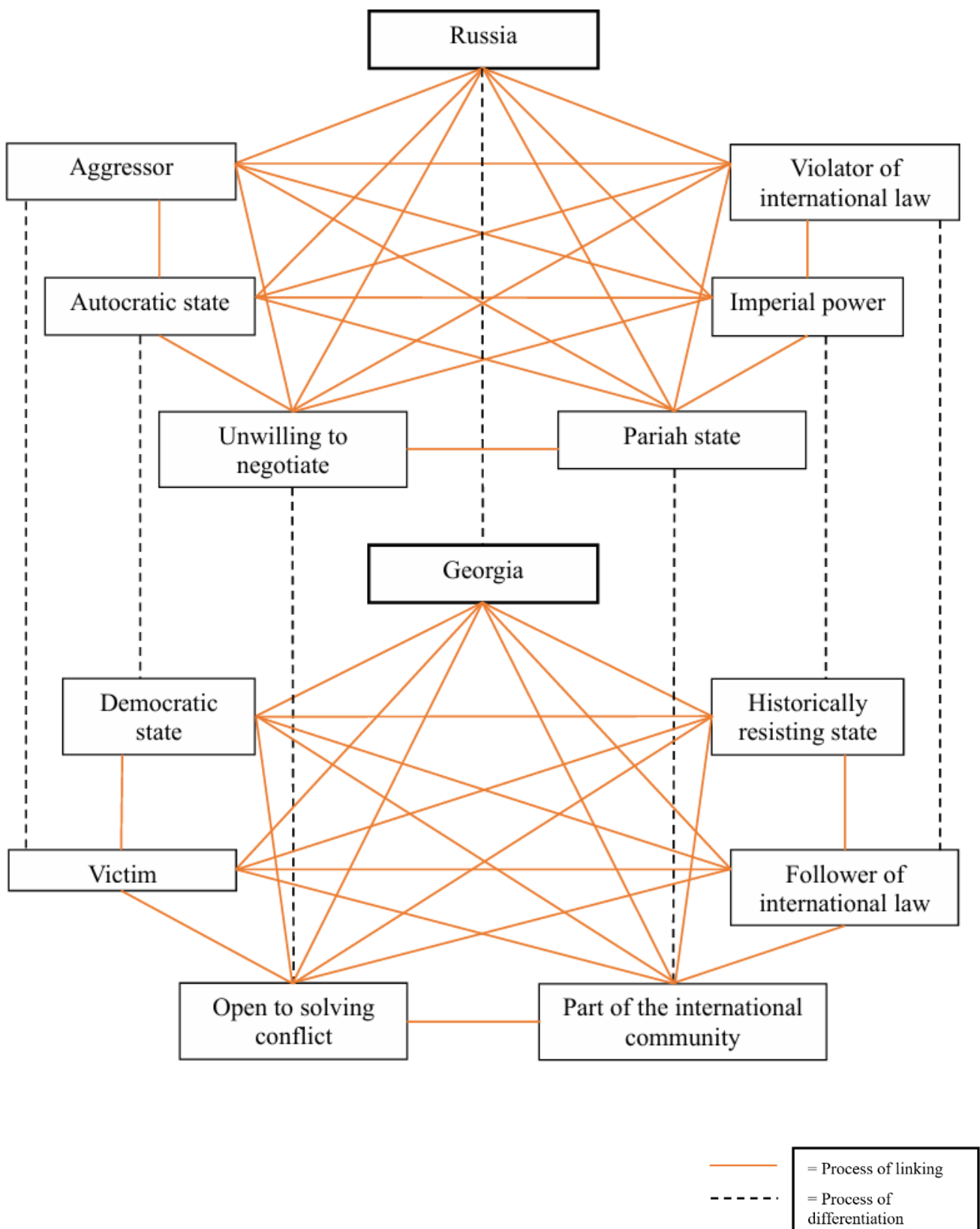


Figure 6.1: The linking and differentiation of Russia and Georgia under UNM, 2008-2013.

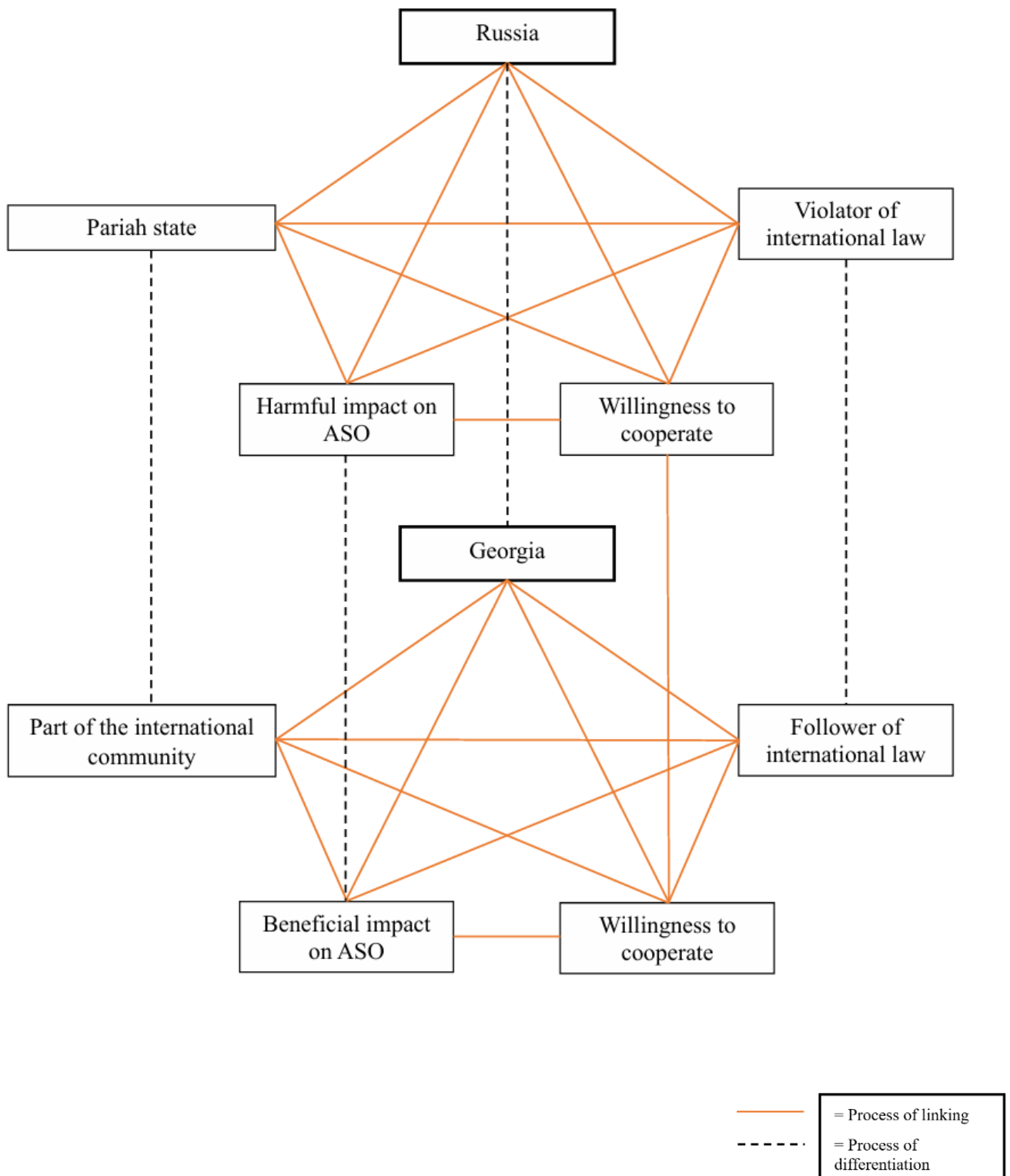


Figure 6.2: The linking and differentiation of Russia and Georgia under GD, 2012-2021.

Furthermore, as an answer to the third sub-question, I identified four significant changes in the construction of the Russian “Other” by UNM and GD. Firstly, by “Othering” UNM, GD is able to shift (partial) blame to UNM about the start of the August 2008 War. This is not only evident in political discourse, but also in the symbolic timing of commemorations. Under GD, the date shifts from August 7 to August 8, creating a discursive space that allows for the reinterpretation of UNM’s actions and policies as contributory factors to the conflict. It is important to mention here that some government officials do deviate from this reading, highlighting that this thesis solely focuses on dominant party discourse. Secondly, an overall softer tone towards Russia in the GD discourse can be observed. Instead of referring to Russia as an autocratic regime, it is now UNM’s time in office that is referred to as such. Thirdly, GD focuses on Russia’s willingness to solve the conflict, constructing a mutual sign. These changes suggest a movement away from a completely antagonistic view of Russia towards one that leaves room for potential cooperation. Lastly, GD perceive Western integration as compatible with its intentions to improve relations with Russia, yet simultaneously weakens this assertion by acknowledging that such integration poses a threat to Russia.

The question then logically arises as to why GD constructs the Russian “Other” differently from UNM. Admittedly, the construction of the Russian “Other” by GD has largely stayed similar as to that of UNM. I would attribute this to the fact that the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia has worsened because of borderization. This makes a complete shift from constructing Russia as the enemy to a reliable partner difficult. Nevertheless, GD attempts to lay the groundwork for cooperation and potential reconciliation. Some scholars have pointed to the benefit of improving trade and/or economic relations to build confidence between conflict parties.²⁷² Lifting the ban on Georgian wine and mineral water can be seen as an example. Assuming for the purposes of this thesis that GD acts independently and in Georgia’s best interest, this discursive change allows Georgia and Russia to work together, paving the way for a potential reconciliation.

Yet, this clashes with the continued distrust towards Russia by the Georgian population. In the most recent public opinion survey conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center, when asked to identify the top threat to Georgia, among others, 27 percent cited Russian

²⁷² Michelle I. Gawerc, “Peace-building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives,” *Peace & Change* 31, no. 4 (October 2006): 439, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0130.2006.00387.x>.

military aggression, 13 percent pointed to the occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, 11 percent mentioned Russian propaganda, and 5 percent highlighted the influx of Russian immigrants to Georgia.²⁷³ In the 2024 Caucasus Barometer, 69 percent named Russia as the main enemy of Georgia.²⁷⁴ Even when looking at **Figure 4.2**, the signs of the Russian identity construction (no support from the international community; harmful impact on Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and violator of international law) are sharply contrasted by the willingness to cooperate. Any concession that is inevitably made during peace negotiations can feel as a reward for the continued human rights violations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

While conducting the discourse analysis, the identity construction by GD appeared contradictory to me, making it difficult to reconcile their foreign policy stance. As I mentioned earlier, the analysis of UNM's identity construction strongly highlights the strengths of poststructuralism, clearly illustrating the contrasting identities between Georgia and Russia. However, during the analysis of GD's discourse, I questioned whether poststructuralism was the most suitable framework, given the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies within GD's narrative. Now, having completed both the analysis and the writing of my thesis, I have come to see that these contradictions are not a flaw of the theory but rather a reflection of the inherent tensions within Georgia's foreign policy itself.

In Section 5.4, I discussed how GD is convinced that improving relations with Russia can be combined with a pro-Western foreign policy. Theoretically, this is plausible – genuine dialogue with Russia to peacefully resolve the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would likely be supported by Western states. However, the political landscape has drastically changed following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which has led to more Western states to view Russia as an increasingly unreliable and violent actor, something UNM already warned for. This shift profoundly impacts Georgia's foreign policy, complicating GD's efforts to maintain a balance between its Western aspirations and its approach to Russia. During my time in Georgia, I personally witnessed the protests against the “foreign agent”²⁷⁵ law in April and May 2024, which is a clear example of how following Russia's authoritarian footsteps threatens Georgia's democracy and its aspirations to align with the West. Despite GD's

²⁷³ Caucasus Research Resource Center, “TOPTHREA19: What is the top threat to Georgia's national security (%)” *Caucasus Barometer*, October 2023, <https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/no2023ge/TOPTHREA19/>.

²⁷⁴ Caucasus Research Resource Center, “MAINENEM: Which country is currently the main enemy of Georgia (%)” *Caucasus Barometer*, 2024, <https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2024ge/MAINENEM/>.

²⁷⁵ Gavin and Parulava, “Georgia's EU dream.”

continued rhetoric in support of European integration, this law severely undermines and effectively kills any realistic prospect of achieving this goal.²⁷⁶ The impact of the full-scale invasion and the contradiction of combining the West with closer relations with Russia within Georgia's foreign policy thus highlight an area for future research.

My thesis presents two additional research avenues that warrant further exploration. The first possibility relates to section 4.2.4, the "Othering" of UNM by GD. In several discursive formations, GD constructs UNM as the "Other," rather than Russia. This shift in focus suggests an internal dynamic that could be further examined. The second research avenue aligns with section 5.3, in which I briefly mention the differing interpretations of a "peaceful solution" by Georgia and Russia. Future research could be built on my thesis by engaging in what Hansen calls a "discursive encounter."²⁷⁷ This also involves analyzing how Russia constructs the identity of Georgia. Exploring the way in which Russia discursively constructs Georgia during the same period could provide insight into why GD's steps towards Russia remain unanswered.

²⁷⁶ Gabriel Gavin, "EU announces Georgia's accession is 'stopped' after anti-West pivot," *POLITICO*, July 9, 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/georgia-eu-accession-stopped-anti-west-pivot-russian-law-foreign-agent-bill/>.

²⁷⁷ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 76.

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Appendices

Appendix A

This appendix provides a chronological list of the discourse entries, along with the responsible person/authority, type, language, and source. All discourse entries that are cited in the thesis are also listed in the bibliography, but this appendix serves as a bibliography for all discourse.

	Time	By whom?	Type	Full version or excerpt?	Language	Bibliography
1.	2006-2009	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Foreign Policy Strategy	Full	English; official translation	Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. <i>Foreign Policy Strategy 2006-2009</i> . Last accessed on August 15, 2024. https://gfsis.org.ge/media/download/GSAC/resources/115_1973_997704_Strategy_MFA2006-2009En.pdf .
2.	2008-2012	Government	Government Program	Full	English; official translation	Government of Georgia. <i>Programme of the government: United Georgia without Poverty</i> . July 2, 2010. https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=41&info_id=105 .
3.	2008, January	President Saakashvili	Speech	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>Inaugural Speech of the President Mikheil Saakashvili</i> . January 20, 2008. http://saakashviliarchive.info/print.aspx?t=1&i=2353 .
4.	2008, February	President Saakashvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “‘Do not Play with Fire’ – Saakashvili Tells Russia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 16, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/114302 .
5.	2008, April	FM Bakradze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation	Civil.ge. “Foreign Minister: Russia Tries to Mislead International Community.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 18, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/114776 .

					by news outlet	
6.	2008, April	President Saakashvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili's Statement on Russian Peacekeeping Forces." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 24, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/114776 .
7.	2008, April	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Georgian MFA Warns of Russia's "Military Aggression"." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 26, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/114846 .
8.	2008, August	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the Georgian population once again</i> . August 10, 2008. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2320&i=1 .
9.	2008, August	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili Addresses Nation." <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 11, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/117030 .
10.	2008, August	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili addressed Georgian population in front of the Parliament together with the European leaders</i> . August 12, 2008. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2316&i=1 .
11.	2008, August	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili's Televised Address." <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 18, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/117156 .
12.	2008, August	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili's statement</i> . August 26, 2008. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2312&i=1 .

13.	2008, September	President Saakashvili	Speech	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the participants of live-chain from Freedom Square.</i> September 1, 2008. http://saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements/?p=2309&i=21 .
14.	2008, September	President Saakashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. <i>President Saakashvili's Speech at the UN General Assembly.</i> Last accessed on August 15, 2024. https://gfsis.org.ge/media/download/GSAC/Articles/Speech_General_Assembly.pdf .
15.	2008, September	President Saakashvili	State of the Nation Speech	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Saakashvili's annual speech presented in the Parliament of Georgia.</i> September 16, 2008. http://saakashviliarchive.info/print.aspx?t=1&i=2304 .
16.	2008, October	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: Threat of Russian Aggression Persists." <i>Civil.ge</i> , October 2, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/117617 .
17.	2008, October	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: Russia's Invasion was Inevitable." <i>Civil.ge</i> , October 16, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/117723 .
18.	2008, November	FM Tkeshelashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Georgian FM: Medvedev's Statement Marks Russia's Aggressive Policy." <i>Civil.ge</i> . https://civil.ge/archives/117839 .
19.	2008, December	FM Vashadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "New FM on Ties with Russia." <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 12, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/118035 .

20.	2008, December	FM Vashadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgia Says Russia Makes ‘Guilty Plea’ on War.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 25, 2008. https://civil.ge/archives/118137 .
21.	2009-2012	MFA	Foreign Policy Strategy	Full	Georgian; translated through Google Translate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>საქართველოს საგარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგია 2009-2012 წლებისთვის</i> [Georgia’s Foreign Policy Strategy for 2009-2012]. Tbilisi, 2009.
22.	2009, January	President Saakashvili	Speech	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili congratulated the Georgian population with New Year</i> . January 1, 2009. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2294&i=1 .
23.	2009, January	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Saakashvili: Putin is Georgia’s Enemy.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 23, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/118251 .
24.	2009, February	President Saakashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Saakashvili Delivers State of Nation Address.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 12, 2009. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=20421 .
25.	2009, February	President Saakashvili	Speech	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Saakashvili on Ties with Russia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 26, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/118418 .
26.	2009, March	FM Vashadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “FM Vashadze: Russia ‘Works actively’ to Remove Georgian Leadership.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 23, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/118533 .

27.	2009, April	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili Sees No Threat of Russia's 'New Military Adventure'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 14, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/118661 .
28.	2009, May	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili's Televised Address to the Nation on Mukhrovani Mutiny." <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 5, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/118784 .
29.	2009, July	President Saakashvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili's Statement at NSC Session." <i>Civil.ge</i> , July 10, 2009. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21215 .
30.	2009, July	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Tbilisi Responds to Moscow's 'Georgia Rearming' Claims." <i>Civil.ge</i> , July 23, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/185663 .
31.	2009, July	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: 'Treat of War Passed'." <i>Civil.ge</i> . July 29, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/119221 .
32.	2009, August	President Saakashvili	Speech	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili's speech delivered at the ceremony dedicated to Russia-Georgian war anniversary</i> . August 7, 2009. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2247&i=1 .
33.	2009, September	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: Georgia Confronts 'Imperialist Monster'." <i>Civil.ge</i> . September 8, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/185666 .

34.	2009, September	President Saakashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>Remarks by H.E. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia</i> . 64 th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. September 24, 2009. https://www.un.org/en/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/GE_en.pdf .
35.	2009, October	FM Vashadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Vashadze: Georgia will Start Talks with Democratic Russia One Day." <i>Civil.ge</i> , October 5, 2009. https://civil.ge/archives/119447 .
36.	2010, January	President Saakashvili	New Years Address	Full	Georgian; subtitles provided by user	Georgiamediacentre. "Mikheil Saakashvili new year address (subtitled)." YouTube, 5:22. January 5, 2010. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPFpmDkDkgQ .
37.	2010, January	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: 'Help Us to Deter Russia's Mirror Propaganda'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 21, 2010. https://civil.ge/archives/119806 .
38.	2010, January	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: Georgia will not Follow Russia's 'Bait'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 22, 2010. https://civil.ge/archives/119810 .
39.	2010, February	President Saakashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. "Saakashvili's State of Nation Address." <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 26, 2010. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=22029?id=22029 .
40.	2010, May	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia delivered a speech at the parade near the Ministry of Internal Affairs</i> . May 6, 2010. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=5026&i=1 .

41.	2010, May	President Saakashvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili Addresses Nation on Independence Day." <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 26, 2010. https://civil.ge/archives/120214 .
42.	2010, August	President Saakashvili	Speech on	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia. <i>The President of Georgia visited Mukhatgverdi Brotherhood Cemetery together with the Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia</i> . August 4, 2010. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=5352&i=1 .
43.	2010, September	President Saakashvili	Speech	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: 'Georgia is Russia's Major Ideological Competitor'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 4, 2010. https://civil.ge/archives/185710 .
44.	2010, September	President Saakashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Civil.ge. <i>Remarks of H.E. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia</i> . 65 th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. September 23, 2010. https://old.civil.ge/files/files/Saakashvili-UN-speech-220910.pdf
45.	2010, November	President Saakashvili	Address European Parliament	Full	English; original language	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>President of Georgia's Address to European Parliament Members</i> . November 23, 2010. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=5858&i=1 .
46.	2010, December	President Saakashvili	Speech at OSCE Summit in Astana	Full	English; original language	Civil.ge. "President Saakashvili's Speech at the OSCE Summit in Astana." <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 1, 2010. https://civil.ge/archives/185756 .
47.	2010, December	President Saakashvili	Speech	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili Says Russia May Resort to 'Political Terror' in Georgia." <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 27, 2010. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=22996?id=22996 .
48.	2011, January	President Saakashvili	New Year's Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>President of Georgia Congratulated New Year to Georgian Population</i> . January 1, 2011. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=6006&i=1 .

49.	2011, May	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The statement made by the President of Georgia before the start of the parade.</i> May 26, 2011. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=6487&i=1 .
50.	2011, September	President Saakashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	TheTbiliCity. "Mikheil Saakashvili's Speech in UN General Assembly – p.1." YouTube, 12:00. September 24, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrpaoBS1wu4&t=14s . The Tbilicity. "Mikheil Saakashvili's Speech in UN General Assembly – p.2." YouTube, 8:54. September 24, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6OjHg8STBc .
51.	2011, November	President Saakashvili	Statement by president	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: WTO Deal with Russia 'Diplomatic Victory'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 3, 2011. https://civil.ge/archives/186099 .
52.	2011, November	President Saakashvili	Statement by president	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: Jeers for Putin Mean 'Beginning of End for Authoritarian Rule in Russia'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 22, 2011. https://civil.ge/archives/186127 .
53.	2011, November	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia. <i>The Address by the President.</i> November 23, 2011. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7146&i=1 .
54.	2012-2015	MFA	Foreign Policy Strategy	Full	Georgian; translated through Google Translate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>საქართველოს სავაჭრო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგია 2012-2015</i> [Foreign Policy Strategy of Georgia 2012-2015]. Tbilisi, 2012.
55.	2012, January	President Saakashvili	New Year Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili's New Year Address." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 1, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186164 .

56.	2012, January	President Saakashvili	Statement by president	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: 'We Aren't Afraid of Russia's Threats'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 20, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186180 .
57.	2012, February	President Saakashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. "Saakashvili's Annual Address with Heated Debates." <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 29, 2012. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=24496 .
58.	2012, February	MFA	Statement by MFA	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Georgian MFA on 'Putin's Strange Way of Expressing Love' Towards Georgians." <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 23, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186229 .
59.	2012, April	President Saakashvili	Statement by president	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili: 'Evil Force, Occupying Parts of Georgia, will be Defeated'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 15, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186300
60.	2012, May	President Saakashvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili's Independence Day Speech from New Parliament Building." <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 26, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186354 .
61.	2012, May	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia delivered a speech at the parade dedicated to the Police Day</i> . May 6, 2012. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7520&i=1 .
62.	2012, August	President Saakashvili	Speech	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili Speaks of Putin's New Plan to Subdue Georgia." <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 7, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186446 .

63.	2012, September	President Saakashvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “In Televised Address Saakashvili Appeals for Unity.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 14, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/116336 .
64.	2012, September	President Saakashvili	Statement by president	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Saakashvili Speaks of “Russian War of Compromising Materials”.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 22, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/186502 .
65.	2012, September	President Saakashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Ամերիկայի Չայն (Voice of America). “Mikhail Saakashvili’s speech at the 67 th UNGA.” YouTube, 23:18. September 26, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMe9r5knRUo .
66.	2012, November	Government	Government Program	Full	English; official translation	Government of Georgia. <i>Government Program: For Strong, democratic, United Georgia</i> . Last accessed on August 15, 2024. https://www.gov.ge/files/41_35183_108931_4.pdf
67.	2012, November	PM Ivanishvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Ivanishvili Comments on Russia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 23, 2012. https://civil.ge/archives/122420 .
68.	2013, January	President Saakashvili	New Years Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “In New Year Address Saakashvili Offers Five-Point Plan for Cooperation with Govt.” <i>Civil.ge</i> . January 1, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/122509 .
69.	2013, January	President Saakashvili	Address Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly	Full	English; original language	Council of Europe Directorate of Communications. Media Relations Division. <i>Address by Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia</i> . January 21, 2013. https://old.civil.ge/files/files/2013/Saakashvili-PACE-Jan2013.pdf .
70.	2013, February	President Saakashvili	State of the Nation Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>The President of Georgia: ‘I was planning to go to the Parliament to offer them cooperation’</i> . February 8, 2013. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=8137&i=3 .

71.	2013, March	Georgian Dream/ United National Movement	Bi-partisan resolution on foreign policy	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. "GD Unveils Draft of Agreement on Foreign Policy Priorities." <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 11, 2013. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=25744 .
				Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. "Parliament Adopts Bipartisan Resolution on Foreign Policy." <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 7, 2013. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=25828&search= .
72.	2013, April	PM Ivanishvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Ivanishvili on August War Probe." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 10, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/122756 .
73.	2013, April	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Saakashvili Slams Ivanishvili's August War Remarks." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 11, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/186685 .
74.	2013, April	PM Ivanishvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "PM: 'We Should Establish Truth' over August War'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , April 12, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/186686 .
75.	2013, April	PM Ivanishvili	Address Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly	Full	English; original language	Government of Georgia. <i>Address of the Prime Minister of Georgia H.E. Bidzina Ivanishvili to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe</i> . Accessed through the Wayback Machine. https://www.government.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=270&info_id=36672 .
76.	2013, May	PM Ivanishvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Ivanishvili on NATO and Ties with Russia." <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 14, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/122847 .

77.	2013, May	PM Ivanishvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Makes Independence Day Address.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 26, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/122889 .
78.	2013, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the fifth anniversary of the Russia-Georgia August 2008 War</i> . Accessed through the Wayback Machine. https://mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=59&info_id=16540 .
79.	2013, August	President Saakashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Saakashvili Speaks of August War.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 8, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/123075 .
80.	2013, August	PM Ivanishvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Ivanishvili’s Speech on the Fifth Anniversary of August War.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 8, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/186760 .
81.	2013, September	President Saakashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Civil Georgia. “Saakashvili’s Speech at the UN General Assembly – 2013.” <i>Civil.ge</i> . September 26, 2013. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26491?id=26491 .
82.	2013, September	PM Ivanishvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Slams Saakashvili for His Russian Policies.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 30, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/123193 .
83.	2013, October	President Saakashvili	Address	Full	English; official translation	The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>President of Georgia Address to the Georgian Society</i> . October 28, 2013. http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=8508&i=1 .
84.	2013, November	President elect Margvelashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “President-Elect Speaks of Ties with Russia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 11, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/117372 .

85.	2013, November	President Margvelashvili	Inaugural speech	Full	English; official translation	Civil.ge. “President Margvelashvili’s Inauguration Speech.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 17, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/186852 .
86.	2013, December	President Margvelashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Margvelashvili on Russia and Georgia’s EU Integration.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 4, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/186869 .
87.	2013, December	FM Panjikidze	Address Council of Europe Ministerial Council	Full	English; original language	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. <i>Statement by H.E. Ms. Maia Panjikidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs</i> . December 6, 2013. https://www.osce.org/mc/109282 .
88.	2013, December	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgian PM Hails Putin’s “Readiness to Improve” Ties.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 19, 2013. https://civil.ge/archives/186877 .
				Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian PM comments on Putin’s remarks about Georgia.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , December 19, 2013. https://agenda.ge/en/news/2013/575#gsc.tab=0 .
89.	2014, January	PM Garibashvili	New Years Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgia’s New Leaders Deliver New Year Addresses.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 1, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/186888 .
90.	2014, February	PM Garibashvili	Munich Security Conference	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgian PM Addresses Munich Security Conference.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 2, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/123477 .

91.	2014, February	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgian PM Says Ready to Meet Russian Leader.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 12, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/123501 .
				Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “PM Garibashvili ready for direct dialogue with Russian Government.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , February 12, 2014. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2014/428#gsc.tab=0
92.	2014, February	President Margvelashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “President Starts Annual Address by Speaking on Ukraine.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 21, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/123526 .
93.	2014, March	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM: “West Must Compel Russia to Stop Forceful Actions Against Ukraine”.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 2, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/186931 .
94.	2014, March	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Garibashvili Comments on Ukraine.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 13, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/123570 .
95.	2014, May	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM: “Reckless Policy of Previous Government Dragged Georgia into August War”.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 12, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/187000 .
96.	2014, May	President, PM Garibashvili, and DM	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “President, PM and Defence Minister address crowds at Independence Day celebration.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , May 26, 2014. https://agenda.ge/en/news/2014/1289#gsc.tab=0 .
97.	2014, May	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Sees “Positive Dynamic” in Ties with Russia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 23, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/187010 .

98.	2014, June	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Full	English; original language	Irakli Gharibashvili. “პრემიერ-მინისტრის ინტერვიუ ““BBC World News”-ის პირდაპირ ეთერში.” YouTube, 5:57. June 11, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAa7Z1OIRno .
99.	2014, August	FM Panjikidze	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgian FM Says Tit-for-Tat Sanctions Not a Solution to Russia, West Standoff.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 8, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/123930 .
100.	2014, August	FM Panjikidze/other government officials	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian Gov’t commemorates August 2008 war.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , August 7, 2014. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2014/1892#gsc.tab=0 .
101.	2014, August	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “PM Garibashvili commemorates Russia-Georgia War.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , August 8, 2014. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2014/1895#gsc.tab=0 .
102.	2014, September	PM Garibashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Civil.ge. “PM Garibashvili’s UN Speech.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 27, 2014. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27688 .
103.	2014, October	Parliament	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. “Parliament Condemns Russia’s “Attempt to Annex” Abkhazia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , October 18, 2014. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27726 .
104.	2014, October	Parliament	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “GD Rejects UNM’s Draft Resolution on Ties with Russia.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 11, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/124196 .
105.	2014, November	MFA	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgian MFA Condemns New Treaty Between Moscow and Sokhumi.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 24, 2014. https://civil.ge/archives/124180 .

106.	2015-2018	MFA	Foreign policy strategy	Full	Georgian; translated through Google Translate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>აქროველოს სავარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგია 2015 - 2018 წწ. [Georgia's Foreign Policy Strategy 2015-2018]</i> . Tbilisi, 2015.
107.	2015, January	PM Garibashvili	New Year Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "PM's New Year Address." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 1, 2015. https://civil.ge/archives/124284 .
108.	2015, January	FM Beruchashvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Georgian FM: 'EU's Unity, Firmness Crucial in Face of Russia's Pressure'." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 17, 2015. https://civil.ge/archives/124309 .
109.	2015, March	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Georgian MFA Accuses Russia of Misinterpreting 2011 WTO Deal." <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 13, 2015. https://civil.ge/archives/124457 .
110.	2015, March	MFA	Statement	Full	Georgian; translation through Google Translate	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>ქენევის საერთაშორისო მოლაპარაკებებში საქროველოს დელეგაციის ხელმძღვანელის დავით დონდუას კომენტარი [Commentary by the Head of the Georgian Delegation to the Geneva International Discussions, Davit Dondua]</i> . Accessed through the Wayback Machine. https://www.mfa.gov.ge/News/commentary_geneva_discussions/ .
111.	2015, March	President Margvelashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "In State of Nation Address, President Asks Who is in Charge." <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 31, 2015. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28174 .

112.	2015, May	Government	Government Program	Full	English; official translation	Government of Georgia. <i>Government Programme (Program): "For Strong, Democratic and Unified Georgia"</i> . May 2015. https://www.gov.ge/files/50258_50258_105367_15.07.17-May7,2015-ForStrong,Democratic,andUnifiedGeorgia-GovernmentofGeorgiaProgram.pdf .
113.	2015, May	PM Garibashvili	Independence Day Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. "PM Garibashvili congratulates Georgia on Independence Day." <i>Agenda.ge</i> , May 26, 2015. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2015/1149#gsc.tab=0 .
114.	2015, June	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Georgian Foreign Ministry in Reaction to the Military Exercises conducted by the Russian Federation in the Occupied Tskhinvali Region</i> . June 12, 2015. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/148100-ganckhadeba-okupirebul-ckhinvalis-regionshi-ruseti .
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116.	2015, August	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. "Georgia's Prime Minister pays tribute to fallen heroes of 2008 Russian-Georgian war." <i>Agenda.ge</i> , August 8, 2015. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2015/1742#gsc.tab=0 .
117.	2015, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Regarding the 7th Anniversary of the August 2008 War</i> . August 7, 2015. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/427632-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis .
118.	2015, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Georgian Foreign Ministry in reaction to the illegal military activities of the Russian Federation</i> . August 19, 2015. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/796624-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-rusetis-mk .

119.	2015, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Georgian Foreign Ministry in reaction to the deployment of Russian railway troops in the occupied territory of Abkhazia</i> . August 24, 2015. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/754339-saqartvelos-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeb .
120.	2015, October	PM Garibashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	UN Web TV. "Georgia, General Debate, 70 th Session." UN Web TV, 19:56. October 1, 2015. https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k19/k19pf2i6ss .
121.	2015, November	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i> . November 23, 2016. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/207487-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba .
122.	2015, December	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 34th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . December 10, 2015. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/925000-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
123.	2015, December	Candidate FM Janelidze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Foreign Minister-Designate Speaks of Priorities." <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 28, 2015. https://civil.ge/archives/125207 .
124.	2015, December	Candidate FM Janelidze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. "Foreign Minister candidate: My major task will be securing Georgia from Foreign threats." Agenda.ge, December 28, 2015. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2015/2948#gsc.tab=0 .
125.	2015, December	Government	Government Program	Full	English; official translation	Government of Georgia. <i>Government Programme: "For Strong, Democratic and Unified Georgia"</i> . December 2015. https://www.gov.ge/files/41_53457_826340_Strong.pdf .
126.	2016, January	President Margvelashvili and PM Kvirikashvili	New Years Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "President, PM's New Year Addresses." <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 1, 2016. https://civil.ge/archives/125215 .

127.	2016, February	President Margevelashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "President Delivers Annual Address in Parliament." <i>Civil.ge</i> , February 3, 2016. https://civil.ge/archives/125279 .
128.	2016, February	President Margevelashvili	State of the Nation Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. "Georgia's President delivers annual speech at Parliament." Agenda.ge, February 3, 2016. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2016/291#gsc.tab=0 .
129.	2016, March	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 35th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . March 24, 2016. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/374861-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
130.	2016, April	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement of the Georgian Foreign Ministry in reaction to the conclusion of the so-called "Agreement on the State Border" by the Russian Federation with the Tskhinvali occupation regime</i> . April 27, 2016. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/931301-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-rusetis-fe .
131.	2016, May	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. "Georgian MFA Responds to Russia's Criticism of Noble Partner Drills." <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 7, 2016. https://civil.ge/archives/125454 .
132.	2016, June	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 36th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . June 15, 2016. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/324626-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
133.	2016, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 8th Anniversary of the August 2008 War</i> . August 7, 2016. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/820548-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis .

134.	2016, September	PM Kvirikashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Giorgi Kvirikashvili. “პრემიერის გამოსვლა გაეროს გენერალური ასამბლეის 71-ე სესიაზე [Prime Minister’s speech at the 71 st session of the UN General Assembly].” YouTube, 20:20. September 22, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50udpB9hxNE .
135.	2016, October	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 37th Round of the Geneva International Discussions. October 5, 2016. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/304950-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
136.	2016, November	Government	Government Program	Full	English; official translation	Government of Georgia. <i>Freedom, Rapid Development, Prosperity: Government Platform 2016-2020</i> . November 2016. https://www.gov.ge/files/41_61087_816118_GoG_Platform_LKF_19_05_2017.pdf .
137.	2016, November	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgia condemns ratification of Russia-Abkhazia military deal.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , November 3, 2016. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2016/2732#gsc.tab=0 .
138.	2016, December	Parliament	Bi-partisan resolution on Foreign Policy	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Parliament Adopts Resolution on Foreign Policy.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 30, 2016. https://civil.ge/archives/126043 .
				Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. “GDDG Submits Parliamentary Resolution on Foreign Policy.” <i>Civil.ge</i> . December 27, 2016. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=29724 .
139.	2017, January	PM Kvirikashvili	New Years Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “President, PM’s New Year Addresses.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , January 1, 2017. https://agenda.ge/news/94473/eng .

140.	2017, March	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 39th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . March 29, 2017. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/360641-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
141.	2017, May	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the signing of the co-called agreement between the Russian Federation and its occupation regime in Sokhumi on the establishment of the joint information-coordination center</i> . May 18, 2017. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/997112-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-rusetis-fe .
142.	2017, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the 9th anniversary of the August 2008 War</i> . August 7 th , 2017. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/774573-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis .
143.	2017, August	PM Kvirikashvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “At August War Commemoration Georgian Leaders Speak of Peaceful Reintegration, Reunification.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 8, 2017. https://civil.ge/archives/218123 .
144.	2017, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the installation of barbed wire fences in the occupied Abkhazia region</i> . August 11, 2017. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/133100-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-okupirebul .
145.	2017, August	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Full	Georgian; translation through Google Translate	Government of Georgia. <i>პრემიერ-მინისტრის კომენტარი</i> [Prime Minister’s Remarks]. August 22, 2017. https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=462&info_id=62258 .
146.	2017, August	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Full	Georgian; translation through	Government of Georgia. <i>პრემიერ-მინისტრის კომენტარი</i> [Prime Minister’s Remarks]. August 24, 2017.

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147.	2017, August	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Giorgi Kvirikashvili: Speculations on Russia’s Assistance in Borjomi Wildfire “Shameful”.” Civil.ge, August 31, 2017. https://civil.ge/archives/218261.
148.	2017, September	PM Kvirikashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Civil.ge. “Prime Minister Kvirikashvili’s UN Speech.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 22, 2017. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=30461.
149.	2017, October	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 41st Round of the Geneva International Discussions.</i> October 12, 2017. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/168359-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s.
150.	2017, November	FM Janelidze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian Vice PM denounces incorporation of Tskhinvali army into Russian as ‘annexation’.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , November 28, 2017. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2017/2618#gsc.tab=0.
151.	2017, December	FM Janelidze	Address OSCE Ministerial Council	Full	English; original language	The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). “#OSCEMC17 Second Plenary Session: Georgia.” YouTube, 4:30. December 8, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORJJltWgEB0.
152.	2017, December	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 42nd round of the Geneva International Discussions.</i> December 14, 2017. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/303568-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s.
153.	2017, December	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Kvirikashvili on Geneva Talks Upgrade, Georgia-Russia Trade Monitoring Agreement.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 22, 2017. https://civil.ge/archives/218938.

154.	2018, January	PM Kvirikashvili	New Year Address	Full	Georgian; translation through Google Translate	Government of Georgia. <i>საქართველოს პრემიერ-მინისტრის მილოცვა</i> [Congratulations by the Prime Minister of Georgia]. January 1, 2018. https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=462&info_id=63218 .
155.	2018, January	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgia condemns ratification of Russia-Tskhinvali military deal.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , January 25, 2018. Accessed through the Wayback Machine. https://agenda.ge/news/94473/eng .
156.	2018, February	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>The Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the death of the citizen of Georgia Archil Tatumashvili detained by the Russian occupation regime</i> . February 23, 2018. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/916932-saqartvelos-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeb .
157.	2018, March	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil Georgia. “Prime Minister Appeals to Russian Authorities, Offers Direct Dialogue with Sokhumi, Tskhinvali.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , March 9, 2018. https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=30935 .
158.	2018, March	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “PM Kvirikashvili urges Russia to take joint steps to resolve “complicated situation” over Tatumashvili’s death in occupied Tskhinvali.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , March 9, 2018. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2018/533#gsc.tab=0 .
159.	2018, March	PM Kvirikashvili	Statement	Full	Georgian; translated through Google Translate	Government of Georgia. <i>პრემიერ-მინისტრი რუსეთისადმი გაგზავნილ მიმართვაზე გაკეთებულ შეფასებებს გამოეხმაურა</i> [Prime Minister Responds to Russia’s Remarks]. March 14, 2018. https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=491&info_id=63906 .
160.	2018, March	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 43rd round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . March 29, 2018. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/302063-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .

161.	2018, May	FM Janelidze	Speech at the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers	Excerpt	English; original language	Civil.ge. “Georgian FM Speaks on Abkhazia, S. Ossetia at CoE Ministerial.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 19, 2018. https://civil.ge/archives/242172 .
162.	2018, June	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 44th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . June 21, 2018. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/967953-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
163.	2018, July	FM Zalkaliani	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian government: Russian Federation is obliged to respect the norms of international law.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , July 19, 2018. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2018/1533#gsc.tab=0 .
164.	2018, August	PM Bakhtadze	Speech	Full	Georgian; translated through Google Translate	Government of Georgia. <i>პრემიერ-მინისტრის გამოსვლა მრგვალი მაგიდის ფორმატის შეხვედრაზე - “მშვიდობისა და უსაფრთხოებისთვის - 2008 წლის რუსეთ-საქართველოს ომიდან 10 წლის შემდეგ”</i> [Prime Minister’s speech at the Roundtable Format Meeting – “For Peace and Security – 10 Years After the 2008 Russo-Georgian War]. August 7, 2018. https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=491&info_id=67357 .
165.	2018, August	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “MFA: Russia will have to change its decision on recognizing the independence of Georgian regions.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , August 26, 2018. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2018/1784#gsc.tab=0 .

166.	2018, September	PM Bakhtadze	Address at the UN General Assembly	Full	English; original language	Government of Georgia. <i>Speech by Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze at the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly</i> . September 27, 2018. https://www.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=497&info_id=68059 .
167.	2018, October	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 45th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . October 10, 2018. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/737145-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
168.	2018, October	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian MFA: statements of Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson are cynical.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , October 19, 2018. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2018/2168#gsc.tab=0 .
169.	2018, December	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 46th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . December 12, 2018. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/619290-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
170.	2019-2022	Government	Foreign Policy Strategy	Full	Georgian; translation through Google Translate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>2019-2022 წლების საქართველოს საგარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგია</i> [2019-2022 Georgian Foreign Policy Strategy]. Last accessed on August 15, 2024. https://mfa.gov.ge/Foreign-Policy-Strategy .
171.	2019, January	PM Bakhtadze	New Year Address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM’s New Year Address.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 1, 2019. https://civil.ge/archives/272901 .
172.	2019, April	Deputy FM Darsalia	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Deputy FM: no results at Geneva Int’l Discussions, as Russia remains “destructive”.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> . April 3, 2019. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2019/935#gsc.tab=0 .

173.	2019, June	PM Bakhtadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian PM: It was very hard to see the MP of an occupying country at high tribune of Georgian Parliament.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , June 20, 2019. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2019/1621#gsc.tab=0 .
174.	2019, July	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 48th round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . July 3, 2019. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/160586-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadaba-zhenevis-s .
175.	2019, July	MFA	Response to Russian statement about flight ban	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgia responds to Lavrov: safety of foreign citizens absolutely ensured in Georgia.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , July 17, 2019. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2019/1949#gsc.tab=0 .
176.	2019, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 11th Anniversary of the August 2008 Russia-Georgia War</i> . August 7, 2019. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/633987-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadaba-2008-tslis .
177.	2019, August	PM Bakhtadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian officials pay tribute to victims of 2008 Russia-Georgia war.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> . August 8, 2019. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2019/2129#gsc.tab=0 .
178.	2019, August	PM Bakhtadze	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “On War Anniversary PM Talks of UNM Responsibility.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 7, 2019. https://civil.ge/archives/316155 .
179.	2019, September	Government	Government Program	Full	English; official translation	Government of Georgia. <i>Government Program 2019-2020</i> . September 2019. https://www.gov.ge/files/41_73525_555908_GovernmentProgram2019-2020.pdf .
180.	2019, September	President Zourabishvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	Civil.ge. “President Zourabishvili’s UNGA Speech.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , September 25, 2019. https://civil.ge/archives/321557 .

181.	2019, September	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Comment by the Official Representative of the Georgian Foreign Ministry regarding the statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson.</i> September 13, 2019. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/637393-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-oficialuri-tsarmomadge .
182.	2019, October	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 49th round of the Geneva International Discussions.</i> October 9, 2019. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/625860-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
183.	2019, October	FM Zalkaliani	Speech	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani Reports to Parliament.” October 17, 2019. https://civil.ge/archives/323505 .
184.	2019, December	FM Zalkaliani	Address at OSCE Ministerial Council	Full	English; original language	The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. “#OSCEMC19 Second Plenary Session: Georgia.” YouTube, 6:51. December 5, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqN5PJ-Bnpc .
185.	2019, December	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 50th round of Geneva International Discussions.</i> December 11, 2019. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/337882-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
186.	2019, December	PM Gakharia	Speech	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Gakharia Sums Up 2019, Speaks of Challenges, Achievements.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , December 30, 2019. https://civil.ge/archives/333405 .
187.	2020, January	PM Gakharia	New Year address	Full	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Giorgi Gakharia’s New Year Address.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , January 1, 2020. https://civil.ge/archives/333517 .

188.	2020, April	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the illegal installation along the occupation line of Tskhinvali region.</i> April 17, 2020. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/335748-saqartvelos-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeb .
189.	2020, April	FM Zalkaliani	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian FM says opening Russian trade representation not on agenda.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , April 21, 2020. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2020/1233#gsc.tab=0 .
190.	2020, May	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the Treaty on Open Skies.</i> May 27, 2020. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/992179-sagareo-utsyebis-komentari-ghia-cis-khelshekruleb .
191.	2020, May	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian MFA: Russia doubled its illegal activities in Georgia and amid pandemic.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , May 22, 2020. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2020/1604#gsc.tab=0 .
192.	2020, June	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Georgian Foreign Ministry Decries “Borderization,” Russian Disinformation.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , May 22, 2020. https://civil.ge/archives/353203 .
				Full	Georgian; translation through Google Translate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>საგარეო საქმეთა სამინისტროს განცხადება [Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs]</i> . May 22, 2020. Accessed through the Wayback Machine. https://mfa.gov.ge/News/sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-%2833%29.aspx?CatID=5
193.	2020, June	PM Gakharia	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Prime Minister Gakharia Stresses Russia Threat, EU Priorities During Annual Parliamentary Address.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , June 26, 2020. https://civil.ge/archives/357304 .

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195.	2020, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 12th Anniversary of the August 2008 Russia-Georgia War</i> . August 7, 2020. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/411362-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis .
196.	2020, August	PM Gakharia	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “At August War Commemoration Georgian leaders Speak of Reconciliation, Peace Policy.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 8, 2020. https://civil.ge/archives/361931 .
197.	2020, August	PM Gakharia	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “PM Gakharia on 12th anniversary of Russia-Georgia war: “Russia must end its destabilisation actions.” Agenda.ge, August 7, 2020. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2020/2483#gsc.tab=0 .
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200.	2020, November	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on approval of the programme on creation of common socio-economic space between the Russian Federation and the occupied Abkhazia region of Georgia</i> . November 24, 2020. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/293737-saqartvelos-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeb .

201.	2020, December	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 51st Round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . December 11, 2020. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/789188-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
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203.	2021, January	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the Judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the case concerning the August 2008 Russia-Georgia War</i> . January 25, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/207721-saqartvelos-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeb .
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205.	2021, February	PM Garibashvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “PM Garibashvili”s address to nation: “Today is not the time for division.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , February 23, 2021. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2021/497#gsc.tab=0 .
206.	2021, March	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 52nd Round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . March 27, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/573307-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
207.	2021, June	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 53rd Round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . June 30, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/815957-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .
208.	2021, August	PM Garibashvili/ FM Zalkaliani	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “PM Garibashvili presents annual report, 10-year development plan in parliament.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , June 25, 2021. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2021/1745#gsc.tab=0 .

209.	2021, August	PM Garibashvili	Address	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “PM Garibashvili Reviews Year, Unveils 10-Year Plan During Parliamentary Address.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , June 25, 2021. https://civil.ge/archives/429232 .
210.	2021, August	FM Zalkaliani	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian FM presents 10-year action plan “Foreign policy focused on Western values, country’s Interests”. What does it include?” <i>Civil.ge</i> , August 9, 2021. https://agenda.ge/en/news/2021/2267#gsc.tab=0 .
211.	2021, August	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 13th anniversary of the August 2008 Russo-Georgia war</i> . August 7, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/560798-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-2008-tslis .
212.	2021, September	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on holding the Russian State Duma elections in Georgia’s occupied territories</i> . September 20, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/335135-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-rusetis-fe .
213.	2021, September	PM Garibashvili	UN General Assembly Address	Full	English; original language	United Nations. <i>Statement by H.E. Mr. Irakli Garibashvili. Prime Minister of Georgia. General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly</i> . September 24, 2021. https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/76/ge_en.pdf .
214.	2021, October	MFA	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Agenda.ge. “Georgian FM responds to media ‘misinterpretation’, says Georgia ‘not considering to participate’ in regional platform with Russia.” <i>Agenda.ge</i> , October 9, 2021. https://old.agenda.ge/en/news/2021/3070#gsc.tab=0 .
215.	2021, October	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. <i>Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the 54th Round of the Geneva International Discussions</i> . October 13, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/381455-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-zhenevis-s .

216.	2021, November	PM Garibashvili	Statement	Excerpt	English; translation by news outlet	Civil.ge. “Garibashvili Talks UNM-Friendly Foreigners, Russia, New Initiatives.” <i>Civil.ge</i> , November 11, 2021. https://civil.ge/archives/457340 .
217.	2021, December	MFA	Statement	Full	English; official translation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <i>Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the statement made by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10 December</i> . December 11, 2021. https://mfa.gov.ge/en/statements-by-mfa/620187-sagareo-saqmeta-saministros-ganckhadeba-rusetis-sa .
218.	2021, December	FM Zalkaliani	Address at OSCE Ministerial Council	Full	English; original language	The Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE). “#OSCEMC2021 Statement by the Head of the Delegation of Georgia.” YouTube, 8:16. December 2, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiWIMimVUT8 .