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Foreign Policy of Georgia as a Small State and Its Strategies

(Master's Thesis)

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Author's Declaration

Herewith I declare that I have written the Master's Thesis on my own and I have cited all sources.

Prague, 25 November 2020

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Author's Signature

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Introduction

Georgia is a small country, which gained independence in 1991 and was looking for possibilities to survive in international politics and develop its position and foreign policy. Being faced with challenges, the main goals in foreign policy of the small state are to restore its territorial integrity, join the EU, NATO and become more prosperous and successful in the 21st century.

Based on this in my thesis, I used a theory of the small states and their strategies to show that, how Georgia is implementing its foreign policy.

Regarding the topic of the foreign policy of small states, Thorhallsson, and Steinsson (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017) are talking about the size, which plays an important role in international relations. The small states are hoping to play their role in different international organizations. The international condition can easily influence and change the security policy of small states.

According to Pedi(Pedi 2017) , the smart state strategy requires smart leadership. The author writes that small states, which are using this strategy, can suffer from the financial crisis due to their small size.

As Pastore (Pastore 2013) writes about this strategy, she brings the example of Baltic states, Slovenia, Malta, and Cyprus. For example, Slovenia had to follow the criteria for EU membership. The reforms, which are done in a small state to achieve some certain goals, are also a smart state strategy.

Bailes, Bradley, Thayer, and Thorhallsson(Bailes, Thayer, and Thorhallsson 2016) wrote about the strategy of shelter, which is interconnected with alliance shelter theory. The strategy of shelter by itself represents a structural response for weak and especially small states related to economic, alignment, diplomatic, and societal approaches.

Pedersen, and Brun (Pedersen and Brun 2018) write about the status-seeking strategy and bring an example of Nordic countries, how they are trying to make better relations with the USA, which later can provide a shelter for them. Nordic countries are seeking a status via participating in military operations (NATO) to improve their status and position in the region.

Panke (Panke 2012) writes about the strategy of negotiation that small states are limited in negotiations due to limited resources and the number of representatives of the state. At the same time, the author claims that a small state can be influential in the decision-making process and they vote for the final decision in the end.

Concerning the foreign policy of Georgia and the strategy of shelter, Tsereteli (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013) explains the strategic partnership of Georgia with Azerbaijan. It can be considered as a shelter alliance because Georgia gets oil resources from this Azerbaijan and Russia's influence significantly decreases. Moreover, Georgia is an alliance with Azerbaijan in terms of trading oil and it serves as a transit country. Except Tsereteli I did not find, who has analysed Georgia's foreign policy through the prism of these strategies – and that's why I am doing it in my thesis. The authors, who are mentioned above their theories are suitable for the topic.

There are a lot of other authors who write relevant information about the strategies of the foreign policy of Georgia. Except for the academic articles, I also used media sources, websites of Foreign Affairs Ministries, Ministries of Defense, and other official documents.

The goal of the thesis is to understand the foreign policy of a small state and take Georgia as an example, which tries to survive in the international arena and develop further. Based on the applied strategies, it is possible to see how this small state performs its foreign policy and faces challenges. The research question of the thesis is How the applied strategies of foreign policy represent Georgia?

The method is a case study to investigate the foreign policy of Georgia and its strategies. The events which have occurred and how they were performed by those strategies and what Georgia was doing. The sources of the thesis are qualitative data, including academic sources, websites, news, and documents. It has synergetic relationships between theory and data. Based on an example of the theory, I was looking for relevant data.

In the thesis, I used a theory of the small states and their applied strategies. The theory explains how small states emerged on the map including the following reasons, like the collapse of the Soviet Union, the process of decolonization, final results of both World Wars.

By using this theory, except for the emergence of the small states, I am also trying to explain, how they should survive, develop further, and overcome the challenges. Based on the different

geolocation, their challenges vary, but the fact is that the small states have problems despite their location. The salvage for the small states is being a member of different organizations, where they can contradict large states and get the profit. Another option to feel secure is to be a reliable ally of a powerful country and a lot of small states view the USA as a powerful and reliable state. To perform foreign policy, small states use their strategies for relevant circumstances.

The first chapter is about the theory of small states, including general and necessary information for example, how they are measured. In the second part of the first chapter, there are described strategies such as smart state, shelter, status-seeking, and negotiation. Based on this theoretical explanation, in the empirical part is used information, which is relevant to the theory.

The second chapter is about Georgia as a small state in general and its foreign policy. Georgia is measured as a small state according to its population, territory, and resources. Another part describes the main picture of the foreign policy of Georgia and shows how the small state is interested in the membership of Western organizations and keeping the distance from Russia, which has imperialist ambitions.

The third chapter explains the strategy of shelter and examples are Georgia's relationship with the USA, Azerbaijan, EU, and membership in the GUAM organization. The USA and the EU provide shelter for Georgia and help them make improvements. Azerbaijan and Georgia are strategic partners with the same historical background and similar foreign policy priorities and that's why they support each other. Membership in GUAM unites the countries together in economic and political spheres, however, their foreign policy priorities are different.

The fourth chapter is about smart state strategy, which explains that a small state can easier suffer economic crises or global problems. At the same time, in order to achieve certain goals through reform, this strategy can be implemented. In the example of Georgia, it is a goal for EU membership, and it does reforms like improving the rule of law, gender equality, democracy, and so on. Regarding the global problem, I wrote about Georgia's success against the COVID, however, it still has some challenges in the economy.

The fifth chapter is status-seeking. A small state is looking for a reliable ally, which can protect it, and at the same time, it performs its responsibilities and improves its status in front of great powers. Here is a great example of Georgia's relations with the USA and participation in NATO

operations. Georgia is the largest contributor from non-NATO members and tries to show that it is a worthy country to join the military block. Georgia needs NATO because it needs protection from its neighbor. However, the big neighbor considers Georgian membership in NATO very negatively.

The sixth chapter is about the strategy of negotiation, where small states are limited in power, but sometimes they can influence a decision. Georgia was vetoing Russia's accession in WTO because of its national interest, and this was one of the reasons why a large state could not join the organization. Another example is a negotiation with China regarding OBOR, which passes through Georgia. Negotiations between the two countries conducted three rounds and they came to conclusion and compromise. However, it is uncertain China's position in supporting Georgia, and in the end the small state must make choice with whom to cooperate, China or the West.

1. Small States and Their Foreign Policy Strategies

As usually, international studies mostly are focused on Great and Super states (powers). However, the studies of small states can influence the international environment and its structure, especially when small states use their strategies of foreign policy, which will be mentioned later in details. Theoretically, the small states are carrying with themselves the systemic consequences of international anarchy because they are on the edge of the imbalance of power. However, the microstates survived, which means that the international system has undergone significant changes and small states have the chance to develop, prosper, and get a status, which they desire. When the balance of power is not able to dictate the final results, the small states and big states have the opportunity for a potential negotiation(Heng 2020).

A small state can be identified or measured by its territory, population, military, and economic facilities. According to the Forum of Small States in UN, a small state is that which has a population of less than 10 million. Sometimes small state with a population of 30 million is considered to be small but in academic sources its 10-15 million (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017). There are a lot of factors such as objective and subjective, which can facilitate concerning the question of the size of the small state, and because of it, there is no satisfying determination. It does not matter how many different measures are used to identify the size of a small state. In nowadays, none of the methods will be able to group the states together because of their differences. For instance, the common indicators to measure the state are size of the state, population and geographical area, already create a problem if countries must be grouped like in small and large (Archer and Nugent 2002).

Another determination of a small state is a shortage of resources and capabilities, which determine power and influence. Small states are not in a profitable situation due to the size of the population, which by itself limits the structural power. Geographically small states have a different position and based on their geo locations they have different challenges. For example, the wealthy Luxemburg, which is one of the founders of the EU, has different challenges comparing with the Baltic states that are bordering with Russia, which has tense relations with the EU. The challenges of those countries are different from the challenges of the Central African Republic of Liberia, where poverty is on a high level and it risks being a failed state. Therefore, the challenges are different, but the concept is the same. All of them should

compensate for the problems related to size and satisfy their needs (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017; Archer, Bailes, and Wivel 2014; Bailes, Rickli, and Thorhallsson 2014).

The economic elasticities of the small states are higher than in large states. It means that they are developing and growing very fast and demonstrate a high productivity compared to big states. However, the weak side of small states is that during the depression they take it worse than big states. For example, if there is an opened garment factory and near 200 people started work, it is not a big issue for the territory, however, from the jurisdictional point of view, the rate of unemployment will decrease. There can be also vice-versa if this factory will be closed, it means that 200 people will lose their jobs, the result is that unemployment can be increased, and this fact will be also considered as a national disaster for a small state (Baldacchino 2014). In economic negotiation, small states don't have too much power because of poor economic conditions. Transaction costs of diplomacy are heavy because they don't have a big apparatus of foreign policy. A small economy does not allow them to develop a wide range of foreign policy issues. Weak structural power of small states makes them less attractive and it brings difficulties in payments to negotiations. Small states have different interests and this is a fact that they don't have the same preferences and it is hard to build the coalition among each other to compensate for the power of the large state. Therefore, small states experience common diplomatic challenges to big states (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017; Panke 2010).

Concerning the military of small states, which can be sought from the large state, which is geographically or ideologically closer. Although the small states invest their resources for military capabilities for self-defense. The most suitable example is Singapore, Sweden, and Israel the small states, which need the armament forces for their protection as the survival and self-help remains one of the main strategies for small states (Heng 2020; Vital 1967).

It can be one large state or the other several states for keeping the balance. This option can be considered as a type of bandwagoning. For example, Lithuania relies on USA protection against Russia, but it determines bilateral dependence especially when it is entering the diversified alliance. To extend the NATO limits the power of the USA and tries to cooperate with Russia to reduce the risk of confrontation and create a balance. Small states experience the suffering of internal conflicts. Disorder and unstable situation in the country. Because of these factors, the USA involved in countries and an example is Grenada and Panama. The same situation was between Russia and its neighbors after the collapse of the Soviet Union when Georgia became

an independent state, it had internal conflicts, which will be mentioned in further chapters (Bailes, Rickli, and Thorhallsson 2014; Archer, Bailes, and Wivel 2014).

In the empirical part, it will be an example of Georgia how it is looking for a military alliance in NATO and have strategic partnership relations with the large states such as the USA. Another example is Georgia's membership in GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), these countries can be considered together as allies.

In foreign policy, size matters because for small states it is harder to implement their foreign policy than for large states. Small states rely on the organizations, where they are members and can decrease the power of asymmetry of large states via limiting the influence of big countries. Depending on international and domestic conditions, the security policy of small states varies. Despite their size, they can influence the world and global affairs if they use relevant strategies. The international system is full of small states because of history. For example, after two World Wars, the process of decolonization the collapse of the Soviet Union (and Georgia is one of the small states, which became independent). If the international system remains peaceful and it will be free trade, the world will be institutionalized, the number of small states will increase and provide their influence in world politics (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017). Small states mostly rely on multilateral organizations rather than on their partners. Because in the framework of organizations small states can get the most profit: gathering data, spreading of information, the forum of exchange the views and taking decisions on the deployment of forces and allocation of resources (Neumann and Gstöhl 2006; Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017).

For small states, there is also an important reduction of transaction costs because it allows them to get access to the information and to coordinate and make deals with other countries otherwise without of reduction of transaction costs they would not be able to do it. Multilateral fora are very helpful for small states because they can't establish diplomatic relations across the whole world or set strong relations on the governmental level due to the limitation of resources and the outcome is that multilateral fora help to fill these gaps. International organizations help the country to cooperate and facilitates the disagreements and conflicts among states in the international system. In a cooperative and peaceful international system, the small states can get a lot of profit. International organizations set the standards and punish cheaters, who don't follow the rules and at the same time mentoring the countries, how they obey the rules. Moreover, international regimes decrease the transaction cost of diplomacy by bringing the

actors on the forum that they could cooperate and come to a final decision (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017; Keohane and Martin 2014; 2014).

Small states are able, but their ability is limited compared to larger states to direct their diplomatic force to negotiations because of the limitation of skills and human resources. It is important also to understand the needs of small states because these needs and preferences are reflected in the foreign policy of small states. The international system should be peaceful and there should be a guarantee of security from the big states and organizations because small states are disabled to protect themselves. Due to the motivation and readiness, small states can refer their resources to influence some particular issues and they can be more influential than big states. For example, the Baltic states they pay too much attention, resources in term of security in the framework of NATO and EU, while Luxemburg gives it priorities to the financial sector and security policy is referred by larger states (Thorhallsson 2015; Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017).

According (Heng 2020) there is a literature about the small states, which claims that small states have several options to reinforce their security and survival.

Usually, small states are looking for common interests that make them closer to each other. For example, Singapore and New Zealand signed a treaty of strong partnership, where representatives of both countries declared themselves as natural partners. From this close cooperation, there are flows of strategic perspectives and support of rule-based international trade system. In 2000 New Zealand became first Singapore's trade Partner (Heng 2020).

In the empirical part will be an example of Georgia and Azerbaijan as small states and their strategic partnership. Azerbaijan as an oil and gas rich country and Georgia is its neighbor and the same time transit corridor country, which has an excellent geo strategic location.

For small states, there is also an important reduction of transaction costs because it allows them to get access to the information and to coordinate and make deals with other countries, otherwise without reduction of transaction costs they would not be able to do it. Multilateral fora are very helpful for small states because they can't establish diplomatic relations across the whole world or set strong relations on the governmental level due to the limitation of resources and the outcome is that multilateral fora help to fill these gaps. International

organizations help the country to cooperate and facilitate the disagreements and conflicts among states in the international system.

The choice and results of the foreign policy of a small state depend on the situation of the international environment at any given time. As was mentioned before, during the peaceful, institutionalized international environment, small states gain too many benefits. In a more limited environment, small states will have less successful results because it will be just a few options of foreign policy. As expert states (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017) *“Small states can and do influence world politics in an international system as permissive as the current one”* (Thorhallsson, Baldur, and Steinsson, 2017, p.20). Still, small states have limitations because of their size, there is a freedom of maneuver. However, the influence of small states depends on their time, resources, and efforts, which they put in their diplomacy.

In the thesis, there will be also described the strategies of small state’s foreign policy (strategy of shelter, smart state, status-seeking, and negotiation), in the empirical part there will be examples of Georgia. These strategies are important tools for foreign policy. Based on these strategies, it is easier to understand what is in the mind of small states and how they try to survive and save their sovereignty and except for saving itself, they are improving and developing further. Based on these theories, it is easier to understand what small states want and try to do.

1.1. Smart State Strategy

Smart state strategy is also relevant for the foreign policy of small states and it is applied in Georgia as well. Pedi and Pastore (Pedi 2017; Pastore 2013) write about small states that they can be easier to suffer crises or global problem because of their small size. Moreover, to achieve a positive result of the foreign policy of small states, it must follow the certain criteria. For example, if Georgia wants EU membership, it must do reform. Based on the smart state strategy of the Baltic countries, they are trying to bring Georgia closer to the EU.

This strategy is useful when a country experiences a global problem, it is easier to suffer. This strategy teaches that small states should not contradict to large states. Some small states use this smart strategy to achieve their goals and get what they want.

The smart state strategy refers to the foreign policy of small states because if they are members of one union or organization, they must follow their colleagues (big states). For example, small states in the EU, foreign policy has three features. First of all, the aims and means should be sorted via their preferences. According to their preferences, they can set the goal and at the same time think about their resources, how efficiently they can use it to follow their political agenda. That's why they should focus their resources on the negotiation and be ready for the compromise, which would not be so important for them. In the European Union, small states must provide their initiatives that have a common interest within the Union (Grøn and Wivel 2011).

The foreign policy of small states should avoid the contradiction of political proposals and initiatives, which the EU already has. In the best scenario, small states should use it as an instrument in the development of themselves. The strategy of a smart state uses its weakness as a resource of influence. The thing is that small states are not considered as rivals for big states and it gives them freedom for their political initiatives, making coalitions and act as mediators. In the EU, the smart state strategies show several characteristics of the optimal strategy, but it suffers from two limitations. Firstly, the characteristics in this approach are marked together in general. It shows a sharp and useful method for the traditional approach of a small state. However, the specification of the strategy does not get enough attention. Secondly the characteristics in empirical studies of this approach were used in the field of security (Grøn and Wivel 2011; Arter 2000; Wivel 2005).

According to Kouskouvelis (Kouskouvelis 2015), the leadership makes a small states smart or at least it associates smartness with high possibility of maximization of influence.

“Smartness refers to efficient use of means to achieve ends, namely, the maximization of their influence” (Pedi, Revecca.2017 p.147). For example, during the economics crises, Greece did not use the policy in an efficient way and it did not successfully influence the economic policy with smart leadership. It is considered that if Greece would use a smart strategy during the crisis, it could avoid high costs and miscalculations.

Except for the Greek crisis, which is not considered exceptional or unique, also other small states have experienced the same economic problem in the past, however, they achieved success at the end. Small, but smart state strategy requires the leadership that must be smart.

Because of lack of resources, small states are more sensitive to crises and changes in the international system than big states. According to (Pedi 2017), small states' economics are more fluctuating under crisis, however, their fiscal policy or other treatments can make larger influences by comparing with large states. In 2020, Georgia experienced the crisis due to COVID-19. I would like to illustrate it in detail in further chapter.

Another example of smart state strategies is the case of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Cyprus, and Slovenia. Their foreign policy, how they acted for the accession of the EU. One of the important criteria is geographical closeness. Traditionally, foreign policy of small states is focused on geographic orientation, especially to their close neighbors, which surrounds. Because of historical and geographical closeness, they have direct interests. This concerns Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Cyprus, and Slovenia because their interests were towards their neighbors even before accessing the EU, and after accession, they performed their foreign policy on the EU level. For instance, Cyprus has aspirations to solve disputes with Turkey in the framework of the EU. Slovenia was taking care of making stronger stability in Western Balkans and Baltic states were trying to make more peaceful relations with Russia. Moreover, membership in the EU allows these countries to widen their geographical interests. Baltic states paid attention to the Eastern Neighbourhood policy and tried to bring the former Soviet republics (Georgia) closer to the EU (Pastore 2013). This was an example of these countries, how they used their strategy of smart state and in the empirical part, it will be the case of Georgia, how it is successful in fighting against the global problem COVID and how it performs own foreign policy in front of EU.

1.2. Status Seeking Strategy

Another strategy is status-seeking. Carvalho, Benjamin, Pedersen, Rasmus Brun (de Carvalho and Neumann 2015) explain that small states are looking for alliances and they are usually big states. Based on these author's examples, it is written about Nordic states, which are looking for an ally like the USA.

The status-seeking strategy is one of the most important tools for the foreign policy of states, especially if they are small. Partially, this strategy can be viewed as an alliance as well because other states, which protect the interests of the victim are allies. Usually, there are large states or

strong regional organizations. This strategy can be viewed as small countries have good relations with the USA and in front of the large state, they can show their improvement of status position and even for some small countries provide 'shelter' against the regional competitors by improving their reputation.

Pedersen Rasmus brings an example of Nordic countries and their strategy as a status-seeking. These countries are trying to make a good alliance with the USA through the military approach. Because the relations with the USA are considered as enhanced status in the region. It was frequently asserted that Nordic states pursuit status with a moral dimension by supporting international cooperation, liberal order, and alliance structures in which the attention is not paid to hard power. In Pedersen's (Pedersen 2018) article wrote that after the Cold War, Nordic countries started to use military as the approach for the improvement of their reputation and status position.

For example, Denmark started its military activities at the beginning of the 2000s and it is considered by the USA as an improvement of its status and well position within international hierarchy.

In 2006, Denmark became one of the six countries, which deployed its military troops in Afghanistan and one of the 8 countries that dropped bombs in Libya. Their priority was to participate in the right states in military activities. And in the framework within the US, Denmark sent special forces to Syria to fight against ISIL in 2016. The USA complimented Denmark for its activities in the Middle East (Jakobsen, Ringsmose, and Saxi 2018; Pedersen 2018).

Based on their example, there is a common with Georgia because the USA and Georgia are strategic partners and in the empirical part it will be mentioned in more detail how Georgia starts relations with NATO. Georgia also wants to show to USA that it is a worth an ally and can bring a lot of profitable contributions. Comparing with Denmark, Georgia is not a member of NATO yet, but it is the biggest contributor from non-NATO members and participated in ISAF from 2004 and till now day continues its mission in different parts of the world especially Middle East. Like Denmark from the Nordic region, Georgia from the South Caucasus region was shown that is a worth partner.

1.3. Strategy of Shelter

Bailes, Alyson, Bradley, Thayer, and Baldur Thorhallsson (Bailes, Thayer, and Thorhallsson 2016) write about the strategy of shelter. Based on this theory, it is clear that Georgian cooperation with USA can be considered as the shelter. Most political shelter is provided by the USA for the majority of countries of the world and the most attention is paid to small states. For example, the Scotland Union with the UK and the bilateral treaty defense of Iceland and the USA can provide political, economic, and military shelter.

Another part of the strategy of shelter explains the alliances of small states within each other or with large states. This strategy is about the strategic partnership of small states, for example, in the empirical part it will be Georgian-Azerbaijan relations. Both of them are small states in the South Caucasus region and they are political allies and support each other despite having a small territorial dispute. Georgia is also a member of GUAM, CoE, UN, and so on. In the empirical part, there will be more detailed information about this and the most important and significant ally is the USA.

Alliance shelter theory asserts that through social cooperation or societal shelter, the Small European states could avoid isolation. The external relations with the whole world are important for the developing state because when different cultures interact with each other, they learn something and are getting better (Bailes, Rickli, and Thorhallsson 2014; Bailes, Thayer, and Thorhallsson 2016).

Political shelter includes the support of military or visible diplomacy when the small state or regional international organization needs it. Here can be mentioned that vulnerability does not refer only to the external threat, but it can also involve the challenges inherent in being small society. External shelters don't only protect small states, but also help in domestic affairs such as lack of infrastructure, indigenous knowledge, and limited public administration capacity. Via binding with the social and diplomatic external world, the external shelter helps the small states to reach their maximum level of potential (Bailes, Thayer, and Thorhallsson 2016).

This strategy is based on military diplomacy and United States of America were pushing Georgia towards membership in North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Moreover, through the USAID, America supports Georgia, especially its sovereignty and helps integrate with Western Institutions.

1.4. Strategy of negotiation

The strategy of negotiation according to Panke Diana (Panke 2010), who writes about small states that don't have enough resources and too much delegation because of these reasons they are not competitive, but their vote sometimes influences the final decision.

The strategy of negotiation is based on the small states, how active they are, and how they fulfill their tasks in the international arena. As being a small state, it means to have a lot of challenges, but sometimes small states are influential. There is only one author, Panke Diana (Panke 2011), who wrote several books in different years about this strategy and seems to be a useful source.

As was mentioned before, the small states do not have a lot of resources and financial capabilities. Due to the lack of these criteria, the small states will have difficulties in negotiation and their results will not be influential for developing strategies at the end. Thanks to international negotiations where one state means one vote. With the help of international negotiations, small states have an opportunity to become international players and reach successful results in international affairs. Small states are not active as large states, but it does not mean that small countries are not able to exert international negotiations. Overall, the small states do not pay too much attention in all negotiations, and they just set their priorities and preferences, which are important for them. To be a small state is not considered a weak state (Panke 2012).

The important thing is that small states know what they want in international negotiations. In case if they don't have their national stances, they use their negotiation skills in the end when the negotiators come to a common final agreement, but there is still any misunderstanding and disagreements in this case small states exert the outcome of negotiations. However, because of the low level of financial resources, the representatives of small states will not be so efficient and fast in negotiations as their colleagues from the large states (Panke 2010). As mentioned above, small states don't have too much financial resources and it means that the delegation of small states will not consist of the big number of authorities. If the state has a small number of authority representatives, diplomats, experts, the less active level of it will be in the framework of the organization. The small number of representatives have too much workload and they are

not able to be focused on other issues very efficiently and some time on negotiations they compromise (Panke 2012).

However, there is some puzzle. For example, Britain and Poland are larger states than Portugal and Ireland. The point here is that the frequency of strategy negotiations, which are used by states are diversifying across of the policy field (Panke 2011).

In the empirical part, there will be an example of Georgia's strategy negotiation and how and with whom Georgia overcomes it. Mostly Georgia played important negotiations in World Trade Organization. Because of a small state such as Georgia in Russia, it took 12 years to access into the organization. Moreover, except of being a member of such a global international trade organization, Georgia also made some negotiation process with a developing country, an emerging super power, and a second large world economy -China. Georgia has an essential geo-strategic location to implement partially One Belt One Road project.

2. Georgia as a Small State and Its Foreign Policy

Georgia is a country, which is located in South Caucasus bordering with countries such as North- Russia, South- Armenia, and Turkey, Southeast Azerbaijan. Georgia is a religious Orthodox, Christian country, which also includes minorities religions such as Muslims, Armenian Apostolic, Roman Catholic, and so on. One of the distinct criteria of the Georgian economy is agriculture. Because it is a lack of agriculture fields and it is not easy to handle every plot of land.

However, this problem is compensated due to the good quality of fruits, tea, and citrus, which Georgia has (Suny 2017). It is discussing topic, what is Georgia Europe, or Asia.

As was mentioned before According to Thorhallsson and Steinsson (Thorhallsson and Steinsson 2017) they consider small states from 10-15 million of the population and according to all the academic sources. The population of Georgia currently consists of 3,987,168 and per km² there are 57 people and per m² the number is 149. The overall land of Georgia is 69,490 km² (“Georgia Population (2020) - Worldometer” n.d.). The last GDP per capita in Georgia, which was recorded shows 15014,30 USD, and it is established by Purchase Power Parity and equals to 85% of the world’s average (“Georgia GDP per Capita PPP | 1990-2019 Data | 2020-2022 Forecast | Historical | Chart” n.d.).

2.1. Resources in Georgia

The land of Georgia is wealthy in natural resources, especially the part of South Caucasus, has a large amount of manganese, silver-lead and zinc ore, barite, coal, and marble. In the Kakheti region there was founded an oil and in Colchis was discovered peat and oil. Another important natural resource is water. Georgia is one of the world’s richest countries in terms of water. There are more than two thousand mineral water and springs, which helps the medication therapy and rehabilitation (“Geography of Georgia - Natural Resources” n.d.).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia was one of those countries which experienced the transition period from a planned economy to a market economy. The conditions of energy usage became worse and worse. That time in the mid of 1990s, people did not know that they

had oil in the Kakheti region as mentioned above. The large deficit is discovered in winter and autumn times. Until the 2000s, Georgia was in bad condition concerning energy (resources). For Georgia, the 2001 year was exceptional because it was conducted random research concerning the energy balance of Georgia about the TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States), which financed households and utilities, which the country consumed in 2001 and 2002. In the planned economy it was used as coal equivalent. The transformation of fuel resources from natural units to provisional values was done via fuel equivalents. Experts from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and TACIS were providing their assistance and support for Georgia. Around 2013-2014, balance of energy in Georgia was improved (Chomakhidze 2016; Emadi and Nezhad 2011).

2.2. Military capabilities of Georgia

Georgia's armed forces were established in 1991. The significant military equipment was lost in 1992-1993 during the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. However, the USA played an important role in developing Georgian military resources and providing training equipment, and helped Georgia to gain armed forces of westernized standards. The USA supplied with drones, helicopters, financial support, and even American military experts were training the Georgian soldiers. USA was pushing Georgia and Ukraine to get the Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the Bucharest summit in 2008 (Archer, Bailes, and Wivel 2014). USA is a good ally of Georgia and when it is a topic of Georgian military capabilities it is impossible to skip the support from a great power.

In 2007, the Georgian armed forces contained about 21 150 soldiers, who were active.

One year later, Georgian government asserted 5000 troops, which were participating in peacekeeping operations. The 2008 year played an important role in Georgia's army during the Russian-Georgian war because at that time Georgia lost its small navy fleet and air force. Based on the diapason of Georgia lost, the Ministry of Interior decided to reorganize its military capabilities and armed forces. In 2009, the navy and Coast guard were involved in a maritime force and cooperated as a police force instead of the navy (Kuimova and Wezeman 2018).

However, after the 2008 war, Georgia as a small state step by step with the help of the West was recovering. For example, on 6th of May, 2020 it was the first time when Georgian soldiers got winter and summer boots and uniform, which has a very high quality like NATO leading member countries have countries such as Germany, France, and UK. (“Georgian Military Equipped with the Highest Quality Uniforms and Shoes, the Same Standard as of NATO Leading Countries - News - MOD.GOV.GE” n.d.).

2.3. Georgia's current foreign policy

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, new states were born and Georgia is one of those countries, which got independence in 1991 and showed to the international community that it has borders and can controls by itself independently. At that time, Georgia faced internal and external problems and challenges, which were threatening to its sovereignty. Georgia was asserting itself as being a modern democratic state, but one of the main issues was that central administrative power was not enough efficient at that time. Being a member of the Soviet Union, Georgia was not experienced and did not have enough knowledge how to deal with international society, and because of the lack of skills, it had problems and a small understanding of modern statehood. It was not able to enhance its foreign policy priorities and relied on international help. The biggest problem of the foreign policy of Georgia was Russia, which did not allow to improve the foreign policy priorities, strategic orientation, and national security agenda of Georgia. However, the country was saved from the collapse and at the beginning of the 21st century it starting focusing its orientation towards the west and several important events occurred, which will be described later (Utiashvili 2014).

When Georgia received independence, it had a movement so called Georgia's ‘return to Europe’, but it did not give any guarantees, more over the same was applied to other post - Soviet republics, which became independent. According to opinion of ex-president of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili and his government concerning the much of electorate of the foreign policy during Shevarnadze, whose actions brought only friendly relations with international actors especially with those which were main and important, but the point here is that it did not give any positive result for the country's development. Unfortunately, the first decade after the independence was not enough successful because there was a messy situation overall and it was connected with the high level of corruption, privatization of state power, and gaining of the

personal profit. During this process, the small state lost its territories like Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which got independence by military power, which was provided by Russia (Beacháin and Coene 2014). Adjara became autonomous republic and Aslan Abashidze was a head of this republic with his power and influence. After the rose revolution it was clear that small state has European ideology and he could not stay in power, he was the one who wanted also proclaim Adjara as independent state, but he failed. After the revolution, time changed and foreign policy also so it was about the restoration of territories, Georgian national pride and confidence (Beacháin and Coene 2014; Ó Beacháin 2009).

Except of Saakashvili, there was a prime Minister of Georgia, Zurab Zhvania and in the Council of Europe in 1999 he said *‘I am Georgian and therefore I am European’*. During his performance he showed the whole world that Georgia is seeking the membership in European Union and described the foreign policy of Georgia for the next decade. ‘Return to Europe’ for Georgians it does not mean only EU membership, but also European way of life, which includes democracy, human rights, prosperity, and the justice. Europeans is not only to get membership, the most important is to share political values and identity (Mestvirishvili and Mestvirishvili 2014). If the small state will follow European identity, it can play a role in the rethinking of the country and its destiny, which can reflect foreign policy. Saakashvili in his speech was proving and asserting that Georgia is one of the oldest European countries for example in front of Spanish Minister Jose Maria Aznar he delivered the speech *‘We must never forget it; we are not anyone’s distant relatives and connected with them by force. We are an indivisible part of this civilization’*. (Beacháin, Donnacha Ó., and Frederik Coene, 2014, p.924).

The main aim of the foreign policy of Georgia is a recognition of its sovereignty, de-occupation, and peaceful restoration of its territories, which are recognized by the international community. To achieve its foreign policy goals, Georgia continues to reinforce democratic institutions. The government aspires to show the international community that Georgia is a safe, peaceful country in the region and is leading in terms of democratic reforms in the Caucasus region. Georgia’s precedence in the EU is one of the priority of foreign policy. Georgia continues the realization of the Association Agreement with the EU, which consists of a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement and an association agenda and institutional rapprochement with the EU. Based on article 49 of the European Union, Georgia will continue its aspirations towards its members and the Association Agreement is not the final goal of Georgia.

Georgia tries to fulfill the criteria of the EU and it will be applied towards the strategies in further chapters.

Another goal of Georgia's foreign policy is its NATO's membership.

The Sovereignty of Georgia is supported by the international community. One of the main allies of Georgia is the United States of America, which recognizes South Ossetia and Abkhazia as part of Georgia, which are currently occupied by Russia (US relations with Georgia, 2016). In the USA, Georgia is considered a point of spreading liberal democracy, the market economy, which is outside of Europe and North America. Georgia has also an excellent geo location and based on this statement, it is easier to allocate military forces between Russia and the Middle East and promote the Georgian soldiers to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq and participate in military missions. As mentioned above, Georgia has perfect geolocation, it means that this small state can be considered as a source of tension between large States such as USA and Russia (Archer, Bailes, and Wivel 2014).

Except for the USA, also EU supports the country's sovereignty with internationally recognized borders. Last year EU delegation was in Georgia on the anniversary of the Russia-Georgia war 2008 and stated: *"The conflicts in Georgia have caused displacement and trauma to the lives of thousands of people and that legacy now affects generations. The EU welcomes and supports sincere and apolitical efforts on all sides to address humanitarian and security issues."* ("EU Reaffirms Support for Georgia's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity on 11-Year Anniversary of Conflict between Russia and Georgia | EU Neighbours" n.d.).

2.4. The foreign policy of Georgia as a small state, and the EU

Concerning the EU, the small state of Georgia is a neighborhood of Europe, which has internal security disputes and established not stable situations beyond its borders, moreover, this is the type of state that the European Security Strategy was intended to deal with.

The part of the thesis, which is related to foreign policy briefly will be described the relations with Georgia and the EU. Georgia forces to think the decision-makers in the EU, how long can this union expand in the East and how to create a balance between European values as an international society and its relations with Russia (Archer, Bailes, and Wivel 2014).

For the EU membership, the applicant country must fulfill requirements. For example, it should be done a successful transition of the market economy like it was in the Baltic States. Georgia did not have even a small business opportunity and there was a lack of human resources, which are important for the basic knowledge of the economy. The government was not active at all and the result was that economic stagnation lasted near 7 years. After the end of the civil war in Georgia and during the government of Shevardnadze was not also very positive because he did not have any new approaches and ideas to make significant reforms in the country. Georgian economy did not have productive power that would be able to transform it into the engine of improvement for Georgia. After the Rose revolution in the country, there were visible significant changes, which the European Union could estimate. For example, Saakashvili and his government paid too much attention to the fiscal discipline and restoration of the basis of the economy, at the same time he was fighting against the corruption, black market, and illegal markets. If someone was doing illegal business, Saakashvili's government was fighting against it (Papava and Tokmazishvili 2006).

“On 22 of April in 1996 Georgia signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with EU in Luxembourg and later this agreement entered into force on 1 July 1999” (“ს ა ქ ა რთვ ე ლს ს ა გ ა რე ო ს ა ქ მ ე თ ა ს ა მ ო ნ ო ს ტ რ ო - European and Euro-Atlantic Integration” n.d.). The goal of this agreement was to enhance bilateral relations and political dialogue between the two sides and as a result, there were created EU-Georgia Cooperation Council: EU-Georgia Cooperation Committee, EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, and EU Georgia Cooperation Subcommittees. At the end of the 1990s by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia was discussed the possibility of Georgia for applying for membership according to article 49, Treaty on European Union. After the consultation with the EU representative, it was understandable that applying for membership could damage the country's existing relations with the EU. Brussels would refuse Georgia's application and provide a non-positive report on the country, where it can emphasize the problems it experiences. Despite that, Georgia did not have chances to apply for membership, but the EU still was supporting it. EU put a lot of contributions in Georgia to make it a modern, democratic country and develop a market economy. From 1999-2004, the EU spent more than a billion euros and was supporting 3 main areas: humanitarian, technical, and financial aid (Gogolashvili 2017).

ENP approves the developing relations between the EU and its neighbors, which support western values like democracy, rule of law, freedom of speech, free trade, economy, and so on. Eastern Neighborhood Policy is considered an important strategy, that is, enhancing relationships with the closest allies and support reforms, which are concerned to be in the political and economic fields (Gogolashvili 2017)(European Parliament resolution,2011).

A lot of Georgians have faith that Georgia's future will be in 'Europe'. The survey, which was conducted in the mid of the 1990s, shows that people have an interest in the integration into the EU and they trust the European institutions. For example, the European Neighborhood Policy was launched in 2003, but it was not considered for the countries of South Caucasus at the beginning. However, one year later, it was emphasized by the Council that recommendations of the European Parliament and the special representative of EU in South Caucasus will also include Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. This large step of Georgia's inclusion in the ENP can be viewed as a new level of EU's participation in the region. It is necessary that this decision was accepted after the revolution of Rose, which was held in Georgia in 2003 and when Russia turned down the accession to ENP. New aspirations and democratic changes inside of Georgia might also develop the whole Caucasian region at that time (Gogolashvili 2009).

In 2003, despite the establishment of the European Neighbourhood Policy and European Security Strategy, it was following the process of the Rose Revolution that showed how Georgia was transiting from an authoritarian regime to democratic and it happened very fast. Tbilisi was on the political priorities of Brussels because Georgia changed its regime based on the European model. In 2004, the relationships between Georgia and EU improved and the result was that Georgia got more financial, technical aids, and support in the negotiation of separate regions with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which was conducted under the OSCE and UN. The foreign policy of Georgia towards the separatist region is peaceful (Bardakçi 2010).

Therefore, the financial aid, which Georgia received from the EU significantly stretched after the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. The outcome of this war was that Russia made an embargo on Georgians goods services, and the Georgian economy significantly decreased. Thus, Georgia aimed to vary its economy with the whole world and not to have relied only on Russia in terms of trade partnerships. Despite large numbers of imported goods from the EU, the portion of Georgian exported goods was not enough for the European Market. In 2011, it started the negotiation between Georgia and EU about the DCFTA and it was not only about deepening trade with Georgia, but also make reformation in Georgians economic institutions and improve

the norms of domestic goods to challenge and compete with other European goods in European Markets (Gasparian and Kavadze 2018).

Except for ENP, DCFTA, ENS Georgia got a visa-free regime from the EU, which means that citizens of Georgia can travel to Europe (Schengen zone) without a visa and it was launched on 28 of March in 2017. The Foreign Policy of Georgia has ambitious, which is beyond the visa liberalization. When the visa-free regime entered into force, it appeared new interest of further relations between Georgia and the EU. Western partners are informed that Georgia's goal is not only a visa-free regime and it will work for possible membership in the EU (Asmus 2006a)(Vardishvili and Panchulidze, 2017).

2.5. The foreign policy of Georgia as a small state, and the NATO

Georgia as a small state needs security especially when it is bordering with a large state, which has tension relations. To survive, Georgia needs security and stability. Membership in NATO means security and political reform. Georgia as a small state does not want to be looked like a post-soviet space or Caucasian region of stable situation. Georgia considers itself in the Black Sea community as a country, which is connected to Europe. Thus, Georgia is on the path to Euroatlantic integration to NATO. Euroatlantic institutions ensure for Georgia a spot in the modern world. The membership in NATO serves as a good motivation for Georgia because represents the best possible state-building tool for this small state (Asmus 2006a; 2006b).

Georgia as a small state GDP rank is in the 119th place according to the IMF. When Global Fire Power shows the rank of its military in the 82nd place. Based on this data, the membership of Georgia is possible, but it does not worth it because of Russia as a big problem, which is ranked as the 2nd military power. Even if Georgia joins the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, it will not be the weakest member. There are other members like Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro that are economically weaker than Georgia because of their GDP. *“According to the Global Firepower rankings the Georgian military is stronger than some of the countries, which are already members and those states are Albania, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Montenegro and Slovenia as well as Macedonia.* (Kyle 2019)” (Kyle, Joe. 2019 p. 244). Moreover, Georgia has good strategic geolocation, it means that except going to fight against Afghanistan, Georgia also provides access to Central Asia for the USA. This is a

moment, which can be considered as small states that serve large states from the point of strategic view.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization does not stop in terms of supporting its partner's territorial integrity, moreover, it calls Russia to abandon its recognition of Georgia's sovereign territories. NATO is not satisfied with the actions in occupied territories and does not recognize elections in Abkhazia in 2011 and South Ossetia in 2008 and conducting such type of elections will not bring to peaceful results (Deepening relations with Georgia).

The existent and survival of a small state such as Georgia depend on the speed of support. As was mentioned, South neighbor of Georgia is Turkey. It means that Turkey is a link or stakeholder between Georgia and NATO as Turkey is already a member of NATO. Russia's navy forces dominate in the Black Sea and these forces are supported by strong anti-ship batteries. Unfortunately, Georgia is not able to trade space for time. NATO must react at least in several hours, but it can happen only with a strong obligation of Turkey. However, the thing is that Turkey has its own problems like the civil war in Syria and focused on its own challenges and because of it, Turkey is not very well prepared for the rapid reaction if Georgia is in trouble. The feud between Turkey and other NATO members represents new political responsibilities for Georgia. That's why during the wartime in NATO it will not be able to protect and save Georgia from defeat (Motin 2020)

For Georgia, it is important to become a NATO member because it is a small state, which needs security and this small country is important for NATO because of its geolocation. One of the most dangerous risks here is Russia, which is on Georgia's integration because it considers a threat to its region when there will be US military bases. In further chapters of strategies, there will be mentioned about Georgia-NATO cooperation and Russia's vision about it in more detail.

2.6. The foreign policy of Georgia as a small state and Russia

As it was mentioned Georgia's foreign policy is the aspiration to the west and territorial restoration. Based on this ideology, Georgia can't have good relations with the big neighbor. The reason is that Russia is identified as a successor of the Soviet Union, which contradicts

Georgian national interests and security. Russia's values are against Western values because it is not a secret that Russia has imperialist ambitions.

“ Georgia has sought to create a conceptual alternative to Russia by providing an example of a complete and irreversible break of historical and cultural ties with its powerful neighbor” (Kakachia, Kornely, and Salome Minesashvili. 2015 p.177).

Russia lost its competition for innovation and economic prosperity and it is just considered as ‘industrial museum’. The political authority of Georgia believes that the big state does not show any signs of the revival of its sphere of influence. Georgia's government argues that small states should have more strategic partnerships with more advanced and globally developed countries in the West. It means Georgia should not be districted to the Post Soviet Space and CIS countries. As Foreign Policy of this small state claims, it should cooperate only with the West because it is no other option to satisfy its political, security, and economic needs (Kakachia and Minesashvili 2015).

Based on Georgia's choice, it creates some disputes in the region. A lot of Georgians view Russia as a conflict based on the West. Georgia's choice towards the West implies the conflict with Russia. As Georgians consider themselves as European, they also value the conflict with Russia. However, the important thing here is that Russia is not against pro-western policy, but it opposes pro-western type building state what Georgia does. *“ Therefore. Russia's internal order is assumed to be shaping its interests, but also shaping Georgia's because the partnership with a non-democratic, corrupt country that does not share modern values would be disastrous for a small state”*. (Kakachia, Kornely, and Salome Minesashvili. 2015 p.177).

In 2012, Georgia experienced the first parliamentary elections, which were conducted peacefully after its independence. Bidzina Ivanishvili came to power with his party Georgian Dream. The relations between Georgia and Russia started a little improving under the current Georgian government. To be focused on Georgia as an example of a small state, Kakachia, Kornely, Salome Minesashvili, and Levan Kakhishvili (Kakachia, Minesashvili, and Kakhishvili 2018a) are trying to provide the link between the country's internal policy and its changing foreign policy in an unchanged external environment. Georgia's foreign policy towards the West remains a priority. Under the governance of the Georgian Dream Party, the relationships with Russia are softened and normalized in cultural, economic, and humanitarian relations. According to structural international relations theory, a small state like Georgia is not

able to pursue its independent foreign policy. Any changes in foreign policy should be assigned to external dynamics. Thus Georgia's foreign policy change behavior towards not different external environments remains an empirical puzzle (Kakachia, Minesashvili, and Kakhishvili 2018a).

Two leaderships of government tried to show Georgia from the different perspective. In regard to United National Movement party, where the leader was Saakashvili, he just tried to show the country's internal problems on a regional and even on an international level. Saakashvili's government was interested in putting Georgia on an international level. For example, the revolutions, which occurred in Middle East and North Africa, Saakashvili decided to portray Georgia on the same position and represent Russia as an enemy of the free movement. Moreover, Saakashvili tried to convince the Western world that problems of Georgia are important on an international level and are enough significant. Saakashvili also expressed pity that conflicts in post-Soviet space are not so important for the West and it happened on Munich conference at 2011. He was claiming that Western participation plays too much role in Georgia and beyond of its borders. While the current government Georgian Dream Party has a different approach about Georgia's international problems and challenges. They adopted the strategy of localization territorial integrity of Russia and European Union Agenda. In 2013, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia was talking that the occupation issue is a threat for a South Caucasian region and the national threat of Georgia and GD government is not going refer Georgia's problem on an international level like it did the previous government (Kakachia, Minesashvili, and Kakhishvili 2018b).

3. Georgia's Strategy of Shelter

In this chapter there will be mentioned the relations of Georgia with Azerbaijan and USA, and Georgia's membership in GUAM. However, another strategic partner of Georgia is a neighbor (Turkey), which is already a member of NATO. Turkey also supports Georgia's territorial integrity and supports a small states in Euro Atlantic Integrity (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). However, I decided to write about Azerbaijan, which is also a small state and make it an alliance on a personal level and in organization (GUAM) as well. And the most prominent ally of Georgia is a large state (USA), which is a reliable partner for Georgia. These three examples are more suitable for this chapter based on theoretical framework.

Georgia as a small state in the Caucasus region needs shelter for its own security and strategic partnerships. This small country has challenges and threats and one of the main threats for Georgia is Russia. Georgia uses this strategy with its strategic partners. One of the main allies of Georgia is the USA and in this chapter it will be mentioned also US-Georgia relations in a status-seeking strategy. Based on the theory of shelter Georgia's ally countries can be considered Azerbaijan and the USA. Azerbaijan, as a small state in the same region with similar foreign policy, is a strategic partner of Georgia and supplies gas and reduces the influence of Russia over Georgia, despite it Azerbaijan has the same experience as Georgia after gaining independence.

The USA is the main and reliable ally for Georgia. The large state supports the country's sovereignty and its Euro Atlantic path. Moreover, the USA provides military assistance to Georgia to protect its independence. Except for the USA, there is another 'shelter' for a small state like the EU. This organization provides a support economy and military. As was mentioned in the 2nd chapter, Georgia got the visa-free regime to travel. European Union also takes care of the security in the neighborhood region, where Georgia comes from. And one more organization is GUAM, where the members are considered allies. The members of these countries are not so strong and they have their own challenges and problems, but despite it, they are allies and looking for a strategic partnership.

3.1. Georgia-Azerbaijan in terms of strategic partnership

There are 3 countries in the South Caucasus region: Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. These countries have their own political interests. In 2020 Azerbaijan and Armenia have a territorial conflict dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is recognized by the international community as part of Azerbaijan, however, three states which are not UN members, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria recognize this territory as independent (“James Appathurai: NATO Is Helping Georgia during Pandemic and Will Continue to Do So” n.d.).

Georgia has the same problems as Azerbaijan concerning the territorial conflict, which is frozen. Two states are allies in this region and Georgia recognizes the territorial sovereignty of Azerbaijan. *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia reaffirms its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and does not recognize the so-called presidential and parliamentary elections held on March 31, 2020, in Nagorno Karabakh* (“Georgia Doesn’t Recognise Recent Elections in Nagorno Karabakh” 2020).

The strategic partner relationships of these two small states start after gaining independence. Two countries signed more than 100 bilateral treaties. Azerbaijan is rich in its natural resources of oil and gas. Georgia has good geolocation and access to the Black Sea, which means that it can serve as a transit country for Azerbaijan to trade its oil with the western world. These countries needed each other to achieve their goals and it was bound with transportation links. The deceased ex-president of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze in 1993 stated that relationship with Azerbaijan are adjunct interests. As he said, we need their railway roads and they need our Black Sea ports if they want to do any business to the West (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013; “Dr Emmanuel Karagiannis,” n.d.).

Georgia and Azerbaijan can be viewed as strategic partners because they have common foreign policy interests. Both of them try to achieve positive results concerning the territorial borders, which are recognized by the international community and improve the process of regional integration as well as economic and political security for both of these states. Azerbaijan is a small state because the current population is 10,165,557 and 123 people for km² and 318 per m². (“Azerbaijan Population (2020) - Worldometer” n.d.; “Azerbaijan Demographics 2020 (Population, Age, Sex, Trends) - Worldometer” n.d.).

Two of these countries were following the same foreign policy. For example, both of them joined in Council of Europe, Georgia did it in 1999, and two years later Azerbaijan joined. They are a member of OSCE and have relationships with NATO and participate in the Partnership for Peace program. Only one distinction between these small states was that Georgia is a member of WTO (World Trade Organization) since 2000, while Azerbaijan still has negotiations for its membership. Countries from the Western World and International Organizations like the UN, EU, and OSCE supported strong regional cooperation of South Caucasus countries, especially good example is the Georgia-Azerbaijan partnership. The difference between the Western world, including International Organizations, and Russia is that Big Neighbor never supported a regional strategic partnership and it had preferences to cooperate with small states individually rather than as a group because the large state could get more benefits and opportunities due to its size and power (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013).

Therefore, Georgia and Azerbaijan have the same interests in their foreign policy, it does not mean that they have the same strategies. The economy of Azerbaijan depends on resources such as oil and gas, and it strengthens the country's image because Azerbaijan has a stronger position in the region than Georgia. This is a fact when there was a discussion about the East-West energy-transportation Georgia was always considered as a weak country, which could become a target of enemies, who desired to fail the success of the project. This weakness was performed by Russian pressure on Georgia rather than Azerbaijan. Kremlin was for the destabilization of Georgia and was supporting separatist movements, looking for the opportunity to weaken Georgia and to the international arena represented as a fail state. Moreover, there were several attempts to assassinate Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze in the mid of 1990 and it is connected with Russian special forces (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013; Baran 2003).

Azerbaijan faced the same experience at the beginning after gaining independence. Russia wanted that Azerbaijan would be dependent on Russia's energy. Russia also fueled the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and with the military support of Russia, the successor of this conflict became Armenia. Russia tried to assassinate the political authority of Azerbaijan in the mid of 1990 as well as it tried in Georgia. The goal of Russia is to prevent the political and economic independence of Azerbaijan and keep being influenced in

Azerbaijan (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013).

Azerbaijan's resources of energy have the potential to supply it in Europe and enhance its relations. Europe is looking for new sources of energy supplies like gas, hydroelectricity. Small states like Georgia and Azerbaijan have this potential to supply both resources for Europe and develop new infrastructure that would guarantee the supply of energy resources to Europe and it can be a priority for both countries. If there are more infrastructure that connects Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Europe, the more income will get the region of South Caucasus (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013).

The same applies to Georgia, to reduce Russia's influence, Azerbaijan supplies its gas and energy resources. Because of it, Georgia is independent from Russia and does not rely on the big neighbor's resources.

Georgia and Azerbaijan have the same challenges in the region and that's why their foreign policy priority is interconnected and they are good strategic partners in the region. However, there are several reasons why Georgia is more targeted by Russia than Azerbaijan. First of all, both presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan used to be in the KGB in their past and it means that they can link on a personal level.

The second reason is that Azerbaijan does not have minority problems than Georgia does. The third reason was that Russia wished to stop the Azerbaijan-Georgia partnership by giving pressure to Georgia and wooing Azerbaijan. The fourth reason is that Russia was mentally disappointed and accused Georgia as a traitor because it was trying to use pro-Western policies instead of being close to Russian culture. And the last reason was that Russia was very angry with Georgia's frank and aggressive policy, while Azerbaijan had a restrained position, but the same time it had a similar policy with Georgia (M. Tsereteli and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program 2013; Cornell 2007).

Now days, approximately half million of ethnic Azerbaijani minorities live in Georgia. When there was the first president of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia, these minorities were under the threat of deportation, who lived in Bolnisi and Marneuli. However, the situation improved when the next president Eduard Shevardnadze came to power and signed the oil contract with Azerbaijan. During Saakashvili's government, the relationships between Azerbaijan and

Georgia have significantly improved. For now, there is no animosity between the two neighbors except of territorial delimitation (Kuzio 2008)(Ilgar Hasanli, Centre for National and International Studies, Baku). Concerning the territorial issue, there was conducted a meeting in Baku last year. The representative of Georgia was Lasha Darsalia, who is a Deputy Foreign Minister and from Azerbaijan, there was Khalaf Khalafov, who is also a Deputy Foreign Minister. Both sides were negotiating about the border delimitation process and they agreed on 2/3 of the border. Now they need to continue the negotiation to reach further remaining issues. Both sides put efforts to avoid provocative actions and act in terms of strategic cooperation, to continue the work on the borderline issue of David Gareji Monastery. Both parties agreed to have negotiations in a good-neighbourly atmosphere (“საქართველოს საგარეო საქმეთა საშინაო სტრატეგია - Joint Commission on the Demarcation of the Georgia-Azerbaijani Border Has Met in Baku” 2019).

This is a reason why the theory of shelter applies to Georgia –Azerbaijan relations. Both of them have similar challenges and disputes, but at the same time, they support each other.

3.2. Georgia and GUAM

Guam is a regional international organization for democracy and economic development. Members of this organization are Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. One of the main sectors of cooperation of this organization is energy security. As it was mentioned above, Georgia and Azerbaijan are allies, it means that since 2007 one small state was receiving energy resources from another. Through Baku-Tbilisi- Erzurum, it was the idea to supply gas to Europe and Ukraine, but the EU did not have too much interest and later after the creation of the Polish-Ukrainian alliance looked like it tried to implement Azerbaijan-Georgian supply to Europe and Ukraine. However, the preferences of a member's foreign policy are different. For example, Moldova's political strategy is membership in the EU, but not NATO. While Georgia sees the membership in NATO as one more step for membership in the EU (Kuzio 2008). To enhance its political and economic security, Azerbaijan and Georgia offered to be allies for the rest of the two members of GUAM (Alieva 2006).

One of the main priorities of the organization is that members are trying to avoid the presence of Russia in its region and prevent the escalation of the frozen conflicts. Unfortunately, GUAM

was not able to contradict the conflict because of Russian opposition and problems in Moldova. The GUAM summit took place in 2008 in Batumi (Georgia), where ex-president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili said *“ there is an attempt to impose on Georgia a scenario similar to the one that was imposed on Europe and implemented in respect of Czechoslovakia through the Munich agreement, as well as in respect of Poland and the Baltic states through the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact” Alluding to the unwillingness of some EU and NATO members to commit to Georgia’s defense against Russian predation, he expressed hope that a new Munich and Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact- dividing Europe into spheres of influence, partitioning territories and revising borders, will not be implemented in today’s world.* (Weitz Richard 2008)

3.3. US-Georgia strategic partnership

It is obvious that Georgia as a small state is looking for shelter. The USA as a large state provides shelter for Georgia and supports it. Georgia is a geographically valuable ally for the USA . America started to have diplomatic relations with Georgia in 1991. The small state made a significant improvement, which is related to fight against corruption, strengthening global security, and developing modern state institutions. Moreover, Georgia is one of the allies of the USA in combating terrorism in Iraq, and nowadays it is one of the largest troop contributors in the Iraq war, which is in the third place. Therefore, Georgia is the largest per capita contributor to the US-led mission in Afghanistan. Same time, the USA from its side helps Georgia to enhance its institutions, especially when there is a given pressure from a big neighbor (Russia). Despite it, the USA assists financially the small state especially when it got independence and this helps consist of 3 billion dollars. From 2009 US-Georgia relations are ordered by US-Georgia Strategic Partnership Charter. US-Georgia Strategic Partnership consists of 4 fields: *“ democracy, defense and security, economic, trade and energy issues, and people to people and cultural exchanges”*(BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS,2016).

From 2004-2008, Georgia tried to become a NATO member but failed because of strong Russia’s opposition. After that, in 2012, the USA and Georgia started the negotiation about the Free Trade Agreement. If the realization of this treaty will be implemented, it means that Georgia will be the only one European country, which has such a treaty with the USA (Tsygankov 2013).

When there is the relationship, partnership, and support of the USA to Georgia, one of the most significant roles plays USAID (United States Agency for International Development). The small state is important geostrategic partner in the South Caucasus region for the USA. As it is clear, American governments can support Georgian integration in western institutions, economic and political structures. USAID has also developed CDCS (“Country Development Cooperation Strategy - Georgia | Georgia | U.S. Agency for International Development” 2020) for 5 years in partnership with Georgia on its challenging path of self-determination and supporting in EU Atlantic aspirations and enhancing resistance to adverse influences. Georgia now is in a tensioned situation, especially when it is concerned towards the occupied regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russian forces. The small state continues to face an uncertain geopolitical situation when it is at the crossroads between Europe and Asia and between Iran and Russia (Ingle 2020). Therefore, Georgia has too many challenges and unclear situations, but despite its small state, is ready to develop and to finish its transition to free trade. The progress, which was achieved by Georgia was not so easy, but it improved a lot with the help of the USA and European Union, which were engaged in the foreign assistance (“A Chill in Georgia-China Relations | CEPA” 2020).

The USA played an important role in Georgia after the war with Russia in 2008. USAID and Defense State Department supported Georgia in the humanitarian field and the Ministry of Defense quickly started air and naval deliveries. Bush’s administration allowed the Defense Department to support Georgia to show the whole world that the USA is a small state and helps to save its independence and sovereignty. The ex-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated about the plan, which consists of 1 billion dollars with the help of Georgia. This aid was provided for the reconstruction of facilities and infrastructure, which were destroyed after Russia’s attack in Georgia. Moreover, this support for the USA was provided for Georgia to increase its economy (Nichol, Foreign Affairs, and Division 2008)

During the visit of the ex-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Georgia, Saakashvili said that Georgia, such as a small state, which needs security, could not attack Russia because a small country is a temptation for a big neighbor. In terms of Partnership, Saakashvili hopes that the USA will help in arms weapons capabilities (Guo 2010 and James,2008)

When the government in the US has changed and Obama became president at that time, John McCain, who is a US Senator, asked the new government to continue to support Georgia for defensive arms that also include early warning radars. Giorgi Baramidze, who that day was the

vice prime minister and responsible for Euro Atlantic integration, called the USA to resume the delivery of defensive weapons for Georgia. In March of 2011, Saakashvili visited America, and as it was reported, he queried US about the transportation of defensive weapons (Rogin 2011 and James,2008).

In 2012, the government in Georgia changed, which had a bit different foreign policy and prefers to soften the relationship with Russia. Despite it, the USA still resumes to support Georgia in its territorial integrity. For instance, in 2017, Vice President Mike Pence visited the capital of Georgia Tbilisi and declared that he criticizes Russia's occupation of Georgia's land. USA urges Russia to withdraw its soldiers and recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as part of Georgia (Baghirova 2019). In November of the same year, the USA announced that US-Georgian relationship took two more steps in the field of military defense relationships on a new level. First of all, the USA declared the historical sale to Georgia of anti-tank missiles that are called Javelin. During Obama's administration, Georgian several times tried to get with weapons, but they failed. The total package included 410 missiles and 72 launchers. Secondly, the US-Georgian armed forces agreed that it will be refocused. Georgian soldiers will be better trained than they used to be trained in Afghanistan for counterinsurgency missions (Coffey 2018).

3.4. EU-Georgia strategic partnership

Another main ally for Georgia is the EU and it can be also considered as 'shelter'. European Union supports Georgian Euro Atlantic Integration and the same as the USA provides also financial assistance. One of the main peacekeeping operations of the EU, which operates in Georgia is EUMM (European Union Monitoring Mission). It was established in September 2008 after the Russian-Georgian war. This mission is not military because the European Union does not provide soldiers and weapons capabilities. Near 200 civilians are sent by the EU to Georgia to check and report the situation in a small state and how stable is it. They pay attention to the Six Point Agreement that it would not be violated, which was signed by Georgia and Russia on the 12th of August. This is an agreement is important for the EU because it is a stakeholder between these two states. European Union Monitoring Mission is perceived by EU members and other countries as a significant element to provide security in the neighboring regions, especially Abkhazia and South Ossetia (EUMM. 2016).

In 2010 the Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle spoke in European Parliament in the Committee of Foreign Affairs ‘*Partners have asked us to be more active. There are clear expectations among our neighbors that, with the Lisbon Treaty, the EU will be able to deploy all instruments (CSFP and CSDP) in a more coherent way*’ (Huff Ariella, p.7 2011). The war between Russia and Georgia became the fact that frozen conflicts in the Eastern region can be turned into the flashpoints. Based on this context, the report of the European Security Challenges calls pay more attention to the situation, which is happening in the South Caucasus region and Moldova.

The Black Sea is surrounded by EU and NATO member countries, which are allies of Georgia and Post -Soviet countries, which have negative internal affairs that are described as instable economic and security challenges. This region consists of countries such as Georgia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia. The Eastern Partnership Initiative was the idea of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland and supported by Sweden. It was proposed in 2008 in Brussels by EU General Affairs and External Relations Council. This initiative was established to support Georgia in economic reforms, travel agreements, and other affairs between the EU and Georgia. The draft of EaP, which is conducted by the EU, declares that Georgia should improve itself in human rights, democracy, rule of law, free-market, and good governance. Step by step, Georgia is successfully developed and partnership with the EU should provide new possibilities for Association Agreements. European Union is also interested in the development of Georgia because it is a strategic and important ally (Maisaia 2016).

European Union should put more effort into insisting on the better progress of reforming in the small state. The government and opposition must agree on the freedom of media and political neutrality of law enforcement agencies, so that none of them could have influence because the media and judicial branch must be independent like it is in modern western countries. EU already provides assistance on the highest level and gives money through the fund for a previous conflict reconstruction of a small state. However, one of the main risks in Georgia is that the European Union should provide priority and make sure that hostilities between Russia and Georgia will not resume. EU should continue its activities in the long term and should maintain its mission of monitoring and give diplomatic pressure on both countries that they would be able to start constructive discussions and reduce the tensions between each other (Popescu and Wilson 2009).

Meanwhile, supporting the reforms in Georgia, the EU should not assume that it is more visible and attractive rather than other external actors with whom it competes over the influence in the region where Georgia is a part of it. European Union should create more transactional relations with Georgia and build the policy so-called matrix. This policy means that there are expectations of reform in Georgia that are matched to the EU responses and their criteria. It is a good beginning, but it requires to expand the scope concerning political and security questions. This type of approach can establish predictable cooperation between the EU and Georgia and significantly enhance Georgia's progress. Practicing the policy matrix in relationship with Russia also involves some questions related to neighboring disputes, especially the conflict in Georgia, and it can upgrade EU policies and think (Popescu and Wilson 2011).

The tension between Russia and Georgia and the occupied cities Tskhinvali and Sukhumi convinced the EU to make the peace between the countries. The EU Commission and EUSR took measures and explored what type of steps can be taken to provide measures about these disputes. The result was that it was established a joint paper document where were added sets of new peacebuilding measures with the aim to establish conditions for a favorable found political settlement. It got a green light from EU member states (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė 2009).

EU also tries to provide shelter for Georgia and develop it foreign policy.

4. Georgia's Smart State Strategy

Basically the smart state strategy in my thesis is used on example of making reforms, to do further steps into EU and measurements, which were taken by government to combat against the COVID-19. However, it can be another example of the smart strategy that Georgia made reforms before it joined the WTO. As Georgia's goal is membership in the EU, I decided to write about a small state's aspirations and show which reforms were done for it and to write about the new global problem of 21st century (COVID). Georgia is already a member of WTO and information concerning this topic will be in the strategy of negotiation.

One of the most important strategies for the foreign policy of Georgia is a smart strategy. This strategy is useful because a small state has political challenges and except it, there are other global economic problems and viruses. In this chapter will be considered how Georgia faced one of the global problems in nowadays (COVID). One of the main reasons why Georgia is one of the most successful countries in the world because it is a small state, which has a small territory and a small number of people. However, at the same time it can not be an argument because the neighbor countries of Georgia are also small states like Azerbaijan, Armenia, and unfortunately, compared with Georgia, none of them succeed in combating the global problem as Georgia did.

The smart state strategy also can be seen in the relation between Georgia and the EU. Georgia as a small state with big ambitions is developing and desires to be on the same level as Western countries do. Smart state strategy requires the leadership that must be smart, and in the example of Georgia, this leadership can be considered Saakashvili and his government, which did significant reforms and promoted the small state. This smart state strategy can be considered not only in front of the EU but in front of the overall international environment. These successful reforms, which were done the aim was to show Georgia as a small state, which has challenges and dark history after independence significantly improved and took the modern path. Moreover, it can fight the global problems of the 21st century and is considered one of the successful countries in the world in terms of COVID. Georgia is successful in combating the virus and preventing the spread of it compared with other countries, but based on Georgia's measurements like lockdown everything it has a negative economic impact.

4.1. Georgia vs COVID

Georgia is one of those countries, which experienced the COVID situation and took quick measurements. The overall situation in Georgia has changed and one of the main issues was the educational process, especially when the first case was discovered in a small state. In April of 2020 in the whole world, the number of people was 1,5 million and in the whole of Georgia 211 indicated. In the whole world, 188 countries temporarily stopped the educational process and Georgia was one of them. However, the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science used Microsoft Teams for online studies, which was available for 2086 public schools in the whole country. There were published additional instructions on how to use this platform for teachers and students (Basilaia and Kvavadze 2020).

One of the main methods to contradict the virus on the national response level is to test people and isolate them for 14 days in hotels, which are in the special quarantine zone and the overall number of hotels is 84. Moreover, there were established 16 ‘fewer’ centers for people who already have suspected symptoms of COVID. On May 18-27, there were 735 cases discovered and 12 people could not survive. *“As September 12, 2020, a total of 2.075 cases were confirmed in the country with a cumulative incidence of 51.9 per 100, 000 population, which the lowest rate in the European region”* (Tsertsvadze Tengiz et al. 2020 p.3).

The first time in Georgia COVID was identified at the end of February and by the end of March, there were reported and confirmed 61 cases. When 3, 320 people were under quarantine, this small state of the Caucasus region was considered successful in fighting against the global problem. Comparing with Georgia in Armenia, the number of cases was 194 by the end of March. In January, Georgia already canceled all flights to China and other countries with a high level of COVID. For 2 months schools were closed and in the mid of March also shopping malls. Everything was closed except for the gas station, banks, groceries, and post office. When the borders were closed, the Georgian citizens, who arrived back at their homes were under quarantine to prevent the spread of the virus. On the 21st of March, there was a decision to make an emergency in the country (Makszimov 2020b).

Despite this serious threat, which small states faced, especially the two regions Marneuli and Gardabani were locked down because near 100 cases have emerged there. However, despite it, Georgia became a successful ‘successful case-study’ to fight against this global pandemic problem despite having an emergency. Comparing with France, Italy, the UK, and other

European states Georgia was successful because of its small size. It is easy to control when the size of the territory and the number of the population is small. Moreover, the issue of travel was considered immediately, when the first information of COVID started to spread. International and internal traveling were suspended. Georgian experienced soldiers, who were in NATO operations played also a big role. They were standing near the borders of the region and did not allow to go in or out of the cities, which were in the red zone (Maisaia 2020).

Georgia is praised for being a successful fighter against COVID. Because this small state in time reacted and took action in closing large cities, travel restrictions, and providing quarantine restriction zones for people who came from abroad (Makszimov 2020a).

On the 30th of June, the Council of EU decided to cancel the restrictions concerning the travel of 15 countries, which are not members of the EU and one of those countries on the list was Georgia (“Council Agrees to Start Lifting Travel Restrictions for Residents of Some Third Countries” 2020).

After this, on the 19th of August, the director of WHO praised Georgia as a country, which has an ideal model on how to combat this global problem, and he noted that the country by itself is a model of combating the COVID (“WHO Director-General Praises Georgia’s Coronavirus Response” 2020). In practice, the Georgian government gave an effective example for other countries, which are also combating this global issue (“Georgia Leading One of the Most Effective Fights Worldwide against Coronavirus” n.d. 2020). The Georgian government launched an aggressive campaign. It was obligatory to wear masks everywhere except for the restaurants and it was also used as a slogan ‘stay at home’. The mayor of Tbilisi called for much stricter control of the process of spreading COVID in the country (Siradze 2020).

Catherine Smallwood is the World Health Organization’s senior health emergency office for Europe. According to her, there are a lot of positive results for various countries, which fight against COVID and Georgia is one of them. The measurement, which was taken to prevent at least a little of the spread of the virus, was effective and rapid as in China as well (“WHO Names Georgia as Country Performing Well in Fight against Coronavirus” 2020).

When there is a topic about the post-election period, it means that there are possibilities of discussion for the specific plan that is agreed with international partners. Directly, this plan ensures a fast exit from the economic crisis and describes the activities, which will occur for

the next four years. According to the Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia in Borjomi, he declared that the minimum amount of money, which consists of 20 billion GELS will be spent on the infrastructure in a small state. As Giorgi Gakharia noted, despite the pandemic situation, the country did not stop and cancel most of the infrastructure projects even for an hour. Based on his statement, it means that Georgia can have chances to be in the list of leading countries, which will be able to fight against the second wave of COVID.

“The main goal is to start economic recovery and restore jobs as soon as possible. Despite the difficult economic and epidemiological situation, we have to hold the October 31 elections calmly, given the support we have from our citizens, and most importantly, we must win in a dignified, fair peaceful environment free from all forms of violence” (“Giorgi Gakharia: We Have All Opportunity to Be among the Leading Countries in Dealing with Second Wave” Gakharia Giorgi, First Channel 2020)

Tengiz Tsertsvadze is head of Tbilisi Hospital of Infectious Diseases, stated that there are also another small countries in EU such as Luxemburg and other small states, which have more cases of ill people than in Georgia and that’s why Georgia can be considered as a small state, which has one of the best results in the world in preventing the spread of COVID. Worldwide, Georgia is ranked in the 109th place and European countries on average in the 50th place. As Tsertsvadze said, out of 53 countries, Georgia took the 50th place in death casualties and new cases increasing. Only small countries like the Vatican, Lichtenstein, and Monaco face this problem better than Georgia (“Georgia Leading One of the Most Effective Fights Worldwide against Coronavirus” 2020).

Despite that Georgians stopped the development of the virus, it does not mean that they can control the situation in their small state. The political situation in the country is not stable and there can be an unpredictable economic impact, which can harm Georgia. Out of 4 million, the number of cases was 1197 and 14 deaths, which means that Georgians achieved success. Because of COVID a lot of countries have economic recession problems and Georgia is one of them. The restrictions, limitations and emergency influenced on Georgian economy. Many service outlets were closed until July and the result was that in the first half of the year, GDP decreased to 5.8% and increased the deficit budget and external debt (“Georgia in the Face of Challenges” 2020). As tourism plays a large role in Georgia’s economy, during the beginning of COVID, 10 hotels were closed and 90% of bookings canceled, moreover, the number of passengers at Georgian airports had significantly reduced. One of the worst stuff was that the

national Georgian currency GEL started declining (“What Impact Will Coronavirus Have on the Georgian Economy?” 2020). People who worked in tourism, transportation, and retail fields lost their jobs because of quarantine and economic lockdown. Migrants who worked abroad were unable to send money to their families (Project Information Document, 2020).

4.2. Georgia’s smart state strategy and EU

Georgia’s political and economic integration within the EU is one of the main priorities of the population of a small state and 78% of people support it and are happy with it. Georgia is still excited about the Eastern Partnership and very actively participates in it. On the 10th of the anniversary of Eastern Partnership, which was launched by President of European Commission, Junker, Georgia provided materials, where there are expectations concerning the framework of future policy. Moreover, this anniversary was held in Tbilisi in September in 2019 (JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, 2020).

Since the beginning of EU-Georgia diplomatic relations, the small state has always tried to develop and change reforms that could be assessed by the EU. It was done easier because after the Rose Revolution, Saakashvili and his people had a Western education and they knew what to do to be closer ideologically, politically, and economically with the West. It means that the government at that time was driven by an idealistic approach and their ambition was to create European states and make Georgia at this level. There were starting reforms to put Georgia on the Western path and the government rapidly started to restore the institutions, fire old police with post- Soviet thoughts, and hire new western educated people. Economy was developed and the government put fiscal and economic policies in order. According to experts ((Gvalia, Lebanidze, and Siroky 2019) ‘‘ *The state budget was below 1 billion GELS (500 million USD) during the last year of Shevarnadze’s rule. Due to improved tax collection, revenues had almost doubled already in the first year of Saakashvili’s presidency, and increased six-fold within four years* ’’ (Gvalia, Giorgi, Bidzina Lebanidze, and David S. Siroky, 2019, p.30).

For Saakashvili and his government, the western economy was on the same level as the national security of a small state. It was needed because Georgia was suffering Russia’s economic embargo in 2006 after the deportation of Georgian migrants and invasion in the 2008 Russia-Georgian war. Georgian Western Model of the economy was on the phase of collapsing and to

save it, European Union provided loans, which was near 4,5 billion dollars (Kakachia and Cecire 2013).

To achieve the free trade area, it is necessary to liberalize tariffs. However, the case of Georgia was exceptional, because in 2006, in a unilateral order, the small state liberalized its external trade policies. Only 8 years later, the European Union completed a free trade area with its tariff imports in Georgia. The agreement between the EU and Georgia does not offer the magic stick, where it could to heal economic and political problems. However, this is support for Georgia and chance, where the small state can significantly improve economic and political reform. It is like a road map for Georgia to join the European economies despite that the economies are not too big, but it gives chances to achieve one of the highest levels of standards of social and economic progress (Emerson and Kovziridze, 2016).

The small state is not officially evaluated for the Copenhagen criteria because there are not any negotiations for accession. Nevertheless, the European Commission monitors the political and economic reforms in Georgia, which are similar to the Copenhagen Criteria. The European Commission frequently publishes the report, which shows the progress of the countries that are in Eastern Partnership. For example, conducting constitutional reforms and other reforms were renewed concerning the business and free trade areas. In 2010, Georgia as one of those partners made a significant report in terms of the judicial system, women's rights, protection, rights of minorities, enhance of democracy, and curbing of administrative corruption. (Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2010-Country report: Georgia,2011)

Improvement of the rule of law is one of the most successful reforms of Saakashvili after the Rose Revolution. The EU-Georgia Action Plan in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy pays too much attention to the cooperation in the field of law and justice (Loke 2011).

One of the most successful stories was in 2004 when the Traffic Police were fired. In one day, 16 000 police officers lost their jobs because they were corrupted, moreover, there were people of the Soviet mentality and values. This is how the new pro-Western Georgian government was fighting against corruption and people who were high officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs were replaced by new representatives. These were one of the most corrupt institutions in 2004. (Loke 2011; “Georgia: Corruption Developments and Anti-Corruption Activities since 1990s” n.d. 2010)

Institutional reforms in Georgia were praised, however, the critics assert that power and politics are centralized near Saakashvili, who was the president and head of the United National Movement party. After the Rose Revolution, this party had too much influence and the political opposition was weak (Hoe-Yeong, 2011 and Popescu, and Wilson, 2011)

However, in 2012, the new government came to power and the United National Movement Party lost the elections, and their power significantly reduced. The new government has Georgian Dream Party (GD) and in 2013 Bidzina Ivanishvili was a Prime Minister. Several times he was declaring that his foreign policy is oriented towards Euro Atlantic and for a Small State Europe is destiny as he said *“if there is a process that must be slowed down, it will be the one with Russia because our priority is the integration into NATO and Europe”*, with the goal of transforming the country into *“a democracy and an economy in European type”* (Arnoult 2014) (Arnoult, Julien, 2014, p.86).

In Bidzina Ivanishvili's mind, the accession to the EU should be considered as restoring diplomatic relations with a big neighbor.

As in 2010 it was conducted reports concerning the judicial system, women rights, and constitutional reforms, also during the new government it was conducted a report concerning the same values. For example, in 2018 Parliament of Georgia confirmed the remaining amendments to the Constitution and finished the reform process. The amended constitution has some new provisions concerning one of the most discussed topics like gender equality, children's right, and issues such as anti-discrimination. In 2018, Georgia also improved domestic policy concerning violence against women and in the overall violence in families and with this improvement Georgia became closer to the standards of Council of Europe. In the gender equality index, Georgia is ranked 76 out of 188 countries (Joint Staff Working Document, 2019)

According to the survey, which was conducted in 2014, 65% of the population prefers and supports Georgia's membership in the European Union, while 16% of people are in favor of Georgia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union, where Russia is a leader. Just 20% of the population consider if Georgia would quit from Europe for better relations with Russia, it could benefit and get advantage. However, 58% of people think that integration in the West (EU, NATO) could be much more beneficial for a small state. It is not dangerous to assume that the population supports Euro Atlantic integration of their politicians despite a small trend,

which is in favor of Russia and there are only small numbers. This situation gets more complicated when there is a talk about democracy and its values. Despite those democratic institutions, enhanced, women's rights are respected and the ethnic minority and religious are welcomed and relations towards them are improved and tolerated. However, it takes time for a small country to get used to the LGBT minorities and tolerate them on the same level as above mentioned. LGBT rights became a topic of discussion because 62% of the population argues that the respect of minorities is essential for Georgia's democratic development, 24% protect their rights, and only 48% don't pay attention to it and consider it not an important topic at all (Fix 2014). Three years later again it was conducted a survey about people's opinion about European Union

In 2017, there was also conducted a survey about people's opinion towards the European Union. Out of the whole population of small state, only 10% have a negative approach, which includes 3% with very negative position and 7% with negative rather than positive. However, the biggest part of the population is in favor of EU. 11% of people have even very positive attitudes towards the union, while 34% have positive rather than negative. And the biggest segment estimates, the point of view towards EU as neutral and it consists 40%. Comparing with previous surveys till now, the population of Georgia is in favor of European Union and associates it with peace, security, and democracy, and people's thought concerning EU remains valid, especially 75% of people think like this (Survey Report,2017).

These improvements can be considered for Georgia's foreign policy smart state strategy because a small state has significant developments in the Western ideology. Georgia wants to join EU and it is 'smart' because it must follow the criteria of EU as it was mentioned in reports of improvements in gender equality, judicial system, and so on.

Like it did Slovenia a long time ago. *'Thus, in the first years after independence Slovenia's foreign office had only a rudimentary organizational structure, and the need to comply with the EU accession criteria substantially challenged its administrative capacity'* (Pastore 2013 p.79).

It needs time to integrate into the West at least on an ideological level, and Georgia tries to fulfill these requirements. Moreover to achieve a positive result of the foreign policy of small states, it must follow the criteria. In the case of Georgia the criteria is the democratic development in country.

5. Georgia's Strategy of Status Seeking

It is only one suitable example of status seeking strategy. To cooperate with NATO and show that Georgia is a reliable ally and worth a candidate member.

Status seeking strategy is very essential for Georgia's foreign policy and even one of the most important and vital because this small state needs a reliable ally or partner and it's better if this ally is a large influential state and one of these states is the USA, which helps Georgia in terms of security and prosperity. Georgia also tries to show that it is a worthy partner for America and actively participated in NATO operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The relationships between Georgia and NATO start when a small state gets independence and step by step it becomes increasingly involved in NATO missions. Except for Georgia, also other South Caucasus countries make the contribution to the military block, however, they don't spend too many efforts like Georgia does.

There are a lot of reasons, for example, Armenia has geopolitical problems with Turkey because of the historical events, which occurred during the First World War and the territorial frozen conflict over Nagorno Karabakh against Azerbaijan. Armenia relies on security from Russia, but at the same time tries to cooperate with NATO and sends its troops. Azerbaijan does not have ambitions like Georgia and understands that it can have very bad relations with Russia if it starts close cooperation with NATO.

Three South Caucasian countries are involved in NATO operations, however, Georgia is a distinct case because it shows pro-Western aspirations and ambitions, and compared with those two small states Georgia's aim is membership in NATO. *“ In this perspective, status-seeking can be seen as the competition among small states in different peer groups for recognition by the great powers, where the aim is to improve or consolidate their position just below the great powers. That small states' status-seeking behavior differs from that of the great powers is supported by the literature, where there exists a broad consensus that small states do not try to compete with the great powers for status”*(Pedersen , Rasmus Brun 2018 p.5). Based on this statement, it automatically can be considered that Georgia also competes with its small neighbor states.

Georgia performs its responsibilities on the highest level in front of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but despite of it, the small state is not able to become a member of Russia. Russia

considers Georgia's membership and the overall the whole NATO as a threat. Russia does everything to prevent a small state's accession into the military block and uses tools such as cyber -attacks, military activities, and support occupied territories.

5.1. Georgia-NATO relations

As it was mentioned, Georgia has an aspiration towards the West. And the EU is not only one goal where the country desires to join. The relationship between Georgia and NATO started also after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1992 Georgia got the membership in North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). Two years later, Georgia joined the Partnership for peace (PFP) program. Since the beginning of the 90s, relations between NATO and Georgia were significantly developing and Georgia was participating in NATO missions (“ს ა ქ ა რთვ ე ლოს ს ა გ ა რეო ს ა ქ მ ეთა ს ა მ ონ ო ს ტრო - European and Euro-Atlantic Integration” n.d. 2020)

Moreover, in 2002, when the NATO summit was held in Prague, that time ex-president of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze officially stated that Georgia has an ambition and aspiration to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and opened a new level of cooperation Between Georgia and NATO. Despite the progress and efforts, Georgia put towards good relations with the West only after the Rose revolution in 2003, country declared the integration in NATO as a priority of foreign policy and domestic reform (“NATO Speech: MOD - NATO HQ - Georgia 5 December 2003” n.d.). Mikheil Saakashvili, who has a western education, was leading his administration to set certain ambition goals. To finish the problem with corruption, restore the territorial integrity of the country, and join the Western Organizations (S. Tsereteli 2018).

In 2004, it was launched the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) (Georgia's commitment under the individual partnership action plan (IPAP) on NATO- 2004-2006). The goal of IPAP is to actualize the democratic reforms and institutions in Georgia. Integration with the EU and NATO is the main priority of the foreign security of Georgia. The country got internal support for membership in NATO, nonbinding referendum which was conducted in Georgia in 2008, and the result was that 77% are in favor of joining NATO (Kavadze and Kavadze 2014; Nichol, Foreign Affairs, and Division 2008). The same year there was a Bucharest summit and Georgia with Ukraine were the subject of discussion in joining the military block. Georgia was

supported by the USA, UK, Canada, and East/Central Europe. These countries were ready to grant the Membership Action Plan (MAP). However, Spain, Italy, France, and Benelux countries under the leadership of Germany were with new members. Because it could be negative consequences especially in confrontation with Russia. Moreover, Berlin had a negative point of view in terms of political and democratic reforms in Georgia. The unclear situation in the country and Saakashvili's weighty decisions about the adjustment conflict disputes (Kavadze and Kavadze 2014).

For example, there was critique from the West when in 2007 Saakashvili brutally suppressed demonstrations, which were opposed to him by the opposition (Kříž and Shevchuk 2009). After elections in 2008, the critique stopped when Saakashvili won the elections. In addition, Office for Democratic Institution and Human Right, which is engaged in ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, strengthening and protecting democratic institutions and it had voiced many objections and wrote: *"The election was, in essence, consistent with most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards for democratic elections, it also revealed significant challenges which need to be addressed urgently. Although this election represented the first genuinely competitive post-independence presidential election, shortcomings were noted. The campaign was overshadowed by widespread allegations of intimidation and pressure, among others, on public-sector employees and opposition activists, some of which were verified by the OSCE/ODIHR/EOM. Candidate registration was overall inclusive and transparent. The vote count and tabulation were evaluated less positively. Many PECs had problems completing the result protocols, which were often not posted for public scrutiny. IEOMS observers reported cases of tampering with voter lists, results, and protocols. The tabulation process at the DEC level was slow and often chaotic"* (Kříž and Shevchuk 2009, p. 104).

Therefore, it was clear that the allies were not in favor of accepting new members in the organization and making the new decision in the future related to MAP. Membership Action Plan is considered a direct ticket for joining the organization, but in Bucharest Summit it was reviewed as a decision for Georgia. *"Thus, the North Atlantic Council's decision has undermined MAP, is a mechanism, and has cast doubt on NATO enlargement as a process that is based on defined requirements. Even worse, it divided the allies more sharply than they had been before Bucharest, and left Georgia and Ukraine without any clear message about their membership expectations"* (Lazarević, Dušica. 2009 p.46).

In September of 2008, it was established NATO-Georgian Commission (NGC). It serves for political consultation and practical cooperation to provide aid for Georgia to reach the goal of membership. Annual National Program (ANP) is a tool, which was used by NATO to help countries to join the military block. In 2008, Georgia successfully passed this ANP and fulfilled nine cycles of ANP. Despite that Georgia did not get the MAP, the country still has good relations with the alliance, which even goes beyond the traditional MAP. These relations are ANP, NGC, and Substantial NATO Georgia package. (Coffey 2018).

Georgia was improving every time and the consequence was that on 7th of December in 2011, Georgia was called as NATO aspirant country. In 2014, at the Wales Summit, the small state was recognized as the ‘most interoperable partner’ and got the status with stronger opportunities and became on the same level as economically rich and famous countries such as: Sweden, Jordan, Finland and Australia. (“Georgia and NATO: A Small Country in Search of Security” 2020).

As it is known, one of the main goals of the foreign policy of Georgia is the membership in NATO and in 2014 at the Wales Summit there were used measures concerning the strengthening of a small state that it would be able to protect itself and prepare for the accession to the military block. The next steps were taken two years later in NATO Summits, which occurred in Warsaw and in 2018 in Brussels. It is expected that at the end of 2020 there will be a refreshed Georgia-NATO package with new goals and ambitions (NATO 2020).

According to the news (“Khatuna Burkadze – Georgia Deserves More on Its Way of NATO and EU Integration” n.d.) ‘‘ *This momentum is the right to renew the NATO-Georgia substantial package, which is a crucial instrument of the integration process, nevertheless, an in-depth analysis of the current situation illustrates that renewing the substantial package or developing other initiatives will not be sufficient. Georgia’s integration in NATO should be accelerated to deliver the promise made at the Bucharest Summit twelve years ago* ’’. (Dr. Burkadze Khatuna, INTERPRESSNEWS,2020).

On the bilateral level, the small state is a very valuable friend for the USA. Several of the main fields of military bilateral cooperation are Resolute Support Mission (RSM), Georgia Defense Readiness Program (GDRP), and Combat Training Center (CTC). Based on these programs, Georgia is developing its military capabilities and conduction institutional reforms. Moreover, the USA will not close its eyes to Russia’s violation of international law and territorial integrity

like it happened last century (“Dr. Khatuna Burkadze – As a Strategic Partner, the United States Steadily Supports Georgia” 2020).

One of the most prominent initiatives from SNGP was NATO-Georgia JTEC (Joint Training and Evaluation Center). In Tbilisi in 2015 there was opened this center, which helps the small state in enhancing its security. Its provide training for Georgian militants and other soldiers from NATO partner countries, moreover the center’s priority is to take care about the peace and stability in Black Sea and Caucasian regions (“Georgia and NATO: A Small Country in Search of Security” 2020).

5.2. Georgia’s participation in NATO operations

Georgia began its participation in NATO operations in the middle of the 1990s. The small state took part in one of the most dangerous places like Afghanistan, Iraq. Georgian soldiers were successful in combating the common enemy of NATO and the small state was making successful progress. To participate in NATO operations was the duty and honor for a lot of Georgians who had a military career and that’s why a small country increased the number of participant around 900 fighters in 1999, and deployed them in Afghanistan. Recently, Georgia sent troops to a new missions in Afghanistan and again Georgia was the largest contributor from non-NATO members and now the number of soldiers was 870 (“Georgian Troops Sent to Afghanistan for a New NATO Mission” 2020). That’s why Georgia became the largest contributor to the troops from NATO partners. Georgia makes aspirations to prove to the military block that it is worth being a member of it and at the same time the small state needs external security from Russia because Georgia faces challenges from a big neighbor (Tavelishvili 2017).

To prove how strong Georgian warriors are, the small country started its active participation in ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) mission in Afghanistan in 2004 and Georgia joined the war. The continuation of the ISAF mission became a Resolute Support mission with having the same tasks and responsibilities as ISAF. As it was mentioned above, the number of troops in 1999 were 900 and recently 870, but in 2018 Georgia contributed 750 soldiers (“New Wave of Georgian Soldiers Sent for NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan - GeorgianJournal” 2018).

After the mission, which lasted for 6 years, Georgian troops returned back to their homes. They started one of the ISAF missions in 2009. The small state was providing security and supporting partners and countries, which are already members of NATO. The troops were allocated in French Bases and the small state completed the peacekeeping mission successfully (“ISAF Mission - News - MOD.GOV.GE” 2015).

The 22nd battalion of the 2nd Infantry Brigade of the Georgian Armed Forces and 100 soldiers from the 4th Mechanised Brigade have left for Afghanistan two years ago to contribute to NATO mission Resolute Support. The US ambassador to Georgia with the Minister of Defense praised Georgian soldiers for the support of the International System and their contribution. Moreover, he wished them to come back safely in 6 months to their home. The mission of the Georgian battalion includes the defense of the Bagram Base that is one of the largest military airfields and from 2006 the biggest airbase of the United States of America and coalition forces in Afghanistan near the village of Bagram, which is located in Afghanistan. The small state is the largest contributor from non-NATO countries, which participate in the mission of Resolute Support with 885 troops in 2018 according Agenda news (“Georgian Soldiers Leave for Afghanistan” 2018).

In 2020, another mission took part in the northern part of Afghanistan to help in Camp Marmal that is the largest Bundeswehr base outside of Germany. Georgian troops have performed the mission of Resolute Support (“Georgian Troops Arrive in Northern Afghanistan for New Mission” n.d.). Despite the existence of the not stable situation, which leads to the tension between the Western World and Russia, in Eastern Europe, Georgia still contributes its military troops and the small state is the largest contributor since the participation of the operations in the Middle East. Georgia’s role and commitment in former ISAF missions and current Resolute Support are great. Since 2010, the small state annually sends its troops with the mission to combat terrorism. In 2015, there are 14 NATO members and partners, which contributes more than 12 000 soldiers, which were presented for further training to fight in Afghanistan and Georgia is one of those partners (Vayavananda 2015).

The small state provided two battalions for America to fight in the Province of Helmand and the second are the medical experts that help ISAF in Kabul. In Musa Qala district, which is in Helmand Province, the Part of Southern Afghanistan the situation there is quite unstable and even dangerous. Georgian troops cooperate with local forces of national security and together are patrolling the territory. *“ We greatly appreciate the active support that Georgia has made*

to our operations past and present. We greatly value the professionalism and courage of Georgian troops. And we honor their sacrifices''(NATO n.d.). It was said by NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen (NATO, 2013).

The small state should be proud of its soldiers, who contributed too much to the international war in Afghanistan in the framework of terrorism and had many casualties, for example, 31 soldiers could not survive, 400 were wounded and out of them 35 were amputees. On top of the deployment of troops, Georgia provided two battalions, which served in America. Since the beginning of their mission, already 11 000 Georgian militaries were in Afghanistan. In June of 2016, the small state had 861 troops, which is the biggest contributor to the Resolute Support Mission from non-NATO member countries and it concedes only to America. However, it was time to pay the price of Georgian warriors for their loyal duty for international peace and security. During the war in Afghanistan, there were losses, and the consequences of it were death. For example, starting from 2010, approximately 31 troops died, near 400 wounded, and out of this 35 were amputees. Fortunately, the USA appreciated the soldiers who were wounded and treated them the way which they deserved. In American hospitals, Georgian troops were healed by professional doctors. Furthermore, during the time soldiers spent in the hospital, there were taught English as a second language (Georgian Association, 2016).

Georgia does not stop its contribution to NATO and in 2009, despite the challenges, which the small state has, it still continues to be the reliable partner of the military block. As it was estimated at the end of 2009, the Georgian government sent its troops to join the ISAF in Afghanistan, which is one of the most dangerous places nowadays. Kutaisi is a city, which is located in the western part of Georgia and there is a subdivision of the Georgian peacekeepers, which got experience in Iraq in 2006 and 2007. The experience, which will be got by Georgian troops can make them closer to NATO military standards (“Georgia ‘Targeting’ Military Operations in Afghanistan” 2009).

Concerning Iraq, the small states sent 2000 soldiers, which estimated to have the third largest presence of the coalition powers such as USA and Great Britain. For Georgians, it is a great opportunity to get experience in military operations in the participation in Iraq. The same time, they have a strong argument to prove that Georgia is really worth a country of membership in NATO. Zaza Kvaraia he was Georgian commander and he deployed 2000 Georgian peacekeepers in Iraq to fight against illegal weapons smuggling. As it was said by Ministry of Defense of Georgia David Kezarashvili “ *If we seriously want to become members of the*

alliance, naturally we have to assume partial responsibility and operate like the alliance members do (Liklikadze Koba, 2007)'' ("Troops Hope To Prove Their Worth In Iraq" 2007)

Georgian participation in US missions in Iraq and Afghanistan shows the determination of a small states being in forefront. The number of Georgian soldiers, which is 32 in the last 10 years, it is a casualty and because of these casualties they were seen by USA as military brothers in weapons. The death of Georgian soldiers connected the closer militaries of the two countries. Tod Poe, who is a congressman on 26 June 2018 said *'' The friendship between our two nations has been forged in blood, with Georgian troops fighting and dying alongside American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan''* (European Security Defense, 2019)

5.3. Russia's view on Georgia s aspiration to NATO

Georgia as a country with Soviet legacy unfortunately faces the opposition and even threat from Russia, which tries to do everything to contradict Georgia's goals towards Westernization. Comparing with other countries in the whole Caucasus region, the small state is distinct because it tries to provide European future for its citizens (Grace.2020 and Tracey,2015). Georgia sees its future towards EU, NATO and the same time keeps the distance from Russia.

As Laguerre Corentin writes in 2015 there was a published military doctrine, where is a discussion that NATO is a threat for Russia. The big state makes a balance with NATO and in 2008 it is attacking Georgia and in 2014, Ukraine. All defensive measures, which are taken by NATO, Russia perceives it as a threat (Laguerre 2016).

Russia's soldiers are presented in the occupied territories of Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia (Chivvis 2016). Russia gives its pressure to Georgia and because of it a small state has challenges to get into the organization despite of its active involvement in NATO operations, which were mentioned above in previous chapters. A lot of Western scholars and policy makers reject the thoughts and ideas that NATO enlargement in reality can be a threat to Russia. Nothing in NATO's policy can be considered as a threat to Russia, but it does not mean that NATO' enlargement is not a threat for Russia. As Robert Hamilton claims, Georgia's membership into NATO will not influence on the balance of power between NATO and Russia, but a small state's membership in NATO can influence Russia's support for it allied Armenia

and it will be difficult for a big state. Russia views West politically as a rival, which desires to weaken Russia in its region through the color revolutions in post-Soviet space and Georgia is one of them and economically the West tries to save its dependency from a big state (Iskandarov and Gawliczek 2020; Hamilton 2016).

During the Bucharest Summit in 2008 when was negotiation about Georgia's membership, Russian General, whose name is Yuri Baluevski was worried about Georgia's membership in organization and he said "*Russia will take steps aimed at ensuring its interests along its borders, and these will not only be military steps, but also steps of a different nature*". (Chitadze, Nika, 2010, p.63). Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia said that it was an open aggression from Russia and asked the international community to react to it. When Georgia got the promise that one day it will become a member, Russia was very angry about it. Russian president Vladimir Putin his position was to protect and support the unrecognized territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Chitadze 2010).

Despite of it, NATO will be active and provide security in Black Sea region against Russian aggression. Representative of NATO for South Caucasus region James Appathurai stated that Russia is using Crimea for the allocation of forces in the Black Sea. That's why NATO wants to be involved deeper in the Black Sea and include Georgia in many activities, so called Hybrid Defense. Russia uses this tool with of other countries, for example, disinformation, cyber - attacks, military activities, energy cut offs, and so on. NATO's aim is to protect a small states from Russia's threat (First Channel, 2020)

6. Georgia's Strategy of Negotiation

Example of negotiations of Georgia can be with Abkhazia. The issue was to return Georgian refugees back to Abkhazia and on this topic the interests of both sides contradict with each other. Georgia views Abkhazia as part of its territory with a status of an autonomous republic. However, the most suitable examples for this chapter are negotiations with Russia in WTO and China's OBOR. Negotiation with Russia, it suits to the theoretical framework, where a small state can influence the negotiations and has voice. Concerning the China, it is a large state and negotiations between large and small states also plays an important role, especially when it is a second world large economy.

Georgia as a small state needs to be a member of any global or international organization, where it can be protected by the international environment, defend its interests, and at the same time improve its position. One of those organizations, where Georgia got membership in 2000 is WTO (World Trade Organization). Because of Georgia, Russia was struggling near two decades to join the same organization. The small state was vetoing the membership because of its national interests and the power of veto for a small country like Georgia was efficient because it took a long time for Russia to get into WTO. Russia could get this membership because of the support from the Western world (USA, EU). When the USA with EU pushed Georgia to find a compromise with a large neighbor after that Russia joined the global trade organization and it was signed agreement between rival states about Basic Principles for a Mechanism of Customs Administration and Monitoring of Trade in Goods.

Georgia also plays a significant role in another important emerging and developing power, which is China. Because of its profitable and strategic geolocation of small states, China considers its own interests, especially concerning the One Belt One Road (OBOR). *“The strategic location existing in Georgia will receive even more applications, that is why we also intend to develop in China. We are beginning the construction of a deep water port in Anaklia, which will enable us to take larger vessels using the existing potential more widely, which certainly has our country” It was said by Prime Minister of Georgia (Mailyan 2019)”* (Mailyan, Beniamin, 2019, p.70)

Therefore, Georgia also sees its interests in terms of economic prosperity. Two countries decided to become trade partners and there were conducted negotiations, which had three rounds at the end both parties came to the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement and tried to

keep the balance of their interests. Except for economic relations, China also recognizes Georgia's sovereignty, despite its relations with Russia and being members in an organization like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

6.1. Georgia's negotiations over Russia's accession to WTO

After independence, Georgia was one of several countries, which had thoughts to join the WTO. The negotiations had started in 1996 and in four years the small state received the approval of the membership. The small state was doing economic reforms to show that it is worth of this organization. Georgia was the fourth country of the post-Soviet space, which joined the organization after Estonia, Latvia, and the Republic of Kyrgyz. Nobody obliges anyone to join the organization. Applicants do it by their desire and Georgia was not an exception and applied voluntarily (Arveladze and Smeets 2017). The representative of Georgia said that it is a small state with a small size of territory and population, but it has a strategic and important geolocation and serves as a transit corridor between Caspian and the Black Sea. Georgia's integration into the World Trade Organization could be a great step for integration in a world trade system. The small state has done global reforms from the centrally planned economy to free market, privatization of state poverty, banking sector, and so on (Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Georgia to the World Trade Organization, 1999).

In 1999 of 6 October at the General Council meeting, ex-Minister of Georgia V. Lordkipanidze said: *“ We believe that expansion of the multilateral trading system will help to stop economic nationalism and protectionism, give countries a faith foothold on the global trading market, thus contributing to a stable and continued economic growth worldwide. I am convinced that by assuming their rightful place in the global trading system, Georgia and other countries in transition will soon see prosperity and stability increase along with their new, expanded activity in the world economic arena ”*(“WTO | NEWS - Georgia Joins the WTO- Press 182” 2000)

After the accession of Georgia to the World Trade Organization, it became a full-fledged member and had equal rights as other members.

When it was a topic of Russian accession in the organization, Georgia was against it because of its national interests. It is related to the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. However, the most

problem of Georgia's negative view towards Russian accession was that a large neighbor did not provide access to trade in separatist regions (Abkhazia, South Ossetia), which are recognized by Russia as independent (Antidze 2011).

USA and EU support Russia's accession, but a small state is against it. *"We are in a situation, where Georgia for the first and only time has the chance to veto Russian ambitions. In the past, it was always the opposite- at the OSCE, at the UN. And this little country is now trying to use this tool to the maximum"* it was said by Bakur Kvashilava, who is a program coordinator of international affairs at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs. ("Russia's 17-Year Bid To Join The WTO Faces One Last Hurdle" 2011).

However, the European Union was giving pressure to Georgia that it could change its decision and accept Russia in the organization (Georgia 2011). The reason for it was that West wanted to improve relations with a large state and have fewer disputes with it (Miller and Lomsadze, 2011).

In 2011, Georgia offered to its large neighbors to continue the negotiation of Russia's accession. This diplomatic sign was mutual because Moscow was interested in the resumption of bilateral negotiations. Brussels and Washington were reminding Tbilisi about the successful end of those negotiations, especially after the conversation between Putin and Obama. *" President Obama pledged to support Russia's efforts to complete remaining steps in multilateral negotiations so that Russia could join the WTO as soon as possible"* (Kavadze Amriran, 2016 p.51) Lawrence Summers, who was a director of US President National Economic Council said that it should be some solution for Georgia. Because Georgia had to come to terms with the fact that Russia will join the organization. USA several times implied that it is in favor of Russia's membership in the World Trade Organization. Also, European Union was in favor of Russia's accession and EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht commented: *" We have struck a deal on the financial outstanding bilateral issues, leaving the way open for Russia to join the WTO by the end of this year. There is now very little time left to reach a bilateral agreement between Georgia and Russia. I call on both parties to continue their efforts to find a solution in a spirit of compromise"*. (Kavadze Amriran, 2016 p.51)

For two decades, Russia was waiting for its queue to get the membership in WTO and find a compromise with a small state. As it was mentioned above, Georgia of the World Trade Organization became a full-fledged member and had equal rights as other members. It means

that a small state can vote against a country, which is not a WTO member and Georgia was against Russian membership as it was mentioned. There was a dispute between Moscow and Tbilisi under Swiss mediation concerning the trade relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The final decision was that they agreed to have international monitors act as customs agents in the disputed regions as opposed to state officials (Welle (www.dw.com) 2011).

It means that the two countries, which interests were contradicted at the end agreed to have a neutral company movement. The responsibilities and tasks of the Swiss Confederation were to choose a neutral company, which is private, and make a consultation with Russia and Georgia. In agreement, it is not written as a geographic name, it is just mentioned geographic coordination. This agreement is about three trade corridors, which include Adler – Zugdidi; the village of Nar (North Ossetia) – Gori; and Zemo Larsi – Kazbegi. All commodities, which will pass through the above-mentioned trade corridors, will be monitored by a company that is more probably private and neutral. Finally, the two sides came to the conclusion to establish a mechanism, which is responsible for the monitoring of trade in goods and customs administration. The features of this mechanism consist of the collection of data, sharing of information within each other, and providing transparency. One of the distinct functions of this mechanism is to prevent a crime and check the cargo, which gives any signs of suspicion. The agreement between authorities of Georgia and Russia was signed on 9 November 2011, which was related to the Basic Principles for a Mechanism of Customs Administration and Monitoring of Trade in Goods. And finally, Russia became a member of WTO on August 22, 2012 (Khatiasvili ,2016).

In 2019 it almost eight years passed after the agreement of Basic Principles for a Mechanism of Customs Administration and Monitoring of Trade in Goods, which was signed between Russia and Georgia. Officially the agreement is signed on paper, but in practice, it lacks the implementation of it. Both of these countries signed separate contracts with private companies to implement the agreement step by step at the next level and they signed contracts in 2017 and 2018. The practical implementation of the agreement has been delayed because of questions such as sovereignty. The issue of sovereignty has significantly surpassed the trade relations between Russia and Georgia (Sirbiladze, n.d.).

Russia is not in a hurry to make international monitoring concerning the cargo in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia because it contradicts the interests of Moscow. It is understandable and even predictable that the relationships between Russia and Georgia related

to the international monitoring system of Abkhazia and Ossetia will not have enough positive impact and the most part of the agreement can be considered as redundant (KAVADZE 2016).

Russia is the main trade partner for Abkhazia even ‘trade patron’. In 2015 and 2016, Abkhazia has exported 60% to Russia. The products, which are exported by Abkhazia to Russia mainly are fish, citrus, nuts, alcoholic beverages, raw food and plumber. However, the capital of Abkhazia Sokhumi gets flour oil, and tobacco from Russia (Gaprindashvili et al. 2019). That’s why the agreement, which was signed between Russia and Georgia is not so strong, due to the sovereignty issues. Russia does not want that cargo for Abkhazia and South Ossetia would be checked and the same time it is ‘trade patron’ and through it, has influence in those occupied regions in Georgia.

6.2. Sino-Georgian negotiations over Free Trade

China’s role increased in international affairs. It is the second large economy in the world after the United States of America. Moreover, China aspires to build strategic partner relationships with the European Union. However, their values distinguish because the EU is about democracy, human rights, and rule of law, while China is a communist country and has an authoritarian regime. This is not a secret that China is challenging the USA as a hegemon power. China becomes very active in the international relations in the 21st century. It has launched a project like Belt and Road Initiative and it involves Georgia as well. China considers Georgia as a political instrument for its geopolitical ambitions because the small state has a strategic important location and can connect China with Europe. However, the small state also has its own priority, which is described in the limitation of relations in the economic field. Moreover, it does not matter how Belt and Road Initiatives will develop, the relations between China and Georgia will be strategically beneficial (Sirbiladze 2020).

Georgia and China took a decision during the negotiation between Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili and his Chinese counterpart, Li Keqiang to talk about free trade. According to the Georgian administration, it will be the first country in the region, which will sign the treaty with China. One of the new achievements of the Georgian Dream Party is to have positive relations with China and the Georgian government said. *“As China’s Silk Road Economic Belt extends across the Eurasian landmass, we in Georgia are well placed to connect two of the*

world's largest trading regions' (Georgian Journal, 2015). The small state welcomes Chinese initiatives concerning the Silk Road Economic Belt project because it is strategically necessary to keep cultural and economic relations between Asia and Europe.

On 10th December of 2015, there were launched negotiations between Georgia and China about free trade. From the Georgian side, there was a Minister of Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development, Dimitri Kumsishvili and the representative of China was the Ministry of Commerce. For Georgia, China is the third largest trade partner and the second import country for a small state (China FTA Network, 2015). The first round of negotiations was conducted in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi. It happened on 22 and 23 of February in 2016. Both sides achieved a consensus on negotiations, different topic and structures, and at the end of the first round of negotiations, the representatives of the two countries signed a model agreement. Working groups were established by two-sided to make the negotiation on the text of the Free Trade Agreement and reach the consensus in further works (China FTA Network, 2016). The second round of the Free Trade Agreement occurred in Beijing, the same year, but it happened in May. The countries were negotiating about investment, competition, intellectual property, environment, and so on. For some problems and challenges, it was reached consensus (China FTA Network, 2016).

The third round occurred again in Tbilisi in July of 2016 and the negotiation was about issues such as the rule of origin, technical trade barriers, trade-in services, and so on. Between these topics, some reached a consensus, however, some opinions about the final price of the trade in goods and services still need to be further exchanged (China FTA Network, 2016). On the 5th of October, both countries came to the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement. It took less than one year of the intensive meeting between the two parties and 3 rounds of negotiations. Chinese politician Gao Hucheng and Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili. The agreement had 17 chapters, which also included factors such as service trade, intellectual property, and different rules. In this agreement, they also involve the balance of their interest that they could be equally, which means they will try to promote the welfare of their population and economic trade relations. The agreement in 2016 also has the significance of the implementation of the initiative of 'Belt and Road', and China's Free Trade Agreement strategy in the region (China FTA Network, 2016).

For example, one of the main important exports from Georgia to China is metal and ores, based on it, they are charged low tariff comparing with agriculture exports from Georgia, which have

high tariffs. However, these high tariffs don't play a negative role because if Georgia trades with someone else except China, the tariffs will be even higher. This includes a tariff of 10% on a live animal and 20% on beverages. Georgia and China both are members of the World Trade Organization and they did not have any disputes and misunderstanding. It means that there is a wide range of functions, which is represented in Free Trade Agreements between two countries offering tariff sessions and decreasing tariffs and non -tariffs barriers and support bilateral investments (Fuenfzig 2016).

However, the overall relationship with China are unclear yet. For example, the small state tried to improve relations with China to have the balance in this region concerning the Russia's influence. However, China did not seem to be helpful for Georgia, for example, in UN, China was not enough active in supporting refugees in Georgia that were exiled by Russian forces and separatist from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. China never pay attention and discuss about the elections in the separatist region, moreover, China is quite about Russia's cyber- attacks on Georgia and Russia's policy of borderization in South Ossetia. Except of it, China also helps Russia to destabilize disinformation in this country. For example, Lugar Laboratory funded by USA, which is located on Georgian-Russia border and it was asserted that it is a danger in terms of biohazard for a small state and it citizens are used as a test subject by force. For Georgia, it is not easy to balance relations with China and West time and one day the small state must choose with whom to cooperate. USA warned the small state that it should not have deep relations with China. If Georgia starts to criticize China directly and openly, it will cost too much for a small state and Tbilisi will not take a strong position towards Taiwan and human rights. If there will be tensions between China and West, most probably, the small state will take side of the West not only in political issues, but also in economical including technology ("A Chill in Georgia-China Relations | CEPA" 2020).

Conclusion

Georgia as a small country, which survived the first decade after independence, became stronger and found its place in the international arena. Georgia's ambitions and goals are helpful to survive and develop further. Based on the strategies of the foreign policy of Georgia, it is clear that how it became progressive and how can be seen by other countries.

Based on the strategy of shelter, Georgia can be represented as the state, which is looking for the alliance, shelter, and strategic partners. The USA as the main ally supports Georgia in its territorial integrity, moreover, it helps in financial. Except for it, America supports Georgia in its Atlantic aspirations and pushes towards membership in NATO. The USA helps with military assistance and develops the army. Another 'shelter' place for Georgia is the European Union. The EU helps Georgia financially and tries to promote western values in Georgia. EUMM (European Union Monitoring Mission) writes a report about the progress of a small state. Regarding Azerbaijan, as another small state, Georgia is a strategic partner and both of these countries experienced the same challenges. Based on the natural resources and good geolocation, the two countries help each other and because of Azerbaijan, Georgia does not have too much influence from Russia. Both countries support each other's sovereignty. GUAM was created to unite Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. The most distinct function of this organization is to avoid the impact of Russia's presence and prevent the escalation of the frozen conflict. However, this organization is not of great efficiency because of the differences in the foreign policies of members. Overall, from the strategy of shelter, Georgia can be seen as a country, which gets help from the Western world and cooperates with its neighbors.

Regarding the smart state strategy, Georgia is one of the successful countries, which combats with the global problem of the year 2020 (COVID). The small state takes measures to avoid the spread of the virus timely. Like all countries, also Georgia has economic challenges because of this global problem. People are losing their jobs and the Georgian currency declines. Another feature of this strategy is shown when a country wants to achieve some goals of its foreign policy, it has to follow certain criteria. With EU membership, the small state started to do western reforms. The government enhances its economy, people of the old Soviet generation were fired from the government jobs, while young people with pro-western thoughts were hired. The number of corruption was very low, the rule of law worked, human rights, and gender equality. Overall, from the smart state strategy, Georgia can be represented as a country, which

successfully fights against COVID and uses its measures efficiently to stop the spread of the virus. Moreover, it has achieved notable outcomes step by step through reforms.

Concerning status-seeking strategy, the relations of Georgia with the USA and NATO are underlined. Georgia's goal is to be a member of NATO, which can be considered as salvation from Russia. In order to improve its standing and prove its worth, the small state starts participating in NATO operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Georgia is the biggest contributor in a military organization from non-NATO member countries and for more than ten years, Georgian soldiers have been performing their mission in the Middle East. Overall, from the status-seeking strategy, Georgia can be represented as a country, which reaches good relations with NATO and started first steps after its independence. Georgia, like other countries, wants to perform well in the opinion of the USA and be a reliable partner in politics.

The last strategy is negotiation, where Georgia successfully negotiates for the sake of national interests. Georgia's position was so influential that it took twelve years for Russia to join WTO. Because of sovereignty, Georgia was against the large state and used its opportunity till the end to stop Russia. However, small states are limited in negotiations and with the help of the West, Russia joined and Georgia agreed with it. Later The agreement of Russian-Georgian trade was signed, but it fail to implement in practice because Russia did not want that the cargo of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would be checked. Because of Georgia's geolocation and as a country along the routes, China was interested to make negotiations with this small state due to OBOR. They did not have any misunderstanding, the two parties reached the final agreement after three rounds of negotiations. However, based on the advice of the main ally of Georgia, it does not develop deeper relations with China because Georgia does not see this support as it gets from the West. Overall, from the strategy of negotiation, Georgia can be represented as a country, which efficiently conducts the negotiation and optimize its opportunities.

The main priorities of Georgia's foreign policy lie in its integration into the West and restoration of territorial integrity. Based on those strategies, there was provided relevant information concerning the West. To achieve its goals and dreams, Georgia must work harder and be careful with big neighbors, also, the West should be more- closer and supportive.

However, the small state has some challenges. For example, despite being a valuable partner for NATO, it is not able to join the military block because of its large neighbor, which perceives Georgia's membership as a threat. Russia is one of the main obstacles for Georgia's aspiration

to be pro-west and achieve the overall prosperity of the small state. But except for Russia, the country has to face other obstacles. As it was mentioned, the small state makes reforms, but the current situation of the country is not on that level that the state would be able to achieve its goals. For instance, concerning the EU membership, the small state is weak in economy, even people ideologically are closer to it and support its integration, but there still exists some challenges. These challenges can be described that LGBT rights are not tolerance enough by some minor percentage of the population. Another economic problem is related to COVID-19 epidemic. Being a successful country in preventing the problem of the virus does not mean that it does well in economy. Like other countries, Georgia became weaker in economy.

The future of Georgia's foreign policy depends on the situation in the international environment and how allies will support the small state. Everything depends on the government of the small state and its allies. The new president of the USA Joe Biden seems to be supportive of Georgia and supports the territory integrity of a small state and fully supports Georgia's aspiration to NATO and helps to meet standards for the membership. But the main priority for Georgia's foreign policy is a restoration of its territories and to get a status of de-occupation. Much works remains to be done to achieve these goals and it depends on whether the foreign policy can be practiced wisely or not. Moreover, also political order should be in a suitable and stable position. Georgia needs to cooperate more with partner countries and organizations.

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