



# **Georgian Foreign Policy Towards the North Caucasus**

July 2023

University of Glasgow: 2684004p

University of Trento: 233479

Charles University: 84345133

**Presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of International  
Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic  
Studies**

Word count: 22,574

Supervisor: Dr. Huseyn Aliyev

Date of Submission: 25-07-2023



## **ABSTRACT**

Researching Georgian foreign policy towards the North Caucasus is essential as it offers insights into regional security, cross-border challenges, conflict resolution efforts, and the dynamics of small states' foreign policy behaviour. Understanding Georgia's approach to this strategically significant region can have broader implications for regional stability and cooperation in the South Caucasus and beyond. Against this background, this study seeks to explore the national role conceptions of Georgia in relation to the North Caucasus region as perceived by the leaders of the country over the course of the last three decades. The fact that nowadays in Georgia, there is no tangible foreign policy strategy towards this region seems puzzling, given the significance of the region for the national security of Georgia. In order to observe and identify the national role conceptions as perceived by the presidents of Georgia, this thesis employs the role theory to look for the trends in the foreign policy rhetoric of the leaders of the country. Utilising discourse analysis on various different sources, this thesis came to the conclusion that there were three main roles that presidents perceived for Georgia over the years in relation to the region of the North Caucasus. These are the role of stabiliser, initiator and role model. This means that the role theory account is particularly well suited to describe the foreign policy rhetoric of Georgia towards the region of the North Caucasus.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework .....	8
1.1 Conceptualisation: Foreign Policy and small states.....	8
1.2. Role Theory – Small state and foreign policy.....	14
Chapter 2 – Methodology .....	24
2.1 Research Design and Case Selection .....	24
2.2 Data collection and analysis.....	26
2.3 Limitations of the Study.....	28
Chapter 3 – Data and Analysis.....	30
3.1. Zviad Gamsakhurdia 1991-1992.....	30
3.2 Eduard Shevardnadze 1992-2003 .....	37
3.3 Mikheil Saakashvili 2003-2013 .....	50
3.4. Georgian Dream 2012 - Present.....	62
Conclusion .....	64
Bibliography .....	71

## Introduction

The fact that the North Caucasus region has a substantial impact on Georgia's security is undeniable. The significance of the North Caucasus is linked to three major challenges. These are as follows: 1. Security; 2. Economy and tourism; and 3. Georgia as a regional player. The North Caucasus might be both an opportunity and a problem for Georgia (Haindrava, 2012). On the one hand, strengthening commercial and tourism links with Georgia's neighbouring region is mutually advantageous; on the other hand, Georgia has the potential to become a regional player in the Caucasus. Georgia, on the other hand, cannot reach this position without a distinct policy towards the North Caucasus (Ibid). As a result, using the North Caucasus as a potential resource requires a well-thought-out program that will provide Georgia with both economic rewards and a reputation. This, of course, would be ideal if it weren't for the security issues: the North Caucasus' instability, North Caucasian volunteers' participation in armed conflicts against Georgia in the 1990s and August 2008, and Russia's manipulation of the region's instability and use of the North Caucasus as a tool against Georgia. The North Caucasus is unstable for a variety of causes, which are expressed in political Islamism and terrorism. These two events are intertwined and pose a challenge for both Russia and Georgia.

Despite the fact that the situation has comparatively calmed in the last several years, the North Caucasus remains a volatile region. At the same time, there is still a risk of the war spilling over into Georgia and the Pankisi situation reoccurring. Furthermore, in Russian politics, how Moscow manipulates the issue is frequently considerably more important than what is actually going on in the region. As a result, Georgia is continually faced with the risk that “Russia will deliberately transfer the conflict [in the North Caucasus] to Georgia” (Kakhishvili, 2015). As a result, it can be stated that security concerns frequently outweigh the economic benefits that can result from the strengthening of links between Georgia and the people of the North Caucasus. On the other hand, the stabilisation of the situation in the North Caucasus is

most likely the outcome of the Russian central government's proactive stance, owing to which the Sochi Winter Olympics were hosted without incident. As a result, Russia has demonstrated that it has effective authority over its own territory, including the North Caucasus. However, this was not always the case, and just a few years before the Olympics, the North Caucasus represented Russia's Achilles heel, which the Georgian authorities recognised in different ways at different times. If Zviad Gamsakhurdia supported the idea of a united Caucasian home, 8,000 Chechen refugees and 1,500 rebels took refuge in the Pankisi valley, which Sergey Ivanov referred to as "mini Afghanistan" at the "threshold of Russia": "Georgia, which is constantly afraid that Russia will interfere in its internal affairs, does everything it can to covertly help its much smaller neighbour" (The Economist, 1999). Georgia did not have a distinct policy towards the North Caucasus following the Rose Revolution of 2003, during the first term of Mikheil Saakashvili's administration. However, the 2008 war proved to be a watershed moment, and Tbilisi began to take continuous steps to rebuild relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus.

As derived from the facts given above, the region of the North Caucasus is extremely important for Georgia in terms of national security and other factors. While the importance of this region means that one would expect Georgia to prioritise ensuring a robust foreign policy strategy with this region, today, we can see that this is not the case. Georgian state today does not have any tangible foreign policy strategy directed to this region which points to the fact that the government does not see any role for Georgia here. This creates a baffling puzzle because, as already mentioned above, this region is very important for the national security of Georgia, but creating a tangible foreign policy is neglected. It is important to note that there is a severe lack of information regarding this issue in the academic literature. Even though there have been a lot of opinions that this is an important topic to study, there is a gap that needs to be filled. Thus, there is a well-known issue that needs to be addressed. Against

this background, this study aims to determine if there was a foreign policy strategy towards this region in the past and how the roles of Georgia were perceived. For this purpose, it seeks to answer the research question: How do leaders of Georgia see the National Role Conceptions of Georgia regarding the region of the North Caucasus?

In order to answer the research question, the study relies on literature to explain the role conceptions in the foreign policy strategy, role theory and concepts of foreign policy, National Role Conception and small state. The reason behind choosing this theory is that it is the most suitable to explain the roles that the leaders of the country apply to their states and to show the small country foreign policy strategy through these role conceptions. While there can be several different roles that the leaders can attribute to their countries, it is the purpose of the empirical part of the thesis to find out which ones Georgian leaders have attributed to Georgia over the course of the last three decades.

As for a research design, I decided to proceed with a single case study. A single case study will allow this thesis to provide a comprehensive assessment of a more extended time period in which there were different leaders and, therefore, different foreign policy strategies. To explain the case selection, besides the initial interest in the case of Georgia, Georgia is a particularly insightful and intriguing case to explore the dynamics of foreign policy strategies and national role conceptions because it is a small state with a rich history, situated in between East and West and has many influences and challenges. As already explained in the previous paragraph, there are several reasons why Georgia should have a clear foreign policy strategy towards the region of the North Caucasus, and the fact that it does not today creates a puzzle and makes it interesting to look at the past and see how this issue was dealt with in the past. Georgia is facing two ongoing secessionist conflicts on its territory, and both of them have ties with Russia and the North Caucasus. Given the situation with

Russia nowadays, this study is timely to look at different foreign policy strategies towards this region. As for the methods, the study will employ qualitative analysis and directly use the data gathered from the speeches, addresses and interviews of the presidents of Georgia. Therefore, the analysis will allow the research to observe and identify the rhetoric of the leaders of the country and thus determine the national role conceptions and foreign policy strategy.

Following the introduction, the thesis will consist of three main chapters: the first chapter will build a theoretical framework based on a literature review on role theory. The second chapter will describe the methodological framework, including the methods used for analysing the data for the empirical part. The third chapter will consist of the empirical part and will present the discourse analysis of data. Each chapter will consist of sections focused on specific topics. At the end of the thesis, the final conclusions will be presented.

## Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

As described in the introduction, this thesis revolves around foreign policy and its development. In today's world, every state is in need of a comprehensive foreign policy with strategies and guidelines for conduct with other states. This is especially important for the states that have a more challenging time to achieve important goals such as economic stability, territorial integrity and peace. This chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first part of this chapter, essential concepts like policy, foreign policy, small state, and ... will be conceptualised and thoroughly explained. In the second part, this chapter will also introduce the theoretical framework, drawing on the literature on role theory. The views of different authors regarding the role theory and concepts of foreign policy will be examined.

### 1.1 Conceptualisation: Foreign Policy and small states

First of all, since this study is centrally concerned with the phenomenon of foreign policy behaviour, it is crucial to provide a definition and conceptualisation for foreign policy; in order to do so, it is essential to have the definition of the policy itself. In a widely spread and accepted definition of policy, Dye describes public policy as “anything a government chooses to do or not to do” (Dye, 2017, p. 1). If we look at another definition provided by Rudolf Klein and Theodore Marmor, public policy can be defined as “what governments do and neglect to do” (Klein & Marmor, 2006, p. 892). Here we can observe that it is stressed that the policy is about choice. It is not something that happens by itself. Instead, there is a myriad of different choices involved, including the choice of reasons for action or inaction, choices of how to react and respond to the outcomes of the policy, and the choices of the instruments of policies as well. To connect this to the case under discussion, any foreign policy is a policy, and when a government decides to adopt a particular course of foreign policy, this is a choice that they are making. As already stipulated, foreign policy is a form of public policy, but it is important to look at the



definitions of foreign policy itself in the literature. If we start with a broad lens, as Fatih Tayfur mentions, “foreign policy is the behaviour of states mainly towards other states in the international system through their authorised agents” (Tayfur, 1994, p. 113). As a policy designed to be implemented outside the territorial boundaries of a state, foreign policy is directed towards the external environment. In another definition, Clarke and White mention, “Foreign policy, like domestic policy, is formulated within the state, but unlike domestic policy, is directed and must be implemented in the environment external to the state” (White, 1989, p. 5). When we talk about foreign policy, if we want to know what it is, we should also look at what it is not. In order to clarify this concept further, it can be useful to distinguish it from domestic politics. In some views, foreign policy is a very differentiated area of governmental activity in the sense that it is equated with the security and core values of state and domestic politics should not interfere in it (Tayfur, 1994, p. 115). There are other views as well, for example, one of Wallace, who sees foreign policy as a “boundary issue” between domestic politics and the international environment (Wallace, 1974). According to him, foreign policy acts as a bridge between the nation-state and its international environment. Another aspect where he sees foreign policy as a boundary is between Political Science and International Relations, thus domestic politics and government and international politics and diplomacy (Ibid). To look at another author, Rosenau, identifies three distinct ways of thinking about a country's foreign policy: foreign policy as orientations, foreign policy as plans and commitments, and foreign policy as activities (behaviours) (Rosenau, 1976, pp. 16-17). Orientations serve as the most fundamental blueprints for behaviour, comparable to the constitution of a company or organisation. When used in this context, the term "foreign policy" refers to the overarching tendencies and guiding principles that inform the ways in which states conduct themselves in international affairs. They are deeply rooted in the histories, customs, and goals of the societies to which they belong. In the context of plans and commitments, the term "foreign policy" refers to the strategies and

decisions that are directed towards achieving particular objectives (Ibid). They are considered to be adaptations of orientations to their respective actual situations. To put it another way, they are the embodiment of the transformation of principles into standards. In conclusion, the term "foreign policy" refers to the activity of states acting in accordance with their predetermined orientations, plans, and commitments with regard to the happenings and circumstances that occur within the framework of the international system (Ibid).

Foreign policy, as described above, includes many aspects in itself. When there are shifts in these aspects, there is a change in foreign policy behaviour. It is important to address the concept of policy change in this section as well. Policy change can also refer to the introduction of new and innovative policies as opposed to the modification of an existing policy, which means that change can take various forms, depending on whether there was an initial absence or presence. If there is already a policy in place, then change would refer to a modification of the policy or the policy itself. But if there was no policy in place, change implies the establishment of a policy, and if there is no change, the absence of a policy continues. In this particular instance, the adoption of a proposed legislative framework or the failure to do so can be conceptualised as a change in policy or as continuity (non-change). When discussing policy change, it is essential to consider what it is not. The opposite of policy change is a policy that does not change, also known as policy continuity. In relation to the case under consideration, if there would be a continuous policy in regard to foreign policy behaviour, it would be essentially policy continuity. When referring to foreign policy, it is less likely for a policy to be absent. Policies can change, but every sovereign state has policies that are deemed to be a part of its foreign policy behaviour. Thus, the absence of a policy can be considered a policy, and in this instance, this policy is continuous. Policy innovation can be defined as the adoption of a new policy (Shipan & Volden, 2008, p. 841). To relate this to the case study, policy innovation would be the emergence of a new

policy regarding foreign policy when none existed before. As stated previously, the adoption of a legislative framework is a policy change. In the absence of a legislative framework, it would be a policy shift to establish one.

Prior to discussing the theories themselves, it is essential to differentiate between policy change and policy reform. As Lucie Cerna notes in her paper, these terms are frequently used interchangeably in the literature, but it is important to distinguish between them (Cerna, 2013, p. 4). Policy change is a significant shift in existing structures or the introduction of new and innovative policies (Bennett & Howlett, 1992, p. 275). On the other hand, policy reform would be a change in a policy, but as Fullan notes (Fullan, 2000, p. 6), reform may not be able to generate change. It is essential to clarify what non-change in policy entails. When I refer to non-change in policy, absence of policy change, policy continuity, or inertia in policy, I am referring to the propensity of policies to remain unchanged, to persist over time, despite changing conditions. In this context, policy change refers to overcoming policy inertia.

To move on to another important concept which is relevant to this study, we need to provide a definition for a small state. First of all, it is crucial to mention that there is no widely accepted one definition for a small state. Regardless of this fact, there is a considerable amount of literature concentrated on defining what is considered a small state. There are different criteria that are applied to determine whether a state can be considered to be small. The most widespread are population size, land area, or both combined. Tom Crowards, in his research, provides a practical methodology for combining population, land area and income parameters to categorise countries by relative size (Crowards, 2002, p. 172). Still, this study does not provide a clear definition of a small state. Based on this lack of general definition, studies conducted on small states proceed on the basis of very different conceptualisations of their main object of inquiry. Matthias Maass argues that there is a fundamental difference between the

definitions that rely on quantifiable criteria and the ones that are derived from qualitative criteria in order to capture the key characteristics of small states (Maass, 2009, pp. 65-66). Thus, there are two fundamental techniques in the relevant literature - objective and subjective - that are commonly utilised to construct a definition of a small state. To begin, some authors believe that strictly measurable criteria should be used to construct an absolute definition. An absolute definition can consider characteristics such as population, geographical size, GDP, or military capability, which should presumably indicate a state's (lack of) strength. When it comes to population size, as the most widespread criterion for defining the size of the state, there have been different views. To bring some definitions as examples, many scholars agreed in the past that a state with a total population of up to 1 million people would qualify as a small state (Clarke & Payne, 1987, p. 15). David Vital proposed a range of 10-15 million in population as a flexible upper limit (Vital, 1967, p. 8). For example, while analysing soon-to-be NATO member states, Männik employs Tom Crowards' paradigm, in which small nations are defined as having a population of 0.5 to 7 million, a land area of 7,000-124,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and a GDP of US\$ 0.7 to 7 billion (Männik, 2004). Männik, considering these parameters, identifies the three Baltic nations, Slovakia and Slovenia, as minor nations in the context of NATO enlargement in 2004 (Ibid). Naturally, there are a variety of different alternative indicators that have been employed as objective criteria (for example, looking at the number of votes in a certain organisational framework, the size of the diplomatic corps, and so on) (Panke, 2010). The fundamental issue with using purely objective criteria is establishing borders between small and large, or even between such categories. Another consideration is that measurable/objective measures may not always describe a state's influence in a given situation (e.g., the effects of military capabilities on EU decision-making) (Thorhallsson & Wivel, 2006, p. 654). A myriad of definitions for the small state try to utilise qualitative criteria for finding a definition. One approach is to define small states in contrast to other

large states. Therefore, small states are those that are not large states (Maass, 2009, p. 77). According to these views, small states are the ones that are of no importance to larger states (Vital, 1971, p. 9). A different approach looks at the behaviour of small states.

Because utilising purely objective criteria can be excessively rigorous, some scholars have only used a subjective strategy. The approach given by Keohane, who proposed that scholars should primarily focus on state leaders' perceptions of their role and their amount of impact on the international system, is a famous example here (Keohane, 1969, p. 296). According to Keohane, the critical factor affecting the distinctive behaviour of small states is leaders' self-perceptions (Ibid, p. 297). Rothstein takes a similar "psychological" approach, arguing that "a small power is a state that recognises that it cannot obtain security primarily through the use of its own capabilities and that it must rely fundamentally on the assistance of others." (Rothstein, 1968). Small states are thought to have limited involvement in international affairs, to favour international governmental organisations, to be avid advocates of international law, to avoid the use of military force, and to generally have limited foreign policy priorities that focus primarily on the regional level (Evans & Newnham, 1998, pp. 500-501). But as Rothstein mentions, the types of behaviour that are supposedly defining characteristics of small states might just be effects of this smallness after all, so characteristics are secondary if we look at it analytically, therefore they are a symptom and not an illness (Rothstein, 1968, p. 22).

If we ask the question, "What is a small state?" as demonstrated above, there can be a lot of different answers. After all the discussion, the main issue remains that there is no consensus or even widely accepted definition that can be used as a yardstick. Even if certain essential criteria were found and viewed as dominating aspects of small states, their order has altered throughout time. Whereas throughout the eighteenth and up to the mid-twentieth century, the lack

of power was regarded as the primary variable of tiny nations, a broader concept of “vulnerability” was promoted in the 1980s, only to be gradually overtaken by a focus on the small states' (lack of) “resilience” (Maass, 2009). Taking the considerations as mentioned earlier into account, this thesis employs a definition of a tiny state that stresses the spatiotemporal context. As a result, a small state can be characterised simply as a weak link in an asymmetric relationship (Mouritzen & Wivel, 2005). Furthermore, to make the definition more universal, the vulnerability is recognised using both subjective and objective criteria that are chosen based on the circumstances of the instance under consideration. If we connect this to the case of this study, we can ask, is Georgia a small country? Even after applying all of the measures as mentioned above, Georgia easily qualifies as a small state based on both objective and subjective criteria.

Having introduced the main concepts, the following section is going to introduce the theoretical framework derived from role theory.

## 1.2. Role Theory – Small state and foreign policy

As an approach to the study of foreign policy, role theory arose with the pioneering work of Holsti, who suggested that decision-makers' ideas of their state's place on the world stage influenced that state's foreign policy behaviour (Holsti, 1970). The primary notion of this theory, the role, is inspired by the theatre, where actors play roles on stage. These performers contribute their identities to their parts, but they are also constrained by the playwright's language and the physical qualities of the stage on which they perform. Roles are patterns of suitable or expected behaviour derived from the actor's social status in an organised group or the types of persons that can exist in a particular society. Roles are thus a blend of self-concept and social acknowledgement imposed by others (Wehner & Thies, 2014). As Holsti describes, generally, the national role conceptions include “the policymakers' own definitions of the

general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions, suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems” (Holsti, 1970, p. 246).

Role theory has its basis in sociology, social psychology and anthropology. These disciplines' scholarship is characterised by two large streams of role theory: structural role theory and symbolic interactionism. Both "emphasise the need to analyse social phenomena from the perspectives of participants in social processes," although their emphasis differs. Structural role theory emphasises how humans are socialised into pre-existing roles, whereas symbolic interactionism highlights how humans interpret and recreate their roles, altering social structure (Stryker & Statham, 1985). In other words, these two strands of role theory contrast in their focus on the importance of social structure in influencing human behaviour vs humans' ability to define or change their roles—and hence the social structure within which they function (Breuning, 2018).

The emphasis in role theory, as applied in political science, is on the role(s) that the state plays in international politics. The interplay between the state and the international system was of particular interest to early role theorists. More current role theory research looks at the domestic political dynamics of roles. Few IR researchers explored decision makers' cognitions or recognised rationality as "bounded" at the time Holsti adopted role theory into his work (Simon, 1985). However, in accordance with social psychologists' definitions of role theory, Holsti recognised that foreign policy decision-making and behaviour are "primarily influenced by policymakers' role conceptions, domestic needs and demands, and critical events or trends in the external environment". In other words, Holsti argued that decision makers' "perceptions, values, and attitudes" are important (Ibid, p. 243). These fundamental

assumptions are familiar to behavioural IR experts today, but they were novel at the time.

Holsti's empirical work classified "statements from the highest-level policymakers" in order to determine presidents', prime ministers', or foreign ministers' "role conceptions" (Ibid, 256). Holsti established that there were "at least seventeen national role conceptions that policymakers elaborate frequently enough to constitute part of a national role conception typology" (Ibid, 273) using a rigorously crafted set of coding procedures. He saw that there were considerably more role concepts than could be obtained from earlier examinations of international politics. He also emphasised that contrary to popular belief, states generally played numerous roles.

This was frequently due to governments' "different sets of established relationships in the world or within a region (probably both)" (Ibid, 277). Not unexpectedly, Holsti observed that major powers played more roles than small and developing governments on average. Holsti's notion of decision makers' national roles was novel. Nonetheless, his empirical study attempted to identify and count roles in methods comparable to those of other behavioural and social scientists of the time. Furthermore, early role theory scholarship in politics and IR focused on the impact of international factors on the national role conceptions adopted by a state's decision-makers (Breuning, 2018).

National role conceptions entail the application of role theory, derived from social psychology, to the analysis of state interactions. In this context, a role is an extensive pattern of behaviour and attitudes that constitute a strategic response to recurring situations. It is a combination of the actor's perception of how they should act, societal expectations, and the specific setting in which the role plays out. Actors use their roles as a reliable compass to navigate the complexities of the world and bring order to their surroundings. Holsti was one



of the first pioneering theorists of international relations to apply role theory to the global context. According to his definition, national role conceptions are the policymakers' own comprehension of the types of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions regarded as suitable for their state, as well as the continual tasks their state should perform within the international system. It reflects their conception of how their state should interact with and relate to the external environment (Gorener & Aras, 2010, p. 76).

The Role approach, rooted in the domain of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), presents a more robust and nuanced perspective for comprehending the intricacies of small states' foreign policy behaviour when compared to conventional International Relations viewpoints. FPA's emphasis on the purposive actions of human decision-makers and their subsequent impact on a state's external conduct provides a fertile groundwork to explore the relationship between state size and foreign policy action. By delving into the concept of national role conceptions (NRCs), defined as the distinct perceptions held by policymakers regarding the appropriate range of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions befitting their state, along with the potential functions their state should continuously undertake within the international system, this proposed framework allows for a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between small states' identity, aspirations, and policy choices in the global arena. Embracing this approach enables scholars and analysts to gain valuable insights into how small states navigate the complexities of international politics, utilise their inherent advantages, and respond strategically to external challenges and opportunities while carving a distinctive place for themselves within the broader global context (Gigleux, 2016, p. 28).

Roles within the international system are not solely determined by a state's self-conception or identity (ego). Instead, they also arise through a process of socialisation, whereby states adopt certain roles based on the expectations of

other political actors. As a result, national role conceptions (NRCs) are a blend of how a state sees itself and the roles that others in the international community anticipate it to assume. In essence, they represent a complex interplay between a state's own perceptions and the social recognition and expectations imposed upon it by external actors (Ibid, p. 28).

Role theory revolves around the central notion of roles. While the role expectations imposed by other actors in the international system play a significant role in shaping a nation's role conceptions, they are not the sole determinants. If they were, structural explanations concerning the behaviour of both smaller and larger states would have more explanatory power than they currently exhibit. The expectations of other states are partially influenced by their assessment of a state's capacity to act. However, when we examine states that behave as norm entrepreneurs or rogue states or why comparable small states do not adopt similar foreign policies, measures of a state's material capacity struggle to provide satisfactory explanations (Breuning, 2018, p. 6).

Role theory is particularly well-suited to address the interaction between ideational and material incentives. By focusing on how leaders perceive their country's role, role theory can develop a framework for understanding national role conceptions, which are influenced not only by the material capabilities of the state but also by intangible elements. These intangible factors include decision-makers' views of their state's role, grounded in their comprehension of its material resources, as well as their vision for the state's future, especially shaped by the roles played by norm entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs actively seek to promote specific policy innovations at the international level. Although initially conceived for non-governmental activism and often linked to individual decision-makers, role theory has also been extended to analyse the behaviour of states (Ibid, p. 6).

During the latter part of the first decade of the 21st century, there has been a resurgence of interest in role theory as an approach to studying politics and international relations. This renewed scholarship has shifted its focus from structural role theory towards a closer alignment with symbolic interactionist role theory, which is a perspective commonly found in sociology. As a result, contemporary role theory in politics and international relations now places greater importance on decision-makers or agents while acknowledging their embeddedness within institutions or structures. Furthermore, this approach embraces the fundamental principles of behavioural international relations (IR), recognising that decision-makers have inherent cognitive limitations. They possess a restricted capacity to process information and are prone to various biases and heuristics that influence their reasoning processes (Ibid, p. 7).

Despite prevailing notions suggesting that small states have limited and possibly regional foreign policy influence, role theory presents a different perspective, proposing that foreign policy decision-makers in these states may discern and exploit specific advantages. For example, a small state might leverage its strategically advantageous geographic location or abundant natural resources. Moreover, the efficacy of decision-makers in mobilising sufficient domestic support around a particular norm could empower the state to assume a prominent role in advocating for that norm on the international stage. This underscores the notion that role enactment is not merely dictated by the role expectations of other states, although such expectations do contribute to shaping a nation's role conceptions. Instead, domestic dynamics play a pivotal role in influencing how a country perceives its own role in global affairs. Notably, early renditions of role theory did not adequately emphasise these internal dynamics, but contemporary research has increasingly delved into exploring and comprehending their significance (Ibid, p. 11).

Gigleux utilises role theory as a tool to gain deeper insights into the foreign policies of small states, revealing that national identity plays a crucial role in shaping the actions of these states within the international system. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that the role conceptions of small states are not solely determined by domestic factors but are also influenced by external elements, such as the perceptions, expectations, and demands of other actors (Ibid, p. 11).

The role theory has the potential to establish an empirical link between international relations agents and structures. These agents, which include both individuals and groups, are profoundly rooted in the social and cultural entities of the nations they serve as foreign policy decision-makers. These institutional frameworks have a significant influence on their worldviews. As agents navigate the complexities of the international system, they are faced with an array of possibilities and limitations. On occasion, agents utilise substantial impact and have the ability to lead to shifts in the framework of the global system. Nevertheless, there are times when agents face restricted opportunities to modify predetermined roles inside the system (Breuning, 2011, p. 16). In earlier work, Holsti astutely acknowledged the interaction between agents and structures, hypothesising that foreign policy behaviour is heavily influenced by policymakers' conceptions of their roles, domestic imperatives, and requirements, as well as significant events or shifts in the external environment (Ibid, p. 19).

Given the subsequent interpretations of role theory in a structural context, it is perplexing that Holsti chose to emphasise the impact of domestic factors on national role conceptions. During periods of intense international conflict, he argued, self-defined national role conceptions are more vital than externally imposed roles. Yet, Holsti also acknowledged that agency was not the only determining factor, implying that decision-makers and actors responsible for the state's actions are aware of international status differentiating factors, and their

policies reflect this recognition. Holsti advocated domestic sources as the primary determinants of national role conceptions, regardless of recognising the value of external factors (Ibid, p. 19).

The relative value of domestic and international sources is eventually the subject of empirical research, which may reveal that there is no single solution to the agent–structure problem. It is likely that empirical research will demonstrate that, under particular conditions and also over the course of time, one or the other can lead more to explain foreign policy behaviour. Providing the conditions under which agents and structures offer more convincing explanations for foreign policy behaviour is a task that remains essentially unfinished. To determine how to conduct this empirical research, initial hypotheses may be derived from the literature on size and foreign policy behaviour, which suggests that leaders of smaller, less powerful states are more likely to perceive that the international structure strongly influences their foreign policy (Ibid, p. 19).

The role approach's focus on the social and interactional origins of national roles makes it particularly well-suited for examining the actions of small states. It provides valuable insights into the social dimension of being a small state. This perspective is rooted in the belief that the significance of a state's physical attributes is only meaningful when viewed in the context of its experiences in social interactions. Early interpretations of the role approach emphasised structural factors as influential in shaping a state's national role(s), establishing a logical link between this approach and other theories concerning the impact of a state's characteristics on its foreign policy. However, contemporary role theorists have shifted their attention to the self-definition of roles by the actors themselves, offering a promising avenue for advancing our understanding of small states and their foreign policy behaviours (Gigleux, 2016, p. 29).

The role approach, in its attempt to explicate the concept of 'status,' aligns it with the notion of a “master role”, which pertains to the most prominent characteristic of an actor within an asymmetrical social system. This “master role” acts as a foundational template that states use to embody other auxiliary roles. By establishing an essential connection between agents and structures, the role approach possesses the potential to enrich the analysis of small states' behaviour significantly. Consequently, it challenges the conventional assumption that vulnerability serves as the primary starting point for studying small states and the consensus-driven perspective that has long characterised small states' policy-making. In essence, the role approach paves the way for exploring alternative levels of analysis and fosters linkages among them (Ibid, p. 29).

The theory in question offers an enriched understanding of small states' foreign policy, diverging from the neorealist standpoint that attributes their responses solely to material structures. Instead, it sheds light on the significant influence of an “intersubjective international structure”. For small states, it is not sufficient merely to view themselves as international normative agents; their recognition as such by other members of the international community becomes vital to wield normative impact and legitimacy. One can conceive of external actors as an international audience comprising interested states and institutions whose endorsement of the chosen roles is pivotal. Policymakers face the additional challenge of effectively communicating National Role Conceptions (NRCs) to their domestic audiences, ensuring the alignment of international enactments with domestic expectations. This task often entails weaving roles into 'ruling narratives,' representing beliefs and stories that frame actors' perceptions of the world during interactions. Consequently, domestic audiences gain awareness of their states' roles once policymakers translate rhetoric into tangible actions, effectively embodying the NRCs in practical foreign policy measures (Ibid, pp. 33-34).

Regarding National Role Conceptions (NRCs), previous scholarly work has often assumed the existence of a consensus surrounding roles without presenting concrete evidence or exploring the possibility of role contestation. There has been a traditional inclination to believe that policymakers generally concur on the appropriate international role for their state. This supposition is grounded in the notion that NRCs are socially constructed, collectively shared and shaped by domestic values, emerging from a broader cultural context. Essentially, national roles are the product of a state's historical trajectory, cultural heritage, and societal characteristics (Ibid, pp. 36-37).

Ultimately, the incorporation of role theory and national role conceptions is of paramount importance when delving into the foreign policy conduct of small states. These concepts provide invaluable insights into how these states perceive themselves and respond strategically to international intricacies. Through the analysis of national role conceptions, researchers gain a profound understanding of the interplay between a state's identity, aspirations, and policy choices, thereby shedding light on the adept manner in which small states navigate the complexities of global politics and assert their distinctive positions in the international arena. Moving forward, the next chapters of this thesis will present a methodological framework and the analysis of data.

## Chapter 2 – Methodology

The following chapter will present the methodological framework for this thesis. To answer the main research question and shed light on the topic of interest, this study will employ qualitative methods of research and analysis to find the main themes and topics in the rhetoric of the presidents of Georgia over the years and establish the role that they were trying to project for Georgia in the region of the North Caucasus. The research design is going to be a single case study, and the Republic of Georgia will be the case under observation. This thesis will use 57 documents, including speeches, addresses, and interviews of the presidents of Georgia as well as some secondary sources such as studies conducted on this matter and will mainly derive the conclusion by conducting discourse analysis of these sources and establishing the rhetoric conveyed by the leaders of the state.

### 2.1 Research Design and Case Selection

In order to conduct this study, I decided to choose a single case research design and focus on the case of Georgia in the time period 1991-2023. A single case study was the most appropriate and optimal design for this study because the research question was very specifically case-oriented, and it aimed to find out the central role trends in the foreign policy of Georgia when it comes to the region of the North Caucasus. One of the many definitions that we can find for a single case study, the one that Gerring uses, refers to it as an “in-depth study of a single unit” (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). As Yin mentions in his book, case studies are relevant and helpful in instances when the question asked requires an extensive and in-depth description of some social phenomenon, especially if we are looking for answers to questions such as “why” or “how” (Yin, 2018, p. 32). This is precisely why a single case study was the most appropriate research design for this study and enough to find the answers to the questions. If we look at the research question, “How do leaders of Georgia see the National Role Conceptions of Georgia regarding the region of the North Caucasus?” we can



see that the best suitable research design to answer it is a single case study which will allow the research to be deep and focused on a single case of one country – Georgia. Instead of looking at several different cases and looking for the same variables, a single case study looks at one specific case and observes different pieces of evidence within one case, in this instance, one country, for example (Toshkov, 2016, p. 285).

As for case selection, Georgia is a particularly good case to study foreign policy strategies and rhetoric and, therefore, national role conceptions when it comes to the North Caucasus region. This is because, for Georgia, the region of the North Caucasus carries a lot of importance in regard to security, economy and, very importantly here, Georgia's role as a regional actor. The North Caucasus region has been historically characterised by complex geopolitical dynamics, ethnic diversity, and lingering conflicts, making it a critical area of concern for regional stability and security. Georgia's foreign policy approach toward the North Caucasus has implications for its broader regional engagement and its relations with major powers like Russia. As Georgia shares borders with the North Caucasus, its policy decisions can influence regional dynamics and impact its own security interests. Hence, understanding Georgia's foreign policy toward the North Caucasus can shed light on the state's efforts to address cross-border challenges, such as terrorism, organised crime, and irregular migration, which have regional and international ramifications. Taking these facts into account, it seems puzzling that, nowadays, there is no proactive foreign policy directed at this region. For this reason, precisely, it becomes interesting to research this issue and find the strategies that Georgia has had in the past towards this region and the roles that it projected in this regard. For already mentioned reasons, Georgia is a likely case for it to have an active foreign policy and active role, and when this does not occur, it allows us to look at the past events and see how this issue was addressed by previous governments.

## 2.2 Data collection and analysis

For this thesis, I use qualitative research methods, more precisely, discourse analysis. I conducted a discourse analysis of 57 speeches, addresses and interviews of three presidents of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Eduard Shevardnadze and Mikheil Saakashvili. As for source selection, I selected the speeches, addresses, and interviews of the presidents of Georgia, where they discuss the topic of the North Caucasus. To be more precise, in the sources selected, they do not simply mention the North Caucasus, but they discuss the strategy of Georgian foreign policy towards this region and Georgia's role in this context. The sources have been mostly recovered from the websites of The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia and the Archives of the President of Georgia. These sources have been analysed with discourse analysis. It is important to briefly describe this method here as well and, with this, indicate why it was the best method to apply to this study. Language plays an important role in discourses and hence in their analysis. All discourse analysis approaches begin with the claim that our access to reality is always through language (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 8). This research depicts discourse analysis as the most suitable methodological tool to observe the national role conceptions because it is an “analysis of language as it is used to enact activities, perspectives, and identities” (Gee, 1999, p. 4). Epstein presents the discourse approach's three key ideas addressing the relationship between language, agency, and identity. For starters, language is powerful, and speaking implies acting. Second, social actors are speaking actors, and third, actor behaviour is governed by established discourses that define the range of possible acts (Epstein, 2010, p. 343). The discourse analysis technique investigates how actors define themselves by stepping into specific subject positions carved out by language (Ibid, p. 344). Our words are never neutral, whether we are conscious of it or not. They always depict the world in a specific way and form particular relationships with the people with whom we communicate (Jones,

2019, p. 14). According to Hansen, the focus of discourse analysis is on explicit articulations due to the discursive epistemology of discourse analysis (Hansen, 2006, p. 37). According to her, this is due to the primacy of language as the social medium where meaning is formed, implying that foreign policies are to be linked through discourse, which gives representations for the difficulties the policies are designed to tackle (Hansen, 2016, p. 102). Furthermore, Hansen (2006) believes that identifying a small number of basic discourses is a valuable methodological tool for discourse analysis. According to her, the analytical significance of using the core discourses approach is that it provides “a lens through which a multitude of different representations and policies can be seen as systematically connected and that they identify the key points of structuring disagreement within a debate” (Hansen, 2006, p. 46). In this study, it is expected that discourse analysis of the sources will identify the main discourses and rhetoric and, therefore, the perceived roles of the country as seen by the presidents.

When analysing the sources, in order for them to be “qualified” to represent the official narrative of the country, they have to meet some criteria. According to Hansen, the sources are supposed to “set out clear constructions of identity and policy; they are widely attended to by other politicians, the public and by governments throughout the world; and they are articulated by a formal political authority” (Hansen, 2006, p. 85). Based on these selections, the texts examined are from the most senior foreign policy leaders – the presidents. The analysed sources are from the time period 1991-2023. This is the time span of Georgian independence after the Soviet Union. This time will be divided into four periods. The first is 1991-1992, with the sources from the first President of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia. The second period is 1992-2003, and the second president is Eduard Shevardnadze. The next period is 2003-2013, third president of Georgia – Mikheil Saakashvili. The fourth and the final period starts in 2012, this is when the Georgian Dream party won the elections, and it lasts until now,

hence 2023. It is important to note that even though this fourth time period is there, it is only described in a short manner, given the fact that there is no tangible foreign policy strategy towards the North Caucasus.

As for the operationalisation of national role conceptions, it can take different forms, and in order to determine what roles were attributed to the country in the region at that time, I will use precisely this method – discourse analysis – and by observing the rhetoric of the presidents of Georgia, I will determine the roles attributed to the country. As already mentioned above, through discourse analysis, the language used in the speeches, addresses, and interviews will be analysed, and this will allow this study to determine the foreign policy rhetoric of the presidents towards the region of the North Caucasus and therefore find the roles that they attribute to the country.

### 2.3 Limitations of the Study

During the research process, several issues were identified that can be considered as limitations of the study. Since all of the sources used for data collection, meaning the speeches, addresses and the interviews of the presidents, are in the original language - in Georgian, and there is a requirement for translation, I am aware of the potential limitations that could arise from the translation of specific terminology, and I will provide in-depth explanations if they are required. Secondly, there is the obvious challenge of covering a time span of 32 years, even if this is not conducted strictly year-by-year. Alongside this, I recognise the limitation of the lack of documented archives. Even though there was enough information found on the subject and the study entirely achieved its goals, it is important to mention that due to the time passed over the years, it was challenging to find a detailed archive consisting of all the speeches, addresses and interviews given by presidents. There is a possibility that there could have been a larger sample of documents to be analysed. Here we can mention the fact that in Georgia, it is very challenging to find well-documented

archives, especially from the first periods of Georgian independence; given the time and very difficult political and economic situation, there was a problem of documenting everything, and it is very likely that a lot of speeches and addresses have not even been recorded and this could be considered as a limitation to this study due to possible missing speeches. It can be said with certainty that not all the speeches that these presidents have given over the course of three decades have been analysed. Therefore, there is a possibility that some of the information is missing. It is important to note here that, regardless, due to thorough observation and analysis of the data, the study has managed to achieve its goals and find the desired answers and gather results. Alongside these limitations, it is important to mention that there can be researcher bias while interpreting the language used by the people of interest – in this case, the presidents of Georgia. This is precisely why the study has been conducted purely based on the very straightforward messages that the presidents conveyed. Therefore, the issue of possible researcher bias has been mitigated by ensuring that the analysis was thorough and objective.

## Chapter 3 – Data and Analysis

The analysis part of this thesis will be structured chronologically, according to the time periods and different presidents/heads of state. Speeches and news articles will be used to conduct discourse analysis and discover what can be discerned while analysing the language. The recent history of the Georgian state can be divided into four parts according to different forces in the government. Based on this, there will be four main sections in this chapter. The first one will be 1991-1992 – Zviad Gamsakhurdia; the second one will be 1992-2003 – Eduard Shevardnadze; the third one will be 2003-2013 – Mikheil Saakashvili; and the last one is 2012-until today – the Georgian Dream party and its leaders. This last part, as already mentioned in the methodology chapter, will only be discussed briefly due to the lack of policy towards this region.

### 3.1. Zviad Gamsakhurdia 1991-1992

The first part will start with Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who was the first president of Georgia after the Soviet occupation. After gaining independence, the authorities of Georgia tried several times to develop a policy of relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus. The first was President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who had good relations with the North Caucasian nationalist activists since his dissident years (Kvakhadze, 2018). Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first President of Georgia, was the one who originally floated the concept of a "common Caucasian home," but the proposal was never put into action. Gamsakhurdia was not in power for very long. Therefore he was unable to carry out his objectives, and in addition to this, nobody had a good idea of how this "common Caucasian home" should be constructed or what it could possibly look like. On top of that, Moscow responded to this outlandish concept by founding the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus in 1989. This organisation later changed its name to the Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus. Its headquarters were located in Sukhumi. Even though Gamsakhurdia sent his representatives to the CMPC congresses, he criticised it heavily, and it was, in

actuality, an anti-Georgian enterprise. The Confederation is remembered for only one thing in history, and that is its strong engagement on the Abkhazian side of a conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia that occurred between 1992 and 1993. One can say that the early 1990s, which were marked by conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, was a period of a sharp deterioration in relations between Georgians and North Caucasians (although this concerns different ethnic groups of the region to varying degrees). This is despite the fact that Gamsakhurdia found refuge in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, after his overthrow.

The first speech that will be analysed is the one he delivered to the Iberic-Caucasian movement. This is one of the names of the Georgian Nationalist Union. A large portion of the speech is dedicated to explaining what nationalism means and why it is important to know about “your own national ethnogenesis”. He mentions that it is not accidental that Georgian kings have always had the aspiration to connect with people from North Caucasus. He mentions the commonalities and the past that unite these people. “We must remember that Georgians, Chechens, Ingush, Abkhazians, Circassians, Adyghians, Karachais, Balkars, Kabardians, Avarians, Lezgs and others are peoples of common Iberian origin, descendants of Proto-Iberians, inheritors of their world civilisation and culture!” (Gamsakhurdia, 1992). He, as a person who was pro-union between Iberic-Caucasian people, mentions the main arguments of people who are against this. “The main argument of the opponents of the unity of the Iberian-Caucasian peoples is the religious difference between the Georgians and the peoples of the North Caucasus. It should be noted that these people are not characterised by religious fanaticism, Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. They do not build relations with different countries and nations on the basis of religion. In addition, in our century, the confrontation between Islam and Christianity in the political sphere no longer has the same character and importance as it did during the Crusades.” Here if we look closely at the

language used, we can see that he tries to clarify that the difference between religions should not determine the relationship between these nations. Here we can see that in order to make his point, he points to the fact that “there are a lot of Georgians who are Muslims”, and this should not be a reason to sever ties with them. Here one interesting point to see is that one of the most important aspects of the Georgian nation – religion is shown not to be a problem for having a union with the peoples of the North Caucasus. He says that whoever is trying to stand in the way of this union with the arguments connected to religion either does not understand the role of religion in people’s lives and politics or is doing it with deliberate malice. This speech and the language used in it is a clear representation of Gamsakhurdia’s wish for cooperation with nations of the North Caucasus.

There are several speeches, addresses and news pieces that allow us to analyse the rhetoric of that time and therefore determine foreign policy behaviour or at least sentiment towards this region. One of such address that we can discuss is from 1991 towards Circassians regarding the anniversary of a tragic day in Circassian history, 21 May of 1864, when they lost their independence to the Russian Empire (Gamsakhurdia, 1991a). In his address, Zviad Gamsakhurdia mentions the important relationship between Georgian and Circassian people. He says that the relationship between the Georgian and Circassian peoples is characterised by sincere respect and that in the imagination of Georgians, Circassians have always been and are people of chivalrous nature, a person endowed with the best qualities of a true Caucasian (Ibid). He mentions that it should be noted that there is a great interest among prominent Georgian scientists and writers of the century in Circassian languages and culture, history and folklore. By saying this, Gamsakhurdia is underlining the important past and traditional and cultural heritage that is crucial to nations that have lost independence and are oppressed by others. By doing so, he shows respect and also understanding of what Circassians have gone through.



“Today, we Georgians, who are united by genetic kinship with Circassians and a common Caucasian consciousness, will honour the memory of Circassians who died for the freedom of their homeland. We believe that the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the Caucasus - Sindis, Kerkets and Meots - Circassians will occupy a worthy place in the community of peoples of the Caucasus and the world. We believe that nobody and nothing can stop the historical brotherhood and friendship of Georgians and Circassians. This will be a firm guarantee of the unity and success of the entire Caucasus. (Ibid)” Here come in again several interesting points. We can see that President Gamsakhurdia here is stipulating on the historical friendship and relationship between these two people, and through this, he refers to a larger community as well and talks about the unity of the entire Caucasus. It is important to note here that we see that Gamsakhurdia tries to relate to Northern Caucasus not only based on history, culture and neighbourhood but genetic kinship and “historical brotherhood” as well. This address represents Gamsakhurdia’s shown respect and support towards Circassian people and, through this, also a broader connection to North Caucasus.

Another interesting piece to discuss is the press conference of Zviad Gamsakhurdia with Georgian and Foreign journalists on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1991 after winning in the elections (Gamsakhurdia, 1991b). When asked a question about future plans, one of the topics was a forum for Caucasian people. “We intend to create a forum for the peoples of the Caucasus, where all those who have been oppressed by the communist regime, the communist empire, and they will unite to defend their freedom and human rights” (Ibid). Here we can observe the language and see that he is trying to show that these nations and people relate to each other, each other’s pain and suffering, shared historical trauma, same struggles that they have gone through and so on. We can see the sentiment of unity and the clear message that the president aims to form an alliance with the

people of the North Caucasus. He sees Georgia's role as somewhat special in this region, and we can see that also from his speech at the session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia. "The Georgian nation and the Georgian state have traditionally had a stabilising role in the Caucasus region in terms of political, inter-ethnic and other problems and have always handled it with dignity. Georgia will be able to fulfil this function in a dignified manner in the case of further stabilisation of the domestic situation when its political system is finally formed, and its national-territorial arrangement is clarified" (Gamsakhurdia, 1991c). Here we can see that he is highlighting the fact that Georgia is still very fragile and trying to find its way in the international arena. Still, besides this fact, there is an eager wish to contribute to the region's well-being. Here if we observe language, we can see that by referring to history and Georgia's historical roles, he is trying to shape this "newborn" state and give it purpose, meaning and functions that will contribute to not only itself but others as well. Thus, by saying this, president Gamsakhurdia is forming a narrative of Georgia having a role of stabilising in this region, and he is making a promise to better fulfil this role once Georgia is more stable itself. Alongside this, in his interview with one newspaper, he mentioned that this very healthy idea of Caucasian cooperation would be very difficult and impossible to fulfil if everyone did not leave the Soviet Union. Being a part of an empire makes it challenging to have a healthy and functioning foreign policy (Gamsakhurdia, 1991d).

During a press conference in Moscow where there were journalists from around the world, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was asked a question about the independence of other republics. He replied, mentioning Ingushetia and the fact that he talked with the leader of the independent party. "I specially invited the leader of the national movement of Ingushetia, the chairman of the independent party "Niispo" Mr Isa Kadzoev - People's Deputy. I want you to give him questions so that the problem of the people of Ingushetia is also covered in the Western

press. This problem is very close to the problem of Georgia since we have similar problems. Do you know what Ossetian extremists are doing to our population? They do exactly the same thing to the Ingush people, the same aggression, the same harassment, encroachment on the territory. Mr Kadzoev will tell you about it. He is a former political prisoner who spent many years in Soviet camps” (Gamsakhurdia, 1991e). Here we can once again see that the language used is pointing to the similarities between Georgia and republics in the North Caucasus. Alongside this, we can see that he is trying to give representation to other nations as well, here exemplified by inviting Kadzoev. This allowed him to answer the questions from journalists representing different countries and, therefore, to cover the problem of the people of Ingushetia in the press worldwide. This shows support and a wish for cooperation. Caring for other nations and, in this case, being watchful and supportive towards people of the North Caucasus shows the narrative and attitude towards this region. Alongside this, here we can also see the role of Georgia that Zviad Gamsakhurdia is trying to project as a nation that helps others in the region, as already mentioned in the previous paragraph, the role of a stabiliser is visible here as well.

In a letter for the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia, A.Kh. Galazov, Zviad Gamsakhurdia mentions the historic neighbouring relations in the region. “We, as historically established neighbouring countries, should be able to resolve the relationship and restore good after some time” (Gamsakhurdia, 1991f). Here he is mentioning this and trying to appeal to Galazov to take into account the Georgian side and to not deteriorate the situation with so-called “South Ossetia”. In doing so, Gamsakhurdia is very actively trying to maintain a good attitude and normalise relations with North Ossetia. In his television address, president Zviad Gamsakhurdia answered questions from viewers. In this address, he mentioned that Moscow deliberately attempted to create a rivalry between

Georgia and the peoples of the North Caucasus. Here he conveys the sentiment that any type of bad relationship is caused from outside, and there is a serious element of Moscow in this. In doing so, he reiterates the fact that Georgia is adamant about having a good relationship with its historical neighbours and peoples of the North Caucasus (Gamsakhurdia, 1991g).

Gamsakhurdia has many more instances where he mentions North Caucasus and clearly identifies his wish for cooperation and close ties. To sum up his thoughts on this matter, we can mention several reoccurring themes. We can start by stipulating the past and shared history. This theme goes throughout Gamsakhurdia's narrative regarding North Caucasus, where he refers to past relations and historic ties. Another important topic that we need to mention is kinship and the "genetic" connection between these nations and peoples, which is used as an argument to support the idea of being close and connected. One other topic is shared trauma and suffering caused by imperial harassment caused by the Soviet Union. Alongside this, the importance of retaining one's identity and self-expression is mentioned as well. One more topic which is mentioned is Georgia's role in the region as a stabiliser and the importance of having a good relationship with the Caucasus people. To bring this section of the analysis to a conclusion, the first president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, shows high interest in good cooperation with the region of the North Caucasus. He is eager to form ties and expresses respect and understanding for the people of the North Caucasus. After analysing the language of his narrative as derived from multiple speeches and addresses, we can see that his foreign policy behaviour towards this region is positive and optimistic. As for the role conceptions, as derived from the several instances of him mentioning this, he sees the role of Georgia as a bringer of stability to the region, as a country that will be the centre of uniting the Caucasus and creating good cooperation.

### 3.2 Eduard Shevardnadze 1992-2003

With this, we can move on to the following time period in the recent history of Georgia. The next section of this chapter will present discussions around the period of presidency of the second president of Georgia – Eduard Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze returned to Georgia in March 1992 after the violent overthrow of the government of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia and his escape from the country. Shortly after his return, Shevardnadze managed to legitimise his power by holding elections and officially became the chairman of the Parliament of Georgia. In 1995, he signed the new constitution of Georgia and became the president of the country. During the presidency of Eduard Shevardnadze, Georgia became a member of the United Nations and a member of the Council of Europe; Georgia's membership in the World Trade Organisation is associated with his name; The most important projects - Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Sufsa, Baku-Tbilisi-Ezerum; Istanbul OSCE Summit 1999 - historic agreement on the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Georgia, "training and equipping" program. Eduard Shevardnadze's name is associated with the officially announced desire to join NATO at the November 2002 NATO summit in Prague. It can be safely said that during his presidency, Georgia started to take tangible steps in the international arena. For this thesis, it is interesting to see how and if the rhetoric towards the region and the perception of Georgia's role in the region of the North Caucasus has changed or developed in a different way. It is important to note that there were a lot of difficulties and problems with this region during that time. The biggest issue was the situation over the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia, which caused major problems for Tbilisi. Chechens escaped Russian troops' "establishment of constitutional order" in Chechnya and settled in the canyon. From a moral standpoint, it was impossible for Tbilisi to block the Georgian border for them, and it would have been politically shortsighted. Furthermore, Georgia lacked the forces necessary to create border barriers and separate militants from Chechen evacuees. Because of the Pankisi Gorge, Georgia was always under pressure from Russia, which even allowed itself to

bomb the neighbouring state's territory, alleging the need for pre-emptive strikes against militants' strongholds (Haindrava, 2012).

In the end, Shevardnadze was able to resolve the crisis - but not without the assistance of Americans: the US-sponsored Train and Equip program helped to lay the groundwork for resolving the problem of Chechen extremists in the Pankisi Gorge without causing harm to the majority of refugees (Ibid). Georgia saved face in the West and North Caucasians, particularly Chechens, but then things stagnated again. Tbilisi also failed to gain Moscow's trust because the latter would not change its stance toward Georgia anyway. Georgian political analysts also paid insufficient attention to North Caucasian issues. There have only been sporadic attempts to reconsider the North Caucasus issue in general and in the context of Georgian-Russian ties in particular (Haindrava, 2012).

Again, as already mentioned, for this thesis, it is important to analyse the rhetoric that Shevardnadze had towards this region. To do this, this section will observe and analyse several of his speeches, addresses and other forms of communication. The time period of this section can start before his actual presidency because he was a head of state before that as well.

To begin this section, we can start with 1992 when the situation in Georgia was extremely tense, and all attention was brought to regional conflicts. Mainly the theme of the discussion was Abkhazia and the brewing secessionist sentiment there. In one of his radio addresses, Eduard Shevardnadze talked about Abkhazia and the situation there. Eduard Shevardnadze touched upon the relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus. He said that he wants Georgian people to be understanding of everything that is happening among the peoples of the North Caucasus. All the leaders of the peoples of the North Caucasus called me - he continued - and when they heard our explanation of the news of Abkhazia, they also understood our interests (Shevardnadze, Eduard

Shevardnadze: National Interests of Abkhaz People are not in Danger, 1992a). Here we can observe a fairly neutral tone. However, alongside this, there is still compassion towards the region of the North Caucasus because he says that he wants Georgian people to be understanding. He mentions the fact that everybody called him and that they are also acting with understanding regarding Georgian interests. This is a sign of the wish for a good relationship with this region. This time, as already mentioned, was one of significant tensions, and this was tightly connected to the part of the North Caucasus as well. During the war in Abkhazia, there were many so-called “volunteers” from this region who were fighting against Georgia; in a letter to the President of Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, V. Kokov and the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria Kh. Karmokov and Eduard Shevardnadze discussed these issues (Shevardnadze, 1992b). This letter is an answer to their letter, which he describes as “constructive and heartwarming”. He says that this kind of sentiment and spirit is the very thing that will help to reconstruct peace in the Caucasus. “When a man's house burns down, the neighbours help to put out the fire, not start it. Unfortunately, violators of this tradition common to us have appeared in the Caucasus who behave in such a criminal manner. I have in mind the leaders of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus. Their order to declare all Georgians living in the republics of the North Caucasus as hostages, and Tbilisi as a disaster zone” (Ibid). Here we can see the evident disappointment with the leaders of the mentioned confederation. He mentions the fact that the neighbours are supposed to help each other out and not make the matters worse when one is in a difficult situation. By saying this, he makes a point that it is important for Georgia and North Caucasus to have a supportive relationship. “Confederations are created and dissolved, and Georgia and Kabardino-Balkaria have eternal borders and eternal interests. And for protection of these interests, our people will come to us, and not to the leaders of this illegal organisation that claims the right to speak on behalf of the people of the Caucasus” (Ibid). Here he once again expresses the discontent with the

mentioned organisation and implies that they do not have the right to speak on behalf of the people of the North Caucasus. He is reminding the leaders of Kabardino-Balkaria that they are neighbours, and it is an important thing to take into account. Next, in his letter, he expresses hope that they will help Georgia by calling back so-called “volunteers” from their republic, and he says that this would be their contribution to preventing a great war in the Caucasus. He ends this letter by expressing hope. “We are striving for peace, and we will achieve it. With this in mind, I wish you, your loved ones, and all the people of brotherly Kabardino-Balkaria all the best” (Ibid). If we observe the language used here, we can see that he reiterates the fact that the main goal is peace, which should be desirable for all the parties involved. Then he expresses kind sentiments towards Kabardino-Balkaria and, by this, shows a positive attitude.

In an interview given in early September 1992, Eduard Shevardnadze received a question regarding his assessment of the role of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus in the ongoing conflict. “as it deserves. I can call the actions of its leaders nothing but international terrorism, which smells of fascism” (Shevardnadze, 1992c). This was his answer, and here we can see that he is very sceptical towards this organisation. In the language that he uses, we can observe anger and frustration. “This confederation turns to aggression. Interferes in our domestic affairs from the territories of these republics. There are radio stations working there that coordinate combat operations in Abkhazia. Thugs come from there and kill our citizens. From there, they give orders to establish terror in our capital. Moreover, all Georgians - citizens of these republics - were declared hostages” (Ibid). There are several issues that are interesting to discuss here. For one, he directly blames the confederation for aggression and interference in the domestic affairs of Georgia. But the most interesting thing to observe is that he does not mention any republic or their leaders. He talks about this confederation and individual thugs. Hence, if we analyse his attitude as a foreign policy behaviour, we can say that he is not



targeting any specific republic, and he does not show discontent with them. This can not be considered as something that would indicate that the wish for cooperation and a good relationship is not there anymore. The thugs that were mentioned here created a lot of problems in Georgia, and they were mentioned multiple times by Shevardnadze as well. He did not always present this issue as very difficult to resolve. For example, in one of the radio interviews, he said, “I do not consider it a big problem to withdraw or expel North Caucasus militants from Georgia if no cracks appear in the relations between Russia and Georgia. And if we, both sides, are on the platform that was formed on September 3 in Moscow” (Shevardnadze, 1992d). Here we can see that he mentions Russia as a factor in withdrawing these militants from Georgia. The general sentiment here towards the North Caucasus is that there is a threat coming from this region, but once again, no specific republic is mentioned. In his speech during the general assembly of the United Nations, he mentioned this confederation, as mentioned earlier and the problems that they create as well. “This illegal non-state, outright terrorist, essentially paramilitary organisation, which acts against the will of the people of the North Caucasus and their legally elected leaders, has declared our country, its capital, a disaster zone and calls to use all means against us, including mass terror” (Shevardnadze, 1992e). If we observe this quote from the speech, we can see that he clearly mentions that these actions from this confederation are against the will of the people of the North Caucasus and their legally elected leaders. Here the sentiment shows that he does not hold this against the peoples of the North Caucasus or their leaders. Later in the speech, he mentions that there is a centuries-old relationship between the Georgian people and peoples of the North Caucasus, and this provides an excellent basis in order to be able to cooperate closely for the interests of their people. He mentions the issue of the militants from the North Caucasus region on many occasions, for example, in his letter to the president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin (Shevardnadze, 1992f), in his press conference in October (Shevardnadze, 1992g), during his speech at the pre-election meeting

of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic (Shevardnadze, 1992h), and many more. In all of these instances, he mentions the militants but never blames the republics for such actions.

As the situation in the region changed, there were different issues that were on the agenda. During one of the radio interviews, Eduard Shevardnadze expressed deep concern regarding the situation in the North Caucasus. Namely, he was talking about the conflict between the Ingush and the Ossetians. He said that this is a serious conflict that can have serious consequences. “The conflict in this region of the North Caucasus can hurt us because both the transportation and gas pipeline highways that are vital for us pass there. If the parties can negotiate, we may participate in the settlement” (Shevardnadze, 1992i). Here we can see one interesting topic that we observed in the rhetoric of Zviad Gamsakhurdia as well, and it is the role of Georgia as a country that can help with stabilising the situation in this region under discussion. In one other interview, where he discusses the issues with Chechnia, he expresses the same sentiment that any type of conflict there can have serious consequences (Shevardnadze, 1992j). In his new year speech on 31<sup>st</sup> of December in 1992, Shevardnadze said, “We want good-neighbourly, peaceful, constructive relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus” (Shevardnadze, 1992k). A month later, in an interview, he mentioned that there were some contractual plans with the region of the North Caucasus (Shevardnadze, 1993a). Later that year, during his visit to Belgium and Germany, Eduard Shevardnadze delivered a speech at the meeting of the Council of NATO member states. In this speech, he mentioned that the conflicts in Georgia and North Caucasus could not only disturb peace in these regions but also cause problems for the parties gathered in this meeting (Shevardnadze, 1993b).

1992 has been an important year for the region of Caucasus, and this is the reason why there were many speeches and addresses from this year. Moving

forward, the quantity may lessen, and we will observe the general rhetoric coming from President Eduard Shevardnadze. At the beginning of 1994, the president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, had an official visit to Georgia. On this occasion, there were many other officials from Russia present. Among them was the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Dagestan Magomedali Magomedov, here the representative of the peoples of the North Caucasus. In his speech delivered at the reception, Eduard Shevardnadze mentioned hopes for common Caucasian peace and harmony. “Dear Magomedali Magomedi, I am taking advantage of your presence here to tell the people of the North Caucasus: the Caucasus Range does not divide us, but rather it unites us” (Shevardnadze, 1994a). In this speech, he refers to the peoples of the North Caucasus as “brotherly”, and then this phrase that he tells to Magomedi shows that he wishes to have friendly relations with this region. He expresses the sentiment of being united rather than divided.

In an interview later that month, a journalist asked Shevardnadze about his own model for solving the ongoing conflicts in the Caucasus that he put forward during his meeting with Boris Yeltsin. This model was “three plus one”, i.e. the three countries of the Southern Caucasus plus Russia with its North Caucasian entities. The journalist mentioned the fact that the republics of the North Caucasus immediately went against this idea and this treaty and are in the camp of opponents of ratification. To this, Shevardnadze said: “I am sure that the people of the North Caucasus will be interested in the Caucasian dialogue. If they are not mature enough today, they will come to this conclusion tomorrow. Some time is needed, and this time, in my opinion, is not so far away. I have already said publicly that the leadership of Azerbaijan, Armenia, President Yeltsin himself welcomed this idea - three plus one, I believe that it has a great perspective and future.” (Shevardnadze, 1994b) Here we can observe one interesting thing by seeing that there is adversity coming from the North Caucasus. Still, even in the face of this, Shevardnadze remains optimistic about

their position and expresses hope that they will be interested in the Caucasian dialogue that he proposed. Despite the adversity, this positive attitude can be observed on multiple occasions. For example, during one of the interviews, he talked about a tragic incident that happened in Ingushia, where 8 Georgian specialists were violently killed. While discussing this, Eduard Shevardnadze said: “With Ingushetia, its president and the Ingush people, we have especially friendly and good-neighbourly, fraternal relations, as well as with many other peoples, the same with Dagestan, North Ossetia, although recently it has become difficult for us to communicate with them. We had a really special relationship with Ingushetia for hundreds of years. I must say that the Ingush are also suffering from this tragedy as acutely as we are in Georgia” (Shevardnadze, 1994c). He once again expresses his positive attitude towards the peoples of the North Caucasus but also mentions the fact that there is tension. Even so, we can see in his rhetoric that he is understanding of the Ingush people and says that they are suffering from this situation as well. “By whoever’s hands this should have been prepared, and whichever people they should be representing, they are terrorists. We will never equate them with people, and I am sure that this will not affect the friendship between us and the Ingush, as well as the improvement of relations with other people. We are doing everything to build a new relationship with the peoples of the Caucasus, including the peoples of the North Caucasus, on the basis of the best traditions of friendship and brotherhood that have existed for centuries” (Ibid). Here, as in many instances before, we can observe the notion of the traditions of good relations and historical ties. Shevardnadze is adamant in saying that whoever committed crimes has individual responsibility, and it does not matter which republic they were from. It is terrorists that went against Georgia and not the republics themselves. He expresses certainty that these issues can not have any harmful effects on friendships that have been built over the years.

In 1995, Eduard Shevardnadze gave the information to the Parliament of the Republic about the domestic and international situation of Georgia, overcoming the crisis and the implementation of reforms program. In the section dedicated to the foreign policy, he is discussing the region of the North Caucasus as well. This document is important to see Eduard Shevardnadze's position regarding foreign policy directed at the North Caucasus at this time period. Hence I will provide a section of his discussion regarding the North Caucasus. "It is necessary further to activate Georgia's policy in the North Caucasus region. Of course, against the backdrop of further deepening of Russian-Georgian cooperation and mutual understanding, the idea of "Caucasian dialogue" has not died; it needs to be revived. This is how I perceived the recent speech of the President of North Ossetia, Mr Galazov. Good-neighbourly differentiated relations with the peoples and states of this region are necessary; the spheres of relations should be specified. More specific cases are needed. We should better take into account the consequences of the events in Chechnya. Regarding the events in Chechnya, we have taken a position that is realistic and prospective, taking into account the interests of Georgia and the entire region, both today and in the future" (Shevardnadze, 1995a). Here we can see the clear message that Shevardnadze wishes to activate further foreign policy in the region of the North Caucasus. He is calling for the "Caucasian dialogue" and expresses hope for cooperation. Here we can also see that he discusses the situation in Chechnya. It is important to note that throughout that year (1995), he talked a lot about Chechnya, and on multiple occasions, he has concluded that the basis of the tragedy of Chechnya is in Abkhazia. "Many politicians confirm that the events of Chechnya and Abkhazia are similar to each other. I have repeatedly said that the tragedy of Chechnya originates in Abkhazia. It was in Abkhazia that the trouble that we are dealing with in Chechnya started" (Shevardnadze, 1995b). Here we can see that he is connecting these two situations and forming a link which helps establish the similarities and shows how they face the same problems. It can be observed in Shevardnadze's rhetoric that when there is a

difficult situation, he sees it as a sign that it is more and more important to try to ameliorate cooperation and relations.

In 1996, during one of his interviews, Eduard Shevardnadze talked about the problems and difficulties in the North Caucasus. “I agree with you that there are many difficulties in the Caucasus, in particular in the North Caucasus. Against the background of complications in the Caucasus, we should more actively seek ways to reconcile” (Shevardnadze, 1996a). Here we can observe again the firm wish for cooperation and reconciliation. He says that these complications and problems can be considered to be a push to look for solutions more actively. “Our relations with the republics and peoples of the North Caucasus are actively developing. In such a multifaceted dialogue, we are going to develop, enrich and refine the idea of a “Peaceful Caucasus”.” (Shevardnadze, 1996b). This small quote from his speech is another example of expressing a wish for dialogue and peaceful solutions. All of these facts point to his desire to cooperate with the region of the North Caucasus. In his speech that he delivered in Turkey, Shevardnadze mentioned that he had great hopes for the “Peaceful Caucasus” initiative. He said that he talked with several leaders of republics and that there is a future to this initiative (Shevardnadze, 1996c). At the end of the year 1996, Shevardnadze expressed more hope for Caucasian dialogue. In his speech, he mentioned the first steps of this dialogue. “Currently, a large-scale Caucasian dialogue has begun, by which I mean, first of all, the Kislovodsk declaration, which was signed by the presidents of the Transcaucasian states and the Russian Federation, with the participation of the leaders of the North Caucasus.” (Shevardnadze, 1996d). He mentions this Kislovodsk declaration a multiple times over the course of the year of 1997 as well. “Georgia is closely following the development of events in the North Caucasus. Many things connect us with these peoples, including Chechnya. The North Caucasian peoples can play a positive role in the peaceful resolution of the Abkhazian conflict.” (Shevardnadze, 1997a). Something to observe here in the language

and in rhetoric is that we can see that he is trying to point out that there are similarities. Then he points to the benefits of the cooperation, namely, helping with the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia. He mentions multiple times that it is in Georgia's interests to have stability and peace in the region of the North Caucasus (Shevardnadze, 1997b). Shevardnadze, during one of his interviews, mentioned with content that the president of North Ossetia, Mr Galazov, offered to meet again with all the leaders of Caucasian states with leaders of the North Caucasus to continue the dialogue that started in Kislovodsk (Shevardnadze, 1997c). In his rhetoric, we can see that he is open to ideas and offers coming from the North Caucasus and is adamant about establishing good relations and cooperation.

Over the years, Shevardnadze did not change his rhetoric regarding the region of the North Caucasus. He reiterated many times that Georgia's wish was to have good-neighbourly relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus and to develop this relation and cooperation even further (Shevardnadze, 1999a). In his interviews, speeches and addresses, he always expressed deep sorrow and concern regarding the terrorist acts carried out in the North Caucasus. After a horrible terrorist attack that killed 64 people in North Ossetia, in his interview, he says that the Georgian brotherly nation sends condolences to the citizens of North Ossetia (Shevardnadze, 1999b). "I call on all true Caucasians, it doesn't matter if it is South Caucasus or North Caucasus, to unite in the fight against terrorism. This is the problem against which we must all fight together." (Ibid). By saying this, he is urging all Caucasians to fight together against the common enemy, which is terrorism. He is not putting the blame on North Caucasus; instead, he is showing that they are perceived as victims in this situation. It is important to note that Shevardnadze often tries to show that we should see how intertwined the fates of the Southern and Northern Caucasus are. "It is very difficult for me to make any predictions, but when I came out with the initiative about "Peaceful Caucasus", of course, I meant the people of the North Caucasus

as well. Many of them, many citizens, and at least many representatives of political movements are involved in this movement. This is not accidental. Any instability in the North Caucasus will have a certain impact on Georgia and, in general, on the countries of the South Caucasus. Also, any instability in the South Caucasus will definitely affect the life of the North Caucasus” (Shevardnadze, 1999c). Here we can see how he is mentioning this intertwined character of these two regions, and it is important to note that he is talking about not only the spreading of instability but vice versa as well – stability can be spread from one region to another. He connects the problems of the North Caucasus with the Abkhazian conflict as well, and he says that if this conflict is not resolved soon, we could see more and more elements of instability in the North Caucasus region and other parts of Russia as well (Shevardnadze, 1999d). He does not deny that there were difficulties in the relationship, and these difficulties are mostly related to militants fighting in the war in Abkhazia against Georgia. Still, he is highlighting the historical and traditional ties that have been there for many years. “I think we have a normal relationship. We are interested in developing relations with all peoples of the North Caucasus. History has taught us and them a lot. There were dramatic, tragic years in our relationship; however, historically, we had good neighbourly, traditional ties. We should strive to restore this.” (Shevardnadze, 1999e). Here he talks about history as a teacher; mistakes that were made in the past can teach us what to do better in the future.

To sum up this time period and to bring it to a conclusion, we can look over Shevardnadze’s speeches and his rhetoric and list the most important themes and topics that were repeated throughout. Even though in the discussion, there is not a quote from a speech or an address from every year that Shevardnadze was in charge; the given data gives sufficient information, to sum up this period and show his foreign policy and attitude towards the region of the North Caucasus. It is reasonably safe to say that his attitude towards this region



remains positive even in the face of adversity. The beginning of this period is marked by the great tragedy of the war in Abkhazia, which has been one of the most devastating events in the recent history of Georgia. In this war, there were a lot of militants from the North Caucasus fighting against Georgia. While talking about this issue, Eduard Shevardnadze never puts the blame on the leaders of the North Caucasus republics or the people of this region. He says that there can be terrorists and traitors everywhere, and these people have individual responsibility in this situation. Here we can see that it is important for him to build a good relationship, and blaming them for intervening in the local conflict would not bring this. Shevardnadze mentions over and over again that people of different republics of the North Caucasus are suffering from this problem as well. There have been multiple incidents that killed dozens of their people on their territory. Shevardnadze mentions Chechen wars as well, he is diplomatic and does not go into deep details, but he expresses hope that the situation will be resolved and peace will be restored. Here we can mention another theme throughout his rhetoric which is Caucasian Dialogue and the idea of a “Peaceful Caucasus”. He puts this idea very actively on the agenda of Georgian foreign policy. This allows us to observe a very adamant desire for cooperation with this region. Here we can also follow another theme, which is being a part of something common. Putting all the Caucasus states and the republics of the North Caucasus together in this Caucasus format gives a sense of belonging and togetherness. There is a prominent topic of historical ties and cultural and traditional good-neighbourly relationships, which is repeated throughout this period. The sense of having fates intertwined can be seen and observed in his speeches, where he talks about how important it is to stabilise the situation in the North Caucasus for us to be able to stabilise the situation in Georgia. He mentions multiple times that the problems in the North Caucasus originated with the conflict in Abkhazia and that the instability in the North Caucasus makes it more likely for the southern part to be unstable as well and vice versa, a stable southern part can bring more stability to the North Caucasus

as well. Before moving on to the next section, we can analyse the similarities and differences in the rhetoric of the first two presidents of Georgia. Similarly to Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Shevardnadze had a positive attitude towards the North Caucasus and expressed hope and determination for good relations and cooperation with this region. The difference that we can observe can stem from the different aspects of the relationship that they put emphasis on. Zviad Gamsakhurdia talks about cultural ties and genetic origin a lot; he mentions the differences in the religion (even though he says that this does not create problems). We can see that with Eduard Shevardnadze, there is less talk about cultural similarities and ties, he does mention history but not genetic origins, and he does not talk about religion either. He highlights the strategic importance of this relationship and cooperation and how it is mutually beneficial for all parties involved to have a good-neighbourly relationship and attitude towards each other. We can say that Eduard Shevardnadze paid attention to the North Caucasus only when there was no way of ignoring it. As already mentioned several times, he discussed it mostly in relation to Georgia, and he turned his eyes to this region when developments there had a direct impact on Georgia. Despite some differences, while looking at both presidents, we can observe their rhetoric and say that both had positive attitudes towards cooperating with the North Caucasus region and republics.

### 3.3 Mikheil Saakashvili 2003-2013

To move on to the following time period that started after the Rose Revolution in 2003 and lasted until 2012. After the Rose Revolution, Saakashvili began to dramatically change everything in Georgia. He started a war against corruption, a fight with criminal activity that was very widespread in the country. There was a lot on the plate, and this was visible. In the beginning (and very much throughout his presidency), it is not easy to find him saying anything directly regarding the North Caucasus. It is important to note that at first, he is trying to establish friendly relations with Russia, and this is one of the reasons why he is

trying to avoid mentioning the republics of the North Caucasus separately. Even though he had a desire for an amicable relationship, he made it very clear that Russia should not interfere in Georgia's affairs. During one of his very first public speeches at a meeting with members of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia, he mentioned that in Russia, some people think that there are connections regarding terrorist attacks in the North Caucasus and the situation in Georgia. He said that Georgia took all measures so that none of the terrorist militants would cross the border of Georgia, and when various groups entered Tskhinvali, even at that time, Georgia closed the border of Chechnya because "we know very well what scumbags we are dealing with in the form of Basaev and his "brothers" " (Saakashvili, 2004). He says that there are people in Russia and in Duma who make mistakes regarding Geography. Here he is hinting that if Russia wants others to say that Chechnya and North Ossetia are Russia, then they should acknowledge that Abkhazia and Samachablo are Georgia. "Among the people who are confused about the geography of Russia, there are some in the Duma, it seems that there are such people in the state apparatus and in the press, I would like to tell them that Grozny and Vladikavkaz are Russia, and Tbilisi, Sukhumi and Tskhinvali are Georgia." (Ibid).

During one of the sessions of the National Security Council, Mikheil Saakashvili said that it is crucial for Georgia to continue peaceful negotiations regarding the conflict zones. He is talking about Tskhinvali, and he is urging Russia to call back their officials from these regions because their being there is a breach of international law. He calls on Russia to withdraw its weapons from these territories and stop the militarisation of Abkhazia and the so-called South Ossetia. The reason why this particular speech is interesting for this research is that he mentions the region of the North Caucasus in an interesting way. He is trying to convey the message that escalation and militarisation will not be good for Russia either, and it is not in their interests. "Any attempt at escalation, militarisation, and especially direct annexation is not in the interests of either

Georgia or Russia. I am deeply convinced of this, and it has been repeatedly confirmed to us by President Putin and other high officials of the Russian Federation. All such effects will have bad results not only for Georgia but for the entire region, and we do not want to introduce elements of destabilisation into the North Caucasus region. Georgia is a peaceful country that needs to develop and establish friendly relations with all its immediate neighbours.” (Saakashvili, 2005). Here there is a direct hint that destabilisation in Georgia will cause instability in the North Caucasus region as well, and he says that it is not Georgia’s wish for this to happen. Here we can see a big difference from previous time periods and rhetoric. There is a very firm fact-stating tone and focus on defending Georgia’s interests. It is also visible that the president is not referring to the republics of the North Caucasus directly; he is not urging them to do anything; he is talking with Russia directly. It can be observed that the rare occasions when Mikheil Saakashvili does mention the republics of the North Caucasus are mostly during the National Security Council meetings. One such meeting that was about explosions that happened on the pipelines. The explosion occurred on two main pipelines, one where Georgia gets gas from Russia and another on the power line, which is located on the territory of Russia (Saakashvili, 2006a). The explosion was on the Russia-controlled territory, and there were North Ossetia and Karachay-Cherkessia involved. At the National Security Council meeting, Saakashvili said that it is important to look for alternative sources of power and gas. He added that the forces that were behind this would be frustrated because this explosion did not bring such dire consequences to Georgia as it would have done several years ago. “Those who simultaneously pressed the button in North Ossetia and Karachay-Cherkessia did not get what they wanted because the whole world stood up.” (Saakashvili, 2006b). Here we can see that these republics are mentioned in a negative way and context. Over the year 2006, the relationship between Georgia and Russia became more and more tense. There were talks of suspending the visa-free regime for Georgians; Russia also continued militarising conflict zones in

Georgia, and airplanes and helicopters of the Russian Air Force repeatedly violated the air space of Georgia (Saakashvili, 2006c).

During the joint press conference with the president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, Mikheil Saakashvili stated that there is a myriad of problems between Georgia and Russia, and he said that he is willing to talk through them as long as Russia will agree to talk and be reasonable. During his speech, he mentioned the region of the North Caucasus as well. “Georgia wants a peaceful and gradual resolution of the conflict. We know very well in which region we live. Any conflict in this region will have serious consequences not only for Georgia but for the entire North Caucasus, Russia, the entire region and the world as a whole” (Saakashvili, 2006d). Here once again, he is trying to show that if Russia does not have any plans against Georgia, the situation that is there today is not beneficial for anybody and can be harmful to Russia and its regions as well.

If we could single out this one sub-period and say from 2004 until 2008, we would attribute this episode of history to the recent history of Georgia, and it can be described quite briefly because, from 2004-2008, Georgia chose a policy of no policy towards the North Caucasus (Samadbegishvili, 2020). Indeed, the absence of politics is also politics, and this also had its reason: during this period (even more before 2006), Georgia still had hope that the problem of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region, the key of which was in Moscow, would be solved through negotiations, even if Georgia at the expense of certain (if not essential) concessions from the side (Ibid). Thus, the Georgian authorities believed that while such a resource existed, having any active policy towards the North Caucasus would only be counter-productive, would irritate Russia and hinder a possible negotiation process. In the next four years of recent history, we will see that Georgia's policy towards the North Caucasus has changed radically, and one of the main reasons for this is the disappearance of any reasonable

expectation of solving problems through Russia (Ibid). Taking this into account, it is understandable that there are a lot fewer instances of the president of Georgia mentioning this region and discussing the situation than it was before, during Shevardnadze's time when the strategy was completely different. For this reason, the discussion about his rhetoric is in a different form, more concentrated on a number of statements and main actions. One speech that we can mention here is the one that President Saakashvili delivered on the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 23, 2010. He said that Russian people will always be welcome in Georgia but as tourists, as students, as businessmen, as journalists or simply as friends, but never as occupation forces. "And I want to tell the Russian leaders that they should care more about their citizens and less about our diplomatic orientation, more about developing the Northern Caucasus - a region that is exploding as I speak - than about undermining our development" (Saakashvili, 2010). He said that he had a vision for a free, stable and united Caucasus. "I strongly believe that a common market, shared interests, and political and economic interdependence will one day give birth to a united Caucasus" (Ibid). He said that there could be actions taken that will help to move in this direction.

One example of such action is when Mikheil Saakashvili initiated a visa-free regime for people living in the republics of the North Caucasus. From October 13, 2010, a 90-day visa-free regime for Russian citizens registered in the republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia and Adygea came into effect when crossing the border with Georgia. President Saakashvili signed the relevant decree on October 11. According to the official statement, the simplification of visa rules for citizens living in the North Caucasus republics was due to the fact that visas were not issued at the border checkpoint, and residents of these republics had to go to the capital of Russia to get visas to cross the land border (Civil Georgia, 2010). According to President Mikheil Saakashvili, the cancellation of the visa

regime for the residents of the North Caucasus is a demonstration that the Caucasus mountains have never been an obstacle to the relationship between our peoples. “Behind these mountains is Kabardino-Balkaria, and many families are divided, although they are divided not because of these big mountains, which have never been an obstacle to relations between people, but because of the immigration policy that existed between Georgia and Russia” (Saakashvili, 2011). He says that he wanted them to visit the country as tourists and see that Georgia lives a different life, that Georgia is a peaceful country, and that it is not hostile to anyone. The right to travel freely in Georgia was extended not to all citizens of the Russian Federation but only to citizens registered in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Adygea, and Karachay-Cherkessia. If we look at this action from a purely political point of view, Georgia separated Russia and the North Caucasus from each other with this decision. This should have been a painful event for Russia, given the leverage and the past it has in the region.

Another important step taken in this area is the official acknowledgement of the Russian Empire's genocide of the Circassians. The Georgian parliament adopted the resolution regarding this issue on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 (Parliament of Georgia, 2011). It is difficult to measure how much (or if) the attitude of the Circassians or other Caucasian peoples towards Georgia was improved by the recognition of the Circassian genocide, although it most likely had some positive effect (Samadbegishvili, 2020). Georgia, which, thanks to Russian propaganda, was slandered as the oppressor of its fellow Abkhazians, came out with a proposal to recognise the tragedy of other oppressed Caucasians and establish historical justice (Ibid). However, with high probability, there was also a calculation that this event could lead to some, even moral discomfort for Russia, which was going to hold the Winter Olympics in 2014 in the place where the Circassian genocide took place or where this nation lived. Another step that was important was to broadcast the Georgian TV Company in the North

Caucasus. It was clear to everyone that this Russian-language channel represented Georgia's propaganda machine for developing sentiments in favour of Georgia and against the Russian government (Ibid). The results of the channel's broadcasting are difficult to calculate, but the costs incurred for the channel's operation, which amounted to several tens of millions of GEL, are easy to calculate. Despite some positives, news coverage was so biased that it was even considered counter-productive by some experts (Ibid).

One document from this period that is important to mention is Georgia's state concept of relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus. The Parliament of Georgia adopted this concept in 2012. Here we can see that there is a written document supported by parliament which can show us a more serious commitment to the foreign policy course set regarding this region. The concept recognises the close economic, social, political, cultural and other ties between the Georgian and North Caucasian peoples and the fact that the cultural kinship, the similarity of traditions and long-term living in one geographical area - the Caucasus region - led to the rapprochement of the people. According to the preamble, Georgia is an integral part of the Caucasus, and all the processes taking place here are of great importance to it. In the introduction of the concept, it is stated that Georgia is interested in the stability, security, and economic development of the North Caucasus and states that this is in the interests of both the North Caucasians and Georgia (Parliament of Georgia, 2012). Considering the fact that this is the only written document to show and express the actual foreign policy of Georgia at that time, it can be interesting to observe it more closely and analyse its parts. The concept proposes eight pathways for growth, the goal of which is to bring Georgians and inhabitants of the North Caucasus closer together and effectively solve common challenges. We will discuss some features of the concept briefly:



Connections between people - Along with other fairly normal items (which deal with tourism, youth rapprochement, and so on), a significant passage can be found in this article: “Georgia respects people with different religious and other values. Given that Islam is the most widely practised faith among the peoples of the North Caucasus, Georgia is delighted to provide them with the opportunity to visit holy sites on its territory” (Parliament of Georgia, 2012). Given the centrality of Islam in the North Caucasus, both on a human and political level, incorporating this topic into the concept, even in the framework of tourism, adds a lot of meaning and lends an entirely different tone to this specific paragraph of the concept.

Human rights - In this part of the document, Georgia expresses concern about the human rights situation in the North Caucasus and declares that Georgia shares the Caucasian people's values and is willing to help protect them, including by joining international organisations that protect people persecuted on ethnic and political grounds (Samadbegishvili, 2020). Georgia has an essential role in promoting communication between the North Caucasus and the rest of the world. Georgia pledges here that it will promote the growth of civic society in the North Caucasus.

Education and science - the emphasis here is on the possibility of receiving an education in Georgia, increasing the access to education in Georgia as well as the promotion of participation in study programs abroad. In terms of science, Georgia says that it will take various measures to preserve the languages and identities of Caucasian peoples.

Economy and commerce - Georgia says it welcomes investments from the North Caucasus and adds that it may serve as a logistical function carrier as well as a platform for Caucasian firms to position themselves internationally (Ibid).

Promotion of historical justice - Georgia declares its willingness to assist the world community in the investigation, analysis, and presentation of crimes done against the peoples of the Caucasus at various times. As an example, the Convention cites the 2011 acknowledgement of the Circassian genocide.

Relations with the diaspora - Georgia is willing to foster engagement and conversation with North Caucasian peoples who have had to leave the region for a variety of reasons. We believe that an indirect focus is placed here on the relationship with North Caucasian peoples who migrated to modern-day Turkey and Syria during the Muhajir period (Ibid).

Health care - Georgia claims to be able to act as the region's medical hub, ready to provide medical services to the North Caucasus population while also working to improve the skills and support efforts to strengthen the professional credentials of local doctors in the North Caucasus.

Georgia has underlined the primary areas where it sees the need and opportunity for cooperation. Some of these points are essentially declarative in nature. However, the document, as a whole, contains working, tangible, and implementable points as well. Not taking into account some special emphases (for example, fostering the growth of civil society or assisting in the establishment of historical justice, which is uniquely uncomfortable for Russia), it is difficult for someone to find the text unsatisfactory or even irritating (Ibid). On the contrary, it primarily includes cultural, humanitarian, and economic undertones, which is tough to criticise.

Before we move on to very shortly describe the next time period and summarise the analysis part, we can look over some more statements and speeches made by President Saakashvili during the period of his presidency. During one of his speeches delivered to the members of the armed forces, Saakashvili talked about

the border with Russia and mentioned the issue of the North Caucasus as well. “By the way, today Russian citizens, including Caucasians, were crossing this border, and when I greeted them, several of them said to me: "You can also cross with us; we will gladly accept you in our country, in our city." They told me, but they themselves understood that today it is impossible. In those moments, I once again saw the tragedy of the situation” (Saakashvili, 2012a). Here in the language that he uses, we can see that he is trying to show the importance of issuing a visa-free regime for the people living in the North Caucasus and the friendly relationship between Georgians and them. Then he proceeds to show the importance of the Georgian state for this region and what it represents for the peoples of the North Caucasus. “For them, the Caucasians, Georgia is the embodiment of their centuries-old dream - to create a modern statehood in the Caucasus, where importance will not be given to any specific ethnic group or any specific confession, but to the idea of equality; That all people are equal and free, everyone can move freely, communicate freely, govern their own country and be the master of their own destiny. The essence of the Russian Empire is fundamentally opposed to the nature of Caucasians -as we are a hospitable nation, they also want to receive us warmly” (Ibid). Here again, we see that Mikheil Saakashvili is trying to project the role of the country as an important example in the region. Hence, we can say that through foreign policy, he is trying to show the role that Georgia plays in the region and its importance. A month later, during his speech on a parade dedicated to police day, he brought up the same topic. He started by stating that Georgia managed to create a consolidated modern statehood in a record time. He said that this is something that peoples of Caucasus are looking at as an example. “These days, I was with you at the border point of Georgia, and we shook hands with many North Caucasians who were entering our country. We interact with these people, and I know their mood well - for them today, Georgia is like an example. If the Soviet system and the Russian Empire poisoned them so much that for centuries, they were considered enemies of us and our country, now everything has

changed radically. Of course, this causes the greatest concern of the force occupying the territories of Georgia because the Caucasus (I mean the people of both ranges of the Caucasus) has seen a landmark, a model of development and a future” (Saakashvili, 2012b). Here once again, as several times before, through a speech of a president, we can see projecting of the role of the country. The language used shows us the role of Georgia as an example in the region, as a landmark and a model of development.

In August of 2012, a well-armed and well-trained armed group appeared near the Georgia-Russia border in the direction of Dagestan-Chechnya. This group took local citizens of Georgia hostage. “I would like to address our neighbours on the other side of the ridge - our North Caucasian brothers. We have our own systematic plan for the Caucasus as a people with a joint peace, culture, politics, economy, and a common history. We are open to any kind of relations with them, but we will not allow the movement of armed groups against the civilian population in any way, the presence of armed persons on the territory of Georgia, because Georgia is a state that is developing very quickly. Therefore, I would like to appeal to each of them: do not let anyone use you as a blind tool of provocation” (Saakashvili, 2012c). Here we can observe the tone of referring to the peoples of the North Caucasus as brothers and also mentioning the shared history and culture. He is trying to establish Georgia as a state that has a plan for this region but will not tolerate certain things. There are other instances of Saakashvili displaying the role of Georgia in the region. For example, in one of his speeches, Saakashvili mentions the people of the North Caucasus in the context of Russia trying to pit people against each other. “According to the principle of "divide and conquer", Russia always ruled this entire vast space, including the Caucasus. They brought the North Caucasians to Abkhazia in the 90s on the principle of "divide and rule"; With this principle, they confused the situation in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region, but even after all that, Georgia was able to build a modern state apparatus, which the entire region, including the

population of our conqueror, envies and admires today. It is already known in the world” (Saakashvili, 2012d). He is very confident when he states that the entire region admires the modern state apparatus that Georgia managed to create in a short time. Here once again, we see the role of Georgia as a trendsetter and an example of development in the region.

In his speech at the international conference of Caucasologists, Mikheil Saakashvili talked about the idea of a united Caucasus. “A few years ago, the Parliament of Georgia recognised the genocide of the Circassian people by the Russian Empire in the 19th century, and we were the first nation to do so. I believe in the idea of a united Caucasus, and this does not mean changing the borders - the borders should remain unchanged. It should be a symbol of freedom, democracy, and people's movement in the Caucasus, and I have seen people who are very appreciative of what Georgia has done in recent years. For the first time in centuries, Georgia was able to maintain modern statehood. However, our conquerors thought that the Caucasus chronically lacked the ability to be organised, civilised and modern” (Saakashvili, 2012e). Here yet again, he mentions the role of Georgia as a symbol of freedom and development. A lesson for others to follow and something that people in the region appreciate. During his speech to Georgian soldiers fighting in Afghanistan, Mikheil Saakashvili mentioned the issue of the Caucasus one more time. He said that with Georgian development, something happened in the Caucasus that no one was expecting: a modern state was created. “The Caucasus has always been an easy prey for the conquerors because, regardless of our personal courage and resilience, especially the Georgians and other Caucasian peoples, our historical experience is that our conquerors constantly tried to pit the Caucasians against each other, to create strife and enmity” (Saakashvili, 2013a). Here we can observe again the presentation of Georgia’s role as an important beacon of hope in the region. Along with this, he mentions a lot of flattering qualities of Caucasian people and says that any problems between these peoples have been

created artificially by conquerors. One more speech that will be discussed here is Mikheil Saakashvili's very last speech as a president during the session of the UN General Assembly. He mentioned once again Russia's imperial tactic of pitting peoples of Caucasus against each other, and he said that it is the same tactic that Russia has used before and is using in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well. This tactic was used against Georgia as well when they tried to create tension with North Caucasus militants. "For the first time, a real, effective nation-state was being built in the Caucasus, and therefore it was necessary to destroy the reforms before they finally bore fruit" (Saakashvili, 2013b). As several times before, here, the role of Georgia as a role model and an example in the region has been presented.

#### 3.4. Georgian Dream 2012 - Present

In this last section of this chapter, I will mention the previous time period of discussion very briefly. After 2012, despite the fact that Georgia has neither changed its foreign policy vector nor made any progress in terms of restoring territorial integrity due to the change of government in the country and softened rhetoric towards Russia, it considered that it had some resources to conduct a dialogue with the Russian Federation in various formats and to expect Russia's retaliatory actions. Within the scope of softening the rhetoric, Georgia, in fact, returned to the "policy of no policy" of 2004-2008, specifically in relation to the North Caucasus. To go a bit more into details, as already mentioned, In October 2012, Saakashvili's government was defeated in the elections, and it was replaced by the Georgian Dream coalition, which is headed by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili. The new government declared that the main priority of its foreign policy was the normalisation of relations with Russia. One of the first things that was affected by the change in priorities was Georgia's policy towards the North Caucasus. TV channel PIK was immediately closed. Educational programs for North Caucasians and government support for bilateral seminars and conferences were cut off. In general, the new government decided that

relations with Russia were so important that a proactive policy towards the North Caucasus would put it under additional pressure. "Georgian Dream" decided to treat North Caucasians in the same way as other citizens of Russia. Due to security challenges - sometimes even worse. It is estimated that in 2014, during the Sochi Olympics, the security services of Georgia cooperated with their Russian counterparts and restricted the movement of North Caucasians (especially young men) along the borders of Georgia. According to available information, in at least two cases, Georgian security services unofficially handed over North Caucasian refugees to Russia (Utiashvili, 2019). Since 2012, Georgia's security has faced a new threat in the form of ISIS, which forced the Georgian authorities to take additional measures at the borders. The next chapter will summarise the findings and present conclusions of the analysis.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, the case of Georgia's foreign policy strategies and national role conceptions in the time period of 1991-2023 was examined from the perspective of role theory in order to answer the question: How do leaders of Georgia see the National Role Conceptions of Georgia regarding the region of the North Caucasus? The objective of this thesis has been to observe and analyse the rhetoric used by different presidents of Georgia and determine the national role conceptions that they attributed and attached to their country. In order to do so, this thesis employed theories and concepts connected to foreign policy, such as the role theory, concepts of small state, National Role Conceptions and so on. Role theory, which itself is rooted in the domain of Foreign Policy Analysis, provided the basis for this study by suggesting that national role conceptions are, in a way, a blend of the state's self-conception and roles that are assumed from outside, for example, in the region. Role theory suggests that by focusing on how the leaders perceive their country's role, we can understand national role conceptions.

In order to determine what were the national role conceptions in a narrow lens of the Caucasus region, more specifically the North Caucasus, the theory mentioned above was then applied to the case of the foreign policy of Georgia towards the North Caucasus in the time period of 1991-2023, and utilising data from 57 speeches, addresses and interviews given by the presidents of Georgia, this thesis was able to identify how different presidents viewed the roles of Georgia as an actor in the Caucasus region.

The analysis of data demonstrated that in the last ten years, the current government does not have any tangible foreign policy strategy towards the region of the North Caucasus. This is the reason why it was interesting to look at this case, to begin with. Given the importance of the region and the neglect, there is a research puzzle created. The lack of any tangible policy towards this



region is the reason why this last time period is very shortly described at the end of the analysis chapter. Other time periods have been thoroughly observed and analysed, and trends have been identified regarding how leaders perceive their country's role. The conclusion chapter will sum up the findings of the data analysis from the previous chapter and present the results of this thesis. To begin with the first period, we know that this is the time when Georgia regained its independence after many decades under the Soviet Union's occupation. This fact plays an important role in our analysis and research as well because the fact that the country was in a very fragile state, still figuring out the intricacies of independence, has a significant influence on the way the foreign policy is conducted. To explain this thought a little more, being in a fragile state affected the way the leader of the country perceived the role of Georgia in the region. There was a lot of tension in the North Caucasus at this time and despite these difficulties in the relationship, as we observed in the analysis part, Gamsakhurdia's rhetoric always remained optimistic towards the republics of the North Caucasus. He was very critical of the Confederation and mentioned several times that they did not represent the peoples living in the North Caucasus. As already pointed out in the analysis chapter, Gamsakhurdia had very strong national sentiments and put a lot of importance on Georgian national values. This is also connected to the way he perceived the role of Georgia in the region and specifically vis-à-vis the North Caucasus. He mentioned several times that Georgia's national past, history and shared past with the North Caucasus create the basis for these entities to have good relations and cooperation today. If we sum up all of his main thoughts and see what is the main role that he perceived as a role of Georgia in the region, we can see that it is the role of a stabiliser. The role of a country that will be a mediator in this region and as the one that will help everyone find commonalities with each other and connect them in cooperation. If we had to describe with one word the perceived role of Georgia in the region of the North Caucasus in this time period, it would be a "stabiliser".

To move on to the next time period in Georgia, we are looking at the second president of Georgia – Eduard Shevardnadze. It is important to note that before he became a president for several years, he was a head of a State Council. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's first president, was deposed in 1992 as a consequence of a putsch. The putschist-created Military Council of the Republic of Georgia invited Shevardnadze to Georgia. Shevardnadze returned to Georgia on March 7, 1992, and was appointed President of the Republic of Georgia's State Council. Shevardnadze linked his return to Georgia to Charles de Gaulle's return to France following the Fourth Republic's collapse. This shows how he saw his role in Georgia, but it is important to note that during his leadership, the country suffered a great deal of economic hardship, and there was a lot of criminal activity. This was the period when Georgia started to become a member of the UN, expressed the wish to become a member of NATO and started its first steps in the international arena. When it comes to the region of the North Caucasus, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, Eduard Shevardnadze only paid attention to the North Caucasus when he couldn't ignore it; that is when events there had a direct impact on Georgia. In the analysis part, we can see his attitude towards the Confederation, he blames all the incidents and wrongdoings on individuals and does not put the blame on the republics themselves. It is important to note that he also sees Georgia as an initiator of peace. He himself proposed a concept of a "Peaceful Caucasus" where he sees Georgia's role as a central one. He suggests that the peaceful situation in this region is beneficial for everyone. He reiterates a lot of times that peace and stability in the North Caucasus will mean the same happening in the South and the other way around. This is why we see that he is initiating cooperation a lot of times. He says that Georgia is the country who is willing to start cooperation. If we sum up his rhetoric and put it very shortly, we can say that the role that Eduard Shevardnadze sees for Georgia in this region during this time period is the one of an "initiator".

If we move on to the third time period and the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, we see in the analysis part that the first half of his presidency was very quiet and very held back in terms of the foreign policy strategy towards the North Caucasus. After the Rose Revolution and before the war in 2008, there was a caution in Georgian politics when it came to Russia. There was a hope of normalising the relationship, and this is one of the reasons why there was no active policy regarding the North Caucasus. After the war, a lot has changed, and one of the things that was very different after the war was the foreign policy strategy and rhetoric towards the North Caucasus. Georgia had nothing to lose after the Russo-Georgian war, and if it had anything to lose, it wasn't the Russian-Georgian relationship, which was at an all-time low. As a result, Georgia's policy toward the North Caucasus has shifted dramatically. The shift affected the entire range of foreign policy in this region and became more and more prominent in 2010. As already mentioned in the analysis part, there were several steps taken in the direction of bettering the cooperation between Georgia and the North Caucasus. These were the unilateral cancellation of the visa regime for the population of the North Caucasus republics, recognition of the Circassian genocide, spreading coverage of TV company Pik around the region and adoption of a state concept of relationships with the people of Northern Caucasus. If we think about what was the aim of the Georgian government when they decided to carry out such an active foreign policy towards the region of the North Caucasus, we can see that, on the one hand, Georgia felt the need for an active North Caucasus policy because of the importance of the region in the matters of national security and on the other hand it was a way of showing Russia that there was no more moral or political barrier for Georgia to hold back in this regard since there was nothing positive to be expected from Russia. One other very important reason (and the factor most connected to this study) is that since 2004, Georgia has emphasised its regional role as an economic, transportation, and logistical hub; as a regional

beacon of democracy; and as a centre of culture, science, and medicine in the Caucasus. Georgia was attempting to make a statement as a multinational, multicultural state willing (within its capabilities) to protect the interests of various Caucasian peoples and discuss the challenges they faced on the global stage. Georgia's proclaimed desire to adopt a broad regional policy toward the North Caucasus was motivated primarily by the country's border with six North Caucasian countries. This policy was intended to produce various results and to achieve its objectives to varying degrees. Some of the main objectives were to gain the benevolence of the peoples of the North Caucasus (and this is important when we remember that North Caucasians were involved in the wars against Georgia), create a security barrier, causing Russia some discomfort, manage dialogue with the Ossetians and the Abkhaz with North Caucasians' mediation, some economic factors through increased tourism and investment, and most importantly, improving Georgia's image (Samadbegishvili, 2020).

To summarise the third time period and the main rhetoric of the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, we can see that he saw Georgia as a beacon of hope, development and success in the region. He tried to project Georgia's role as a regional hub, as a role model and an example to learn from. He very adamantly expressed the sentiment of success in many different ways; he was talking about Georgia having a regional role as a beacon of democracy, as an economic, transport and logistical hub, and as a centre for culture, medicine, and science in the Caucasus. Thus, to put it succinctly, Saakashvili perceived Georgia's role as a "regional example" of success, as a role model and as a beacon of hope and development. If we talk shortly about the last period as well, the fact that there is no tangible foreign policy towards this region shows that the government now does not see any role for Georgia towards this region other than a neutral one. To answer the research question, we can say that the roles that the state leaders perceived for Georgia over the years were "stabiliser",

“initiator”, and “role model”. Each of these roles has been explained in the context of the rhetoric.

The goal of this study, finding the roles that the leaders attached to Georgia in relation to the region of the North Caucasus, has been achieved. While the methodological approach that was taken to conduct this study produced sufficient data to conduct the analysis, had it been possible to have access to more insider information or to conduct interviews with said leaders and have more information about the above-mentioned periods and foreign policy rhetoric at that time, the findings could have been further substantiated by additional details that such information could have provided. As already mentioned, the desired goal had been achieved, and the sample that was used for this study was enough to reach this goal. Another limitation that we can take into account is that, even though this thesis provides the answer to the research question, there is an issue of limited generalizability because it does not provide an opportunity to look at other countries since the findings were specific to the case under consideration. On the other hand, this study can be a stepping stone for further research about the national role conceptions of small states in countries with the same size or similar historical backgrounds. Further research can be considered in other countries, especially in ones that face similar challenges. Additionally, this could be complemented with comparative studies on countries coming from the same historical background and developing in different directions in this regard. Hence it would be insightful to conduct a comparative MSSD (Most Similar Systems Design) study and see the reasons behind such different developments.

Considering the fact that there is very little information about the nature of Georgia’s foreign policy towards the North Caucasus and there is nothing about national role conceptions, this thesis narrows the gap in the literature by providing gathered and analysed information about this issue. So considering

there is not much written about this issue, the wider implications of this thesis can be added to the academic literature regarding Georgian national role conceptions in a narrow lens looking at the region of the North Caucasus. The findings of this thesis can have wider implications relevant to policy as well. Since this thesis shows the role conceptions of Georgia in the past, the findings provide information about the absence of any policy today, and therefore this could be a reminder of the importance of the region since the research on this topic can provide insights into Georgia's pursuit of regional cooperation, conflict resolution, and regional integration initiatives. Analysing its interactions with North Caucasus entities may reveal its strategies to promote peace and stability in the broader South Caucasus region. Hence, studying Georgia's foreign policy toward the North Caucasus can contribute to academic and policy debates about small states' foreign policy behaviour in complex geopolitical environments. It may offer lessons for other small states facing similar challenges in their regional interactions and provide valuable insights for policymakers.

In conclusion, this thesis fulfilled its main goal and found the national role conceptions of Georgia over the years. Alongside this, it also uncovered a problem of neglect towards this issue nowadays. In doing so, the thesis has contributed to the understanding of national role conceptions for a small state in a regional context while providing additional opportunities to expand this research in the future.

## Bibliography

- Bennett, C. J., & Howlett, M. (1992). The lessons of learning: reconciling theories of policy learning and policy change. *Policy Sciences*, 275-294.
- Breuning, M. (2011). Role theory research in international relations: state of the art and blind spots. In S. Harnisch, C. Frank, & H. W. Maull, *Role Theory in International Relations* (pp. 16-35). New York: Routledge.
- Breuning, M. (2018). Role Theory in Politics and International Relations. In A. Mintz, & L. Terris, *The Oxford Handbook of Behavioral Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cerna, L. (2013). *The Nature of Policy Change and Implementation: A Review of Different Theoretical Approaches*. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.
- Civil Georgia. (2010, October 13). *Georgia imposes a visa-free regime on residents of the North Caucasus republics*. Retrieved May 28, 2023, from Civil.ge: <https://old.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=23228?id=23228>
- Clarke, C., & Payne, T. (1987). *Politics, Security and Development in Small States*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Crowards, T. (2002). Defining the Category of "Small" States. *Journal of International Development*, 143-179.
- Dye, T. R. (2017). *Understanding Public Policy*. New York: Pearson.
- Epsterin, C. (2010). Who speaks? Discourse, the subject and the study of identity in international politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 327-350.
- Evans, G., & Newnham, R. (1998). *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*. London: Penguin Books.
- Fullan, M. (2000). The Three Stories of Education Reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 581-584.
- Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991a, May 10). *Address to the Circassian (Adyghe)*. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:

<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991b, May 28). *Press Conference of the President of the Republic of Georgia with Foreign and Georgian Journalists*. Retrieved April 21, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991c, June 11). *Speech of the President of the Republic of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia at the session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia*. Retrieved April 23, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991d, June 27). *It is impossible to change the system entirely in six months: Interview with Zviad Gamsakhurdia*. Retrieved April 23, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991e, July 3). *Press conference of the President of the Republic of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Moscow*. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991f, July 27). *Letter to the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia A. Kh. Galazov*.



Retrieved April 25, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:

<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1991g, December 9). *President of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia answers the questions of viewers*. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASHa0df317f45ec32bf21e1ac;jsessionid=89EB127CB0D17AD90E980E1214CA5D4A?ed=1>

Gamsakhurdia, Z. (1992, June 12). *Zviad Gamsakhurdia's Speech to Iberian-Caucasian movement*. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from Kingdom of Georgia: <https://www.georoyal.ge/?MTID=1&TID=26&id=3837>

Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. London: Routledge.

Gerring, J. (2004). What Is a Case Study and What Is It good For? *American Political Science Review*, 341-354.

Gigleux, V. (2016). Explaining the diversity of small states' foreign policies through role theory. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 27-45.

Gorener, A., & Aras, B. (2010). National Role Conceptions and Foreign Policy Orientation: The Ideational Bases of the Justice and Development Party's Foreign Policy Activism in the Middle East. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 73-92.

Haindrava, I. (2012, June 24). *The Objectives of Georgia's Policy in the North Caucasus*. Retrieved May 5, 2023, from Russia in Global Affairs: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/a-caucasian-home-as-designed-by-tbilisi/>

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

- Hansen, L. (2016). Discourse analysis, post-structuralism, and foreign policy. In S. Smith, A. Hadfield, & T. Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases* (pp. 95-110). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holsti, K. J. (1970). National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy. *International Studies Quarterly*, 233-309.
- Jones, R. H. (2019). *Discourse Analysis: A Resource Book for Students*. London: Routledge.
- Jorgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Kakhishvili, L. (2015). *Georgia's policy towards North Caucasus during 2008-2012*. Tbilisi: Regional Dialogue.
- Keohane, R. O. (1969). Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics. *International Organization*, 291-310.
- Klein, R., & Marmor, T. R. (2006). Reflections on policy analysis: putting it together again. In M. Moran, M. Rein, & R. E. Goodin, *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* (pp. 892-912). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kvakhadze, A. (2018). *Georgia in North Caucasus: Challenges and Future Perspectives*. Tbilisi: Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies.
- Maass, M. (2009). The elusive definition of the small state. *International Politics*, 65-83.
- Männik, E. (2004). Small States: Invited to NATO — Able to Contribute? *Defense & Security Analysis*, 21-37.
- Mouritzen, H., & Wivel, A. (2005). *The Geopolitics of Euro-Atlantic Integration*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Panke, D. (2010). *Small states in the European Union : coping with structural disadvantages*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate.
- Parliament of Georgia. (2011, May 20). *Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia On the recognition of the Russian Empire's genocide of the Circassians*.

- Retrieved May 29, 2023, from Legislative Herald of Georgia:  
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1698588?publication=0>
- Parliament of Georgia. (2012, June 29). *Resolution of the Parliament of Georgia on the approval of "Georgia's state concept of relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus"*. Retrieved May 29, 2023, from Legislative Herald of Georgia:  
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1698588?publication=0>
- Rosenau, J. N. (1976). The Study of Foreign Policy. In J. R. al., *World Politics: An Introduction* (pp. 15-35). New York: The Free Press.
- Rothstein, R. L. (1968). *Alliances and Small Powers*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Saakashvili, M. (2004, September 10). *Public speech of the President of Georgia at the meeting with the members of the Supreme Council of Abkhazia*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from Archive of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2776&i=34>
- Saakashvili, M. (2005, September 23). *Speech of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili at the session of the National Security Council*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from Archive of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2727&i=32>
- Saakashvili, M. (2006a, January 22). *Mikheil Saakashvili commented on the explosion of the gas pipeline to the TV company "BBC"*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from The archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2692&i=30>

- Saakashvili, M. (2006b, January 22). *Speech of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili at the session of the Security Council*. Retrieved May 26, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2693&i=30>
- Saakashvili, M. (2006c, February 21). *Statement of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili at the Security Council session*. Retrieved May 26, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2683&i=30>
- Saakashvili, M. (2006d, June 14). *Joint briefing of the presidents of Georgia and Russia*. Retrieved May 27, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=2424&i=29>
- Saakashvili, M. (2010, September 23). *His Excellency, the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili's speech at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly*. Retrieved May 28, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements/?p=5505&i=1>
- Saakashvili, M. (2011, February 25). *Mikheil Saakashvili: The Caucasus Mountains have never been an obstacle to the relationship between the North Caucasians and the people of Georgia*. Retrieved May 28, 2023, from Georgian News Agency: <https://www.ghn.ge/news/35630>
- Saakashvili, M. (2012a, April 9). *Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the representatives of the armed forces of Georgia*. Retrieved May 30, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:

<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7450&i=8>

Saakashvili, M. (2012b, May 6). *The President of Georgia delivered a speech at the parade dedicated to Police Day*. Retrieved May 30, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili: <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7520&i=7>

Saakashvili, M. (2012c, August 29). *Speech of Mikheil Saakashvili*. Retrieved May 30, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili: <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7806&i=5>

Saakashvili, M. (2012d, August 12). *The President of Georgia: Our Didgori is still ahead!* Retrieved May 30, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili: <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=7759&i=5>

Saakashvili, M. (2012e, December 7). *Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the participants of the International Conference of Caucasologists*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili: <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=8010&i=3>

Saakashvili, M. (2013a, May 26). *The President of Georgia addressed the Georgian military in Afghanistan*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili: <http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=8296&i=2>

Saakashvili, M. (2013b, September 25). *Speech of the President of Georgia at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly*. Retrieved May 31, 2023,

- from The Archives of the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili:  
<http://www.saakashviliarchive.info/ge/PressOffice/News?8465>
- Samadbegishvili, S. (2020, March 16). *Georgia's "Soft Power" in the North Caucasus*. Retrieved May 29, 2023, from Geocase:  
<https://www.geocase.ge/ka/publications/88/saqartvelos-rbili-dzala-chrdiloet-kavkasiashi>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1992a, August 18). *Eduard Shevardnadze: National Interests of Abkhaz People are not in Danger*. Retrieved May 5, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1992b, August 29). *Letter to the President of Kabardino-Balkaria Republic V. Kokov and the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria Kh. Karmokov*. Retrieved May 6, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1992c, September 4). *Nobody wins in the wars like this one*. Retrieved May 7, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1992d, September 23). *Now the fate of our people and our country are dependent on the elections*. Retrieved May 7, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>

nt/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1

Shevardnadze, E. (1992e, September 25). *Speech of the Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze at the 47th session of the UN General Assembly*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>

Shevardnadze, E. (1992f, October 6). *Letter to the president of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>

Shevardnadze, E. (1992g, October 7). *Eduard Shevardnadze answered the questions of the journalists*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>

Shevardnadze, E. (1992h, October 9). *The speech of the Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Georgia Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze at the pre-election meeting of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic on October 9, 1992*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>

- Shevardnadze, E. (1992i, November 2). *Eduard Shevardnadze: Now it is necessary to recruit the government, the structures of the parliament as quickly as possible and immediately start solving our livelihood issues.* Retrieved May 12, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1992j, November 17). *Eduard Shevardnadze: The world has not yet understood what separatism combined with extremism means. This event could not be properly assessed in Russia.* Retrieved May 12, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
<http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH01479048438fd58757be81c3;jsessionid=B06332144B99AE62D482B17B608F40E3?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1992k, December 31). *May 1993 be the year of peace, democracy, humanism, new victories, happiness, progress!* Retrieved May 13, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
[https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227010/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_VIII.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227010/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_VIII.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1993a, January 30). *We are pro equality in relations.* Retrieved May 14, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227010/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_VIII.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227010/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_VIII.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1993b, June 23). *Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to Belgium and Germany: on June 23, the head of state of Georgia delivered a speech at the meeting of the Council of NATO member states.* Retrieved May 15, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:  
[https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227010/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_VIII.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227010/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_VIII.pdf)



- Shevardnadze, E. (1994a, February 3). *Reception due to the official visit of the President of the Russian Federation to Georgia*. Retrieved May 16, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH5a9b9de15f6b6d64405a9c;jsessionid=8865FA77AE82A8B924697E4C4FCA2F83?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1994b, February 8). *A new stage of the national movement begins, which is called responsibility for one's country*. Retrieved May 16, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH5a9b9de15f6b6d64405a9c;jsessionid=8865FA77AE82A8B924697E4C4FCA2F83?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1994c, May 31). *Radio Interview: Country came to life, started to move to the better and I think, tomorrow is going to be a better day*. Retrieved May 17, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH5a9b9de15f6b6d64405a9c;jsessionid=8865FA77AE82A8B924697E4C4FCA2F83?ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1995a, February 7). *A year of reforms, new constitution, people's referendum and democratic elections: Information to the Parliament of the Republic about the domestic and international situation of Georgia, overcoming the crisis and the implementation of the reform program*. Retrieved May 19, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227035/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_X.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227035/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_X.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1995b, January 24). *The interests of building a democratic state require the dictatorship of the law*. Retrieved May 19, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia:

- [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227035/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_X.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227035/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_X.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1996a, February 28). *"The law on land ownership is not only an economic, but also a political statement on the way to the final rejection of the totalitarian system of farming.* Retrieved May 20, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XI.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XI.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1996b, February 28). *The three most important concerns of foreign-political activity are the security of the homeland, the well-being of the homeland and the name of the homeland: the speech of the President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze.* Retrieved May 20, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XI.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XI.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1996c, April 6). *The time has come when the states of the Caucasus region should take care of their own area of existence: Speech of Eduard Shevardnadze.* Retrieved May 20, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XI.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XI.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1996d, December 12). *Speech of the President of the Republic of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze.* Retrieved May 20, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XI.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227709/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XI.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1997a, August 5). *Interview with Eduard Shevardnadze.* Retrieved May 21, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227877/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XII.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227877/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XII.pdf)

- Shevardnadze, E. (1997b, August 12). *If we wish for Georgia to become a modern, civilised state with a dynamically developed economy, we must make industry the backbone of the economy*. Retrieved May 21, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227877/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XII.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227877/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XII.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1997c, November 18). *Interview with the president of the Republic of Georgia - Eduard Shevardnadze*. Retrieved May 21, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: [https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227877/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze\\_Tomi\\_XII.pdf](https://dspace.nplg.gov.ge/bitstream/1234/227877/1/Eduard-Shevardnadze_Tomi_XII.pdf)
- Shevardnadze, E. (1999a, February 16). *The report of the President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze on the domestic and foreign political and economic situation of the country at the session of the Parliament of Georgia*. Retrieved May 22, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH013113f13c865a995728e175?p.s=TextQuery&ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1999b, March 23). *The task of our generation is to put the country on the path of prosperity and prosperity so that our children and grandchildren can live better lives - Radio interview with president Eduard Shevardnadze*. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH013113f13c865a995728e175?p.s=TextQuery&ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1999c, July 6). *Briefing of the president of the republic of Georgia - Eduard Shevardnadze*. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH013113f1e73102995728e175?p.s=TextQuery&ed=1>

- Shevardnadze, E. (1999d, September 7). *The form of constructive discussion of today's parliament's work will undoubtedly give a healthy boost to the already effective election campaign*. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH013113f1e73102995728e175?p.s=TextQuery&ed=1>
- Shevardnadze, E. (1999e, October 4). *Briefing of the president of the republic of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze*. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia: <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/greenstone3/library/collection/uaxlesii/document/HASH013113f1e73102995728e175?p.s=TextQuery&ed=1>
- Shipan, C. R., & Volden, C. (2008). The mechanisms of Policy Diffusion. *American Journal of Political Science*, 840-857.
- Simon, H. (1985). Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science. *American Political Science Review*, 293-304.
- Stryker, S., & Statham, A. (1985). Symbolic Interactionism and Role Theory. In G. Lindzey, & E. Aronson, *Handbook of Social Psychology* (pp. 311-378). New York: Random House.
- Tayfur, F. M. (1994). Main Approaches to the Study of Foreign Policy: A Review. *METU Studies in Development*, 113-138.
- The Economist. (1999, October 28). *Chechnya's war frightens the Caucasus*. Retrieved April 10, 2023, from The Economist: <https://www.economist.com/europe/1999/10/28/chechnyas-war-frightens-the-caucasus>
- Thorhallsson, B., & Wivel, A. (2006). Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 651-668.
- Toshkov, D. (2016). Single-Case Study Designs. In D. Toshkov, *Research Design in Political Science* (pp. 285-309). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Utiashvili, S. (2019). *Wanted: Georgian State Policy towards the North Caucasus*. Tbilisi: Georgian Foundation For Strategic and International Studies.
- Vital, D. (1967). *The Inequality of States, A study of the Small Power in International Relations*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
- Vital, D. (1971). *The Survival of Small States. Studies in Small/Great Power Conflict*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Wallace, W. (1974). Establishing the Boundaries. In J. Barber, & M. Smith, *The Nature of Foreign Policy: A Reader* (pp. 12-17). Edinburgh: The open University Press.
- Wehner, L. E., & Thies, C. G. (2014). Role Theory, Narratives, and Interpretation: The Domestic Contestation of Roles. *International Studies Review*, 411-436.
- White, B. (1989). Analyzing Foreign Policy: Problems and Approaches. In M. Clarke, & Brian White, *Understanding Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Systems Approach* (pp. 1-26). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.