

Georgia's Foreign Policy from Geopolitical Perspective" (2008-2022); Evaluation Based on James Rosenau's Foreign Policy Theory

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ABSTRACT

After the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008, the Geopolitical equation for Georgia changed. It lost 20% of its territory. Georgia was an attractive destination for the West from the very beginning of the dissolution of the USSR. Since this country had a suitable geography to replace the energy transfer route to the West, it could achieve membership in NATO and the EU as an Eastern European State. Due to its location between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, and its Geopolitical superiority, it could open the region to new regional energy projects such as BTC. However, this territorial disintegration suspended Georgia's membership in NATO and the EU, affecting Georgia's foreign policy. Based on the geopolitical characteristics and Rosenau's foreign policy, which defines the individual and the role of leaders during each government, their decisions reflect differently on the government and society, so the international system is affected by their policies and affecting to their policies. From this viewpoint, the foreign policy of Georgia is derived from the combination of geopolitical elements and James Rosenau's foreign policy criteria. This descriptive-analytical research is based on data gathering in the library method and it is going to infer the realistic outcomes of foreign policy goals regards to the geopolitics of Georgia based on its leaders' role.

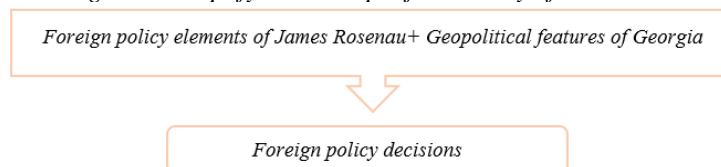
1. Introduction

Because of Georgia's location along the black sea, which can connect the Caucasus to Europe, she gradually shifted to the West. Due to the movement of merchants over the centuries and the cultural interaction during the time. In the bipolar system also, the Soviet Union was annexed to Europe via the Black Sea, which also influenced Georgia's pro-Western tendencies. It is also near the Caspian Sea, and although, it does not share a border with it, this situation creates a unique condition for Georgia in terms of exports of Caspian Sea resources. From this matter, Georgia gradually became the playground for the balance of power between the East and the West. This balance of power in Georgia changed the country's geopolitics and its destiny as well, since this balance of power led to the separation of two autonomous regions, which both had Russian support. This article's purpose is to figure out, how geopolitics can affect Rosenau's theory in determining foreign policy.

From James Rosenau's perspective, to analyze a country's Foreign Policy, one must consider the internal variants (personality, role, government, society) and the international variants (system). Rosenau also, categorizes the countries based on development, cultural penetration, political power, economic situation, and the social structure (Rosenau J. , 1984). As one IR scholar once said, even the simplest foreign policy action, such as; the announcement that a head of state will be travelling abroad, can bring multiple investigations. It can be interpreted as reflecting "the decision of an individual, the deliberations of a committee, the outcome of a policy-making process, the sum of clashing interests' groups, the values of a dominant elite, the product of a society's aspirations, the reinforcement of a historical tradition, the response to an opportunity or challenge elsewhere in the world" (Rosenau J. , 1987).

The hypothesis is, the combination of five elements of James Rosenau's foreign policy with the geopolitical features of Georgia, are creating policies and define Georgia's interactions and relations through the region and international arena. In this case, although different personalities took the presidential office in this period, but the foreign policy goal due to Georgia's geopolitics was static, to join the Euro Atlantic organizations.

Figure 1. Simplify the concept of the theory of the article



Source: Designed by the author-2022

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Geopolitics

Geopolitics provides the link between geography and strategy. Geopolitics is based on the undeniable fact that all international politics range from peace to war, in time and space, especially in geographies and environments. It then seeks to establish causal links between geographical space and international political power, to design specific strategic versions (Owens, 2015). Often, geopolitical rivalry occurs between international powers and major powers eager to control territory, natural resources, and other substantial geographical locations or places such as; ports, canals, and river systems. This kind of geographical competition can be intensified in specific spots if the latter is of vital importance to one or more stakeholders concerned (Guo, 2005, pp. 167-200).

Geopolitics is the influence of geographic, economic and demographic characteristics on politics, especially international politics and international affairs. Features like; situation, the shape of the country, area, and population, are numbers of elements that are going to introduce as the geopolitical characteristics (Govo, 1986, p. 950). Geopolitics is; the reality of the geographical environment to gain power so that one can enter the global game at the highest level and maintain national interests

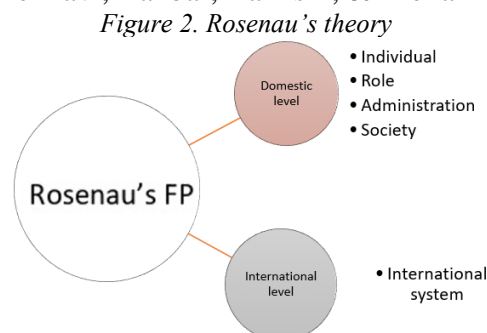
and survival (Ezzati, 2000, p. 112). According to Cohen, geopolitics is defined as the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings and perspectives, and on the other hand, political processes. Both geographical settings and political processes are dynamic and each influence and is influenced by the other. Geopolitics addresses the consequences of this interaction (Cohen, 2003, p. 12).

2.2 James Rosenau's Foreign Policy Theory

Rosenau conceptualized foreign policy as authoritative actions taken by governments or are committed to take, to maintain the desirable aspects of the international environment or its undesirable aspects. It is necessarily goal-oriented, and it has unintended consequences which considerably affect the kind of adaptation that society makes during a certain period (Rosenau J. , 1976).

Rosenau distinguishes three requisite parts of foreign policy known as the three concepts of foreign policy. 1) As a cluster of orientations, foreign policy refers to attitudes, perceptions, and values, all of these derive from the state's historical experience and strategic circumstances, which mark its place in world politics. These clusters of orientations function as guidance for state officials when they are confronted with external conditions requiring them to make decisions and take action. In other words, these are general tendencies, and principles underlying the conduct of states in the arena of international politics. 2) As a set of commitments and plans for action, foreign policy points to revealing strategies, real decisions, and observable policies, which are taken when states are linked to their external environments. They are mostly observable, and consist of specific goals and means through which these are achieved. According to that, the commitments and plans for actions are translations of the cluster of orientations, which are made when observers or analysts refer to the making of foreign policy. Meanwhile, 3) as a form of behavior, foreign policy refers to its empirical phase involving concrete steps or activities that follow the translation of generalized orientations of foreign policy. In other words, the foreign policy appears as the external behavior of states (Rosenau J. , 1976).

Rosenau emphasizes that in the process of analysis confusion is likely to increase, when the analyst fails to distinguish these concepts because "the analysis of foreign policy as orientations involves different problems and phenomena than the investigation of foreign policy as plans, and both embed different issues than does the study of foreign -policy-as-behavior." The five elements of Rosenau's foreign policy are as follows; at the domestic level, which includes; individual, role, administration, and society, and at the international level, which is international system, that this research is going to divide this element into two branches; Russia and the Western bloc (EU, US, NATO). Rosenau also categorized countries based on development rate, cultural penetration, political power, and social structure. (Hassanpour Dehnavi, Rahbar, Bakhshi, & Mohammadzadeh, 2021).



Source: Designed by the author-2022

3. Geopolitics in Georgia

Among all the substantial geopolitical factors, the most important ones for Georgia are; its location and position, area, the shape of the country, roughness, borders, water resources and water

networks, natural resources, road network, and population. To clarify the importance of Georgia's geopolitics and to expand its Geopolitical features, it is noticeable to mention that Georgia was a dependent country during its history, but eventually, she decided to ignore the principles of Russia, to be a self-determined country from 1991 up to now. In addition, the South Caucasus was always a competitive stage for the key players of the world (Alana, 2019).

Considering the Geopolitical Factors of Georgia as the Independent Variables, which affect Georgia's Foreign Policy that is a Dependent Variable. The way Georgia's Geopolitics affects the balance of power in the South Caucasus region by the explanation of Independent Variables (Geopolitical Elements), which are constant, and has least change ratio by time, unless some phenomenon or significant territorial criteria change; like a war which might end to a separation of part of a territory or might affect the population of a state. Georgia at three milestones experienced these Geopolitical changes: 1993- 2003- 2008. The relevance between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables with some examples brings out the higher perspective of Foreign Policy. The Geopolitical elements are constant components that are unchangeable or slightly change over time. These components create conditions that are usually variable and dynamic, and in bearing with the external and domestic political factors, the outcome is foreign policy (Hakim, 2020).

3.1 Survey on Georgia's Geopolitical Factors

3.1.1 Position and its neighbors

Georgia, located in the Caucasus region of Eurasia, is bordered to the north by the Russian Federation, which has historically been one of the most powerful countries (during the imperial era, communism era and in the contemporary era, regionally and internationally). It should also be noted that the two separatist provinces of Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia are located on the Russia's border. Turkey borders it on the south (a regional power) which is one of its economic partners in the region, and the energy corridor to the East of Europe via Georgia. Armenia is also located on its southern border and has a complicated situation with Azerbaijan and Turkey, but it has neutral relations with Georgia. Azerbaijan had Georgia's back after Russia's sanctions in 2007 to supply its energy shortage, which is located to the southeast. These two nowadays have positive interactions in several aspects. Georgia also has a 310 km coastline with the Black Sea on its western border.

This proximity to the Black Sea and the presence of ports (Poti in Imereti, Sukhumi in Abkhazia, and Batumi in Adjara, which are the three main economic centers of Georgia) provide favorable conditions for trade with the West, and it has been the main trade route throughout history (CIA World Fact Book, 2022). Nonetheless, since Abkhazia province, which has a 200 km coastline with the Black Sea, is one of the separated regions in Georgia therefore, the central government of the country does not have any access to that coastline, and those ports (Danko, 2008).

Georgia is specified by its vigorous economic and infrastructure links with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Out of these three states, which are often involved in major regional projects, Georgia is the smallest economic player, but its geographical location serves a key role in the development of important transit infrastructure such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) gas pipeline, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway (Walsh & Yükleven, 2014).

The position of the South Caucasus at the intersection of East-West, and North-South, especially the position of Georgia, which has 310 km of coastline with the Black Sea and its connection point to the West, has defined a spectacular role for Georgia in this crossroads. Its proximity to the Black Sea made Georgia to be at the forefront of relations with the West. Therefore, this relationship has influenced not only the foreign policy but also its cultural trends. Finally, this westernization approach in Georgian society increased day by day until the present time. Although this approach concerned the Soviets and Russia throughout history, and it brought more sensitivity to the South Caucasus and Georgia. Furthermore, it is important to notice the separatist regions in Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia) are neighbored by Russia, which is a dilemma in Georgia's foreign policy, and it was one of the reasons for the war in this country in 2008.

Figure 3. Physical features of Georgia's location and its neighbors



Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. - 2008

3.1.2 Area of Georgia

The area of Georgia is 69,700 km², of which about 18% of its land is located in two separatist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Due to its small size, this country also has shallow strategic depth. Georgia also has about 21,946 km² of the exclusive trade area. In 1993, Ajaria declared its independence from Georgia, and in 2003, it reunited with Georgia again. In 1993, Abkhazia separated from Georgia as well, and in 2008 South Ossetia declared independence from Georgia during a five-day of war, which Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia shortly afterward. On the other hand, due to the location of Georgia, which is located in the southwest of Russia, given its common historical background with the Soviet Union, it is also considered a near abroad for Russia (worldatlas, 2020). Therefore, being bordered by a powerful neighbor as a small country brings constant fear and threat to Georgia, and as a result, Georgia became more Pro-Western over time.

Figure 4. Map of the Caucasus Republic of Georgia and its separatist regions-



Source: Flicker.com- 2010

3.1.3 The Borders, Roughness, and shape of Georgia

Georgia with 1814 km of land border is a mountainous country with coastal plains. There are two mountain ranges; the Lesser Caucasus and the Greater Caucasus. The Greater Caucasus Mountains are the natural border of Georgia with Russia, with 894 km long, and the Lesser Caucasus Mountains are the natural border of Georgia with Armenia, with 219 km long, and Turkey, with 273 km long. It also shares 428 km with Azerbaijan. The average altitude of this country is 1432 meters, and its lowest point is 0 meters above the Black Sea. Georgia's border with the Black Sea is remarkable. It has a 310 km coastline with the Black Sea, this coastline, was the post-Soviet and the South

Caucasus frontline with the west, which 57 km is adjoining in Adjara Province and 53 km to other parts of Georgia. There are several major ports along this coastline: Batumi¹, Poti², Kulevi³, Supsa⁴, and Anaklia⁵. 200 km of this coastline is in occupied Abkhazia and four other operational ports called: Sukhumi, Gudauta, Gagra, and Ochamchire, are officially suspended by Georgia (Papidze, 2016). Georgia is seeking to develop its Black Sea ports for further facilitate East-West trade. It is also noticeable that Georgia has a key role in the South Caucasus, since Armenia is a landlock country and does not have access to free water; Azerbaijan also needs Georgia from this sense (CIA World Fact Book, 2022).

Georgia has favorable security conditions due to its natural mountainous border, except at the eastern end of the North and South Caucasus Mountain range, which is declining in height and can be a security challenge for Georgia the territorial security, is derived from several factors. As most of the Great Caucasus Mountain range, which is the natural border between Georgia and Russia, is located in the north of Georgia, it has proper and effective control over these mountains and the roads passing through them. Nevertheless, due to the hardness and height of the Great Caucasus, it can be out of authority. However, the natural heights of the North Caucasus Mountain range are like a bulwark against Russia, but they have been able to penetrate them over time. It is also worth mentioning the two separated provinces of Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, located in the north and northwest of Georgia, and considering their autonomous status, which was recognized by Russia after the 2008 war, this separated regions also, provided favorable conditions for Russia's presence in these remarked territories (worldatlas, 2020).

As the result, this natural mountain border could not protect the security and territorial integrity of Georgia. In addition, due to Georgia's location in the east of the Black Sea, it has a strategic position and favorable access to this water. On the other side, these low lands were a reason for Russia to recognize the independency of Abkhazia, to have proper access to Georgia to monitor or oppress it, and to the Black Sea, as well. (worldatlas, 2020) Thus, reuniting these provinces with Georgia is one of the top priorities for this country, from the aspects of security, foreign policy, and national interests.

Figure 5. Georgia high detail map



Source: Wikimedia Commons-2012

Georgia's shape is roughly parallelogram-like, with natural indents and relatively symmetrical. This relatively quadrilateral territory, if examined it in terms of the concavity and convexity of borders; the concavity of the western shoreline has made it more aristocratic over the Black Sea. The convexity of the northwestern corner of Georgia has taken control of Abkhazia from the Georgian central government. Russian influences over Georgia and the Black Sea from Abkhazia in the northwest and controlling the coastline there becomes easier (Hakim, 2021).

After the separation of the two provinces of Georgia in the northwest and north of the country, the

1 A sea port Located in Adjara

2 A sea port in Svaneti

3 A Black Sea oil terminal in Svaneti, which deal with liquid cargo

4 The final point of the Baku-Supsa pipeline in Guria

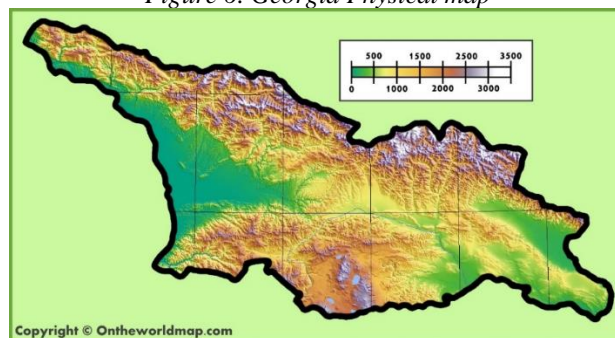
5 A deep-sea port in Svaneti and became operational in 2021

borders of this country changed, and created an asymmetric shape for Georgia. The autonomy of South Ossetia, hence the international community has not accepted this declaration of independence, but given that, Georgia's northern neighbor has recognized this autonomy, it can be inferred that a concavity has emerged in the heart of Georgia from 2008, which no progress has been made to improve this situation. Thus, Russia also can encroach on South Ossetia, posing a threat to oil and gas pipelines that pass through the territory closely, as South Ossetia's demarcation went a bit further into Georgian territory after the 2008 war. As of 2022, approximately 7-10,000 Russian troops are still occupying the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Therefore, maintaining the security of pipelines is one of the main tasks of Georgia to attract foreign investment in the energy sector and other sectors.

On the northeastern border of the country, however, there is concavity and convexity as well its intensity is not remarkable. In southern of Georgia, there is also concavity and border convexity, but its severity is not very significant. Thus, the demographic composition and borders of post-Soviet countries have generally been imposed. Obviously, this demarcation and ethnic arrangement has had a major impact on Georgia's foreign policy, as well as the definition of West orientation in the country, that is, the constant pressure and fear of its northern neighbor, Russia, has always led Georgia to a power that can support her against it. Since the end of the Cold War, this supportive power has been the United States and the European Union (Hakim, 2020).

In the convexity of the southeastern border of Georgia, which is located in the neighborhood of Azerbaijan, although, the relations between the two countries are friendly and warm, due to the territorial form there is a possibility of Azerbaijani domination in that part.

Figure 6. Georgia Physical map



Source: ontheworldmap.com-2010

3.1.4 The water resources and rivers network

There are about 25,000 rivers in Georgia, and the largest one is the Kora River, which flows through northeastern Turkey, passes through Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, flows into the Caspian Sea, followed by the Rioni River, and streams in western Georgia and ends through the Black Sea at the port of Poti. Georgia also has 11 lakes, the largest of which is Paravani Lake, with an area of 37.5 square kilometers, which is located in Javakheti province (Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia, 2008, p. 13). According to the latest statistics of 2015, there are about 637 glaciers with an area of 355.80 square kilometers, which are rich sources of fresh water and mineral water in Georgia. Abano and Adishi glaciers are two of the most important glaciers in Georgia (Tielidze, 2017, p. 167). Rivers in Georgia are very efficient in hydroelectric turbines, which can export these hydropower turbines. The critical functions of these rivers and water supplies are in the armament industry, medical tourism, cultivation, and exportation (worldatlas, 2020).

3.1.5 Resources: A) Natural resources (minerals, energy) B) Food resources

I. Natural resources

According to the climate of Georgia and its territorial qualities, its natural resources are timber, water supplies, manganese reserves, iron alloys, copper, and fertile soil. Georgia is suitable for

growing tea, citrus, and grapes due to its coastal climate and good lands. 35.5% of the country's land is arable (4330 square kilometers), 39.4% of Georgia is forested, and 25.1% is mountainous. Because of the climatic and geographical conditions of this country, the forest and timber resources, rivers, lakes and freshwater reserves, rare minerals, and some alloys are the main Natural Resources of Georgia (CIA World Fact Book, 2019). These resources make Georgia a potential regional economic player.

II. Energy resources

Georgia's coal and oil reserves are limited. Therefore, the domestic demand for fossil fuels had been met by Russia and, following sanctions on Georgia by Russia, Azerbaijan. After extracting fossil resources from the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan sends them to Turkey via Georgia to sell in European markets. For this purpose, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, several energy transition lines have been defined in the Caucasus region, which also pass-through Georgia. These energy pipelines are the Baku-Supsa oil line, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil line, and Baku-Tbilisi- Erzurum gas line. In general, there is about 1596 km of gas pipeline, and about 1175 km of oil pipeline pass through Georgia (CIA World Fact Book, 2019).

Energy Corridor is one of the most significant international efforts Georgia made. The process that could take all the attention to her for its welfare is remarkable. This international cooperation took Georgia to another level of negotiations with Western states. It was about a decade of conflict over the new energy transit routes among some regional and international players. Georgia's position in the energy sector, due to the utilization of the Baku- Tbilisi- Erzurum Gas Pipeline in 2007, increased. The gas pipeline, which is the first Caspian Sea gas pipeline to Europe via Georgia and Turkey, is also parallel to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. (Vaezi, 2009, p. 7).

Figure 7. Existing and planned oil and gas pipelines from Baku, Azerbaijan,



Source: Diplomat Magazine-2006

Breaking the monopoly of Energy Pipelines, which was under Russia's control, was one of the greatest purposes of the US to disturb Russia's influence in the Energy Sector. All the Western powers' aim was to have a serious presence in the region for more isolation of adverse states like Russia. (Amirahmadian, 2009, p. 66) According to Russia, the increase of Georgia's role in the energy sector might be a security challenge for Russia and Vis a Vis (Dmitri, 2009, p. 3). Therefore, Russia imposed embargoes on Georgia to put it under pressure since the price of gas from 50 US\$ per thousand cubic in 2004 increased to 235 US\$ per thousand cubic in 2006 (Newnham, 2015, pp. 161-170) (worldatlas, 2020).

III. Food resources

Despite Georgia's agricultural strengths, except for limited exports, other agricultural products are consumed domestically. However, there are threats to Georgia's natural resources, including pollution of rivers, pollution of the Black Sea, soil pollution due to harmful chemicals caused by the country's civil war, biodiversity loss, and the crisis of resource management in this country (CIA World Fact Book, 2022).

Because of undeveloped technology in the food industry, it has food dependency and is imported from other countries like Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, Georgia faced food crises during the war in 2022 in Ukraine, the country that provides almost 50% of grains in the world. In this regard, as fears of a global food crisis dominated the world, Georgia struggled to harvest its wheat amid a shortage of combine harvesters in Georgia and expensive fuel prices, which spiked after Russia launched a war on Ukraine. Therefore, Georgia farmers grow several kinds of endemic wheat, which are more difficult to harvest and thresh. Thus, wheat production is rising in Georgia. Although, these endemic seeds and grains are not enough to feed the Georgian nation, and Georgia is still relying on imports from the West, still, these grains are vital to emphasize the country's sovereignty toward Russia (AL JAZEERA, 2022).

3.1.6 Road network

Georgia's road network plays a critical role in both domestic and international traffic with the four neighboring countries. The country has a network of 13 internationally oriented trunk highways that connect the capital Tbilisi with its four neighboring countries. This is also the backbone of a network of domestic-oriented national roads connecting vital regions with each other. The total length of the road network is approximately 21,110 kilometers, according to 2021 numbers (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2021). The importance of these roads becomes clearer since these connect the administrative, important industrial and cultural centers of Georgia with other countries and capitals of the Autonomous Republics and administrative centers of the regions, as well as access to the international roads.

Georgia's rails and railways network also have a 1,583 km wide railway and a 100 km narrow railway. The Karas-Baku-Tbilisi railway, which meets modern standards, is one of the key railways in the region. Although, Georgia's railway system dated back to the Soviet era, it has been rebuilt and modernized after independence (Civil Georgia, 2017).

Figure 8. Georgian Railway Network



Source: Wikipedia-2001

Georgia has 25 merchant marines, 2 for heavy cargo, 3 for general goods, and 20 for other commercial purposes. It also has two for oil tankers. This country possesses 18 airports. Georgia has a 1,596 km gas pipeline and a 1,175 km oil pipeline (CIA World Fact Book, 2022). Georgia focuses on becoming an energy and cargo transit hub in the South Caucasus regionally and internationally, by increasing infrastructures and maintaining its security. This is one of the most

important goals of Georgia's foreign policy.

To mark Georgia's intention in this regard, there are some major international investments and proceedings in this country that highlights this goal as follows; the Supsa Sea Terminal, is operated by the United Kingdom-based BP6 in 1999. Kulevi port and terminal were purchased by the Azerbaijani state-owned SOCAR7 in 2007. A year after, Kazakhstan state-owned KazTransOil8 acquired management rights of the Batumi Sea Port and purchased 100% shares of the Batumi Oil Terminal for 49 years. In addition, in 2008, 51% of shares of the Poti Sea Port and its management rights for 49 years were purchased by the United Arab Emirates, although it sold its shares to APM Terminal9 in 2011. The construction of the Anaklia Deep Sea Port in 2017 is a joint venture by TBC10 Holding and the United States (Papidze, 2016). By these foreign investments, Georgia is practicing a leading role in the South Caucasus.

Figure 9. The map shows the route the BTE Pipeline takes, which goes from Baku to Tbilisi to Erzurum. The South Caucasus Pipeline.



Source: Own Work- Charles- 2021

3.1.7 Population

According to the statistics of 2022, the population of Georgia is 4,935,518 million people, which has 126th place in the world. Georgia's population can be described from two perspectives: a) Ethnicity, b) Religion.

I. Ethnic groups in Georgia

The population of this country consists of; Georgian with 86.8%, Azeri with 6.3%, Armenian with 4.5%, and other minorities (Russian, Abkhaz, Ossetian, Yazidi, Ukrainian, and Greek) 2.3%. Georgian is its official language. The growth rate in this country is 0.05%, and 59.5% of the people in this country are urban. National unity is the main concern reflected in the population since some of them are living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which Russia recognized as independent states in 2008, an issue that has deeply involved the Georgian government plus other internal ethnicity disputes. (World Population review, 2020)

6 British Multinational Oil and Gas Company. It is one of the world's oil and gas super majors.

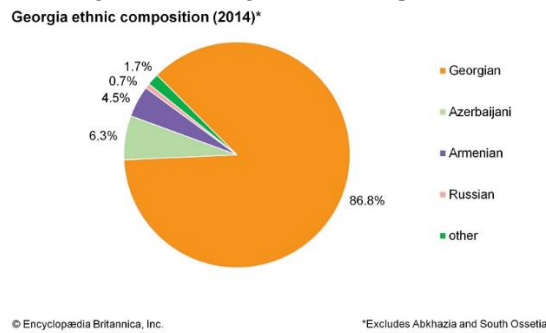
7 The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic.

8 National oil transporter in Kazakhstan.

9 A port operating company headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands.

10 A Georgian bank headquartered in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Figure 10. Georgia ethnic composition

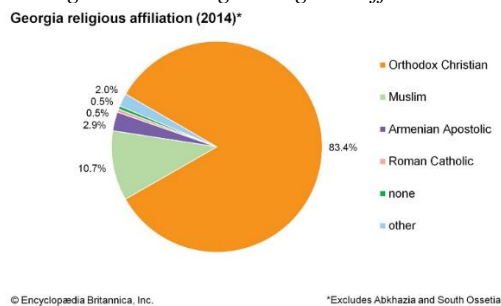


Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.-2014

II. Religion

The official religion of Georgia is Orthodox Christianity, with 83.4%. Other religions of the country are Muslim with 10.7%, Armenian with 2.9%, atheist with 0.5% and other religious minorities with 1.2%. Something to consider about Georgia is that it has a same sect with Russia, and Orthodox is the official religion for both countries. Although Abkhazia and Ossetia, which were supported and recognized by Russia since the war in 2008, do not share a same religion with Russia. From the foreign policy perspective, Russia and Georgia are aligned religiously. This issue can be a reason for the divergence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Russia (World Population review, 2020). An important point that stemmed from the Soviet era is the fact that the former Soviet Union's policy towards its satellites after the collapse was because their borders were imposed and engineered. This means that, first, the borders passed through one ethnicity, for example, the Ossetians, who used to live in one province, divided up in the North Ossetia in Russia and the South Ossetia in Georgia, and second, if there was a dominant majority in a country, Russia placed several minorities next to them. These minorities have always come to the aid of Russians at historical turning points, for example Georgians toward minorities such as; Abkhazians, Ossetians (UNHCR, 1994) Hence for the country's future perspective, Georgia needs to work on the ethnics' reunification in order to sustain its coexistence, public cooperation and political contribution.

Figure 11. Georgia religious affiliation



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.-2014

4. Geopolitical Observation Results

In the final analysis, lack of natural resources for export, inappropriate shape of the country and its small area, neighboring with Russia that creates a perpetual fear of hostility due to Russia's aggressive behavior, has brought constant threats to Georgia and jeopardized its security, it has been challenging. During the history, Russia used the minorities in its neighborhood to control her neighbors and save its interests in the region, by putting and manipulating the minorities next to the majorities, and it could usually reach its goals. This situation pushed Georgia to join the Western

Euro Atlantic organizations to maintain its security and sovereignty. It is clear that this approach was against Russia's interests. Therefore, Georgia's westernization tendencies beside Russia's threat over its traditional territories and the paradox this situation brings, is one of the most critical issues in Georgia's foreign policy perspective.

5. Georgia's Foreign Policy

From 1991 up to 2022, Georgia had four presidents. Considering Rosenau's view, in making foreign policy, the key elements are different during each of these presidents, and at each round of the presidency, a few of those are predominant. To clarify this idea, this article divides this timeline and analyzes each presidency as follows:

5.1 (1991-2003)

After the collapse of the USSR, we can observe the individual element as the most prominent element among the five other elements of Rosenau's theory remarked earlier. Shevardnadze, the first president of Georgia after the independence, was one of the most influential leaders during the USSR and had a significant role in the democratic foundation in Georgia. During his time, society was back-warded from any stance. Before the collapse of the soviet, the international system had obvious contrast with the Eastern bloc.

When the dissolution of the USSR happened, due to Russia's approach about interaction with the west, western countries needed a new secure route for the safe energy transition. Therefore, Georgia was a perfect solution for this equation, regards to its suitable shorelines along the Black Sea. Hence, the West invested in this country in all the sections. Russia on the other side wanted to keep its influential territory as it had during the USSR, but it did not possess any power. During that period, Georgia was undeveloped, its cultural penetration was low, and the communist atmosphere had a strong influence. Due to its inappropriate domestic situation, it had a weak political and economic power. Yet Georgia was counted as a communist political system (Akhmeteli, 2014).

5.2 (2003-2013)

During the presidency of **Saakashvili, as the second president of Georgia, he** tried to fight the systemic corruption, which was a big dilemma in Georgia. He also put his effort to pull the country closer to the EU conditions. Although, the country was not ready to unite with the Western coalitions. To joining the western organizations, Saakashvili had unrealistic vision about Western support and aids in case of Russia confrontation. Therefore, during the war between Georgia and Russia in 2008, this desire did not serve well, and the Georgia's society turned against him, this was a cause-and-effect relation. During Saakashvili's office the element of role, was the most prominent one in his first round, and administration was the prominent element in his second round.

During this time, the international system was investing in several sectors in Georgia, which include the BTC project, the development of port infrastructure facilities and fleet, transit routes, logistics, and military bases. Despite all these efforts, the West did not make any significant interaction in the Georgia- Russia war in 2008, which led to the loss of 20% of Georgia's territory. On the other side, Russia, which was supporting and training Georgia's army for a while in 2002, observed the intense Westernization perspectives of the leaders of Georgia. Russia analyzed this behavior as a Western-oriented threat. In the war of 2008, Russia invaded Georgia, assaulted South Ossetia, supported the separatism movements in the autonomous provinces, and recognized their independence.

During Saakashvili, Georgia's development speeded up. Its cultural penetration improved and was reinforced by the West. Due to its foreign policy approaches, which insisted on foreign invests, and fast developments, its economic power was boosted, but its political power between the first round of Saakashvili's presidency (strong) and his second round (weak because of war in 2008) swung,

but in general, Georgia was on the path through the democracy (REUTERS, 2013).

5.3 (2013-2018)

Margvelashvili, the third president of Georgia who was an academic figure from the Tbilisi State University, was not a well-known politician until his presidency, even though he could bring new rationality into Georgia's political system without changing the foreign policy's perspective. In his presidency, the administration and the society played prominent role in foreign policy, according to Rosenau's theory. Regards to the Western approach and all the consequences it might have, his term was relatively stable without any significant tension. Margvelashvili had a constructive and realistic view of Georgia's internal situation. At this time, Georgia could get closer to the EU circumstances; therefore, society trusted him and his administration once again. In this regard, the cause-and-effect relation is clear.

During his presidency, although Russia imposed sanctions on Georgia because of strengthening its relations with the EU and NATO, Georgia tried to reconcile with Russia and warm up their relations in a diplomatic manner through an unofficial round of meetings between Abashidze, Georgian Prime Minister special representative for Russia, and Russia's Federation Council Senator Karasin began to open up new dialogues toward their common issues. (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016)

In addition, the international system in 2009 made up its relation with Russia, although, in 2014, Russia invaded Crimea, and history repeated itself once again. In 2013, the international system encouraged Georgia to increase its capacity for foreign investments and developments (Dickinson, 2021).

In the meantime, Georgia was developing based on the EU instructions, and its cultural penetration from the West was increasing. Its political power was not significant at first, but then due to Margvelashvili rationality and academic experiments, he could increase his power and sustained it. During that time, the economic situation was stable with a soft rise. Therefore, democracy was rooted in Georgia day by day. Also, in 2017, new opportunities for Georgians to travel to Europe without visas, to study, and to establish businesses ascertained (European Union, 2017).

5.4 (2018-2022)

Zorabishvili was a Georgian diaspora in France as his parents were refugees, and she served in the French diplomatic service for three decades. She was the French ambassador to Georgia in 2003, and during Saakashvili's presidency in 2004, with the mutual agreement of the presidents of France and Georgia, she accepted Georgian citizenship and became the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (The Washington Post, 2004).

During her political life in Georgia, establishing democracy was her main goal since she became the president of Georgia, free market, foreign investment, energy transition, and cargo shipment, her prestigious and positive coalitions with the EU especially after Russia invaded Ukraine are the most prominent procedures, she took toward democracy to join NATO and the EU. Although, because of the illegal entrance of Saakashvili to Georgia in 2021, he was arrested, and the EU condemned Georgia because of this action that might tackle the concept of democracy in Georgia, Zourabichvili responded no democratic country would pardon and accept such an action.

The society also supports her because of her consultation for membership in the EU therefore; cause and effect are accomplished here. Indeed, the individual, the role, the administration, the society, and the international system, the five elements of Rosenau's theory, are coming hand in hand with her presidency.

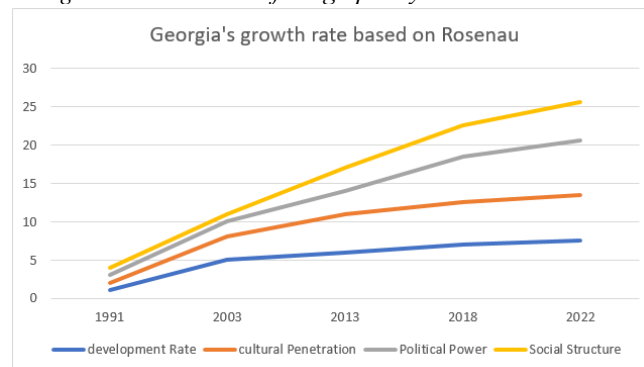
The international system respects Zourabichvili as well, and the EU leaders have good relations with Georgia, but Georgia's membership in the EU is still under negotiation. Zourabichvili is also

very cautious toward Russia. Although, Georgia and Russia have had no formal diplomatic relations since August 2008 due to the Russo-Georgian War and Russian recognition of separatist provinces. When the West imposed severe sanctions on Russia because it invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Georgia did not support the sanctions and not join them significantly. As Zourabichvili mentioned in her interview with Foreign Policy, Georgia is a part of all the international sanctions, SWIFT, and financial sanctions. Therefore, there is no need for more specific sanctions from Georgia. (Mackinnon, 2022).

In this current presidency term, Georgia is a developing country but not as fast as Zourabichvili or the EU desired. The Western cultural penetration is also very high, especially after the European Council president Charles Michel announced that Ukraine and Moldova's nomination for membership in the EU have been approved. Approving the nomination is the first official step for membership in the EU. After that, France said although, there is a full consensus on the matter, there is no guarantee that Ukraine's membership will be approved in the EU (BBC News, 2022). Zourabichvili also supported this action and mentioned it in her Instagram that "we see that our path is clearly toward membership and toward getting back into the European family and that is an incredibly historic step by the European Council (Zourabichvili, 2022).

So far, different phenomena have been happening that limited the political power in Georgia in this round of presidency like, the covid-19, the global financial crises due to the pandemic, and the war in Ukraine in 2022. Because of Covid-19, Georgia experienced inflation, and the EU supported her financially. Therefore, since the EU supports Georgia from different aspects, it can be concluded that this country is on the path to democracy.

Figure 12. Rosenau's foreign policy criteria 1991-2022



Source: Designed by the author- 2022

According to the graph above, based on Rosenau's theory, during each presidency, no matter which person was in power and how has implemented his authoritative actions, the outcome was the same. The growth rate rises annually to achieve democratic European development and eventually join the EU and the other Western coalitions. Based on the presidents' analysis, come hell or high water, Georgia's foreign policy perspective is prone to Westernization in favor of democracy.

To admit that, After Zourabichvili won the presidential election in Georgia in 2018, foreign leaders soon congratulated her including, US President Donald J. Trump, who touted Georgia's and the United States' close relationship as strategic partners." (Vestnik Kavkaza, 2018).

The Foreign Ministry of Turkey issued a statement saying, "We hope the results of the elections will be beneficial for the people of Georgia. We believe that the results of the elections will further contribute to the strategic partnership between Turkey and Georgia." The former president of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko wrote on Twitter, "I wish you every success in ensuring Georgia's democratic European development and consolidation of society. I'm convinced of the further deepening of strategic partnership between our two nations." Alan Duncan, State Minister for

Europe and the Americas, congratulated president-elect Zourabichvili, noted, "The UK and Georgia are strategic partners. I welcome the President-elect's determination to bring society together and to uphold the democratic standards which the people of Georgia demand and deserve." (Civil Georgia, 2018). These international statements from the leaders of the western countries clear their intentions and positive opinions toward Georgia's membership in the Euro-Atlantic organizations. They also see the democratic path for Georgia through westernization.

6. Conclusions

In the final analysis, even though Georgia is not a member of the EU or NATO yet, she is a strategic partner with some Western countries. In the future, if Georgia joins the EU or NATO, she will obtain some opportunities and facilitations, on the other side, it will have some obligations toward them, which must consider. Therefore, joining these organizations has responsibilities that Georgia must obey and defend its interests too. On the other hand, Georgia is located in the Caucasus Region, neighbored by Russia as a rival with the EU and NATO and a great power in Eurasia. Nevertheless, since Georgia has obligations toward both East and West, and the two do not share any common tie due to the current situation, thus this might vague the Georgia's foreign policy perspective.

Although Georgia's membership in the EU or NATO will not take place in the near future, a large part of the Georgian society supports membership in both organizations to ensure security and democracy. In this regard, a poll conducted by the International Republican Institute on the United States in 2015 found that support for joining Georgia to the EU and NATO was high, about 78%, respectively .

According to geopolitics, geopolitical circumstance determines the destiny of a country, but what can improve a country's future is the decision-making process by its leaders. Those decisions depend on their individuality, the capacity of the role they have, the administration they represent, the society that reflects their decisions, and the situation of the international system.

If we observe foreign policy as behavior and geopolitics as a situation, in this situation that Georgia, a small country with a multi-nationality texture, bordered by Russia, without any reliable natural resources, needed to find a departure from its dead-end. What was the solution to this deadlock ?

During the time that all the independent countries were struggling with their internal matters, the only solution was to rely on the West for its support, armaments, military training, security, investments, and coalitions. Therefore, Georgia defined membership in the EU and NATO as its main foreign policy goal. Right after the independency and during each presidency in Georgia, although different individuals took office and exercised power differently, the goal was the same. On the other side, the West also needed Georgia as a placeholder in Eurasia and a new energy transition hub. Therefore, the bilateral relationship between them took place.

Before the separation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, having membership in the EU and NATO was probable, but after the invasion of Russia in 2008, Russia revealed itself and denounced to the world that it never let its near abroad become a nest for the West, and to maintain its security, Russia will pay all the costs. On the other side, the Western bloc also did not want to bear with Russia directly and make any hostility. In this regard, the 2008 war in Georgia was an alarm for the West to not be provocative and not support Georgia militarily but expand its diplomatic capacities. Thus, Georgia should concentrate on its own power and rely on its geostrategic position in the region to maintain its economic cooperation, and democracy development, and sustain its security coalitions without joining the EU and NATO. Therefore, the key factor for Georgia's foreign policy perspective could be managing the bilateral relations with Russia and the West.

However, the Ukraine war in 2022 was a big question mark toward this approach. If a balanced manner toward the West and Russia, was a good solution not threatened by Russia then why Russia

invaded Ukraine eventually ?

According to this war, it can be confirmed that nothing but a full membership of Georgia and Ukraine in the EU and NATO with a complete commitment to defending these countries against Russia cannot save them from Russia's threat, and any other actions just provoke Russia to be more offensive. Even the nomination status of these countries in the EU and NATO cannot guarantee their security.

With these facts on the table, presidents after Saakashvili, especially President Zourabichvili, took this measure as a fact, and they just tried to get closer to the West and to be a good alliance for long-term interests. In this approach, according to Georgia's geopolitical characteristics, which are the fixed elements, based on its small territory, its shape and borders, and the security dilemma due to Russia's presence in its neighborhood, to mitigate Russia's threat and maintain security, no matter who is in line for power, the principles of Georgia's foreign policy are constant, uniting with the west alliances and organizations. Although they may not achieve membership any time soon, relying on this approach can reduce Russia's pressure .

Also, according to the devastating war in Ukraine, the West needs effective action toward Georgia, whether changing the policies and appendixes to be able to have the new members or face the threat of Russia, in this case, this threat is elevating and jeopardizing energy security, food security, and transportation, and affects the international system in general.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Simplify the concept of the theory of the article- Designed by the author-2022

Figure 2. Rosenau's theory- Designed by the author-2022

Figure 3. Physical features of Georgia's location and its neighbors- Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.-2008

Figure 4. Map of the Caucasus Republic of Georgia and its separatist regions- Flickr.com- 2010

Figure 5. Georgia high detail map- Wikimedia Commons-2012

Figure 6. Georgia Physical map- ontheworldmap.com-2010

Figure 7. Existing and planned oil and gas pipelines from Baku, Azerbaijan, including the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline. Diplomat Magazine-2006

Figure 8. Georgian Railway Network- Wikipedia-2001

Figure 9. The map shows the route the BTE Pipeline takes, which goes from Baku to Tbilisi to Erzurum. The South Caucasus Pipeline. Own Work- Charles- 2021

Figure 10. Georgia ethnic composition- Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.-2014

Figure 11. Georgia religious affiliation- Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.-2014

Figure 12. Rosenau's foreign policy criteria 1991-2022- Designed by the author- 2022
onquerors and Governors of Tucumán]. Serie La Cultura Argentina.