GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IN UNDERSTANDING GEORGIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE OTHER

by

Ellen Galdava
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Science
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Committee:

__________________________  Chair of Committee

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________  Graduate Program Director

__________________________  Dean, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Date: _______________________  Spring Semester 2015
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
Generational Difference in Understanding Georgian National Identity and The Other

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University

By

Ellen Galdava
Bachelor of Arts
American University in Bulgaria, 2012

Director: Daniel Rothbart, Professor
School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Spring Semester 2015
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my husband Giorgi, my family, and to my country.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee, family, respondents, and supporters who have made this happen. I want to thank my husband, Giorgi Maisuradze and Claudine Kuradusenge, for moral support. Dr. Karyna V. Korostelina for guidance and recommendations.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF FIGURES</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>XXI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDENTITY</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERATIONS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: GEORGIA PAST AND PRESENT</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUALITATIVE APPROACH</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALIDITY</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHICAL ISSUES</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUP 18-28</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUP 29-49</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUP 50-75</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Theme, Age Group</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Theme 1, age group 18-28</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Theme 2, age group 18-28</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Theme 3, age group 18-28</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Theme 4, age group 18-28</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Theme 5, age group 18-28</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Theme 6, age group 18-28</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Theme 7, age group 18-28</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Theme 1, age group 29-49</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Theme 2, age group 29-49</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Theme 3, age group 29-49</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Theme 4, age group 29-49</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Theme 5, age group 29-49</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Theme 6, age group 29-49</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Theme 7, age group 29-49</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Theme 1, age group 50-75</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Theme 2, age group 50-75</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Theme 3, age group 50-75</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Theme 4, age group 50-75</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19</td>
<td>Theme 5, age group 50-75</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20</td>
<td>Theme 6, age group 50-75</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21</td>
<td>Theme 7, age group 50-75</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Association Agreement (AA): AA is a treaty between the European Union (EU), its Member States and a non-EU country. It creates a framework for cooperation between them.

Axiological balance: Daniel Rothbart and Karyna V. Korostelina (2007) developed the concept of axiological balance to refer to a kind of parallelism of virtues and vices attributed to groups. Balanced axiology leads to the recognition of morality as well as immorality of both the Other and the in-group. A high degree of axiological balance reflects recognition of one’s own moral faults and failings, while a low degree of axiological balance is the perception of an in-group as morally pure and superior and an out-group as evil and vicious.

Boundary: Charles Tilly (2005) described boundary as any contiguous zone of contrasting density, rapid transition, or separation between internally connected clusters of population and/or activity for which human participants create shared representations. If this is a quote, use quotation marks and include page reference
Caucasus: Caucasus is a region at the border of Europe and Asia, situated between the Black and the Caspian seas. The Northern Caucasus include: Russia, Rostov Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, Kalmykia, Astrakhan Oblast, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Adyghea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaya-Cherkessia, North Ossetia-Alania, Krasnodar Krai, and Stavropol Krai. Countries in the South Caucasus are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (partially), and Turkey (partially).

Clientelism: Clientelism is a social order that depends upon relations of patronage. In particular, it is a political approach that emphasizes or exploits such relations.

Collective Axiology: Daniel Rothbart and Karyna V. Korostelina (2007) define collective axiology as a system of value commitments that offers moral guidance to maintain relations with those within, and outside, a group. It has two variables: axiological balance and collective generality.

Collectivist Culture: Collectivist Culture is when the social identity is the central one, and is strongly interconnected with personal identity.

Collective generality: Daniel Rothbart and Karina V. Korostelina (2007) refer to collective generality to be the ways in which in-group members categorize the Other, how they simplify or not, their defining character. A high level of collective generality views out-group as consistent, homogenous, demonstrating fixed patterns of behaviors,
committed to durable rigid beliefs and values, and widespread in the region or the whole world. A low level of collective generality reflects the perception of the out-group as differentiated, ready for transformation, exhibiting various kinds of behaviors, and relatively limited in scope. The degree of collective generality can change over time, especially in the situation of strengthening intergroup tensions or violence.

*Chosen traumas/chosen glories:* Vamik Volkan’s (1997) chosen traumas/glories are mental representations of shared glories or losses that help the in-group to unite around common, shared ideas.

*Dehumanization:* Dehumanization is a process that views enemies as unprotected from aggression by social and moral norms.

*Eastern Europe:* Eastern Europe is the eastern part of Europe; countries within Eastern Europe are Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and the most western part of the Russian Federation.

*Eduard Shevardnadze:* He was a Georgian diplomat and politician. Shevardnadze served as First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party (GPC), the de facto leader of Soviet Georgia (1972-1985) and as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union (1985-1991). He was responsible for many key decisions in the Soviet foreign policy during the
Gorbachev Era. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, he was President of Georgia from 1992-2003.

**Endogamy:** Endogamy is the custom of marrying only within the limits of a local community, tribe, or clan.

**Entrapment Stage:** It is a period, when a conflict ends up being trapped in a longer course of action that is justified by an increased commitment to the pursuit of goals.

**Entry Point:** It is a term used in peacebuilding to identify the best way to proceed with intervention in the conflict or civic tension.

**Escalation Stage:** It is a stage associated with proliferation and generalization of the initial specific issue, the polarizations of relationships among parties, deep feelings and the personalization of the situation.

**Ethnic Identity:** Ethnic identity is membership in a particular ethnic or cultural group. [A more detailed analysis is provided in the literature review section, Chapter 2.]

**The European Union (EU):** EU is a politico-economic union of 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe.
**Eurasian Customs Union:** Eurasian Customs Union established in 2010 included Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Since January 1, 2015 Armenia and Kyrgyzstan became members of the Union.

**Fixed and Homogenous:** Fixed and homogenous in this study refers to in-group’s assessment of the out-group. It assumes that the members of the out-group have similar perceptions and behaviors and are resistant to changes. Also, this phrase characterizes the out-group as having long-term stability of their beliefs, attitudes, and actions. This kind of perception about the out-group prevents one to assess members of the out-group separately from the larger community.

**Frozen Conflict:** The conflict is frozen when the conflict is inactive, without real efforts for conflict resolution.

**Georgievskiy Traktat:** It was a bilateral treaty concluded between the Russian Empire and the east Georgian kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti on July 24, 1783.

The coalition was established on April 19, 2012 through the efforts of the billionaire businessman and politician, Bidzina Ivanishvili. Presently, the party has the majority in the Georgian parliament.

**Georgian Orthodox Church:** The Georgian Orthodox Church is Georgia’s dominant religious institution.

**Giorgi Margvelashvili:** Margvelashvili is the fourth President of Georgia. He assumed office in November 17, 2013.

**Giorgi Saakadze:** Saakadze was the Grand Mouravi, a Georgian politician, and a military commander. He played an important and contradictory role in the politics of the early 17th century.

**Glasnost:** Gorbachev implemented the Glasnost in the USSR. It called for increased openness and transparency in the government institutions.

**Gorbachev period:** This period refers to history of the Soviet Union from 1982 through 1991. The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, created an atmosphere of open criticism of the communist regime. The famous policies such as: Glasnost and Perestroika are associated with Gorbachev’s period.
*Iconic Order:* Daniel Rothbart and Karyna V. Korostelina (2007) developed this concept. It is a part of Collective Axiology and functions as the graphic expressions of negativities.

*Identity Crisis:* It is a term in psychology that means a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself.

*Ilia II of Georgia:* Ilia II is the current Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia and the spiritual leader of the Georgian Orthodox Church.

*Individualistic culture:* In the Individualist culture, personal identity is central and it precedes the development of social identity.

*In-group dynamic:* In-group dynamic is when individuals perceive themselves as members of a group and identify themselves with it in order to distinguish between their groups (in-groups) and those not their groups (out-groups).

*In-group/out-group dynamic:* It is a system of behaviors and psychological processes occurring between the two social groups.
Irakli Garibashvili: He is an incumbent and 11th Prime Minister of Georgia. Garibashvili is as well chairman of the Georgian Dream–Democratic Georgia party.

Joseph Stalin or Iosif Vissarionovich: Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953. He was ethnically Georgian.

Lavrentiy Beria: He was a Soviet politician, Marshal of the Soviet Union and state security administrator, chief of the Soviet security and secret police apparatus under Joseph Stalin during World War II, and Deputy Premier in the postwar year (1946-53). He was ethnically Georgian.

Mikheil Saakashvili: He was the third President of Georgia. He served two consecutive terms from 2004-2013. He is the founder and the former chairman of the United National Movement Party.

Mythic narrative: It is part of Collective axiology, developed by Daniel Rothbart and Karina V. Korostelina (2007). It is the story of the threatening Other to gain potency through dissemination of shocking images, harrowing anecdotes, and accounts of violence.
**National Identity**: National identity is the person’s identity and sense of belonging to a state or to a nation. [More detailed analysis of the concept of national identity is provided in the literature review, Chapter 2, section 2.]

**Nationalism**: It is a positive feeling toward one’s nation with negative feeling towards other nations.

**Normative order**: Daniel Rothbart and Karyna V. Korostelina (2007) developed this concept. It is third element in the Collective Axiology and it provides a basis for understanding the world in morally binary terms such as good/evil and holy/disrespectful.

**Patriotism**: It is a strong attachment and loyalty to one’s nation without corresponding hostility toward other nations.

**Perestroika**: It was a political movement in 1980-86 widely associated with Mikhail Gorbachev, which aimed to reform the Communist Party of the USSR.

**Primordial view**: This view assumes that nations are ancient and natural phenomena. This perception relies on the concept of kinship, where members of an ethnic group feel that they share characteristics, origins and events with a blood relationship.
**Protracted Conflict:** Protracted conflict refers to conflicts that are complex, severe, commonly enduring for long period of time, and violent. The protracted period is more serious than dissimilarities of opinion, mere bickering, and quarrel in electoral politics.

**Recurrent Conflict:** Recurrent conflict is a protracted conflict that flares up for a while. Recurrent conflict is intensified by destructive elements, and then becomes less visible, finally simply fading away without event resolution.

**Rose Revolution:** The Rose Revolution was a change of power in Georgia in November 2003, which took place after widespread protests over the disputed parliamentary elections. As a result, President Eduard Shevardnadze was forced to resign.

**Russian Empire:** It existed from 1721 until overthrown by the February Revolution in 1917.

**Salient identity:** It is the most important identity for an individual.

**Shared reservoirs:** Vamik Volkan (1997) developed this concept. Shared reservoirs refer to the symbolic representations of the past. It is determined by the culture or by society. These symbols can be flags, songs, special dishes, places of worships, religious icons, memorials, certain animals, people, and groups of people.
Social Categorization: Social categorization is a theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) that describes the circumstances under which a person will perceive collections of people as a group.

Social Constructivist: This kind of approach to political identity assumes that we create realities and make these realities meaningful by way of interaction.

Social Identity: Social identity is a person’s understanding of who they are based on membership in different groups.

Stereotype: Stereotype is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

The Five-Day war: It is the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia that began on August 7, 2008 and continued until August 12, 2008.

The Museum of Soviet Occupation (Tbilisi): This is a museum established on May 26, 2006 in Tbilisi, Georgia. It documents seven decades of the Soviet rule in Georgia from 1921 until 1991. The museum is dedicated to the history of the anti-occupational, national-liberation movement of Georgia and to the victims of the Soviet repressions.

The Other: The Other means out-group. The characterization of the other can be negative as well as positive, depending on the out-group and in-group.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR): USSR was a Marxist-Leninist state on the Eurasian continent and existed between 1922-1991.

Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic: It was also known as the Transcaucasian Federation, the Transcaucasian SFSR and the TSFSR. The Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic was a constituent republic of the Soviet Union that existed from 1922 to 1936. The TSFSR consisted of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Transgenerational transmission: It is when an older person unconsciously externalizes his traumatized self into a developing child’s personality.

Tsarist Russia: Tsarist Russia, also known as Tsardom of Russia, was the name of the centralized Russian state from Ivan IV’s in 1547 until Peter the Great’s foundation of the Russian Empire in 1721.
Ukrainian crisis: The crisis in Ukraine began on November 21, 2013, when the president Viktor Yanukovych suspended preparation for the implementation of an Association Agreement with the European Union. The decision caused mass protests, known as the “Euromaidan.” After months of protest Yanukovych resigned on February 22, 2014 and fled the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. The resignation was followed with violence and conflicts in the largely Russian populated eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. The crisis resulted in annexation of Crimea by Russia on March 18, 2014. The conflict between pro-Russian rebel groups and the post-revolution Ukrainian government started in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine. Despite the negotiations processes involving the EU and Russia, peace in the eastern part of Ukraine is still volatile.

United National Movement (UNM) (გერგილა ნაციонаლური ოძრება): UNM was founded in October 2001 by Mikheil Saakashvili. The party was in the majority until the October 1, 2012 elections.

Zurab Zhvania: He was the fourth Prime Minister of Georgia. He served in the office from 2004-2005.

Zviad Gasamkhurdia: He was the first democratically elected President of Georgia. He was in the office from 1991-1992.
ABSTRACT

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENT IN UNDERSTANDING GEORGIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE OTHER

Ellen Galdava, MS
George Mason University, 2015
Thesis Chair: Professor Karyna V. Korostelina

This thesis describes generational difference in understanding Georgian national identity and the Other. Political developments in Eastern Europe and the implementation process of the Association Agreement with Europe make the study particularly interesting for conflict resolution practitioners. Exploration of attitudes toward Russians and Europeans will help practitioners design appropriate intervention strategies for lessening the possibility of conflict escalation. In addition, the purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the gap among generations and to examine the possibility of civic tensions in Georgia. The study examined three age groups: youth (18-28), adult (29-49), and senior (50-75).

The research findings reveal distinct differences between the age groups in the understanding of the Georgian national identity. The major generational gap is observed
in the identity formation among the youth. Differently from the adult and the senior
generations, they define Georgian national identity in terms of citizenship. Along with
that, different perceptions of Russia create another major gap among the generations. The
only time youth prefer diplomatic relations with Russia is if Russia de-occupies Abkhazia
and South Ossetia. The adult and the senior generations do not have any pre-conditions
for establishing diplomatic and friendly relations with Moscow. These two major gaps in
understanding Georgian national identity and perception of Russia produce possibility of
a civic tension among the generations.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is important to understand national identity in order to mitigate or prevent violence. Different foundations of the national identity can translate into deadly violence and bloodshed. A single phrase or an unrelated event serves as a trigger to an eruption of salient conflicting identities, biases, and stereotypes that were previously subdued. Therefore, studying and exploring identities, especially national identities, is important for conflict resolution. Understanding the dynamics of identity will help not only to prevent the violence, but will also identify possible resolutions.

However, a majority of the conflicts are frozen or inactive without any real efforts made for conflict resolution. These frozen conflicts impact multiple generations. Researchers and practitioners should not assume that the same event would equally influence several generations because each generation experiences different historical, political, or economic conditions. Thus, the same frozen conflict may have different influences on each generation. In other words, every generation grows and develops in a unique environment. Additionally, adult or senior generations transmit certain chosen traumas and glories without in-depth contextual explanations. These transmitted stories and events, when added to the already accumulated experiences and perceptions, lead to the construction of a national identity and various understandings of the Other.
After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the populations of Eastern European countries and the Caucasus experienced major shifts and transitions in their everyday and political lives. One of the major impacts of the dissolution of the USSR has been the radical societal, political, and institutional transformation. Only 24 years ago, post-Soviet countries such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and the Baltic States sang the USSR anthem and marched in defense of the Soviet identity. However, the same generation is now living in a society that fights for democracy and freedom of speech and advocates for capitalism. The generations who lived in the USSR are also facing a complete shift in their national or ethnic identities. However, no existing research has thoroughly explored whether these generations abandoned the national identities and perceptions they embraced before the emergence of democracy.

Meanwhile, during these 24 years, new generations are growing up in an anti-Soviet period and, in most countries, with anti-Russian propaganda. Therefore, a huge generational gap exists in understanding their histories and identities of who they are and who Russians are or were. In countries such as Georgia and Ukraine, generational gaps prevent conflict resolution and stability and create vulnerability for civil tension. Exploring the generations is necessary to see the differences in their worldviews. Studies that examine this type of data also aid in identifying entry-points for practitioners to pursue conflict resolution and identity-based training.

Another major change after the dissolution of the USSR has been the eruption of multiple ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus. Unfortunately, these conflicts remain unresolved. The conflicts are in the entrapment stage, and the region is at risk of recurrent
violence. For example, the 2008 war in Georgia and the border shootings over Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan show the nature of recurrent violence in the region. The primary reasons behind the violence in the Eastern Europe and the Caucuses are the salience of ethnic identity and the emergence of national movements, yet existing research has not examined the impacts of these ethnic conflicts on the youngest generation.

Despite the conflict, Georgia, in the last decade, made dramatic changes in its domestic and foreign policies. The recent governments are moving forward with integrating into the European Union (EU). The former government of President Mikhail Saakashvili, as well as the present government of Prime-Minister Irakli Garibashvili, have tried to incorporate the Georgian economy into the global market. Both governments have rigorously continued an introduction of the Western educational system and achieved visa liberation with the EU. As a result, the Europeanization of Georgia has impacted the youngest generation’s perceptions of national identity.

On the other hand, the crisis in Ukraine and responses of the international community triggered discussions about European Georgia. The adult and senior generations, who lived in the USSR and experienced the transition periods, became active in questioning the rationality of the country’s foreign policy. Yet the young population, who grew up with anti-Russia propaganda, perceives the emergence of pro-Russian or a moderate tone toward Russia as traitorous. These societal developments led to the creation of a double narrative that labels people either as pro-Russian or pro-Georgia/pro-west. The neutral tone is almost nonexistent.
A small-scale pro-Russian demonstration on March 27, 2014, and the flag of Russia in Freedom Square resulted in a clash among the demonstrators and the NGO “Freedom Zone.” Freedom Zone has a clear pro-western mission and consists of young students from Tbilisi, Georgia. The demonstration exposed the differences in opinions among age groups in Georgia, highlighting the gap in their understandings and worldviews. The violent attack was a consequence of accumulated differences in the understanding of national identity and in the country’s foreign policy orientations.

This period in Georgia is important as the country works to implement the Association Agreement signed with the European Union. However, strengthening the pro-Russian narrative and pro-Russian forces in the population hinders the implementation of the Association Agreement. The new narrative also increases the possibility of generational tensions in the society. Therefore, it was interesting to explore the salience of a pro-Russian or a pro-Western narrative.

Furthermore, exploring generations provides conflict resolution practitioners the capability to predict and prevent possible civic violence. Moreover, studying generations enables researchers and practitioners to see a full picture of the country’s political and cultural development. In other words, studying generations creates a thoughtful and detailed timeline of history and memory that is useful in understanding conflicts in Georgia (or in the surrounding states).

**Purpose of the Study**

With the above mentioned, I explored differences in the understanding of the meaning of national identities and the change of boundaries among three age groups in
Georgia: “youth” (18-28), “adult” (29-49), and “senior” (50-75). My primary focus was to see generational differences in the dynamics of a collective axiology in dealing with Russians or Europeans. As a consequence, my findings show that Georgian youth see Russians as resilient, fixed, and homogenous. Additionally, youth have a higher degree of collective generality than adults. In other words, youth generalize and see the government of Russia as a whole and not as consisting of individuals.

The important factor that defines differences is that adult Georgians have various experiences with Russians, but fewer experiences with Europeans. Therefore, the adult generation does not see Russians as homogenous because during their lifetime relations with the North were both peaceful and turbulent, while youth was raised in a hostile environment with narratives full of violence and suffering. Chosen traumas transmitted to the youth increased the tendency of salient national identity and a tendency toward nationalistic aspirations, therefore, affecting youth’s perceptions of Russia.

Social circumstances and changes in the government also impacted construction of national identity. The boundaries of Georgian national identity expanded to include more ethnicities. A new shared reservoir, that is, symbolic representation of the past, also impacted the young generation’s understanding of national identity. As Kelman (2010) argued, in the process of national identity construction, the new generation discovers and accepts more diverse elements of identity. Thus, young Georgian’s national identity not only consists of ethnic Georgian elements, but also includes elements of other ethnicities. Additionally, in the process of national identity development, Georgian youth created broader boundaries, accepting not only a diverse Georgia, but also aspiring for
membership in the European family. These changes in the youth’s perceptions completely shifted the understanding of national identity and created a generational gap.

In this study, I analyzed whether the younger generation is more nationalistic and hostile toward Russia and the senior generation more forgiving and welcoming. Also, I looked at whether being “Georgian” means being “European” or being Georgian remains being part of the post-soviet understanding. Additionally, this research reflected on the difference in understanding Georgian national identity among generations.
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of the thesis focuses on the understanding of Georgian national identity among three various age groups: 18-28, 29-49, and 50-75, labeled as “young,” “adult,” and “senior,” respectively. The first half of the interview focused on the characteristics of the Georgian ethnic group. Particularly, the first few questions asked, “Who are Georgians, or what does it mean to be a Georgian?” This helped to see the in-group characteristics and to transition slowly into exploring the deeper meaning of national identity and perceptions of the Other. Therefore, the theoretical framework is divided into three major parts: identity, understanding of the Other, and generations.

Identity

Tajfel (1978) and Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that, together with personal identity, individuals have a social identity manifested in their membership in different groups. The social identity influences the individuals’ perceptions of themselves and of society. Tajfel and Tajfel and Turner added that social identity develops through the affiliation of individuals in different groups and through interaction of each group’s members. Social identity theory has two aspects: cognitive and emotional. The cognitive
aspects of the social identity theory derive from the knowledge of being part of the social group or groups and are closely related to the emotional aspect of social identity theory.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that the cognitive basis of social identity is the process of social categorization and intergroup comparison. The cognitive component is connected with the emotional one, which reflects such feelings as belonging to a group, love, hate, amity, and enmity (Korostelina, 2007, p. 24). Tajfel (1978) discussed one of the most important ideas of the theory of social identity, the need for positive social identity, also referred to as favorable comparison. Members develop positive social identity through positive overestimation of their in-groups, in other words, in-group members perceiving themselves as more intelligent, moral, respected, etc. compared to out-groups.

Korostelina (2007) provided three reasons that social identity can become salient. Firstly, national identity becomes salient after an individual moves to a different country, where the person becomes a minority. Secondly, threat or negative attitudes toward the in-group from the out-group may make the prior insignificant social identity salient. The third factor Korostelina distinguished is a change in people’s goals/activities attached to their social identities. For example, becoming religious and attending church more often than before will make a person’s religious identity salient.

The salient social identity leads to the development of intergroup prejudice, negative attitudes, and conflict behavior. However, before the discussion moves to how identity produces negative attitudes and biases, it is necessary to evaluate the role of social categorization. Brewer (2007), in her analysis of prejudices and biases, argued that
the experiment on “minimal intergroup situation” conducted by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in Bristol, England, provided a powerful demonstration that social categorization and in-group/out-group dynamics are sufficient for the production of biases and stereotypes (p. 698). Social categorization and a “we-they” distinction result in differential evolution, liking, and treatment of other persons (p. 699). Drawing a line between “them” and “us” is enough to start the process of stereotyping and prejudices.

Nonetheless, categorization alone does not provide a sufficient answer to the reasons behind one group’s negative attitudes toward the Other. Allport’s (1954) analysis showed that negative prejudices and attitudes toward the out-group are developed after the formation of the in-group. Allport wrote that only for sustaining in-group cohesiveness are the biases developed toward the Other. This analysis coincides with the theory of in-group favoritism. The individual’s need for positive social identity results in prioritization of their in-group’s selves and diminishing the other. Allport further stresses that in-group love does not necessarily means in-group hatred. The negative prejudices develop due to the need for positive self-assessment.

Brewer (1999) agreed with Allport (1954) and claimed that moral superiority, perceived threat, and power politics result in negative attitudes toward the out-group. Brewer’s notion of moral superiority advocated that, when in-groups become larger and more depersonalized, the institutions, rules, and customs that maintain in-group loyalty and cooperation take on the character of moral authority (p. 435). Brewer added that when the moral order is seen as absolute (not relative), tolerance for difference is lessened to the extent that out-groups do not subscribe to the same moral rules. Therefore,
indifference is replaced by contempt. The negative attitudes do not necessarily translate into direct violence and conflict. However, if sufficient social changes happen that encourage integration or dominance, the resulting negativity can influence the eruption of violence, even to the level of “ethnic cleansing” (p.435).

Brewer (1999) also claimed that whether actual or imagined, the perception that an out-group constitutes a threat to in-group interests or survival creates circumstances in which identification and interdependence with the in-group is directly associated with fear and hostility toward the threatening out-group, and vice versa. This coincides with Korostelian’s (2007) salient factors of social identity. The perceived threat as well makes social identity salient together with increasing the negative attitudes toward the Other.

A final factor that exacerbates negative attitudes toward the Other is power politics. Groups are social and political entities. Deliberate manipulation by group leaders in the interests of mobilizing collective action to secure or to maintain political power results in an increase of negative attitudes toward the Other. Brewer (1999) summarized that, when trust is in-group based, it is easy to fear control by outsiders and to manipulate perceptions of the in-group.

Brewer (1999) also argued that the need to justify in-group values in the form of moral superiority to others, an infused sensitivity to threat, an anticipation of interdependence under conditions of distrust, and power politics all conspire to connect in-group identification and loyalty in order to support disdain and over-hostility toward out-groups (p. 442).
Three separate studies conducted by Fein and Spencer (1997) reinforced the position of Brewer (1999) and Allport (1954). Fein and Spencer evaluated the role of self-image and self-esteem-maintenance processes in people’s perceptions and reactions regarding the Other. Their findings are similar to the social identity theory; they argued that stereotyping is one of several possible ways to maintain self-image. The major difference of Fein and Spencer’s findings and social identity theory is the concept of group dynamics. Fein and Spencer suggested that stereotyping and negative attitudes toward the Other boost self-image of a person and not an image of the entire in-group. Their findings are important and reveal how identity impacts the creation of prejudices and stereotypes toward the Other.

A salient collective identity and the favorable comparison of the in-group produce negative attitudes toward the Other. Yet this does not necessarily translate into violent conflict unless there are adequate socio-economic and political environmental conditions. In other words, negative attitudes toward the Other produce a fertile ground for the formation of conflict identities. The development of hostility and relative deprivation are one of the factors that push the in-group to shift from having negative attitudes into developing more violent, conflicting selves.

Negative attitudes and prejudices are not the only way in which identity influences conflicts. Korostelina (2007) argued that the salience of social identity plays a determinant role in the formation of conflict behavior in collectivist cultures. Specifically, the connection with an in-group, subordination to it, and unity with its members are more important than individual autonomy (p. 45). Group identity supersedes
individual identity, and people are ready to fight for and defend their ethnic identities to ensure personal security and social stability. Identity provides a person with a worldview, a set of values and principles, and creates a clear distinction of who is perceived as the enemy. Salient identities limit the possibility for the individual to analyze and view the good in the out-group. Therefore, to resolve conflict, it is crucial to deconstruct identity and to destabilize it.

Salient social identity strengthens groups and provides the foundation for dehumanization of the opponent and the eruption of deadly violence. As already mentioned, in the process of stereotyping, the out-group is not part of the moral authority; thus, atrocities toward them are not perceived as wrong or immoral and, therefore, are easier to justify.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that the most stable social identity is ethnic identity. Eriksen (2010) defined ethnicity as “social relationships between persons, who consider themselves as essentially distinctive from members of other groups of whom they are aware and with whom they enter into relationships” (pp. 16-17). He argued that ethnic groups have myths of common origin, and they also have ideologies that encourage endogamy, the custom to marry only within the limits of a local community, tribe, or clan (Eriksen, 2010, p. 17). Barth (1969) also put forward a useful definition of ethnicity. He identified four characteristics of an ethnic group: a) it is largely biologically self-perpetuating, b) it shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms, c) it constitutes a field of communication and interaction, and d) it has a membership, which identifies itself and is identified by others, as constituting a category
distinguishable from other categories of the same order (pp. 10-11).

The analysis of the social and ethnic identities helps to understand the foundation for the creation of a Georgian national identity. What follows is a discussion of a theoretical framework of national identity.

**National Identity**

Ashmore (2001) said that national identity is one among many coexisting and overlapping social identities, including territorial, racial, religious, linguistic, and gender identities. He argued that the main aim of national identity is to integrate different collective “selves.” Ashmore’s idea of national identity is to incorporate diverse groups into a single ‘us.’ Eriksen (2010), however, defined national identity in terms of variance between ethnic and national identity. Eriksen claimed that national identity has clear and fixed boundaries defined by the borders of the sovereign state, while boundaries for an ethnic group are not clearly and physically defined.

Similarly to Eriksen (2010), Anderson (1991) assessed national identity as limited because it has fixed boundaries or borders after which other nations start. To be specific, Anderson’s perspective on national identity is that “national identity is an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 6). To clarify, Anderson argued that national identity is imagined because fellow members of the smallest state will never meet, hear, or speak to every single member of that community. The main reason is that nationalism, according to Anderson, invents nations where they did not previously exist. Additionally, it is sovereign as the idea of national
identity was born in the age of Enlightenment, the age of freedom of people. The last component of Anderson’s national identity is community. He stated that national identity is a political community because, despite the level of inequality in a specific context, nation is perceived as deep, horizontal comradeship.

Smith (1991) defined national identity as a product of shared ethnic history and continuity of identity, and a system of religious and belief systems. For Smith, national identity was a dominant ideology and consciousness manipulation and symbolism. Smith went further and stressed the importance of membership, the “need for community” (p. 40), as from his perspective; membership is based not on similarity but on a feeling of strong attachment and solidarity with other members of the group’s nation. As Anderson (1991) argued, these are members of the nation, who they have not seen, heard, or spoken to.

Eriksen (2010), Anderson (1991), and Ashmore (2001) all discussed that national identity is invented, imagined, and constructed. However, they have not explicitly defined the process of national identity creation. Kelman (1997) proposed a dual process of national identity (Smith, 1991) construction: discovery and creation. In the first step, society or the state discovers which elements of various identities should be accepted for the creation of shared, collective selves (also argued by Ashmore). The second step is to create a boundary for understanding in-groups and out-groups. Kelman incorporated the characteristics of national identity that various scholars have discussed. For instance, the first step of the formation of national identity includes defining what symbols and features will create attachment of different selves into one single national identity. The
second step assists in clarification of who is in-group and who is out-group. The creation of the “we-they” dynamic and the boundary helps to solidify in-group cohesiveness (in-group cohesiveness will be further analyzed below).

From a different perspective, Tilly (2005) extensively discussed national identity in terms of citizenship. From his perspective, national identity is not a feeling; it is a contract between the government and the citizen. Further, the creation of national boundaries is the foundation for the establishment of citizenship and the founding of categorically defined rights and obligations connecting subjects to state. Tilly proposed eight points to defend his argument. One of the points is that political actors, including governments, influence an “us-them” boundary creation and have a say in alteration of those boundaries by enclosing programs and speeches. Tilly argued that the processes of political boundaries create and define inclusion or exclusion of certain groups’ understandings of citizenship.

Tilly (2005) defined national identity in terms of the citizenship. Citizenship is an organized set of social ties, including the rights and obligations that connect people who fall under the power of a particular state. Tilly argued that those rights and obligations apply to whole categories of persons rather than varying from one individual to another.

From Kelman’s (2010) perspective, national identity has more functions than offered by Tilly (2005) and others. He distinguished national identity as serving the following purposes: a) to provide a sense of uniqueness and unity, b) to develop a positive self-image, c) to offer a basis for cultural development, religious beliefs, and a
way of life, d) to grant the foundation for ownership of land/resources, and e) to justify claims and grievances of the group (p. 194).

The authors above share a social constructivism understanding of national identity, but differ in definitions and perspectives. Korostelina (2007) and Brown (2007) united various understandings of national identity by introducing three important conceptual distinctions among ethnic, multicultural, and civic conceptions. Both Korostelina and Brown argued that ethnic conceptions of national identity presume that at the core of a ‘nation’ is ethnicity, and other ethnic minorities should assimilate. The multicultural approach assumes that all minority groups are equal and should have self-governance and equal rights. The civic concept of national identity argues that national identity is based on citizenship and the rule of law, and views constitution and civic responsibility as the main features of the nation.

Korostelina’s (2007) main argument was that the adoption of the civic national identity and its salience mitigates the tension across various groups in the country. However, salience of the ethnic identity makes the country vulnerable to ethnic tensions.

The study I used Anderson’s (1991) and Eriksen’s (2010) conceptualization of national identity and Barth’s (1969) ethnic identity, but used Kelman’s (2010) five functions to characterize national identity. In addition, from the perspective of my study, the national identity is limited with clear territorial boundaries of the sovereign state (it is not based on the ethnic, historical, or religious roots of the person).

While talking about national identity, it is relevant to explore factors that impact change in the national identity. Social constructivist ideology implies that identity is
changing through time and is socially constructed. Therefore, there are certain local or international incidents that affect the alteration. Volkan (1997), in his book *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*, analyzed group identity and how it becomes more dominant than individual identity. Volkan argued that cohesiveness of the ethnic group is protected by strong internal components, such as chosen traumas/glories. These are mental representations of shared glories or losses that help the in-group to unite around common, shared ideas.

These chosen glories/traumas are sometimes historically insignificant, but relevant to the present economic, political, or social environment. They help to hold the in-group strong and united. Volkan (1997) linked the chosen trauma/glory to the concept of shared reservoirs, which is symbolic representation of the past. These representations are mostly symbolic objects, such as songs, religious icons, flag, books, etc. Shared reservoirs, together with chosen traumas and glories, create a united in-group. These components also affect future generations as they are transferred through generations and used to make the new generations involved in the community. Volkan argued that these ‘historical’ facts are chosen by elite to serve national interest and make the in-group cohesive.

Volkan (1997) also addressed how these mental representations or traumas are transferred through new generations. For instance, Volkan said, “transgenerational transmission is when an older person unconsciously externalizes his traumatized self into a developing child’s personality” (p. 43). His analysis of three generations of a family shows that transmissions of traumatized self-images occur almost as if psychological
DNA were planted in the personality of the younger generation (p. 44). Volkan argued that transmission of trauma and self-identity happens through patterns of behavior and nonverbal messages together with the handing down of chosen traumas/glories, narratives, and shared reservoirs. He summarized that transgenerational transmission impacts personality of the younger generation and its relationships with its own generation, previous generations, and self. The next section details the analysis of how identity is transferred through generations.

So far, the theoretical framework of the research dealt with the national identity conceptualization and the components of social identity that influence in-group cohesiveness. Exploring construction of national identities and modification of the boundaries through generations will help show how they impact we-they dynamic. Barth (1981) argued that creation of the in-group happens by defining the Other and the boundary. The national identity, therefore, is defined in the process of the boundary formation and the contrast between us versus them. Eriksen (2010) agreed that, like ethnic identities, national identities form in relation to the Other (p. 134). The created boundaries between in-group and out-group define the relation with the Other. The in-group always evaluates the out-group based on stereotypes, attitudes toward the out-group, and the perceived characteristics, culture, and history of the out-group. This image of out-group helps to define intergroup borders and to differentiate the in-group from the out-group.

Barth (1969) analyzed group boundaries in terms of ethnic ones. He said that the group boundaries canalize social life and complicate social behavior and social relations.
For instance, Barth argued that the identification of another person as a member of the same ethnic group implies sharing criteria in evaluation and judgment of the Other. Barth also said that dichotomization of the Other implies recognition of limitations on shared understanding and on differences in criteria for judgment of value and performance. Additionally, dichotomization of the Other assumes restriction of interactions to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest. Therefore, ethnic boundaries not only dictate what is shared understanding and who people are, but it also dictates the level of interaction among groups.

Tilly (2005) argued that in the operation of social boundary, four mechanisms are expected: a) distinctive relation on one side; b) distinctive relations between sites on the other side; c) distinctive relations across the zone between these two; and d) on each side, shared representations of the zone itself (p. 134). These four mechanisms result in the creation of strong understanding of the in-group and the out-group. However, in the process, it alters the social evolution boundaries among groups. According to Tilly, boundary change consists of formation, transformation, activation, and suppression. In order to analyze mechanisms that impact boundary change, Tilly proposed two clusters of mechanisms: a) those that precipitate boundary change, and b) those that constitute boundary change and produce its direct effects (p. 135).

Tilly (2005) further listed five processes that precipitate boundary change. The first one is the encounter that occurs when members of two previously separate or only indirectly linked networks enter the same social space, begin interacting, and form a social boundary (p. 138). Tilly claimed that encounter makes the boundary salient.
between those groups that are indirectly linked or are previously unlinked. The second process is imposition. During imposition, authorities draw a line where it did not exist previously that results in a top-down approach in shifting boundaries. During nationalist movements, imposition is one of the most frequent ways to establish boundaries among groups. Tilly further added that imposition of a social boundary leaves traces of its existence in the relevant social relations and representations even after it loses authoritative backing (p. 139).

In the third mechanism, which is borrowing, people create a new organization to emulate distinctions already viable in other organizations of the same general class. The fourth is conversation, which includes ordinary talk that extends to a wider range of similar interactions among social sites. Tilly (2005) clarified that conversation is a boundary-causing mechanism because it develops distinctive relations within at least two clusters, establishes distinctive relations across the zone between those clusters, and creates or transforms shared representations of the zones between them (p. 140). The last process contributing to the precipitation of boundary change is incentive shift. Tilly defined incentive shift as when participants receive rewards or penalties that affect their pursuits of within-boundary relations and cross-boundary relations (p. 141). The above described five social mechanisms cause boundary change. Tilly also discussed mechanisms that occur during a boundary change.

According to Tilly (2005), inscription-erasure, activation-deactivation, site transfer, and relocation all produce the effects of boundary change. Inscription heightens differences in social relations across zones, while erasure reverses any or all differences
Activation of a boundary consists of it becoming more salient and noticeable. Site transfer maintains a boundary, but shifts the exact locations of persons and social sites with respect to differentiated relations on either side of the boundary. Lastly, relocation combines two or more of the constitutive mechanisms.

Tilly (2005) and Barth (1969) introduced concepts of the creation and modification of boundaries. It is also relevant to analyze consequences of the boundary change. Tilly argued that boundary change facilitates or inhibits exploitation of one category by another (p. 146). According to Tilly, boundary imposition and activation result in ethnic cleansing (p. 149). Barth added that boundary change includes more members in the ethnic groups or excludes some of them.

**Conceptualization of the Other**

This part of the theoretical framework will analyze the Other. The in-group cohesiveness is strengthened by positive stereotypes and biases toward members and the negative prejudices against the Other. These biases create a dual perception and result in aggressive goals toward the Other (Korostelina, 2007, p. 153). Additionally, in the case of external threats toward the in-group, the stereotypes and biases against the Other increase the feeling of insecurity in the in-group and makes their ethnic or national identities salient. The insecurity, together with lack of information, reinforces the stereotypes and biases against the out-group and elevates the possibility of conflict. Korostelina (2007) argued that the narratives of insecurity developed in the in-group devalue and dehumanize the out-group. As a consequence, it becomes moral and
honorable to take actions against the enemy. The out-group perceives this as a threat against their in-group and counteracts, causing a new turn in the spiral of conflict and violence (p. 157). The stereotypes and dehumanization of the Other creates an environment of possible violence. Therefore, analyzing the prejudices against the Other is an important factor in determining the possibility of violence and conflict.

This research used collective axiology in the definition of we-they relations. Collective axiology is a system of value commitments that offers moral guidance to maintain relations with those within and outside. In a sense, it is a boundary that establishes criteria for in-group/out-groups membership. Rothbart and Korostelina (2006) argued that, through collective axiology, each group traces its development from a sacred past, extracted from mythic episodes beyond the life of mortals, and seeks permanence.

According to Rothbart and Korostelina (2006), collective axiology has three constructed forms: mythic narratives, sacred icons, and normative order. Mythic narrative is stories of the “threatening other” accompanied with shocking images of the Other. They describe iconic order to be “emerging from specific storylines about localized episodes, [and] icons function as the graphic expressions of negativities” (p. 39). In other words, iconic order is an image of the negative Other that views every stranger’s actions as unjust, immoral, uncivilized, or possibly inhuman in character. Lastly, normative order understands the world in binary terms – good/bad, black/white. Specifically, to accept ‘who we are,’ it becomes necessary to define ‘who we are not,’ that is, ‘who are the Others.’ This kind of binary world shapes and organizes the world around us. In general,
in collective axiology, normative order defines actions that are needed and prescribes behaviors.

According to Rothbart and Korostelina (2006), collective generality and axiological balance characterize the dynamics of collective axiology. Collective generality describes the degree of categorization of the Other, specifically how the in-group simplifies the out-group’s character. Under this category, Rothbart and Korostelina introduced four main characteristics of the collective generality:

a) Homogeneity of perceptions and behaviors of out-group members
b) Long-term stability of their beliefs, attitudes, and actions
c) Resistance to change
d) The scope or range of the out-group category (p. 47)

High collective generality sees the out-group as consistent and homogenous with fixed patterns of behavior and rigid beliefs and values. Low collective generality perceives the out-group as exhibiting various kinds of behaviors. Rothbart and Korostelina (2006) argued that, during the violence and tension, the degree of collective generality might shift.

The second characteristic of dynamics of collective axiology is axiological balance, which is defined as the “parallelism of virtues and vices” attributed to groups (Rothbart & Korostelina, 2006, p. 49). Balanced axiology sees morality, as well as immorality, in both the in-group and out-group. Rothbart and Korostelina (2006) suggested “a high degree of axiological balance reflects recognition of one’s own moral faults and failings, while a low degree of axiological balance is connected with the
perception of an in-group as morally pure and superior and an out-group as evil and vicious” (p. 50).

In this study, I used collective axiology and its two dynamics to measure the degree of in-group/out-group relations in Georgia. To prevent violence and assess the probability of conflict escalation in Georgia, studying national identity and the Other helped to explore vulnerable segments of the population.

Generations

Intergenerational conflict can express itself in terms of a variety of recourses and social or cultural aspects of a country. Thus, studying generations is important for the conflict resolution field. Dahrendorf (1979) expected that, among generations’ struggles over labor markets, capital investments and salaries are the most frequent. Dahrendorf also supposed that generations fight over cultural icons, national identity, and other forms of cultural capital. Dahrendorf defined generation as a social cohort passing through time, which, as a result, enjoys a strategic ensemble of life chances with respect to scarce resources of both a material and cultural character (p. 95).

Before defining what generation is, one must thoroughly understand the dynamism of generations. Eisentadt (1964) is the first scholar who examined generations and their role in the social studies. Eisentadt argued, “The characteristics of one age group cannot be fully understood except in their relation to those of other ages” (p. 24). The main task of a society and social system is to provide perpetuation of its own structures, norms, and values. For this reason, the individuals’ passage through different
age stages is not only their private concern but also a matter of crucial importance to the whole social system, emphasizing the potential dangers of discontinuity and disruption, as well as the necessity to overcome them (p. 25). As a result, the individual in a specific age group acts as transmitter or receiver of cultural and social heritage. This was the main reason that Eisenstadt stated that, to acknowledge the whole map of social structure and one specific age group, one must observe other age groups. During the observation, then, one must explore the transmission of social and cultural heritage.

Therefore, Eisenstadt (1964) claimed that there are three main preconditions that result in creating “human images” of a particular generation:

a) The plasticity of human nature
b) The exigencies of socialization and learning
c) Mortality and population changes within the social system (p. 24).

These three preconditions impact transmission of social and cultural heritage. For example, the transmission is made possible through plasticity of human nature because behaviors are not biologically inherited; instead, they are acquired through socialization and learning. Transmission of social heritage is a cycle that continues due to mortality and population change. Due to age progression, a generation of receivers eventually becomes a generation of transmitters.

In addition to analyzing the importance of social structure and the role of generations in social structure, Eisenstadt (1964) proposed how age impacts the role of the individual in society. For example, he said, “certain roles may be allocated on the basis of age, e.g., various roles in the family, in the sphere of authority, or in the
economic and occupational spheres” (p. 33). Eisenstadt hypothesized that role distribution based on age is important in those societies in which the basic value orientations are harmonious with those of the human image of age, i.e., particularistic, diffuse, and ascriptive (p. 54). Therefore, in such societies, family and kinship creates a foundation unit of the social division of labor. Also, in such societies, age-heterogeneous relations of these units are the basic form of interaction between age grades, while age-homogenous relations only hold subsidiary importance. Eisenstadt further suggested that most collectivist societies stress age as a means to allocate roles and expectations. Therefore, transmission of social and cultural heritage in these societies happens through family and kinships, as well as through the early learning and socialization processes of young generations.

Mannheim (1952), differently from Eisenstadt (1964), saw generations as separate from each other. Mannheim introduced the concept of generation in the analysis of social stratification and identified generation as existing without its member having concrete knowledge of each other. Also, the unity of a generation does not consist in a social bond that leads to the formation of a concrete group (Mannheim, 1952, p. 288). According to Mannheim, it is necessary to divide concrete social groups/movements from the broader term of ‘generation.’ Therefore, Mannheim defined generation and understood it in a sense of class-position, named as the “common location” (p. 289). Mannheim further argued that class position is defined based on economic and power structures, while generation location is based on the existence of biological rhythm in human existence, the factors of life and death, a limited span of life, and aging (p. 290). Therefore, individuals
who share the same year of birth have the same generational location in the historical
dimension of the social processes.

The generational location thereby limits the generation from a specific range of
potential experience, predisposing individuals to a certain characterized mode of thought.
Moreover, generational location exposes individuals to specific experience relevant to
their shared historical context. Therefore, generational location excludes a large number
of possible modes of thought, experience, feeling, and action, and restricts the range of
self-expression open to the individual to certain circumscribed possibilities (Mannheim,
1952, p. 291). Mannheim (1952) concluded that the social phenomena ‘generation’
represents a particular kind of identity of location, embracing related ‘age groups’
embedded in a historical-social process. While the nature of class location is explained by
economic and social conditions, generation location is determined by the way in which
certain patterns of experience and thought tend to be brought into existence by the natural
data of the transition from one generation to another (p. 292).

Mannheim’s (1952) definition of generation assumes that each generation is
different from each other because of various historical and social processes. Therefore,
their identities are impacted differently. It can be argued that several generations can
experience the same historical event during their lifetimes. However, Mannheim counter-
argued and stated, “Inventory of experience which is absorbed by infiltration from the
environment in early youth often becomes the historically older stratum of consciousness,
which tends to stabilize itself as the natural view of the world” (Mannheim, 1952, p.
299). Thus, this leads to differences among generations.
To summarize his idea of generations, Mannheim (1952) proposed five phenomena that are implied by the mere fact of the existence of generations:

a) New participants in the cultural process are emerging.

b) Former participants in that process are continually disappearing.

c) Members of any one generation can participate only in a temporally limited section of the historical process.

d) It is, therefore, continually necessary to transmit the accumulated cultural heritage.

e) The transmission from generation to generation is a continual process (p. 292).

Similarly to Eisenstadt (1964), Mannheim (1952) also analyzed generational transmission of historical and cultural heritage as part of the socialization and learning process. Both authors perceived society as constituting a cycle of generations. They saw society as evolving and changing due to various historical and social experiences. Therefore, it can be argued that young generations receive a small portion of the historical experience of the older generations. It is interesting to analyze what kind of cultural and historical heritages are transmitted to younger generations. As was already discussed by Volkan (1997), through transgenerational transmission, older individuals unconsciously externalize their traumatized selves into a developing child’s personality (p. 43). Therefore, the small portion of identity and heritage that young generations receive from an older one is traumatic. In addition, generations impact each other by the chosen traumas and glories analyzed in the above paragraphs.
Similarly to Mannheim (1952), Abrams (1970) argued that a system of age spans carries the implication that people belonging to any given span will have a body of similar and common experiences. Therefore, they will tend to share the same predicaments of self-definition and have to handle similar role-expectations in relating themselves to incumbents of other age spans. Abrams introduced that a generation represents a more fundamental freezing of consciousness, one in which age groups associate their age with history (p. 183). In other words, specific age groups, in response to events or situations, repudiate norms established by their seniors and carry that repudiation with them through life and transmit it to their successors.

Eyerman and Turner B. (1998) proposed that generation is defined as a cohort of persons passing through time who come to share a common habitus, hexis, and culture, a function of which is to provide them with a collective memory that serves to integrate the cohort over a finite period of time (p. 91). The authors argued that such definition of generation draws special attention to the idea of a shared or collective cultural field of emotions, attitudes, preferences, dispositions, and set of embodied practices, such as sport, leisure, social or political movements, etc. Parkin (1979) added that sharing a collective culture of generation impacts the creation of a cohort, which has a peculiar and strategic access to collective resources. Parkin argued that generations have access to specific resources relevant to their historical contexts through rituals of exclusion. Common collective culture also results in preservation of its individual cultural identity but exclusion of other generational cohorts from access to cultural capital and material resources.
While highlighting the role of resources in generations, Bourdieu (1993) is also relevant. Bourdieu treated generations and ageing as phenomenon that are socially constructed by the conflict over resources, both economic and cultural. According to Bourdieu, what one-generation has struggled to achieve may be regarded by following generations as irrelevant and unimportant, resulting in clashes between systems of aspirations formed in different periods (p. 99). These clashes lead to the gap between generations and anti-youth or anti-senior generational sentiments (p. 100). Therefore, while analyzing generations, one must explore distribution of resources together with the understanding of the specific historical context that the generation lived through.

None of the definitions of generation above give the complete picture. Each one stresses some aspect, characteristic, or angle of the generation. Wyatt (1993), based on the analysis of Vietnam, proposed a cultural definition of generation. According to his research, there are six causes or determinants of generations:

a) A traumatic event, such as a civil war, natural catastrophe, or assassination of a political leader.

b) A set of cultural or political mentors that stand in an adversarial relation to the dominant shift in demography, which influences the distribution of resources in a society.

c) A dramatic shift in demography, which influences distribution of resources in a society.

d) A privileged interval, which connects a generation into a cycle of success and failure.
e) The creation of sacred space, wherein sacred places sustain a collective memory of utopia.

f) The notion of the ‘happy few’ who provide mutual support for individuals who are accepted as bona fide members of the cohort (Wyatt, 1993, pp. 2-6).

Wyatt’s (1993) definition summarizes all above discussed definitions and concepts. Wyatt’s conceptualization includes parts of Eisenstadt (1964) theory on the role of generational connectedness and the importance of age. Wyatt’s proposition also resembles Mannheim’s (1952) idea about the necessity of historical context and its role in the influence of generations. For instance, Wyatt wrote that the traumatic event creates a sense of a rupture in time and gathers those who confront it into a sense of ordeal and cohesiveness (p. 2). These kinds of historical events make the generation different from previous ones. The first characteristic of generation by Wyatt reflects Mannheim’s idea of historical context as well as Volkan’s (1997) chosen traumas/glories.

Moreover, Wyatt’s (1993) definition includes Bourdieu’s (1993) and Parkin’s (1979) arguments about importance of resources in formation of identity and generations. For example, Wyatt argued that a shift in demography influences distribution of resources, including opportunities for education and work. Finally, Wyatt’s last point of generations coincides with Eyerman and Turner B.’s (1998) statement that member of the same generation shares collective memory. Wyatt’s definition is a holistic approach to the analysis of the generations. It combines all
various sides of the exploration of generation that some authors analyzed above argued.

**Past Research on Generations**

In the last decade, studies on generations became popular, but few scholarly researchers analyzed identity modifications in generations. Most of the studies concentrated on the generational difference of immigrants in Europe, the United States of America, or elsewhere, but not among general generations.

Maliepaard, Lubbers, and Me´rove Gijsberts (2009) studied ethnic and religious attachment and their interrelation between second-generations of Muslim minorities in Netherlands. Their research dealt with the religious identities of two Muslim minorities, Turks and Moroccans. The generational study showed that the youth, who identified themselves strongly as Muslims, were tied more to their ethnic identities.

Still, the majority of the research showed that the generational difference among Muslim minorities in Netherlands exists. The second-generation respondents showed less affiliation with their ethnic and religious group and less engagement in ethno-cultural and religious practices. This study revealed the existing generational gap due to the integration into the community, higher education, and the external context of secularity of Netherlands. However, one must analyze what forms the dynamics of national identity in Netherlands. Specifically, are the Muslim youth integrated in the ‘we’ understanding, and what are the attitudes toward Muslims in the general public of Netherlands?
Hussain Yasmin and Bagguley Paul (2005) did similar research. They more closely explored the role of citizenship among British Pakistanis after the riot in Bradford in 2001. They aimed to explore generational difference in the understanding of citizenship among the first and the second generation of Pakistani immigrants in Bradford. The findings indicated drastic differences among age groups. The first generation of migrants saw themselves as “denizens - a resident of Britain with a low sense of security” (Hussain & Bagguley, 2005, p. 407). However, the older generation saw youth as citizens exercising the full rights of being British.

Furthermore, the gap between the generations of Pakistani migrants showed that the older generation perceived the second generation as having the same values and characteristics as British. Thus, for the older generation, while the youth were equated to being British, they saw themselves as living in a foreign country. In a nutshell, Hussain and Bagguley (2005) found that “we” for the older generation was still the ethnic in-group, while for the youth, “we” meant their ethnic counterparts as well as white people. This case showed the dynamics of the generational difference of Pakistanis in Britain. Specifically, the research revealed the change and shift in understanding of us/Them in youth and adults.

However, the study did not analyze the salience and importance of this difference for national identity. It does not show the perspective of white people and whether British people are included in Pakistani youth’s in-group understanding. The importance is to see the gap between generations in the larger picture, on national discourse, and essentially how the gap impacts domestic or foreign policies.
Mila Dragojevic (2013) further explored the dynamics of generations. She examined the role of intergenerational memory of past cycles of violence in the collective identity formation and the potential for mobilization. Dragojevic interviewed 114 respondents, including individuals born in Serbia, Bosnia- Herdzegovina, and Croatia. The primary purpose of the study was to answer one primary question: “Why were some people more likely than others to bring up WWII references without being asked about them?” (Dragojevic, 2013, p. 1055). Her main question was to see whether the usage of the symbols and narratives of WWII by political leaders had greater influence on the youth or the personal stories told by the families.

Dragojevic’s (2013) findings are essential as she said, political actors aiming to mobilize a population may intentionally use symbols or discourse that will sound familiar to those individuals who had personal or family memories of the previous cycles of violence. Once the memory recall is set in motion, the individuals then decide whether they think that there is a real danger. (p. 1076)

Additionally, Dragojevic found that the stories and narratives told by older generations to young ones served as warnings/alarm points for the younger generations. Therefore, the results of the research suggest that those who have been exposed to transgenerational transmission of trauma were more driven to escape before any violence has taken place and, in some cases, driven to support the nationalist-oriented parties. This part of the society also was more likely to take part in an armed rebellion (p.1078).
Dragojevic’s (2013) research showed that a young generation is more inclined to become nationalist because of the transgenerational transmission of trauma, but the research does not analyze and compare two generations. The main question should be to see the understanding of the Other and the national identity of the older generation.

Discussion of theoretical frameworks

National identities are socially constructed to unite, create, and as argued by Anderson (1991), invent a nation. States and society use various ways to construct national identity that all serve one primary function – unification of different groups on a clear territory. The constructivist approach explains how identities, specifically national identity, change through generations. Wyatt (1993) believed that a traumatic event that can be paralleled with various chosen traumas/glories, shared reservoirs, and different socio-economic environments is a key feature that impacts how a new generation understands and constructs its national identity.

A set of cultural or political mentors, which stand in an adversarial relation to the dominant shift in demography, together with new political agendas, dictate what needs to be accepted as a new characteristic of national identity. The mentors also dictate who is the Other. Transgenerational memories transferred through experience of historical circumstances and early learning/socialization processes also affect how homogenously the Other is seen by a new generation. Early socialization processes also transfer stereotypes and biases to new generations. For instance, Dragjevic’s (2013) research showed the extent of the impact of war narrative on the new generation. Wyatt (1993)
also symbolized conflict as a traumatic event that influences the perception of the specific generation’s consciousness.

Major factors that can influence generations are the change of the boundaries of national identities and the changes in collective generality and axiological balance. The discussion on generations showed that boundary change heavily depends on historical context and accessibility to scarce resources. Boundary change can also be a result of the government’s imposition.

In addition, national identities are constructed differently through generations as every generation receives certain chosen glories/traumas that are relevant to its socio-economic environment and purposes of the state. The boundaries of the national identity shift according to the demands and desires of society. The same generation does not necessarily transfer the same ‘historical’ facts or boundaries to the new generation because, as already said by Mannheim (1952), generational location influences what is transferred and what is not. Each generation can exaggerate, highlight, or completely change these ‘new or historical’ facts depending on the policies and purposes of the state and community.

The generational location also impacts the construction of the Other. For each generation, the Other is different; either each has a new perception of the Other or the generation’s attitudes/prejudices have shifted. Because social identities are socially constructed, society also influences the creation of the Other. In other words, mechanisms such as mass media, government, current socio-economic or political conditions, literature, music, and global politics impact who is perceived as the Other in each age.
Even though the new generation receives narrative of the Other, the generation’s different living conditions might impact a shift in perceptions. The comparison analysis among generations provides the potential to evaluate the impacts of the new historical and social development on the perceptions of the Other.
CHAPTER 3: GEORGIA PAST AND PRESENT

“I am Georgian, therefore, I am European.” Georgian former Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania declared this famous phrase on February 27, 1999, in the Council of Europe. This phrase clearly illustrates Georgia’s desire for integration in the European Union. The definition of Georgian identity was changing through time, and the words of Zurab Zhvania are an excellent example of the new narrative that developed over the past 20 years. This phrase shows how the government of Georgia tried to shift the national identity by developing a narrative of being Georgian, meaning being European. However, Georgia is a complex country with complicated history and intense domestic and foreign circumstances. The development of a European narrative in Georgia is volatile and vulnerable to both external and internal forces.

To further advance research, a brief analysis of Georgian history is necessary to have an idea about the different experiences of generations and different chosen traumas/glories transferred through generations. The history of Georgia covers a couple thousands of years. However, in what follows, I analyze the emergence of Georgian identity through the lenses of history.

In ancient Georgia, at that time known as Iberia, religion defined the foreign course of the nation. There was no Georgia as it is known today. Instead, there were kingdoms, such as Kartli-Iberia and Colchis-Egrisi, inhabited by populations speaking
Georgian. Mirian III declared Christianity as an official religion of the kingdom in 337. The Christian religion quickly spread in Georgian speaking kingdoms, and by the end of 4th century all Georgian speaking people shared the religion. Suny (1988) argued that Christianity was an important aspect of the development of the Georgian culture, language, and policies. Melikishvili (1970) agreed that Christianity brought changes in the consciousness and mindset of early Georgians. Melikishvili argued that Christianity, together with the Georgian language, united the Georgian people across the west and the east. According to Melikishvili, language also influenced the foundation of Georgian identity. For instance, when the King of Abkhazia announced that Georgian language was the primary language for the practice of Christianity, the policy rapidly spread in all the feudal principals of the Georgian people. As a consequence, early Georgian identity was based on religion and language (Melikishvili, 1970).

Despite religion playing a positive role in the early history of Georgia, it also lead to wars and violence. From the beginning of the fourth century until the 10th century, the territory of Georgia stayed embroiled in the midst of wars with Iran, Arabs, and the Byzantium. The Byzantium controlled the western part of Georgia, while Iran and then Arabs ruled the eastern part. Melikishvili (1970) argued that, despite the invasion of Iran and Arabs, the Georgian people remained strongly tied to their Christian identities. The religion became a “safe heaven” for the population (Melikishvili, 1970).

Invasions by Marwan Ibn Muhammad from 735-737 further divided the country and changed the demography of the Georgian people. These occupations also brought changes in the kingdoms as the King of Kartli-Iberia, Ashot Bagration fled to the
southern part of Georgia, where he established the Tao-Klarjeti Kingdom. The Byzantium legitimized his kingdom and declared the titles of his successors as “Kings of Georgians.” Tao-Klarjeti started the first reunification wars, but the attacks from Marwan Ibn Muhammad halted them. During Marwan Ibn Muhammad’s invasions, the number of Georgian speaking people decreased dramatically (Suny, 1988). As a consequence, after the dissolution of the Arab dynasty at the end of eighth century, five kingdoms remained in Georgia: Tao-Klarjeti, Kakheti, Abkhazia, Hereti, and Tbilisi’s Saamiro. Arab Amir had influence in the eastern part of Georgia and controlled the Tbilisi’s Saamiro. Battles for reunification of Georgian kingdoms continued with the rule by the king of Georgians, Bagrat IV, and his son, Giorgi II, successor of Ashot Bagration.

However, new invasions of Turk-Seljuks in the 14th century hindered aspirations of Georgian kings. The fights with Turk-Seljuks prolonged from Giorgi II to his son, David IV the Builder. With David IV the Builder’s rule, a new era in Georgian history starts. David IV ruled a united Georgia from 1089-1125, a period of reign named as the era of prosperity and wealth. David IV the Builder established the first Georgian army, controlled the Church, created the first spy networks, and built castles/churches/bridges. What is more important is that David IV defeated Turk-Seljuks and reunited Kakheti in 1103-1104, Tbilisi in 1121, and the western part of Georgia around 1120-30 (Melikishvili, 1970) Notably, David IV increased the Georgian army by resettling 40,000 individuals from Kipchaks family in Kakheti. He even married Gurandukht of the Kipchaks. This was the first case where the Georgian community willingly accepted non-Christian families.
The period of prosperity continued to David IV Builder’s successors, Giorgi III and King Tamar. The latter was the first female King of Georgia, who successfully overcame domestic opposition and once more defeated Turk-Seljuks in the Basiani Battle in 1202. During her reign, she established the Empire of Trebizond. Mumladze (2012) claimed that the reign of the King Tamari was the last glorious time for Georgia. After her death, her successors were not able to counter Mongols, who first attacked Georgia in the year 1220. Only Giorgi V managed to unite the country in 1329 for a short period. It was the last unification of the Georgian lands until the mid-19th century.

After the reign of Giorgi V, the history of Georgia is a narrative of battles with Ottomans, Iran, and Mongols. Even though the country was divided into several kingdoms, the essence of Georgian identity remained based on the language and the religion. These two factors helped the nation to differentiate itself from the invaders and to ensure cohesiveness of the in-group. Meanwhile, Georgian kings tried to remain close to European powers and to seek help from the West. For example, Melikishvili (1970) described how Vakhtang VI sent ambassador Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani to Europe, where he met Louis XIV and the Roman Pope in 1714. The mission of the ambassador was to guarantee military assistance in battles against Ottomans. However, Ambassador Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani returned to Georgia without the European help. Therefore, Vakhtang IV turned to the Tsarist Russian Empire. The diplomatic relations with Russia intensified, and Georgian ambassadors started to travel in the North instead of the West.

In the late 17th century, Georgian and Russian relations took another step forward. In 1768, the Russia-Ottoman war started, and King Erekle II hoped that the
victory of Russia would positively impacted Georgia. Nevertheless, the agreement signed between the Russian empire and the Ottomans did not mention the Georgian kingdoms. Therefore, Erekle II knew that, with the increase of the Ottoman power, Georgian kingdoms risked losing complete independence. Consequently, Erekle II asked King Ekaterine II of the Russian Empire for help. The communication and exchange of ambassadors ended with a signed agreement in 1783. The agreement, referred to as Georgievskiy Traktat, defined the fate of the country in the all-future centuries. Tsarist Russia was responsible for securing Georgian borders, assisting militarily, and ensuring security and safety of Georgian people from the Ottomans. Georgia became a protectorate of Russia. Georgia lost control over the country’s foreign policy, but the agreement ensured that Georgian monarchs controlled domestic policy. Additionally, the monarchy and dynasty of Bagration’s stayed untouched and protected.

Nonetheless, Russia violated the agreement on multiple occasions. In 1795 during the Krwanisi battle, Russia did not send military aid to Erekle II. As a result, he was defeated, and Iran occupied Tbilisi. Russia again violated the agreement when, in 1801, Emperor of Russia Pavle I annulled the Kartl-Kakheti kingdom. The successor of Pavle I, Alexander I, further canceled the dynasty of Bagrationi. Slowly, along with the example of Kartl-Kakheti, the Kingdom of Samegrelo became a protectorate of Russia in 1802. In 1804, the king of the Imereti Kingdom, Solomon II, had to sign the agreement of Elazanuri with Russia, according to which Imereti and Guria became protectorates of the Tsarist Russia. In 1829, Meskhet-Javakheti and, in 1878, Adchara were under the rule of the Tsarist Russia. The Russian Empire continually violated the agreements and canceled
monarchies and dynasties in all protectorate kingdoms of Georgia. However, advocates of the Georgievskiy Traktat have argued that unification with Russia also unified Georgia under the Tsarist Russian flag.

In the early 1800s, Georgian dynasties completely lost control over kingdoms. Melikishvili (1970) suggested that, despite common religion and safety from Ottomans and Iranians, Georgians assumed that the country’s development was impossible without independence. Consequently, several rebellions and uprisings mark the first years after the Georgievskiy Traktat. One of the most prominent rebellions took place in 1832. Its aim was to restore Georgian sovereignty and independence of the country. Tsarist Russia responded severely. Georgian intellectual elite and members of the royal family had to flee the country to avoid imprisonment and then execution at the hands of Tsarist Russia.

After the February 1917 revolution in Russia, Georgia reclaimed independence. The deposition of Tsar and establishment of provisional government gave Georgians the chance to regain sovereignty. On May 26, 1918, Georgia officially declared itself as the independent Republic of Georgia. Its new government rapidly started to establish peace agreements with its neighbors and European countries. On June 3, 1918, the government signed an agreement with Turkey, which ensured the return of lost territories to Georgia. Additionally, in 1919, with the help of Great Britain, Batumi reunited with the rest of the Georgia. The new republic of Georgia also signed an important agreement with the Russian Federative Socialist Republic on May 7, 1920. According to the treaty, Russia acknowledged independence of Georgia and respected its territorial integrity. The Russian Federative Socialist Republic also agreed not to interfere in the domestic policies
of an independent Georgia (the agreement acknowledged Abkhazia and South Ossetia as parts of Georgia).

However, Georgia’s independence was short-lived; on February 25, 1920, the Soviet Red army entered and occupied the capital. The government fled first to Batumi and then went to France, where they remained. This involuntary accession in the Soviet Union failed to stifle the Georgian spirit of independence. From 1921 onward, demonstrations and uprisings took place throughout all regions of Georgia. Some of the prominent leaders of the uprisings were Kakutsa Choloyashvili and Mikheil Lashkarashvili. Georgian Patriarch Ambros Khelaia wrote a letter to the European leaders in international conference in Genua, Italy, in 1922. The aim of the conference was to acknowledge legitimacy of the Soviet Union. In his letter, Patriarch Ambros Khelaia highlighted that the Red Army had occupied and invaded Georgia. Unfortunately, European countries did not hear the pleadings of the Patriarch. Therefore, in 1924, Georgian rebel leader organized an uprising in Chiatura with the leadership of Choloyashvili. The Soviet Union defeated the rebellion in three days, and Choloyashvili fled to Turkey.

In the midst of such a hostile environment, Georgian national identity was developing. Gachechiladze (2013) observed that, in the early 20th century, Georgia already had established a clear sense of national identity. However, members of the Georgian society were not conscious of its existences. Gachechiladze identified that the turning point of understanding and radicalizing Georgian national identity was the assassination of Dimitri Kipiani in 1887. Kipiani was a statesman, publicist, writer, and
translator. He was also a leader of Georgia's liberal nobility and was known for his work in support of the Georgian culture and society. His assassination was an “awakening” of Georgian nationalism (Gachechiladze, 2013, p. 73). Additionally, Gachechiladze said that the Mtawminda Panteoni (თავშისართული წარმოფთავა), which is the place of burial for the Georgian liberal elite and nationalist movement leaders, serves as a symbol of Georgian identity (p. 74). Another important symbol and mechanism that spread the national identity was the newspaper “Iveria” and schoolbooks published by Iakob Gogebashvili. The textbooks and newspaper aided in increasing the understanding of Georgian national identity in the middle and low levels of the society. Consequently, Gachechalidze summarized that, in the early year of the Soviet occupation, Georgia’s national identity was based on language and religion.

Before moving to discuss national identity during the USSR, an analysis is necessary of the role of the movement called Tergdaleulebi (თერგდალუელი) in 1861. This movement caused the first generational conflict in Georgia. Karumidze (2013) argued that development of Georgian national identity divided into three phases: 1) From 1861 Tergdaleulebi movement until the end Stalinism, 1953; 2) from the beginning of the 20th century until April 9, 1989; and 3) from 1989 onward (para. 3).

According to Bakradze (2013), Tergdaleulebi is the name of the movement that started in the 1960s in Georgia and included Georgian scholars and publicists, such as Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Niko Nikoladze, Iakob Gogebashvili, Giorgi Tsereteli, Kirile Lortkipanidze, etc. These publicists returned from Tsarist Russia after getting an education and founded newspapers, such as “Sakartvelos Moambe” (საქართველოს მოამბე).
“Droeba” (დროება), “Krebuli” (ქრებული). The movement had five main objectives: a) to change Georgian society – the aim was to become more developed in science and technology. This included the simplification of the Georgian language that eventually helped to increase the literacy rate. b) to highlight the drawbacks of the Georgian society – leaders of the movements thought that it was their responsibility to talk about the negatives of the society; c) to abolish serfdom; d) to free labor (freedom of labor did not translate into socialist ideas); and e) to be independent – the core of the movement was the slogan “we must own ourselves” (“ჩვენი თავი ჩვენვე უნდა გვეკუთნოდესო”) (Bakradze, 2011, para. 5-7). Yet the Tergdaleulebi did not openly fight for the independence, but expressed their concern about the country’s sovereignty in domestic and foreign policy issues.

Ideas of the young movement met with resistance from the senior generation. Conflict was portrayed in a literature manner and was published as a poem named “fathers and sons conflict („მამათა და შვილთა ბრძოლა”). Because the Georgian newspapers and other media sources helped establish the Tergdaleulebi movement among generations by publicizing the conflict, they also helped widely circulate the poem to the public. Therefore, according to Bakradze, the Tergdaleulebi movement had substantial impact on establishing Georgian national identity, an impact easily described by the words of Ilia Chavchavadze: “Language, Land, and Religion.”

In the first years of the Soviet Union, Georgian national identity and the national identities of other countries subsided. The creation of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet republic that included Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia aimed to
create one common Soviet identity. Gachechiladze (2013) argued that leadership of the Soviet Union had double policies. On one hand, it aspired to create one identity of the “Soviet” people by uniting the mountainous people of Caucasus, but on the other hand, it also popularized minority ethnic groups by creating alphabet or history textbooks (p. 400).

In 1936, when it became obvious that national identities of the Caucasus people was hard to change, Stalin abolished the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and instead started to promote individual nations and their cultures. Andronikashvili (2013) claimed that twist in the policies created new Georgian national identity founded on ethnicity (p. 10). This ethnic pattern continued throughout the USSR, and the first president of independent Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, widely grasped it. When Lavrenti Beria then conducted purges against Muslim Georgians, it strengthened the identification of Georgian national identity with ethnicity and religion. During the period of 1924-1944, a decree of Stalin and the execution of Beria resulted in the deportation in Central Asia of Muslim Meskhs, Muslim Adcharians, and Muslims living in Abkhazia were deported. Critics have argued that the Georgian ethnicity of Stalin and Beria played a major role in these deportations. The deportations of the Muslim segment of the population sustained the concept that true Georgians were Christians. Notably, during this period, there were widespread purges, deportations, and arrests in different parts of the Soviet Union. Therefore, deportation of Muslim Georgians should not be analyzed in the prism of Stalin’s and Beria’s ethnic backgrounds.
Gachechiladze (2013), Andronikashvili (2013), and Karumidze (2013) agreed that the period of Stalin’s leadership widely influenced and transformed the Georgian national identity. Andronikashvili highlighted that during the era of Stalin, publishers produced history textbooks and literature portraying Georgia’s prosperous past, its rapid decline in power, and the inevitability of the Erekle II decision to sign the 1783 agreement. Moreover, Stalinism brought the resurrection of important historical facts. For instance, Andronikashvili argued that the writing of novels such as “David the Builder” by Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, “Ukarkasho Xmlebi” (“უქარქაშო ხმელი”) by Levan Sanikidze and historical figure Giorgi Saakadze aimed to serve the Soviet purpose. Interestingly, Andronikashvili suggested that David IV Builder was not popular prior to the novel by Konstantine Gamsakhurdia and that medieval Georgia was associated with King Tamari rather than with David IV (p. 9). Through exaggerated and romanticized historical novels, Georgian national identity became full of stories about sacrifice, Georgian free spirit, inevitable defeat by enemies, and final unification with the help of the Tsarist Russia (Andronikashvili, 2013, p. 10). Georgia was not the only place where Stalin resurrected historical facts and promoted certain narratives. Andronikashvili stressed that Stalin created his historical legacies in Russia by popularizing the figure of Ivane the Terrible.

Georgians identified Stalin with romanticized historical figure Giorgi Saakadze, who fled to the Ottoman Empire and was helping his nation secretly from the far away land during the Ottoman invasion. Gachechalidze (2013) observed that, even after the death of Stalin and the period of de-Stalinization when everything related to Stalin
became negative, Georgians still cherished Stalin. For example, events in the beginning of March 1956 provide an excellent representation of Georgian’s idealization of Stalin. Khruschev’s ‘secret letter,’ which criticized Stalin, led to the demonstration of March 9, 1956. The demonstration revealed Georgians’ attachment to Stalin. Blauvelt (2009) also explored that the demonstration was an example of Georgia’s salient ethnic discourse (p. 656). Georgian population’s perceived that denunciation of Stalin symbolized the diminishing status of Georgians in the USSR. It also created an atmosphere of insecurity and discrimination. This was the only turbulent event after Stalin’s death that manifested in the level Georgian nationalism and in-group cohesiveness.

The post-Stalin period also interprets as a slow acceleration of the Georgian nationalist movement. Ilia Chavchavadze’s words, “Language, Land, and Religion” once more became popular among young generations of that period. The Soviet Union, as well as Soviet Georgia, was drowning in corruption and clientelism that led to the unpopularity of the Soviet leadership.

In the midst of public dissatisfaction, Eduard Shevardznadze became the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party (GPC) in 1972, and until 2003, the Georgian population both loved and hated him as a public leader. The early period of Shevardznadze as the First Secretary was marked with a fight against corruption. His charisma made Georgians follow him and to see a savior in him. In 1978, when the Kremlin proposed a new constitution, it omitted the section on Georgian language. According to the new constitution, Georgian language was no longer an official language.
of the country. As a result, public disapproval and several widespread demonstrations erupted. The Ivane Javakhishvili’s State University became a place for social gatherings of the intellectual elite and dissatisfied youth of that time. Gachechiladze (2013) identified that Ivane Javakhishvili’s State University became the birthplace of a new national movement and its leaders. Presently, the Georgian society still sees it as a symbol of Georgian identity.

The number of demonstrations increased, and the events of April 1978 unfolded quickly. Shevardnadze understood that the section on native language would have played a decisive role in his political career (Gachechiladze, 2013, p. 428). On April 14, 1978, Shevardnadze had two options: a) to be patriotic and include the section on Georgian language in the constitution or b) to follow orders from Moscow. Shevardznadze solved the issue diplomatically by preserving the Georgian language section in the constitution and controlling peaceful demonstration without police intervention. He managed to keep his position, and in couple of years, he became the foreign minister of the Soviet Union. Georgians celebrate April 14 as the “Native Language Day.”

The euphoria of national victory was not long gone when the Abkhazian autonomous republic demanded the deletion of the Georgian language section from its constitution in 1978. The group of radical Abkhazians also insisted on separation from the central government of Georgia. Soon after the establishment of the USSR and Georgia’s occupation, Abkhazian identity development diverged from Georgia. The attitude toward Georgians became antagonistic and hostile. 1978 was not the right time for the USSR to push for Abkhazia’s independence because it would have had a chain
reaction in other autonomous republics in the Union. Therefore, the central government of the Soviet Union created the Abkhaz TV channel and Abkhazian State University to resolve the Abkhazian identity concerns of 1978. However, the underlying causes of Abkhazian radicalization revived in the end of 1990 and turned into deadly violence.

These events, even though subdued by Shevardnadze, became viral in the period of “Glasnost” and Perestroika. The Georgian national movement found a way to come out of hiding. As already mentioned, Ivane Javakhishvili State University played a key role in advocating and helping national movement leaders in the later 1980s and early 1990s. Jones (2012) also emphasized that, before the birth of the nationalist movement, one-third of youth was younger than 19 years old. In addition, Tbilisi’s population increased to 55.8%, and from 1970-‘89 the number of educated scientists and researchers increased by 50% (p. 38). Yet poverty, unemployment, and the downgrade of the Soviet economy limited the dynamic society. Therefore, Jones suggested that significant shift in demography coupled with the devastated economy radicalized nationalist Georgian identity and resulted in youth marching against the centralized Moscow government in 1989.

Jones (2012) analyzed the role of nature in the Georgian national movement. He argued that a substantial part of Georgian identity has always been attached to Georgian nature. For example, Georgians have perceived beautiful mountains and rivers as only existing in Georgia and as part of Georgian heritage, culture, and identity. Therefore, Jones said that this romanticized love toward nature fueled public dissatisfaction when, in 1987, the Soviet Georgia started building a Caucasian mountainous railway. The railway
was supposed to connect Moscow and Georgia. Opponents of the project argued that the construction of the railway negatively impacted the wildlife in the mountains. Their main concern was de-population of Georgian villages and extinction of the mountainous lifestyle of Georgia. Thus, they perceived nature as parallel with Georgian national identity and perceived the railway as a threat.

After the central government of the Soviet Georgia cancelled the construction of the railway, the number of parties and movements based on protection of Georgian heritage, nature, historical monuments, and churches started to double. For instance, in May 1989, Zurab Zhvania, a Georgian political figure, established the first Georgian Green Party that advocated for securing Georgian nature. Every movement related to protecting Georgian ecology was related to history, “kartveloba” – which means being Georgian – religion, and even to the presence of Russian foreign army in Georgian territories (Jones, 2012, p. 42). The nationalistic goals became increasingly more apparent when, in 1988, Georgian youth protested the acquisition of Georgian land in Telavi and Gardabani by Azeris. Soon, the peaceful movement for defending Georgian heritage turned into a revolutionary movement for Georgian independence.

On April 9, 1989, Russian soldiers with the order of the Soviet Georgia and the central government in Moscow demolished peaceful protest, resulting in the death of 19 people. Jones (2012) argued that this event radicalized Georgian nationalism and paved way for an increased sense of insecurity and fear of the Other. Jones summarized that, during 1985-1990, the perception of threat to national culture, history, heritage, and demography increased. Jones argued that the spread of threat narratives in the population
was not based on reality as the demography showed that the Georgian population increased from 1970 to 1989 (p. 59). However, the Georgian population did not adequately accept the reality, and during 1985–’90, a sense of fear toward the Other and insecurity guided their actions, which eventually resulted in radical national actions and conflicts in the regions.

‘Glasnost’ also contributed to popularization of nationalist goals. Freedom of expression and lesser control over the media gave a platform to nationalist leaders. Besides, the Georgian Orthodox Church regained its power and started to intervene in the state affairs. For example, Jones (2012) estimated that 313 new churches and monasteries opened during 1988–’89 (p. 66). Jones further added that the Georgian Orthodox Church, instead of being pacifier and peacemaker, took sides and radicalised the national movement (p. 68). Georgian national identity became strongly dependent on ethnicity and religion that guided the integration of ethnic minorities. Research done by Kekelia, Gavashelishvili, Ladaria, and Sulkhanishvili (2013) concluded with remarks that the Orthodox Church substituted the power vacuum in 1990s and successfully dictated to the government, as well as the population, the basis of Georgian national identity (p. 159). The research asked several hundred priests to define Georgian national identity. A majority of them defined it as being based on ethnicity and religion (p. 155). This trend is prevalent in the adult population of modern Georgia.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, during that period, researchers conducted an abundance of scientific research on the origins of Georgian ethnus and the length of its presence in the Georgian territory. For instance, Pavle Ingorokva published a book about
the origins of the inhabitants of Abkhazia, in which he denied that Abkhazians were an indigenous population (Coppieters, 2002). Nonetheless, Abkhaz researchers and historians were also publishing their versions of the history (Tekushev, Markedonov, & Shevchenko, 2013). As Coppieters stated, “Polemics were addressed to a domestic audience as part of a mobilization campaign in each community, and the historical arguments making scientific claims were popularized by journalists or by scholars themselves.”

Furthermore, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the leader of the national movement and the first president of independent Georgia, highly influenced the development of Georgian national identity. The son of a Georgian prominent writer and lecturer from the Tbilisi State University, he was an active human rights activist. The Georgian society widely recognized his ideas and policies, and took them for granted. He viewed Georgia as a Christian country ruled by ethnic Georgians. As a result, Gamsakhurdia shaped Georgian identity in simple words, “Georgia for Georgians.” In other words, the rhetoric of ethnic national identity directed the multiethnic country. This soon led to the conflicts with South Ossetia and Abkhazia (there were various reasons and factors that triggered the conflicts, but the nationalist movement was one of the most prominent factors of the wars).

The nationalistic aspirations of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, coupled with Moscow’s involvement, spurred the country into violent conflicts that resulted in breakaway, de-facto governments in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. At some point, it is understandable that Gamsakhurdia needed ethnic ideology to strengthen the fragile country and shape
national identity. Still, the extent to which this stretched the Georgian national identity resulted in chaos and violence. This development benefited the Northern neighbor, not the Georgian state.

After Gamsakhurdia sent the country into civil war and poverty, Shevardnadze returned from Moscow as a savior. During Shevardnadze’s presidency, the identity of the Georgian people still stayed strongly related to ethnicity. The wars and the tension from the out-group further made the ethnic identity of Georgians more salient. Shevardnadze’s main aim was to stabilize the nation and to establish peace by freezing the conflicts, not by solving them. Therefore, not a lot was done in terms of developing the Georgian national identity or addressing the identity issues of Abkhazians and South Ossetians. The era of Shevardnadze was ripe with stagnation and underdevelopment, where youth, as well as older generations, had no opportunities for success or growth. The country sank into black years of high corruption, high rates of crime and unemployment, and low levels of education, health care, and individual security.

The Rose Revolution in 2003, which overthrew Shevardnadze, brought a new perspective and opportunities for Georgians. Despite former President Saakashvili’s mistakes, the country moved forward with domestic as well as foreign policies. Ethnic rhetoric disappeared, and instead, Saakashvili tried to shift the basis of the country’s national identity from ethnicity to civic concept. Under Saakashvili, the symbolic side of the Georgian nationalist discourse also proved to be highly important (Kirchanov, 2010, p. 165). Kirchanov (2010) argued that Georgian political nationalism greatly relied on historical commemoration to strengthen the nation’s identity (p. 166). Therefore, it was
not a surprise when the inauguration of Saakashvili was in Gelati, Kutaisi, on the memorial of David IV the Builder. As already mentioned the Georgia population perceives the era of David IV the Builder to be the golden age of the country, regaining territorial integrity, strengthening economy, flourishing culture and literature, and defeating enemies.

Consequently, Saakashvili’s desire to be associated with David IV the Builder symbolized his goals to become the modern-day David IV the Builder. In Saakashvili’s various speeches, “Toward David IV the Builder” replaced “Georgia for Georgians.” These changes of rhetoric are important because, as already mentioned, David IV the Builder was prominent not only because of rapid economic and territorial enlargement, but also for creating a foundation for multiethnic Georgia. Mumladze (2012) said that, during the reign of David IV the Builder, in 1118-1120, the government placed 40,000 Kipchaks soldiers, along with their families, in Kakheti, Georgia. Additionally, the title of the David the Builder read as follows: “The king of Abkhaz, Georgians, Rans, Kakhs, and the Armenian King and sharvansha and shahansha, and all east and west” (Mumladze, 2012). Even though the title is a proclamation of power, it also clearly showed the inclusion of existing minorities.

During the Saakashvili’s government, the oratory was less ethnic, and the policies oriented toward inclusion of the minorities in the country. In his 2005 speech, Saakashvili said that the government was aggressively pushing forward to integrate minorities in the decision-making spheres (Jones, 2012, p. 361). Nonetheless, a report published by the public movement "Multinational Georgia" in 2007 showed that ethnic minorities made up
only 2% of the total number of employees in the Georgian Parliament (p. 8). Also, in the 225-member parliament, there were only 11 ethnic minority representatives – ethnic Armenians, Azeris, Ossetians, and Jews (p. 8). In the Ministry of Internal Affairs, by 2007, only 234 out 15,000 staff were ethnic Azeris and 80 ethnic Armenians (p. 8). Thus, statistics show that, despite Saakashvili’s proclamations, in practice, inclusion of minority groups was not happening.

In the period of Saakashvili’s, popular sentiment also underlined when those parts of the Georgian history established communications and relationships with the West. This sentiment dehumanized and portrayed the Soviet Georgia in a negative light. Kirhcanov (2010) also analysed how history became an argument for the country’s European orientation. Gachechiladze (2013) added that Saakashvili’s government promoted the government of 1918-1921 while denouncing leaders of the Soviet Georgia or anybody who found any positivity in the Soviet Union. Above all, Saakashvili’s government shifted Georgian identity from an ethnic basis to a civic one. These dramatic shifts in consciousness, as Gachechiladze described, are part of the Georgian nature to radicalize and to move from one extreme to another in a short period of time (p. 417).

Karumidze (2013), ironically, noted that Saakashvili, who denounced everything connected to the Soviet Union, idealized King David the IV Builder, whose reign Stalin propagated and exaggerated. Moreover, during Saakashvili’s regime, like in other Baltic states, the government founded the museum of the Soviet Occupation in the main district of the capital city of Georgia. The museum became another symbol of new Georgian/European identity.
Unfortunately, an analysis of the construction of Georgian national identity during Saakashvili’s government is incomplete without mentioning the 2008 war. Jones (2012) suggested that Saakashvili’s government amplified the sense of insecurity and fear of Russia in the beginning of 2008 (p. 339). The government was actively engaged in announcing possible threat and attack from the North while the West was cautioning Georgia to remain adamant in its resistance of any provocation. Still, the war was inevitable, and in the beginning of August, a five-day conflict erupted. As a result, Georgia lost more territories, the number of refugees doubled, and Russia stationed troops only a couple of kilometers away from the capital.

After the war, in the middle of the August 2008, Saakashvili’s government was in the peak of crisis as the opposition was starting to raise questions about the reasons that the country was not able to avoid conflict and invasion (Wertsch & Karumidze, 2009, p. 384). Therefore, Saakashvili once more reinvented and used history as a source for strengthening in-group cohesiveness and dehumanizing the Other. In this instance, as Wertsch and Karumidze (2009) suggested, Saakashvili’s government called for a rally in front of the building of Parliament on August 12, 2008, to celebrate the victory of the Battle of Didgori. The Battle of Didgori happened on August 15, 1121, when David IV the Builder defeated the foreign enemy (Turk-Seljuks). During the rally, the Georgian government officials invoked memories of the Battle of Didgori several times. Wertsch and Karumidze argued that resurrecting and stretching this historical imagination transformed the sense of defeat into a sense of Georgian bravery (p. 385).
Additionally, after the war, Saakashvili’s government more rigorously used the adjective “occupant” and labelled as pro-Russian and anti-Georgian any politician not naming Russians as “occupants.” Saakashvili also continued to base Georgian national identity on insecurity and fear of the Other. However, differently from Gamsakhurdia’s period of rule during the government of the Rose Revolution, the Other was Russians and not ethnic minorities of the country. Despite the fact that Saakashvili’s rhetoric was inclusive toward ethnic minorities, it completely isolated Russians and Russian-speaking people.

Unfortunately, for sustaining fear and its own political power, on March 13, 2010, the Georgian channel “Imedi” aired a completely staged broadcast. The news broadcast showed what could possibly happen if Russia decided to invade the capital and to take complete control of the country (Imedi TV, 2013). The report resulted in panic in the capital city and complete distrust toward the government.

The national identity of Georgia, during Saakashvili’s rule, started to be more inclusive of ethnic minorities and was based more on civic conceptions. For example, the survey conducted from 2004-‘08 by The International Center on Conflict and Negotiation in Tbilisi showed that Georgian national identity was more centrally based on the notion of democracy and Christian orthodoxy rather than on language and ethnicity (Nizharadze, 2008). Still, fear and insecurity followed the in-group cohesiveness and complete alienation and dehumanization of Russians. Wertsch and Karumidze (2009) agreed that, after 2008, the government advocated for the narrative that aimed to portray Georgia as a victim invaded by a powerful enemy (p. 385). Parts of the narrative included Georgians’
brave and heroic struggle for regaining independence and re-establishment of European-style democracy (Wertsch & Karumidze, 2009, p. 385).

Furthermore, Saakashvili concentrated on the development of youth. In the processes of reforms, he ignored and disregarded “old intelligentsia.” For instance, in one of his speeches, he referred to the old intelligentsia as “drained” and underdeveloped and blamed them for Georgia’s failures. This marked the increasing gap between the youth and adult/senior populations. The government of Saakashvili preferred and promoted youth while labelling the adult/senior population as old-fashioned, anti-liberal, and anti-Western. Saakashvili’s policies excluded the adult population from educational or economic programs and created the gap between populations. Youth was able to get education abroad, to get employed and trained, while the senior generation faced unemployment and labels of being anti-progress and anti-European.

These shaped different understandings on issues such as Georgian national identity and who are Georgians. Moreover, exposure to the Western culture and education changed the mindset of youth toward more Western-oriented foreign policy, conflict resolution mechanisms, and desire to be a part of the European Union, while the adult/senior generations remained distant from Western culture and governance and stayed deeply stereotyped and uneducated on Western ideals.

The government of Saakashvili started to use radically different chosen traumas/glories from previous governments. David IV the Builder once more became popular with the public and the media discussing and analyzing the benefits of a multiethnic Georgia. The war of 2008 impacted new generations’ assumptions of who
Russians are and what they wanted from Georgians. Constant speeches and the fake news broadcast by Imedi TV terrorized youth, who were raised in the dark ages of Shevardnadze and in constant conflict with Russia.

During the governance of Saakashvili, several important research studies focused on the differences among generations. One of them is Zaza Shatirishvili’s (2003) article, published on Eurozone, “‘Old’ Intelligentsia and ‘New’ Intellectuals: The Georgian Experience.” Shatirishvili talked about the emergence of the generational gap between the senior and new intellectuals. He argued that a considerable gap has formed in Georgia between the “old” intelligentsia and the ‘new’ intellectuals, who have different discourses and hardly understand each other. He additionally argued that the senior generation prefers to be ‘nestled’ in traditional types of organizations, such as the Academy of Sciences and the universities, and the ‘new’ generation of scholars prefers NGOs or new media (Shatirishvili, 2003, p. 2).

Shatirishvili (2003) also characterized that the new generation mostly speaks English and no Russian, while the senior generation speaks Russian and German. In his analysis, Shatirishvili concentrates on the differences among scholars, but he is not talking about the generational differences in the society. He only slightly touched on it while analyzing the role of Russian language in current Georgian society. Shatirishvili argued that increasingly more young intellectuals and students prefer to learn English, French, or German rather than Russian. From his point of view, the young generation sees the Russian language as unnecessary in their careers and professional development.
As a result, it will be interesting to explore further the generational gap on understanding Georgian identity and understanding of ‘the Other’ in Georgia.

Another important publication on generations is Nana Sumbadze’s (2012) study that explored values across generations and their relevance to democracy. The study targeted age groups 18-24, 40-50, and 60-70 for exploring dynamics of individualism versus collectivism and materialistic versus post-materialistic and religion. Sumbadze’s findings showed the existence of differences in each of the segments. For instance, Sumbadze found that the older generation is more collectivistic, favoring traditionalism, family coherence, and bringing children up to be obedient, while younger generations value independence and determination.

Furthermore, Sumbadze (2012) found that “attitudes towards democracy as a form of governance and to its components, i.e. participation in decision making, the possibility of expressing one’s own position and being equal before the law are universally adhered to” (p. 69). Thus, the three age groups analyzed have democratic values, but Sumbadze’s findings showed a difference in gender equality and tolerance toward minorities.

Interestingly, Sumbadze’s (2012) research suggests that religion is more important for the younger generations and young people than for the senior and adult segments of the society. In addition, the research shows that compared to older adults, young people demonstrate less tolerance toward other denominations. Sumbadze (2012) concluded her analysis with a discussion of value systems in Georgia. Her argument is that there is low level of trust toward others’, less participation in voluntary
organizations, and little readiness among the public for development of the country among younger generation. This poses challenges to the democratic transition.

On the other hand, her research did not deal with the identity differences among the older and younger generations. Sumbadze (2012) proposed interesting research on the existing gap between the young and senior generations in Georgia but did not do an in-depth analysis about perceptions on the Other.

Differently from Sumbadze (2012), Kolstoa and Rusetskiib (2012), in the paper titled Power Differentials and Identity Formation: Images of Self and Other on the Russian-Georgian Boundary, analyzed how Georgian and Russians place themselves in relation to each other. The authors argued that, prior to the pro-Western government of Saakashvili, Georgia was more preoccupied with its neighbor. After Saakashvili’s government came into power, however, the Georgian national identity shifted to become more European. Therefore, their findings suggest that Georgians started to define themselves as Europeans or close to European civilization and the Russians as out of Europe. For the Russians, Kolstoa and Rusetskiib’s findings suggest that the Russian government did not orientalize Georgians and perceived Georgia as fraternal, culturally close, and similar country. The authors also argued that the Russian government strongly differentiated Georgian people from the government of Mikheil Saakashvili.

Kolstoa and Rusetskiib’s (2012) findings are based on the content analysis of the speeches of the elite in both countries. For instance, Russian President Vladimir Putin said during his annual news conference on December 18, 2014, that if Tbilisi finds it possible, Moscow would be “glad” to welcome new Georgian leadership in Moscow for
talks. During his speech, he also criticized and mocked Saakashvili, but expressed gratitude toward Georgian people (Civil Georgia, 2014, para. 4).

Saakashvili’s government lost elections in October 2012. The government of Garibashvili and the coalition of Georgian Dream (ქართული ოცნება) are the new representatives of the country. It is challenging to predict and analyze impacts of the current Garibashvili government on national identity. The coalition party of the Georgian Dream still orients foreign policy toward the West. The advocacy of being Georgian means being European is seen by celebration of signing of the Association Agreement with the EU on June 27, 2014. In his speeches, current Prime Minister Garibashvili highlights Georgia’s European identity and continues Saakashvili’s enthusiasm in defining Georgians as Europeans. For instance, Garibashvili says the following:

Georgia has always been a part of the European civilization, its geographic, cultural and historic space and it was caused by common values. The history of Georgia represents the history of struggling for protecting these values. Georgia still made contact with the European ideals, values and culture when it was not independent. Historic developments made the European choice become a dream and historic target. (Interpressnews, 2014, para. 1)

Differently from Saakashvili’s rule, the new government of Garibashvili is more moderate in its assessment of the relations with Russia. The radical narrative is shifting to a more neutral tone. Tarkhan-Mouravi (2014) claimed that the policy of the “Georgian Dream” is “not to irritate” Russia and to repair relations with Moscow in parallel with advancing toward integration in Europe (para. 7). Tarkhan-Mouravi questioned the
intentions and actions behind the “not to irritate” policy of the government and argued that, after the crisis in Ukraine, it is not debatable that pursuing Euro integration and “warming and repairing” relations with Russia is impossible (para. 10).

Sharashenidze (2014) agreed that it is impossible to have good relations with Russia and be a part of European family. Sharashenidze added that the new government’s vague foreign policy leads to emergence and an increase of pro-Russian forces in the country. More precisely, Sharashenidze said that, three years ago, it was unimaginable that somebody would have defended or advocated for pro-Russian perceptions, policies, and ideas on the Georgian talk-shows. Additionally, the new government’s “not to irritate” policy enabled pro-Russian forces to run small-scale protests and to establish political parties. For instance, Valeri Khaburdzania, a former minister of Internal Affairs during Shevardzadze’s government, created a political party and positioned the party as pro-Russian (News.ge, 2013). The leader of the non-governmental organization (NGO) “The Earth Is Our Home,” Elguja Khodeli, arranged a small-scale pro-Russian demonstration with the Russian national flag on March 27, 2014. The demonstration ended in clashes among civilians, who were irritated by seeing the Russian flag (საქართველოს ყოფა, 2014). The “Eurasian Institute” also arranged a demonstration against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on March 3, 2014 (Newpost.ge, 2014). During the demonstration, the organizers promoted the idea of integration in the Eurasian Alliance. The latest demonstration occurred on December 11, 2014, in Kakheti, where pro-Russian demonstraters said that Russia was not an occupant and that they wanted to return to the Soviet Union period (Kvira-information platform, 2014).
NGOs met this political and social activism of pro-Russian organizations such as “EuroAsian Institute” and “The Society of Erekle II” with resistance. For example, on August 13, 2014, an unknown group of civilians vandalized offices of these organizations (Newpost.ge, 2014). Also, the youth-led, pro-Western NGO “The Freedom Zone” demonstrated against the “The EurAsian Institute” on several occasions.

According to Tarkhan-Mouravi (2014), being pro-Russian or pro-Western became a political and social cleavage that defines and characterizes individuals and groups. Despite Takhan-Mouravi’s and Sharashenidze’s (2014) analysis, Garibashvili is noted as saying that his government is ready to negotiate with Russia (Agenda.ge, 2014, para. 2). The new president of Georgia – Giorgi Margvelashvili – on the question of whether Putin is an enemy of Georgia said that Putin is a leader of a country with whom he wishes to have a rational relationship, not too sweet and not too antagonistic (Tabula.ge, 2014).

The Georgian Dream coalition is obviously taking a more moderate and cautious approach toward analyzing and responding to questions about Russia. This differs from the party of Saakashvili, which labeled the current government’s position as traitorous and pro-Russian (Vashadze, 2014).

The intense history of Georgia showed the importance of religion and ethnicity in the early years of Georgia. The history depicted the progression of Georgian national identity. This part of the current study revealed the road from the ethnic conception of Georgian national identity to a more civic-oriented national identity. Presently, the discussion overestimates with respect to estimating and speculating on the impacts the government of Garibashvili has on the creation, adaptation, or transformation of
Georgian national identity. The preliminary signals show that the country is staying on the European radar. Nevertheless, the tendency of defining parties or individuals through pro-West versus pro-Russian lenses creates possibility for conflict escalation and social tensions.
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

In the study, I employed a qualitative research design because, as Creswell (2014) argued, a qualitative approach is used when exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem. The research question of the study explored understanding of national identity and the Other between three Georgian age groups: 18-28 labeled as “youth,” 29-49 labeled “adult,” and 50-75 referred to as “senior.” Choosing a qualitative method was appropriate because it seeks to understand the meaning individuals make and, when considered in this research, can unearth ideas and understandings behind the words. This research method went into details about the way a Georgian national identity (and the Other) is understood by the three age groups. Additionally, Creswell differentiated several types of data collection procedures in the qualitative research design. Following this, the study included qualitative, face-to-face Skype interviews. The questions were open-ended and unstructured.

The sampling of the study was purposive sampling, also referred to as nonprobability sampling or “qualitative sampling” (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 78). Teddlie and Yu differentiated several types of purposive sampling. This study used sampling to achieve representativeness and comparability. Teddlie and Yu defined this type of
sampling as being used when the researchers want a) to select a purposive sample that shows a broader group of cases, and b) to set up comparisons between different types of cases (p. 80). The essence of the study is to compare three different age groups in Georgia. Therefore, using this type of sampling helped to ensure equal representation for each group. The age groups, as already mentioned, were 18-28 called “youth,” 29-49 labeled as “adult,” and 50-75 labeled as “seniors.” I interviewed 12 participants interviewed for the youngest age group “youth,” 11 for the adult group, and eight for the senior age group.

I selected respondents using a snowball technique referred to as a chain sampling (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). The main reason for using the snowball sampling was to access members of the age group, not just in the capital (where I am from), but also from the regions and villages. This guaranteed that I could generalize the findings. A snowball sampling also helped to find gatekeepers who provided access to the respondents and the Internet as the interviews were Skype interviews.

Choosing the gatekeepers was the most important part of the sampling procedures because each provided privacy as well as assisted with access to respondents. During the research, it became obvious that the gatekeepers also ensured that participants trusted the research and were open and comfortable in answering the questions. I choose the gatekeepers through my acquaintances.

**Data Collection Procedures**

As already mentioned, the interviews were online and through Skype. I interviewed 31 participants interviewed from mid-October to mid December 2014. The
majority of the respondents, 12 (38.7%) were from the group labeled “youth,” ages 18-
28. Eleven respondents (35.4%) were in the 29-49 age group labeled as “adults,” and
eight respondents (25.8%) represented the 50-75 age group labeled as “seniors.”

The gatekeepers ensured that participants were alone in the room and were not
disturbed during the interviews. This guaranteed privacy and confidentiality of the
participants. The setting of the interviews consisted environments familiar to the
respondents, in most cases, their homes or offices. The home environment helped to
establish quick and trusting connections between each respondent and me. However, five
respondents did not have access to the Internet; thus, each respective gatekeeper equipped
the respondents with a laptop and a Wi-Fi connection.

I asked the questions in Georgian because, in the adult and senior generations, the
likelihood that the members knew English was sufficiently low. Despite the fact that the
youth group of the research spoke in English, interviewing them in English would have
put them in a different context. This would have halted a comparative analysis among the
age groups. Also, using the native language made it easier for the participants to express
their feelings and ideas. The translated questions are in the appendix. At the end of the
interview, I translated the answers into English.

During the interviews, I took handwritten notes. I omitted the names or any kind
of identifiable information of the participants, ensuring this information was omitted from
the project. Each participant received a label using a participant number and the
participant’s age, for example, “Participant 1, age 20.” This guaranteed anonymity and
confidentiality.
Data Analysis and Interpretation

I analyzed the data using thematic analysis. Boyatzis (1998) argued that thematic analysis pays greater attention to the qualitative aspects of the material. Also, the thematic analysis gave a rich data set across the interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) summarized that not only does thematic analysis allow for rich descriptions of the data, but also with using latent thematic analysis, the content of the data enables the researcher to identify and to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, ideologies, and conceptualizations. Latent thematic analysis created a possibility to identify features that give the theme particular form and meaning. Attride-Stirling (2001) argued that applying thematic networks is a way of organizing a thematic analysis of qualitative data (p. 387). Using this process, I sought to unearth the themes salient in text at different levels, and thematic networks aimed to facilitate the structuring and depicting of these themes. During the data analysis, the thematic network method helped to create a web-like network and to organize themes that further simplified comparison of themes across the age groups. Therefore, using it for the research was beneficial as it helped to see the dynamic and to interpret the responses given by Georgians about Georgian national identity.

During the research, I took a constructionist perspective, believing that meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced rather than inherited within individuals. Thus, thematic analysis helped to focus and to theorize the socio-cultural context and structural conditions by employing ‘latent’ thematic analysis.
In the beginning of the data analysis, I got familiar with data. In the second phase, I generated the initial codes. In the third phase, I started to search for themes in the manner proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001). The procedures of thematic network helped to organize themes into three classes: Basic Theme, Organizing Theme, and Global Theme. In the Basic theme, I identified the most basic and lowest-order themes derived from the textual data. In other words, basic themes are characteristics of the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387). Attride-Stirling said that on their own, basic themes provide little information. For this reason, I moved the analysis of themes to another level and grouped themes into an Organizing Theme class.

To create Organizing Themes, I grouped Basic Themes into clusters based on similarity in issues. These clusters summarized the principal assumptions of a group of Basic Themes. This phase helped to reveal more of the meaning of the data and highlighted the significance of a broader theme that united several Organizing Themes. In this phase of the grouping, more general and broader themes emerged.

Therefore, the data analysis moved to another level, called Global Theme. In this stage, I identified and analyzed super-ordinated themes. Attride-Stirling (2001) defined a Global Theme as a position or an assertion about a given issue or reality (p. 389). In this phase, it was possible to summarize main themes and reveal interpretations of the data. This enabled me to single out major themes.

I created graphs while data analysing. These graphs were a useful tool for visualizing logical connections in the emerged themes. Additionally, the visualization of
the data analysis will enable the readers to see, in detail, the answers and identify the Global Theme.

**Validity**

Creswell (2014) provided several ways to ensure the validity of the findings in qualitative research. This study used rich, thick descriptions that Creswell explained as offering many perspectives on a theme. The two most important checks on the validity of the data were negative or discrepant information. I also used peer debriefing as a tool to ensure validity of the data. Creswell described peer debriefing as locating a person who reviews and asks questions about the entire qualitative study so that the account will be an interpretation beyond the researcher. I worked closely with the thesis committee members who are professors at S-CAR, George Mason University. During the interview process and afterward, I reviewed the findings and questions with the committee members.

**Strengths & Weaknesses**

Every research method has strengths and weaknesses. This qualitative research study provided in-depth findings that helped to find deep and meaningful answers to the research question. In other words, the qualitative method helped to explore the chosen age groups closely and to find the specific meaning and interpretations each group gave of the Georgian identity and the Other.

The sampling method was its strength as well as its weakness. To begin, purposive sampling assisted with reaching out to respondents who were represented in any of the three age groups needed for the study. The gatekeepers established trusting
communication between the respondents and me. Nevertheless, there was risk that the sample might give socially desired answers because of the relationship to the gatekeeper or to me. Therefore, the study was vulnerable to the socially desired answers. For avoiding socially desirable answers, I used follow-up questions. Follow-up questions also helped to identify details of answers and explanations behind each respondent’s words.

The weaknesses of the research design can also be using thematic analysis because I chose and interpreted themes that strengthen the argument of the research question. Starks and Brown (2007) argued that readers will judge the trustworthiness of the process by how the analyst used evidence from the interviews to support the main points and whether the building tasks of language converge toward a convincing explanation. Therefore, critics of the process might argue that the interpretations are not accurate.

On the other hand, during the data analysis, the three stages used guaranteed that I clustered together the prevailing themes, and several global themes emerged. I did not envision or expect some of the global themes before the research. Additionally, after identifying major themes, I was able to explore the unheard or underrepresented themes, too. In other words, despite concentrating on the major themes, the research also highlighted those voices that were not part of the major theme.

**Ethical Issues**

The primary concern about the ethics of the study was my background and the stereotypes/biases from the Georgian society toward me. The nature of the Georgian community is to respect older populations, ideas, values, and political or social
standpoints. Georgian traditions ask for obedience of the younger generation, especially from the females. An important factor is my education and placement, as some parts of Georgian society perceive that Western education makes Western-educated youth antagonistic toward Georgian traditions, values, and history.

I am a 23-year-old female who has studied and lived abroad since age 16. My identity, as expected, caused negative stereotypes from some of the respondents. In fact, some respondents started avoiding questions. Some of the respondents started to identify me with the West and filtered their responses. Still, the follow-up questions and the proper introductions helped to limit and lessen the impact of stereotypes and biases.

In general, my background did not cause mistrust toward the research. On the other hand, most of the respondents were eager to answer questions and were interested in the final result of the project. A majority of the respondents mentioned that this research helped them to see themselves differently and think about such easy questions as characteristics of Georgians.

I used Skype for the purposes of having face-to-face interviews but that posed challenges. Few of the respondents from the senior group felt uncomfortable in the beginning of the interviews. However, the introduction and the detailed explanation of the process of the interview helped the respondents to overcome the challenges posed by Skype. The web camera was also a great tool for establishing trust and communication with the senior age group.
CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The research concentrated on three different age groups. The total number of participants was 31. The majority of the respondents, 12 (38.7%) were from the group labeled “youth,” ages 18-28. There were 11 respondents (35.4%) in the 29-49 age group labeled “adults,” and eight respondents (25.8%) in the 50-75 age group labeled “seniors.”

Thematic Analysis

I coded the answers during the data-gathering process. Coding helped to identify patterns in the responses and to see the emerging themes. As already mentioned in the methodology chapter, I used the thematic network analysis to organize the data and to group similar codes. These processes helped to unearth the salient themes and to distinguish major patterns across age groups. After grouping, I created graphs that helped to visualize the linkages between Basic Themes, Organizing Themes, and Global Themes. The thematic analysis helped to compare the emerging themes between age groups. The major themes across age groups are related to national identity, Georgian European identity, and relations with Russians.

Age Group 18-28

In the youngest age group, I interviewed 12 participants in Georgian through Skype. I used snowballing to choose the respondents. During the interviews, participants
were open and interested in the research. The research became a platform for young people to amplify their voices and their understanding of Georgian national identity and the relations with Europe and Russia. Some of the participants, apart from the questions asked, addressed domestic policies and youth’s inability to be represented in the government. Their tone of voice, overall, was moderate, but emotions were heightened, especially in regard to questions about Georgia-Russia relations. One distinguishing characteristic in the youth group was their freedom of expression. They were less constrained by established norms and attitudes in the society than the other two age groups. Despite the dehumanization of Russians, some of them were not as extreme toward Russia as the others in their generation. However, this did not prevent them from being explicit in their answers. Therefore, in this age group, there were fewer socially desired answers than in other age groups. In this group, I identified seven major themes. This was not surprising given the large number of participants and their openness.

One of the primary themes is the understanding of Georgian identity. Currently, Georgian youth is unable to determine who they are and or their place in the Georgian society. One of the primary reasons of youth’s troubles in defining their identities is the government’s dual policy. Specifically, foreign policy strongly follows aspirations toward European integration while the leaders of the government continue vague policies domestically. Some of the participants mentioned that Georgians want to become Europeans. However, the government of Georgia reveals a lack of commitment in its actions to change the culture and to transform society. For example, Participant 2, age 21 said the following:
Why we are not Europeans? Well…. the government enacts European laws to make easier movement of people with disabilities, while there is less attention to implementation of these policies… nobody is fined if the car is parked on the spot designated for people with disabilities….so we are not Europeans and we will not become ones until government rigorously follows their speeches about Georgia’s European identity.

This skepticism toward Georgia’s European path was prevalent in other responses, too. For example, youth also questioned the essence of Georgianness. In the following paragraphs, I will analyze each theme in detail.

**Identity ‘Crisis’ in Youth**

*(Theme 1)*

One of the surprising themes that emerged in this age group was the cynical and skeptical approach toward Georgianness. When I asked the question about the meaning of Georgianness and major characteristics of Georgians, participants in this age group assessed their identities in negative language. They were repeating widely accepted terms of Georgianness that included respect to history, culture, traditions, heroism, hospitality, and kindness. However, they all also stated these characteristics are old and outdated. Seven respondents out of 12 expressed concern that the idea of Georgian identity restrains and limits their freedom. Six of them openly said that the Georgian identity creates societal constraints.
This negativity toward the Georgian identity and Georgianness was surprising because Georgians are known for their pride in association with Georgia. When I asked follow-up questions about their preferred definition, participants did not have an answer. Participant 14, age 24 said, “I want to see freedom of thought and behaviors and not to be controlled by the society or traditions. This is what I want… I do not have [a] specific vision of perfect Georgian identity.”

Ten participants out of 12 agreed and stated that they would like to see less limitation and rules that derive from Georgian traditions and more freedoms like ones exercised by the youth in Europe. For example, Participant 8, age 21 said the following:

Georgians are enslaved by society and their traditions. I do not even know if we have a specific idea of what Georgian traditions are. Is it only about being hospitable and a patriarchal society, or some other? This limits us to develop and be as free as Europeans.

Participant 13, age 24 also said, “Being Georgian means to be brave, friendly, respecting culture and history, but also being limited and controlled by society and elders.”

Negative in-group characterization and negative favorable comparison is rare in the studies of social identity. Typical in-groups have positive, favorable comparisons that strengthen them. The inability to feel comfortable in their identities and search for themselves is an interesting juxtaposition for further research. This understanding of Georgian identity is also interesting to explore because Georgians are known for fighting for freedom and independence from foreign invaders and occupiers, but existing research has spent little time analyzing and researching the limits of society toward its young
The identity “crisis” clearly creates a gap between generations as the older age groups have a stronger and positive sense of self and Georgianness.

It is possible that the identity ‘crisis’ in youth is a result of the rapid change in the country’s foreign orientation. The government’s political outlook did not translate into modifications of culture and domestic policies. The responses of participants referred to Europe as a place for personal freedom and liberal values. This may be a consequence of the government’s active propaganda of Europe and its values. References to Europeanness are an example of what the youth wants to be in the future. Another explanation for the identity “crisis” can be that the young generation is in a transition period that will eventually lead to a definition of who they are and where they stand in Georgia, a transition period that is preceded by massive globalization of the country.

The diagram below (Figure 1) shows the logical flow of the theme.
The figure represents the dynamic in the youth group. The answers show how the age group characterizes Georgian identity in terms of the widely accepted notion of respect toward history, culture, and traditions. Youth are criticizing Georgianness for being restricting and limiting in personal freedom.

Civic National Identity in Georgian Youth

(Theme 2-3)

The second Global Theme that emerged is the following: “Georgia is not only for ethnically Georgians. Citizenship defines national identity.” Nine respondents out of 12 in this group identified Georgia as a place for ethnic minorities and citizenship as a factor
in determining Georgian national identity. They disagreed with the popular phrase that was popular during the 1990s national movement (“Georgia for Georgians”). For these participants, Georgia is a multiethnic society where these kinds of phrases provoke conflict and civil dispute. Eight participants out of 12 in the youth group cited the law and passport as a primary means in defining Georgian national identity. Reliance on law and passport also guarantee inclusion of ethnic minorities in the society. Also, participants think that every citizen of Georgia has equal rights and that ethnicity is not a decisive factor in identifying who is Georgian and who is not.

Participant 16, age 22 said, “Those who hold Georgian passport[s] are Georgians and have equal rights.” Also, Participant 17, age 18 noted, “[The] Constitution clearly states who are Georgians and who are not. So those who have Georgian passport[s] are Georgians, and ethnicity has nothing to do with this.”

Figure 2 below shows additional answers relevant to this theme.
An interesting pattern emerged during my analysis of Theme 2. During the research, it became obvious that agreeing to the phrase “Georgia for Georgians” is perceived as backward and wrong. The new generation aims to become European and liberal, and they know that it means to integrate ethnic minorities. Approval by the EU and the European society is the incentive for incorporating ethnic groups. Thus, participants denounced and criticized the phrase of 1990s. When asked about equal rights, those respondents who denounced the phrase believed that equality in rights is relative. Participant 24, age 25 said, “Georgia is not only for Georgians, but for all other ethnic minorities.” However, this respondent added that ethnic minorities should not have an opportunity or right to run for positions in the executive government.
The young generation does not fully comprehend the civic national identity. Even though nine participants said that Georgian national identity depends on passport and citizenship, responses were divided on the question of whether ethnic minorities have the same rights as ethnic Georgians. I further explored this pattern when participants answered whether ethnic minorities who are citizens of Georgia have the possibility to run for governmental positions or acquire land. Four participants out of 12 in the youth group answered negatively. This resulted in Theme 3, that “Georgia is for all ethnicities, but ethnically Georgians have more rights.”

Despite the fact that a majority of the participants (nine respondents out of 10) valued citizenship, youth is still cautious when it comes to ethnic minorities holding governmental positions. Participant 19, age 19 said, “…Ethnic minorities and Georgians have equal rights, but not all of them. Minorities should be restricted from buying land, property, and run[ing] for elections.” This theme was not surprising as ethnic discourse is still popular in Georgian society. Additionally, the number of ethnic minorities in the government or holding offices is rare or unknown to the public. The stereotypes and biases transmitted to the new generation reinforce the ethnic discourse in the youth.

The graph below (Figure 3) further shows attitudes toward ethnic minorities holding high-level seats in the government of Georgia.
Theme 2 and Theme 3 showed that youth is moving toward defining national identity as based on citizenship. Nonetheless, their conceptualization of national identity does not fully align with the civic ideology. The youth follow ethnic discourse and civic discourse simultaneously. Therefore, this group has not yet developed their national identities. There are seeds for development of a civic concept, but much work is needed to reverse the prejudices against the minorities.

**Prejudices against Ethnic Minorities**

(Theme 4)

Theme 4 further supported the notion that the Georgian youth has not comprehended the idea of a civic definition of national identity. Nine respondents out of 12 did not trust ethnic minorities during the conflict and base their attitudes on the history
and past conflicts. This is the consequence of prejudices transferred from the previous generations. Therefore, Theme 4 is that ethnic minorities are not fully integrated in the community. During the conflict situation they are not trusted.

Even though nine out of 12 respondents said that ethnic minorities who hold citizenship are Georgians, they still have biases and stereotypes against ethnic minorities. The data showed that the youth perceive minorities as Georgians and an integral part of the country. Yet the youth did not trust minorities during conflict. Participant 23, age 26 said, “Armenian betrayal during Abkhazian conflict showed not to trust them,” and Participant 24, age 25 said, “….Trust only Georgians because of history.”

Participants mentioned the 1990 war in Abkhazia multiple times in the interviews. Members of this age group were not big enough to remember the violence. Instead, youth receive the assumption of ethnic Armenian betrayal during the conflict in Abkhazia from adult and senior generations, who witnessed and participated in the war. As a result, young generation of Georgia approaches ethnic minorities in two ways. On one hand, through political speeches and the governments’ policies, the youth tries to integrate ethnic minorities. Still, in the stories and narratives told at home, the youth hear ethnic minorities depicted as suspicious, so the youth perceives minority groups as a threat during the conflicts. This is an obstacle to the full integration of the civic concept of national identity. This duality also influences the integration of ethnic minorities into the Georgian society. The graph below (Figure 4) further shows ethnic minorities disenfranchisement from the Georgian society.
Figure 4: Theme 4, age group 18-28

Georgians Europeanness

(Theme 5)

Georgia signed the EU Association Agreement in 2014. Therefore, the Georgian government will enact a number of new policies and regulations to bring the country closer to European standards of governance and justice. These mean substantial changes in lifestyle for the majority of Georgians. This made it interesting to explore whether Georgians perceive themselves as Europeans and part of the EU.

All 12 participants in the youth group doubted whether Georgians are Europeans. Even though the youth welcomes the idea of European Georgia and are eager
to become part of the European family, they are skeptical whether the phrase, “I am Georgian, therefore I am European,” is true. Participant 24, age 25 said, “It is a popular phrase, but we are not European.” Further, on the question why the respondent does not perceive Georgian Europeanness, Participant 24, age 25 answered that “we can become European if we change our culture and some of our traditions, and that will be awesome.” Participant 27, age 28 was more specific and said that “we have not identified who we are as Georgians and how can we say whether we are Europeans or not.” Twelve out of 12 participants agreed that, geographically, Georgia is part of the Europe and added that Georgian culture is similar to the European culture. Still, participants questioned whether integration in the European Union could happen without Georgians changing to a more liberal culture.

Furthermore, the youth once more expressed their desire to be free from societal constraints. In their answers, the youth paralleled Europe and the European identity with freedom and a liberal culture. The youth’s antagonism toward widely defined version of Georgianness and their advocacy for freedom from societal constraints make it possible to argue that the youth in Georgia see Europe as a place of freedom and tolerance. However, youth do not have a clear idea of what it means to be European other than to be free from societal constraints. For future research, it will be interesting to explore the youth’s attitudes toward LGBT movements, feminism, and secular society.

To summarize, according to the youth in Georgia, being Georgian does not mean being European. Georgians need to change and adapt to be accepted as part of the
European family. The graph (Figure 5) below highlights some other answers from participants.

![Graph showing youth's views on Russia](image)

**Figure 5: Theme 5, age group 18-28**

**Youth’s Views on Russia**

(Theme 6)

After analyzing Georgian identity, national identity, and European identity, the questions referred to Georgian and Russian relations. The main aim was to identify how Georgian youth perceive Russians. The analysis also evaluated the level of collective axiology. All 12 respondents referred to Russia as “occupier,” “invader,” “imperialistic,” “corrupt,” and “dictator.” Participants both mentioned and discussed important historical
facts in the interviews. For instance, some of these included the current conflict in Ukraine, the 2008 war, the Georgievsky Treaty signed by Erekle II, and 1921-1923 independent Georgia. Participants also blamed Russia’s imperialistic policies for triggering conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Seven respondents out of 12 differentiated between the policies of the Russian government from an average Russian citizen. The Theme 6 is that “Russian government is occupier and has occupied Georgia since Erekle II. Russia’s policies are imperialistic. However, there is a mixed perception toward Russian people.”

I anticipated that the youth would not have differentiated the Russian people from the Russian government and would have seen them as one. Conversely, the youth see Russian people as victims of the Russian government, and thus, they are not responsible for the conflicts in Georgia. Yet positive attitude shifted when the youth referred to the Russian government. All 12 participants agreed that the Russian government has followed an imperialistic policy toward Georgia since Erekle II.

Participant 24, age 25 said, “The Russian government always wanted war and Georgia’s full annexation. They [Russia] violated the agreement signed with Erekle II, occupied independent Georgia in 1921, triggered wars with Abkhazians… they were never friends of Georgia.”

The youth has high collective generality when assessing the Russian government and not the Russian citizens. The youth perceive the policies of the Russian governments, or of the Soviet Union as similar in nature and labeled them as “imperialistic.” For example, Participant 17, age 18 said, “The Russian government is occupier, but people of
Russia are nice.” Another example is Participant 15, age 21, who said, “I have never been in Russia, but my parents told me that they love Georgia and our culture. I think these people are victims of dictatorship, and not everybody is enemy of Georgia.”

Six out of 12 participants claimed that the previous generations talked and narrated about positive characteristics of Russian people and their love toward Georgia, Georgian culture, traditions, folklore, and cuisine. Though, only two participants had direct contact with Russians, and others had never been in Russia, do not speak Russian, and have not interacted with Russian ever in their lives. Despite this, due to influence from previous generations, the youth identifies average citizens of Russia as different from the government of Russia. This attitude diminishes the possibility of violence.

However, five out of 12 respondents have high collective generality toward Russia. In other words, five members of the youth group do not distinguish people from the government. These respondents see Russian people as one whole, having similar values and characteristics as its government. Participant 16, age 22 said: “Russians have belittled Georgia since the 19th century,” and Participant 2, age 21 said, “Russians never loved Georgians. They see us as entertainers who can only dance, sing, and cook. We are perceived by them as little brothers who needs to be taken care of.” Participants used phrases such as “they are all same government and people, occupants and invaders,” “occupant and people see us as lower class,” or “Russians are chauvinists and occupiers.” The young group does not widely accept this pattern of thought. Though I anticipated a higher number of radicalized Georgians, only five participants out of 12 perceived Russian people and the government as similar.
All 12 young respondents labeled the Russian government as “occupier” and used the word interchangeably during the interviews. The participants differed in their perceptions of the average Russian citizen.

The differentiation of the Russian government from Russian citizens did not translate into enthusiasm or desire to repair relations with Russia. The moderate attitude of the youth completely disappeared when the questions asked about desired future

Figure 6: Theme 6, age group 18-28
relations. Participants were resistant to have any kind of diplomatic relations with Russia. I analyze this theme below.

**The ‘If’ Attitude toward Russia**

*(Theme 7)*

The present government of Garibashvili’s remarks toward the Russian government are warmer than the statements of the previous government of Georgia. Three out of 12 participants referred to this distinction and said that the current approach toward Russia is unacceptable. From their view, there should not be any relations unless Russia returns Georgian territories. One participant added that the policies during Saakashvili were respectful toward history and those soldiers who died for Georgia’s independence. For example, Participant 15, age 21 said, “No way, in 2010, the policies toward Russians were more suitable to past than current warm and soft attitude.”

The last major theme in this age group is that “no diplomatic relations with Russia unless they accept Georgian territorial integrity and de-occupy Georgia.” The “if” attitude toward the future relations with Russia is not surprising as this age group grew up during the period of Saakashvili, whose political attitude, as already mentioned, toward Russia differed radically from the present government’s approach.

The interviews showed that, for the youth, the primary concern is territorial integrity. None of the participants desired to have cultural, trade, diplomatic, or friendly relations with Russia without de-occupation. Participant 14, age 23 stated, “If Putin is gone and territories returned then we can think of some kind of relations,” and Participant 16, age 22 said, “No relations at all, not even diplomatic unless territories returned. The
war in Ukraine shows that there is no value in diplomacy with Russia. We should be strict.”

This kind of attitude toward Russia is problematic from the conflict resolution perspective. The answers indicate that the youth do not see diplomacy as one of the ways to resolve conflicts. Therefore, youth are more prone to violence because “no diplomatic relations unless territories returned” is an obstacle to start negotiations and to achieve territorial integrity. It is also impossible to imagine the Russian government renouncing recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The youth’s inability to see value in diplomacy with Moscow leaves the government of Georgia with two options: 1) to use violence as a tool for dealing with conflict or 2) to pursue diplomacy that will not guarantee their re-election and will result in public outrage and demonstrations.

It will be interesting to research perception of the Georgian youth on meaning of conflict resolution. The future research should also explore perceptions of the youth on mechanisms and ways of resolution Georgian conflicts. Currently, no diplomatic relations attitude limits conflict practitioners from working on Georgian conflict.

The graph (Figure 7) below depicts the answers of the respondents.
Concluding Remarks

The attitudes of the youth toward different aspects of their identities are ambivalent. Skepticism in the understanding of Georgian identity links to their inability to define whether being Georgian means being European. I assumed that traditions and culture limit their freedom and integration into the European family. Though the data revealed ambivalence in their understanding of Georgian Europeanness, the youth desire to become European. Their aspirations result in transforming Georgian national identity from ethnic understanding into civic a one. The reliance on passport, law, and constitution as a mechanism to define national identity is a new trend in the Georgian
society. The transition is an ongoing process; therefore, youth have not fully embraced ethnic minorities in the communities and still distrust them. The analysis also showed that ethnic groups are not allowed and able to hold governmental positions. The distrust toward minorities is a consequence of generationally transmitted negative stories and stereotypes about minority groups.

The ‘if’ attitude toward the North is an obstacle to peaceful conflict resolution. It also limits the government of Georgia to pursue diplomacy as a means to resolve or to mitigate tensions with Moscow. Attitudes toward Russia are a major cleavage among adult/senior and young generations in Georgia. Luckily, positive stories about Russian people transmitted through generations have shaped the youth’s perspectives on Russian citizens. Low collective generality toward the Russian people should be an entry point for practitioners to transform the ‘if’ attitude into a moderate tone.

**Age Group 29-49**

In the adult age group, I interviewed 11 participants in Georgian via Skype. I choose respondents through snowballing. It was interesting to explore the adult generation in Georgia for several reasons.

First, the national movement and rhetoric was in peak during the late teenage years of this adult group. Therefore, some of the major themes that emerged during the interviews were the result of the national movement. Secondly, this is the last generation who received the Soviet style of education. Thirdly, these participants experienced transition from the Soviet Union to the democratic Georgia. The adult group also participated in the 1990s civil war and Abkhazian conflict in Georgia. Above all, this
generation witnessed and participated in the Rose Revolution in 2003 and observed transition from the Shevardnadze’s pro-Russian government to the Saakashvili’s pro-Western government.

Consequently, studying this age group was interesting as they have experienced and witnessed major political transitions in Georgia. These adults supported the national movement and the anti-Soviet demonstrations. These political and legal transitions impacted understanding of Georgian identity, national identity, and the Other in this age group.

**Christianity and Georgianness**

*(Theme 1)*

In the adult group, the most unexpected theme was “Being Georgian means being Christian.” Differently from the youth, the adults define Georgian identity in terms of religion. Participants, when asked to define meaning of Georgian identity, used words such as “faithful” and “belief in God.” For example, Participant 22, age 44 said, “Georgians are religious, respectful to elders, traditional…. family, gender, males are dominant in the family.”

I did not anticipate that the adults defined Georgian identity in terms of Christianity. The result is interesting because this group was born and raised in the Soviet Union, where the practice of religion was illegal. After the USSR, however, the Georgian Orthodox Church regained its power and was able to increase the number of churches, religious schools, and institutions. In the early years of the 1990s, the number of priests also tripled. This age group widely respects the Patriarch Ilia II. Participant 1, 43 said,
“Patriarch Ilia II is the one who notified us that the Russian army was planning to dissolve the demonstration on April 9, 1989.” This group perceived the involvement of the Patriarch in the demonstration and his words as heroic. The role and influence of the Patriarch increased after the dissolution of the USSR, as the Church was the only stable institution in Georgia till 2003.

The Georgian Orthodox Church, in the aftermath of the USSR, increased its power because it filled the vacuum of power created by the weak government and the dissolution of the USSR. Therefore, the only stable institution that provided safety and peace to adults prioritized religious identity over other social identities. As a result, the Georgian adult population perceives that being Georgian means being Orthodox Christian. Interestingly, it is questionable how the Georgian Orthodox Church had enough power during the USSR to elect Patriarch Ilia II when other parts of the USSR denounced and excluded religion.

Reliance on the religious identity and salience of ethnicity in this age group is a consequence of the national movement and the discourse that was popular during that period of time. In the 1990s, the national movement leaders once more revisited the notion of “language, land, and religion” that was popular during the Tergdaleulebi period. Therefore, stability of the Georgian Orthodox Church and the national movement contributed to the salience of religious and ethnic identities in the adult population. Participant 9, age 46 said, “Christianity saved us since the old ages, and this is who we are, only Christians in the whole region.” Participant 9, age 46 was not the only one who referred to religion as the savior of the nation through tough times. This reference to the
past coincides with Gachechiladze (2013), who argued that the Christian religion served as the guidance of the country’s foreign policy since the ancient times. Gachechiladze added that religion was also a source of in-group cohesiveness.

The Christian religion and its salience is the first major cleavage among generations. It is rare to find a young Georgian who is not baptized. Nevertheless, differently from the adult population, the youth do not prioritize their Orthodox Christian identities. Their religious identity is of secondary importance.

The figure below (Figure 8) shows the breakdown of the answers in this age group.

**Figure 8:** Theme 1, age group 29-49
Importance of Georgian ethnos in the Adult population of Georgia

(Theme 2-3)

The adult age group, aged 29-49, participated in the national movements in the 1990s. They are the generation of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who resurrected the concept of “language, land, and religion” that highlights the importance of ethnicity, religion, and Georgian soil. The results of the study show that six participants out of 11 supported the notion of “Georgia for Georgians.” As already mentioned, during the Gamsakhurdia’s government, Georgian national identity was tied to ethnicity that excluded the ethnic minorities, including Armenian, Azeri, Turks, Ossetian, Abkhazians, and other minorities. The rhetoric of the public officials made the ethnicity a distinguishable marker in defining Georgian national identity. Presently, this approach to national identity in the adult group still exists. For example, Participant 1, age 43 said, “Of course, Georgia is only for ethnic Georgians… others can live, but the land is ours.” This part of the respondent’s interview also shows attachment to the land that was the third important factor in the national movement.

During the interview, participants highlighted the importance of preservation of Georgian genes and blood more than six times. All 11 respondents shared the sense of insecurity. Participant 26, age 42 argued that the country is so “tiny” that mixing Georgian blood with other ethnicities risks extinction of Georgian ethnos. The participants also recalled the past wars where ethnic minorities or other ethnicities living in Georgia betrayed Georgians. On the follow-up question, I mentioned those historical cases in which ethnic Georgians were the ones who betrayed their country and assisted
foreign invaders. On this comment, the respondents’ emotions heightened. Four of them suggested that historical facts were fabricated, and in reality, the traitors were always ethnic minorities residing in Georgian land. Four out of 11 participants mentioned Armenians during the interviews. Participant 22, age 44 noted that, from personal experience, Armenians during war should not be trusted. I did not expect this stereotype against Armenians because Armenia and Georgia have strong diplomatic relations. Large Armenian diaspora lives peacefully in the Georgian community.

Sense of insecurity triggers salience of ethnic identity and feelings of preservation. Jones (2012) observed this mood of fear in the generation of Gamsakhurdia and argued that it was this sentiment that made the national movement radical. The fear of extinction of Georgian ethnos and an imaginary or real enemy still exists in the adult generation. The participants used phrases such as “Georgian ethnos,” “Georgian gene,” “Georgian soul,” “Georginnness,” and “we-ness.” The cohesiveness of ethnic Georgians in this age group is stronger than in the youth group.

Six of the adult group did not openly share their viewpoints as they tried to conceal their perspectives. Their answers were not consistent, and some of them refused to clarify their points. It is possible that participants were hesitant to discriminate ethnic minorities due to the perceived hospitable character of the Georgian people. For example, five participants disapproved of the notion of “Georgia for Georgians,” but still advocated for more rights for ethnic Georgians and fewer for minorities. Additionally, eight out of 11 participants argued that every citizen of Georgia had equal rights. Yet from their perspectives, ethnic minorities should not be morally allowed to become part
of the executive body of the government. The stereotypes and prejudices on ethnic minorities still exists in this generation. The past narratives of betrayals sustain the notion that only ethnic Georgians can love Georgia. The figure below (Figure 9) shows the breakdown of the answers in this age group.

![Figure 9: Theme 2, age group 29-49](image)

During the interviews, eight participants mentioned the word “right.” I followed up with questions. The data gathered led to Theme 3. This theme argues that ethnic minorities do have equal rights, but equality in rights depends on the nature of rights. For instance, 10 out of 11 participants discouraged minorities to acquire land, to run for election, to hold governmental positions, or to even be head of the regional governments. This kind of attitude in a multiethnic country creates the possibility of another ethnic conflict. The negative sentiment toward Armenians should be addressed as the majority
of them live in the Javakheti region (in the south of Georgia). Participant 10, age 41 has everyday relations with Armenians but still perceives that only Georgians should have the right to acquire land and to govern the region.

Three out of 11 participants referred to their religious identities as a primary reason that Georgia is for Georgians and why Georgians have more rights than others. These three participants mentioned a well-known tale in Georgia that describes how the God divided the lands among different ethnic groups around the world. The tale says that, while the God designated land for people across the world, Georgians were enjoying themselves. After all the ethnic groups were satisfied, the God left the special, fertile land for himself. However, when he saw the Georgians, he liked them so much that he gave it to them. Thus, phrases such as “God gave the land to Georgians,” “because we are faithful to God,” “Georgians have divine right to control Georgian territory,” etc. were popular in the interviews. It is possible that this story impacts Georgians’ collective attachment to land and nature.

The sense of insecurity combined with deep religiosity in this age group makes the adult group radical and salient. Currently, this generation is in power and in the legislative body. While the government of Georgia is not nationalistic or salient in their speeches or policies, the ambition of the adult population is taken into account. For example, there is no Christian holiday or other religious ceremonies without every single government member attending the Church. None of the government members denounces the speeches of the Patriarch Ilia II despite the latter’s announcements being radical and extremist in the last two years. Therefore, as long as religion is valued and respected by
the government, this age group will feel secured and will feel their sense of Georgianness is preserved.

Theme 2 and Theme 3 are alarming for conflict resolution practitioners. These themes show the salience of ethnic rhetoric in the definition of in-group and out-group. The stereotypes and prejudices against the minorities also pose a threat to escalation of civic tension. Conflict resolution practitioners need to transform the narratives of threat and ensure that multiethnic countries like Georgia remain peaceful and free of violence.

This graph (Figure 10) shows the distribution of answers on the question whether ethnic minorities have equal rights.
**Georgians are Unique**

*(Theme 4)*

The adult age group disagrees with this statement, “I am Georgian, therefore I am European.” One of the participants stated that “Georgians are Georgians.” Despite the government of Georgia actively implementing and pursuing the road to the European integration, the adult population of the country do not perceive themselves as Europeans. The salience of the ethnic identity and the Christian religious identity prevent this age group to be identified with liberal Europe. Participant 9, age 46 said, “We are not Europeans, EuroAsians, or Caucasians, we are Georgians.” Participant 10, age 41 added, “This is another popular phrase, we want to become Europeans but some of their values and lifestyle will never be acceptable to our faith.”

Even though all 11 participants rejected GeorgiansEuropeanness, three of them perceived that Georgian culture belongs to European culture. Participants argued that because Georgians and most Europeans are Christians, the cultures of these are similar, too. Participant 12, age 43 stated that Christianity always united Georgia with Europe as Georgians shared more in common with Europe than with the Muslim neighbors. This participant still suggested that, despite common faith, Georgians are unique and can never become European without abandoning their unique and ancient culture and traditions. Participant 29, age 41 also explicitly referred to the religion by stating that the
“foundation of Europe is Christianity, and we have some commonality with them.” Still, the participant rejected the idea that Georgians are Europeans. Participant 29, age 41 added that “we are partners and friends of EU, but we cannot become European.” Rejection of the EU is attributed to the stereotype that European people’s lifestyle is too liberal. These kinds of stereotypes and prejudices are a barrier in understanding what it means to be European.

In this age group, the impact of the Christian religion in relation to the European identity was substantial. References to the Christian faith and the God highlighted this age group’s views on the religion. Stereotype informed during the USSR still continues to block the establishment of open relations among Europeans and adult Georgians. The figure (Figure 11) below shows the breakdown of Theme 4.
To conclude Theme 4, it was interesting to see how religion impacted the adult Georgians’ perceptions of the European identity. The Christian religion serves to bring Georgians closer to Europeans but also creates a gap in understanding what it means to be European. The stereotypes and biases against Europeans that formed during the USSR also increase the gap in understanding. During the USSR, the Soviet government portrayed the West as immoral, and the adult generation grew up in this propaganda. Therefore, this age group views European identity as unacceptable to Georgians’ faith and traditions.

Adults and Russia

(Theme 5)
The last part of the interview focused on Georgia-Russia relations. Participants in this age group were eager to talk and to analyze the Russia-Georgia conflict. They pointed out the mistakes by the Saakashvili’s government and suggested possible methods for resolution. The adult generation supports the warm tone of Garibashvili’s government toward Russia. This attitude differs from the responses of the youth group. Nonetheless, similar to the young generation, adults also labeled Putin’s Russia as “occupant” and “invader.” All 11 respondents named Russia as occupier due to the 2008 war. Participant 28, age 40 said, “Georgia–Russia relations now is in the deadlock. Putin’s government is occupier, and there is nothing we can do.” Participant 29, age 41 also said, “Georgia will not have problem with democratic Russia, but currently we have dictatorship that has occupied our land.”

Similar to the youth, participants in the adult group also differentiated between the government of Russia and Russian people. The participants made it clear that their negative attitudes were only directed at the Russian government and not toward any average citizens of Russia. For example, Participant 4, age 44 said, “…I want you to write down that in Russia I mean the government not the people. Russian people have nothing to do with the occupation and suffering. They love us and respect us. My kids do not understand it…” It was important for this respondent to make sure that I understood the difference. This kind of comment was prevalent in other interviews, too. For example, Participant 9, age 46 said, “Russian people are different, and you should know that I do not have problems with Russian people.” Participant 10, age 41 said, “Russian people, culture, literature, and music is one of the best in the world, not the government though.”
Theme 5 is that “Russians are identified as occupants and imperialistic, but Russian people are perceived as friends of Georgians.” Still, two participants out of 11 mentioned that some of the Russian people treat Georgians as “little brothers” and looked down on Georgians. These two participants did not show any negativity toward the people even though they assumed that Russians “look down on Georgians.” This was an interesting duality in the answers of these participants.

Eight out of 11 participants remembered the USSR times and close relations between Russians and Georgians. Despite the fact that they label Russia as an occupier and invader, there is still a feeling of nostalgia. Participant 12, age 43 said “Russia is a bumper in Georgian development, but people are welcoming and warm towards Georgians. It was like that during USSR, when I traveled in Moscow often times.” Ten out of 11 speak fluently in Russian and had direct connection with Russians in their lifetimes. Thus, their attitudes toward Russian are not based on stories told by the senior generation. The adult group has firsthand experience with Russian people.

In the beginning of the research, I assumed that the event of April 9, 1989, should have negatively influenced adults’ perceptions of the USSR and Russia. During the April 9 massacre, Russian soldiers murdered young, peaceful demonstrators. During the wars in 1990s and 2008 it was Russian soldiers who killed hundreds of Georgians. Still, it turned out that these events had more impact on the younger generation than on the adult generation.

To summarize, the adults in the research were moderate in their assessment of Georgia-Russia relations. They clearly differentiated people from the government and
remembered the USSR period as an era of friendly relations among Georgian people and Russians. From the conflict resolution perspective, this kind of attitude toward the Other gives room for negotiation and diplomatic relations. Therefore, it enables peaceful resolution of the conflict. This kind of attitude, however, increases the possibility of generational tension. The young generation is accepting and moderate toward Russian people, but the youth opposes any kind of relations with Russia until de-occupation occurs.

The figure (Figure 12) below shows the responses of the participants in short phrases.

**Figure 12: Theme 5, age group 29-49**

**Low Collective Generality in the Adults**
(Theme 6)

Seven members out of 11 experienced low level of collective generality toward the Russian government. In other words, seven participants in the 29-49 age group responded that the Russian government’s attitude toward Georgia was changing, depending on the leaders and other external factors. Participant 22, age 44 said, “Russian policies toward Georgia differed based on the various USSR leaders and governments. Not always were we belittled and discriminated.” Therefore, Theme 6 is that “Relations with Russia have been changing, depending on the governments in each country.” The adult group lived in the USSR and have communicated and resided side by side with Russians; thus, the adults have a low level of collective generality. Low collective generality is beneficial for the conflict resolution because it enables respondents to objectively analyze and differentiate various policies and actions of the Russian government.

The adults also identified turning points in the Georgia-Russia relations. For example, Participant 26, age 42 said that the national movement in 1990s was the decisive factor in shifting Russia-Georgia relations. According to this participant, before the national movements, these two nations had peaceful and friendly relations. The Gamsakhudia’s movement and emergence of strong national identity sidetracked the friendship and changed the approach of Russia toward Georgia, and vice versa.

Four respondents presumed that Russia’s approach toward Georgia was always the same, imperialistic and occupant. These four respondents said that, since the Erekle II, the policies and the approach of Russia has not changed. The different governments of
Moscow always wanted to occupy and belittle Georgians. This is called high collective generality. Despite relatively low statistical evidence of high collective generality in the adults, it is important to analyze this segment of the population, too. These four adults identified the Georgievskiy agreement as the beginning of the Georgian occupation. This narrative is also popular among the youth. Every Georgian government since Shevardnadze has also popularized this narrative. Such difference on perception provides room for interpretation and discussion. Those groups who perceive that Russia was not always imperialistic are labeled as pro-Russian, while the other half of the adult group who sees Russians as always being occupants and imperialistic are named pro-Georgia or pro-West. Therefore, seven respondents of the adult population are labeled as pro-Russia by the young generation.

This double narrative and prejudices among generations increase the possibility of generational tension. Still, in terms of relations with Russia, the adult group can potentially find a common ground and space for diplomatic conflict resolution.

The figure (Figure 13) below shows the distribution of answers from seven members of the adult participants.
Adult Population on Future Relations with Russia (Theme 7)

The last theme that emerged in the study is about future relations of Georgians and Russians. The “if” attitude of the youth disappeared in the adult group. None of the participants among the adult group had a condition for restoring relations with Russia. All of them said that relations with Russia should be “repaired,” “restored,” “fixed,” “changed,” “modified,” “corrected,” etc. Therefore, Theme 7 is that “relations with Russia should be restored to be cultural, diplomatic, economic, and friendly.”

Respondents in this theme referred to the USSR period as an example of what kinds of relations Georgia should have with Russia to return the territories. For example, Participant 22, age 44 said, “At least during the USSR, we were united and had all the
territories…” This reference to the USSR does not mean that the adult population wants to return to socialism or the Soviet structure of governance. The respondents meant the relations between the two countries that occurred during the USSR. Participant 28, age 40 went further and described the USSR period, stated that “the USSR was not that bad. It saved country from fascism.” I had expected this kind of attitude toward the USSR and relations during the USSR to be more prevalent in the oldest generation. The main reason is that the age group 29-49 is the founders and pioneers of the national movement in 1990s. Therefore, it was quite a revelation when participants desired restoration of diplomatic, cultural, economic, and trade relations with Moscow.

One of the main reasons that the generation of the national movement desires to restore the relations with Russia can be the calamities, sufferings, and poverty that followed the dissolution of the USSR. The competitive market of the global economy and the ignorance of the Western countries during the 2008 war made the adult generation re-evaluate their perception of the Northern neighbor. Participant 28, age 40 said the following:

Where was the EU and the West in 2008? Where were they when Georgian peasant[s] could not sell wine and agriculture products in Russia? We were on the edge of hunger and death, but they (the West and the EU) only were concerned!...
The only way to keep Georgia safe is to be diplomatic with Russia. We need them, and they need us…

Participant 9, age 46 said, “We need to have good relations with Russia. Diplomatic, trade, economic types of relation to be safe.”
Overall, the positive attitude toward future relations with Russia is a consequence of the historical friendship of Georgia and Russia during the USSR. It can also be argued that the general feeling of insecurity of this generation prioritizes security and basic human needs over territorial integrity and independence. It is still questionable how the generation of the national movement changed its foreign course from a radical tone into a moderate one. For future research, it will be interesting to conduct in-depth studies on the adult generation of Georgia to see what kind of events had greater impact on their perceptions and views on Russia-Georgia relations. The figure (Figure 14) below shows the distribution of answers on future relations with Russia.

**Figure 14: Theme 7, age group 29-49**
Concluding Remarks

Attitudes developed by the adult Georgian population are in conflict with the youth. The religious identity supersedes all other social identities in the adult population. The Christian identity governs and shapes Georgian identity, national identity, and the Europeanness. Orthodox Christianity is a boundary for defining who is Georgian and who is not. The religion also impacts relations with Europe. During the USSR, the USSR government and general population perceived Europe as immoral and too liberal; thus, this narrative still exists in the Georgian adult population. Therefore, from their perspective, Georgian traditional and religious identity cannot coexist with Europe’s liberal lifestyle. The stereotypes of Europe are an obstacle for adults to understand what, in truth, it means to be European.

The adult age group have more experience with Russia than the youth. Therefore, it was reasonable to find the adults’ low collective generality toward Moscow. The adult population also differentiates multiple periods of peace and turbulence in the relations among Georgians and Russians. The poverty and underdevelopment that followed the dissolution of the USSR also impacted their attitudes toward the neighbor. Therefore, respondents want to have closer, diplomatic, and trade relations to ensure security and peace. The findings of the research show that there is no condition for relations with Russia. The sense of insecurity makes the respondents prioritize stability and peace over territorial integrity. As a result, the study found a gap between the youth and the adult population. This dynamic creates two cleavages between generations: pro-Russian and pro-Georgia/pro-West narratives.
Age group 50-75

Interviews with the senior group were challenging. Participants used the interviews as a platform to educate the young generation about the importance of normalized relations with Russia or the past history that the two countries shared. Even though the number of the participants in this group was only eight, the openness and enthusiasm of the participants allowed for thorough and interesting discussions. I was able to gather rich data.

This generation lived the majority of their lives in the USSR. They have vivid memories and knowledge about life in the Soviet Union. The transition period also severely impacted the senior generation. After the dissolution of the USSR, many seniors lost their jobs and savings in the banks. Their education became worthless in a new dynamic and competitive market. Seniors knew Russian or German but had no knowledge of English or other European languages. Therefore, in a short period of time, their lives changed dramatically. These experiences of the senior population were interesting to hear. Participants’ stories showed how major political transitions influenced their lives and career developments. Seven out of eight respondents became unemployed after the dissolution of the USSR, and they never worked in their respective professions in an independent Georgia. New generations and the new governments of Georgia cynically addressed their diplomas and education as brainwashed and backward.

The exclusion of the seniors from the political and social life of the country resulted in nostalgia of the USSR. Seven major themes emerged in this age group that relate to Georgian identity, national identity, ethnic minorities, Europe, and Russia.
Georgian Identity among the Senior Generation

(Theme 1)

The senior generation has clear perception of their identities. They base their identities on history, culture, traditions, and patriotism. Seniors do not criticize or denounce Georgianness. Different from the adults, seniors do not parallel their Georgian identities with the Christian religion. During the USSR, a ban on religion meant practicing it was risky; thus, the Christian religion was never a defining marker of the seniors’ selves. Six participants out of eight have not been baptized or married in the Church. This is unusual for the modern Georgian society.

Differently from the youth generation, the senior generation feels comfortable in their identities. They do not disapprove it or are not in search of new identities. Also, the version of the Georgianness that the youth disapproves of is the one acknowledged by the senior generation. Thus, similarly to the youth, the senior group addresses history, traditions, and culture in defining Georgianness. Participant 3, age 66 said, “You are Georgian if you love your country and respect history…” Participant 6, age 71 added, “To be Georgian you have to respect traditions and culture…”

Among the senior group members, the characteristics of Georgianness do not rely on ethnicity, language, and religion. Differently from the adults and the youth generations, the senior generations characterized Georgians as “loyal,” “hospitable,” fighter,” “patriotic, “brave,” “kind,” “righteous,” “honest,” “cheerful,” “respectful to culture and ancestry,” “peace lover,” “laid back,” etc. Therefore, according to seniors, Georgians can be anyone who want to be Georgian. This definition is different from the
adult group, where ethnicity and religion define the in-group of Georgians. Various political and social events that impacted these two generations’ perceptions and outlooks cause such a big difference in two generations.

Age group 50-75, as already mentioned, grew up during USSR. They called everyone “Comrade” (товарищ); thus, they did not differentiate people according to their ethnicities or other personal factors. Everybody was “Comrade “(товарищ). Ethnicity, nationality, age, or gender did not matter during that period of time. Therefore, in general public, this cleavage of ethnicity was not important. It can be argued that the politics of “Comrade” established a new way of looking at Georgian identity that did not necessarily need ethnicity and language as markers. In the end of the USSR, nonetheless, the evolution of the national movements redefined Georgian identity, and the adult generation prioritized ethnicity and religion as in-group characteristics.

It will be interesting to understand why the definition of the senior generation became popular and widespread in the young generation. The future studies should also explore, in detail, why the senior’s definition of the Georgian identity was lost during the national movement.

The chart (Figure 15) below shows the division of the theme in this age group.
Multicultural Georgia

(Theme 2 – 3)

The senior generation of the participants understood that Georgia is a multiethnic country. The second theme that emerged in this age group was that “Georgia is not only for ethnic Georgians. We are multiethnic nation and we need to integrate minorities.” Participant 11, age 75 explicitly stated, “I do not agree with this statement that Georgia is only for Georgians. We always lived securely with Armenian and Kurds. They are my neighbors and integral part of our society.” This kind of attitude toward minorities was widespread in this group. However, two participants said that, despite the violence that emerged at the end of the USSR, there was never a problem for the ethnic Abkhazian population to share Abkhazia with ethnic Georgians. Even though there were widespread nationalistic sentiments on both sides, the senior generation rejects the stereotype that
there ever existed fear of ethnic Abkhazians. Participant 6, age 71 argued, “Abkhazia was a diverse part of Georgia. It is argued today that Abkhazians were discriminated by us but in truth we lived in peace and harmony. . . .” Participant, 7, age 69 also said, “The nationalistic sentiment in Georgia and the manipulation of the USSR government resulted in conflict; otherwise, Georgians and Abkhazians lived peacefully and equally.”

The senior age group had strong feelings about inclusion of the ethnic minorities in the Georgian politics or society. This feeling should also be addressed to the period of the USSR when the central government of the USSR propagandized and promoted friendship and comradeship of different ethnicities. Though the USSR implemented policies that created autonomous republics for small ethnic minorities, the propaganda of comradeship resulted in an integration of ethnic minorities. The senior generation also has less negative stereotypes against other minority groups in Georgia.

None of the eight participants mentioned law, citizenship, passport, or constitution as necessary to the definition of national identity. Seniors argued that ethnic minorities should be integrated because of the long history of living together and the tolerant nature of Georgians. Therefore, in this generation, national identity is based on multicultural conception rather than on the civic idea of national identity. Multicultural conception assumes that all minority groups are equal and should have equal rights.

The below chart (Figure 16) depicts the breakdown of the answers by those respondents who based their national identity on multicultural concept.
Multicultural concept of the national identity assumes that minorities have equal rights. Therefore, six respondents out of eight supported this notion. According to these six members of the senior group, ethnic minorities should have equal rights, even acquisition of land or running for elections should be not a problem for minority groups. Conversely, the adult and the youth groups reserved these rights for ethnic Georgians. Participant 20, age 55 said, “Ethnic minorities have the same rights as me because they lived here for generations.” Participant 21, age 58 also commented, “Georgians and other minorities are developed and born together from ancient times. Thus, why should not they have equal rights?”

Figure 16: Theme 2, age group 50-75
Tolerance and hospitality of Georgians are one of the reasons that the senior age group accepts and integrates the ethnic minorities. The USSR also played a role in integration of the minorities. The multicultural approach toward national identity, though, was lost during the national movements.

From the conflict resolution perspective, multicultural national identity is a first step toward integrating ethnic minorities and lessening possible ethnic violence in Georgia. The chart (Figure 17) below shows the detailed thought processes of Theme 3.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 17:** Theme 3, age group 50-75
Georgians are Caucasians
(Theme 4)

The senior generation disagrees that Georgians are Europeans. Theme 4 is that “Georgians are not Europeans and that Georgians are Georgians or Caucasians.” During the discussion of the Georgian European identity, stereotypes and biases against the Europe and the West were prevalent. Five out of eight respondents perceived Europe and the West as immoral and unethical. For instance, they used phrases such as “Europe is disgraceful,” “Georgian traditions and values cannot coexist with European immorality,” “They do not value family and people as much as we do,” “Europeans brought unethical behavior and too much freedom to youth,” etc. The established stereotypes can be attributed to the USSR. As already analyzed in the adult group, in the USSR, the senior group perceived the West and Europe as having no value systems and as immoral compared to the USSR. The senior group grew up in such propaganda. Inability to communicate or connect to Europe further strengthened established prejudices. Travel of any kind in Europe and the West was rare and almost nonexistent, and the Georgian society developed biases and stereotypes based on narratives derived from the government and the media. It is notable to mention that the closest the generation of seniors could travel in Europe was to get in any of the Baltic States. Georgian society even perceived that as prestigious, and only the highest circle of the society could do that.

The rejection of the European identity and Georgia’s Europeanness did not come as a surprise. During the study, what was not estimated was the role of the Caucasian identity. Participant 30, age 64 said, “Europe is Christian, but we do not share the same
culture. Georgians can be better identified as Caucasians because of our folklore, cuisine, even political culture is the same.” Other participants used phrases such as “Georgians are Caucasians,” “Europeanness of Georgians will never happen because we are from Caucasus,” “Caucasian spirit is more prevalent in Georgian than European spirit,” “We fight like in Caucasus, and our soul is closer to Caucasian spirit,” etc. It was interesting to explore this side of Georgian identity because the adult and the youth groups did not mention the Caucasus.

Many ethnic minorities, in the Caucasus, have various religions, predominantly Muslim. Despite different religions, ethnic groups in the Caucasus share similar cultures, traditions, histories of violence, conflicts, and invasions. Participant 21, age 58 said, “We are children of the Caucasus (mountain). ” In the beginning of the national movement, Georgians actively engaged in protection of the nature and the Georgian land, but none of the members of the adult age group perceived their identity as part of the Caucasian identity. The senior age group’s attachment to the Caucasian identity was lost in the subsequent generations. The evolution of the national movement subdued the Caucasian identity because it did not serve to make Georgians unique and the sole owners of the Georgian land.

The figure (Figure 18) below shows the thought processes involved in Theme 4.
Nostalgia of the USSR

(Theme 5 – 6)

The last part of the interview was the most productive and interesting in the senior age group. Senior participants’ attitudes showed that, during the USSR, most of the participants knew their place in society and felt comfortable. For example, Participant 11, age 75 said, “Life in USSR was so much easier. I knew that after graduation the government will assign me somewhere to work and this was not a problem. I knew my value and place in the society.” Participants felt that, after the dissolution of the USSR, they were left without a mission. Factories and workplaces closed; nobody was assigning them to work in specific places. Despite the anticipation of wealth and stability, the first years of the independence were tough. Georgia was in the midst of civil war, and there
was huge poverty in the society. The senior group was left astray and disappointed. They were not ready for the competitive global economy. Therefore, the senior generation of Georgia wishes close, warm, and friendly relations with Russia. They perceive the closeness with Russia as a return to stable and peaceful Georgia. Even though some of the members of the senior age group lost children and relatives during the 1990s wars and the 2008 war, they wished to establish diplomatic and neighborly relations with the North.

The seniors justified the desire for close relations with Russia by arguing that “we have 200 years history” with Moscow. Participants also disapproved that the West did not help Georgia during the 2008 war. Participant 6, age 70 said, “We fought 2008 because we were promised safety by the West. The EU did not come they did not save us or protect us. We were better off during USSR than during global economy or so called democracy.” The sense of betrayal from the EU during the 2008 war was a decisive factor for three members of the senior group to change their political attitudes and to aspire for closer relations with Russia.

The geographical closeness with Russia was a significant argument for the senior age group. Participant 6, age 71 said, “Russia is our neighbor. We share border, and relations should get better.” Furthermore, none of the participants referred to Russia as an occupant or invader. These two words are popular adjective for describing Russia in Georgia, but the senior generation avoided using them. Therefore, according to Theme 5, the seniors of Georgia want to have warm and friendly relations with Russia. The chart (Figure 19) below shows the details of the theme.
Theme 6 is that the senior generation has nostalgia toward warmer relations with Russia. More than seven times during the interviews, seniors felt nostalgic of the USSR. Three participants said that inability to find their places in the competitive, global market, multiple wars, poverty, instability, etc. made them feel nostalgic toward the USSR.

When seniors were asked about which period it was in Russia-Georgia relations that they wished to return to, five participants said the Soviet times. Participant 3, age 66 said, “During Soviet times, there was peace and respectful relations. I want to have the same kind of period for my children.” The graph (Figure 20) below shows the answers of the participants.
Low Collective Generality toward Russia

(Theme 7)

Similar to the adult generation, the seniors have low collective generality toward Russia. Participants differ various periods in the USSR when Georgians were treated good or bad. In other words, respondents, in the senior group, could identify peaceful as well as turbulent periods in relations with Russia. The participants did not elaborate on my questions, but for them, Russia has not treated Georgia the same way since the Georgievskiy Traktat. Low collective generality in the senior group, despite the tragic
events that happened in Georgia, is a result of the exposure and communication with Russians and the Russian government during their lifetimes.

Participant 11, age 75 identified the national movements as a marker of worsening relations between Georgia and Russia. According to this participant, Stalin’s death was another indicator for transforming the relations between Georgia and Russia. The ethnicity of Stalin and negative attitudes toward him resulted in feelings of insecurity for Georgians. Therefore, this participant mentioned that Stalin’s ethnicity played a role in changing the attitude of future governments of Moscow toward Georgia.

Differently from the youth, this age group did not explicitly categorize average Russian citizens as separate from the government. During the interviews, participants referred to Russia without specifications and clarifications. However, this age group was not as radical and nationalistic in their assessments of the Russian government. Therefore, it did not seem necessary for them to clarify whether they meant Russian people or the Russian government in their answers.

The graph (Figure 21) below displays the breakdown of thought processes during the analysis of Theme 7.
Figure 21: Theme 7, age group 50-75

Concluding Remarks

The senior generation of Georgia, distinguishably from its subsequent generations, is more peaceful and positive toward its own identity, ethnic minorities, and Russians. The USSR’s comradeship policies influenced perception of the Georgian national identity. Therefore, multicultural understanding of Georgian national identity is widespread in this segment of the Georgian population. Seniors perceive ethnic minorities as equal members of the Georgian society. The religion and ethnicity is not important in defining who is Georgia and who is not. Interestingly, unimportance of religion once more revealed when the senior population related their identities with the Caucasus. Diverse ethnic groups, who predominantly practice Muslim religion, reside in the Caucasus. Therefore, identification of Georgian identity with Caucasian identity
subdued the Christian Orthodox religion. This kind of approach toward the Georgian identity and the unimportance of the religion is a result of the secular governance of the USSR.

The senior population also wants closer ties with the Moscow. The poverty and underdevelopment that this segment of Georgian society endured during the first years of independence resulted in nostalgia toward Russia. The geographical closeness and history of 200 years of relations also played a major role in their desire to have diplomatic, cultural, trade, and warm relations with their Northern neighbor.

This generation of Georgia is a lost generation because, after the dissolution of the USSR, society restricted their involvement in political or societal life of the country. Their exclusion was a result of their Soviet education that most of society declared as useless in the democratic Georgia.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

At the start of the study, I anticipated major differences among generations on the understanding of Georgian national identity. I perceived that the age groups would differently assess Russians and Europeans. The findings show that the major expectations of the research were true. Together with expected trends, interesting and surprising themes emerged in the process of the data analysis.

To begin with, understanding Georgian identity differs across generations. Georgianness as a social identity of the senior generation is based on history, traditions, and culture. Due to the threat narratives and feelings of insecurity developed at the end of the USSR, in the adult population, ethnicity and religion became a marker of Georgianness. Another interesting transformation took place with the end of the USSR when the Christian Orthodox identity became salient as one of the primary definitions of Georgianness. The senior generation did not mention religion as part of their selves, but during the Glasnost and Perestroika, the Georgian Orthodox Church regained its power. Thus, religious identity became predominant, and the number of religious people tripled in the adult generation. The dissolution of the USSR, the Georgian civil war, conflicts in
Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a high rate of corruption, instability, and underdevelopment made the Church a safe haven for the population. The Georgian Orthodox Church was the only stable institution in the country.

This trend did not continue in the young generation. The youth has problems defining their Georgian identities. Due to the development of technology, open borders, and other social or economic events, the young generation experiences identity ‘crisis.’ The youth are cynical and skeptical to the widely acknowledged idea of Georgian identity. They do not like it nor agree with it. While talking about their Georgian identities, they can highlight and list more negative characteristics than positive ones. Therefore, there is no positive favorable comparison in the in-group that is rare in analysis of social identity.

Identity ‘crisis’ of the youth is a consequence of multiple issues. One of them is the dualistic rhetoric of the government. The government officials in Georgia orient foreign policy toward Europe and the West, but domestically, they pursue nationalistic policies. In addition, during the interviews, youth’s ethnic identity was not as salient as in the case of the adult population. The youth also experienced insecurity and vulnerability of wars, but their in-group cohesiveness and salience of their ethnic identities are not the same as in the adult generation. Arguably, the comparable stability and development during the period of Saakashvili and open borders played a role in keeping the youth less dependent on their shared ethnicity. The youth also have more access to the mass media. Internet and technology shortened the gap between the European and the Georgian youth.
Therefore, the information gathered through media impacts perceptions and views of the Georgian youth.

The research found that the national identities of the youth, the adult, and the senior generations do not have the same foundation. Even though the youth is going through identity ‘crisis,’ they are moving closer to a civic definition of the national identity. In their responses, the youth used words such as “law,” “citizenship,” and “passport” as factors in determining who is Georgian and who has rights in Georgia. Still, they have not fully familiarized themselves with this kind of thinking. Tilly (2005) defined incentive-shift as one of the reasons that boundary shift happens. During the incentive-shift, participants in boundary processes receive rewards or penalties that affect their pursuits of within-boundary relations, cross-boundary relations, and representations of the boundary the boundary zone (p. 141). Therefore, Georgian youth’s acceptance of the ethnic minorities can be understood in terms of the incentive shift. In other words, the EU with acceleration of the integration process will reward the youth for being tolerant and welcoming toward minorities. This kind of boundary shift is not necessarily wrong or negative because, eventually, the youth will be able to fully understand merits of the civic concept of national identity. The level of ethnic minorities’ integration in the Georgian society will increase, and that will lessen the possibility of another ethnic violence in the country.

Currently, youth showed less trustworthiness toward ethnic minorities. In the case of war and conflict, ethnic minorities are not trusted. One of the reasons is the stereotype that is transmitted through generations. Past generations tell narratives of
ethnic minorities’ betrayal during past wars to new generations, which essentially results in suspicion toward ethnic minorities. Despite this, all governments of Georgia try to integrate ethnic minorities and increase their numbers in the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. Therefore, through time, the Georgian youth will be able to completely abandon ethnic definition of national identity and look at passport and citizenship as markers of Georgianness.

In the adult population, the situation is different. The national movements during the 1990s imposed the boundary that identified Georgians and non-Georgians by ethnicity. The nationalist movement and the government of Gamsakhurdia impacted the salience of ethnic marker. Therefore, even today, the adult population perceives ethnicity as the defining factor of national identity. For them, only Georgians are Georgians, and all other people should not be allowed to buy land, run for elections, etc. Differently from youth and the adults, the senior generation relies on multicultural national identity. Assimilation and patriotism are important markers for this age group. The senior generation grew up in the era of the USSR where there was no ethnicity and no difference. Everybody practiced and respected each other’s cultures and traditions. Despite the fact that no Soviet identity existed, ethnic identities were not salient. The World Wars and the Cold War impacted the cohesiveness of the people in the USSR, and this made the ethnic identities secondary.

The difference in understanding national identities also results in differences in perception whether Georgians are Europeans. Each age group agrees that Georgians are not Europeans. Nevertheless, they differ on the outlook for the future, whether Georgians
can become Europeans. The youth assumes that Georgians will eventually become Europeans, but they would have to change and adapt. Primarily, Georgians will have to abandon some traditions that are not part of European liberal culture. The adult group disagrees and finds it impossible. Though Europe is founded on Christianity, from the perception of the adult group, even the common religion will not ensure complete Georgian integration into the EU. The salience and uniqueness of Georgian ethnic identity is still deeply rooted in their mindsets. The senior generation also disregards the European identity as immoral and unacceptable for Georgians.

Despite the skepticism, the Georgian government is not abandoning its EU course. The European integration might help to resolve the identity ‘crises’ of the youth. The continuous speeches on Georgians Europeanness, exchange programs for Georgian youth, and other programs will result in the Georgian youth defining themselves as Europeans. Presently, the young generation is searching for itself in the multiple identities that are offered by previous generations.

The confusion over the definition of the national identity and skepticism of Europeanness of Georgians leaves the country vulnerable. It is hard to calculate actions and positions of this generation.

The young generation of Georgia avoids any relations with Russia unless Russia returns territories to Georgia. They also exercise high collective generality over the government of Russia. In other words, the young generation has fixed perceptions. They perceive the Russian government as being imperialistic and occupant since the Erekle II. Therefore, they analyze and understand Russian actions only in terms of it being an
invader. Any other suggestions are perceived as pro-Russian propaganda. This leads to a dual narrative. The duality is whether one is pro-Russian or pro-Georgia/pro-West. The middle and moderate ground is almost nonexistent. Thus, this creates the likelihood of possible conflict or tension among generations. The primary reason is that the adult and senior generations have low collective generality toward Russians. For these generations, Russia was not always bad or occupant. They can breakdown the 200 years of relations with Russia in several periods and can identify points of escalation and de-escalation. In addition, these two generations remember times of peace and friendship together with times of war and violence.

The adult and the senior generations grew up in the USSR or in the transitioning Georgia, and they have seen what the country lost to be democratic and to be close to the EU. For these generations, it is important to have peace and economic well-being. They are not ready to engage in a competitive global market as their skills and backgrounds are not suitable for the European market. Thus, closing trade relations with Russia impacts adult and senior generations more than the young generation. The young generation grew up in a world where learning English and computers was more important than learning Russian and agriculture.

This difference in seeing Russians and assessing them creates a huge variety between perceptions of the young and adult/senior generations. This gap will be a major factor in dividing the country into pro-Russia and Pro-West narratives. Also, the dual cleavage and high collective generality will not enable the young generation to
understand concerns of the previous age groups. Therefore, youth labels the older groups as anti-democratic and anti-liberal.

Lastly, this generational gap impacts conflict resolution. The ‘if’ attitude of the young generation limits practitioners in talking and negotiating with Russia. Unless Russia returns territories to Georgia, diplomacy is not a viable tool to resolve the conflicts.

To summarize the findings, it is hard to argue for one general similarity across three generations. Roughly saying the three generations share the skepticism toward Georgian European identity is possible, but none of the generations believe that being Georgian means being European. Another similarity comes in addressing average Russian citizens. Each generation evaluates Russian society separately from the Russian government. Similarities are found between the young and senior generations in assessing ethnic minorities and in the senior and adult populations in evaluating relations with the government of Russia.

Hence, the differences among generations help the conflict resolution practitioners to see how the respective generations position themselves in the Georgian society. The youth has identity crisis, but they position themselves as pro-West and pro-Georgia. Their attitudes are oriented toward the Western and the European values. Additionally, the ‘if’ attitude toward Russia strengthens the youth’s European position in society. The adult and the senior generations share a moderate and neutral position toward Russia and pose themselves as the pro-Russian segment of the population. The
difference in positioning the groups in the Georgian society antagonizes and divides the population.

The normative prescription of the youth is simple; either one is pro-Russia or pro-Georgia. Therefore, the duality of narrative increases the possibility of action against those segments of the population that expose a different narrative. The positioning in society also impacts the normative prescription of action of the youth. They are more emotional and extreme in their assessments of Russia; thus, they are more likely to use violence in defense of the country’s European path. The adult and senior generations will be less likely to support the youth. The adult and the youth will play a moderate and neutral role in the case of violence. Their actions will be more driven toward resolving the issues peacefully. However, it was not obvious in the research what the adult and the senior segments of the society can sacrifice for preserving peace. In other words, it is not evident from the findings whether the adult and the senior populations will employ collaborative or accommodating strategies when it comes to negotiating cease-fires or peace agreements.

There are three important mechanisms that resulted in drastic differences among generations. First, the recent governments of Georgia highlighted the importance of Europe and Georgia’s European past. Therefore, the youth grew up in such a societal context where Georgia’s Western culture and Western orientation defined success of the political parties. The members of the youth group have not lived in the Soviet Union, and their perceptions of Moscow depend on the narratives developed by the government. The rhetoric of the politicians also led to expansion of Georgian boundaries and inclusion of
ethnic minorities. Accordingly, youth is more civic-oriented than previous generations. Politicians have also influenced how Georgian youth see themselves. The popularity of Europeanness makes the youth transform their Georgian identities into more European identities. Presently, the youth are in process of transforming their Georgian identities as they question accepted narratives of Georgian identity and seek to find a new definition.

The second mechanism that influences differences among generations is political events and policies. The adult and the senior groups lived in the transition period. They experienced merits and drawbacks of the USSR and struggled through the 1990s. The changes in the structure of economy and society influenced their everyday and personal lives. Importantly, society largely ignored the senior population through the transition period. Society had no use for the senior populations’ education and work experiences and placed no value on either. Thus, the senior group is dissatisfied with the European course and remains nostalgic of friendly relations with Russia, where they felt like an integral and necessary part of the population. At the same time, the youth feels relatively comfortable in the global market, speaks in European languages, travels to Europe, and has opportunity to acquire Western education. Consequently, their perceptions of democracy and the global market are different from the adult and the senior generations. For the latter, the memory of severe and painful transition is still vivid.

In addition, Saakashvili’s government had a dramatic impact on the youth’s perceptions of Russia. The popularized oratory of evil and imperialistic Moscow spread during Saakashvili’s period of rule, radicalizing the youth. The youth grew up in the narrative, which only highlights negativity of the Northern neighbor and its harmful
deeds toward Georgia. The war in 2008 sustained this narrative in the minds of youth. This further increased the gap among generations. This does not mean that this narrative is wrong and that Russia’s actions are benevolent. The Saakashvili government’s approach and the existing radical narratives in the youth hindered their ability to see diplomacy as a means for conflict resolution.

Furthermore, the recent government’s policies only targeted the youth. Exchange programs, language courses, scholarships for study abroad, etc. have been concentrated on youth development. The adult and the senior population were left behind in their struggle against the competitive market. This further widened the gap in the development of generations.

The third mechanism that impacted the differences is the open borders and the mass media. Georgia became a democratic, independent country with relatively free conventional media. Visa liberation and the ability to travel in the Western countries opened new doors for the youth. The majority of the youth traveled in Europe for educational or other purposes. Therefore, they have been exposed to European culture and politics more than the adult and the senior populations. Moreover, spread of the Internet and social media platform, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc. brought Europe and U.S. closer to the homes of the Georgian youth. Wearing jeans is not the marker of the Western culture like it was during the 1990s in the teenage years of the adult population. The Western pop culture, literature, Hollywood, TV-shows, games, and other trends became a vital part of the youth’s culture but not for the adult and senior
populations. Therefore, this resulted in an increasing gap in understandings of Georgian identity and Georgian national identity.

The three mechanisms mentioned are factors that fuel and perpetuate the dramatic gap among generations. Variance in worldviews and perceptions make the peace in Georgia vulnerable to civic tension. Presently, the actions of the Russian government have not been overt. However, the gradual increase in pro-Russian sentiment has not been left unnoticed by the youth. The incident in March 2014 is a clear example of what kind of response the youth will have on pro-Russian demonstrations. Presently, the relative peace in the country creates the possibility to address the division among generations and to destabilize the binary narrative that divides the nation into two poles.

**Recommendations**

There is no value of the research and data if it is not followed with recommendations of how to avoid tension and violence in Georgia. The research findings can influence three important recommendations for conflict resolution practitioners in the field.

**Recommendation 1:** The youth is unable to see the Russian government as changing its policies. Therefore, unless the Russian side de-occupies Georgia, every action it takes will be seen as imperialistic and negative. The adult population should be given an opportunity to explain their stance, but not in the dual narrative that is already established. The non-governmental organizations and the Georgian government should encourage development of the third voice about the Russian foreign policy. In other
words, they should encourage a moderate tone in the assessment of the relations with Russia. This will lead to the second recommendation.

**Recommendation 2:** The youth should not perceive being moderate or careful in the assessment of the Russian policies as going against Georgian independence. Conflict resolution practitioners should ensure that the merits of diplomacy and peaceful tools for prevention of violence become part of the young generation. The youth should be more involved in analyzing and discussing past history. Both governments should encourage educational and entertaining programs between Russian and Georgian students in a neutral country, where both communities will feel safe. Additionally, history teachers should receive training to educate youth on a more objective and neutral past that will enable the young generation to analyze the historical events.

**Recommendation 3:** The Georgian government should further promote integration of the ethnic minorities in governmental posts. Through active engagement of other ethnicities, the government should seek to eliminate the fear and sense of insecurity toward the ethnic minorities. This will assist the young generation in getting closer to the civic concept of national identity and will lessen the bias and prejudices in the adult generation. Moreover, the Georgian government should encourage a higher number of NGOs to concentrate on the civic concept of national identities. The mass media and educational system should promote equal rights among different ethnicities in the country.

These three major recommendations are necessary to ensure that the tension and conflict will not escalate in Georgia. Based on this research, I foresee the possibility of
generational tension over the foreign policy and national identity, but Georgians can both avoid this and lessen the impact.

**Future Research**

This research should serve a first step toward in-depth research of the identified themes. The future research should explore the identity ‘crisis’ in the young generation. The identity ‘crisis’ of the young generation will in itself have an impact on the construction of identities of future generations. Therefore, a new trend or pattern might emerge that was missed by this research. Conduct ethnographic and qualitative methods would allow for researchers to triangulate the data and to get detailed information.

Further research should also focus on the adult population to understand levels of religious identity and how it impacts political decisions. In other words, the Christian Orthodox Church actively engages in the domestic and foreign policies of the country. Therefore, the adult population closely follows the speeches of the Patriarch and the actions of the Church. The future research should concentrate on how the Christian identity influences political and other social identities in the adult population. It will be interesting to pursue this kind of research in the young generation as well. The results will be helpful to understand the dynamics and the role of the Church in the lives of both generations. Furthermore, exploring differences in perception of gender and gender relations could lead to interesting findings.

Lastly, general research in all generations of Georgians is needed to study the perceptions on conflict resolution. What constitutes conflict resolution, what is the local or cultural practice to solve conflicts, and how Georgians perceives the conflicts with
Abkhazia and South Ossetia are all questions further research can solve. This general research will assist to understand the socially accepted mechanisms of conflict resolution and will help policymakers draft policies for resolving the frozen conflicts in the country.

**Conclusion**

The generational analysis on Georgian national identity and the perception of the Other showed a holistic picture of the dynamism of the Georgian society. The exploration of generations assisted in viewing a complete map of various turning points in the history that influenced certain age groups. Comparison of the age groups helped to understand each of these turning points thoroughly. The research made it clear that the Georgian youth experiences identity ‘crisis.’ The idea of Georgianness, though, transmitted to new generations is not viable and relevant to the present socio-economic and global environment. New Georgian generations seek to define themselves and their roles in Georgian society, in Europe, and generally, in the world. The identity ‘crisis’ also reflected the understanding of Europeanness of Georgia among the youth. One of the participants nicely put it when answering the question about whether being Georgian therefore means being European, stating it “is impossible unless the nation decides its own identity.” However, it is important to mention that introducing the question of Georgia’s Europeanness led to questions about Georianness in the youth. It triggered discussions and debates of what it means to be European or Georgian. Therefore, in the future, it will help to create a foundation for a new Georgian identity based on consent of the youth.
Presently, Georgian youth has enlarged the boundaries of the in-group. They welcome ethnic minorities and perceive them as part of the community. Law and citizenship are acknowledged as legitimate ways to define Georgians. However, the youth also is cautious and fearful of the ethnic minorities due to the chosen traumas transmitted through generations. Also, lesser representation of the minorities in the government and political sphere restricts their representation. In turn, lesser representation in the power position sustains established stereotypes among the youth.

The majority of the new generation received positive narratives and stories about ordinary Russian people. Therefore, this resulted in neutral or positive perceptions of average Russians. Additionally, some of the participants saw Russian people as victims of their government, not the advocates of Putin’s policies. This trend in the youth limits the hatred and negativity toward their Northern neighbors. Still, the high collective generality over the policies of the government risks the possibility of conflict resolution. In the young generation, the government of Russia is seen as resilient, constant, imperialistic, and occupant. Therefore, any moderate assessment of Russia leads to antagonism and tension. The youth disregards any relations with Russia unless Russia returns territories. The youth’s ‘if’ attitude hinders empowerment of the conflict resolution practitioners. The ‘if’-ness of the environment also puts a barrier among generations as the senior generation is able to overcome the bitterness of the past to secure peace and stability in the country.

The adult generation findings reveal the importance of their religious identities. Additionally, the adult population still has ethnicity as the top priority in defining the
boundaries of in-group and the national identity of the country. Their characteristics of the definition of Georgian national identity excluded part of the population. Therefore, exclusion creates a basis for recurrent ethnic or religious violence in the country.

As already mentioned, the adult group revealed a low level of collective generality toward the Russian government and the Russian people. Similar to the senior segment of the Georgian society, the adults do not perceive Russian policies toward Georgians as resilient and constant. From the point of view of adults, Russian policies differ depending on governments and leaders. Thus, they do not necessarily use words such as ‘occupant’ or ‘imperialistic’ in their descriptions of Russia. They also express cautiousness in their choice of statements and phrases. The same is true of the senior generation. They do remember the past, and they experienced merits as well as disadvantages of the USSR and Russia. Consequently, the adult and the senior generations are able to compare and contrast different periods during the USSR and their relevance to Georgia. This does not hold true for the youth, who grew up in hatred directed at and isolation from Russia.

The significant finding was also the multicultural approach to the national identity from the old generation. Differently from the youth and the adult groups, the senior generation does not rely on passport or religion in the definition of Georgianness. The culture of comradeship during the USSR influenced their perceptions of ethnic minorities. In other words, because everybody was equal and referred to each other as ‘comrades’ (товарищ) during the USSR, the senior age group did not perceive the ethnic or other socio-cultural backgrounds as an important part of the communication. As a
result, in the senior age group, a more integrated community developed that led to multicultural understanding of national identity. This merit of the USSR was lost during the national movements in the 1990s when ethnicity became priority.

Perceptions suggested that the senior generation is nostalgic of the times they spend in the USSR. Yes, this is true. They look back and think of the times when there was peace and relative stability. This should not be thought of as anti-democratic or against independent Georgia. Personal experiences during the transition period and unexpected eruptions of violence in the country influence the individual desire to return to the USSR period when basic human needs of food and physical security were not a problem. Again, this does not mean that the senior generation does not appreciate freedom of speech, movement, thought, etc. They do understand and value advantages of the current structure of the country and the open borders. However, the new environment does not have a place for them. The government did not offer adequate re-training for the senior generation to re-integrate them into a new society. During the transition period, non-governmental organizations and aid countries concentrated more on establishing peace and stability, while disregarding actual people, whose lives dramatically shifted overnight. The overlooking of the identities of the senior generation and Saakashvili’s exclusion of the senior generation from the policies disengaged them, therefore, leading to suspicion over Europe and nostalgia toward the USSR period.

The differences found among generations will impact the country’s path toward Europe or toward development and stability. The identity ‘crisis’ experienced by the youth and their ‘if’ attitude toward Russia alienates the youth from the adult and the
senior generations that seek to establish diplomatic relations for solving the conflict at hand. In addition, the adult population’s prioritization of religious and ethnic identities hinders the integration of ethnic minorities.

In a nutshell, the research’s major findings relate to the salience of religious and ethnic identities in the adult population. The identity ‘crisis’ and ‘if’ attitude toward Russia in the youth generation and multicultural national identity in the senior generation are also part of the major results of the study. Also, the possibility of civic and generational tension is expected over the relations with Russia. A dual narrative developed in the society radicalizes generations in their advocacy for either narrative. Additionally, a dual narrative disables the emergence of a moderate and neutral voice.

The research leads to suggestions for closely working with the youth to transform established high collective generality and to open space for dialogue and discussion on moderate, more peaceful dialogue processes. Additionally, the Georgian government should pursue ethnic integration more in practice rather than in theory and in the speeches.

Generations change, and cultural and historical heritage transmitted and received by new generations define the course of Georgian domestic and foreign policies. Eventually, the new generation of Georgia will acquire political power; thus, their inability to see and to establish diplomatic relations with Russia and to solve the issue via negotiations will possibly escalate into violence.
APPENDIX

Interview Questions (Translated from Georgian)

1) How do you feel about being Georgian?

2) Why do you think you are Georgian?

3) What does it mean to be Georgian?
   i) What are the characteristics of Georgian?
   ii) What is the difference between Georgian and “other”
   iii) Who is the ‘true’ Georgian for you?

4) What do you think about the phrase: “Georgia for Georgians”
   i) If someone not ethnically Georgian speaks Georgian language has he/she equal rights to you?
   ii) Lets think hypothetically: There is war in Georgian whom does you trust more ethnically Georgian or other minorities or both? And why?

5) What do you think about the phrase: “I am Georgian, therefore I am European”
   i. Can Georgian and European values coexist?
   ii. Is Georgia part of Europe?

Now, we turn to our second part of the interview.

6) What do you think about Georgia-Russia relations?
   i) How will you characteristics Russians toward Georgia?
ii) If you reflect on the history are Russians attitudes toward Georgia linear or volatile?

iii) Do you remember period in Georgian-Russian relations, which you would like to bring back?

iv) If you think ten years ahead how you imagine Georgian-Russian relations?
REFERENCES


Braun, V., & Clarke, V. Using thematic analysis in psychology.


Interpressnews. (2014, June 13). *Irakli Garibashvili – we are, were and will be Europeans*. Retrieved January 6, 2015, from Interpressnews: http://www.interpressnews.ge/en/politcss/58524-irakli-garibashvili--we-are-were-and-will-be-europeans.html?ar=A


The role of the Georgian Orthodox Church in construction of national identity (XX and XXI centuries).


Sharashenidze, T. (2014, ივნისი 12). ამოცანა-ერთგვარობა საქართველოში. ნინჯრილი უჭირავ და აღდგენილი განთავსებული ანიმაციონალური საქართველო-ათენობრივი ქონებს (Anti-West forces are becoming stronger and more aggressive- Tornike Sharashenidze). (Newpost.ge, Interviewer)


President: Putin is the leader of the nation with whom we should repair relations. Retrieved January 6, 2015, from Tabula.ge: http://www.tabula.ge/ge/verbatim/91256-prezidenti-putini-aris-qveknis-lideri-romeltanac-unda-davalagot-urtiertobebi


BIOGRAPHY

Ellen Galdava was born and raised in Tbilisi, Georgia. She graduated from American University in Bulgaria with a degree in Political Science and International Relations in 2012. Afterwards she acquired her MS degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.